Work experience in the media and creative industries

Work experience is **vital** for anyone considering a career in the media. Most jobs are heard about through word of mouth so **networking is essential** to build contacts and find out about job opportunities. Work experience will not only look good on your CV, it will also allow you to do this essential networking.

Some media, journalism & publishing organisations offer internships or work experience placements (a number of examples are listed in step two below), however it’s also very common for people to organise their own work experience (see step three below). You can also gain experience by creating your own work at university. Employers are genuinely interested in seeing what you can do and it also demonstrates your enthusiasm.

**Step One: Know which area of the media you want to work in**
The media is a huge industry with more than 200 job roles. It is important to be clear what you mean by the media. What area of the media are you most interested in TV, radio, film, digital, video, interactive media, journalism, publishing? If you are interested in television, are you interested in production, presenting, broadcast journalism, research, technical support, business development? If you are interested in journalism, do you want to write for a newspaper, magazine or online? Do you want to work in a creative role like script writing or business role like HR?

Media takes a cross platform approach, allowing content to be created and accessed in many different ways, e.g. a computer game could be made into a film or a TV show could be made online etc. So while it’s important to know the area you want to target, it’s worth researching other areas and considering how they could fit together and how you can be flexible about working in a variety of ways.

To help you decide what kind of role you want, it’s important to know what your strengths are. The media industry is very competitive, so you will need to market yourself effectively. Assess your skills and think about how you could best use them. You can use our CV web pages to see a variety of example CVs and use **CareerSet** to get feedback on tailoring your CV in relation to a job description.

To find out about the different jobs within the media industry and what they really involve, visit **Screen Skills**. This is the Sector Skills Council for the Creative and Media industries and you can access extensive information, including job descriptions, training, post grad courses and more.

Talk to contacts in industry to find out where there are skills shortages.
Another useful careers website is Prospects which has job descriptions, salary information, entry requirements and links to other resources. Also check Prospects industries information. Guardian Careers has regular live Q&A with media industry professionals - useful to gain insights into key issues, you can post questions and view previous forum discussions. Check Guardian media for latest news about the sector.

**Step Two: Research the opportunities**

**At university**
- Award winning student media on campus - get involved!
- Use our Student Internship Bureau and vacancy database on Handshake
- Get involved in relevant volunteering projects
- Attend relevant careers events as these can be great networking opportunities. In many departments we run smaller alumni events, where you can meet graduates working in different career areas e.g. journalism, publishing, TV and writing. For more details on these and other events visit the events page
- York profiles and mentors: we have a number of York graduates working in Media, Journalism and Publishing. Many are willing to help you with information and advice. View their profiles and make contact via York Profiles and Mentors

**External organisations**
- Screen Skills Trainee Finder matches trainees with UK companies across the animation, games, film, TV and VFX industries
- Creative Access works across the creative industries and specialises in paid work experience opportunities for underrepresented candidates in the UK. Sign up for their email which includes ringfenced opportunities and opportunities open to all

**Film, Television and Radio Broadcasting (including writing)**
- The BBC Academy has guides, tutorials and put on regular live virtual masterclasses. Visit the website and sign up for updates.
- Screen Yorkshire funds new productions and seek to support new talent entering the film and TV industry. They have regular masterclasses and networking events
- The BBC offers short unpaid work experience placements in a range of departments throughout the year. They also run 11 month (paid) trainee schemes and a talent pool, which you could get involved in after graduation, including the Production Trainee Scheme
- See Channel 4’s website for careers in the creative industries. Apply for work experience in a range of departments - both creative and business-related
- ITV have work experience opportunities via their Insight Pool, apply in January, April or October
- Mama Youth Project supports under-represented groups (including unemployed graduates) into the media industry through a free training programme, leading to paid work experience
- The Network runs an annual event providing free master classes, workshops and careers chats at the Media Guardian Edinburgh International Television Festival
• British Film Institute has responsibility for funding film development and production; training; distribution and exhibition in the UK
• See Screen Skills trainee opportunities for 12 month placements in film or high-end TV
• Creative England supports film productions made throughout England. The website includes useful news section on regional productions, competitions, hosts crew networking events and you can register on their crew database. Follow them on twitter to keep up to date with the latest events: @cenglandprodn, Production team: @creativeengland, Film team: @CEfilm
• PACT (Production Alliance for Cinema and Television) is the UK trade association representing and promoting the commercial interests of independent feature film, television, digital, children's and animation media companies
• Film and media agency for London includes details of production trainee schemes
• The Knowledge Online is a huge database of film-related companies
• Film and TV Production Directory – search for worldwide jobs
• Shooting People is an international networking organisation dedicated to the support and promotion of independent filmmaking
• Production Base - networking site for film, TV and commercial production. Can upload CV/show reel and search for jobs. You have to pay to join, but there are discounted rates for recent graduates
• BBC writing opportunities for TV, radio and film with advice on script writing techniques
• Script writing blogs with loads of helpful info
• Simply Scripts - database of film/tv/radio scripts and writing advice
• Celtx, free script/playwriting software that does all the formatting for you
• Script writing book, recommended by York grad working in screen writing
• Script Yorkshire - support and advocacy organisation for script writers across performance and broadcast media
• South Yorkshire filmmakers network
• Hospital Broadcasting Association - includes a search facility to find particular stations and the hospitals they serve
• The Community Media Association has information on local community media projects and organisations (many using radio)
• Grapevinejobs - jobs in broadcast and media
• Grierson DocLab and Mentoring Scheme advertises each year to help people launch a career in factual programme making
• Industrial Light and Magic London internships, advertised annually
• Shine TV work experience on a TV production or development
• Careers advice for film, games and television from BAFTA

Publishing
• Society of Young Publishers - supports people who are interested in entering the industry
• The Publishers Association has a careers section with advice, including blogs and videos from industry professionals
Some large publishing firms offer work experience opportunities—see company websites for details (e.g., Hachette)

Oxford Brookes University runs a variety of publishing courses and its website includes a list of work experience and job opportunities

Book Careers - an independent careers advice service specialising in the book industry, includes a “CV Clearing House” facility for you to leave your CV (some services require a fee)

The Bookseller is the professional journal for the publishing industry and reading it will help develop your commercial awareness by keeping up to date with industry news. They also have a careers section with blogs and advice from industry professionals. Free reference copy in the Careers and Placements Information Room

Case study of a Commissioning Editor at Cambridge University Press has some useful tips for getting into the sector and staying up to date.

Step Three: Apply and make speculative approaches

In order to write a good speculative letter/email you will first need to do some research into the organisation you are writing to. This way you will be able to target your application to their needs and demonstrate your passion for the company, role and industry

Catch the attention of the person you are writing to. Give them a clear reason to want to contact you and take things further. For example, demonstrate that you have relevant skills, perhaps through extra-curricular activities and explain how offering you work experience will be of benefit to them (not just you!). Include a web link to your best work if possible. Also demonstrate that you understand what they do as an organisation - perhaps mention an interest in the clients they work with/your enjoyment of a documentary they made/an article you read that resonated with you – i.e. really tailor the application to that particular organisation

Be explicit about what you are asking for and what you can offer

It is a good idea to write to a specific named individual. If necessary phone to clarify who the best person to contact would be before sending your letter/email. Company websites, twitter and LinkedIn profiles may also be useful for this

Update your CV. See an example of a technical media CV and Production CV at the end of this information sheet. For Publishing and Journalism, a conventional chronological CV is probably best (see the CV web pages).
Follow it up! It’s a good idea to contact the organisation a week or two after you have sent it. Ask if they’ve had a chance to read it and whether there will be any opportunities for you. If not, find out if they know of anyone else you could approach for work experience opportunities.

Create an online presence: use social or professional networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn. Not only can you find out about companies in this way, they can find out about you! Use Twitter to follow individuals working in the roles you are interested in - this will help you keep up to date with their news, but could also lead to job opportunities (e.g. they could put out a last minute call for help if a runner lets them down…). However, remember they can check you out on line, so think about the impression you want to give and lock down your privacy settings of anything personal you wouldn’t want them to see.

Taking the initiative is an essential skill to help you get work experience in the media and is also vital for success and career progression within the sector. For example, in television, companies constantly compete against one another for commissions and jobs are often short term contracts. The ability to market yourself effectively is a skill you will use throughout your career in the media.

And finally….
Be realistic – the media is a tough industry to break into. Most work experience will be unpaid, so be prepared to work on this basis initially and for the competition to be intense. Read about York Futures Scholarships to support you with career development and read about your rights as an intern.

It can also be helpful to develop your practical skills. For example, learn a new language through the Languages for All programme. Careers and Placements also runs a variety of skills training courses - see our events page.

Outside of university, you could consider undertaking courses in subjects such as shorthand or proof reading to help you develop your practical skills. See the National Careers Service or search Find Courses for more information. If you want to be a runner, learn to drive – it’s pretty much essential!

Other useful resources to research the sector and job vacancies

- Graduate Arts and Media jobs in the Yorkshire and Humber region
- Creative Pool - recruitment agency covering the creative industries including: Advertising, Architecture, Graphic Design, Journalism and Writing, Media Careers, Multimedia and New Media and Publishing
- Agency Central - recruitment agency directory, search by occupation.

Resources available in Careers and Placements
We have a number of York graduates working in Media, Journalism and Publishing. Many are willing to help you with information and advice. To view their profiles and make contact via the York Profiles and Mentors.

Books – available on reference in Careers and Placements
- Contacts The essential book of contacts for the entertainment industry
- TV: An Insider’s Guide
• Writing for television
• Getting into Films & Television
• How to get a job in television
• An actor’s guide to getting work
• How to be a working actor
• British Performing Arts Yearbook
• Freelancing for television and radio

Journals – available on reference in Careers and Placements
• Broadcast
• The Bookseller
• The Journalist

Related Information Sheets
• Considering...Broadcasting

Note: some internships offered in this sector may be unpaid. Before starting an internship you should be clear about the length of the internship, pay and conditions, what you will be expected to do, and what you will gain from the experience.

Please note: The websites listed here are not intended to represent a comprehensive list. Careers and Placements cannot be held responsible for the content of external websites.

york.ac.uk/careers
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