Why Do Work Experience or Volunteering?
Getting into paid employment without relevant work experience can be very difficult. Some people are fortunate in obtaining a part-time job or work placement in the career area they are interested in whilst at university, although in many cases this is not possible. This is where additional work experience can be very helpful.

Work experience enables you to gain the necessary experience often required for entry to future careers, such as journalism, environmental work, museum work and social work. It gives you the opportunity to put theory into practice, and research and try out potential future career areas to confirm (or reject) your ideas. You could also be better off financially while increasing your awareness of workplace culture. It will also help you build a network of contacts which could be useful in the future or with your dissertation or class projects.

Whatever way you gain work experience, you'll be helping yourself gain and further develop transferable skills that employers are looking for, as well as helping you decide what you would like to do in the future. Adding this work experience to your CV, in addition to your degree, will help you stand out from the crowd!

Finding work experience
Register with the Careers and Employability Service’s TARGETconnect platform (https://stirling.targetconnect.net)
This platform provides a dedicated job site for Stirling students and graduates. We advertise part-time and seasonal work, paid internships, volunteering opportunities and graduate jobs.

Apply for summer internship programmes organised by big employers
These are very competitive and require early application, usually by an online application form, before Christmas. For many employers, paid summer internships are now an extended interview to help them decide if they want to take you on after graduation. The 'Work Fest' internship and graduate opportunities fair on campus in early October is a great way to meet some of these large employers.

Research internship directories: available free of charge within the Student Services Hub (2A Cottrell) and the Careers and Employability Service (3A1 Cottrell) If you are keen to work for a particular company, have a look at their website, as their internship and graduate opportunities should also be posted up on these. Also check out the following websites:

- Rate my Placement - ratemyplacement.co.uk/
- Prospects - prospects.ac.uk
- Saltire Foundation - entrepreneurialscotland.com/ internships with large companies in Scotland and abroad
- Target Jobs - http://targetjobs.co.uk/internships
- Times Top 100 - http://top100graduateemployers.com/

Apply for internships with smaller organisation: There are a number of paid internship programmes dedicated to help students and graduates gain work experience with small businesses, social enterprises and charities within Scotland and beyond. This is a great way of gaining work experience locally before applying for a larger employer internship or graduate programme, or may help you decide that you would prefer helping drive a small organisation to new heights! It is worth finding out about these internship programmes in the autumn semester, as some opportunities will be available to apply then and in early spring. Examples of such programmes:

- Stirling Internship Programme: stir.ac.uk/stirling-internships/ (for Stirling students and graduates)
- Bright Green Placements: brightgreenplacements.org.uk (internships with an environmental focus)
- Adopt-an-Intern: adoptanintern.org.uk/ (graduate internships only)
- E-Placements Scotland e-placementsscotland.com (internships in IT)
ScotGrad: scotgrad.co.uk

Contact employers directly about work experience
Send a CV and covering letter to organisations you are interested in and follow up with a phone call. Networking is another way of finding local opportunities. Go to events where you are likely to meet people in the field of work you are interested in and try and speak to them. Make sure you contact organisations a few months before you want to start work. For more help with this, please pick up a ‘Researching Employers’ information sheet and ‘CV & Applications’ booklet.

Consider contacting people about work shadowing
Make the most of any opportunity you can to shadow a professional working in a career area of interest to increase your understanding and build up a useful network of contacts. You may know someone who works in the field you are interested in so try contacting them to ask about the possibility of shadowing. Alternatively, send your CV and a covering letter to organisations you are interested in, and follow this up with a phone call. Read out leaflet on Networking and Using Social Media.

Get volunteering on campus:
- **Become a Student Ambassador** - assisting students and their relatives/friends on campus during open days, applicant days, visit afternoons and individual tours.
- **Become a STEER Student Mentor** - providing peer support for undergraduates in their first year of study.
- **Get involved in the Student’s Union** - including student representation, committee membership, coaching and the international student buddy scheme.
- **Clubs/Societies** - Getting involved with one of the University's clubs and societies is a great way to develop transferrable skills, particularly if you have a position of responsibility such as President or Treasurer.

A selection of local and UK volunteering opportunities:
- **Apex Scotland** (working with ex-offenders and young people at risk): apexscotland.org.uk
- **British Heart Foundation**: b hf.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-area/scotland.aspx
- **Citizens Advice Bureau**: cas.org.uk
- **Forth Valley Advocacy**: forthvalleyadvocacy.com
- **PLUS** (supporting local children and young people with disabilities): plus-stirling.org.uk
- **Townbreak Stirling** (supporting people with dementia and their carers): townbreakstirling.co.uk/

**Student Volunteering Scotland**: volunteering.org.uk
**Community Service Volunteers**: volunteeringmatters.org.uk
**The Conservation Volunteers**: tcv.org.uk

Careers and Employability Service:
Links to useful websites: stir.ac.uk/careers/students/work_experience_and_volunteering/
Information on our accredited work experience modules: stir.ac.uk/careers/modules/
Get 1-to-1 advice stir.ac.uk/careers/students/advice/