

Work Experience

Work experience for young persons helps ensure that they are better prepared for the world of work, with the necessary skills and motivation and is a valuable part of their education.

In diagnostic radiology work experience typically involves students (in this leaflet the terms “student” and “young person” refers to persons under 18 years of age) observing the different imaging modalities within the department. It is perfectly acceptable to offer work experience to young persons in diagnostic radiology departments but as it often involves access to controlled areas and work with ionising radiation certain procedures and legislations must be followed.

Risk Assessment

Prior to the offer of work experience a risk assessment needs to be carried out which takes into account the inexperience of the student with regards to potential or existing risks. This risk assessment should not be based purely on radiation risks and needs to account for other health and safety risks.

Local Rules

Following the risk assessment, if it is decided to allow students to enter controlled areas to observe procedures, then depending on the length of the visit local rules may need written restrictions specific to the students.

- **Young Persons visiting the X-ray departments:**

The existing Local Rules regarding visitors entering Controlled Areas should generally be

sufficient to allow the entry of young persons visiting the department into Controlled Areas.

- **Young Persons on work experience for a month or longer:**

In cases where a work experience student is expected to be in the department for a period of a month or longer, specific restrictions associated with the student need to be included in the Local Rules. A draft inclusion into the Local Rules is given below. Training is also important in these cases and is talked about later in the leaflet. Students should also normally be assigned a personal dosimeter which is registered with the dosimetry service as belonging to a person <18 years of age so that the relevant dose limits (1 mSv p.a.) can be applied.

Sample Amendments to Local Rules:

- The student will have had training in radiation protection and will have read the applicable Local Rules and signed a declaration stating that they have understood these rules.
- They will be provided with a personal dosimeter and will be monitored for the duration of their stay in the department. The dose investigation level is 0.25 mSv per quarter.
- The student should be supervised at all times and is only allowed to enter controlled areas while under supervision of appropriate radiology staff.
- The student, while observing a radiographic procedure, should always be behind the protective screen regardless of type of exposure.

Training and Supervision

It is important that students receive the relevant training required by IRR99 regulation 14. This includes training in issues such as the risk to health caused by exposure to ionising radiation, precautions to be taken and what to do in the event of a radiation incident. Training at the start of the term of work experience will help to ensure that the local rules are followed and possible harm to people is kept to a minimum.

It is important that the student is supervised at all times especially when within controlled areas. Supervision will also help to establish the effectiveness of the training and the progress of the student within the placement.

Legislation

The following is some of the legislation relevant to young work experience students.

“...the limit on effective dose for any person other than an employee or trainee, including any person below the age of 16, shall be 1 mSv in any calendar year.” IRR99 defines trainees as “a person aged 16 years or over (including a student) who is undergoing instruction or training which involves operations which would, in the case of an employee, be work with ionising radiation.”

The IRR99 regulations state that it is the duty of the employer to ensure that all necessary restrictions are in place to ensure that the dose to employees (including trainees/students) is kept as low as practicably possible and the dose limits associated with the employee are not exceeded. In the case of work experience students the dose limit is set at 1 mSv p.a.

PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE VISITING THE X-RAY DEPT

Information for Staff

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Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999, Regulation 19(2) - "... no employer shall employ a young person for work... involving harmful exposure to radiation; ... and in determining whether work will involve harm or risks for the purpose of this paragraph, regard shall be had to the results of the assessment."

Proposed Amendment to IRR99

Please note that the HSE is planning on amending the relevant IRR99 regulation by implementing Article 7.2 of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 115, 1960 (Radiation Protection Convention) which states that "no worker under the age of 16 shall be engaged in work involving ionising radiation".

The HSE has not provided a definite date for the amendment of IRR99 and until then it is still legal to provide young people <16 with work experience involving ionising radiation.

Further Information

We hope you find this information useful. If you would like any additional information or have any concerns, please contact the Radiological Protection Centre (details on next page).