

Company Name: Zurich
Location: Worldwide
Business Sector: Corporate



'Offering work experience placements has provided Zurich with an ideal opportunity to look for potential recruits'

Zurich Financial Services Group (Zurich) is an insurance-based financial services provider with a global network of subsidiaries and offices in North America and Europe as well as in Asia Pacific, Latin America and other markets. Founded in 1872, the Group is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. It employs approximately 60,000 people serving customers in more than 170 countries.

Which means we're in the perfect position to give local students in school years 10 and 11 a glimpse of the wider world of business and the workplace in general. Ten years of offering work experience placements has provided us with an ideal opportunity to look for potential recruits too. Although places are naturally limited to the number of requests that managers can successfully co-ordinate with their regular workload, they always make sure there is something interesting and valuable for students to work on.

Health and safety information is sent to candidates in preparation for their placement. And to round off the experience, everyone receives a certificate of attendance, a selection of Zurich merchandise, and both managers and students are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire.

Company Name: Walker Thompson
Location: Coventry
Business Sector: Public Practice
No. of Finance Staff: 13



‘Ultimately we may identify future staff members through the work experience programme’

Walker Thompson is a three partner general practice. We are an ACCA quality checked practice, ACCA Platinum Training Practice and AAT Corporate Training Partner. In addition we have been accredited against both the Investors in People Standard & Investors in Excellence. Our clients range from sole traders to medium-sized companies. We carry out a full accounting service with the exception of insolvency work.

We have been offering work experience to school students in various guises for the past 20 years and do so in order to maintain strong community links with local schools, colleges and universities. One Partner was formerly a director of the local Careers Service and a director of Young Enterprise and is currently a governor of City College. We have delivered Insight Programmes aimed at providing careers advice to students in years 10 and 11.

We are often involved in pre-placement mock interview scenarios. Some students also ask to return following their placement with us.

Our practice benefits from these placements as ultimately we may find future staff members through the programme or perhaps identify with individuals that they may not be suited to the career.

Our expectation is for students undertaking a placement to have core numeracy and literacy skills and a degree of common sense – too many students are ill prepared by schools to enter the world of work.

Students engage in a variety of tasks: they usually start with simple accounts records and are encouraged to verify income and expenditure. Depending upon ability and aptitude they can work on controlling ledgers, extracting balances and in exceptional cases can, over a 2 week period, produce basic trial balance, balance sheet and profit and loss accounts. They can also spend time on administration and process management.



Company Name: Culley Lifford Hall Ltd.
Location: Walsall & Lichfield
Business Sector: Public Practice
No. of Finance Staff: 7 (3 qualified accountants,
2 accounting technicians
and 2 administrators)



CULLEY
LIFFORD HALL

'Students must be communicative, enquiring, willing, committed, thorough and be able to demonstrate basic IT skills'

Culley Lifford Hall Ltd. provide a comprehensive range of professional, technical and commercial services to their clients.

We have been offering work experience placements for over 20 years to students who have aptitude and who we can inspire to progress within the accountancy profession.

Prior to the placement we provide students with a copy of the office manual and health and safety policy so they are aware of the company policies. We also ask them to complete a confidentiality agreement to ensure that our clients details are not at risk.

Throughout a student's work placement they are allocated to different staff in order to gain an understanding of the whole practice and the work we undertake.

Students are given an 'admin day' whereby they undertake photocopying and use the fax machine, scanner and other office equipment. Students are asked to complete our internal basic petty cash records for the office and are given an introduction to our debtors ledger and time and fees ledger.

On the client side of our work, students have the opportunity to set up accounting working paper files and sort source documents, providing them with an insight into how a case is started. Additionally, we provide an introduction to the initiation of a client case which includes explaining the alternative business structures we encounter.

In addition, students are asked to undertake basic analysis work for clients using Microsoft Excel, and tackle the basic interpretation of management accounts.