



MMI MENTOR



THE WORK EXPERIENCE PLAYBOOK

Work Experience for Medicine

A practical system for finding opportunities, maximising placements and turning experience into meaningful medical interview insight.

You do not need connections. You need a strategy.

Written for applicants with no family in medicine and no help from school.

Email & phone scripts

A 20-organisation search system

Five printable worksheets

Two reflection frameworks

A 30-day plan

Written by **Saad Umer** — founder of MMI Mentor and medical student at the University of Exeter.
No doctors in the family. No school contacts. Four rounds of asking before anyone said yes.

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How to use this guide. Sections 5 to 12 are the part you should act on this week — they are about getting a placement at all. Sections 14 to 20 are what you do once you have one. Sections 22 to 25 are how the whole thing becomes an interview answer. If you are short on time, read section 3, then go straight to section 7 and start a list.

06 | MMI MENTOR FRAMEWORK

The department-first strategy

The change that finally worked for me was not asking harder. It was asking smaller.

THE USUAL APPROACH

"Can I do work experience at your hospital?"

Goes to a general inbox. Concerns a whole organisation. Requires someone senior to decide who owns the request. Easy to leave unanswered.

DEPARTMENT-FIRST

"Is the radiography department able to host a sixth-form student for a single day of observation?"

Goes to a named team. Concerns one department. One person can say yes. The ask is small, specific and time-bound.

Why the smaller ask travels further

- A department manager can make a decision without escalating it.
- You are asking for one day, not an open-ended arrangement.
- Smaller departments are approached far less often than "the hospital".
- It shows you have thought about where you want to be and why.

Departments worth researching

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| • Radiography and imaging | • Pharmacy | • Rehabilitation |
| • Emergency Department | • Paediatrics | • Occupational therapy |
| • Outpatients | • Cardiology | • Audiology |
| • Physiotherapy | • Oncology | • Dietetics |

FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE

Both of my in-person placements came from this approach. Asking the hospital as a whole produced nothing. Asking a radiography department, and separately an Emergency Department, produced one day and two days respectively. That is not proof that the method works — it is one person's sample of one. But it changed my results after three rounds of asking the wrong way, and it costs nothing to try.

Do this before you write

- ☐ Read the department's page on the Trust website — know roughly what they do
- ☐ Find a named contact, a department email, or the work experience coordinator
- ☐ Check whether the Trust already runs a formal scheme, and whether it is open
- ☐ Note any stated minimum age, DBS or safeguarding requirement
- ☐ Decide the exact dates you are free before you ask

A caution worth stating plainly: this approach improves your odds of reaching someone who can decide. It does not guarantee a placement, and plenty of departments will still say no.

10 | TEMPLATES

Three emails you can adapt today

Replace everything in **blue**. Delete anything that isn't true.

TEMPLATE 1 — GP PRACTICE

Subject: Work experience request — Year 12 student — two days of observation

Dear **Practice Manager / Dr [Name]**,

My name is **[full name]** and I am a Year 12 student at **[school/college]**, applying to study Medicine.

I am writing to ask whether the practice is able to host a student for **one or two days** of observation. I am interested in general practice particularly because **[one honest, specific reason]**.

I am available **[dates / half-terms]** and can be flexible. I understand that my role would be to observe only, and I am happy to complete any DBS check, induction, occupational health or confidentiality requirements the practice has.

If the practice is not able to offer placements, I would be grateful for any suggestion of another practice or service I could approach.

Thank you for your time.

[Name] · [email] · [phone]

TEMPLATE 2 — HOSPITAL DEPARTMENT (THE DEPARTMENT-FIRST ASK)

Subject: Observation request — [department] — Year 12 student

Dear **[Department Manager / Lead]**,

My name is **[full name]**, a Year 12 student at **[school/college]** applying to Medicine.

Rather than a general hospital placement, I am asking specifically about the **[radiography / physiotherapy / outpatients]** department. I would like to understand **[what the team actually does day to day / how the department works with other specialties]**, and I appreciate that a single day of observation is a realistic ask.

Would the department be able to host one student for **one day** at any point **[in the next two months]**? I can fit around whichever day suits the team.

I understand the role is observation only, and I will complete any Trust induction, DBS or confidentiality requirements in advance.

If this is handled centrally by the Trust's work experience team, I would be grateful if you could point me to the right contact.

Thank you,

[Name] · [email] · [phone]

TEMPLATE 3 — CARE ORGANISATION, HOSPICE OR CHARITY

Subject: Volunteering enquiry — [Year 12] student, [town]

Dear **[Volunteer Coordinator]**,

I am **[full name]**, a Year 12 student at **[school/college]**. I am hoping to volunteer regularly rather than for a single placement, and I am interested in **[the organisation]** because **[reason]**.

I can commit to **[e.g. one afternoon a week for at least six months]**. I am happy to complete a DBS check, safeguarding training and any induction you require, and I understand there may be a minimum age for some roles.

Could you let me know whether you have any current opportunities, or when you next recruit?

Thank you,

[Name] · [email] · [phone]