



LAW SOCIETY OF IRELAND

CAREER SUPPORT SERVICE

Information on the Work Placement Programme

Background Information

The Work Placement Programme (WPP) is being considered by an ever increasing number of both employers and relatively inexperienced jobseekers.

This initiative, administered by FÁS and launched in 2009, was established to provide people who were not in employment with an opportunity to obtain quality work experience. Participants are placed in employer organisations for up to 9 months and learn by working there. Rather than being paid by this employer, participants get an exchequer payment equivalent to what they would get if claiming job seeker benefit.

Any firm or organisation, employing at least one person, can apply to participate in this initiative. One further WPP participant can be taken on for every 10 employees the employer has (once they have had no redundancies in the last three months there).

Any person who is not working and is short on experience in the area in which she/he wants to build their career should be aware of how this initiative operates. Half of all places available are ring fenced for graduates and the programme is very much targeted at inexperienced professionals, such as recently qualified solicitors.

Information for People Not Currently Working

Reasons For Applying

The WPP offers you an alternative if you have been unable to find paid work. If you secure a placement you have an opportunity to keep your skills fresh in a real work environment. You gain valuable work experience that you can add to your CV.

How to Apply

To apply for placements you must be registered with FÁS, and record your 'expression of interest'. You can do this at any local FÁS Employment Service Office, or Local Employment Service Office (LES). If you are already registered with FÁS you can record your 'expression of interest' over the phone by calling freephone 1800 611 116 or direct call 046 9738000.

People Who are Eligible To Participate

Anyone who is unemployed for 3 months and beyond is eligible to apply for the WPP. Solicitors can apply for both graduate placements and the non-graduate placements.

Remuneration Arrangements

The placement is unpaid and voluntary. However, if you are already in receipt of certain social welfare payments, you may be allowed to retain your payment while on a placement.

Information for Employers

Employers That Are Eligible to Participate

Most organisations in the public, private, community and voluntary sector can apply to offer work placements. In your application you will be required to meet certain criteria and to make certain declarations. An application form and application guidelines are available at: <http://www.fas.ie/en/WPP/Provider.htm>

Reasons For Participating

The WPP facilitates your business to take on a person for a nine month work experience placement. While the person is gaining valuable work experience they are also contributing to your business. You have the opportunity to see how they work and if you are in a position to recruit you will have had ample opportunity to determine if they are suitable.

Remunerating Participants

This is a work experience placement and so you are not required to pay participants during the placement.

How to Apply

Access the application form at: <http://kiosk.fas.ie/wppapp/application.aspx> . Complete it and submit it online. It is a simple form requiring little detail.

Associated Regulatory Issues

A solicitor providing legal services is required by Irish law to hold a practising certificate. She/he is also required to have adequate professional indemnity insurance in place if providing legal services to any party that she/he is not employed by.

For solicitors on WPP placements (and in any other situations where they are volunteering or otherwise working on a non-paid basis) these requirements stand unchanged - and are no different than if the solicitor was being paid for the work done /services provided.

Solicitors getting involved in a WPP placement (or otherwise volunteering for an organisation) can arrange with that organisation that they are indemnified in the same way, and to the same extent, as an employee of that organisation would be. In these circumstances, they should not need to take out professional indemnity insurance (just as an employee would not need to).

Solicitors need to be very careful about this matter and should seek confirmation from the organisation they are joining / volunteering with, preferably in writing, that the organisation agrees not to hold them responsible for any losses and to indemnify the solicitor against all losses arising as a result of claims by third parties.

A solicitor on a WPP placement with a private practice legal firm should operate within that firm as if she/he is an employee (in a non earning capacity) and arrangements to be made should be done on that basis.

A solicitor on a WPP placement within any other kind of business or other organisation should operate within that firm as if she/he is an employee (in a non earning capacity) and should be led by the 'Guide for Solicitors Employed in the Corporate and Public Sectors' as published by the Law Society. This guide can be downloaded from the Society website at: <http://www.lawsociety.ie/Documents/committees/corporate/Corporateguide09.pdf>



Law Society of Ireland

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