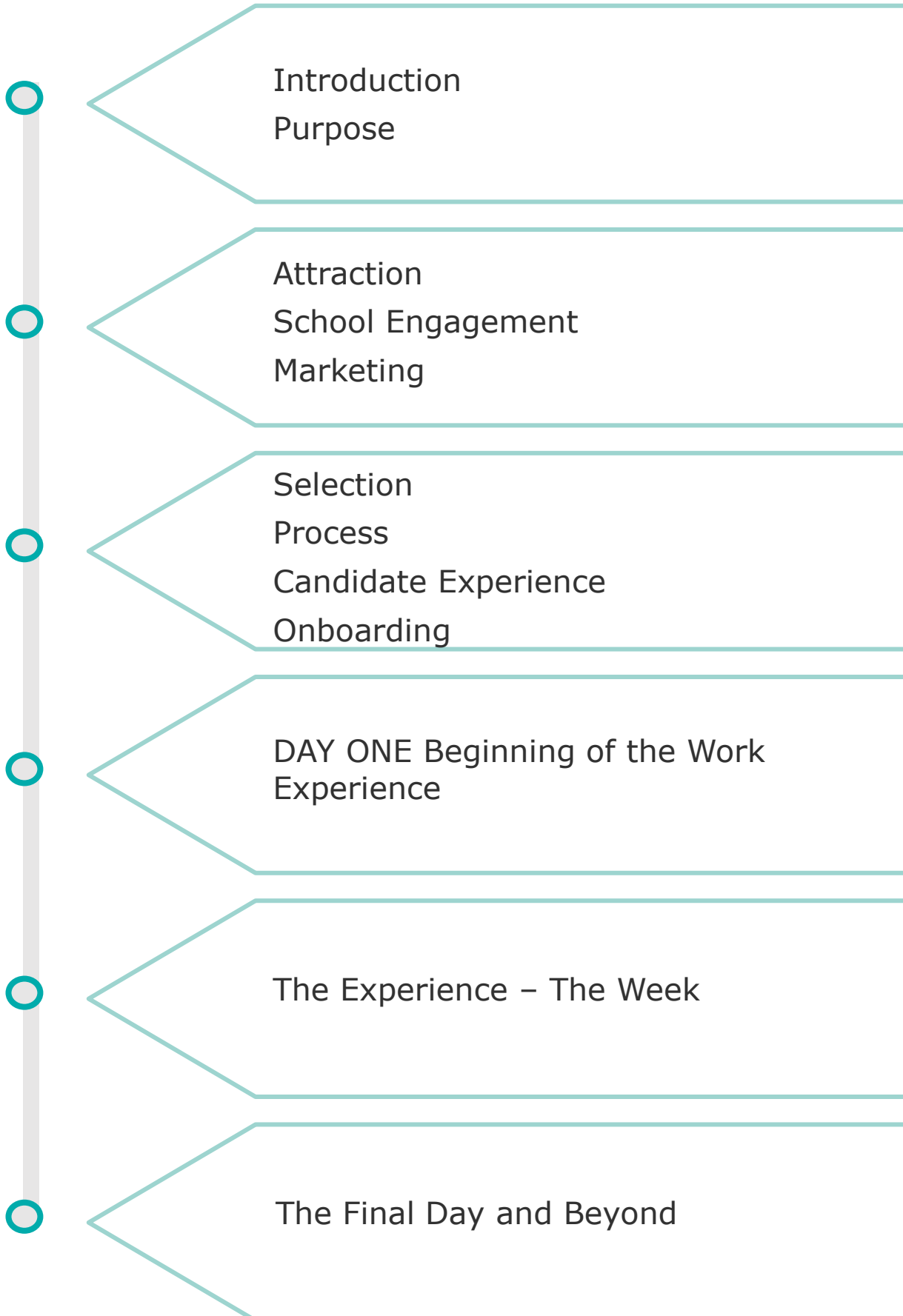


WORKING TOWARDS EVERYONE HAVING AN EQUAL CHANCE OF ACCESSING THE ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION



A Work Experience Toolkit

Contents



Purpose



This toolkit is designed as a guide for setting up the attraction and selection process for your Access Accountancy programme as well as the Work Experience itself.

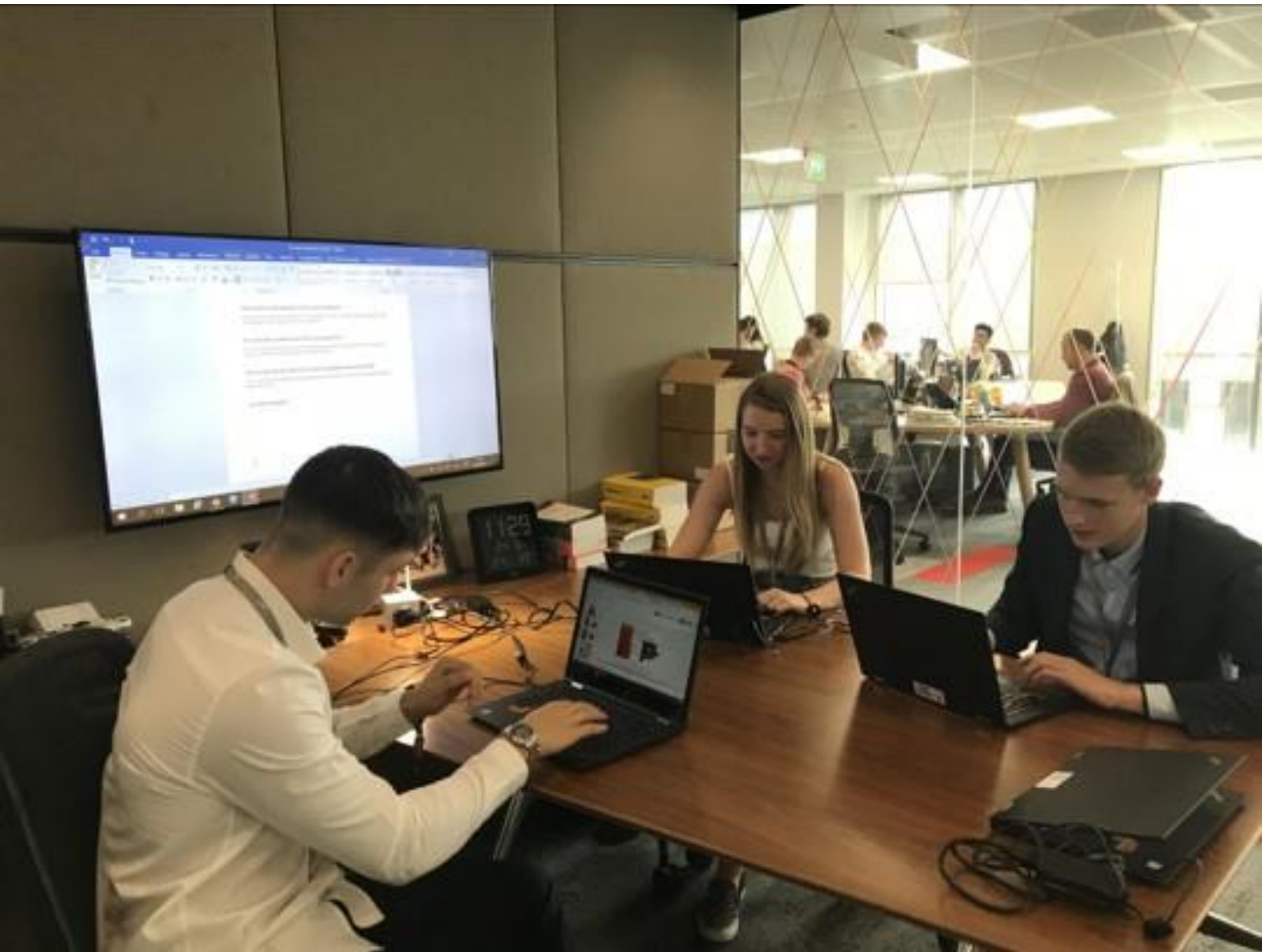
The recommended activities included are examples of best practise and can be used either as an add-on to your current process or to shape the framework for a new process.

The key takeaway here is to question your current processes and assess whether they are appropriate to use for Access Accountancy candidates.

Is your process accessible? Are you breaking down barriers?

Remember our commitment – to improve access to the accountancy profession for young people from less advantaged backgrounds across the UK.

Attraction



Eligibility



The target criteria for participants on the programme is outlined below. Students should:

- attend a state school or college between the age of 16 and 18; and
- are or have been eligible for free school meals in the last six years; or
- attend a school that is above the regional average in terms of number of students eligible for free school meals; or
- their parent/guardian or carer had not achieved a degree level qualification by the time the student was 18

There are no academic entry requirements set by Access Accountancy. Individual firms can set entry requirements if they wish – but do challenge your reasoning for this. Are the entry requirements a barrier to potential talent? Is the main purpose of your programme to pipeline future talent or to give opportunities to students who might not otherwise have the chance to do work experience?

Examples of different programmes



The programme varies between firms and is flexible in how it can be run. For example, some firms only accept applications from students who meet the criteria above and they make this clear on the job description & application form. It's important to include the eligibility questions during the application process, as this data will be required when reporting back to The Bridge Group annually.

Firm	Programme	Duration	Access accountancy Criteria	Academic Criteria
Deloitte	ASPIRE	1 Week	All 200 Students meet the AA Criteria.	There is no academic criteria
EY	Smart Futures	2 weeks	All students must meet the AA criteria.	Studying towards 3 A-Levels/5 Highers or equivalent.
Grant Thornton	Access Accountancy	1 week	All students must meet the AA criteria	There is no academic criteria
KPMG	Discovery Programme	1 week	All placements meet the AA criteria	On track to achieve 104 UCAS points, 5 GCSE'S A*-C including Maths and English Language
Mazars	Access Accountancy Insight Week	1 week	50% of places are ring-fenced for AA eligible students.	There is no academic criteria
PWC	Business & Digital Insight Week	1 week	50% of the 321 students meet the AA criteria	On track for 96 UCAS points, GCSE 4 or above in Maths & English
RSM	Access Accountancy	1 week	All 50 students meet the AA criteria	There is no academic criteria

There are numerous methods for engaging with schools to generate applications for your programme, including:

- **Utilise your current school contacts;** you may already visit schools as part of your apprenticeship programme promotion – leverage these visits (careers fairs, workshops, meetings with teachers / careers advisors) & contacts to promote your Access Accountancy opportunities.
- **Clients;** partner with your business to establish / leverage existing school contacts. Your firm may have academies, trusts, schools, government bodies as clients who may wish to partner with you on Access Accountancy.
- **Third parties;** work with new or existing suppliers to explore engaging with schools. This can also include charities and brokerages who act as a partner between schools & businesses.
- **Starting from scratch;** if you don't have existing school connections, it's not too onerous to start building these. We would recommend selecting 1-2 schools near your local office and researching their social mobility stats (usually accessible on the school's website / OFSTED report) to assess suitability. There is normally a careers advisor or teacher who will be eager to work with you to provide opportunities for their students.

Marketing your programme in the right way will contribute a huge amount to the success of the programme, enabling you to find the very best motivated candidates who will really benefit from the work experience.

You need to think about how you are going to engage with both the teachers and the students and tailor appropriately, putting yourself in the shoes of your audience.

In the next section you will find some examples of:-

- A Job Description
- Step-by-step guide
- Email template for schools
- School Workshop
- Social media guidance (examples of posts, blogs & videos)

How to promote your Access Accountancy programme



- Plan the number of placements & locations and ensure you have approval.
- Reach out to staff in your business to establish if there are any existing local school contacts i.e. staff who are parents/governors, schools or academies who are clients, schools where you already attend fairs, or alumni schools.
- If you have no existing contacts, you can use the Sutton Trust list to select target schools. Most schools will also have a website with either the careers contact or relevant faculty contact.
- Reach out to the schools with information on the programme – you can also mention that this will help them meet their Gatsby benchmarks.
- You can also use advertising suppliers to promote your roles online i.e. RateMyApprenticeship, AllAboutSchoolLeavers, Milkround, TargetCareers etc.
- Utilise your careers website and social media platforms.
- Attend school careers fairs / run office insight days / present workshops in schools.
- Ensure that candidates are able to disclose any reasonable adjustments needed in the selection process / workplace.

Job Description Template



Programme date:
Programme duration:
Deadline for applications:

About the Programme

Our programme involves:

[What does the programme content look like? What will they learn during the week?]

[You may also want to include details of expenses, what you'll cover etc.]

About Access Accountancy

[FIRM NAME] is proud to be part of an ambitious collaboration of employers and professional bodies, dedicated to improving access to the accountancy profession. Access Accountancy's mission is to increase awareness and aspirations among young people to join the accountancy profession. Our vision is to be a profession that is more representative, at all levels, of the socio-economic demographic of wider society.

What we are looking for

[You can include any academic entry requirements here, the Access Accountancy eligibility criteria and / or competencies]

About Us

[You may want to include a brief paragraph about your company here]

How to Apply

[Let candidates know how / where to apply by providing a web link or email address]

Example Teacher Email



Dear XXX,

I am writing from XXXX, XXXX are (ADD DESCRIPTION OF COMPANY and hyperlink website)

We are going to be running a work experience week on **DATE** in **LOCATION** During this week student will get the opportunity to:-

- XXXX
- XXXX
- XXXX
- XXXX

In order for students to be eligible they need to **meet/be/have**:-

- XXX
- XXX
- XXX

If your students are interested they will need to apply via **INSERT WEBSITE or APPLICATION PROCESS** by **DEADLINE DATE**

if you want to find out any further information please do not hesitate to get in touch on XXXX

Many thanks

XXXX

Social Media Examples



Student blogs: <http://www.accessaccountancy.org/stories--students.html>

Teacher video: <http://www.accessaccountancy.org/stories--teachers.html>

Stakeholder blogs:
<http://www.accessaccountancy.org/stories---wider-stakeholders.html>

Website example:
<https://www.mazarscareers.co.uk/school-leavers/access-accountancy-work-experience>

Selection



Selection



As Professional Services firms, we all generally have set selection processes for our graduate & apprenticeship programmes. For Access Accountancy, you have the opportunity to flex this process and do something different. Selecting students for Access Accountancy is not about selecting students who would be suitable for your permanent roles – it's about assessing motivation & potential.

If you have a lack of resource, dealing with large volumes of Access Accountancy applications (alongside the day job) can be overwhelming. Therefore, make sure you set up a process that works for you. You could keep the roles open for a short amount of time or only take applications from 1-2 schools directly.

Key Considerations on how to tweak your current process

Do Access Accountancy applicants need to go through the same process as your graduate/apprenticeship candidates? If yes, why?

Should they be assessed on the same strengths/competencies?

Do they need to take your online tests? These can be a huge barrier for socially disadvantaged students.

Do they need to do an assessment centre?

Does the programme need the same academic entry requirements? Does it need entry requirements at all?

Is it accessible?

Do you have an ATS that you can manage applications through? Could you set up a dedicated inbox for applications instead?

Don't overcomplicate the application form – what information do you actually *need*?

Who needs to be involved in screening & interviewing? If you use chargeable staff for interviewing, is there an alternative for these candidates?

Selection Processes



Here's What we do

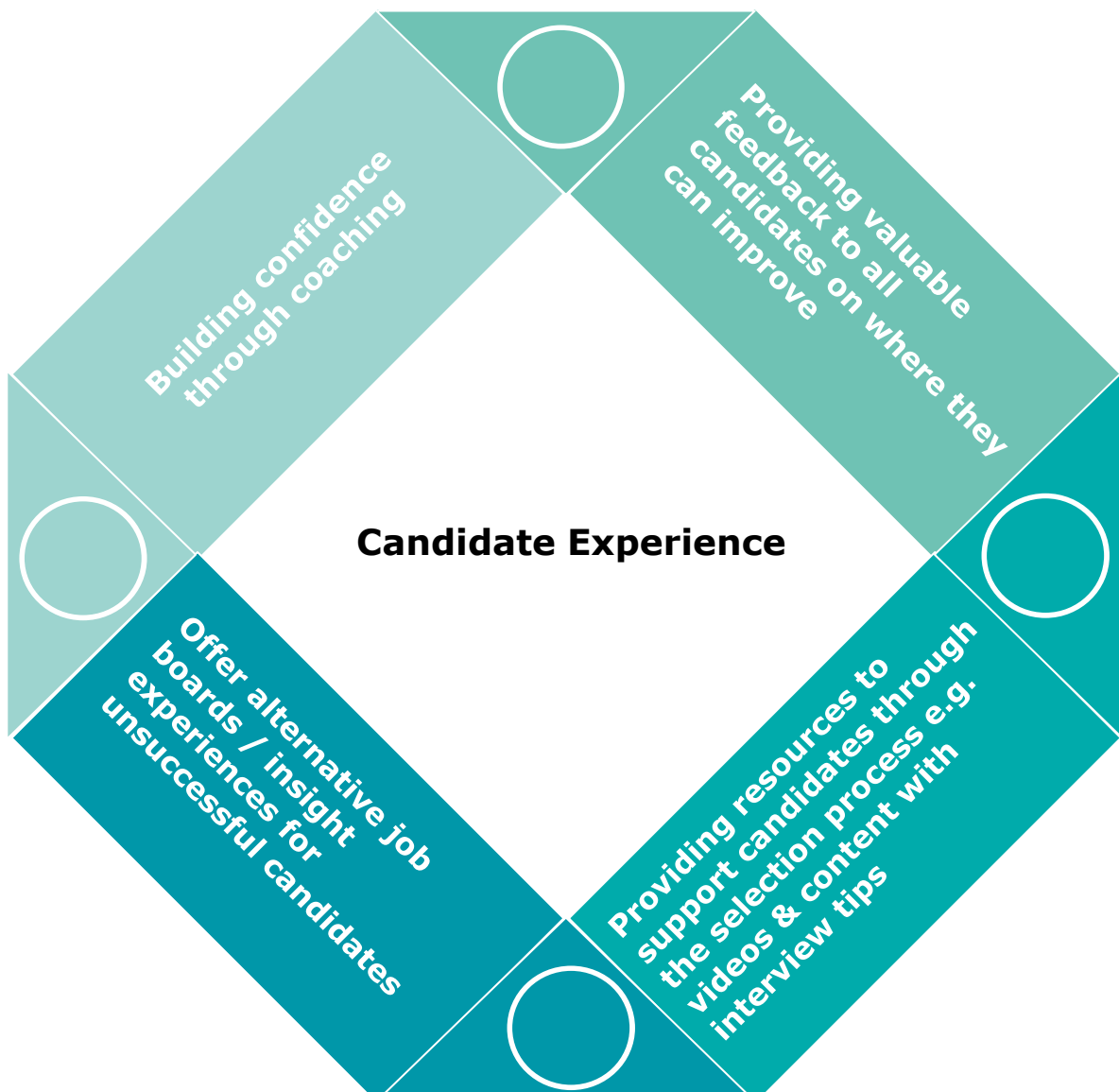
Firm	Selection Process
Deloitte	1. Online Application including motivational question 2. Offer and a mentor
EY	1. Online Application 2. Telephone Interview 3. Offer
Grant Thornton	1. Online Application 2. Digital Interview 3. Offer
KPMG	1. Online application form including competency questions 2. Offer
Mazars	1. Online Application 2. Telephone Interview 3. Offer
PWC	1. Online Application 2. Career Valuation & Career Unlocked online assessments 3. Invited to a Coaching Day or a Video Interview (dependant on AA criteria) 4. Offer
RSM	1. Online Application 2. Telephone Interview 3. Offer

Candidate Experience



Leave a positive footprint throughout the selection process. These candidates may be future applicants for your apprenticeship/graduate programmes or even future clients.

There are various ways you can make a positive impact:



Onboarding considerations



- Make sure they know what to expect, managing expectations – remove barriers!
- Has a dress code been communicated?
- Are you reimbursing for lunch and travel expenses? Is there an onsite canteen?
- What's the best way to communicate with them? Text instead of call/email?
- Right to work checks
- Induction
- Signing contracts – do they need to do the full normal offer pack?
- Training (safeguarding, working with young people) for staff
- Does the business understand the programme, know how to talk about it?
- What are the post-experience options e.g. mentorships, fast-tracks, application routes
- Will they be paid? Students should be paid National Minimum Wage unless it is part of their school curriculum or if they are work shadowing only.

Work Experience Week



Day One – Beginning of the week



First impressions count and you will want to ensure that the work experience students you are taking on have a positive impression of your organisation, therefore it is crucial that the first day is executed well. An important part of the students' experience is around the induction piece, as this will formulate their first impression of your organisation.

Please see below some suggested elements which you may want to cover during the induction:-

Welcome and Introductions

Wish the students a warm welcome to your organisation, introduce the key speakers in the room, giving a brief description of what they do. You may also want to consider an ice-breaker activity to encourage the work experience students to get to know each other.

Agenda

Outline the schedule for their work experience programme, mentioning any activities or workshops they will be participating in during the programme.

About your organisation

Give a brief overview of your organisation, outlining key milestones including when it was founded, and briefly touch on the type of clients you work with.

Preparing Students for Work Experience

It is important to note that for many of those in the room, this will be their first time in a corporate environment. As such, do outline what is expected of them and how they can make a good impression; for example, they should make sure that they appear engaged, ask questions, dress appropriately and are punctual.

Housekeeping

Whilst health and safety may not be the most interesting of topics, it is important from a compliance perspective that students are aware of it. Therefore, do ensure that they are aware of where the fire exits are for example.

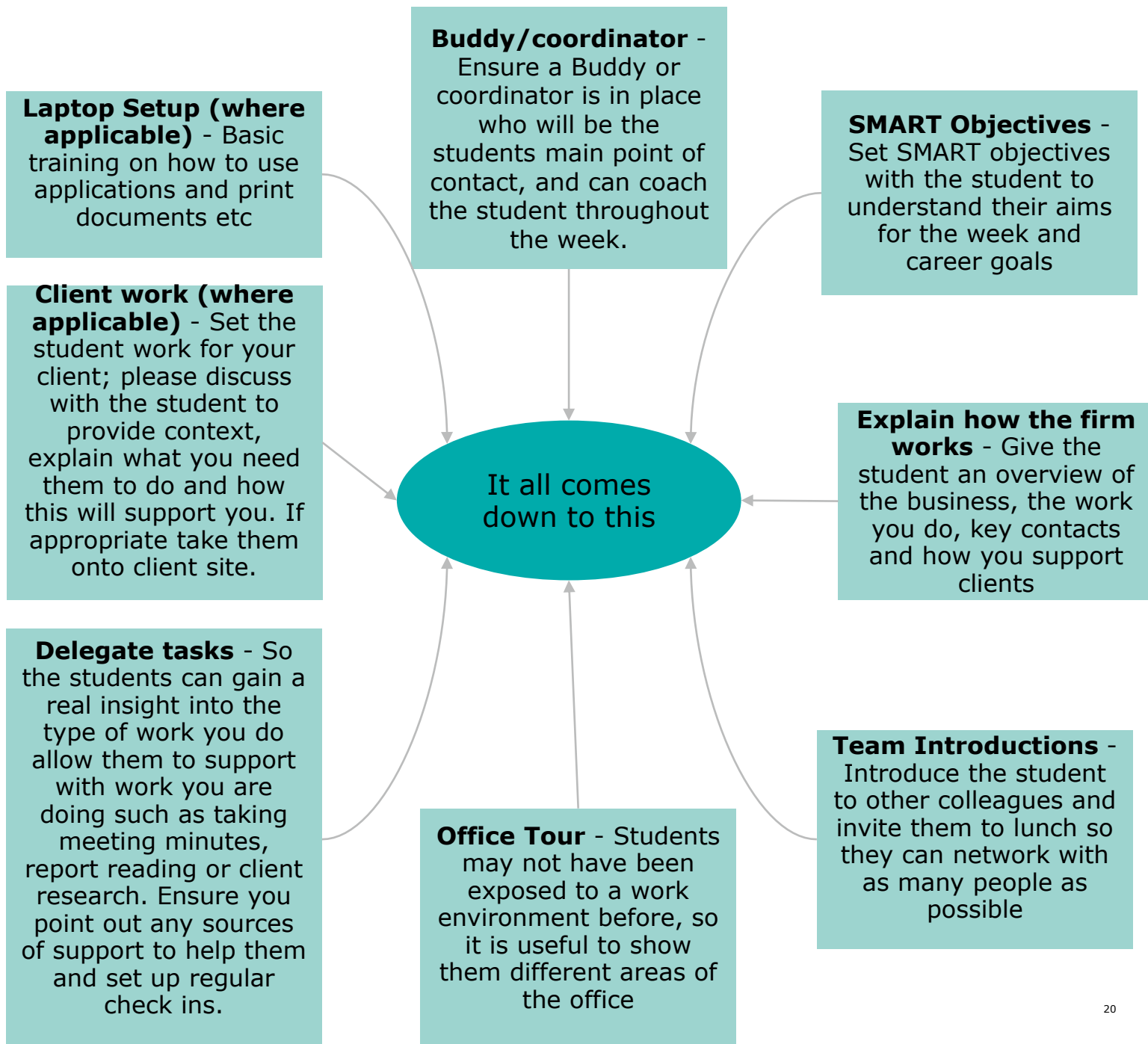
Quiz

You may want to consider putting together a quiz based on what has been covered in the induction. Consider forewarning them at the beginning of the presentation so that the students are engaged throughout.

The Work Experience

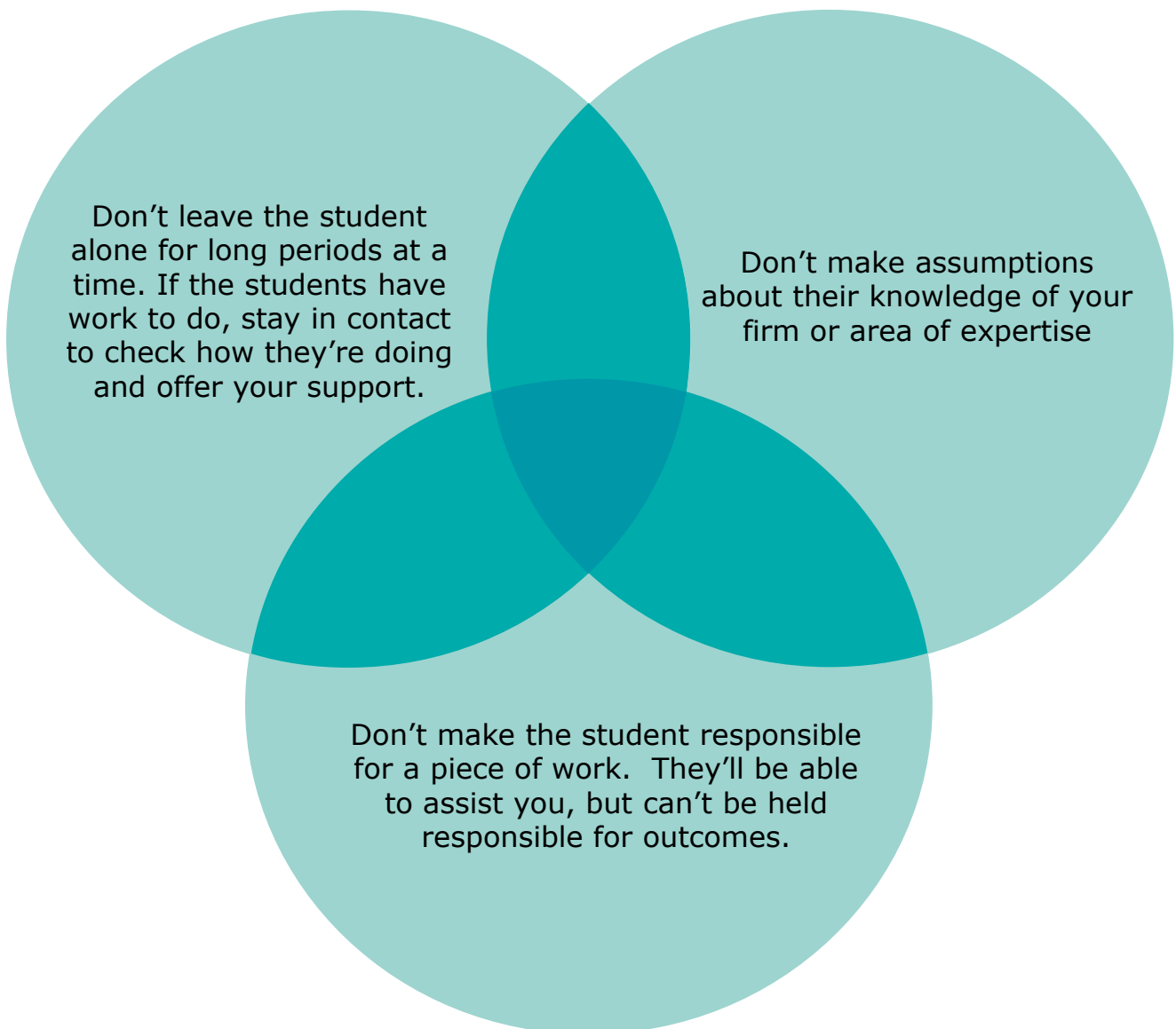
Carefully plan the shadowing, and agree a final timetable of activities beforehand to ensure that the student receives varied and challenging work experience. Inform the student of their agenda and what to expect whilst they're with you, and manage their expectations for any planned activities.

Here are some suggested elements that can be incorporated into the work shadowing below:



The Work Experience

Here are some elements you should be aware of:



The Final Day of Work Experience



As the work experience comes to an end, the final day provides an opportunity to debrief on what the students have learned about what a career in accountancy might look like. It also provides the opportunity to bring all the students together as a group to hear their collective feedback and thoughts.

Please see below some suggested elements which you may want to cover during the final day of the programme:

A present back session where each student has to prepare a presentation and talk about what they have learned, what they particularly enjoyed and why, and whether the work experience has been successful in giving them more of an insight into a career in accountancy. Also, more importantly, is a career in accountancy something that they might now be seriously considering?

The students could be given a project to complete as they progress through their work experience with you. This could incorporate an element of homeworking each evening, reflecting what they have learned as each day of their work experience progresses. The project could be based on a topical financial subject or on a particular business issue you may be facing.

You may want to pull together a quiz based on what has been covered during the work experience, to assess levels of engagement and learning.

You might want to consider inviting the students' parents along to the final day so that they too can be involved in any career decisions made.

Here are some elements you should be mindful of:

Please ensure that if the student has incurred any out of pocket expenses during their time with you, that these are settled and dealt with on the final day of the work experience programme. It is important that students are not financially disadvantaged by carrying out their work experience with you.

Please keep in touch with your alumni and make them aware of future opportunities with your organisation, including further work experience.

You will need to collect certain data from the students in order to feed this into the Access Accountancy data collection process each year.