



The Employer's Guide to Virtual Work Experience



Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. What Students Want from Work Experience**
- 3. Reinventing Work Experience**
 - A look into the key differences between in-person and virtual
 - Why go virtual?
 - Choosing your eligibility criteria
 - Promoting your programme
- 4. Creating Virtual Work Experience**
 - How to build the programme - a step by step process
 - After the programme
- 5. What You Need to Know as Employers**
 - Gatsby benchmarks
 - Safeguarding
 - Diversity and inclusion
- 6. Your Virtual Work Experience Toolkit**
- 7. Conclusion**

Introduction

It's time to reinvent work experience. This guide will show employers how to transform their in-person work experience into a virtual programme that is accessible, scalable and engaging for young people across the UK.

Evidence highlights that students who have at least four contacts with employers before leaving school are 86% less likely to become a NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). These students are then better informed about their future careers and are more likely to have an easier transition into the workplace. Students improve their transferable employability skills such as teamwork and communication all while learning about employment opportunities and new skills related to a particular career - all of which cannot be gained through academia alone.

"Hosting an event virtually removed barriers that in person events cannot, including geographical blockers and the challenge of creating a diverse pool of students. Virtual work experience no longer seems like a 'pandemic solution', but a vision for future careers education."



Asha Jagatia, Vodafone

Virtual work experience programmes enable employers to provide hundreds, if not thousands, of young people access to life-changing career experiences. But there are also significant benefits for the employers.

How employers can benefit from virtual work experience

- Build a future pipeline of prospective candidates
- Reach a more diverse cohort unrestricted by geography or office space
- Develop a skills base amongst future applicants
- Drive audience awareness of a business, career path or sector

How? Let Springpod show you...



What Students Want from Work Experience



Springpod asks students what they want to achieve from their experience prior to starting the programme. This helps us to plan future content and ensure we tailor our programmes to the demands of the students, ensuring that they gain valuable insights and explore careers they're interested in. Common expectations include:

- Learning more about the industry to ensure it's the right career path for them
- Learning more about a variety of roles available within their chosen industry
- Learning more about the skills required for employment within their chosen career
- To help inform the decision of their next step after education
- Insights from real-life employers who can share their own journey
- Activities or project work that replicates the work they would do on the job
- Learn about the range of career pathways and routes such as apprenticeships.

Here's what students in our audience had to say about their expectations and motivations for pursuing work experience:

"Gaining engineering work experience would significantly benefit me not only in my prospects of attaining a position on a higher engineering course but would also provide me with valuable insight into the actual experience of engineering work which is often left undiscussed during the education process."



Noah Cleverly (interested in Engineering VWEX)

"I want to have an idea what the industry holds so it leads to the final decision on the course I would like to take for university or degree apprenticeship."



Carina Aguiar (interested in Finance and Accountancy VWEX)



"I am very eager to learn about architecture and engineering and would like to explore different avenues in the field to guide my career choice. I think this experience will allow me to gain a better understanding of how the engineering industry is progressing and what skills will be required to keep on top of this ever-evolving sector."



Rohan Choudhary (interested in Engineering VWEX)



Reinventing Work Experience

First, it's important to understand the differences between in-person and virtual work experience programmes. Not all elements of an in-person programme can be replicated in a virtual environment. However, virtual work experience unlocks a mass of alternative opportunities.

The VWEX programmes also complement the in-person opportunities by attracting a wider demographic of students. Our employer partners are able to reach hundreds, if not thousands of students to promote their brand and career opportunities. This blended approach provides a feeder to in-person opportunities as employers can engage with and nurture students showing intent in key areas. This supports D&I and CSR goals by boosting social mobility and providing equal access to opportunities.

Let's take a look at the key differences

	In-person	Virtual
Safety	Many work environments are not suitable for work experience opportunities due to age or legal and safety restrictions.	All activity takes place online, so students can experience careers and environments that may not be suitable in person.
Group size	Often small groups of students at one time for around 1-2 weeks and within the working hours of the organisation.	Cohorts often include several thousand students. Most organisations are able to reach ten times the number of students they could with in-person work experience.
Administrative overhead	Employers need to coordinate with schools, students and parents. They need to consider safeguarding, health and safety as well as supporting the students on-site.	Virtual programmes can be built and delivered by a third party such as Springpod.
Accessibility	Students need to be able to travel to the work experience location and they need to be available for the full duration of the programme.	Programmes can be opened to any UK student. Students can fit the programme around their schedule by catching up with on-demand elements.

	In-person	Virtual
Exposure to different teams	Due to the administrative overhead, students often only interact with a small group of employees.	Students can join live talks with professionals from across the business including apprentices, graduates and senior leaders.
Impact	The impact of in-person work experience is limited by the group size and the investment required by an employer to run them well.	Springpod's employer programmes receive an average rating of 8.9 out of 10 and see an average of 35% increase in confidence about finding a job in the future.

Why go virtual?

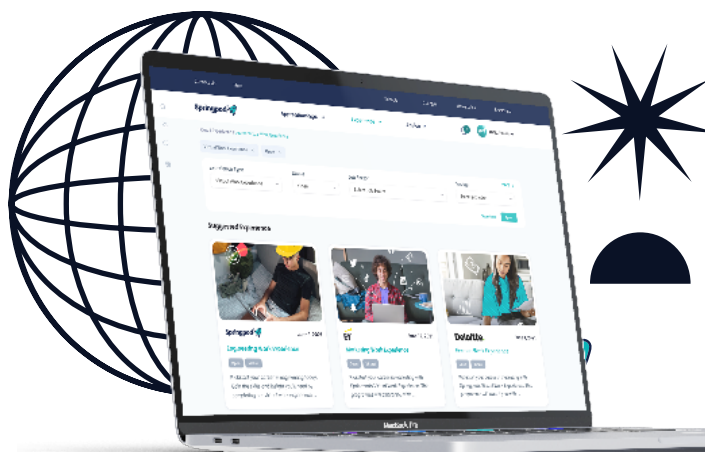
Virtual work experience gives employers access to hundreds of thousands of young people searching for their future career experience, whether that be an apprenticeship or university.

Each week we see **5,000 students** creating accounts and applying for virtual work experience programmes.

Employers are engaging a more diverse cohort of students than ever before: **49%** of Springpod students are from ethnic minority backgrounds, **22%** are or have been eligible for free school meals and **63%** are female.

Our programmes are making more of an impact than ever before, 99% of students who complete Springpod programmes rated their awareness of careers in their chosen industry as 'good' or 'excellent' and **90%** stated they feel confident about finding a job in the future. **88%** of students completing our employer partner VWEX programmes are likely to consider a role with that employer.

Employers are significantly reducing the administrative burden of running work experience by outsourcing: programme creation, programme promotion, applicant assessment, notifying applicants of the outcome, programme delivery, student support and the award of a student certificate. All of these activities are managed by Springpod on behalf of the employer.



Choosing your eligibility criteria

Before launching your programme, Springpod will ask about your eligibility criteria, which will form the basis for how we promote your experience. To advertise your programme, we can promote nationally or we can target granularly by region, demographic and sector of interest. This approach ensures we help to attract students who might not have experienced your brand before and who are viable options for future company hires.

Promoting your programme

Springpod is on track to provide **over 1 million students** with access to life changing career and university experiences by 2024. We work with you to promote your programme to our database of over **400,000 students**, to thousands of teachers at our partner schools and colleges, to youth organisations and DWP Youth Hubs that work with young people not in education or employment and across our social channels. Springpod is able to offer [additional marketing activities](#) to clients as part of their package.

At the Programme Workshop meeting we'll discuss your goals and objectives, and with an understanding of these, we'll be able to gauge how best to promote your programme for maximum results and return on investment.



Creating Virtual Work Experience

Building a virtual work experience programme shouldn't be a daunting task. Springpod helps manage the process end-to-end with guidance and support along the way. The programmes generally take around 16 weeks to plan, build and sign off, so it's important to bear this in mind when you consider your own timeframes and ensure you can meet the programme deadlines to avoid delays. Springpod will advise on the best time to run your programme to ensure high student engagement.

How to build the programme



Step 1: Building Brand Awareness

The first step is to be clear on your objective for the programme - are you focusing on building brand awareness, promoting your apprenticeships, demystifying careers, creating social value or something else?

It could be that you have more than one goal you want to achieve, which is often the case with our clients and well within the scope of one programme.

Together with our expert content team, you will share your initial ideas on what you would like students to cover during their virtual work experience programme to get the best results. The content team will then bring these ideas to life in a storyboard format.

Remember, unlike typical in-person work experience, virtual allows you to cover more than one role or department within a single programme, so you can showcase more of your

business and the sector in which it operates.

Common elements you can include are:

- Live Talks
- Pre-Recorded Talks
- Activities
- Projects
- Video tutorials
- Quizzes
- Gamification



Check out the **Virtual Work Experience Toolkit** at the end of this guide for ideas.

Step 2: Storyboarding & content gathering

Once you have chosen your programme elements, the team will storyboard your programme based on the topics you've chosen. This is where you'll start to get an understanding of what the experience will look like, its flow and the different elements included in each module.

The team can collaborate with you to come up with creative ways to showcase your company to ensure the resulting programme is interactive and engaging for students. For those employers who want to provide feedback on student submissions, it is essential to be involved in the assignment setting process.

It's a good idea to feature different roles (including those at a senior level) and age ranges in your live talks, to give a more comprehensive view of your organisation. Recent graduates and apprentices work well as students are more likely to engage with and relate to those on a similar path or a similar age to them. Springpod's Customer Experience and Speaker Team will provide speakers with a full on boarding experience, this helps to get speakers acquainted with the platform, its features and what to expect on the day, ensuring the speakers feel confident and the talks runs smoothly.

During the weeks that the programme spends in production, it's important to meet Springpod's deadlines so we can ensure the programme runs smoothly and on time. This is the longest part of the process as the Content Team works hard to bring the programme to life.

Step 3: Opening applications



Once the storyboard is signed off between you and the team, the next step is to open up the applications!

This is the exciting part where programmes are shared on social media, with Springpod's audience and by your own team to maximise the potential candidates. Behind the scenes, the content team is busy writing and building the programme for you and will share the content along the way for approval and amendments.

Springpod can target your programme at specific groups of young people, such as those in a certain location, of certain genders and more. We work with you to help achieve your goals and create a programme that is diverse and inclusive to all.

Step 4: Review and Sign Off



Finally during weeks 13-14 the programme will be shared with you to ensure that you are happy with the results. This is an opportunity to provide feedback to the team, who can make changes and improvements.

During this time, Applications for your programme will close a week before the live date. The team will then create a final shortlist of applicants and let the participants know they have secured a place. Our Customer Experience team will enrol all the participants onto your programme, leaving you free to concentrate on other tasks.

Step 5: Lift off!



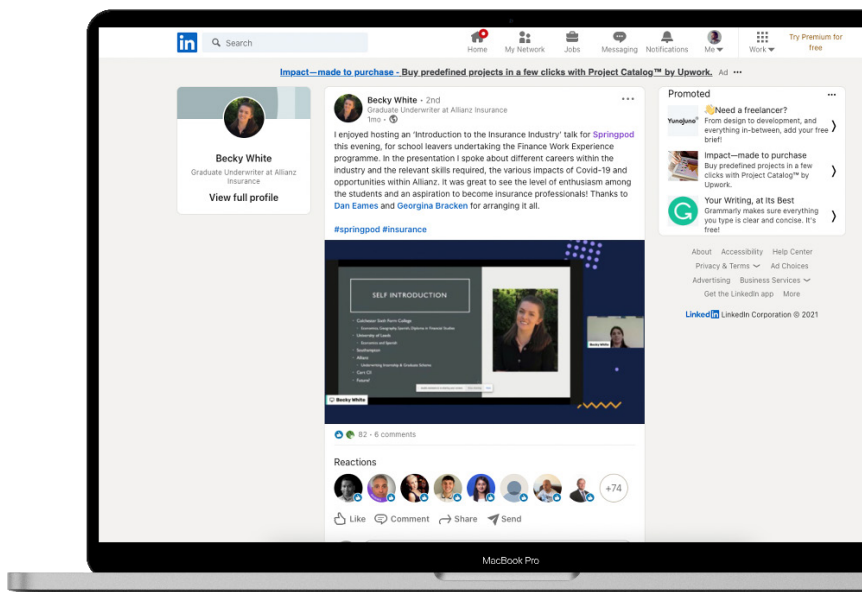
It's time to launch! During the programme, the Springpod support team are on hand to help manage your live talks and answer any queries or issues you may have. We take the stress out of managing work experience.

After the programme

Don't forget, once the virtual programme is complete, Your Account Manager will take you through your insight report with feedback and data from your virtual work experience which you can use to prove the success of the programme and your return on investment. Within this report, you can also discover suggestions for improvements for next time, should you choose to run another programme with us.

Measuring the impact of virtual work experience is crucial, which is why we collect student feedback throughout the programme. You'll be able to understand which elements students enjoyed as well as what can be improved. You'll also gain an understanding of how the programme has impacted their confidence, career knowledge and their planned next steps after school.

Employers can see how the students' knowledge of their industry has improved and, more importantly, if the programme has achieved its initial goals.



The insight report also features demographic data for the students, so you know if you've engaged your target group. Data points include:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Entitlement to free school meals
- First-generation to attend university status
- School type
- Students' desired next steps after leaving school



What Employers Need to Know

Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework that schools and colleges use to develop a good careers programme. There are **8 Benchmarks** that form the recommendations for good practice in career guidance. Whilst Springpod meets all the benchmarks in some way, employers providing work experience should only focus on Benchmarks 5 & 6, as these are directly linked to employer and student engagement.

Gatsby Benchmark 5 is designed to provide students with access to meaningful work experience and an understanding of the workplace. Springpod's programmes aim to enable students to feel suitably informed and empowered to apply for applicable courses and employment, targeted at students aged 14-19. During the initial programme creation, employers will be asked what they want to achieve, and by defining these learning outcomes, they are able to work towards achieving the benchmark.

The content team will also work with you to create quizzes, activities and longer projects that enable two-way interaction between the employer and student. This two-way engagement is essential to creating a meaningful learning experience for young people.

By providing two-way interaction with students and employers, your programme can achieve Gatsby Benchmark 6. Employers usually provide feedback on a project or task that students have completed. In one programme, students could combine the interlinked activities which they completed at the end of each module to create a comprehensive portfolio for the employer to feedback on. Students could refer to this portfolio post-programme on their CV and during interviews.



The live talks introduce students to multiple employees from one workplace – providing them with the opportunity to ask questions and gain a true insight into life at your organisation.

At the end of the programme, the final stage of two-way engagement is complete through the insight report that is provided by Springpod. This includes testimonials from students on how they feel the programme went, their next steps and their demographic data.

“I enjoyed the interactivity of the talks as I was able to ask questions to speakers and hear their responses in real-time. I also enjoyed the activities which helped give an insight into the kind of jobs that are available at Vodafone and what different employees do.”



Cailin, Year 12, after completing the Vodafone programme.

Safeguarding

It's vital to understand the importance of safeguarding young people when you consider creating your virtual work experience programme. Our [safeguarding policy](#) gives you peace of mind that students' data is safe and secure when they use the platform.

Some policies are specific to virtual work experience, these include:

- No webcams or names are shared during live webinars or talks, instead, students appear under anonymous guest names and employers are never left to communicate with students without the supervision of our DBS cleared team.
- The programme is managed fully by our team, on a dedicated platform, allowing Springpod full visibility of the interactions taking place between students and employers. This includes monitoring for profanity and the sharing of contact details.
- Students and employers never have 1-to-1 engagement, whether this is in calls or meetings.
- Parental consent is needed for any student under the age of 16 who wishes to take part in a Springpod programme.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

83% of Gen Z candidates said that a company's commitment to diversity and inclusion is important when choosing an employer. You can make your programmes more inclusive by including a diverse range of staff in the process through their involvement in the programme's mixed-media content.

Diverse teams that are reflective of their customer base are more likely to succeed and attract a larger talent pool during the recruitment process.

On the student side, you can choose whether to open up your programme to any applicant or to target specific groups when selecting your final cohort. Springpod's database has a diverse range of young people at employers' fingertips, including over **63%** female, **49%** ethnic minority background and **22%** who are eligible for free school meals.



Your Virtual Work Experience Toolkit



Your Objectives Checklist

Objectives	Why it's important	Notes
What do you hope to achieve and why?	This will help you to discover the ways in which you can run your programme and maximise the best results based on your objectives.	
What roles and sectors do you want to include?	This will help with module and webinar planning during your programme build.	
How will you ensure successful completion rates?	Creating project work that adds to the student's portfolio that they can use after the experience is one way to boost completion rates.	
What metrics are you hoping to measure and achieve during this project?	Do you want to focus on D&I stats, a particular location or criteria for example? It may be that you hope to achieve a certain % of students who are now more confident in their knowledge of your sector.	



Content Ideas Toolkit

Content

Things to think about

Webinar topics & speakers

Would you like live or pre-recorded talks in your programme?

The roles/departments that you want to cover?

Who will speak during the webinars?

What topics will you include?

(Organisation overview, employability skills etc.)

You should consider having employees from different age groups – apprentices and graduates are often more relatable to a younger audience.

Activities

Including activities within your programme keep students engaged and less likely to drop off, there are so many options of what to include.

Have a think about how you can best demonstrate your organisation and the different roles on offer.

Project Work

Try and think of smaller, more manageable mini-projects that students can complete to group into one larger portfolio at the end of the experience.

Smaller chunks are easier for employers to feedback on and create valuable engagement opportunities with you and the students.

Video

It's good to break up chunks of text with some video elements.

Does your marketing team have stock footage you can use?

Do you have something our content team can work with you to produce?


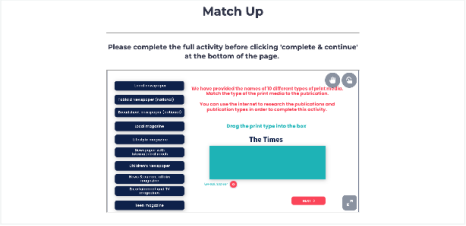



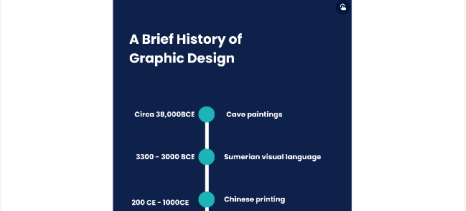
What content would work better as a video than text?



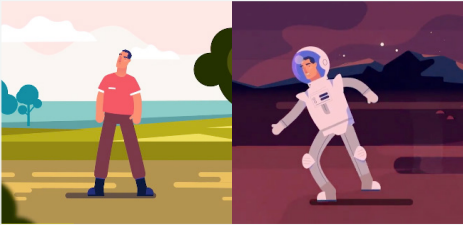
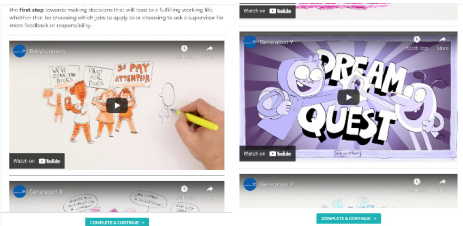
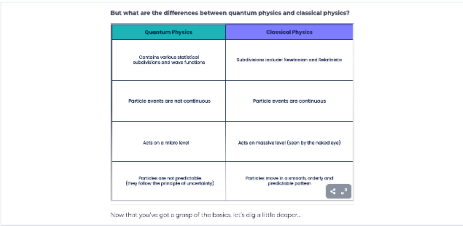
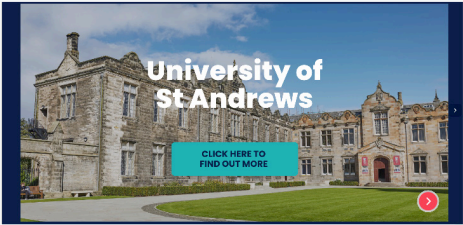
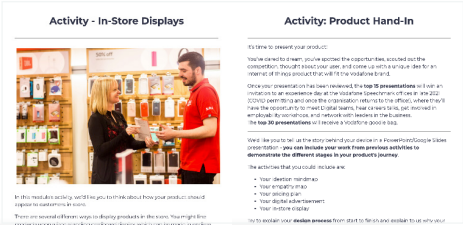

Examples of content types

Category	Sub type	Example	Industry / Client
Quiz	Fill in the blanks		Social Media Marketing
Quiz	True false		Architecture
Quiz	Picture quiz		Architecture
Workbook	Drag and drop		Estate agency
Activity	Embedded tool		Barclays - Banking *Barclays owned
Activity	Written scenario		Psychology / Football

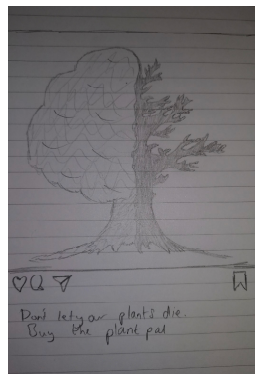
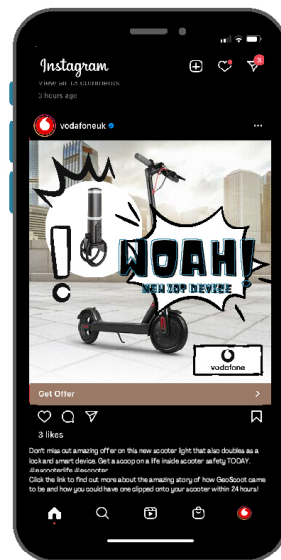
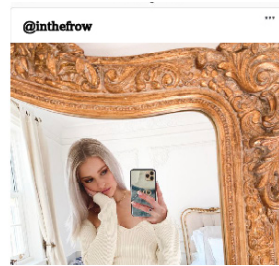
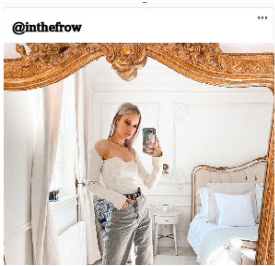
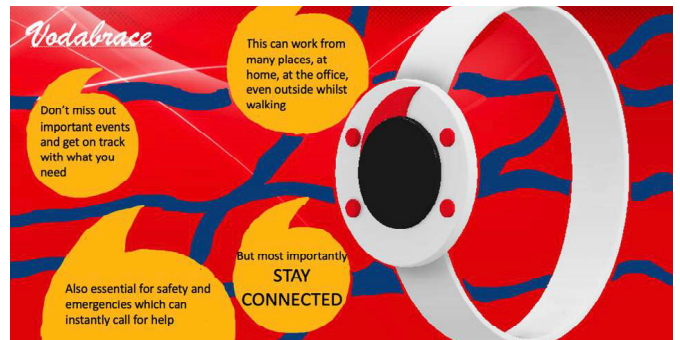
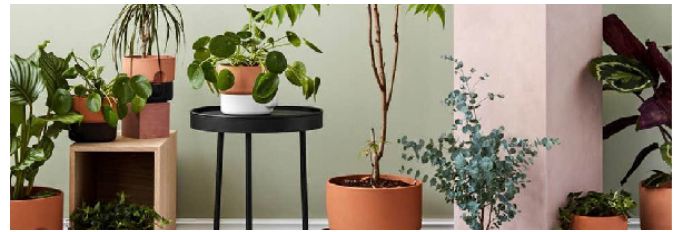
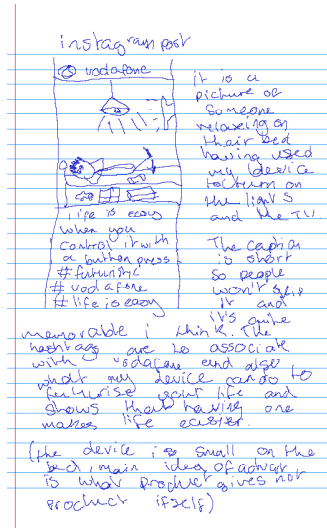
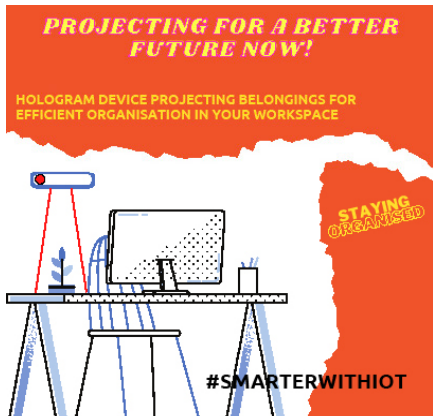
Examples of content types

Category	Sub type	Example	Industry / Client
Activity	Organisation		Journalism
Quiz	Mix n Match		Journalism
Video	Presenter explainer video		Graphic design
Video	Explainer video		Heathrow - Business
Imagery	Graphic imagery created to a brief		Graphic design
Infographic	Interactive timeline		Graphic design

Examples of content types

Category	Sub type	Example	Client / Industry
Activity	Interactive embedded airbus activity		Airbus – Aerospace *Airbus owned
Activity	Designed for a different audience – 2nd year uni students		Nursing
Content	Infographic		Fujitsu – Quantum Physics
Content	Interactive content – uni showcase		Sustainability
Activity	Interlinked activities forming a project – see all the activities in this programme		Vodafone – Technology / Business/ Telecoms
Activity	Client case study		Heathrow – Construction

Examples of student work completed during Virtual Work Experience



Impact and Report example

241,434 students have enrolled onto Springpod and our employer partner programmes over the last 18 months

Springpod's Most Popular Industry Programmes:

1. Law
2. Psychology
3. Finance & Accountancy
4. Technology
5. Engineering
6. Business Management
7. Dentistry
8. TV & Film
9. Teaching
10. Politics

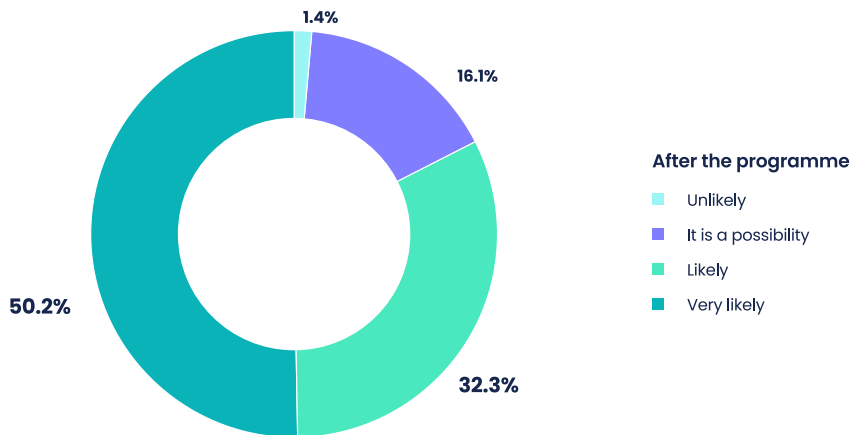
A truly diverse audience

Average % across our programmes (July 21-Dec 22)



82% of young people who finish a programme are "likely" or "very likely" to consider a career in that industry

How likely are you to consider a career in this industry | Average % across all Springpod programmes in 2022:



Trusted by leading employers and professional bodies



Conclusion

It's time to start making a difference to young people! Virtual work experience can have a huge impact on student's lives, and you can be part of this.

From reading this guide, you'll have a clear understanding of what virtual work experience is and its benefits, plus some ideas on how to plan your own programme.



To get started building your virtual work experience to pave the way for students across the UK, **get in touch with our team today.**

[Contact us today](#)

Springpod[®] 