

# *Practical work experience: an overview for employers*

Your students will gain their practical work experience as part of a training agreement with you. They need to complete at least 450 practical work experience days, which normally takes between three and five years.

The knowledge, skills and experience that your students gain as part of their training agreement gives them the opportunity to put what they're learning into practice.

## *What is practical work experience?*

Practical work experience is undertaking real-life work of a financial, business and/or commercial nature.

It can include (but is not limited to) experience in at least one of the following:

- accounting
- taxation
- financial management
- insolvency
- information technology
- audit or assurance

Audit work experience is not an essential part of practical work experience.

If your students' practical work experience is in just one area, you will need to ensure that your students gain an in-depth of understanding of that area.

Practical work experience can also be in more than one area which will allow your students to demonstrate breadth as well as depth of understanding. It's important that your students' practical work experience:

- includes responsibility levels that increase in depth and scope as the student progresses through their training;
- is recorded throughout their training agreement; and

- exposes them to as many different practical assignments, finance functions and/or clients in as many different sectors as possible.

During the BICA training agreement, students should accumulate and show evidence of at least 450 days of practical work experience. This excludes exam days, holidays, any training, illness and office administration. If they are eligible for a two-year training agreement, they will need to accumulate and show evidence of 300 days' practical work experience.

## ***Record audit experience***

Any student undertaking any form of audit work experience can record this within the Audit Qualification tab in their online training file.

At each six-monthly review you should discuss and calculate the number of days' experience with your student. When they update their audit experience within their online training file, they need to add the nature of the audit work undertaken, the name of entities audited, and their audit experience and development during each period.

Once you have discussed their audit work experience at the review, it then needs to be promptly signed off by the authorised individual listed within the training file.

It is important that your students record their audit experience throughout BICA training and agree the number of days at each six-monthly review with you. If they don't claim their audit experience within six months of the end of their training period, they will lose it.

## ***Financial accounting and reporting: UK GAAP exam is changing***

The current Financial Accounting and Reporting: UK GAAP exam will be available until September 2018 only. From March 2019, a new Financial Accounting and Reporting: UK GAAP exam will be available. This new exam will cover micro and smaller entity accounting including FRS 105, as well as, FRS 102.

For all your students who have completed or are studying towards the current exam, a supplement will be available to help them with their Corporate Reporting: IFRS exam preparation.

Whichever version of the exam your students pass, current or new, they will be eligible for the [Audit Qualification \(AQ\)](#), as long as they sit and pass the Corporate Reporting: IFRS exam and meet all other AQ requirements.

## ***Six-monthly reviews***

It is a requirement of the BICA training agreement that you and your employer meet at least every six months. These meetings are to discuss and monitor your progress on professional development, ethics and professional scepticism, practical work experience and exams. It is your student's responsibility to update their records within their online training file.

Once you have discussed your student's practical work experience progress, your student will need to confirm the number of days in their training file. When they have done this, their six-month period will be locked and stored within the file. If they need to update the record once it is locked, we can amend it. Please complete the Amendment to a training agreement form on behalf of your student and email it to us at [atesupport@bica.org.bw](mailto:atesupport@bica.org.bw)

## ***Your students' practical work experience log***

Students will log their number of days within the practical work experience tab of their training file.

1. Your students may find it useful to keep records or timesheets of the number of work experience hours they complete. These hours should be divided by seven to calculate the number of days to enter.
2. At each six-monthly review, you and your student will discuss, calculate and agree the number of days they have accrued within the last six months.
3. They then log the number of days within the practical work experience tab of their training file. They do this during or after the review has taken place. They just click on the 'add practical work experience' button to add the number of days. This confirms that your students have reviewed and discussed the number of days with you.
4. Once the period of work experience has been confirmed, it will be locked and stored within the online training file. If an error has been made, you can log into your student's online training file and click on 'Return to student' within the practical work experience tab. This will reopen the entry of practical work experience and the student can correct the error
5. If you do not agree with your students' number of practical work experience days, you will be able to reject the time period and request that they amend it. When they have amended it and you are satisfied with the number of days, you will be able to sign it off. You may also put a development plan in place, so your student can demonstrate to you that they have gained the required skills.

### **Top tips for your students**

- Students need to update their practical work experience in their online training file in six-month blocks. They also need to make sure that the days they enter are for the full period of their training agreement - so there are no gaps at the start or end.
- Students may find it helpful to use a timesheet or make a note of the hours they have completed in a diary.
- One working day is seven hours long.
- Students cannot count study leave, training, sickness days, holidays or office administration within their practical work experience log.

## ***Credit for prior work experience***

In certain circumstances we will recognise work experience gained before your students start their training agreement. This may reduce the duration of their agreement.

The maximum period of previous work experience is 12 months. Previous work experience must have been gained within the 24-month period preceding registration with an employer or principal, and if a student's training agreement is 36 months (or longer) a maximum of 12 months may be applied for. Students with a 24-month agreement may apply for up to eight months.

## ***Secondment and part-time working***

Secondments are a good way for your students to gain different and varied work experience from another employer as part of the practical work experience requirement of BICA.

## ***Redundancy***

There may be ways that we can help you and your students in situations where your organisation is considering making BICA students redundant.

## ***Information for students registered before July 2013***

If your students started their BICA training agreement before July 2013, they may be recording their practical work days via paper-based records.

At the end of their training agreement, you and your student will need to complete and sign the [Evidence of Technical Work Experience form](#).

### Work based learning

If you still have students that began their training before July 2007 and are following the work based learning requirements of the old BICA syllabus, please see the email [atesupport@bica.org.bw](mailto:atesupport@bica.org.bw) or call +267 397 2992.