

The logo consists of a red, rounded triangle pointing to the right, with the word "PRIME" written in white, bold, uppercase letters inside it.

PRIME

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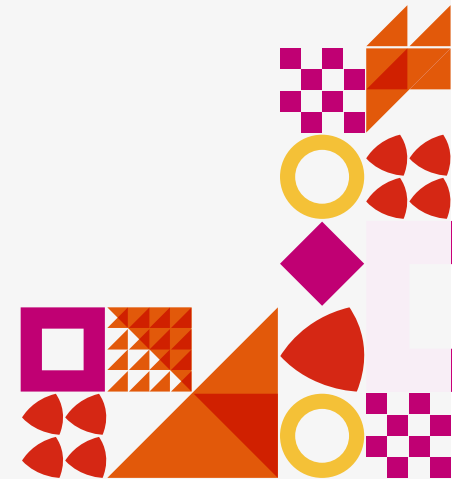
# A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MEMBER FIRMS

How to set up and run a  
work experience programme

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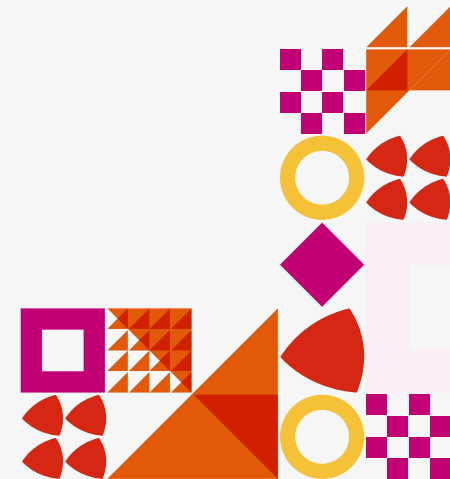
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# 1. Introduction

PRIME's members are actively trying to ensure that everyone who wants to enter the world of law has an equal chance to do so. Our firms offer work experience to young people from less privileged backgrounds – and this guide provides the resources you'll need to make sure your work experience programme is the best it can be.

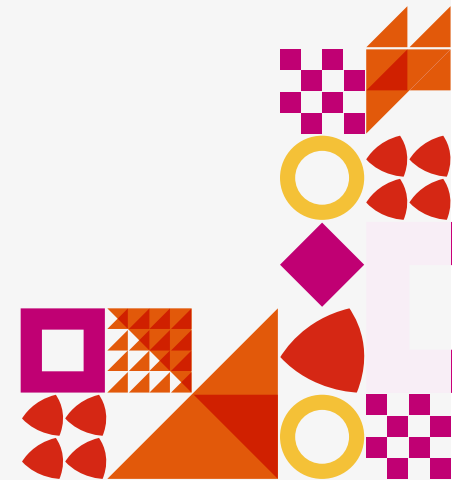
To find out more about PRIME and to sign up to the commitment, visit [www.primecommitment.co.uk/for-lawyers](http://www.primecommitment.co.uk/for-lawyers)



## 2. About this guide

Each firm will have its own way of working, so this guide aims to share best practice, rather than to prescribe a specific set of rules. Together, we'll enable as many young people as possible to have access to good quality work experience.

If you have any further tips and suggestions for improvement, please contact [admin@primecommitment.co.uk](mailto:admin@primecommitment.co.uk)



## 3. PRIME criteria

To ensure your programme is robust and will have the most impact, it is important to follow the nine criteria set out in the PRIME Commitment.

**1**

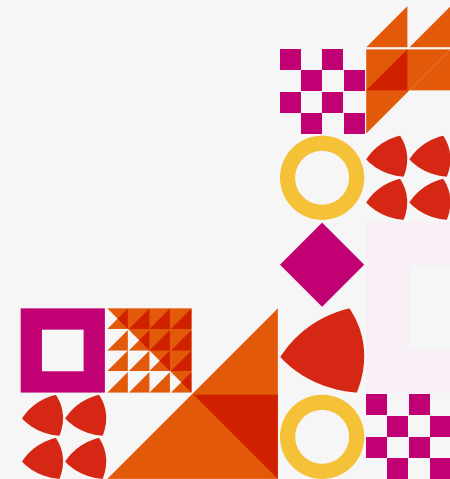
### **Fair access**

Our mission is clear and that's to provide access to work experience for young people who have least opportunity. Our firms work with recognised partners to ensure the selection criteria continue to be the fairest way to identify those with least opportunity.

**2**

### **Provide support**

We pledge to support our PRIME students by providing financial assistance so they can attend work experience. As a minimum our firms will provide refreshments and reimburse reasonable travel expenses.



## 3. PRIME criteria contd.

### 3

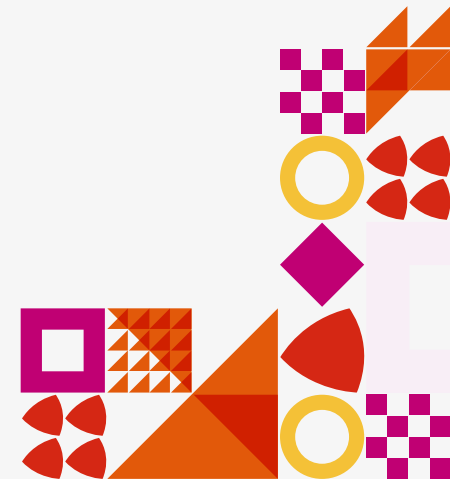
#### Prepare for work

PRIME schemes will properly prepare young people in advance of work experience. They'll give practical information and pre-placement activities where appropriate. Our firms will ensure they're able to meet the diverse needs of their PRIME students.

### 4

#### Give career advice

Our firms will give information to their PRIME students about the range of careers available in the legal profession and wider business (for lawyers and non-lawyers) and clear, honest information about the requirements for them. They'll also give information on the potential routes into those careers, including the relevance of university education and other routes into the profession. To support this information, our firms will adopt a partnership approach with other relevant organisations (e.g. universities and clients).



### 3. PRIME criteria contd.

#### 5

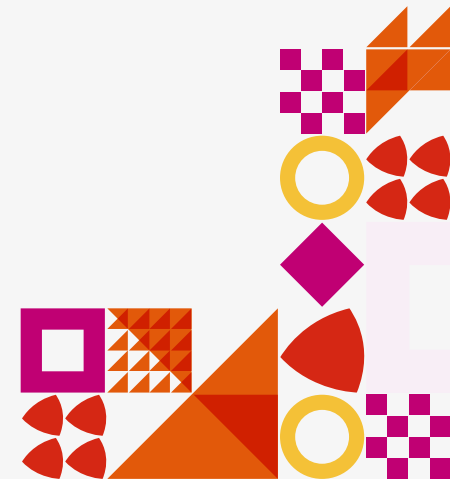
##### **Develop key skills**

Our members will ensure that our PRIME students, through the work experience they receive, develop key personal and business skills. These invaluable skills (such as team work, communication, presentation, negotiation, making an impact and networking) are fundamental to a career in law and the wider business world.

#### 6

##### **Maintain contact**

We don't want the PRIME experience to end when the work experience does. Our firms will provide a way for PRIME students to maintain contact with them after they leave – whether that be over email or a more formal structured mentoring programme or an annual reunion event.



## 3. PRIME criteria contd.

7

### Keep up best practice

Our member firms want to develop and improve on the work experience they offer. All of our firms pledge to monitor their work experience offering. They'll ensure they share best practice and data amongst PRIME members to enable the membership to develop and assure the quality of the commitments made under PRIME, including with externally commissioned evaluation when considered appropriate.

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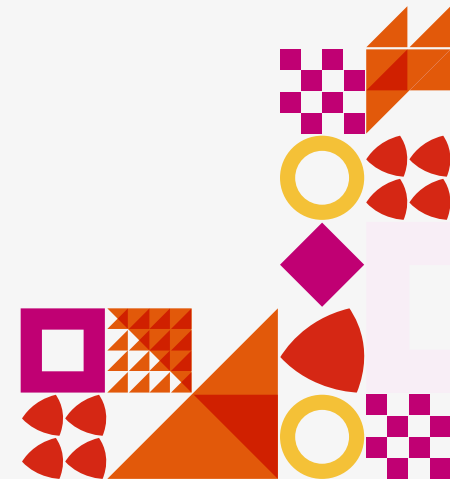
### Target 50%

PRIME members commit to providing opportunities to those who need it most. As a result, our firms pledge to offer a number of work experience places that is not less than 50% of the number of training contract places that the firm offers each year.

9

### 30-35 hours contact time

We make sure our firms won't cut work experience short. PRIME work experience ensures that firms provide at least 30-35 hours of contact time per student (not necessarily on consecutive days).



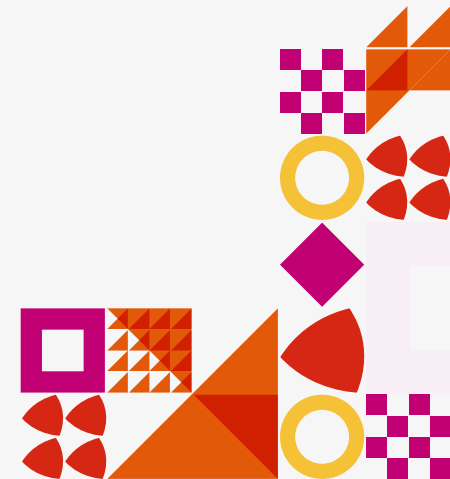


## 4. Identifying students

### **Students should:**

- attend a state (non-fee paying) school; and
  - be in Year 9 to Year 13 in England and Wales, S2 to S6 in Scotland, or Year 3 to 5, or Lower and Upper Sixth in Northern Ireland. Many firms work with Year 11 to Year 13 students in England and Wales, Year S5 and S6 in Scotland and Year 5 Sixth form in Northern Ireland;
  - be or have been eligible for free school meals (or where this information is difficult or sensitive to obtain, the participant attends a school that is significantly above the regional average in terms of number of students eligible for free school meals);
- be of the first generation in their immediate family to attend university.

Recognised work experience programmes with the same or similar criteria (such as Pathways to Law) would be included within PRIME.



# 4. Identifying students

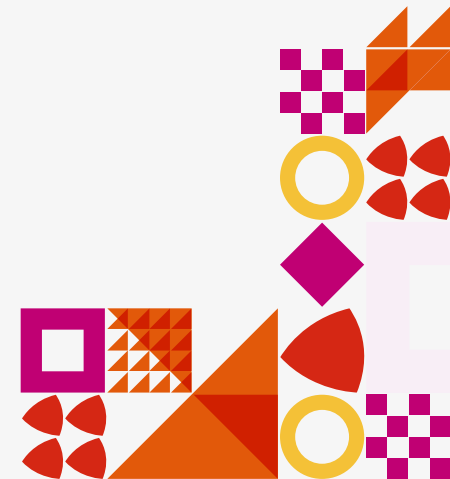
## 4.1 School Partnerships

If you don't already have a school to partner with on the scheme, there are a number of ways you can identify one. There are some areas where schools may be saturated with business supporters (the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney, close to the City, are often cited). You could seek schools in 'cold spots' that will benefit most from your support, while at the same time having the resources to manage the partnership. Ensure schools allocate PRIME students to you. Think about mixing students from several schools/ different backgrounds.

- Most firms target schools that have a high proportion of students eligible for FSM. For instance, in England, according to the DfE's 2016 publication "Schools, pupils and their characteristics", in January 2016 14.3%

of pupils were eligible for and claiming FSM. You should look at schools whose percentage of FSM is much higher than this.

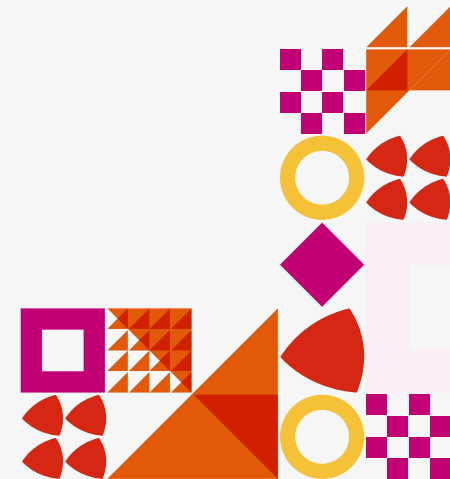
- If you want to do your own research into schools in a borough local to your offices, a useful website is the DfE's school profile site where you can look up FSM and pupil premium status to help you target disadvantaged students (visit <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>).
- You can also talk to charities who broker school-business relationships. There are many out there who can help; a current selection is in the Prime Partners Section.
- Your local council may have a team who can support you in linking up.



# 4. Identifying students

## 4.2 Other things to consider

- You could open your scheme so that any students can apply. You could advertise on sites such as [www.accessprofessions.com](http://www.accessprofessions.com) or run the placement as part of a wider engagement programme by working with MyKindaCrowd: [www.mykindacrowd.com](http://www.mykindacrowd.com)
- You could create an application form to help select students and to collect compliance information (see 7.7). Be aware some students may not answer SEB questions: it can feel uncomfortable or disloyal to explain your circumstances even if firms wouldn't see any disadvantage in lower SEB. Schools and brokerages can make sure the criteria are definitely fulfilled and this form can be used in conjunction with them.
- Some firms have an on-line application process with cut-off dates, similar to their training application process.
- Consider the inclusion of students living further away than a daily commute. Universities will often provide assistance to Pathways students by assisting with accommodation.



## 5. Use of CRS to ensure students fulfil PRIME criteria

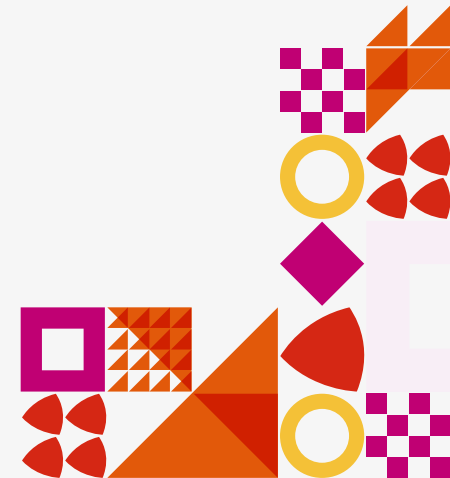
In partnership with Rare Recruitment a specially developed tool is available for use to measure students' relative disadvantage, as well as their performance, the Contextual Recruitment System or CRS. It means you can compare a student's application fairly with the benefit of more information. The CRS will gather data about participants on all PRIME programmes to ensure we do our best to understand if there are particular areas in the UK where we could further improve access.

The CRS will provide PRIME with invaluable data about:

- The percentage of students from less socially mobile backgrounds attending PRIME programmes
- The breakdown of participants' backgrounds – for example, how many attended poor performing schools, how

many were in receipt of free school meals, how many were refugees etc.

- The breakdown of participants on PRIME programmes by region, including a comparison of the location of PRIME participants with Department for Education “cold spots”.



## 5. Use of CRS to ensure students fulfil PRIME criteria

Firms are asked to collect the data from all of their PRIME participants using this simple form:

<https://prime.contextualrecruitment.com/crs/2018/apply>

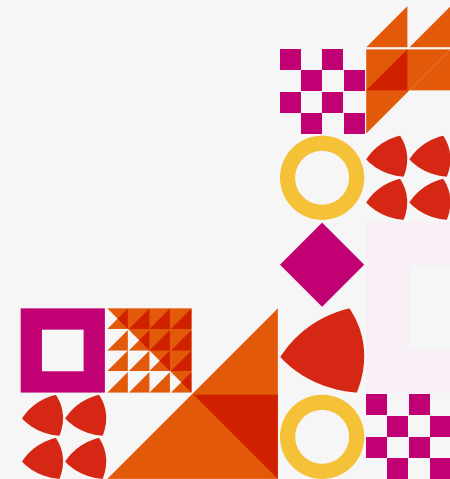
Students may already be familiar with the CRS if they have submitted information to join PRIME member firm programmes.

In no circumstances are candidates ever marked down for supplying, or not supplying, this information.

If a student consents to providing information, it will be shared with Rare to more accurately understand their achievements in light of their personal circumstances. Students are informed that Rare may retain this information, which will remain anonymous,

and use it for research purposes to help PRIME understand and report on the social mobility status of PRIME participants as a whole. Rare's Privacy Policy sets out that it will not share any name, phone number, or email address, or any other information supplied on the application form.

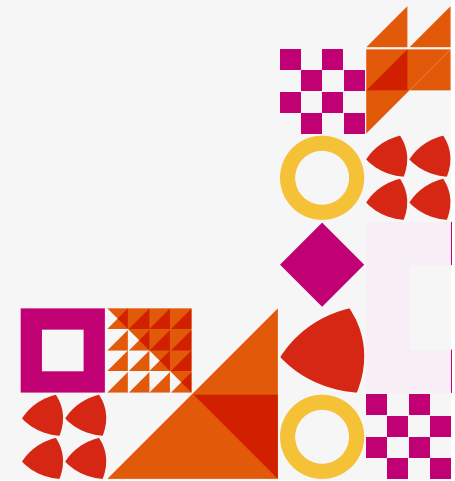
In order to get the best data and to ensure that PRIME has the greatest possible impact, it is important that all PRIME member firms collect this data from their students in a timely way. It is advised that you send the link out to students as soon as they have been accepted on a programme – email [admin@primecommitment.co.uk](mailto:admin@primecommitment.co.uk) for suggested wording.



## 6. Good communications with our stakeholders

The best ways to keep your programme running smoothly, is to communicate effectively with everyone involved. One way to do this is to imagine yourself in the shoes of the students, school and parents – think about what you'd want or need to know.

- Make sure that charities, brokerages, schools and parents are all fully aware of deadlines and criteria. Chase them if they have not sent through student details – and check that HR send out documentation as quickly as possible.
- Remember that parents may be worried about their child so always be ready to discuss any details with them. Call the relevant person if there are any issues with the student – i.e. truancy.



# 7. A step-by-step guide

Make sure that the external communication channels, your contact points and the respective roles/responsibilities are clear to all, to ensure responsive communications and the smooth running of the programme.

## 7.1 Establish co-ordinators

Assign a main contact who has the capacity to coordinate the programme. You could think about identifying a representative for each school to help coordinate their specific arrangements. Identify an HR contact to deal with the administration/on-boarding of students.

## 7.2 Plan when the programme will run

### Things to consider:

- You will need to avoid exam periods so mid-late July at the end of the summer term is a good option to offer.

- Many schools won't permit students to be taken out of lessons so the scheme might have to run during school holidays.
- Identify when the boroughs/schools you are working with are running their work experience weeks.
- If you run your scheme at the same time as Ramadan, Muslim students may be fasting so are likely to get very tired. If you do run your scheme over this period, consider setting early starts and ending the day early. Eid will also mean the students will take a day out of the office to be at home for the festivities.



# 7. A step-by-step guide

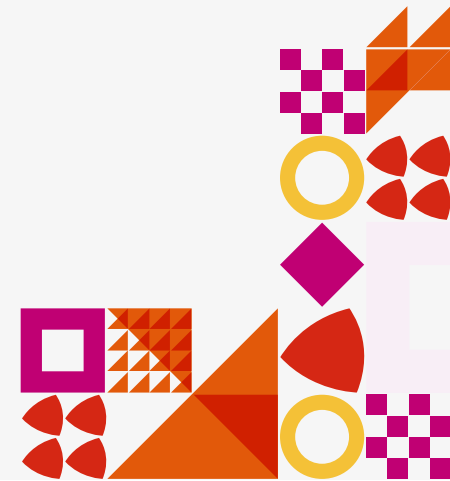
## 7.3 Select the students

- You could run a competitive selection process to ensure the most motivated students are identified, as well as providing them with an experience that reflects job-seeking in the real world.

For example, many firms invite students in to the firm for CV and interview workshops with the HR team. They are then given time to prepare and submit a CV and covering letter. Those who get it in on-time are invited into the firm for an interview and are provided with feedback on their performance. Students could then be selected according to who demonstrated the most motivation for gaining the placement, who would benefit from increasing their confidence and who would not otherwise get the opportunity.

If this is not possible, you can interview students by telephone or again if this is not possible you can rely on the brokers to identify the right students for you.

- You could ask the schools you are working with to select the most suitable students.
- Charities who broker school-business relationships will choose suitable students for you.

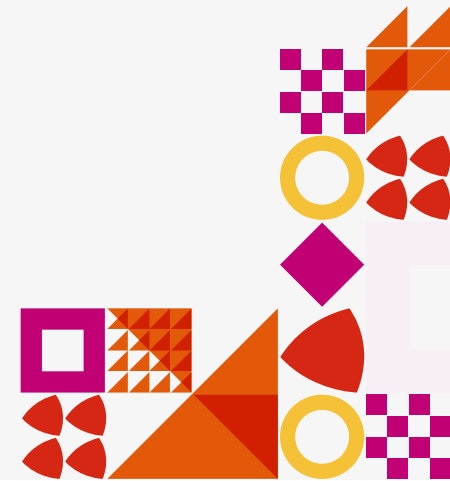




# 7. A step-by-step guide

## 7.4 Design the programme content

- Many firms fulfil the PRIME placement hours' commitment by a week-long placement. The placement should be full of valuable skills and development activities and the students should get exposure to people from across the firm/business.
- When designing your placement activities, encourage different departments in your organisation, both legal and non-legal, to get involved. There will be a variety of skill sets and existing training materials you can take advantage of, and you may have external organisations you work with who would be interested in collaborating and delivering a workshop.
- The law firm profiles can give a broad sense of how some law firms structure their placements. Following, are some sample sessions from law firms' programmes. This is just a guide and you should feel free to pick which sessions work for you.



# 7. A step-by-step guide

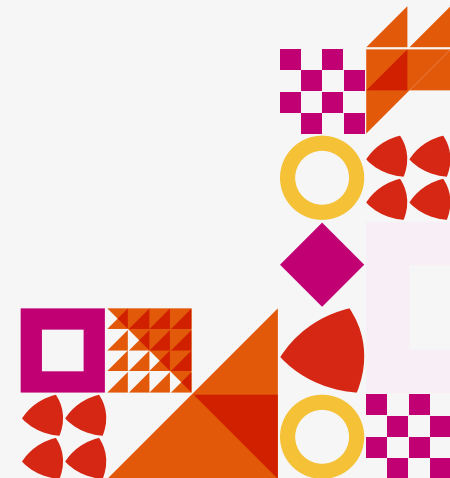
## Legal Skills/Legal World

- Introduction to the law
- Life of a barrister and the UK court system
- Talk from a barrister or in-house Counsel
- Legal research training
- Legal shadowing
- Mock legal task and mock client meeting

## Skills/Employability Skills

- CV and interview skills workshops
- IT training
- Career bingo
- One-to-one CV reviews (including for university applications)
- Business writing workshop
- Making an impact training

- How to pitch
- Negotiation skills
- Presentation skills training/Deliver a presentation
- How to impress an employer
- Growth Mindset Session
- Risk management and compliance workshop
- Business Development workshop
- Social networking workshop
- Session with Graduate Recruitment
- Commercial awareness case study
- Mock interviews



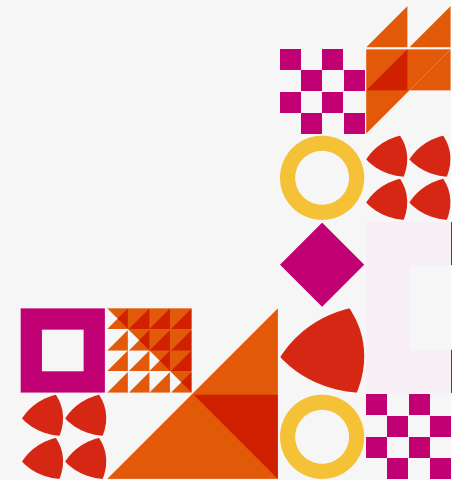
# 7. A step-by-step guide

## What is a law firm?

- Introduction to the Firm (including health and safety induction). Obligatory and should be at least an hour long
- Tour of the Firm
- Talks on various aspects of the firm
- How a law firm works
- Pathways to Law workshop
- Studying Law/ Misconceptions of a career in law
- University Life/University visit/Routes to a career in Law
- Introduction to Business Services
- Introduction to Graduate Recruitment
- Introduction to IT and Office Services: what they do
- Marketing and Accounts: what they do
- Office Etiquette

## Activities

- Debate (e.g. on why a firm engages in CR)
- Legal Case study including interviewing a witness and presenting to a CEO
- Tour of the High Court
- Trips to clients, other Courts
- Debrief at end of week



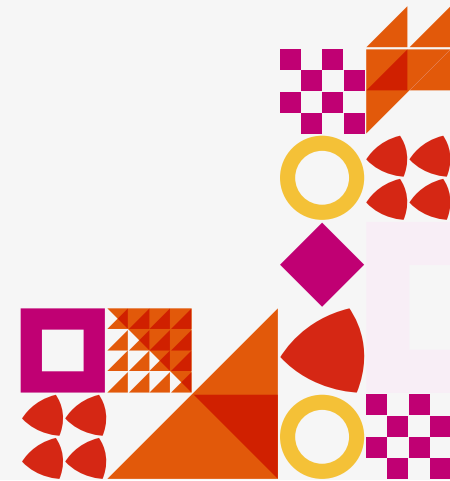
# 7. A step-by-step guide

- Consider the mix of activities and workshops so that there is balance and to avoid duplication. Allocate the task of pulling together the sessions into one schedule.
- Consider and design a plenary workshop for all the students to come together on the Friday before the start of the week so that the students get to meet each other and so that you can ensure they know what to expect and how to be prepared.
- Get feedback on students and decide how to give feedback to students.
- Key contacts detailed in law firm profiles may be willing to provide guidance i.e. by a conference call.

- Consider involving others in the firm's network (other locations; client involvement; client collaboration).

## 7.5 Internal Arrangements

- Consider and arrange seat locations among lawyers and/or other areas of the firm and think about booking rooms early and ensuring you have the space for the students in your office.
- Provide a desk, pc/computer access, internal email address.
- Ensure you will have enough volunteers to present the programme and supervisor and mentor the students.



# 7. A step-by-step guide

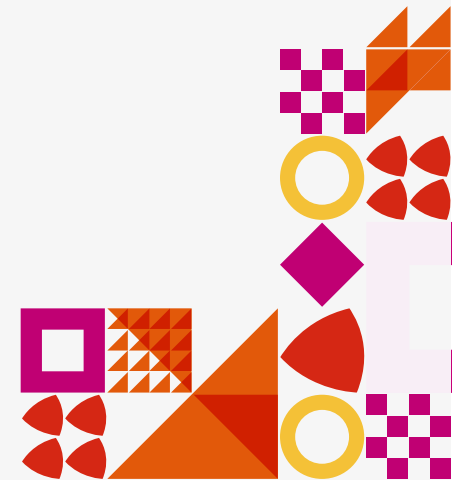
- Consider how volunteers will account for their time (i.e. the time recorder number) and whether and how their contribution might be recognised through the appraisal process.
- Allocate a supervisor for the student to sit with, and a buddy to help with their pastoral care.
- Consider the requirements of any disabled students.

Pastoral support is vital; meet with supervisors and buddies and discuss their role and the importance of this.

## 7.6 Internal communications; Buddy and Supervisor Guidelines

Design internal comms to ensure volunteers are clear and comfortable, and have internal channels to ask questions and to report issues.

Buddy and Supervisor Guidelines give guidance as to best practice on how to mentor students and practical details of how the programme runs. (Email [admin@primecommitment.co.uk](mailto:admin@primecommitment.co.uk) and ask for a resources pack for an example).



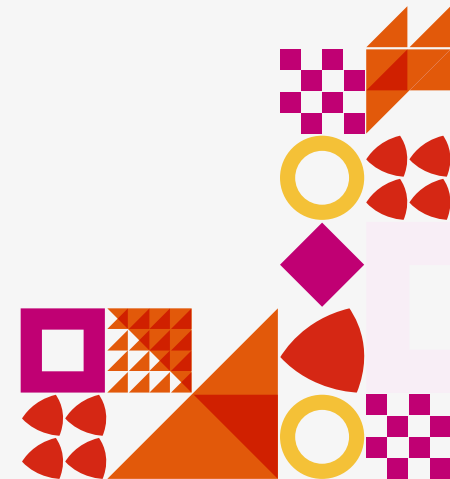
# 7. A step-by-step guide

## 7.7 Create a compliance checklist

- Schools/work experience health and safety advisers will arrange to visit to undertake a health & safety risk assessment.
- Check you have a Safeguarding Policy in place and make sure it is complied with.
- Make sure all students have a health and safety induction arranged.
- All relevant risk and compliance forms and policies for your firm should be completed in advance of the student joining. Ask all students to sign a confidentiality form. Some firms have an on-line portal for acceptance of a confidentiality agreement, information security obligations etc.
- You should liaise internally so that your firm's approach on 'right to work' is reflected in your process and is adhered to even though the students will not be employees or working in a traditional sense,

and will be with the firm for a short period only. In the experience of those contributing to this guide, this will mean a current EU passport, or a national insurance card and birth certificate.

- Make sure students are aware of the right to work documents they will need to bring on their first morning of placement. Put this message on all correspondence with the student, and the school or the brokerage.
- HR should be responsible for checking the documents on first morning of the placement. If documents are not available on the first day, you'll need to decide whether the student can still do day-one initial training, provided they bring in the documents the following morning to continue with the placement.



# 7. A step-by-step guide

## 7.8 What will success look like?

Take some time to think about this. How will you know that the programme has been a success?

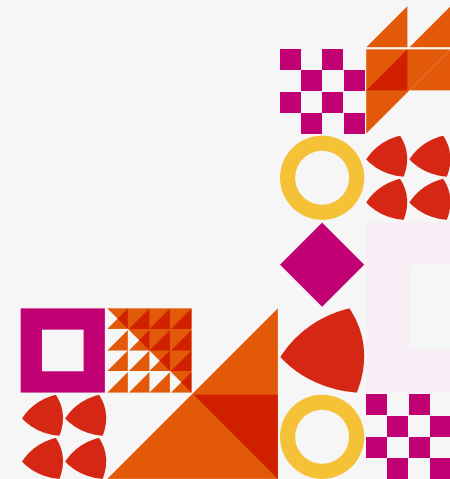
- Set up a pre-placement questionnaire for students to complete before they have any involvement in the scheme (including any CV and interview workshops) and follow-up at the end of the programme with a post-placement questionnaire. (Email [admin@primecommitment.co.uk](mailto:admin@primecommitment.co.uk) and ask for a resources pack for an example).
- Set up an internal reporting system (i.e. volunteer hours, volunteer satisfaction survey etc.).
- Set up system for keeping in touch (i.e. LinkedIn profiles).

## 7.9 Expenses

Students should not be left out of pocket when they take part in the scheme. Lunch and travel expenses should be reimbursed. Ideally fares should be paid in advance.

### Some options:

- Pre-purchase oyster cards, put a relevant amount on them and post them to students. Ask students to return them at the end of their placement and reuse them.
- Pre-purchase day-return rail tickets via an in-house travel system and send them to students in advance of their placement (you'll need the name of their closest rail station as well as the closest station to the office).
- Ask the organisations you're working with to pre-purchase relevant travel cards then invoice you direct for reimbursement.



## 7. A step-by-step guide

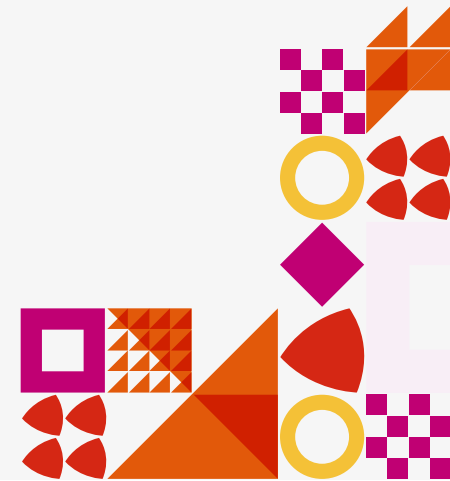
- Ask students to purchase a weekly bus/ rail ticket on their first day/in advance of their placement - they would then be reimbursed either by cheque or paid direct into their bank account against proof of purchase. If students have a 'Young Persons Rail Card', it would help save costs.

### 7.10 Joining instructions

Once you've received contact details for the students, contact them personally with joining instructions in advance of their placements.

#### Think about including:

- Confirmed dates.
- Office location.
- Core hours (as these may vary from location to location) .
- Who they should report to on their first day.
- Map/directions (particularly if the office is difficult to find).
- Contact information (in case the student is running late or unable to find the office).
- Information about lunch provisions
- Emergency contact details (this could also be on application form).
- Dress code (match the dress code to your firm's practice, avoiding barriers which could exclude students from participating).
- Request for dietary requirements.
- Form asking for any health issues/disabilities (this could also be on application form).
- A draft outline of their first day (subject to change).
- A full timetable for the rest of the week.
- A note of supervisors and seating plan.





# 7. A step-by-step guide

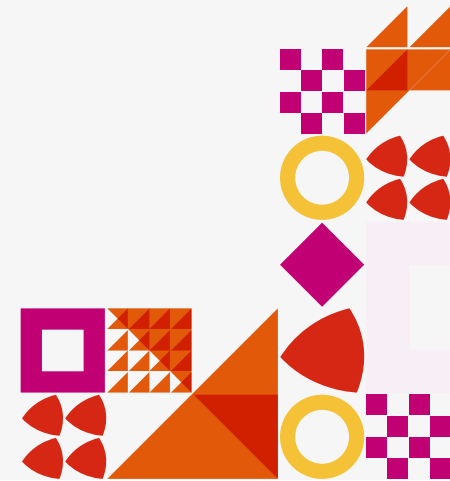
## 7.11 Produce a student pack

The students will have a lot of information to take on board and it may be the first time they have had to independently find their way around an office building or campus of buildings. Therefore, you can produce a pack for them to use throughout the programme that tells them what they will be doing, who their supervisor and buddy is, where they need to be, who to contact if they get lost, and a learning log.

## 7.12 Run the Programme

As well as the ordinary internal logistics of running any programme, it will be important to bear in mind the age of the participants.

- Clearly explain the expected hours. Make sure they understand that any time not earmarked for a specific activity, isn't free time; it's time to be spent at desks shadowing, making other contacts etc.
- Discuss a code of conduct with them – i.e. what to do if they're running late or not able to make it into the office. Talk about etiquette regarding mobile phones, wearing headphones in the office etc.
- Get across the message that on a CV, a note of a work experience is only the beginning: how the student talks about the experience will be the most valuable aspect to future employers.
- Promote a Learning Log/Reflective Journal: it can be helpful to provide a learning log for students to keep track of the skills they are developing each day, a start-point and end-point evaluation so they can see their progress and a notes section. (Email [admin@primecommitment.co.uk](mailto:admin@primecommitment.co.uk) and ask for a resources pack for an example).



# 7. A step-by-step guide

- Hold an end-of-the week debrief session and tell students that they should have their reflections of the week ready, including things they enjoyed/found useful; things that surprised them; suggestions for improvement, etc.
- An office will be an alien environment for many students. Think about how you can help them and stop them feeling overwhelmed.
- Apart from general lack of confidence, whatever their intentions, students may need guidance on how to make the most of their opportunity. Advise them on asking questions, approaching colleagues, knocking on doors etc.

## 7.13 Celebrate

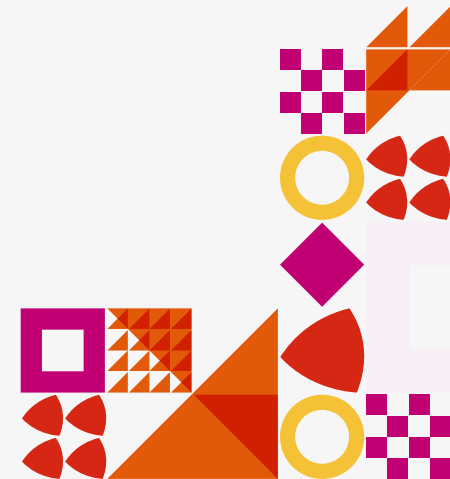
A good opportunity to bring together the supervisors/buddies and students – and perhaps also teachers – is to arrange an afternoon tea or another event at the end

of their programme. It's a chance to test the students' networking skills too.

You could also run a graduation ceremony after the holidays (so that head teachers and school staff are available to attend) and invite students to give a presentation on their experience, hand out awards and/or certificates and give feedback.

## 7.14 Staying in touch and tracking

- Tell students about your other processes and opportunities, e.g. workshops, apprenticeship programmes, vac scheme applications, training contract applications, other recruitment processes.
- Keep in touch via LinkedIn, Alumni database, newsletters and invitations to relevant events.
- Think about offering mentoring – and whether this is a structured scheme or on an ad hoc basis.



## 8. Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the contributors to this guide.

This material is for general information and guidance only and is not intended to provide legal advice.

Date of Publication: 8 November 2017

