employer guide to placements

recruiting the best for your business
A placement It is an excellent opportunity for a student to gain meaningful work experience aimed at improving their employability and skill development, whilst offering businesses a useful recruitment tool for a flexible work force.
Thank you for supporting a UWE Bristol placement student. We hope this guide will assist you and your placement student in making the placement as beneficial as possible for both parties.

At UWE Bristol we welcome input from our external partners, and hope this placement provides a good introduction to working with the university. There are several ways you can be involved with our students and graduates and the Placement Support Team would be happy to discuss these with you further:

Student and graduate recruitment through:
- Graduate opportunities.
- Placements and internships.
- Work experience or work shadowing opportunities.
- Career fairs and employer presentations.

Supporting the career development of UWE students through:
- Career mentoring.
- Offering hints and tips for getting into the sector in which you work.
- Providing assistance in employability work shops eg. interview skills.

Providing curriculum support in a variety of ways including:
- Joining an employer panel.
- Guest speaking.
- Advising on course content.
- Helping assess presentations.
- Providing case studies from your organisation.

In addition, we offer a number of professional courses at the University for developing your current staff.

We look forward to working with you this year and in the future.

“Our experience of the placement scheme at UWE Bristol has been very positive. The students we have had have been an asset to our organisation.”

William Blockley,
GVA (GVA Grimley)

“During the last 3 years we have hired 20 UWE Bristol students who have worked in a number of departments including Marketing, Operations, Finance, Sales and IT. We have always found that as well as studying relevant degrees, the students are business orientated and have a great work ethic.”

Becky O’Hara,
Intel

What is a placement?

A placement is a period of relevant, supervised work experience assessed as part of a programme of study. At UWE Bristol the length of a placement can vary from a few days to a full year ‘sandwiched’ between Years 2 and 3 of a degree. This is also sometimes referred to as an industrial placement. In some courses, placements are compulsory, in others they are optional.

It is an excellent opportunity for a student to gain meaningful work experience aimed at improving their employability and skill development, whilst offering businesses a useful recruitment tool for a flexible work force.

There are numerous benefits for an employer in taking on a sandwich placement student, including:
- Gaining a new and motivated staff member.
- Gaining a fresh perspective on the company or a project.
- Accessing new up-to-date technological advice.
- Enhancing your corporate social responsibility by employing a student and offering them a meaningful experience.
- Developing your brand reputation and awareness of your organisation in the student community.

Support

The Placement Support Team is available to provide support to employers and students throughout the placement. Should you have any questions about the placement scheme or how we might support you in other ways please do not hesitate to get in touch:

placements@uwe.ac.uk
+44(0)117 32 82220

For longer placements we will be in touch during the placement period to ensure things are working well. In addition, students will often have an academic tutor assigned to them to support academic related enquiries.
The job itself
The primary aim of the scheme is to offer students and organisations a mutually beneficial experience. Introducing your student to the structures of working life and helping them to develop transferable skills, personal qualities and competencies will contribute greatly to their graduate employability.

Job expectations
Your student will usually have accepted this opportunity based on the job advert and/or interview so the responsibilities and tasks should reflect what was advertised and discussed. Goals should be clear and concise and discussed to ensure your student is happy and feels capable of achieving them. If goals are changed the reasons should be made clear to avoid any miscommunication.

You could consider utilising their skills, knowledge and fresh ideas by giving them responsibility for:
- A specific project or piece of work
- A variety of projects, developing their skills more broadly
- Assisting more than one team, helping them understand how to coordinate with a range of staff.

If you would like further clarification around their course and the appropriateness of the work your student can share their programme specification with you.

Monitoring progress
For some students this may be their first experience in the workplace so a work plan with (daily) tasks and clear objectives can help. We also recommend regular reviews and contact throughout the placement to ensure that they are settling in and progressing well.

We encourage the celebration of successes but equally highlight that the student be considered as any other employee would and be subject to the same policies and procedures such as disciplinary and grievance.

We do ask however, that if you are considering disciplinary action or making the student redundant that you get in touch with the Placement Support Team immediately.

How to make the placement a success

The placement student should be regarded as a regular employee and undertake a real job with real responsibilities appropriate to their level of experience.

Provide a full induction
An induction will assist the student to settle in as quickly as possible and help them to feel like a full-time staff member.
Consider:
- Company Information, products, history, culture, values, organisation structure and key people.
- Health and Safety Information (as per the placement agreement).
- A tour of the offices, their work station, facilities.
- A full discussion around their role, responsibilities, key dates, day-to-day duties and expectations of them as an employee.
- Working hours, break times, holiday and sickness arrangements.

Student’s arrival
Ensure your organisation is ready for your placement student’s arrival.
Save time by ensuring that computer logins are set-up, reception staff are ready, a mentor or co-ordinator knows when they are arriving and is prepared for their arrival. In addition, make certain your staff do not feel threatened by the student. Reassure them that the student is not there to replace them; this will ensure that they welcome them and help them feel at ease more quickly.

Organise meetings
Organise meetings with all the key personnel that your placement student will be working with. This will enable your student to be more confident when operating in their role. Also ask these individuals to explain their role’s within the organisation and how they may work together.

Company events
Include your placement student in any company events that may take place during their placement. This will ensure that they feel fully integrated within the organisation and experience really working for your company.

“How the placement scheme is an excellent opportunity to work with a student for up to one year. Given the time period you have together, your organisation can make the placement as meaningful and beneficial for the student as possible. Building a relationship with them where they feel confident enough to share their learning and experience to date. It’s a two way relationship where the student can draw on their learning and develop new skills.”

Rebecca Hehir,
Head of Communications
Avon & Somerset Police

“This is my first year of working with the placement scheme. The student I had has been an asset to me and the organisation and has offered some interesting ideas that we have carried through to improve our services.”

Julie Edwards,
Health Education
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Management and mentoring

Whilst your placement student is not a permanent staff member, they still require good management. Their line manager should be their go-to for work-related queries and should be responsible for the project planning, task setting and monitoring.

As this may be their first experience of a professional working environment, where possible we also recommend assigning a separate staff member to act as a mentor to assist them with their integration into the company.

The benefits of a mentor are two-fold:

- They provide the student with someone who can guide them and support them, someone who can answer queries and concerns assisting them to become productive as quickly as possible.
- This is an excellent development opportunity for your employee and can be their first steps into management.

In addition, we suggest that you or the mentor hold regular meetings with the placement student to ensure that they are able to keep up with the work and are completing it to a good standard. It also offers the opportunity for revision of the tasks if other things become a priority.

A learning-contract may benefit you and your placement student: by understanding what they are looking to gain from the experience you can ensure your priorities are in alignment.

At the end of the placement

Whilst we expect that you will have had regular reviews throughout the placement, towards the end, a final review meeting will be beneficial for both you and the student. This will mean you can review their projects and understand what they have achieved, but it can also offer the opportunity for you to discuss a variety of topics, such as:

- The skills they have developed and can take forward
- How they might be better prepared for the graduate job market following this experience
- Whether or not they have met the goals and targets that were outlined at the beginning of the process
- Their strengths and development areas.

In addition, an exit interview held by someone in a position of authority can provide you with the opportunity to identify aspects of the placement that have worked well or not so well and to gain useful insight into your organisation.

Celebrating UWE talent

During the student’s final year at UWE Bristol we run our ‘Celebrating UWE Talent’ event which recognises the fantastic achievements of those students who have proven to be excellent ambassadors for the University through work placements, internships and work experience.

We will contact organisations in advance of the event to ask if they would like to nominate their placement students.

References

A reference will be an extremely useful tool for your placement student when they are looking for future employment.

You are not required to write a reference but if you feel their work merits a reference then please include as much detail as possible. This may include comments on the work they undertook, the outcomes and their achievements as well as their general work ethic and demeanour.

Placement project

Most students are required to complete coursework or projects related to their placement. The format this takes will vary but typically the student will need to undertake some research about their placement organisation.

Whilst we do not expect the student to be given time during working hours to undertake this research, we do ask that you be as supportive as possible about their commitments to this work. They may need access to data, key people or departments to support their academic work, so you will need to reach an agreement with your student on what you can accommodate.

Placement tutors

For longer ‘sandwich’ placements, employers in the UK may be asked to host a visit from a member of the academic team to discuss placement progress and towards the end of the academic year employers will be asked to provide feedback on the student’s performance.

Where applicable, further arrangements will be made with you and your student during the placement period.
The benefits for an employer in taking on a placement student, includes: gaining a new and motivated staff member; gaining a fresh perspective on the company or on a project; the potential of new and up-to-date technological advice; developing your brand reputation and awareness of your organisation within the student community.

**Student placement induction checklist**

This list can be used as a reminder for all the things that need to be covered in the placement student’s induction.

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**Introduction to your job/department**

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<td>Agreement of role objectives and target</td>
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