AN EMPLOYER’S GUIDE TO STUDENT WORK PLACEMENTS

LET’S WORK TOGETHER

EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREERS
Placement provider guide

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Want to work with our students?

We know it’s a tough job market out there and with more and more competition for jobs, students today need to stand out from the crowd. That’s why, at Essex, we prepare our students for their future by providing an excellent academic education and plenty of opportunities to learn new skills.

However, we know it’s not all about qualifications. Practical experience is just as important when competing for jobs.

Through work placements our students have the opportunity to practically apply their learning in a real workplace and provide you with high quality skills and expertise.

This guide answers your questions about working with the University to offer placements. If you have any other questions please contact the relevant Faculty Placements Manager at www.essex.ac.uk/business/talent/placements

What is a work placement?

A placement is a period of work embedded into a student’s degree course. It’s designed to offer our students a development opportunity, in addition to fulfilling an employment role.

Our students can benefit your organisation by:

- Undertaking specialist projects
- Offering a cost-effective solution to recruitment needs
- Bringing fresh ideas and new expertise
- Providing up-to-date professional skills, including IT, languages and research methods.

Your placement can benefit our students by:

- Helping them apply their academic knowledge in the workplace
- Enhancing their professional and interpersonal skills
- Enabling them to learn more about a particular sector, business or job role
- Preparing them for their future career

Examples of different types of work placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement year</td>
<td>A placement equivalent of a year’s academic study (between 30-52 weeks). Typically taken by undergraduate students as the penultimate year of their degree course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Termly placements</td>
<td>A placement equivalent to an academic term (12-15 weeks). May also be used to describe a part-time placement where a student combines spending one to two days a week throughout the term on placement with their academic study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacation internship</td>
<td>A short-term placement taken during Christmas, Easter or summer vacations.</td>
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Task and projects suitable for a work placement

A work placement is more than work experience or a temping role. A work placement offers our students the opportunity to develop their skills, but also offers you, as an employer, a targeted resource to focus on a business project or need, such as:

- Developing computer packages and databases
- Developing a business plan
- Quantitative and qualitative research
- Business reports
- Project management
- Delivery of a specific project
- Carrying out work specific to company, e.g. translation, consultancy etc.

Who employs our students?

If a student is on a placement year, or working at your business either part-time or for a period of weeks, you, as the organisation or business employs and pays the student.

Placements that are of a voluntary nature may involve expenses for travel and/or subsistence.

There can be exceptions to this where funding or a bursary is provided for the student while they are on their work placement.

What support can you expect from the University?

The University provides support throughout the whole process for both you as the employer and our students.

University staff will help you to develop your opportunity and will talk you through what options would suit your organisation, whether it be a placement or internship. We can offer advice on developing a job description, project outline and the duration of the placement.

You can choose the application process which best suits your needs, and the University will advertise/publicise your opportunity to relevant students.

Each student undertaking a placement will be allocated an Academic Supervisor who will be responsible for their assessment and will maintain regular contact and support them. The relevant Faculty Placements Manager will also be available to help and support both the student and you as the Placement Provider throughout the process.
The University’s responsibilities

Before the placement:
- Support the application process for both you and the student
- Brief students on what to expect and how to conduct themselves while on placement
- Sign a tri-partite agreement between you, the University and the student
- Allocate an Academic Supervisor to support and assess the student
- Provide the student with relevant coursework to complete

During the placement:
- Schedule and maintain regular contact between you, the student and Academic Supervisor
- Deal with any issues or problems arising promptly and professionally

Post placement:
- Provide activities and/or materials to support the student to make the most of their placement experience

How can you provide support?

We ask the Placement Provider to treat the student as an employee. They will need to be allocated a line manager and undergo appropriate induction and training suitable for the role.

A typical induction might include:
- an overview of the organisation
- an introduction to the use of equipment
- expectations about attendance and sickness/absence reporting
- an overview of company policies on equal opportunities, anti-harassment and disability.

Contact the relevant Faculty Placements Manager if you need further information or advice on aspects of induction.

We would want to know in all cases if a student’s attendance or engagement is unsatisfactory and would ask you to contact the Academic Supervisor if the student:
- has an unexplained absence from work
- goes on a prearranged holiday and does not return
- is making unsatisfactory progress
- or you wish to discontinue the placement

This is especially important if you recruit an international student on a Tier 4 General Student Visa, as the University, under its educational sponsor licence, must notify the UK Border Agency if a student’s attendance or engagement is unsatisfactory.

You will also need to inform students about the relevant health and safety regulations that apply to your premises and any accidents that occur should be reported in accordance with your organisation’s procedures. We will send you a health and safety checklist to you which will need to be completed within two weeks of the start of each placement.

It is the student’s responsibility to find suitable accommodation, however any assistance from you would be appreciated.
Your responsibilities

Before the placement:
- Sign a tri-party agreement between you, the University and the student
- Complete and return the health and safety checklist
- Ensure you have a work area for the student
- Allocate a Placement Supervisor (line manager) to the student
- Provide an induction session for the student and introduction to staff members

During the placement:
- Give the student the opportunity for real responsibility
- Provide suitable support, supervision and training for the role
- Ensure the Placement Supervisor (line manager) meets regularly with the student to review their progress
- Report any issues or concerns promptly to the University and/or the student as appropriate

Post placement:
- Complete the work placement feedback form
- Arrange an exit interview with the student
- Signpost any graduate employment opportunities for the student, if relevant
- Agree any follow-up arrangements with the University with regard to future placements

We look forward to working with you