Contents

Introduction 1
Why do a placement? 2
Getting started 3
Finding a placement 4
The application process 5
Selection process 6
Example of a standard CV 7
Overseas placements 9
International students 10
Success stories 11
After you get an offer 12
A Degree with Employment Experience is where you spend the penultimate year of your degree working on a placement with a company or organisation.

This option is available to undergraduate students at the University of Sheffield (with approval from your department).

In a highly competitive graduate labour market, relevant work experience is becoming more and more important to secure your step into a graduate career. A recent survey of the top 100 graduate recruiters warned that graduates who have had no previous work experience are unlikely to be successful in the graduate recruitment process and reported that one third of graduate positions would be filled by graduates who have already worked for their organisations – either through placements or vacation work.

Whether you want to work for one of the leading graduate employers, a smaller organisation, or pursue further study, a year spent on placement can provide you with many skills and benefits.

Use this booklet to help you find out more about the benefits of taking a placement year, get advice on finding and applying for placements and ultimately help secure the right placement for you!

Call into one of the twice-weekly drop in sessions in the Careers Service or attend one of the Degree with Employment Experience talks to find out more!

Claire Brooke
Placement Coordinator
Careers Service

www.sheffield.ac.uk/placements/students

DegreeWithEmploymentExperience
**Why do a placement?**

**Enhanced Employability...**

- Students with work experience are more valuable to organisations.
- Research has shown that the majority of students are offered a graduate job with their placement provider.

> “It’s all down to my placement experience, without it I would not have this amazing job!”

**Improved Finances...**

- Exploit the possibility of earning a salary and still benefit from student discounts and council tax exemption.

**Develop Key Skills...**

- An opportunity to develop practical skills that will be vital to succeed in your future career.
- Benefit from an enhanced perspective on your own development, aided by your placement journal on MOLE.

> “My time management and team working skills have improved and I am sure this will put me at an advantage when I return for my final year.”

**Gain Career Focus...**

- Try out an industry or organisation with low risk.
- Give yourself more time and opportunities to assess the graduate employment market.

> “My year at Bentley has given me good awareness of what a finance job entails and has therefore given me more focus on which career path I would like to take.”

**Experience the Graduate Recruitment Process...**

- Selection practices similar to graduate recruitment are used by many organisations when recruiting placement students.
- An opportunity to get ahead of your peers.

**Progress Academically...**

- Apply the theory you have learned in your degree and see the results.
- Return to University in your final year refreshed and with improved focus.

> “I have learnt a lot of new things, both academic knowledge and experimental skills. They have helped me realise my strengths and weaknesses.”
Getting started

Where to Look...
Applications can begin as early as the beginning of September in the Autumn term. The application process can take time, so start as soon as possible!

This depends on what you are looking to gain from your placement, consider:

- **Which area or industry you would like to work in...**
  Relevant to your degree or totally new?

- **The type of organisation you could apply to...**
  Large or small company, public service or not for profit?

- **Where you would like to work...**
  Around Sheffield, near home or further afield? Possibly London?

- **What type of experience you want to get from it...**
  Practical application of your studies or new technical knowledge?

Once you have an idea of what you want from your placement experience, come along to the careers service for help in finding and successfully applying to organisations.

Think About Finances...
Placements can be a great opportunity to rebalance your financial situation during your degree and improve your own financial intelligence.

**Consider what your income may be;**
- The majority of placements are paid but some can be voluntary.
- Average income for paid placements is approximately £14-17k but can be higher or lower depending on sector, organisation and location.
- Some companies offer sponsorship or bursaries to well performing students.
- The Erasmus scheme provides funding for placements in the EU.

**Consider your outgoings;**
- Location costs – research rent and utility costs where your placement is.
- Travel costs - will you be commuting to your workplace or travelling home at weekends?
Finding a placement

Your research method should depend on which type of organisation you are hoping to join. Placements are advertised as early as the Autumn Semester so it’s wise to be organised and invest time in research.

Large Organisations...

- If there is a particular company you are interested in then have a look at the careers section on their web pages, they may offer a formal and structured scheme.

- Large organisations also advertise through the Careers Service or on recruitment websites such as:
  - Prospects [www.prospects.ac.uk/work_experience.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/work_experience.htm)
  - Rate My Placement [www.ratemyplacement.co.uk](http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk)

Wider Research...

Use all the resources at your disposal as a University of Sheffield student;

- Careers Service
  - MyVacancies is accessible through MUSE.

- Placement and recruitment fairs
  - At the university, visit [www.sheffieldcareersfairs.ac.uk](http://www.sheffieldcareersfairs.ac.uk)
  - Further afield, such as the National Placement Exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham. For more info, see; [www.work-placement.co.uk](http://www.work-placement.co.uk)

- Internet and Business Press
  - Search engines, industry, sector and institutional websites.

Networking...

- Speak to friends and relatives who work in organisations that you are interested in.

- Utilise contacts such as tutors in your department and ask who the department’s industrial partners and affiliates are.

- Try searching LinkedIn for contacts [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

Speculative Approach...

- Send a targeted CV and Covering Letter to find out what opportunities they may have for you.

- This is a common approach in some sectors e.g legal, media, SME’s and non-profit organisations. It’s becoming more common in other areas too.
The application process

**LEVEL 1 – SPRING**

Thinking about doing a placement.
Research relevant organisations.

**LEVEL 2 – AUTUMN**

Decide that a placement is for you.
Placements are advertised on the web and at the careers fairs.
Do your research with help from the Careers Service.
Selection processes begin for larger organisations.
Help is available at the Careers Service for applications, tests, interviews and assessment centres.

Please note: Some selective placement providers such as those in Pharmaceutical R&D and the Government Economic Service advertise and have closing dates very early in the autumn term.

**LEVEL 2 – SPRING**

Selection process continues for large organisations and begins for smaller organisations.

Placements are offered to start in the summer.

**SUMMER**

Placement experience begins.
The application process

Application Forms
- Are usually online, particularly for larger private organisations.
- They will include personal details and may ask about your own motivations for applying and some competency questions designed to find out about your previous experience and potential to succeed in the role.

CV
- You may be asked to include a CV so it’s a good idea to get it up to date before you start the process. There is an example of a CV on the following page.

Covering Letter
- Some organisations may ask for a covering letter with a CV as an application; this is more common amongst smaller organisations and those with less financial resources, such as charities and Non Government Organisations.
- A covering letter can give you more freedom to express your motivations and your own skills but must be concise and relevant.

There is help available for these important tasks at the Careers Service where help with draft CV’s and covering letters and application forms is on offer.

Selection process

Psychometric & Ability Tests
- Predominantly administered online, designed to test your numerical and mental ability or personality traits.

Assessment Centres
- Assessment centres are designed to simulate working scenarios and test your problem solving ability.
- They are very likely in large organisations such as multinational companies and are much the same as the selection procedure for graduate training programmes.

A comprehensive range of assistance is on offer for all popular selection methods at the Careers Service; with workshops run regularly on practice tests and interviews as well as some helpful literature.
Laura Robinson

Term Address:
123 Fulwood Drive
Sheffield
S10 2UB

Home Address:
456 Heathcroft Ave
Sunbury on Thames
TW15 7LL

07989 123456
laurasample@sheffield.ac.uk

If you are including your term and home address include the dates when you are at the address.

PROFILE
Use this section to target your CV to the particular placement you are applying for. You might do this by outlining your current situation, subject you are studying, your unique selling points together with any relevant experience.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS
BA (Hons) Business Management
(Predicted a 2.1 based on first year exam results)

University of Sheffield (graduation 2012)

Use this space to include some information about the degree you are studying.

You may wish to include some of the relevant modules that you have studied and the marks you have achieved. The important thing is to differentiate yourself from others doing this course. It may be appropriate to mention course projects, presentations, prizes awarded

A level: Subject and grade awarded e.g Maths (A) English (B), Psychology (A)  June 2009
GCSES: 9 subjects at grade A-C including English (A), Maths (A) and Science (B)  June 2007

RELEVANT SKILLS
Use this section to reflect how you possess the transferable skills the employer is looking for.

Select four-six skills and provide evidence demonstrating how you have developed these skills. Evidence can come from work experience (paid or unpaid) including voluntary work, your academic work and other interests such as sport or other hobbies.

**Be aware that including a strong skills section in your CV can be quite hard to achieve**

Team work
- Worked as part of a team of 6 to create and implement fundraising events for a local hospice. Events included a sponsored abseil, fundraising dinner dance with silent auction and a pub quiz. In total we raised over £5000, the strength of our team and the roles we undertook within the team were key to exceeding our target.

Organisation
- As Vice Chair of University of Sheffield High Peak Club I am responsible for organising weekly walks and climbs within the Peak District. I also arrange for expert speakers to attend our monthly meetings. In August I organised a climbing holiday in the Alps for 25 members of the society, this involved booking flights, accommodation and the itinerary for the week. This required excellent organisational skills as I was organising this trip at the same time as working part time and studying for my first year exams.
WORK EXPERIENCE

In this section you can highlight your responsibilities and your main achievements.

Work experience can include any paid and unpaid employment including voluntary work.

If you are including a Skills section in your CV you may choose to use different examples of responsibilities /achievements to those included in the skills section.

Marris and Brooks – Part time Administrative Assistant
(10 hours per week during term time and full time during vacations)

January 10 – present

Working for a small training consultancy, main responsibilities include:

• Communicating with companies to provide information on the training courses we deliver, via email, telephone and mailshots

• Booking trainers and venues for training courses

• Arranging accommodation for delegates

• Generating invoices and chasing up nonpayment of invoices

Key achievements include:

• Re-designing the marketing literature to appeal to a wider audience, as a result of the new marketing materials, bookings for our training courses have increased by 10%

• Negotiating a reduced room hire charge for venues the company uses on a regular basis

Bluebell Hospice Volunteer Fundraiser
July 2009 – present

• Participating in fundraising activities for the hospice

• Fundraising events organised include sponsored abseil, pub quizzes, dinner dance and selling of charity lottery tickets. We have so far raised over £5000 for the hospice.

Go Out Doors – Part-time Sales Assistant
July 2009 – January 2010

• Operating the till and handling cash

• Providing advice to customers on the clothing and equipment

• In December 2009 I was awarded ‘employee of the month’ based on my sales for the month.

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Vice-Chair High Peak Club
October 2009 – present

• Elected Vice Chair of this student led club which currently has 65 members

• Organising walks, climbs and other activities in the Peak District and further afield

• Coordinating monthly meetings and arranging for expert speakers to give talks at meetings

• Chairing meetings in the absence of the chair

• Membership of the club has increased by 25% over the past year and new members are impressed by how well organised the club is and the variety of activities offered

REFERENCES

Available upon request

Top tip! Convert your CV into a pdf to ensure that the format does not change when you email or upload it. This also means it can be read easily on Macs, IPhones or blackberry devices.

This sample CV is intended as a guide only and you are recommended to refer to the resources available on http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/gettingajob/cvs.html and seek advice from the Careers Service.
An overseas placement could give you increased self-confidence, cultural awareness and international adaptability in a globalising economy and labour market. However, it will require more planning, may be expensive and can be more challenging than a placement in the UK.

**Financial Considerations...**
- Flights and travel to your host country.
- Insurance for travel, medical and personal belongings.
- Fees to cover embassy and visa services.
- Cost of living in host country.
- Accommodation costs, particularly those that will be required upfront.
- Funding for placements in the EU may be available through the Erasmus scheme. Visit [www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/erasmus)

**Medical Factors...**
- Take a well equipped First Aid kit.
- Find out what vaccinations are needed and if you need to take malaria medication.
- Have a dental check up prior to departing.
- Order any prescriptions that you may need before you depart.

**Social Aspects...**
You will be spending a year living and working in another culture with different customs and etiquette, which can be a positive experience if approached in the appropriate way.

It is important to research the country and area you will be going to live and work in before applying for a placement there. See the placements website for more information.

**Language...**
It is very important to consider the language that is spoken in your host country. Find out whether you will need to be able to speak it fluently.

**Further Information...**
The placements website has more information on how to overcome language barriers (see below for details). More information and guidance on working overseas is available via the Placements resource on MOLE. [www.sheffield.ac.uk/placements/students](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/placements/students)
International students

As an international student you can undertake a placement year providing:

- It is an approved part of your degree programme or your degree programme can be extended to include the year. (The University of Sheffield courses named Degrees with Employment Experience / Year in Industry have approved placements as part of the programme).

- The placement does not extend beyond the end of your course.

- You remain a registered student with the university.

- You continue to pay the appropriate tuition fee.

If you are an international student and considering undertaking a Degree with Employment Experience, please speak to International Student Services for advice on extending your visa first of all.

- International Student Services can be contacted on 0114 222 1269 or international.students@sheffield.ac.uk

The Student Advice Centre provides advice and information on various specialist matters relating to international students.

- The Student Advice Centre can be contacted on 0114 222 8660 or advice@sheffield.ac.uk

Some International Inspiration...

Muhammad Faizan Sheikh - BEng Electrical Engineering with Employment Experience at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)

“I worked in Electrical Power Supply systems; carrying out research and development projects for current and future models of cars. When I started university, I had questions about the type of career I’d want after my studies. The placement year has given me the chance to experience different job roles within JLR. It gave me an insight of the work environment in research, product development and production. Due to my hard work and dedication, I have been offered a place on their graduate recruitment scheme in product development. I recommend every second year student to make a placement year a priority and give whatever it takes to secure a placement in a reputable company.”
Holly Beavitt-Pike -
BSc Archaeology with
Employment Experience
at the Peak District National
Park Authority - Conservation
Archaeologist

"Much of my placement was based in
the Park Authority offices in Bakewell,
where I reviewed planning applications
to determine if they will affect any
archaeological remains. I also carried out
agri-environmental consultations, wrote
up site visits and used GIS (geographic
information systems) to create
maps and assess the archaeological
significance of sites threatened by
development. I regularly visited sites
across the Peak District to look at ways
in which archaeology can be managed
in a sustainable manner. The job came
with quite a lot of responsibility! This
placement has been a real success and
I have loved every minute of it, including
walking up lots of big hills in rain, sleet
and snow! The opportunity to
do this placement has allowed me to
continue my love of archaeology, and be
at the forefront of managing this valuable
resource for future generations.”

Holly has now graduated with a first class
degree in Archeological Science and has
secured a position as Archaeology and
Heritage Assistant for the Lake District
National Park Authority.

Henry Cormack –
BSc Economics and Politics with
Employment Experience at the
Government Economic Service

“I was given my first choice department,
which meant working at HM Treasury
during the year it was responsible for
enacting the biggest rescue of Britain’s
banks in recent history. My job as an
Assistant Economist involved a range of
tasks – from day to day routine matters,
such as preparing briefings for ministers
and civil servants; to more challenging
and exciting work, such as undertaking
a project to examine the impact of the
recession on the UK’s economic growth.
I was also lucky enough to be allocated
a training budget by HM Treasury,
which I used to develop my (lack of!)
skills in delivering presentations. This
is something I’ve benefitted from well
beyond the duration of my placement,
which goes to show how valuable
undertaking a placement can be.”
After you get an offer

Once you have received an offer of a placement, there is an administrative process that must be followed in order to successfully transfer onto a Degree with Employment Experience.

Transfer to a Degree with Employment Experience...

- Inform your department that you have an offer; they may wish to see a copy of the job description and contract.

- Inform the Placement Coordinator, health and safety checks can then be made by the university.

- A change of status form will then need to be filled in and handed in to your department.

Pre-Placement Necessities...

- Fill in a contact details form prior to starting your placement and give a copy to the Placement Coordinator and your department.

- Find out key facts about your placement:
  - Written notice of salary
  - Location of the place of work
  - Holiday entitlement
  - Sick pay entitlement
  - Start and end date of placement

- Attend a pre-placement briefing session, usually held in May.

- Make sure that you are registered for the placement resource accessible through MOLE. This can be done by emailing the Placement Coordinator.

- Arrange accommodation for the duration of your placement.

The Placement Coordinator is happy to see you on an individual basis to discuss any pre-placement preparation that you may need to make.

Drop-in sessions take place from 1-2pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during term time. Appointments are not necessary.
Placement top tips

• Apply in plenty of time, pay attention to closing dates.
• Look at the information the company is requesting.
• Be flexible with your location; wanting to stay in Sheffield = limiting placements!
• Apply for as many placements as possible.
• Choose placements on their whole offerings, not just on salary or location; look at training and future opportunities too.
Contact details

Claire Brooke, Placement Coordinator
Careers Service, 388 Glossop Road

T: 0114 222 0962

E: placements@sheffield.ac.uk

Drop-in sessions take place from 1-2pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during term time. Appointments are not necessary.

Facebook: DegreeWithEmploymentExperience

Placement DEE