

# Placement Starter Guide

March 2017

# Congratulations on securing your placement!

You're about to gain invaluable work and life experience that will benefit you in your final year and future career.

We hope that by the end of your placement you will have learned a lot from the experience including:

- knowing how your programme discipline applies to industry, and vice-versa
- improving your communication, self-management, problem-solving and decision-making skills
- understanding the way an organisation is structured and operates
- reflecting on what you want from your future career.

In this guide you will find the general information you need to get started on your placement, including the support available for your placement, how to best prepare for the time ahead and some top tips to ensure that you get the most out of your time on placement.

Guidance on the academic requirements for your placement or work-based learning module will usually be provided separately by your academic team.

If there is anything that we have not covered in this guide that you would like to ask about, please get in touch with us.

UWE Bristol's Placement Management team  
+44 (0)117 32 82220

Ask us a question through InfoHub | <https://infohub.uwe.ac.uk/Questions.chpx>

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# Confirming your placement details

## Receiving an offer

The job requirements should be negotiated between you and the employer, but the placement should be relevant to your programme of study and must enable you to meet the requirements and learning objectives of your placement module. Details about work experience and placement requirements are included on the [programme](#) and [module](#) databases.

Before you accept the position you should ensure that you've clarified the role and responsibilities and the terms involved. Refer to the checklist at the end of this guide.

Consider your options thoroughly and don't accept an offer verbally or in writing until you are certain.

For more information, please refer to our [how do I accept or reject a job offer](#) guidance on Infohub.

## Withdrawing from or declining an offer

If you accept a placement you are advised to decline all other offers and withdraw any outstanding applications. When declining an offer, do so as soon as possible to enable the employer to make alternative arrangements.

If you wish to defer acceptance, please contact us for advice on how to proceed.

## Confirming your placement to UWE Bristol

We want you to have a successful placement. To ensure this we will check that your placement role is a good academic fit and will allow you to meet the learning outcomes of the placement module. We also take our duty of care to you seriously and need to make sure you're going on a safe and viable placement.

Once you have agreed the role with your employer, you will need to complete a [Placement Proposal Form](#) so that your placement can be approved by us. **Remember – you can't start a placement until it has been approved by UWE Bristol.**

Once we have received your Placement Proposal Form we will then provide you with a Health and Safety Form which is to be signed by yourself and your employer. You will then be expected to attend a placement briefing in the spring term with the Placement Management Team and academic staff. This will prepare you for your placement work and brief you on the academic assessment during the year.

Full details of the process are included on the [confirming your placement](#) webpage.

## Registration for your placement year

Please note that approval of your placement does mean you're registered with UWE Bristol. You will still need to [register and pay your fees](#) each academic year. For the majority this is an online process and once registered you'll be able to:

- Submit academic work and have it marked.
- Receive academic support.
- Use the University IT, library and other support services.
- Have your tuition fee loan released to the University by the Student Loans Company, giving you access to student funding
- Qualify for council tax exemption and other student discounts.

## Information for students with a Tier 4 Student Visa

If you have a Tier 4 Student Visa, you cannot start your placement until the official end of UWE Bristol's summer term. Full details of these restrictions and how to get advice can be found on our Infohub FAQ – [Placement Information for International Students with a Tier 4 Student Visa](#).

Once on placement, your employer is required to notify us of any unauthorised absence from the workplace during your placement. For a placement at UWE Bristol you are required to report for [attendance monitoring](#) at least three times during the academic year.

You must keep your contact details up to date (e.g. your UK address, telephone number etc.) via [myUWE](#) so that UWE Bristol and the Home Office can contact you if needed.

## Preparing for your placement

**"I'd tell everyone to do a placement, it was definitely one of the best things I've done. Not only have I gained more applied knowledge in my subject but I have had the opportunity to link existing knowledge with theory and also real life case studies".**

Rose, BSc(Hons) Psychology, placement at Southmead Hospital

## Updating your details in myUWE and Infohub

Ensure that you keep your contact details and term-time address up-to-date on [myUWE](#). Don't forget that we'll use your UWE Bristol email address for all communication, so continue to check it regularly.

In addition, remember to update your [Placement Proposal Form](#) in Infohub if any of your placement details change.

## Ongoing health conditions, illnesses and disabilities

If you have an ongoing health condition, illness or disability, you may want to discuss how you can get the most from your time on placement. This can include talking through any support requirements or adjustments you need and how to arrange this. Or, you may want advice on how to consult with your manager so you can manage your placement effectively.

Please contact the [Disability Service](#) and ask to speak to an Adviser about your placement. You can also contact us for general advice and information.

## Evidencing your student status

From time to time placement students are asked to provide evidence of their status as a full-time student. There are some standard status letters that you can print off on [myUWE](#) (under 'My details/Documents').

For anything else contact the Placement Management Team on 0117 32 82220.

## Health and Safety

### Employer responsibilities

Your employer is responsible for your health and safety during your employment. You should receive appropriate health and safety information and training soon after you arrive at the company. If you are not satisfied with the health and safety briefing, arrangements, training, etc. provided by your employer, please speak to your manager in the first instance so that they can rectify the problem. If this does not resolve your concerns, contact us immediately.

### Your responsibilities

As an employee of the placement provider, you are also responsible for your own health and safety and have a duty of care to yourself and others around you. You will have completed an initial risk assessment as part of your Placement Proposal Form and where appropriate been provided with separate guidance about mitigating those risks. Keep risk factors under

review and if they change or are different to what you expected you should make appropriate amendments and resubmit your Placement Proposal Form.

### **Other considerations**

If working in extreme environments, there may be further precautions you can take to reduce risks, such as taking extra fluids in an extremely dry/hot environment, or wearing extra warm clothing and taking breaks in cold environments.

You may be required to travel to and from your placement, or travel as part of your placement to different locations. If you need to travel daily, try to locate yourself close to your placement, so that the commute doesn't become too onerous.

If using your own vehicle for commuting to and from, or between locations, you will need to make your insurance company aware, as there may be implications to your insurance policy.

## **Working abroad**

There's a lot to think about when you are planning a trip to work abroad. UWE Bristol's [guide for working and studying abroad](#) is a good place to start – it contains information on visas, healthcare, finances, accommodation and other key things to consider.

Please be aware that outside the UK health and safety culture and legislation will vary. If your employer does not have the equivalent of UK Employer's Liability insurance or you are not covered by it, please contact us to discuss.

As a UWE Bristol student on placement you are covered by the UWE Bristol Travel Insurance policy. You can find this on the [confirming your placement webpage](#) under Overseas Placements.

We strongly recommend that you register for country specific alerts through [Travel Security Online](#) using the user name **umal70** and password **28y64**.

If you'd like to talk through any aspects of working abroad, please contact the Placement Management Team.

## **Money matters**

### **Fees and funding**

In order to complete your registration you will need to pay fees for the academic year. The placement module fees for returning (i.e. current) students are listed for each programme on the [tuition fees webpage](#).

You can apply for a student loan to cover your tuition fees and help towards maintenance during your time on placement. You should submit your application for funding to [Student Finance](#) prior to the deadline.

Please note that for the maintenance loan you will normally only receive a reduced amount. However, for unpaid placements there are exceptions in certain sectors/institutions where you can apply for the full package. You can find a full list of these and other useful information on the [Fees and Funding webpages](#) under the section 'Placement Support'.

There is not normally any other funding you can apply for if you are earning a salary, but the [UWE Bristol Money Advice and Funds service](#) will be able to discuss the options more fully with you. If you currently receive other forms of funding please check with the appropriate sources to determine whether these will continue to be available during your placement.

## **Funding for students on overseas placements**

Students working outside the UK in the EU or Switzerland may be entitled to [Erasmus+ funding](#) during their placement. Once you have confirmed your placement to us we will notify the Study Abroad team who will contact you directly regarding the Erasmus+ grant.

You may also be eligible to apply for the [UWE Bristol Go Global Bursary](#) which is designed to support students working overseas. This gives current UK domiciled undergraduate students who are in receipt of the Student Finance Maintenance grant or equivalent the chance to apply for up to £1000 to help them undertake a paid or voluntary overseas opportunity.

UWE Bristol's [guide to working and studying abroad](#) covers general funding options including general banking advice when overseas and UWE's Study Abroad Funding webpage provides advice on funding queries including Erasmus+.

## **Council Tax**

Placement students are still full-time students and are therefore exempt from Council Tax. You will need to let your local Council know so that they can record this against their records. You can print a certificate from [myUWE](#).

## **Income Tax and National Insurance (NI)**

You may have to pay income tax and National Insurance on your earnings, depending on your salary level. Tax and NI is deducted monthly from your salary in accordance with your personal tax code.



To make sure you are paying tax at the right rate take your P45 and / or P60 (if you have them from previous jobs) with you when you start your placement.

## 18+ Student Oyster Photocard

If you're on placement in Greater London you may be eligible for an 18+ Student Oyster photocard. Full details of eligibility and how to apply on line can be found on the [Transport for London \(TFL\) website](#). Before you make your application please ensure you have updated [myUWE](#) to reflect your address in Greater London. Make sure you apply through the placement student route.

## Starting your placement

**"They don't expect you to know everything straight away. Companies realise that this is your first time in a real working environment and give you time to settle in. Ask loads of questions and don't be afraid of being wrong".**

Charlotte, BA(Hons) Business and Law, placement at Glaxosmithkline

## Workplace expectations

Each placement organisation will have its own code of conduct and/or acceptable standards of behaviour at work. These will include time-keeping, dress code, internet use, expense claims and sickness reporting.

As an employee of the company it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with these rules and ensure that you comply with them.

The company rules and procedures, formally documented or informal, should be made available to you during your induction. Ask your manager first if you are ever unsure.

## Student and employee – dual role

On placement you will undertake a dual role - you will be an employee of your placement company at the same time as being a UWE Bristol student. As a representative of the University, you should behave appropriately and professionally at all times whilst on placement.

It can be a challenge to manage both of these roles simultaneously - you may be required to conduct research or complete course work, whilst managing the daily demands of your role, so good organisational skills are paramount.

You will be studying an academic module whilst on placement, and it is expected that you will keep your employer informed about your university requirements where appropriate.

Academic advice will be available from the start of term on Blackboard. You can also continue to make use of all UWE Bristol [support services](#), and the [Library](#) - many of the resources are available to borrow remotely.

## Coping with the first few days

Remember, it always takes time to settle into a new job. The following tips can help you to settle into your placement.

- Work through the induction checklist at the back of this guide, and follow your company's induction procedures.
- Don't try to run before you can walk – everyone needs to learn the basics first. Own your mistakes and learn from them.
- Be professional at all times. Show up on time, don't leave early and avoid using social media or mobile phones for personal calls and texts. Keep your manager informed about any absences – planned or otherwise.
- Update your manager regularly about your progress and ask questions if you are unclear about what is expected or if you have any support needs.
- You may feel really tired at first - starting a new job is physically draining.
- Be flexible and prepared to "muck in" and do anything, especially at first.
- Work on your personal relationships with your manager and colleagues
- Be enthusiastic - show them that you are determined to learn.
- Develop trust – more challenging work may come your way!

We'll get in touch with you during your first month on placement to see how you're getting on, but if you do have any concerns or just need to talk things through, please get in touch with us so that we can offer you appropriate support and advice.

## Sickness reporting

Make sure you familiarise yourself with the company's policy on reporting sickness and ask your manager if you're unsure.

We don't need to know if you take holiday or short amounts of sick leave. However, if you are off sick for any longer than two weeks, please contact us so that we can discuss any longer term implications and advise on available help or support.

## Problems on placement

Although the experience of being on placement is usually a very positive one for students, difficulties can sometimes arise, for example:

- Performance problems/making mistakes
- Lack of relevant/challenging work
- Difficulties in getting on with colleagues/manager
- Unacceptable behaviour at work i.e. bullying or harassment
- Financial worries
- Disciplinary action taken by the employer
- Redundancy

If you have any problems during your placement please contact us. Please do not be embarrassed or worried to raise a problem or concern - if we are not aware of the issue, we cannot help you to resolve it. Most problems can be resolved if nipped in the bud early.

We will treat the information you give us confidentially and in accordance with our data privacy statement.

If you think that your placement will be finishing early please contact us. You may need to find additional work experience to meet the requirements of your course, depending on the length and nature of the work already done, but we may be able to support you in securing another position or offer advice on alternatives.

## Returning to UWE Bristol

**"I believe that my placement has affected my future decisions. Although I would still love to work in a technical role, I would now consider applying for other roles which I would have probably avoided before. It has opened up so many more possibilities and I am grateful for it".**

Liam, BSc(Hons) Forensic Computing and Security, placement at UK Hydrographic Office

## On completion of your placement – your feedback

We require all students to complete our feedback form, which will be sent to you near the end of your placement. Your feedback will help to improve the experience of our future students.

We may also ask you to submit a case study or blog – so if you're working on an interesting project, feel free to take some photos!

## Returning to your final year

Previous placement students cite how much their placement helps them to perform better and maximise their time during their final year. Check out your course Facebook group to keep informed and get to know your new cohort of students. Don't forget to register for your final year and organise your accommodation.

## Maximising your employability

During your placement you will be [developing important transferable skills and experience](#) which will benefit you in future job applications and interviews.

Don't forget that further support is available from [UWE Bristol Careers](#) to help meet your career needs. You can access advice and guidance on writing your CV or application form, help with searching for jobs and advice on more complex career issues.

## Celebrating UWE Bristol Talent

When you return to UWE Bristol look out for details about '[Celebrating UWE Bristol Talent](#)', which recognises the fantastic achievements of students who have represented the University through work placements, internships and work experience.

## Complete your UWE Bristol Futures Award

Completing a placement counts as one of the three activities needed to gain your [UWE Bristol Futures Award](#)! This is an employability award that recognises the extra-curricular activities that you can get involved in whilst at university. The Award has an entry on the employer-recognised [Higher Education Achievement Report \(HEAR\)](#) and is noted at your graduation ceremony.

# Support during placement and useful contacts

We hope that this starter pack gives you the key information and advice to make the most of your placement. If there is anything that isn't covered, please get in touch.

Good luck on your placement and we look forward to hearing how you're getting on!

## Placement Management Team

0117 32 82220 | Ask a question online: <https://infohub.uwe.ac.uk/Questions.chpx>

## Information Point

Access all student support services, including Money Advice, Disability and Wellbeing. No question is too big or small – visit, call, tweet or email.

[infopoint@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:infopoint@uwe.ac.uk) | [www.uwe.ac.uk/students](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/students) | 0117 32 85678 | @UWEBristol

## The Students' Union Advice Centre

0117 32 82676 | [advice@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:advice@uwe.ac.uk)

## IT helpdesk (24/7)

0117 32 83612 | [www.uwe.ac.uk/its](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/its)

## Wellbeing Service

0117 32 86268 | [www.uwe.ac.uk/wellbeing](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/wellbeing)

Normal UWE Bristol opening hours are: Monday to Thursday 08:30 - 17:00, Friday 08:30 - 16:30 all year except public holidays.

# Checklists

## Placement offer checklist | Do you have:

- A job title and department or location
- A written job description outlining the role and responsibilities
- Details of a named contact at the organisation
- Confirmation of hours of work and anticipated start/finish dates
- Confirmation of pay/other benefits
- Details of the period of notice required for either party to end the contract
- Details of any probationary period
- Details of any conditions of offer, e.g. subject to completion of a medical examination, satisfactory references, proof of exam results; security clearance, etc.
- Agreed access to data or department to conduct research (where applicable to academic requirements)

## Confirmation of placement checklist

- Ensure you've clarified the role and responsibilities and terms involved with your employer – refer to the 'receiving an offer' checklist above.
- Decline all other offers and withdraw any outstanding applications.
- Notify us of the placement details by submitting the Placement Proposal Form.
- Complete Health and Safety form, to be signed by you and your employer.
- Attend placement briefing session.
- Keep focused on your academic studies. If you fail modules you may not be eligible to go on placement.
- Register and pay your fees to UWE Bristol.
- Update contact details on myUWE, including email and term time addresses.
- Ensure the Placement Proposal Form is kept up to date throughout your placement.
- Read the Placement Starter Guide

## Placement induction checklist

Your placement employer should give you an induction to your new job and the company. Use this general checklist as a guide/reminder of the sorts of things you should be finding out about when you start work and if your employer does not cover anything – ask!

### Basics

- Location of your workstation/PC
- Working hours
- Lunch, tea/coffee arrangements
- Staff ID cards and security arrangements, if any
- Computer ID
- Email address
- Telephone – answering, transferring, holding, retrieving calls
- Car parking arrangements
- Dress code
- Work policies – e.g. disciplinary, grievance, equality, use of IT, etc.

### Introduction to your job/department

- Meet your manager and/or day-to-day supervisor
- Meet the other staff in your department
- Agree role objectives and targets
- Get an overview of department activities and work cycles
- Find the organisational structure, corporate objectives and mission statement
- Is there any special jargon/acronyms or special terminology you need to know?
- Arrange for any specialist training

### Holiday and sick leave

- How much leave to you get
- How do you book holiday

- Are there any restrictions on when you can go on holiday
- Who do you notify when you're ill
- How do you notify them?

### **Health and safety**

- Who are the health and safety representatives and first aiders
- What are the emergency/security numbers (internal and external)
- How do you report an accident or hazard
- What is the smoking policy

### **While you're on placement checklist**

- Keep in contact with UWE Bristol
- Check your UWE Bristol email address regularly
- Update placement contact details via the online Placement Proposal Form as necessary
- Notify the Placement Management Team if you have any problems or concerns
- Contact your Visiting Tutor once assigned (if applicable)
- Give your manager the Employer Pack
- Diarise any academic deadlines