

GUIDE



for
placement providers

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in offering a placement year opportunity to University of Reading students.

A Professional Placement Year is available on most of our undergraduate programmes and is a fantastic opportunity to build up your talent pipeline to meet recruitment needs, be they for broad or specialist roles. Please see a list of our **undergraduate courses**

We have a network of well established relationships with placement providers of all sizes, locally, nationally and globally, which we are keen to grow on behalf of our students.

Whether you are offering a placement year for the first time, or you are a seasoned recruiter of students and graduates, our team are keen to help you find the right students for your placement year opportunity.

Placements Work!

Placement year students can bring significant benefits to any organisation, by contributing their practical skills, technical knowledge and innovative thinking. If you would like to see some examples, please visit **THIS WORKS** for some inspirational testimonials from students and placement providers.



The key ingredients of a successful placement year

As the placement year is an official component of our degree programmes and counts for 120 credits awarded on a pass or fail basis, each placement year experience should provide students with an authentic opportunity to grow professionally, whilst developing and exploring skills and knowledge in readiness for life beyond graduation.

In the case of our more specialist degrees, students should also have the opportunity to contextualise and apply their academic learning and technical knowledge in the workplace.

Assessment and reflection

To pass their placement year, students are required to complete and submit a variety of reflective assessments. Assessments may include a combination of a report, poster, presentation, audiocast or video. The assessment is normally submitted when students return to their course but there are usually opportunities for placement providers to offer some valuable feedback during the placement. It is important that placement providers let students know what information should not be included in their assessment content, especially if the work they are doing is of a confidential or sensitive nature.

Availability

Placement students are available from mid to late June each year following the summer examination and assessment period. Students must return to their programme in time for their first week of semester 1 (September) after their placement year ends.

Our students must undertake a minimum of 30 weeks to qualify for the placement year, but it is preferable to complete a full year, so they have every opportunity to develop, learn and contribute.



Your responsibility as a Placement Provider

- **Placement role.** We ask that placement providers share a clear role description and person specification, outlining their key responsibilities, and provide students with access to an onboarding induction alongside suitable training and development opportunities to help them thrive during their placement.
- We advise placement providers provide clear goals and objectives and offer regular opportunities for appraisals and line manager feedback. **Please remember our students are learning** whilst in the role and this may be their first professional experience.
- **Equipment.** If the placement involves any remote or hybrid working, placement providers should issue students with technical equipment and software required to perform their duties and provide regular opportunities for support. If PPE is required, it is important that this is provided for the student in line with HSE standards and regulations to ensure the student will be safe whilst performing their role.
- **Contractual rights.** We also ask that students have access to the same employment rights as their colleagues, including sick and holiday pay, appropriate to their working hours. All students should be covered by employer / public liability insurance for the full duration of the placement. **If the placement is unpaid**, placement providers must sign and return our university placement agreement before the placement starts as this protects the student's rights to use their placement as a formal aspect of their degree and also provides terms and conditions relevant to all parties involved.
- All placement providers are asked to complete and sign a **Placement Health and Safety checklist** so that students can complete their **Placement Pathways**, our student placement approvals system.
- **Paid placements.** The national average placement year salary can range between £20,500 and £27,000 depending upon location and sector and of course London and South East weighting.



- **Unpaid placements.** In the interest of fair access for all students, regardless of background, we ask that placement providers consider paying a reasonable salary, in line with the national average to prevent students from facing financial challenges during their placement year. We understand that some sectors including, but not limited to, arts, creative, heritage, clinical and animal conservation may offer low or unpaid voluntary placements. Whilst we do not prevent students from taking up valuable and legitimate placements with the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills, we are unable to actively promote placements below the adult minimum wage on our vacancies board unless it is a genuine voluntary or charitable role.
 - **Flexible.** If your placement is unpaid or low paid please consider offering a flexible or part-time working arrangement across the placement year, so that students may take up part-time work to supplement their finances. Some placement providers are also able to offer accommodation, travel expenses and food vouchers which can make a big difference.
 - **Student visa holders** are permitted to undertake a placement year if it is an assessed and integral part of their studies, and can work full-time whilst on the placement. We are required to monitor their attendance during the placement year as part of our sponsorship duties and request that placement providers let us know about any unauthorised or prolonged absences as soon as possible. Student visa sponsorship may be affected if a student does not attend as required.
 - **Equal, accessible and supportive working environment.** If placement students have specific needs and disabilities, we ask that employers provide a supportive working environment, allowing for reasonable adjustments wherever possible, enabling individuals to contribute and develop alongside their peers and colleagues. In addition, we expect placement providers to provide equality, fairness and respect for placement students, whether temporary, part-time or full-time in line with their own policies on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and all students feel safe, and able to raise concerns, during their placement.
 - **Reporting Concerns.** The University expects the placement providers it works with to have appropriate processes in place for dealing with any disclosure of harassment, bullying and/or sexual misconduct, including fair investigation procedures. Any student making a disclosure or against whom a disclosure is made will be supported appropriately by both the partner institution and the University as required.
- We ask if a student has an unauthorised absence, that placement providers contact us immediately on 0118 3788354 or placements@reading.ac.uk so that we can undertake an immediate welfare check.**





The University's responsibilities

- **As the primary education provider** for our placement students and sponsor for students requiring a visa, we have a duty of care to monitor our students' attendance, wellbeing and attainment of placement learning throughout their time on placement.
 - **We also have a duty of care** to ensure the due diligence of all placement opportunities and that the relevant placement administration is processed before the placement can begin. We provide travel and medical insurance for students undertaking their placements overseas.
 - **Placement Visits** Our Placement and Academic Tutors will conduct a minimum of one visit during the placement year, which should involve time with the placement student and supervisor independently and together. Visits may be conducted via Teams, but we always endeavour to visit in person, wherever possible.
 - **Supporting Disability and Inclusion.** We are responsible for working alongside students and their placement providers to ensure appropriate and inclusive adjustments are made where necessary and possible.
 - **We are committed to our students' ongoing support and welfare during their placement.** Students have access to the same support and facilities they have during their time on campus, including remote support.
 - All students are asked to attend a **placement pre-departure briefing** to assist their transition from studies to placement in the final semester before their placement commences.
- These sessions are run by the placement team alongside placement tutors and includes topics such as professional behaviours and values, placement assessments, managing wellbeing and time management.

Responsibilities of our students

- **All students are expected to follow expectations** set out by their placement provider including contractual obligations, health and safety requirements and meet the expected values and behaviours of the organisation.
- **Students are also expected to inform their placement provider of any access or support requirements**, including any changes to their health or changes of circumstance during the placement so that appropriate support can be considered.
- **Students are expected to attend their compulsory university placement year visit**, alongside their supervisor / line manager and update both parties of any concerns or challenges impacting their ability to perform their responsibilities during the placement year.
- **Students are responsible for reporting any major concerns or incidents** impacting their placement to both their placement provider and the University so that they may receive support from all partners involved.
- **Students should also provide adequate notice** to both placement provider and the University, should they need to leave their placement early and also should notify us of any changes to placement role, location or change in line management. Failure to do so can result in a placement year not being awarded as well as implications for student visa holders. Students must also register any placement related overseas travel with the university.
- **Students are also required to respond to University emails**, especially those regarding monitoring and attendance during their placement year and they should regularly check their student email account.

The Value of a Placement – in their own words.

Placement Provider testimonial

“ We have had several University of Reading students with us as Honorary Assistant Psychologists, and they have successfully completed their professional placement years with good support from the University. It is a pleasure to host the students because they add significant value to our service. The students bring up-to-date theory which we use to inform our interventions and care pathways, and they hold strong research skills which helps us to conduct local service evaluations and audit projects. We enjoy working with Reading students and look forward to meeting the next round of applicants ”

***Dr Shaw Tearle, Senior Clinical Psychologist Buckinghamshire
Community Learning Disability Health Team***

Placement Student Testimonial

“ I have thoroughly enjoyed my placement year, as it has helped me develop both professionally and personally. I am within an international PR & Communications team at HP, and have been given a solid foundation of the industry. I have also picked up on a lot of “unspoken” learnings, from office etiquette, to industry specific thinking, and it has all been greatly helpful. Finally, my placement year has been incredibly helpful in my future career prospects. I have already secured a Public Affairs Internship for this coming summer, something that I would not have been able to do without this time at HP. ”

William, BA Politics and International Relations

Academic Placement Tutor

“ Our placement students are highly motivated individuals who never fail to impress me and their employers. They always enjoy the placement experience, learn a wealth of new skills, and come back to the University often with very clear ideas on their career plans. For me, catching up with them on their placement and hearing about that experience is one of the most enjoyable aspects of my role. ”

***Professor Nicolas Branch,
Head of Geography and Environmental Sciences.***

Other ways of engaging with our students.

If you are interested in offering other types of placements , work-based learning, internships or mentoring within your organisation, we have a range of alternative schemes and opportunities which can connect you to our fantastic students.

In addition to placement year programmes, many of our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes also offer a shorter placement option to help students contextualise their learning in practice, whilst exploring and developing their skills and career paths. For more information on all curricular placements, please email [**placements@reading.ac.uk**](mailto:placements@reading.ac.uk)

Thrive Mentoring

Thrive Mentoring is our flagship mentoring programme at the University of Reading, which aims to support our students in gaining career clarity through connecting with a Thrive Mentor. The programme has been running since 2014, achieving University of Reading's Collaborative Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning. For more information, please email [**mentoring@reading.ac.uk**](mailto:mentoring@reading.ac.uk)

The Reading Internship Scheme

The Reading Internship Scheme connects University of Reading undergraduate students with organisations through short-term, paid internships. We welcome all types of internships whether that's social media, data analysis, marketing, research, quantity surveying, project management... the list goes on!! Salary contribution grants are available for charities and SME's. For further information on RIS please email [**ris@reading.ac.uk**](mailto:ris@reading.ac.uk)

We offer a huge range of opportunities to engage with our students, from Careers and Placement Fairs to employer networking events and panels as well as a platform to promote your opportunities and raise your profile on campus. For more information, please visit our Employer Services pages [**Employer services | University of Reading**](#)



A final word from our Vice Chancellor

“ A placement year can be a truly transformative experience, allowing students to apply academic knowledge and build professional skills. We are committed to working with employers to nurture future talent together, helping students thrive and contribute to the global economy as graduates. ”

*Professor Robert Van Der Noort,
CBE, Vice Chancellor*



Guide for placement providers

i For more information,
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