WHAT IS A ‘PLACEMENT YEAR’?

A PLACEMENT YEAR IS A PERIOD OF WORK EXPERIENCE EMBEDDED INTO A FOUR YEAR DEGREE PROGRAMME.

A work placement is a great way to gain an insight into a particular industry or role, improve your employability and gain valuable experience that will boost your chances of securing a graduate position. When you graduate, the work placement will be recognised on your degree transcript and Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

Did you know? During your placement year you are still fully registered as a student at the University of Essex and so are entitled to full support and access to facilities.

WHO CAN DO A PLACEMENT YEAR?

MOST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY CAN DO A PLACEMENT YEAR!

Are you currently registered on a 4 year course including placement year? If so, then you’re all set!

- Not registered yet? Get in touch with your Faculty Placements Team and they’ll advise on what to do next.
- Remember you need to pass your exams to proceed to the placement year, and some Departments/Schools may have their own requirements.

Did you know? Your 1st year really does count! Many organisations ask for your 1st year grade and very competitive schemes often request a 2:1 or above.

HOW DO I FIND A PLACEMENT YEAR?

WHilst you have many resources and areas of support from the university, it is your responsibility to find and apply for a placement. But remember we’re here to help you every step of the way.

Your Faculty Placements Team can help you throughout the process. The majority of placements are advertised online, here are some key websites to get you started:

- www.essex.ac.uk/see/careerhub
- www.ratemyplacement.co.uk
- www.targetjobs.co.uk
- www.gradcracker.co.uk

Remember to check national job sites such as Indeed.co.uk and Monster.co.uk to see opportunities from organisations that may not be listed elsewhere.

Did you know? Students have found placements by researching local employers and approaching them directly. This is particularly effective with charities, not-for-profit or small and medium sized companies (SMEs).

www.essex.ac.uk/see/careerhub
WILL I BE PAID FOR MY PLACEMENT?

MOST ORGANISATIONS PAY YOU A SALARY WHilst ON PLACEMENT.

The amount paid varies depending on the industry sector and organisation but the average is £16,000-£18,000. However, in some cases, organisations may offer placements that are unpaid or offer remuneration for expenses only. We encourage organisations to pay but you can choose to undertake an unpaid placement at your discretion.

Did you know? Student loans funding (if eligible) is available but this could be at a reduced rate depending on the type of placement that you have secured. If you are undertaking a placement abroad, you could receive Erasmus+ funding.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

THERE TENDS TO BE A TYPICAL CYCLE TO RECRUITMENT, HOWEVER IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO START PREPARATIONS!

The diagram below provides an overview of what you should consider doing at different times of the year.

YEAR 1
Research placements and prepare your CV

YEAR 1 SUMMER
Get some experience
Start to apply

YEAR 2 AUTUMN
Most applications open so continue to apply
Make sure you’re still building up experience

YEAR 2 SPRING
Organisations begin interviews and assessment centres. Continue with applications and keep updating your Placements Team on your progress

YEAR 2 SUMMER
Accept offers and prepare
Or continue to apply

SUMMER VACATION
START!

Did you know? Many national schemes close before Christmas but not all organisations advertise at the same time. Keep checking for opportunities as new ones are listed daily!

WHAT CAN THE EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREERS CENTRE HELP ME WITH?

We are here to help! The Employability and Careers Centre can support you in a number of ways, including:

- Careers advice and guidance
- CV and application feedback
- Mock interviews and assessment centre advice
- Advice on where to gain experience
- General placements advice

You can get in touch with your dedicated Faculty Placements Team for more specific placement information and support:

Humanities hum-placements@essex.ac.uk
Science & Health sh-placements@essex.ac.uk
Social Sciences ss-placements@essex.ac.uk

STUDENT EXPERIENCES

PLACEMENT YEAR AT ARM

"Since I had a taste of working in industry for a year I feel much more confident. A lot of my technical skills, like programming, have been improved upon; even social skills as I was building demonstrations and presenting them to customers and business partners. My placement experience has also helped me to secure a graduate job with BT."

Dragos Donici
BSc Computer Science

PLACEMENT YEAR AT TWO LAW FIRMS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

"Although I had had legal internships before, working for a year really gave me an insight into not only the legal sector, but also the day to day life of what a lawyer actually does. It has taught me so much, such as developing a work/life balance, as well as helping to bring me out of my shell and pursue not only what I want but what I deserve. If I had to go back, I wouldn’t change a thing."

Edwina Ola
LLB Law and Human Rights

PLACEMENT YEAR AT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY (BEIS)

"It’s been a remarkable and exciting year full of extraordinary skills, experience, knowledge and invaluable development opportunities. I feel honoured to have worked alongside some of the most influential economists, data scientists, policy advisors and legal advisors. Throughout my placement year I have been able to build on my key skills and acquire expert policy knowledge. I was inspired throughout my placement and am very grateful to have had this experience."

Michelle Chingono
BSc Economics

All our handouts and information leaflets are available in other formats on request.
The Employability and Careers Centre makes this information available in order to help students and graduates make well informed choices regarding employment opportunities, postgraduate study options and career paths. We make every effort to ensure that the information is accurate and up to date but can accept no responsibility for errors or omissions.

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