



# **STUDENT PLACEMENT HANDBOOK**

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**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT  
WORK PLACEMENTS**

**EMPLOYABILITY  
AND CAREERS**



University of Essex



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# 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 WELCOME

We know it's a tough job market out there and with more and more competition for jobs, you need to be able to **stand out** from the crowd. That's why at Essex we prepare you for the future by providing an excellent academic **education** and plenty of **opportunities** to learn new skills. However, we know it's not just about qualifications. **Practical experience** is just as important when competing for jobs. By undertaking a work placement you will be able to apply your learning in a real workplace and gain **transferable skills** and **expertise** needed to secure that ideal job when you graduate.

This **Student Placement Handbook** provides you with information about work placements. While you are on your placement, you are still a student of the University of Essex and we will support your academic development and general welfare. This handbook is designed to answer the questions you will have about your placement and you are encouraged to get in touch with your Faculty Placements Team.

## 1.2 PLACEMENT INTRODUCTION

So **why** should you do a placement year? How does a placement year **fit** into your degree? Your placement will occur between the second and final year of your degree and will typically start in the summer after your second year exams. During your placement you may be working in a different part of the UK or overseas; however, you will still be registered as a University of Essex student.

Competition for work placements is **very high**. Some employers start the recruitment for placement year vacancies in the summer before your second academic year so it's important to start your preparations as soon as possible.

Our Employability and Careers Centre and your Department, School or Centre will work with you to identify and secure placements. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to apply and secure one. You will be allocated an **Academic Supervisor** who will keep in contact with you throughout your placement and will give you advice on your academic assessments. Your **Placement Supervisor** will be a member of the employer you are working for and will help you manage your day-to-day work and support your learning and development. Your **Faculty Placements Team** can provide more information about placements for the particular sector or job role you are interested in, and will also be available to help and offer advice to you and your **Placement Provider** throughout your placement.



“Be confident in your abilities and sell yourself. Focus on what makes your personal ‘unique selling point’ to differentiate yourself from other applicants.”

Carys Baul-Lewis,  
General Electric



## 1.3 PRE-PLACEMENT PREPARATION

**Are you registered on a placement year?** If you are not, you will need to check that your Department/School offer placement year degrees. If they do offer placement year degrees, get in touch with your Faculty Placements Team. If you are registered on a placement year degree, check the **academic requirements** for undertaking a placement year, which will vary across Departments/Schools. You may need to obtain a certain mark in your first year and attend certain lectures or workshops. Have a look at the **Rules of Assessment** for your course to fully understand what you will need to commit to.

► [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/ug/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/ug/default.aspx)

“It's not by sending a few CVs from time to time to some firms that you'll get an interview and succeed in getting an internship. Never stop looking and take at least 30 minutes of your time every day to look for offers and send resumes.”

Pauline Rocchia-Chatagner,  
Meucopo Eco Government

If you are unsure which Faculty your Department belongs to, please go to **Section 8** to see the Faculty and Department tructures.

A work placement is a period of work experience embedded into your degree and there are **different types of work placements** that can vary in length, ranging from a few weeks to a whole year:

PLACEMENT YEAR	A placement equivalent of a year's academic study (between 30-52 weeks). Your placement will occur between the second and final year of your degree.
SIX MONTH PLACEMENTS	Some Departments offer the opportunity to do six month placements during the Spring and Summer terms of your second year of study.
TERMLY PLACEMENTS	A placement equivalent to an academic term (12-15 weeks). This might be full or part-time.
VACATION INTERNSHIP	A short-term placement taken during Christmas, Easter or Summer vacations.
PROJECTS	Negotiated pieces of work, either group-based or individual, which form part your degree course and are supervised by an academic and the employer. These usually take place in your final year.

A work placement is a great way for you to gain an **insight** into 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 HEAR.





It's important to gain professional work experience before you graduate. In a recent survey:



**Over a third of recruiters who took part in the research repeated their warnings from previous years – that graduates who have had no previous work experience at all are unlikely to be successful during the selection process and have little or no chance of receiving a job offer for their organisations' graduate programmes.**

**High Flyers, 2017**

By undertaking a work placement, this experience will:

- Help you to develop **professional skills** sought after by graduate employers.
- Enable you to **learn more** about a particular sector, employer or job role.
- Allow you to **apply** your **academic knowledge** in a practical working environment.
- Provide you with **ideas** for future career pathways.

In terms of finding the right placement for you, many employers offer placements. Large **multi-national** employers often have established placement year programmes and shorter opportunities over vacation periods. These are highly competitive but offer excellent **development opportunities** and are often used by employers to nurture future talent. Details about these schemes will usually be found on employer websites. **Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)** are increasingly offering a range of placements. These employers often allow students to undertake a **wider variety of tasks** and responsibilities, and opportunities tend to be less competitive but do require more research to find and secure.

**Will you get paid during your placement?** Most employers pay placement students a **salary**. However, in some cases, employers may offer placements that are unpaid or only offer expenses (employers may refund some of your costs, such as travel, but they do not actually pay you a salary). You are most likely to encounter unpaid/expenses-only placements if you are applying for roles in charities, politics, media and the arts. Employers should indicate in their advertising if a post is unpaid or only offering expenses. If you are in doubt, contact the employer and ask for advice.

For **paid** placement years, you will normally need to spend a **minimum of 40 weeks** on a University-approved placement. For **unpaid or expenses-only** placements, you will normally need to spend a **minimum of 30 weeks** on a University-approved placement.



**Actively engage with the**

**Employability & Careers Centre, your Placements Manager and lecturers. They provide an amazing line of support, advice and guidance.**

**Michelle Chingono,**  
Government Economic  
Services (GES)

**So how do you secure a placement?** You will be **responsible** for finding your own placement. You need to **proactively** research careers and opportunities that are **of interest** and submit applications to relevant employers. As well as national schemes, the University will advertise all types of opportunities, specifically for Essex students. Your Department, Faculty Placement Teams and the Employability and Careers Centre will offer information and guidance that will **support you** with this process. The University of Essex are always updating **CareerHub** with opportunities and a variety of placements specifically for Essex students:

► [www.careerhub.essex.ac.uk](http://www.careerhub.essex.ac.uk)

There are **numerous** job sites online, which you may have used in the past when looking for work. Placements can be found through these, although there are specialist placement websites advertising only work placement opportunities. [www.ratemyplacement.co.uk](http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk) is probably the biggest website listing national placement vacancies. They also act as a host for reviews on a wide variety of organisations that have been written by students, for students, based on their experience with the company. **Rate My Placement** list reviews for all sorts of organisations, not just those who advertise with them so definitely check them out.

Other **placement-specific** websites that you may want to take a look at are:

- [www.indeed.co.uk/student-placement-jobs](http://www.indeed.co.uk/student-placement-jobs)
- [www.targetjobs.co.uk/internships](http://www.targetjobs.co.uk/internships)
- [www.milkround.com](http://www.milkround.com)
- [www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs](http://www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs)
- [www.totaljobs.com/jobs/placement](http://www.totaljobs.com/jobs/placement)
- [www.linkedin.com/jobs](http://www.linkedin.com/jobs)

There are also **sector specific** websites for work placements available, as well as employers advertising directly on their **own** websites. Frequently check online and watch out for application **deadlines**; it is not uncommon for vacancies to close early so do not leave it until the last minute! If no deadline is stated, they will usually close for applications once they have recruited, so get your application in nice and early!

**What is the application process?** Applying for a placement in a large organisation is very similar to applying for a graduate job; the majority of employers will ask applicants to complete an **online application form** and attach a **CV**. If the employer progresses your application, you might be asked to complete an online **psychometric test** and/or have a **telephone interview**. If you are successful at that stage, you will normally be invited to an **assessment centre** and/or a **final interview**. You can practice psychometric tests online.

► [www.essex.ac.uk/careers/applications/tests.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/applications/tests.aspx)





The Employability and Careers Centre and your Faculty Placements Team will **support you** in securing a placement through **workshops**, drafting **CVs**, the **application** process, **mock interviews** and any other concerns that you may have. **Moodle** is also available and is a really good online tool to help you secure your Placement Year:

► [moodle.essex.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=5586](https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=5586)

If you are a second year student, under the Rules of Assessment, you must undertake some form of **pre-departure training** before starting your placement year. This means you should attend the **Placement Year Pre-Departure Conference**, which usually takes place in May or June every year. The Pre-Departure Conference will help **prepare** you and ensure you make a professional impression in the workplace. It is also a unique opportunity to meet other placement year students and enhance your **networking skills**.

You will need to be registered on a Placement Year degree before you start your placement. Check with your Department/School if a placement year is an option and when they recommend transferring (if you are not already registered). To transfer, you will need to complete an online course change form:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/changing-course.aspx](https://www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/changing-course.aspx)

## 1.4 ACCEPTING A PLACEMENT OFFER

Once you have been offered a placement, you will need to send the information to your Faculty Placements Team to **approve**. This is because some **additional checks** may need to take place before you can accept the role. To be approved by your Department/Faculty Placement Teams, your placement must:

- Meet the **academic requirements** set out in your placement module. (For example, it must start at a suitable time of year, offer relevant experience and be of sufficient length).
- Provide a placement that enables you to meet the **learning outcomes** required by your degree course.
- Offer work that is at a **junior professional level**. This means that the work you undertake is **challenging** and enables you to develop **new** professional skills. However, whilst the role at times may require you to do some routine tasks such as photocopying and/or filing, this sort of task should not be the main focus of your role.
- Provide you with a **Placement Supervisor** who will support your workplace development and liaise with your Academic Supervisor at the University.
- Provide you with a **safe workplace environment** that complies with the University Health and Safety requirements.
- Provide you with a workplace environment that complies with the University **Equality and Diversity** requirements.
- If you are an international student with a **Tier 4 visa**, your placement must comply with the requirements of your visa set by the **Home Office**.
- Work placements can be undertaken in the UK or abroad but **must** be approved by the Faculty Placements Team and your Department/School before you can commence.

Your placement must be approved by the University **prior** to the first day of the Autumn Term of the academic year in which you are due to start your placement. You will **return** to the University to recommence your studies in the Autumn Term in the following academic year.

Once you have **secured** a placement, you will be required to complete some **mandatory** formal placement paperwork known as a **Tri-partite Agreement**. This is a 3-way agreement that is signed by you, the University (Academic Supervisor), and the Placement Provider. You will need to **read** through the Tri-partite Agreement as everyone's **roles and responsibilities** will be outlined. Your Faculty Placements Team will help you with this once you have secured a placement and an Academic Supervisor.

“Think about where to apply, don't apply for the sake of it, something will always come through and you don't want to be stuck on a placement you didn't really want.”

Chris Ward,  
HM Treasury



## 1.5 ACCOMMODATION, TUITION, TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

Where will you **live** during your placement? Your placement could be situated anywhere in the country or overseas and you will be required to find **suitable accommodation** in the area. Your employer may be able to offer **advice** regarding local accommodation. It will be your responsibility to secure suitable accommodation. Here is a list of some UK accommodation websites to get you started, although please note that some of these websites/companies will charge fees:

- [www.airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk)
- [www.rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent)
- [www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/flats](https://www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/flats)
- [www.gumtree.com/flats-and-houses-for-rent](https://www.gumtree.com/flats-and-houses-for-rent)
- [www.gumtree.com/short-term-rent](https://www.gumtree.com/short-term-rent)
- [www.unite-students.com](https://www.unite-students.com)
- [www.studentblock.co.uk](https://www.studentblock.co.uk)
- [www.spareroom.co.uk](https://www.spareroom.co.uk)

You should ensure you have fully prepared your plans for **travelling** to and from the workplace. Some students like to do a trial run first to give a better idea of timings and to **familiarise** themselves with the route. If you are relying on public transport, do you know an **alternative route** if there are delays or closures? If you will be driving to work, what is your back up option if your car needs to go to the garage or breaks down? You should ensure you **plan ahead** so that you already know what to do if you ever find yourself in these circumstances.

It might be worth **checking** with your Placement Provider whether they have anything in place to support employees using public transport, as some employers offer staff discounts on seasonal bus passes through a salary sacrifice scheme. If you are working in London, your Placement Provider may offer a similar scheme for train fares where they pay your travel with **Transport for London** upfront and deduct from your salary each month. You can also receive **student discount** with TFL on their 18+ Oyster Card:

► [tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student](https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student)

Most employers allow employees to use a private vehicle to drive to and from the workplace. However, some employers may require the use of a **business vehicle**, which will affect your **insurance policy**. As a result, if you drive you should ensure that your car insurance policy covers business use whilst you are on placement. It is your **responsibility** to ensure that your insurance policy is appropriate for the business requirements whilst you are on placement. You should check with your Placement Supervisor if you are unsure of the business requirements surrounding the use of vehicles whilst on placement.

If you are on a paid placement, you will receive a **salary** from your employer. You will **pay tax** that will be deducted from your wages by your employers throughout your placement. During your placement you will still have student status, which means you are **exempt** from paying council tax. You will need to prove this with a **council tax exemption certificate**, which you can request online:

► [www.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-full-time-students](http://www.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-full-time-students)

**Tax Years** run from 6th April to 5th April, which means that a placement year is likely to cross two tax years. Students will have to pay **Income Tax** and **National Insurance (NI)** on earnings that are above their **personal allowance** (this is the amount of income that no tax needs to be paid on); this also applies to international students. You should ensure that you **check** your personal tax allowance and keep all pay-related documents safe, as you may need them in case of claiming any tax back after their placement. Claiming a **tax refund** through **HM Revenue and Customs** is free. Students do not need to pay an employer to claim a tax refund on their behalf. For forms and further information regarding getting a tax refund:

► [www.gov.uk/claim-tax-refund/too-much-tax-taken-from-your-pay](http://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-refund/too-much-tax-taken-from-your-pay)

International students can claim any overpayment of tax before they leave the UK. Shortly before they leave the UK, they should complete form **P85 'Leaving the UK – getting your tax right'**. This form tells HMRC that they are leaving the UK and makes a claim for repayment of any overpaid tax for the year of departure. If a student has the form **P45** from a former employer, they should **send** parts 2 and 3 to HMRC **together** with form **P85**:

► [www.gov.uk/government/publications/income-tax-leaving-the-uk-getting-your-tax-right-p85](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/income-tax-leaving-the-uk-getting-your-tax-right-p85)

If you are a home-funded student you may wish to contact **Student Finance England** for a reduced rate maintenance loan whilst on your placement year or to discuss your individual situation:

► [www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/apply-online-for-student-finance)



# 2 PLACEMENT SUPPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY

## 2.1 PLACEMENT SUPPORT

**What support can you expect from the University before your placement?**

Placement **preparation sessions** either on a one-to-one or group basis will be available to help you learn about the process of **finding, applying and interviewing** for placement opportunities.

Additional Department and University events/services run throughout the year to help **develop your career learning**. For example, visits from top employers and alumni, opportunities to practice recruitment tests (such as psychometric tests), individual careers interviews and CV workshops:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/careers/events](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/events)

There will be opportunities to gain skills and experiences for your **CV** through schemes such as **Frontrunners, Essex Interns, UOPS, Student Reps/Ambassadors** and participation in **Student Societies**:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job\\_hunting/on\\_campus.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting/on_campus.aspx)

You will receive **clear information** from your Department about the **academic assessment** and relevant deadlines during your placement.

You will also receive **support** from your Department and/or Faculty Placements Team with the completion of formal paperwork.

## 2.2 DISABLED STUDENTS

If you have additional needs such as disability or a long term health condition, you might like to get in touch with the Employability and Careers Centre (contact details are found in **Section 8**) to discuss any **support** you may need at application stage and while on placement. This includes: advice on placement schemes specifically for disabled students, support in arranging **reasonable adjustments** at interview and in the workplace, and talking through how/when to positively disclose disability. If you require **specialist equipment** to support you on placement you may be eligible to apply for Access to Work funding towards this. We want to ensure all students enjoy a **safe** and **inclusive** placement so please get in touch to let us know how we can support you.

## 2.3 WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO NOT PASS YOUR PLACEMENT YEAR?

What will happen if you **do not** pass your placement year? Your placement year assessment is assessed on a **pass/fail basis** and **does not** count towards your final degree mark. The University will support you so that you can make the most of your placement. However, if you are not successful in passing the year or if you need to leave your placement for some reason, you may need to **intermit** for the rest of the academic year or receive a 'fail' for your placement year. Your Faculty Placements Team and Department will be able to advise you on further on your individual options.

Utilise the support available from the Placements Team, whether it's help in writing a CV/cover letter individually tailored for each employer, or support in preparation for assessment centres/interviews.  
**Hodhayfa Fattouche, NHS Foundation Trust**





**“While at Adobe (IT Software Company) I have generated enterprise level sales leads worth over \$2 million in the digital marketing space**  
**Sam Halston, Adobe**

## 3 WHILST ON PLACEMENT

### 3.1 ARRIVAL AND STARTING YOUR PLACEMENT

The most important thing you need to remember is that when you are out on placement you are **employed** by your Placement Provider, but will still be a **student** of the University of Essex. This means that you have a responsibility to act **professionally** to **both** the University and your Placement Provider at all times. You are an **Ambassador**. You are **Essex**.

Your placement is an **integral** and assessed part of your degree and you will therefore be expected to successfully complete a number of **assessments** in connection with your workplace experiences to demonstrate your learning. In most cases your assignments will be marked out of 100 and you will need to achieve a **pass mark of 40%**. When you have been allocated an Academic Supervisor, speak to them about how to submit your assignments.

Details of the specific **assignments** that you undertake for your placement module will be **provided** by your Department and will enable you to meet the following **outcomes**:

- An **understanding** of work roles and environments within a practical context.
- An **aptitude** to connect subject-specific theory to practice in a work environment.
- The **ability** to communicate with a wide range of colleagues and clients in a working environment.
- The **capacity** to work in a team within a work environment.
- **Improve** your personal and professional practice through a reflective approach within a work environment.

### 3.2 PLACEMENT SUPERVISION

All **correspondence** from your Faculty Placements Team will be to your **Essex email address**. You **must** remember to **regularly** login to your Essex email account to keep it active. You are advised not to rely on emails being redirected from your Essex address to your personal email address (e.g. Yahoo/Google/Hotmail) as sometimes these providers do not accept attachments, or they will file mail in the junk folder.

#### What support from the University can you expect during your placement?

Whilst you are on placement, you may receive **regular** contact with your **Faculty Placements Team** who will **refer** you to the appropriate sources of advice if you encounter a problem. They will keep in regular contact with your Placement Provider to ensure your placement is **progressing satisfactorily**.

You will receive **regular** contact with a named **Academic Supervisor** from your Department who will advise and support you on all issues relating to academic assessments and will **refer** you to the appropriate sources of advice if you encounter a problem whilst on placement. Your Academic Supervisor or Faculty Placements Team will also keep in regular contact with your Placement Provider to ensure your placement is **progressing satisfactorily**.

You will receive **regular** contact with a named **Placement Supervisor** from your Placement Provider who will **support** your **work-based learning** and development and help you manage your day-to-day workplace issues.

You will have **continued access** to University services whilst you are on placement e.g. the library, the Students' Union.

You will receive **clear information** from your Department and the University about arrangements for your return to Essex after your placement has come to an end.

### 3.3 COMMUNICATION, QUESTIONS AND YOUR PLACEMENT ENVIRONMENT

It is **natural** to feel slightly nervous about starting a new job but try not to be too anxious as you will have been appointed a **Placement Supervisor** who will be the person to help you **settle in, introduce** you to other colleagues and will be the person to go to for any **questions** that you may have. You should ensure that you liaise with your Placement Supervisor on a **regular basis** to discuss your progress and to ensure that you **meet** personal objectives that you set yourself when you start your placement. It is useful to **assess** your objectives to reflect upon how your experience meets your **academic requirements**.

You will also liaise regularly with your **Academic Supervisor** who will be interested to hear how your placement is progressing and will be your **first point** of contact if you have any other questions that you feel they can help you with. Your **Faculty Placements Team** may also keep in touch to hear how you do on placement and will also assist where necessary if you have any concerns. However, by the end of your first few weeks you will have developed your **communication** skills and will feel much more comfortable about your role's **responsibilities** and the placement **environment**.

**Stay positive** and leave bad moods at home! We all have days when we are not feeling our best, but it is best not to share this at work. Negativity can bring everyone down, so if you are negative about something at work, find a way to improve it, if something from home is making you down leave it at home and confide in someone outside work. Stay **work-focused** and do not let your private life **impact** on your job. You should try to have an upbeat **attitude** and be a **problem solver** as much as possible.

Try and stay out of office politics. Wherever you work there will be some form of office politics and gossip. **Keep away** from it, you could get yourself in trouble and most definitely do not comment about it on social media – (in fact be safe and don't mention work on social media). **Respect Others** – no matter what their role is in the organisation. Being courteous and respectful – friendly, polite and well-mannered makes you someone people want to work with. Remember – you never know what people's professional working relationships are – treat everyone the same.

### 3.4 SETTING AND ACHIEVING PERSONAL GOALS

Many students cite their placement year as the **highlight** of their degree. As well as managing real responsibilities and projects, there is much to get involved with. Take **advantage** of any opportunities that are offered to you – you never know what **benefits** could come as a result of getting involved!

Many placement students have the **opportunity** to work on projects outside of their 'job description' and **get involved** in an employer's corporate responsibility or community investment work. For example, we have had students organise volunteering days or large fundraising events. This is a great way of demonstrating to future employers you can work within a team and have organisational and motivational **skills**.

So, get involved in whatever you can and **make the most of your year!**

 Irrespective of the job, focus on your personal growth and of your best outcome. I have learnt to expand my capabilities and skills whilst owning my flaws.  
**Vishrutee Bhurtan,**  
**SRLV Accountants**

### 3.6 RECORDING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

On placement you will **develop** and **gain** a variety of **skills** that you will be required to translate and reflect upon through your academic assignments. As a performance management tool, **recording your achievements** is a good way of helping you **plan, measure** and **evaluate** your Placement Year effectively. You will be surprised by how much you will progress on placement from the time you begin to when you complete. An effective way of being able to compare is by **visually documenting** your progression:

Performance Evaluation	Week 4	Week 8	Week 12	Week 16	Week 20-24	Week 25-28	Week 30-40
Job knowledge							
Productivity							
IT & literacy skills							
Key skills							
Communication							
Initiative							
Attendance							
Punctuality							
Achievements							
Team work							
Problem solving or decision making							





“Go above and beyond what the company expects of you. You will stand out and have the opportunity of good job security after you graduate.”

Sapna Tanna,  
KidsOut

# 4 YOUR WORK PLACEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

## 4.1 YOUR WORKPLACE RESPONSIBILITIES

Although you will be on placement, you are still a student of the University of Essex and are therefore subject to the **University's Regulations**, including the **Disciplinary Regulations**, which you have agreed to adhere to as a student of the University:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/default.aspx)

Before you go on placement we expect you to:

- Take **responsibility** for finding your own placement and have it approved **in advance** of the start date.
- Keep **records** of all applications made and their outcomes.
- **Respond** to all communications from your Department, the University and external placement providers promptly.
- Keep in **regular** communication with placement staff in your Department/Faculty. This means discussing potential opportunities with them as soon as possible to ensure the placements are suitable, informing them of any placement offers, and ensuring placements staff are aware of any potential problems, which may prevent you taking up a placement opportunity.
- **Conduct** yourself professionally in all your dealings with potential Placement Providers and external organisations, remember that you are **representative** of the University and any poor conduct may impact on the University's reputation with external organisations. You should seek advice from the Placements Teams in your Department/Faculty if you are unsure how to communicate with an employer.
- Once you have accepted a placement offer (either verbally and/or in writing), ensure you **complete** and return any formal paperwork **required** by the employers and the University as soon as possible and within specified deadlines.
- Complete any pre-placement **academic assignments and preparation sessions** set by your Department within set deadlines.
- If you are an international student with a Tier 4 visa, ensure you are aware of, and comply with, any regulations set by the **Home Office** relating to your visa and any work permits.
- If you have any queries regarding visas and your right to work in the UK, contact **Student Support** at the University (contact details are found in **Section 8**).





### During your placement we expect you to:

- **Conduct** yourself professionally in all your dealings with your employer and external organisations, remembering that you are **representative** of the University and any poor conduct may impact on the University's reputation.
- **Abide** by all workplace **regulations** and practices of your employer, including those relating to Health and Safety, absence management and confidentiality.
- Demonstrate **good attendance** and **punctuality** and inform your employer and the University immediately if you are unable to attend work.
- Dress and behave **appropriately** for the workplace.
- Engage with all reasonable **opportunities for development** during your placement.
- Continue to **check** your University email account, **responding** to all communications from your Academic Supervisor, your Faculty Placements Team and your Department promptly.
- **Liaise** with your Academic Supervisor to arrange a suitable time for a workplace **visit** (or alternative).
- If you are an overseas student, ensure you continue to comply with any **Tier 4 visa regulations** and keep the University up-to-date with your address and contact details.
- Notify your Department and your Placement Provider of any problems that may prevent successful completion of the placement **as soon as possible**.
- **Complete** any academic assignments set by your Department within **set** deadlines.

### After your placement we expect you to:

- Complete any **post-placement** academic assignments set by your Department within **set** deadlines.

### After your placement we suggest that you:

- **Attend** any welcome back Placement Year events
- **Engage** with the Employability and Careers Centre by **articulating** and **sharing** your experience with students thinking about undertaking a placement. Contributing to workshops and events is another area that can be **recorded** on your CV.



## 4.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

During the first few weeks on your placement, you will receive an **induction** covering your employer's **Health and Safety** policies, amongst other regulations in the workplace. These procedures will cover a wide scope of areas providing information on who to contact if you are too ill to come to work, how to report an accident in the workplace and what you may or may not do in the working environment.

All procedures **are in place** to keep everybody as **safe** as possible, therefore do not disregard these policies even if you think they may be overly cautious. If you **do not** receive this you should ask your line manager for the information. Health and Safety issues do not just relate to work; think about your safety with regards to where you are living, how you get to work and even in your spare and social time. To understand more about Health and Safety in the workplace, please refer to Moodle:

► [moodle.essex.ac.uk](https://moodle.essex.ac.uk)

If your course is subject to the **Fitness to Practise Procedure**, you will have additional responsibilities regarding your conduct and professional suitability, as outlined in relevant regulatory and/or professional body codes of practice. You will have been notified upon registration if your course is subject to the terms of this procedure. **Failure** to meet the relevant responsibilities can lead to the Fitness to Practise Procedures being **invoked**. Please check with your Department if you think this procedure may apply to you.

## 4.3 REGISTERING AT THE START OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

During your placement year you are still a **student** at the University of Essex. At the start of every academic year you will need to **register** and your placement year is no exception.

As you will not be studying on campus, you will need to register **online** through a link that is different to other students. The **Progress Team** will email your Essex email directly to let you know what you need to do, but will only do so when we have confirmed you are on placement.

If you **fail** to register as a student before the deadline, the University may think that you are **not** on placement. As a result, you may have to intermit the year and it will not count towards your final degree mark.

## 4.4 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION

**Equality, Diversity and Discrimination** are very important issues for the University of Essex as well as for employers, and are taken very seriously. Before you start working, you will learn about – and get training in – the employer's Equality and Diversity **policy**, which is required by **law**. This also means that you have the **right** to an equal workplace, free from discrimination or harassment. If you feel that you are discriminated against, or harassed, you should contact the appropriate person listed in the undergraduate students' handbook **immediately**. You may wish to refer to Student Support or the University's harassment support network:

- [www.essex.ac.uk/life/facilities/support.aspx](https://www.essex.ac.uk/life/facilities/support.aspx)
- [www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment](https://www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment)
- [www.essex.ac.uk/equality](https://www.essex.ac.uk/equality)

**Outside** the UK, legislation on equality, diversity and discrimination **may vary**. However, because you are a student of the University of Essex, the **Equality Act** under which discrimination is unlawful still applies if your placement takes place abroad. If you feel that your Placement Provider does not comply with it, you should discuss with the appropriate contact person in your Department **immediately**.





## 4.5 HEALTH, REPORTING SICKNESS AND HOLIDAY REQUESTS

You should **not wait** until you are ill to **register** with a local **GP**. You will find that addresses and names of local doctors surgeries in the UK are held at main post offices or visit:

► [www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4)

If you are off sick, you are **not** legally entitled to **full pay**. However, you may be entitled to **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** that is applicable to UK placements only; if you do not qualify for SSP then you may find you are eligible to claim for **incapacity benefit**. You should ensure you check with your Placement Provider when you begin your placement to find out what you are entitled to. If you are ill, then you must inform your Placement Provider **immediately**.

If you find that you are sick for **longer** than seven days, you will need to obtain an **MED3 Form** from your GP. You should ensure you keep your employer **up to date** with your health and let them know when they should expect you to return back to work.

You will find that most paid work placements will offer **paid annual leave**, which is normally the equivalent to **four weeks (20 days)** a year and will be **pro rata** if you work less than a year. If you are working flexible hours, thus on a shift or rota basis, you may be required to work on some Bank Holidays. Please **read** through your contract of work carefully and **check** with your Placement Provider if you are uncertain of your working patterns. You should also ensure that you agree and **book** your annual leave/holiday **in advance** with your Placement Supervisor.

# 5 PLACEMENTS ABROAD

**“I suffered numerous rejections whilst looking for a placement. However, your determination and resilience will land you that dream job!”**

**Daniela Otuagomah,  
St Maarten's Ministry  
of Tourism**

## 5.1 MONEY, FUNDING AND INTERNATIONAL GRANTS

By studying/working abroad it is likely that you will develop skills that will be very **attractive** to potential employers and can potentially be of great **benefit** in career terms. Living abroad, adapting to a new environment and culture, developing confidence, taking risks and most probably gaining new language skills are all valuable assets to employers.

Whilst on placement you will need to **manage your expenses** to ensure you have enough to live on. Essex Abroad offer advice and guidance on how to budget before starting your placement, as well as information on which **bursaries, grants** and **scholarships** you may be eligible for. These can be found on their webpages or you can contact the team directly: **E eagrants@essex.ac.uk**

Funding is **not** always guaranteed, and often needs to be applied for. Make sure you research the eligibility criteria before submitting any applications.

You can find out if you are **eligible** for any scholarships or grants offered by Essex Abroad at:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/study/funding.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/study/funding.aspx)

We also recommend that you research external funding opportunities offered by the host university or Government/Embassy/Trusts in the country you are visiting.

To help prepare you for how much you need to **budget** in particular countries, Essex Abroad has budget guides for individual countries. You can view these online, and download a blank template to plan your own budget in line with this:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/prepare/budget.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/prepare/budget.aspx)

## 5.2 OVERSEAS HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your health, safety and security when working or studying overseas are **extremely important**. Safety standards in many non-UK countries are not as good as those in the UK. There may be hazards that you do not usually worry about, such as disease, natural disasters, poisonous animals or civil unrest. When things go wrong the lack of familiarity with the country, its cultural differences and language barriers can make a relatively minor incident into a major incident. However, with good preparation many of the potential travel pitfalls can be **avoided**. Please visit the Health and Safety pages of the Essex website for more detailed information about each of these topics:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/activities/overseas-travel.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/activities/overseas-travel.aspx)

Important things for you to research and arrange are:

- Travel insurance
- Online Security Training
- Have the contact details of local emergency and host institution services on hand at all times



### 5.3 ADAPTING TO CULTURAL CHANGE

Many students who study or work abroad often find a **change of culture**, depending on where they go. This may be in the form of new food, unfamiliar road signs, no decent tea bags, different tasting chocolate – all seemingly little things that can often cause big emotional reactions. Culture shock is defined as feelings of disorientation and homesickness when familiar surroundings change, and it can affect anyone spending any length of time in unfamiliar environments. Essex Abroad offers a range of resources to help you research and prepare for visiting a country with a different culture:

► [www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/prepare/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/essexabroad/prepare/default.aspx)

### 5.4 IMPORTANT DOCUMENTATION

Before you go on a placement year abroad, you will need to consider **certain documentation** that you will need. Both your Faculty Placements Team and Essex Abroad can help make sure you have the following prepared:

- Tri-partite Agreement
- Passport
- Visa
- Resident's permit
- Insurance/healthcare documentation
- Accommodation
- Employer Health and Safety form
- Online Security Training
- Learning and Grant Agreement (if necessary)
- Arrival and departure certificates

In certain countries, you may need to apply for a **residence permit** or register with the local council/police after your arrival. The relevant embassy and/or your host institution should be able to advise you on the requirements but it is a good idea to research this before arriving in your host country so that you know what to expect:

► [www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk)



## 6 PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

**“The nature of project-based work means that sometimes you do have to work late unexpectedly to meet deadlines, but this prepares you well for working life”**

**George McCann,  
Transperfect**

### 6.1 THINKING ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Your **Personal Brand** is important as this is made up of your **vision, purpose, skills, beliefs** and **attitudes**. Your Personal Brand is also made up of your **image**, your **behaviour** and your **emotional maturity** and so you should be **self-aware** of what and how you **speak** and **present yourself** whilst remembering to be **authentic**.

To **strengthen** your Personal Brand it is always useful to:

- **Volunteer** for assignments or take positions of **responsibility**.
- Routinely ask for **feedback** and reflect on this.
- **Write** articles, blogs, tweet etc.
- **LinkedIn**; comment on discussions, include presentations, articles etc.
- What happens if you **Google** your name? This is useful to consider your Personal Brand **objectively** and how a prospective employer would see you.

### 6.2 TIME MANAGEMENT AND BALANCING YOUR WORKLOAD

**Time-management** in the workplace is very important and demonstrates to your Placement Provider about your **organisational** and **time keeping** skills. It is always useful to keep either a hard copy or digital **calendar/diary** by inputting tasks and deadlines; make lists and remember to reassess your workload **accordingly**. If you struggle with your workload, speak to your Placement Supervisor who will help you manage effectively.

### 6.3 PUNCTUALITY, BEHAVIOUR AND DRESS CODE

You have a **responsibility** to follow your Placement Provider's organisational **policies**, to respect the **confidentiality** of your employer's **business** and to **behave** professionally at all times. This should all be explained to you as part of your induction in your first week on placement when you learn about your work environment **in context**.

**Punctuality** is important when undertaking professional employment and your work placement should be considered no different. You should ensure that you are on time for work **everyday** and if you think you may be late into work, you should inform your Placement Provider **as soon** as you are able to. Lateness is not only rude but it implies you have poor organisational skills or are disinterested. It's important not just for start times but also applies to returning from coffee or lunch breaks. Also make sure you meet deadlines for any projects or tasks allocated to you.

You should dress **appropriately, smartly** and **professionally** at all times when undertaking your placement. Regardless of what you will typically be wearing on a day to day basis, you should still always be clean, neat and tidy in your **appearance**.



6.4 DEALING WITH POTENTIAL PLACEMENT PROBLEMS

For the majority of students, everything goes incredibly well and we hear fantastic success stories. On some rare occasions, students may have **difficulties** on placement. This can be down to a variety of different reasons from personal circumstances to disagreements with a Placement Provider.

If you experience any problems during your placement, your first point of contact is your **Academic Supervisor** or your Faculty Placements Team. Any student experiencing dissatisfaction with any Departmental matter, whether academic or otherwise, is encouraged to try to resolve it informally in the first instance. If you are unable to resolve a complaint, you should do so in line with the **University's Complaints Procedure**

► [www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/complaints.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/complaints.aspx)

In the UK, besides your placement-specific rights, you have the same **rights** as work as every individual working in the UK. You can get information on basic employment rights on the **Citizens Advice Bureau** website:

► [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

If your placement is abroad, different laws and regulations might apply. The rights at work that you are entitled to in the UK are no longer applicable when you work abroad. In consultation with the Essex Abroad Team, make sure you understand your rights abroad. One source of information is the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** website:

► [www.gov.uk/browse/abroad](http://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad)



7 END OF YOUR PLACEMENT

7.1 RETURNING TO UNIVERSITY

Once you have completed your placement, it is always a nice **gesture** to write to your Placement Provider to thank them and to discuss **references**. You should also ensure that you complete any **post-placement** assignments set by your Department within set deadlines.

As a returning **Final Year** student to the University, you will need to **ensure** you have **registered**. You will receive an email to your Essex account informing you when you will need to do this.

“Get involved with extra-curricular activities, like clubs and societies to get as much experience as possible. Have the confidence to sell yourself- no one else can do it for you!”

Cameron Nuttall,  
TE Connectivity

If you are a student returning from a Placement Year (in the UK and overseas), you **will not be** guaranteed University **accommodation** at the Colchester Campus; however, you will be given priority above other home and EU Undergraduate students who are on the waiting list. **Accommodation Essex** provides application forms directly to Essex Abroad for returning Study Abroad students and students that undertook their placement abroad. However, all students returning from their placement at the **Southend** Campus **will qualify** for accommodation on Campus.

The Students' Union's house-finding service **SU Lets** will be able to help you find the perfect place to live. The **Students' Union Advice Centre** can offer information about tenant rights and responsibilities, about repairs, repossession, eviction, harassment by landlords, contracts, deposits and much more.

► [www.essex.ac.uk/accommodation/support/student\\_lets.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/accommodation/support/student_lets.aspx)

What support can you expect from the University after your placement?

- You will receive clear feedback on your placement assignments.
- There will be opportunities to provide feedback on the placement experience.
- You will receive continued careers support from the University to help you secure a graduate job (including access to paid internships offered exclusively to Essex graduates).

7.2 REFLECTION, SKILLS AND UPDATING YOUR CV

Once you have returned to the University, to widen your prospects of **professional employment** for when you graduate, you should update your **CV** and **LinkedIn** account with your relevant work experience gained from your Placement Year. It would a good idea to **reflect** upon your academic assignments that you completed throughout your Placement Year alongside your **recorded achievements** (see **Section 3.6**).

7.3 CAREERS ADVICE

The **Employability and Careers Centre** run a range of workshops to support students' individual **career paths**. These sessions offer support surrounding **self-awareness**, identifying your **aims**, understanding your **working style** and anything else that may concern you. To schedule a meeting, please go to **Section 8** for contact details.

# 8 CONTACT DETAILS

## 8.1 FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

Each **Department** is situated within one of three **Faculties**. Below are a list of all Departments and contact details for the **Faculty Placement Teams**:

FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS		
Science and Health	Social Sciences	Humanities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Biological Sciences (School of)</li><li>■ Computer Science &amp; Electronic Engineering (School of)</li><li>■ Health and Social Care (School of)</li><li>■ Mathematical Sciences (Department of)</li><li>■ Psychology (Department of)</li><li>■ Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences (School of)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies</li><li>■ Economics (Department of)</li><li>■ Essex Business School</li><li>■ Government (Department of)</li><li>■ Institute for Social and Economic Research</li><li>■ Language and Linguistics (Department of)</li><li>■ Sociology (Department of)</li><li>■ UK Data Archive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ East 15 Acting School</li><li>■ History (Department of)</li><li>■ Human Rights Centre</li><li>■ Interdisciplinary Studies Centre</li><li>■ Law (School of)</li><li>■ Literature, Film and Theatre Studies (Department of)</li><li>■ Philosophy and Art History (School of)</li></ul>
Faculty Placement Teams		
E sh-placements@essex.ac.uk	E ss-placements@essex.ac.uk	E hum-placements@essex.ac.uk

## 8.2 STUDENT SERVICES

Students seeking advice and support from the University should be directed to either the **Student Services Hub** or the **Students Union**:

**Student Services Hub**  
T 01206 874000  
E askthehub@essex.ac.uk  
**Drop-in** Silberrad Centre (1st floor), Mon – Fri from 9am – 5pm

**Students' Union**  
T 01206 874034  
E suadvice@essex.ac.uk  
**Drop-in** Square 3 (next to Lloyds Bank)  
► [www.essexstudent.com/advice/](http://www.essexstudent.com/advice/)

## 8.3 ESSEX ABROAD

Students seeking advice from **Essex Abroad** should contact:

T 01206 872632  
E saoadmin@essex.ac.uk

## 8.4 EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREERS CENTRE

Students seeking advice and support from the University's **Employability and Careers Centre** should contact:

T 01206 872494  
E careers@essex.ac.uk

## 8.5 EMERGENCY PROCESSES FOR PLACEMENT STUDENTS

If you are a student that is off campus and in need of immediate emergency assistance in the UK, you should dial **999**. For non-urgent issues contact:

- Police **101**
- Health service **111**

If you have a serious issue and need to make contact with the University outside of office hours, there is a 24-hour security at our Colchester Campus. You can call the security team on **01206 872125**.

If you are worried because you think you are likely to be in danger and at risk of any form of harm as a result of your placement, you should contact your Placements Team **as soon as possible**. As a student at the University of Essex, you should familiarise yourself with who to contact and what to do in an emergency. There is also advice on personal safety:

- [www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency.aspx)
- [www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/safety.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/safety.aspx)

If you are undertaking a placement abroad, you should make yourself aware of the local emergency contact numbers. Please be aware that 999 is **NOT** the emergency contact number for police, fire and ambulance services in other countries. You should keep the University of Essex informed of any emergency as we may be able to help. The emergency number of the University is **+44 1206 872222** and is staffed 24/7 365 days of the year. You should also have a copy of the contact details of your employer easily to hand.





