

UEL ACADEMIC PLACEMENTS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR EXTERNAL ORGANISATION

What is an academic placement?

An academic or embedded placement is mandatory placement that a student is required to complete as part of their degree programme. This placement is usually credit bearing.

How long do placements last?

There are a number of different placements across our programmes, and the durations vary. Please see details below:

- **Undergraduate embedded placements:** Many of our undergraduate programmes require students to complete work placements. These can be short-term for around 1-2 weeks, or longer placements which need to be around 70 hours in total.
- **Sandwich placements:** A placement in industry offers students the opportunity to explore a role in an organisation over a 6 to 12-month period, working on a full-time basis. Placements are completed in the third year of study and students then return to complete their fourth and final year.
- **Postgraduate placements:** Our MBA, MSc Engineering and MSc Computing programmes have placement years which require students to work in industry for a period of 25-30 weeks for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

I am interested in offering a student a placement. What should I do next?

Please register on the [UEL Employment Hub](#) and complete the 'Placement Application Form' and email it to the Placements Inbox: placements@uel.ac.uk

How do I know if my placement will meet with the academic requirements?

Once your application has been received it will be reviewed and sent to the relevant academic for approval. If it does not meet with the requirements for one of our programmes, we will get back to you with advice regarding how it can be made compliant.

Are organisations required to pay a salary to academic placement students?

According to government guidance – 'Students working as a required part of a UK-based further or higher education course don't qualify for the minimum wage if their placement with you or your organisation does not exceed 1 year. The exemption does not apply to students performing work that is not related to their course, such as to help finance their studies or during a gap year.'

Please find further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-minimum-wage-work-experience-and-internships>

As academic placements are exempt from National Minimum Wage they are typically unpaid. However, reimbursement for lunch and travel is required. Some organisations choose to pay a salary which makes the role more attractive for students.

Are there any other eligibility criteria for taking on a placement student?

- **Work Space:** The sponsoring organisation is required to have adequate work space that meets with Health & Safety requirements. Students should not be expected to work from home, or find their own working space.
- **Supervision:** Students should have a Line Manager to supervise their work, and to be able to sign off hours worked and review documents such as the student's Reflective Log or Appraisal Report.
- **Employer's Liability Insurance:** The placement provider is responsible for the health and safety of the student whilst on placement as if the student were their employee. Most employers are required to hold Employers Liability (EL) insurance and there is an agreement among the UK insurance industry that work placement participants will be regarded as employees by all UK insurers and covered by EL policies. As the student will be on placement with your business you have a duty of care around their Health and Safety. The issue of whether you pay them or not doesn't affect your requirement to hold Employers Liability Insurance

What happens if I want to extend the placement beyond the agreed week period?

Extensions can be offered to placement students beyond the agreed period. This can be agreed directly between yourself and the candidate concerned, taking into regards their specific visa requirements if applicable. Please click on the link for guidance with regards to remuneration for work that falls outside of the academic placement: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-minimum-wage-work-experience-and-internships>

What are some of the key benefits of taking on an intern?

Taking on a placement student can be a rewarding experience. Some of the key benefits include bringing a new perspective to the work of your team and getting fresh views and ideas on a particular project or work area. The placement may also provide existing members of your team with a development opportunity, in delivering mentoring and support to the student. It is also a great way of finding time and resource to tackle any projects that have been put on the backburner.

How does the recruitment process work?

- Sponsor organisation to create an account on the [UEL Employment Hub](#)
- Sponsor organisation to complete the 'Placement Application Form' and email it to placements@uel.ac.uk
- Placement Officer with contact you to agree a recruitment timeline
- Shortlisted candidates will be sent to you on the agreed date
- Sponsor organisation will do a final shortlist and invite students in for interview
- Sponsor organisation will provide the Placement Officer with details of candidates interviewed and those that have been successful. Interview feedback must also be provided.
- Placement Officer sends paperwork to be signed (Sponsor Agreement Form and Student Agreement Form)
- Student starts placement on agreed date

What support should I put in place for the student before they start work?

You should aim to have the following in place, to ensure a smooth induction process for the student:

- Mentor/ Line Manager from your team identified and available on 's first day to follow your standard induction process
- IT login and email account set up
- Seating and desk arrangements
- Arrangements for the student to meet other key members of your team
- Agree a named member of your team who will sign weekly timesheets for the student, together with the Reflective Log where required.

What steps should I take if I experience any conduct or performance issues during the placement?

We would recommend that where possible, you discuss any performance or conduct issues with the student directly as a first step. This will give them the opportunity to make improvements/changes to address the issues raised. If you feel you would like further advice about delivering feedback or have a concern which you feel cannot be addressed via the above approach, please contact your Placement Officer who will be able to advise you.

What is my role in the student's placement assessment?

Requirements are different across programmes but most students will be asked to keep a Reflective Log which will ideally be reviewed by their supervisor. The postgraduate programmes require supervisors to complete an Appraisal Report and they are also invited to observe student presentations. In all cases sponsoring organisations will be required to confirm the hours that the students completed and complete the evaluation form on the UEL Employment Hub.

For further enquiries about the scheme, please contact:

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Placement Team: placements@uel.ac.uk