

Placement year: School placement lead guide

Introduction

This guide is aimed at supporting academic staff who have the role of Placement Lead within their school.

The initial setting up and management of a placement year sits jointly between the Academic Team and the Placements and Work Experience Team. This guide seeks to identify clarify the roles of these two key stakeholders.

If you are aware of students considering a Placement Year in Industry who are approaching the end of their first year or starting their second year, please encourage them to complete our [Expression of Interest form](#). This allows us to send relevant opportunities, resources, and support throughout their placement search. If you would like to be cc'd into our vacancy emails that we send out to second year students fortnightly, please get in touch.

Placement year general information

Below is some general information about the requirements for a placement year to be approved.

- A Placement Year in Industry must be a minimum of 24 weeks at 24 hours per week (not including holiday). Placements that do not meet both the minimum duration and minimum weekly hours requirements will not be approved. For example, a 24-week placement at 18 hours per week, or a 12-week placement at 24 hours per week, would not be accepted.
- The placement must also take place with a registered company or charity and should ideally be a paid opportunity. However, exceptions may be considered depending on the nature of the opportunity.
- The organisation must meet the University's health and safety requirements. This includes having appropriate health and safety policies in place, as well as Employer's Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance. Most organisations will already have these measures in place, but further information can be provided if required. Please see our [Health & Safety and Training Checklist](#) we send to employers to complete.
- A placement year should provide students with meaningful professional experience that develops graduate-level skills, responsibilities, and workplace knowledge relating to their course of study to enhance their future employability.

Here are some positive and negative indicators when reading a job description for a placement role before approving:

Green Flags (Positive)

- Clear job responsibilities, objectives, and expected outcomes.
- A fixed salary or hourly wage, with terms and conditions clearly stated.
- Relevant induction, training, and development opportunities.
- Clear working hours and working arrangements.
- Opportunities to develop professional and transferable skills through meaningful tasks such as projects, analysis, research, reporting, or problem-solving activities.
- A structured placement programme with appropriate supervision and support.
- Evidence that the organisation has successfully hosted placement students previously, or can demonstrate the capacity to provide a high-quality placement experience.

Red Flags (Negative)

- Zero-hours contracts or unclear working hours.
- Commission based, target based, or otherwise salary not guaranteed.
- No website available to view.
- Negative information on Companies House such as a dissolved company.
- Self-employed or freelance contracts where support, supervision, and learning outcomes may be difficult to evidence.
- Roles with a heavy emphasis on 'face to face' sales, particularly where these are not clearly communicated in the job description and are disguised as roles such as Marketing Intern/Marketing Assistant.
- Vague job titles or role descriptions that do not clearly outline duties, responsibilities, and expected skill development such as 'marketing', 'events', 'brand ambassador'.
- Limited information regarding training, supervision, mentoring, or support arrangements.
- Roles that appear to focus primarily on routine or repetitive tasks, with little opportunity for professional development or acquisition of graduate-level skills.
- Employers who are unwilling or unable to provide a placement agreement, learning objectives, or a named supervisor.
- Individuals claiming to be talent scouts or recruiters on websites such as Indeed or Reed who state that they have reviewed your CV and ask you to book an

- online meeting via a link. Do not click on unsolicited links.

Academic Progression Requirements

Students must successfully complete and pass the previous year of their programme before commencing a placement year.

Where a student has outstanding reassessments or resits, they should not begin their placement until progression has been formally confirmed following the relevant assessment board. Placement Leads should be aware that placement start dates may need to be amended where progression requirements have not yet been met.

When approving placements, any students that have failed modules, please get in touch with the placements team before approving.

Before placement

Applying for placements

Placement Years provide students with valuable industry experience, enhance their employability, and can positively contribute to graduate outcomes. As School Placement Lead, you play an important role in ensuring students are aware of and actively consider this opportunity.

The Careers & Employability Team will support students throughout the placement process by promoting vacancies fortnightly (get in touch if you would like to receive these emails), delivering workshops, and providing 1:1 guidance.

As placement lead please ensure placement support is promoted to students and colleagues throughout the year and that suitable opportunities within the curriculum are identified with your placement adviser to offer placement support.

School Placement Lead Checklist

At the start of Semester A (Year 2):

☐ Schedule and promote a Placement Year Information Session for Year 2 students in Semester A.

- ☐ Ensure relevant academic staff are aware of placement year opportunities and key dates.

Throughout the academic year:

- ☐ Regularly remind second year students to check placement vacancies shared by the Placement Adviser via email and Blackboard.
- ☐ Encourage students interested in a placement year to engage with Careers & Employability support.
- ☐ Signpost students to placement workshops, resources, and 1:1 appointments.
- ☐ To monitor student engagement for your cohort and identify students who may require additional encouragement or support please ask your placement adviser for access to the placement engagement tracker.

Support Available to Students

Placement Advisers provide:

- [1:1 appointments](#) to talk through applications and interviews.
- [Group workshops](#) covering 'Prep for placement year' and 'How to find work experience'.
- [CV and Cover Letter](#) resources.
- [Interview preparation](#) resources.
- [Job search website](#) recommendations.

Placement registration process

Once a student has secured a placement, please signpost them to the Placements Team, as there is a mandatory registration process that must be completed before the placement can be approved. Please see our [student guide](#) for further information. The placement registration process consists of the following steps:

Students:

- Once students secure a placement, they must register it via the placement [registration form](#). Students within your School will then be assigned to you through the [PowerApps site](#).
- Students will be sent two forms to complete:
 - A [Placement Agreement](#), which they must read and sign.

- A [Risk Assessment Form \(UK\)/Risk Assessment \(International\)](#) which they must complete and submit.
- Once the placement has been approved, students must attend a pre-placement briefing session. These sessions are delivered online by Placement Advisers and run monthly throughout the summer. We will send the sessions to you once dates have been decided. Alternative arrangements can be made where necessary.
- After attending the session, students will be sent the Pre-Placement Briefing Guide to read. They will also be required to sign a form confirming that they have attended the session and read the guide.
- Once students begin their placement, they must complete an Induction Checklist with their line manager or supervisor and submit it to the Placements Team.

Employers:

- Employers will be sent a Health & Safety Form to complete. This provides us with relevant information regarding key contacts, insurance cover, and any workplace risks.
- Employers must also provide a job description for the role. This should be sent to the relevant Placement Adviser, who will then forward it to the appropriate Placement Lead for academic approval. We can provide a template to employers if they struggle to structure or provide one.

Placement Leads:

- Once the employer has submitted a job description, it will be sent to you by the Placement Adviser for academic approval. We recommend that the job description is also shared with the Programme Lead for the student's course in case any queries arise. Please refer to the Placement Year General Information section above for further details on placement requirements. **Please approve placements within a week where possible.**

Placement Advisers:

- Once Placement Advisers have received all required documentation, including:
 - Student forms
 - The employer's Health & Safety Form and job description
 - Academic approval of the job description from the Placement Lead,
 the placement can then be formally approved.
- The approval information is then recorded on a Placement Approval Form by the relevant placement provider and the relevant documentation is uploaded to the student's PowerApps record.

Please note: you will need to assign members of staff within your School to the role of Placement Visit Tutor before the start of the academic year. Each tutor can support multiple students at any one time. Please share list of placement tutors with placement team by the Friday before Welcome Week at the latest.

Placement Visit Tutors are responsible for maintaining contact with students throughout their placement and providing support where required. Further information about this role can be found in the Placement Visit Tutor Guide.

The placement team will provide regular updates throughout the academic year on the placements approved so far for your school, or you can view them at any time through the placement PowerApps site.

During placement

Whilst Placement Tutors are responsible for the day-to-day support and monitoring of students on placement, the **School Placement Lead retains overall responsibility for placement activity within their School.**

This includes ensuring that appropriate Placement Visit Tutor support is in place for all students, maintaining oversight of student progress, and being aware of any significant issues that arise during the placement period.

In some cases, the Placement Lead may also undertake the role of Placement Visit Tutor.

Placement Lead Responsibilities During Placement

- ☐ Ensure all students on placement have an appointed Placement Visit Tutor.
- ☐ Maintain regular **monthly** contact with Placement Visit Tutors and stay informed of any emerging concerns.
- ☐ Monitor placement activity and engagement across the school.
- ☐ Support with placement issues where escalation beyond the Placement Visit Tutor is required and work with the Placements Team where additional intervention or support is needed.
- ☐ Ensure student wellbeing, placement quality, and engagement remain appropriately supported throughout the placement period.

☐ Review any significant concerns raised by Placement Visit Tutors and support appropriate action where required.

Placement Tutor Information

Placement Tutors provide direct support to students and employers throughout the placement period and should be checking in with students on a **monthly** basis.

Placement Leads should ensure they are familiar with the responsibilities of the Placement Visit Tutor role and maintain regular communication with tutors throughout the year.

For full details, please refer to the [Placement Visit Tutor Guide](#).

Towards the end of the placement, Placement Tutors will hold a review meeting with the student and employer to discuss progress and performance. During this period, Placement Advisers will also begin promotional activities for the next placement cohort and support placement registration for the following academic year.

After placement year

Placement advisers will collect feedback from the employer and student about their placement experience which will be reviewed and shared when review meetings are arranged with Placement Leads during the summer. This can then be used in promoting placements to future students.

There will be an annual review of placements during the summer involving Placement Leads and Placement Advisers, which will be arranged by the Placements Team. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the effectiveness of placement processes and ensure that both the academic and administrative aspects of placements are operating successfully.

International students

International students studying on a Student Visa who are completing a placement year as part of their course can do this on a full-time basis as long as it is completed before the end of their course date. For further information, please visit our [International with Student Visa guide](#) which includes a checklist for students at the end.

If the placement is a mandatory element of their course e.g. nursing, this should have been indicated by the student when they completed their application form when they applied for their Student Visa.

If a student is wanting to complete an optional placement year, then the University has the responsibility of completing the required Change of Circumstances Documentation. This should occur as part of the process if the student registers their placement on the Placement PowerApps site.

We would however advise all International Students to check their status in respect of undertaking a placement year by making contact with the International Advice Team [International students – Student Services](#).

It is a requirement of the Home Office that we monitor the attendance of students studying on a Student Visa. The University is intermittently audited on this. Any failure to comply with this needs formally reporting to the Student Visa Compliance Team.

Health and safety

Please note, the following applies when the student:

- Finds their own opportunity.
- Undertakes it in their current work setting.
- Is paired up with an organisation by a member of the university.
- Undertakes the opportunity at the University.
- Is paid or not paid.
- Applies for an advertised opportunity.
- Undertakes the opportunity in a different country (although there are some variations that are assessed on an individual basis)

This applies for both year long and module placements.

As stated in Section 2.1 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

‘Primary responsibility for the management of the health and safety of a student while they are on placement lies with the placement provider. The student will be treated as equivalent to one of their own employees in relation to health and Safety matters.’

This being the case our first steps must be to ensure that the organisation offering the opportunity is fit for purpose.

To confirm that the opportunity and placement provider are suitable for a placement year, we ask all employers to complete our [Health & Safety and Training Checklist](#)

This will be sent to the provider when a student registers their placement.

The placement provider form will confirm information such as:

- Either a Companies House number or Charitable Status number, or in the case of a Sole Trader or Family Business some form of documentation that evidences they exist as a business, such as a HMRC number.
- Details of the learning opportunities that will be afforded to the student in a job

description.

- Relevant insurance: Employers' Liability Insurance for a minimum of £5 million, Public Liability Insurance for a minimum of £1M (office/clerical placements) or minimum of £5M (other placements). Certain State/NHS/Public bodies may be covered by Crown Indemnity.

If **you are using** the central SharePoint system via the Placements and Work Experience team to support your Year in Industry or Module Work Based Learning Opportunity then the Placement Advisers will undertake the above and either approve, ask for further information or not approve the opportunity. This will be communicated to the student, academic colleagues and other relevant parties.

If **you are not using** the central SharePoint system, then the responsibility to undertake the above sits with the Module Lead or other person designated by the school.

Placement Lead Checklist

- ☐ Promote placement year opportunities to students.
- ☐ Organise a Year 2 placement information session in Semester A.
- ☐ Encourage students to engage with Careers & Employability support and monitor engagement.
- ☐ Review and approve placement job descriptions for academic suitability.
- ☐ Ensure each student has an assigned Placement Visit Tutor.
- ☐ Maintain oversight of all students on placement within your School.
- ☐ Stay in regular contact with Placement Visit Tutors and support escalation of any concerns.
- ☐ Ensure international students are signposted to the International Advice Team and follow the correct process.
- ☐ Review placement feedback and attend the annual placement review with the Placement Team.

Remember: As Placement Lead, you have overall responsibility for placement activity within your School.

We hope you have found this guide helpful.

Please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Placements and Work Experience Team at Placements and Work Experience PlacementsandWexp@lincoln.ac.uk should you require any further information.

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Placement and Internship Advisers – Careers and Employability Team