

Placement year: student guide

Introduction

This guide is aimed at supporting students who are considering a placement year or have secured a placement opportunity. It is great that you are taking up an additional work-based learning opportunity. We know from our experience of supporting other students what a positive experience a placement is and how much students get from their opportunity.

We also know how much yearlong placements and additional experience are valued by employers both at the time students are completing them and when students go on to apply for jobs in the future. In 2024/25, 64% of graduates who did a year placement are now in a graduate level role. To find out more, please visit our [What our Students say about Placements](#) page.

If you are looking at completing a placement year, we know that this is a big consideration for you and that searching and securing an opportunity can be a difficult task. We also know that it raises a lot of questions. We therefore hope the information in this guide will help with reducing any worries or questions you may have. This guide should be read in conjunction with the placement year handbook which will focus on the academic elements of the placement and will be provided by your placement lead in your school.

This guide will also run through the process which both placement year and module placement opportunities will need to be approved through.

What is a Placement year?

For an opportunity to meet the standards of a University of Lincoln placement year it must meet the following:

- Take place with a registered company or charity.
- Be relevant to your course of study.
- Enable you to meet the learning outcomes of the placement year (see placement handbook).
- Last a minimum of 24 hours a week for 24 weeks (this does not include holiday). Some courses or opportunities require you to undertake more than this, so make sure you check the requirements of your programme or the opportunity you are applying for.
- Be paid. There are some exceptions to this, which we can discuss with you if it becomes relevant.

- Meet the universities requirements for health and safety, this includes having health and safety policies in place and employee and public liability insurance in place (most companies will have these, but further details can be provided if the company requests them).

All the above will be checked and must meet the above standards. If you are at all unsure that the placement will meet the standards, please do contact placementsandwexp@lincoln.ac.uk

Academic Progression

Students must successfully complete and pass all required modules before starting their placement year. If you are required to undertake reassessments or resits, you must wait until your resit results have been confirmed and you have formally progressed to the next stage of your programme before commencing your placement.

If you secure a placement before your resits are completed, your start date may need to be delayed until progression has been confirmed by the University.

Before a Placement

Finding your Placement

The responsibility of finding a placement sits with you, however if you need support with this you can arrange an appointment with one of the Placement Advisers that sit within the Careers & Employability Team via this link [Placements & Work Experience - University of Lincoln Careers & Employability](#). This link also gives you access to a lot of other information that you might find helpful.

The Placement Advisers will be able to discuss your placement interests with you and support you with sources to identify an opportunity.

There are 2 ways that students find a placement:

- **Applying to advertised vacancies:** These can be found through a variety of websites listed on the [placements and work experience webpage](#). [CareerLink](#) is the University's online vacancy platform where employers can upload placement roles, this is a great place to start.
- **Making a speculative application to a company/organisation:** This involves you creating an email explaining what you are seeking and attaching a CV. Our [speculative applications guide](#) has more information.

When searching for placement opportunities, be aware of both positive indicators and warning signs that may help you assess the quality and suitability of a role:

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.

Applying for your Placement

Once you have identified a placement you would like to apply for, or a company/organisation you would like to approach, you may wish to book a further [appointment](#) with one of the Placement Advisers. They can support you with the various stages of the application process, including completing application forms, writing cover letters, and developing your CV.

You can also find useful resources here: [Online Resources and Learning - University of Lincoln Careers & Employability](#).

Interviewing for your Placement

The type of interview process you encounter will vary between placement opportunities, so it is important to be as prepared as possible. Placement Advisers can support you at every stage of your interview preparation, from providing interview resources and guidance to conducting mock interviews. We strongly recommend booking a [mock interview](#). It is far better to practise in a supportive environment than for your first interview experience to be for a role you are particularly keen to secure. Interview skills improve with practice, and we are here to help you build your confidence and prepare effectively.

You will likely need to apply for several placement opportunities before securing a role. Placement recruitment can be highly competitive, and it is common for students to submit multiple applications before receiving an offer. This is a normal part of the process and should not discourage you. Our resources and services are designed to support you throughout your placement search and application journey. Whether you need help identifying opportunities, writing applications, preparing for interviews, or responding to feedback, we are available to support you at every stage.

Before you start your Placement

Registering your Placement

Once you have found and secured your placement, it is essential that you formally register it with the university via [this link](#). You will not be able to commence your placement until the full placement approval process has been completed.

Approving your Placement

Your placement must meet a number of standards before it can formally be approved (as detailed in the introduction section above).

Once you formally register your placement, the Placements and Work Experience team will commence the approval process. This requires the collection and approval of several documents so please allow at least two weeks for this. If you have any concerns, please get in touch with us. As you cannot begin your placement until it has been approved, you should register it as soon as possible.

Once your placement has been formally approved you will be notified directly.

Please do not start your placement until you have received the formal approval notification and have attended a pre-placement briefing which you will be invited to after your placement is approved.

Finance

Student Finance

If you are completing a year-long placement as part of your course you will need to make [Student Finance England \(SFE\)](#) aware.

The fee to undertake a placement year is reduced from a usual tuition fee and is £1850, this is available through SFE.

During a **paid** placement year, students can apply for a reduced maintenance loan. If your placement is **unpaid**, you may be able to secure the same maintenance loan as previous years. Eligible placements are usually unpaid in the following areas:

- Hospital or public service laboratory
- Local authority as relates to child health or welfare
- Prison, probation and aftercare services
- Public health functions
- Special Health Authority, NHS Committee Board
- UK Parliament

You may be asked to provide evidence of this. The Placements Team are able to provide you with a letter (for paid and unpaid placements) to support your application, once your placement has been confirmed with us.

If you believe your placement will be unpaid, we recommend contacting SFE to confirm if you will be eligible for your maintenance loan as some unpaid placements do not qualify for the full maintenance amount.

Course-related travel grant

The University's Student Services may be able to provide a course-related travel grant to use during your placement or work experience opportunity. Please visit [Financial Assistance Funds – Student Services \(lincoln.ac.uk\)](#).

For further support and information related to financial matters, please visit the [Financial Support and Money Management](#) webpage from Student Support.

International students

If you are an international student interested in completing a placement, there are some key considerations. Please visit our [international student placement guide](#) to learn more.

Students with Additional Needs

We recognise that students from traditionally unrepresented backgrounds may face barriers for securing and completing placements. We have additional support available, which includes a specialist adviser who can offer 1-1 appointments as well as monthly workshops, which can be found on our [events calendar](#). Discover the resources and assistance available to help you secure and thrive in placements or work experiences here: [Placement Support for disabled students](#).

The university also offers various funding options such as the Course-Related Travel Grant (accessed through Student Support) and the Opportunity Fund. For more information on the support we offer, please visit the [Diversity, Equality and Mental Health Hub](#).

Accommodation

The University of Lincoln Accommodation team have an agreement to benefit placement year students. If you are looking for a placement but still want to make sure you have back up accommodation in Lincoln in case you don't secure a role, you are still able to book accommodation through the team. If you then are successful in finding a position, there will be no cancellation fee associated with cancelling your accommodation agreement. This over covers all 5 University managed accommodation sites; St Marks, 179 High Street, The Gateway, Cygnet Wharf, and Valentine Court.

If you are looking to secure a placement in Lincoln, you would still be able to book accommodation with the University of Lincoln as well.

If you are going to be staying elsewhere, away from Lincoln, you may need to do some searching for accommodation. Some larger employers will have accommodation for groups of placement students to stay in together. Smaller employers may want you to sort this yourself. As you are still an enrolled student, you should still be eligible to apply for student accommodation – some Universities will accept students from other Universities too so if you are living in a city with different Universities, it is worth seeing if they have this offer.

If you have any questions about accommodation options, contract flexibility, or support available during your placement year, please contact Accommodation Services directly at accommodation@lincoln.ac.uk

On Placement

Once you commence placement you will be formally starting the placement year module and will be allocated a placement contact tutor, who is part of the academic team. This person will be responsible for:

- Meeting with you and your placement provider at a schedule defined by your course of study (see placement handbook).
- Assessing your practice alongside you and your placement provider.
- Providing support with any issues arising in the placement.

You will have a form of assessment to complete towards the end of your placement. This may be a presentation, essay, or combination. Further information on your assessment can be found in your school's placement year handbook.

Biomedical Science students completing IBMS NHS placements will have the opportunity to complete their portfolio throughout placement so may have more consistent academic work to keep up with.

You will be assessed against all the same guidelines as usual university assessments so please do not use AI for these. If you would like specific guidance for usage of AI during the assessments, please visit this link: [AI for Study and Assessment | Learning at Lincoln | University of Lincoln](#)

Concerns during placement

If you have any worries or questions whilst you are on placement, or you feel that you need additional support, we have outlined some actions you can take.

Talking to your line manager - You will have a manager or supervisor whilst on placement who will be your first point of contact at work. They will be able to offer you advice regarding your progress and work during placement.

Contact your placement tutor - Your placement tutor is here to be a link between yourself and the University whilst you are on placement. You will have meetings with them as well as being able to email them. If you have any concerns, you can raise these to your tutor who can offer advice and help take further steps. You will be assigned a tutor and notified who this is. If you are unsure, please contact the placements team.

Contact Student Wellbeing at the University of Lincoln - As you are still enrolled as a student at the University, you will still be able to access all support services. The Wellbeing team can offer advice and support on different situations.

Student Wellbeing Centre contact information

Telephone: 01522 886400

Email: studentwellbeing@lincoln.ac.uk

Self-referral form: [Contact Student Wellbeing](#)

Email the placements team (placementsandwexp@lincoln.ac.uk) - The placements team are always here to support you. If you have any worries about how your placement is going or have any administrative queries, we can help.

There are plenty of different people you can reach out to regarding your placement. If you are experiencing any problems, please contact someone sooner rather than later so we can help you enjoy your remaining time on placement!

Post Placement

Your placement will end once you have completed the agreed number of days and hours. At this point, the Placements and Work Experience Team will ask you to complete a student feedback form which will enable us to know how you experienced your placement, whether you would recommend it to another student and whether there are any issues that you consider should be addressed before the placement provider is used again.

If you do require further support when returning to university, please visit our [Final Year checklist](#) page for more information on graduate opportunities and live schemes, available resources and details of how to book a 1:1 appointment for tailored careers support.

Placement Year Checklist

- ☐ Find and apply for placement opportunities.
- ☐ Book an appointment with a Placement Adviser if you would like support with finding opportunities, applications, CVs, cover letters, or interviews.
- ☐ Register your placement with the University once secured.
- ☐ Complete the placement approval process for the Placement Team.

☐ Wait for placement approval and attend your pre-placement briefing meeting with the Placement Team. **Do not start your placement until it has been approved.**

☐ Keep in contact with your placement tutor throughout your placement.

☐ Speak to your line manager/supervisor about any placement concerns and contact your Placement Tutor if you need further support.

☐ Complete your placement assessment towards the end of the placement provided by your Placement Tutor.

☐ Submit your placement feedback form at the end of your placement.

Remember: Register your placement early, attend your pre-placement briefing, and seek support whenever you need it. We're here to help throughout your placement journey.

International students: Check your visa requirements before accepting or starting a placement.