

TAPPING INTO  
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**Recruiters' Guide:**  
**Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**



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## Questions

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## 1. Do University of Birmingham Students have the practical, higher level skills that I need to grow my company?

### *Our courses are industry informed*

Many of the degree courses at Birmingham have an industry informed curriculum to ensure that students are fully equipped for the challenging workplace. External business professionals and alumni visit campus regularly, sharing their knowledge and discoveries in provoking ways to stimulate debate. Smaller companies as well as multinational firms often support course and fieldwork activities so that learning fits real business needs and priorities. Some Schools (departments) are advised by Industrial Advisory Committees, comprised of small and large employers on the relevance of current degree programmes.

### *Students gain experience through industrial placements, internships and part-time work*

Some of our programmes also include an industrial work placement for students (for approximately one year in their third year of study). All students can undertake work experience during the vacation periods (an internship) and can secure part-time employment whilst studying. Students are tasked to source their own work experience making them more independent, resourceful and self-reliant. We also have a team of Internship Officers who will work with you to provide work experience and internship opportunities that are both valuable to students and of benefit to you.

### *Skills to tackle 21<sup>st</sup> Century issues*

We encourage our students to learn through a process of enquiry, shared with their peers and wider stakeholders such as business representatives and alumni. Depending on the students' level and course discipline, students can be/are involved in real world problem-based learning, evidence-based learning, small scale investigating, fieldwork projects or/and research.

Students are tasked to use a range of resources to address problems/gaps and construct solutions and answers, identifying new questions and creating new knowledge.

Typical skills developed include: problem solving, analytical, communication (both written and verbal), presentation, interpersonal, numeracy, leadership, independence, resourcefulness, self-reliance and networking skills.

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*Extra-curricular activity and voluntary work provides students with a valuable work ethic and strong enterprising skills*

The Guild of Students (the Students' Union) has around 200 reputable societies, in which students are required to budget, raise capital, negotiate with businesses and maintain and grow their student membership through an effective delivery of offerings and superior customer service. The Guild also offers many volunteering opportunities. These tend to be student-led projects, working with numerous external charities and voluntary organisations as well as SMEs. Students wishing to invest their enterprising skills into a new venture are able to gain start-up assistance from our Enterprise and Innovation team. On average, one third of those businesses are trading after 12 months (clients including both large organisations and SMEs). An impressive result!

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## 2. What type of work experiences can I provide students?

Typically, work experience falls into the following categories:

Opportunity Type	Definition
Graduate Opportunity	Includes full-time and part-time positions and graduate schemes.  Entry-level position that <b>requires a degree</b> paying the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or above.
Postgraduate Opportunity	Includes full-time and part-time positions and graduate schemes.  Position that <b>requires a postgraduate degree (Master's, PhD)</b> paying the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or above.
Funded PhD Opportunity	<b>PhD projects with funding attached such as an annual stipend.</b>  We are interested in niche opportunities (opportunities that are not already widely advertised e.g. on FindAPhD.com). PhD opportunities for all academic areas are accepted.
Internship	Candidates carry out specific work- related tasks over a set period of time. The aim of an internship is to provide the intern with professional experience and the opportunity to develop skills related to working in a particular sector or profession. Should be paid at the higher rate of National Minimum Wage.  Ranging <b>typically from one week to 12 weeks during a vacation</b> . They may work full time or part time hours.
Graduate Internship	Candidates carry out specific work- related tasks over a set period of time. The aim of an internship is to provide the intern with professional experience and the opportunity to develop skills related to working in a particular sector or profession. Should be paid at the higher rate of National Minimum Wage.  Graduate Internships can be for a <b>longer period, having already left university</b> . They may work full time or part time hours.
Placement	For students enrolled on a higher education course which includes a period of work experience. On completion of the placement, the <b>student gains credits towards their degree programme</b> .  The placement helps to combine academic theory with practice. The experience is usually paid by the organisation. This should not exceed one year.

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<p>Work Experience (including work shadowing)</p>	<p>Intended to enable students to develop their skills and knowledge. The student is not expected to undertake specific work-related tasks, but is given the opportunity to learn more about the sector/profession through activities such as observation, shadowing, attending meetings, talking to employees.</p> <p>This is non-contractual and unpaid, as <b>the student should not be carrying out tasks which an employee or worker would do.</b></p> <p>Most work shadowing opportunities are one or two day experiences; however in larger organisations there may be enough opportunities to last a week. Most work experience opportunities are no more than 4 weeks or 20 working days within a 10 week period.</p>
<p>Fee-paying Overseas Opportunity</p>	<p>Any work experience opportunities outside of the UK requiring a financial payment from students. When your opportunities are placed on our database they include a disclaimer making our students/graduates aware that this opportunity is outside of our terms of advising and they should undertake their own research into the advertised opportunity.</p> <p><b>We reserve the right not to advertise any position we deem unsuitable for our students and graduates.</b></p>

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### 3. How much should they be paid?

We encourage employers to pay our students and graduates at least the higher rate of National Minimum Wage. (See <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>). However, we recommend employers pay salaries reflecting the level of work our students/graduates are undertaking. We recommend a minimum of £7.83\* for any role. Further information you may find useful can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>

*\*Correct rate for 25 and Over for financial year April 2018 – March 2019*

### 4. Can I offer unpaid experience?

All unpaid opportunities which **do not form a contract of employment** or a worker relationship (and are not part of a placement year as part of a course) are exempt from NMW.

This includes:

- Work experience/work shadowing
- Volunteering opportunities with a charity, voluntary organisation, associated fund raising body or a statutory body

These opportunities will only be advertised if they are **no longer than 20 working days within a 10 week period on a part-time basis or no longer than 4 weeks on a full-time basis**.

Further information you may find useful can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>

### 5. Can students work from their own home and what are the legal implications?

Whilst students are not actively encouraged to work from home, there are aspects of work that may be suitable to be undertaken from home and which enable them to gain beneficial experience such as project work with an organisation with which they may not otherwise be able to work.

A good example would be an opportunity which will enable students to undertake assessment of data from a remote location. The student would work from their own home to assess the information, and in turn produce a report.

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There are a number of issues which must be considered when students are required to work from home. These include:

- **Trust** – if payment is involved, employers have to be confident that students are working the number of hours for which they are being paid; conversely, students need to be confident that they are able to complete the work in the time for which they are being paid and that there won't be pressure upon them to work longer hours on an unpaid basis to complete an unrealistic volume of work
- **Health and safety** – if a student is working on a contractual basis with an organisation, that organisation has a commitment to the student to ensure that health and safety requirements are being adhered to. For example, if an employer provides a student with any apparatus to use at home, sufficient checks should be conducted to ensure that the student's health or safety is not compromised
- **Insurance** - when working for an employer, their liability insurance will normally cover an employee in the event of accident whilst working on-site, or if injuries or death result from work-related activities. However, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their employer has sufficient insurance cover in place to protect the student when working from home, if there is a chance that they may incur injury or worse in the line of duty not sure about the last bit of this sentence – there is always “a chance” i.e you can never rule out risk and not sure about “in the line of duty”, perhaps end with “when working from home”
- **The Gov.uk website** provides general guidance to both employers and employees regarding working from home: <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>

Please note that we are unable to promote any opportunities that require our students/graduates to work in a private residential address.

## 6. What sources of funding exist to recruit a student or graduate?

The University of Birmingham is unable to offer any financial incentives to employers to assist with the recruitment of students. However, where a student may source and secure a voluntary opportunity with an organisation, we are able to offer a limited number of work experience bursaries for which they may apply, to assist them with basic costs (such as travel or accommodation). However, these bursaries are limited (in most instances to a maximum of £800 and are not granted simply in place of wages.

Santander has partnered with a number of higher education institutions, including the University of Birmingham, to provide match-funding grants to assist SMEs with the costs of employing a recent University of Birmingham graduate to undertake a full-time internship of 10 weeks' duration. For more information about this scheme, please visit <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/partners/employers/services/match-funding-internships.aspx>



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## 7. How can you assist with my recruitment so that I receive quality applications?

We can help in several different ways to ensure you receive the quality applications you'd expect from a prestigious university such as Birmingham:

- Our Application Support Advisers are available to assist students applying to work experience opportunities and internships before they submit final applications. These advisers will assist students in ensuring applications are correctly formatted and of the professional quality employers expect.
- As mentioned above, we can target specific groups of students with the promotion of your internships or work experience, ensuring you get the most relevant and qualified students applying.
- Our staff are very experienced in helping you prepare the best and most relevant job descriptions for your opportunities. If you are unsure how best to present a job description or advertisement we are here to assist in the phrasing, content and style of these to ensure they appear most attractive to our students.

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## 8. Is there a charge for your services?

Most of our services are free – and all with the aim of reaching your targeted groups in the most effective way.

FREE Services to SMEs:

1. Vacancy promotion through Careers Network's "Careers Connect" database to University of Birmingham students and recent graduates
2. Vacancy advertising to the wider West Midlands universities on your behalf (at request)
3. Company exposure to students via our Internship Officers who can promote your opportunities face to face with students from your targeted Schools/departments
4. Advertising in departmental e-newsletters distributed to students
5. Social media promotion of opportunities to targeted cohorts of students / recent graduates

Some services, such as attending Careers Fairs and delivering presentations on campus do carry charges, due to the higher levels of cost and administration. However, this is discounted and priced competitively.

## 9. What do students study here?

Students may undertake courses in a wide range of courses across all five colleges, including:

- **College of Arts & Law:**
  - African Studies
  - American and Canadian Studies
  - Archaeology
  - Classics
  - Drama and Theatre Arts
  - English Literature
  - English Language and Applied Linguistics
  - History
  - History of Art
  - Law
  - Modern Languages and Cultures
  - Music
  - Philosophy
  - Theology and Religion

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- **College of Social Sciences:**

- Business
- Economics
- Education
- European Studies
- International Relations
- Marketing and Communications
- Planning
- Political Science
- Russian and East European Studies
- Social Studies
- Social Work
- Sociology

- **College of Engineering & Physical Sciences:**

- Chemical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science
- Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Metallurgy and Materials
- Physics and Astronomy

- **College of Life & Environmental Sciences:**

- Biological Sciences
- Earth Sciences
- Environmental Sciences
- Geography
- Psychology
- Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences

- **College of Medical & Dental Sciences:**

- Applied Health Research
- Biomedical Science
- Cancer and Genomic Sciences
- Cardiovascular Sciences
- Clinical Sciences
- Dentistry
- Immunology and Immunotherapy
- Inflammation and Ageing
- Medicine
- Metabolism and Systems Research
- Microbiology and Infection
- Nursing
- Pharmacy

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## 10. Who do I contact for more information?

- For any enquiry related to a graduate career role (aimed at students due to leave the University of Birmingham, or those who have left), please contact [recruiters@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:recruiters@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
- For any enquiry related to a student role (e.g. an internship, work placement or short term voluntary position) contact [internships@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:internships@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
- Or telephone Reception 0121 414 6120