

RESPECT Sponsorship Frequently Asked Questions

I'm an international student. Am I eligible for RESPECT?

Yes: RESPECT is open to all students, regardless of their nationality. There is no visa restriction for this since your employment takes place during vacation periods or during a year's placement which is a requirement of the With Industrial Year degrees.

I'm not sure which companies to apply to. Should I just choose all of them and hope for the best?

You can but it makes interviews quite hard, since one of the first things the company will ask you is why you want to work for them. It's recommended that you check out the website of each company, look at their careers pages and then have a look at the online content about being a civil engineer, such as the Institution of Civil Engineer's YouTube channel [Civil Engineering TV \(http://www.youtube.com/user/civilengineeringtv\)](http://www.youtube.com/user/civilengineeringtv).

Your main choice is between the world of consultancy, where you would spend most of your time in the office, as a designer; or contracting, where you would be out on site, building and making the designs real. Both have their advantages and challenges and it's worth spending a bit of time understanding them: ask your colleagues and friends and check out that online content again.

I'm in my first year. Should I apply this year or leave it until my 2nd year?

This is a decision only you can make, but many of the bigger companies who recruit more than one student will aim for a mixture of 1st and 2nd years. You'll get experience appropriate to your level of study and joining in your first year gives you at least two summers' worth of experience over your colleagues from the 2nd year. This might be especially useful if you go on to BEng, where you only have 2 summers anyway.

How can I be sure to keep my sponsorship?

You should expect to have some objectives and personal targets set for you at the start of your placement and you should then work to achieve these. This way, both you and your company will be able to assess how well you've got on and whether you both want to continue. Assuming all goes well, you'll confirm that you'll continue the following summer and receive your bursary.

How does the bursary get paid?

The bursary is paid directly to you during the academic year after your placement. Some companies pay it in one go during the autumn term, others might pay differently, e.g. £500 per term. It's worth checking out with your company manager how they usually do this, so you're not taken by surprise at any time.

Please note, payment is between you and your company, and doesn't involve the university at all. The purpose of the bursary is to assist you towards your fees and expenses but it's paid directly to you.

What if I don't want to continue?

If you decide to leave the scheme at any point, including not accepting a graduate position (or accepting a place at an assessment centre) if it's offered after your final summer, you automatically forego that year's bursary. If you choose to leave after having received the bursary, the company is entitled to ask you to return it in full. If the company decides not to continue sponsoring you for any reason but you've performed to your expected standard, they are obliged to pay your bursary.

When you complete your last placement, just before your final year, you need to speak with your company manager to confirm whether or not they're able to offer you a graduate job. Some companies expect you to join them for at least one or two years, sometimes going through a final assessment centre; others don't have such a strict regime. In any case you'll need to decide whether you want to pursue your career with them or not. If you choose not to accept a graduate position or assessment centre, you then forego your final bursary payment.

Can I use the placement to take the 3rd and 4th year Industrial Project modules for the MEng "With Industrial Experience" degree?

Yes you can, providing you spend at least 10 weeks with your company during each placement. It's worth checking they're ok with this too, so they're aware of the School's requirements for assessment and monitoring during your placement. We haven't experienced any company yet saying "no" to this.

Note you can also take Industrial Project 1 after your 2nd year as a stand-alone 3rd year option without having to continue to the "with Industrial Experience" MEng. This is especially useful if you might continue to BEng or wish to choose alternative 4th year MEng options. It also means you can confirm your choice of Industrial Project 1 regardless of your 2nd year marks.

I'd like to go abroad for my 3rd year. Can I still get sponsorship?

Yes but your company might wish to sponsor you only for the time you're in the UK – unless they have operations in your chosen country and are able to place you there. Usually, depending on the timing of your overseas university's terms, you can still take your placements with the company. As for other options, it's worth discussing this with your host company during your first placement or at interview.

I'd like to take a different placement, possibly with a charity. Can I do both?

It's up to you to talk to your company about this and negotiate either a shorter placement or a later/earlier start date to give you time to do this. If it's possible, most will be happy to accommodate this, as you're looking to do something beneficial to yourself and to the people the charity helps. However, your company might wish you to prioritise your placement with them, as they will all have plans for you, to give you some great civil engineering experience.

Can I take a year-long placement with my company?

Yes. We now offer a 4-year BEng and 5-year MEng with Industrial Year across all our programmes of study, so you'll be able to take a placement which is accredited as part of your degree. You'll need to achieve minimum 59.5% average in Years 1 and 2 to be eligible.

I don't want to start straight away with a graduate job. I'd like to travel or take some time out to do other things before I start working. Can I do this with RESPECT sponsorship?

Many companies are able to accommodate a delayed start to your career. It's worth discussing this closer to your final year, as you may have changed your mind in the intervening time.

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