



Professional Skills Module

Example Placements

We partner with organisations from a range of sectors to create a bank of Professional Skills Module placements; exclusive opportunities that benefit both our students and their employers.

Placements give students of Arts and Humanities at the University of Birmingham the opportunity to develop their professional skills and confidence, enhance their employability and explore a potential career as part of their degree.

Organisations gain additional support to fulfil a specific project or focus, often making a significant impact that you wouldn't otherwise have the capacity to achieve. Students offer a fresh perspective and can help with strategies for engaging young people.

Students are required to undertake a minimum 70 hours of work between June and December. They are assigned an essay and a presentation reflecting on their experience, which gives them drive and motivation to work hard at the project they are assigned.

We ask organisations to provide students with a structured piece of work/project and support throughout the placement where required. We think it is important you take the lead on recruiting your student but we will support you if you would like help with selection.

The following pages offer examples of the many ways in which our students have supported organisations this year.

To explore how placement students could benefit you and your organisation, please email Lesley Griffiths, Placements Officer, at calplacements@contacts.bham.ac.uk to arrange a visit or zoom chat.

“This has been a brilliant opportunity for our organisation and we encourage other values-driven organisations to provide quality, co-designed opportunities to talented students.”

Social Ark CIC

“A fantastic way to gain a little extra capacity whilst helping the next generation of employees or entrepreneurs gain the experience they need in industry. The students brought us different perspectives: they might not have had prior experience in what we were asking them to do, but we found this to be a healthy and fresh way to look at what we do”

Bearwood Community Hub

PSM Placements in Charities and Social Enterprises

social ARK

Social Ark is a London-based, values-driven organisation supporting talented, under-resourced young people to develop social enterprises. They co-designed the placement role with their student to design and develop a much-needed Mentoring Programme Pack. The task involved researching peer programmes, surveys, interviews and evaluation, all contributing to the creation of a new mentoring programme.

“This work is, in my opinion, an extremely impressive mentoring programme with advice and research on active listening, tools for further support and procedures for each stage. It far outweighs any similar mentoring packs I’ve seen from other organisations.”



Gro-Organic CIC is a West Midlands-based social enterprise with a passion for creating wonderful green spaces whilst investing in local people in the community. Their placement project involved developing activity resources aimed at young children. The student recruit exceeded expectations, creating 150 different activity sheets.

“[our student] was able to confidently produce high-quality resources both through print and video that will enable vulnerable children living in refuge to take part in creative and fun activities.”



Ovacome is the UK’s ovarian cancer charity providing expert support, information and a supportive and knowledgeable community for anyone affected by the disease. Our PSM student was tasked with scoping, designing and populating a regional contact database for local business and community organisations.

“[Our student] was very thorough and hard-working and has created an invaluable resource for our West Midlands Hub. They also went on to contact 120 organisations to offer our workplace talks.”



52 Lives aims to help one person every week by mobilising the support of its online community. In addition, their School of Kindness provides free Kindness Workshops to primary schools. They recruited to a digital marketing role which involved writing articles, news stories and social media posts – some were based on interviews they conducted and others were written from research.

“[our student] quickly picked up the tone and messaging of our charity and wrote high quality content at incredible speed. She accomplished far more in her time with us than I ever imagined.”



GINA Project is a social enterprise providing tailored counselling services for people subjected to sexual violence and abuse. One of their PSM students was recruited to research and compile a Fundraising Pack with ideas and activities for raising funds and develop a fundraising strategy and webpage.

“[our student] has simultaneously demonstrated a thorough understanding of fundraising concepts, whilst showing sensitivity and compassion in approaching the delicate nature of the work we do at GINA in supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse.”

PSM Placements in Culture, Heritage and Creative Arts



K'antu Ensemble is an award-winning early music group exploring new approaches to early folk and world music. Their extensive outreach programme includes the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the Everything to Everybody Shakespeare Festival. The placement encompassed a broad range of tasks including marketing, admin and education resources and involved producing arts and music activity sheets; compiling costings; and creating multi-platform content.

“[our student] was keen to take on a variety of different tasks so we were able to give him an unusually wide range of experiences across our organisation’s work and he has been a great addition to the team.”



Samuel Johnson Birthplace Trust Museum is the home of the literary giant most famous for his Dictionary of the English Language - a capsule of his life and times. They recruited for the role of Museum Re-Branding Developer, which involved reviewing the existing brand and collaborating with staff, stakeholders and volunteers to research and write a design brief outlining the requirements of the rebrand.



Selly Manor Museum features two of the city’s oldest buildings, rescued from demolition and relocated to Bournville by the Cadbury family and opened as museum in the early 1900s. One of the two roles recruited was Museum Assistant, a multi-faceted placement involving: researching and curating a digital exhibition; front of house; pest management; site management; event preparation, and supporting a school tours.

“...an excellent placement student; diligent, hard-working and focused on her goals.”



The Coffin Works is a uniquely preserved historic Jewellery Quarter factory, rescued and brought back to life as a heritage site and a slice of social history. Their PSM recruit took on an important project focused on capturing feedback, analysing data and generating insights, and reporting on a new visitor experience model. They also immersed themselves in the Museum’s operation through assisting with front of house and tour guiding.

“[our student] has produced an extremely useful report on visitor experience along with personal interpretation and ideas that will be vital for the future development of the museum’s model.”



Black Country Living Museum is a 26-acre representation of the industrial and social history of the Black Country with costumed staff depicting the inspiring stories of 300 years of the region’s history. The Museum recruited two students to assist the Collections Team in storying, cataloguing, researching, cleaning and photographing the collections. Their work also involved set dressing for seasonal changes and events and curating a display space.

PSM Placements in the Commercial sector



West Midlands Trains operates trains from London to Liverpool and across the West Midlands. The franchise is investing £1 billion to improve services, including a significant project at the University Station. One of their two recruits took a project management role, covering a diverse range of tasks, including: producing the monthly company-wide newsletter; writing a series of Collaboration Case Studies; leading on the CrossCountry 'Access for All' project; drafting project documents; and feedback analysis.

"Producing the August Newsletter was a huge achievement. It is distributed across the whole of the WMT organisation, including the most senior members of the organisation."



WellEasy is an online membership-based marketplace, working direct with brands to reduce retail mark-up and increase affordability of healthy and natural food, beauty and homeware products. They recruited a Content Creator to develop their marketing presence and produce content across their social media platforms. Their student demonstrated a remarkable grasp of the brand and concept and developed a wide variety of 100+ pieces of high quality social media content, including both video and infographics.

"the whole team were amazed at the level, creative flair and quantity [our student] was able to produce with the briefs she was given. Her ability to work within a group and communicate the concept was exceptional."

Columba

Columba UK is a startup that provides a managed marketplace for digital procurement to increase the effectiveness of brand/agency relationships and establish trust and value for both parties. Their students' roles focused on marketing and operations, with tasks which included: an outreach research project; business development; creating a brand new network platform; developing web and social media content.

"[our students] have been excellent and we've subsequently offered both of them paid part-time work."



Y.O.U Underwear is an ethical, sustainable clothing brand with a mission to improve access to education for women and girls by donating underwear to vulnerable women and children in Africa. They recruited students for Written and Visual Content Creation and TikTok Creation, with both students working to creative briefs, reflecting the company brand whilst engaging with social media trends and incorporating trend research and SEO.

"[our students'] work has been a great help to develop our upcoming content hub, expand our web rankings and presence and access a new audience on TikTok."

PSM Placements in Editorial and Publishing



Darling Magazine is an award-winning, SW London/Surrey-based women's print and online publication, with a total readership of 80,000 per quarter and the aim of inspiring and empowering readers with quality, topical content. Their placement students supported with editing online content; researching, and writing for publication; interviewing for a profile piece; creating promotional videos, social media account management; and setting up and populating a Pinterest account.

"[Both students] have done great pieces of work for us and have proved to be valuable to the Darling team."



Midlands Arts Papers is an online journal, led by the University of Birmingham in partnership with 13 public museums and galleries from West and East Midlands. MAP publishes new research on the outstanding works of art and design held in public collections across the region. They recruited an Editorial Assistant to support the 4th annual issue, scoping objects to reflect the theme, clearing image permissions, writing blog content and social media promotion; and a Researcher (Art and the Commonwealth Games), curating art trails at museums in the region by identifying and researching 10 relevant objects in each collection, then writing the art trails for publication in 2022.

"The student did a great job, and really made a contribution to our work. It was also a useful opportunity to reflect on and revise our training."



The Book Shelf specialises in non-fiction publishing and provides a range of services - including: coaching, critique, editing, design and marketing - to empower and upskill authors to prepare for self-publishing. They took on two students as Publishing Assistant, supporting aspiring authors in preparing for publication, research and product development; and Social Media and Marketing Assistant, creating and scheduling multi-platform content and campaigns, growing the company's social media presence and engagement.

"The placements were fantastic and definitely exceeded my expectations. For small employers like us, having students on placement offers the opportunity to gain new and fresh ideas in the business and to gain support in so many different areas from young people who are driven, enthusiastic, and full of initiative to help your business succeed."



True Cadence is a London-based music business social enterprise providing structured learning, mentoring and artistic development to disadvantaged young people. Their PSM student was tasked with developing a lively and engaging blog to showcase their work, interview and profile young creatives, share stories of their young programme participants and enhance the organisation's mentor and corporate engagement.

"[our student] has been great. She gets better with every article and takes every feedback on board."

PSM Placements in the Non-Profit sector



Birmingham Race Impact Group is a consortium of activists, academics and amateurs, campaigning and lobbying to promote racial justice and equality in Birmingham. One of their two PSM students was tasked with researching primary sources of the City's history surrounding race across several decades. The research culminated in a detailed report and comprehensive timeline of events.

"This is a fantastic document that will certainly be of real use to researchers in the coming years. [Our student] became a valued part of the BRIG team and did a fantastic job responding to briefs as her placement progressed."



Centre for the New Midlands

Centre for the New Midlands is an independent, apolitical think tank focused on the development and dissemination of new ideas to enrich the lives of the region's citizens. The Centre recruited five students, working in teams across two roles: Marketing Consultant, researching current best practice in the think tank community and compiling a report with their recommendations; and Audience Consultant, researching approaches to enhancing engagement with the under-30 demographic and reporting on their strategic recommendations.

"I have really enjoyed working with all 5 of the students. [The Audience team] consistently demonstrated enthusiasm to enhance their knowledge and deliver an outstanding end presentation to our panel. [The Marketing team] presented some fairly quick wins as well as some broader long term enhancements."

Bearwood Community Hub

Bearwood Community Hub is a non-profit community-led organisation fostering collaboration and social action to improve lives, livelihoods and the local urban environment. PSM students supported the work of the Hub by creating a social media strategy; developing web content; report writing; practical and marketing support for setting up and promoting the co-working space, creating an online booking system and hosting visitors.

"The students brought us different perspectives: they might not have had prior experience in what we were asking them to do, but we found this to be a healthy and fresh way to look at what we do."

UK Vision 2030

UK Vision 2030 is a faith-based community project which began in August 2020 with the aim of understanding the drivers of racial inequality across eight 'spheres' and creating a vision for reversing these trends. They recruited two Project Officers whose roles involved analysing the outcomes of focus groups and interviews with leaders from across the Black community; supporting recruitment to the organisation and developing a campaign for the launch of the report, 'UK Vision 2030: A Call to Action'.

"[our students] showed excellent research skills and creativity in thinking about the launch for the UK Vision report, presenting recommendations to the leadership team with confidence."