

What is a Placement Year?

A Placement Year is...

An opportunity for you to spend a year gaining valuable work experience during your time at University.

Placement years are totally different from the work experience you did at secondary school. If you undertake a placement you will be employed by an external company undertaking a role very similar to a graduate level position.

What are the benefits?

Year placements provide the opportunity to:

- Develop skills like team working, presentation, project management, negotiation and organisational skills.
- Work in and learn about a profession or a sector, implementing roles with real responsibility and challenges.
- Gain a better idea about occupations by learning more about what you enjoy.
- Increase your chances of successful employment after University by gaining the skills graduate employers are looking for.
- Gain an additional qualification.

How do they work?

Placement years take place in between the penultimate and final year of your degree. You complete your penultimate year as normal; the following year you work for an employer, then you return to University for your final year.

Placements take place between July of one academic year and the September of the following year. The length of your placement can vary from 9 to 13 months; this is negotiated with your individual placement employer.

You remain a student at the University of Birmingham during your placement. You will have one main assignment and some progress reports to complete, and you will be supported by a placement tutor.

You will pay half your normal tuition fees and can expect to be paid between £12,000 and £18,000 pro rata. The average pay is higher in some sectors than others.

What kind of placement can I do?

You should check with your relevant School or Department whether there are restrictions on the type of placement role you can undertake to meet your course requirements. The easiest way to find this out is to contact your School/Department's placement tutor, as detailed below:

- Biosciences – Peter Lund – p.e.lund@bham.ac.uk
- Business School – Pat Jones – p.a.jones@bham.ac.uk
- Computer Science – Behzad Bordbar – b.bordbar@cs.bham.ac.uk
- Chemical Engineering – Richard Greenwood – R.W.Greenwood@bham.ac.uk
- Electronic and Electrical Engineering – Carolyn Toney – C.Toney@bham.ac.uk
- Mechanical Engineering – Mark Jolly – m.r.jolly@bham.ac.uk
- Environmental Management – Rosie Day – r.j.day@bham.ac.uk

If your School/Department is not mentioned please contact your department's general office.

How do I find a placement?

If you decide to do a placement year you must find your own placement position. This is great practice for graduation, but there is help available!

Careers Centre Services

The Careers Centre provides a range of services to support you in finding and securing your placement, including:

- An online vacancy system at www.careers.bham.ac.uk. Register as a user and set up a vacancy search to receive regular emails on the latest opportunities.
- Online advice and guidance - look at the work experience section of the careers website for more detailed information on occupational areas and external websites advertising placements.
- Events and presentations by employers providing placements. This is a great opportunity to find out more about organisations you are interested in and the placements they offer.
- The Careers Library - visit the Careers Centre to look through the undergraduate careers and work experience directories.
- CV clinic - Improve your CV by visiting the CV checking service.
- Advice desk - If you get stuck, book an appointment with a Careers Advisor for some individual guidance on finding placements; they can also provide tips with completing application forms.

- Workshops - More detailed guidance with CVs, application forms, interviews and assessment centre are available through a series of on-going workshops. See the website for more information on dates and times.

When do I get started?

Many employers start advertising in the autumn term so start looking for vacancies early on. In particular large graduate recruiters will start their recruitment early, so if you have an employer in mind make sure you check their deadlines.

Other employers will actively advertise placements right up until the end of September, so if you decide to do a placement later on you still have a good chance of securing one.

What should I do once I have a placement?

Once you have secured a placement position you must contact your School/Department's Placement Tutor to find out what the next steps are. However, it is a good idea to contact your tutor before you start searching for a placement to find out if there are any course requirements for the placement role.