Why not give your career an edge?

For more information contact:

The Placements Team
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Visit us in the link engagement centre, D Block, Ellison Building, 11–3pm Monday to Friday
Engineering and Environment’s Professional Placement Scheme allows you to gain real world experience as part of your studies. This is your opportunity to gain relevant work experience which is crucial for securing the best possible job when you graduate. You will also spend time applying and developing the skills and knowledge you have learnt on your course.

“Over 50% of recruiters say that graduates who have had no work experience at all are unlikely to be successful during the selection process and have little or no chance of a job offer from their organisations’ graduate programmes.”

High Fliers Research, The Graduate Market in 2014

“A placement is the best way to give your career an edge.”

“Having had the chance to work in the ‘real world’ and with real challenges I have been on a roller-coaster of emotions and learning experiences. The gratification of seeing your work produced at a professional level and becoming a success is priceless; it’s something that cannot be achieved at academic level. Also the money I earned allowed me to be responsible for all manner of things in my private life and in addition has contributed significantly to my final year of study.”

Samuel Johnson, Product Design Engineering. Placed at West End Studios, Eastbourne, UK
Why should you do a work placement?

- Acquire real world experience.
- Maximise your long term employability.
- Determine your career path.
- Develop key skills relevant to your subject specialism.
- Placements available UK-wide and overseas.

- Increase your starting salary.
- Gain ideas for final year project.
- Gain a higher degree classification by applying theory to real world applications.
- Extend your network of contacts.
- Make new friends.
- Earn money.

"Working for Paragon has become more than a job, it’s a way of life and a network of friends. The outstanding social aspect of the company allows you to get to know members of staff in a way that wouldn’t happen elsewhere.

This allows barriers to be broken down, making it easier to ask questions and not feel bad about doing so. Filling my APC diary with enough variation to fully comply with the APC competencies is easily achieved at Paragon."

Steven Kennedy, Building Surveying, Placed at Paragon Consulting, London

What does it involve?

- Minimum of 40 weeks placement; usually paid and after your second year.
- An assessed placement culminating in a portfolio of work including log books and a reflective report; the outcome is either pass or fail.
- Optional Employment Skills Award for Placement that is endorsed by Northumbria’s Careers and Employment Service.
- Professional body recognition.
- Normally two tutor visits if UK-based.
- Limited opportunities to undertake a semester’s work experience as part of the Study Abroad Scheme in key partner countries.
- Placements undertaken in the UK, Europe, USA and Asia.
What does it cost?

- A reduced tuition fee (£1000 in 2014/15 but subject to change) but this is covered by existing student finance/loan arrangements.

- Most placements are paid with salaries of at least £12,700 per annum.

- Students doing specific unpaid placements for specified charitable organisations (check with Student Finance England) may be eligible to receive a maintenance grant or loan during their placement year. Please ensure that you check which organisations this covers and be prepared to support yourself.

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What support is available?

- A dedicated Placements Professional Support Team that alongside the Careers and Employment Service can offer guidance on a number of areas including CV writing, interview preparation, sources of vacancies and rolling series of employer presentations.

- Academic management of the scheme from a Placement Director, a subject Placement Tutor and a dedicated Visiting Tutor.

- Faculty Approvals Committee support to ensure that placements comply with certain health and safety, risk assessment and insurance conditions.

- A dedicated module structure (EE0500) to ensure consistency and quality assurance.

- Automatic enrolment on an eLearning Platform for advice and a source of vacancies.

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"In University you work in a team and produce something fairly minor in a semester. At CERN you work in a team and management tell you they need it next week so I’d say I’ve definitely learned how to work in a team in a high-pressure workplace. I’ve made some great friends and some great contacts including CEOs and VPs of multi-national companies. Northumbria University is great but I feel as though this is where I belong in the world."

Ian Steers, Computer Science, Placement at CERN, Switzerland
Guide to finding your ideal placement

1. Make yourself placeable
Get some real work experience, network with family/friends/work colleagues, have a look at some company websites, improve your IT skills, prepare and keep updating your CV, involve yourself with opportunities that will give you experience and help you stand out from the crowd.

“...The average starting salary increases to £22,335 for students 6 months after graduating if they have completed a placement compared to £18,366 for those that did not participate in the placement scheme."

Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2013-14, Engineering & Environment at Northumbria University results.

2. Get application ready
Update your CV and ask a member of staff from the Placements Team or the Careers and Employment Service to review this and the format of covering letters. Exemplars are available on the Blackboard portal for reference purposes.

3. Look out for placement opportunities
Attend the Poster Fair in Induction Week and the annual Employers Fair in October to see typical placement opportunities available. Keep an eye on the Blackboard listings and emails from the Placements Team for company presentations and job vacancies and check regularly for updates.
Seek advice from the Placements Team or the Careers and Employment Service about other sources of opportunities.

4. Apply
Ensure that you read the job description and think about how your skills and abilities meet the job requirements before you apply.
Follow the application instructions carefully, ensuring that you adhere to any deadlines given.

5. Record all details
Once you have sent your application, keep hold of the job description and a copy of your application form, covering letter or CV.
6 Successful application
If your application is successful you may well be invited to an interview or an Assessment Centre. Speak to us for advice if you need help with this.

7 Awaiting a response
You may not receive a job offer after your first interview or Assessment Centre because they may want you to attend a second interview or assessment day. However, if you are offered the position you should inform the company of your decision as quickly as possible. However, consider the offer very carefully as it is unprofessional to accept a position and then change your mind at a later date. It is perfectly appropriate to ask for a little time to consider an offer, but please do not take more than 48 hours to reach and notify the company of your decision.

8 Confirming your placement
As soon as you accept a placement position please complete the Placement Confirmation Form (available via the Blackboard portal) or from the Placements Team and email it to ee.placements@northumbria.ac.uk.

A Placements Approval Committee will consider the suitability of the placement and then notify you in due course of the outcome. Please ensure that you attend a University placement briefing session before you start the placement.

9 Begin your placement
This is when the fun begins and you get to learn and develop new skills, make new contacts and enhance your employability further. During your placement, you will be allocated a tutor who will visit you and your supervisor in your workplace and who you can contact for any help you may need during your time on placement. You will be required to complete a placement portfolio which you will need to hand in once you complete your placement.

“Before starting my placement I was concerned that I would be given little responsibility and always considered to be under qualified which was not the case. I regularly took on business critical projects that required me to work outside my comfort zone and rely on my strengths. Take advantage of every opportunity!”

Victoria Ellis, ITMB, Placed at IBM, Basingstoke, UK

“73% of employers would recruit a graduate with volunteering experience over one without.”

Timesbank, Reed Executive