

Department of Animal Sciences
Department of Sustainable Land Management



PLACEMENT YEAR

BSc Environmental Management
BSc Animal Science



HOW DOES A PLACEMENT FIT WITH MY DEGREE?

A placement year is a fantastic opportunity to gain 12 months work experience in an area that is directly related to your degree programme or potential career path, giving you the freedom to find a placement that suits you and your career aspirations.



The Placement will be undertaken during the third year of your programme. Your first two years will be based at University where you will develop a thorough knowledge of your chosen subject, which can then be applied in an industry-specific setting in your placement year, before returning to University for your fourth and final year.



Why a placement makes you more employable

There are many reasons why students decide to take a 12 month placement

- Most companies demand applicants have relevant work experience and those that do have an added advantage over applicants that have not undertaken work experience.
- Many employers use their Placement Year scheme to identify potential candidates for their Graduate Recruitment scheme. If you don't do a placement with the company, you may find it harder to join at a graduate level.
- If you have no idea what Graduate level career path you'd like to explore, or what company you'd like to work for, a Placement year allows you to investigate a career or company with a view to helping you make a more informed career choice.
- Not only do you apply and develop the skills that you are learning at University but you also learn many new ones such as event planning, specialist software and databases, product development and the use of social media.

WHAT ARE MY PLACEMENT OPTIONS?

The companies you can apply and work for will depend on your degree programme and the career you are interested in pursuing.

Many of our students apply for placements with large, established organisations such as; DuPont or Kew Gardens. Other students have spent a rewarding year working for smaller-scale business to gain a broad experience of the whole operation.

Students have also spent a rewarding year working for smaller-scale non-governmental organisations or charities, both abroad and here in the UK. All gain broad-based experience of project management, day-to-day operations and communication, depending on the goals of the organisation. Typically students will have responsibility for a specialist task. This may mean working with end-users, liaising with clients, delivering presentations or writing reports; learning many new employability skills as part of their role.



Preparation and training

The School's dedicated Placement tutor will guide you through the career planning process, and covers everything you need to know about your placement year, including how to:

- Fill out an application form
- Create a winning CV
- Write a covering letter

We also work closely with the Careers Centre who provide support and advice on all aspects of the application process, and give you the opportunity to participate in telephone and mock interviews and Psychometric Assessments (ability tests) to ensure that you are thoroughly prepared for the application process.

Support during the placement

Once your position has been secured, a member of academic staff will be assigned to you for the duration of placement. They will contact you at intervals during your placement to offer support and guidance as required.

Recent placements

Animal Science

Chester Zoo

WALTHAM Petcare Science Institute

DuPont

GVI - Marine Conservation

Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

RSPCA Stapeley Grange Wildlife Centre

Environmental Management

Kew Gardens

Cotswold Conservation

Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

RSK Environmental Consultants

FINDING A PLACEMENT

There are lots of ways to find a placement. Employers look for students who are proactive and self-driven so be prepared to use a number of different methods to find your ideal placement.

'My Placement with Danisco Animal Nutrition, part of DuPont, was a really valuable experience. I received training and support from the company and the University throughout the year and the skills and knowledge that I gained will make me a valuable employee after I graduate.'

Rachel Richards,
Animal Science Student

Resources available to help you search for a placement

We have lots of resources to help in your search for a placement, including:

- An employer database with details of companies who offer relevant placements, or who have taken on our students previously
- Our annual Careers and Placements Fair, attended by a range of companies who have vacancies for placement students
- My Jobs Online, where employers advertise placements and you can sign up to receive daily or weekly email alerts

Networking and direct contact

Don't feel you have to wait for your ideal placement to be advertised. If you know what company you would like to work for you can approach them directly. Our students have gained placements via a direct approach, such as:

- Phoning the company and discussing potential opportunities
- Giving their CV directly to a manager, either at Trade Fairs or Career Fairs

Using existing contacts - friends, family, colleagues - can also help you secure a placement.



'I believe that doing a placement is a unique opportunity to work in an industry that would normally only be available to graduates. It was different to anything else that I've done before, and gave me a preview of what work in my area of interest might be like. Being involved with an organisation like Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has definitely increased my motivation to succeed.'

Joe Bishop, Environmental Management Student



'I split my placement year into two 6 month periods: the first at Paignton Zoo, Devon; then the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. Both experiences have offered me a wealth of new skills, from work on the ground and data collection to statistics! The placements have allowed me to become more independent, and grow in confidence, particularly as I spent time abroad.'

Jennifer Jackson, BSc Animal Science graduate

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I didn't register for the 4-year degree course – can I still do a placement?

Yes, when you've accepted your placement we can arrange a transfer to the relevant 4-year degree course.

When will my placement start?

This is often dependant on your employer – some schemes run from July, others from September. If you are unclear about this or any aspect of the placement then you just need to contact the Placement tutor.

Will I be assessed?

Yes, the placement is allocated 120 credits and there are three pieces of assessment including a report from your employer.

Will I get paid?

Some employers offer paid placements but some, particularly if you want to work for a charity, are voluntary. Depending on your placement company, there may be other benefits as well, e.g. a company car, European travel etc. Some companies will also give students a bursary for their final year of studies (usually on acceptance of a place on a graduate programme).

Will I be offered a job when I finish my degree?

You may get paid, but this is dependent on the organisation hosting the placement.

PLACEMENT YEAR

 For more information, please contact Placement Officer:

Dr Gillian Rose

Room 2U21
Agriculture Building
University of Reading
Whiteknights
Reading, RG6 6EU

sapdplacements@reading.ac.uk

Tel (0118) 378 8490

www.reading.ac.uk/apd

