

PLACEMENT YEAR

BSc International Development



HOW DOES A PLACEMENT FIT WITH MY DEGREE?

A placement 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 donors, non-governmental organisations, businesses or charities require applicants to have relevant work experience. Those that do have an added advantage over applicants that have not undertaken work experience.
- Many employers use their placement schemes 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 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 organisations you can apply and work for will depend on the career you are interested in pursuing in international development.

Many of our students apply for placements with large, global organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme, or big multinational corporations, such as the American telecommunications firm Verizon (based in Reading). Other interesting opportunities have been with the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes of major organisations like Panasonic.

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

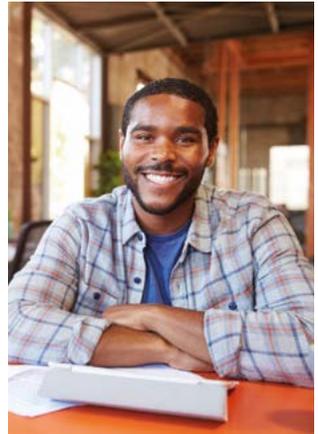
The School's dedicated Placement tutor will support you throughout all aspects of the placement search and application process. They will cover everything you need to know about placements, including how to:

- Fill out an application form
- Create an effective 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

The Otra Cosa Network in Peru

Gamos Development Consultancy, based in Reading

Verizon - Reading

UNA Exchange Wales

Concern Universal, a UK registered charity, based in Malawi

United Nations Environment Programme in Thailand

Honduras Child Alliance

EduCare in Northern India

International Development Select Committee

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.

'I learnt something new every day on my placement. It certainly opened my eyes and I was able to exercise a lot of what I have learnt at Reading and was able to draw upon my knowledge and skills gained from the Reading Experience and Development (RED) award.'

Phoebe Russell, BSc

International Development with a placement Year, United Nations Environment in Thailand

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, by:

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

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





'I went to Zimbabwe and worked with a local NGO conducting small-

scale learning sessions and workshops with vulnerable children aged 5-22, following the themes of HIV/AIDs, child rights and responsibilities, sexual and reproductive health awareness and sustainable livelihoods. It was invaluable experience.'

Harriet Hemmings, International Development Student, Progressio UK

'I knew little about development consultancy prior to my placement. It was a fantastic opportunity to gain an insight in to the sector and see first-hand how a small organisation is run. The diversity of the work enabled me to get involved in a wide range of projects.'

Josephine Helen Mcallister,

International Development student, Gamos, Reading

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. Alternatively, for a 'taster' within either the 3-year or the 4-year degree course we offer an optional 'mini-work placement and professional development module'.

You can also do a 'micro-placement' in the summer holidays.

When will my placement start?

This is often dependent on your employer – some schemes run from July, others from September. If you are unclear about this or any aspect of the placement speak to your Placement tutor who will be able to advise you.

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?

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

PLACEMENT YEAR

i For more information, please contact Placement Officer:

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