

Work Placement

Employers' Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What are the benefits of recruiting a placement student?

Each year, approximately 1,200 students are placed with a network of over 700 employers, both at home and abroad. This reflects the positive relationship between UCC and industry, on a local, national and international level, with many employers hiring their placement students after graduation.

Students provide a valuable source of skilled labour for businesses as well as a flexible solution to recruitment needs. They:

- bring in new ideas and look at 'old' problems with 'fresh eyes'.
- have good problem-solving and analytical skills.
- are up-to-date on new techniques and technologies.
- bring in enthusiasm, energy and specialist skills.
- are ideal to tackle one-off projects which might otherwise be put to one side.
- can help out during busy Summer holiday periods.
- provide a cost-effective solution to your recruitment needs without adding a permanent payroll cost.
- may be future potential employees and you can screen them during placement.
- provide you with the opportunity to build closer links with the university.

How is placement organised?

Placement Managers are responsible for the management and development of placement programmes. The role of the Placement Manager is to help students to secure work experience relevant to their course, to build skills to enhance their employability and personal development and to enable them to successfully implement their career decisions. The core activities include:

- managing the placement programme and endeavouring to place all students in the participating classes.
- meeting student classes to deliver presentations on placement process, CV Writing, Interview Technique.
- delivering workplace-skills workshops and seminars to student classes.
- identifying, establishing and maintaining good working relations with employers.
- working with other Placement Managers to ensure co-ordinated approach to interaction with employers.
- liaising with employers to discuss their requirements for students.
- ensuring comprehensive and up-to-date employer and vacancy information is available to students.
- co-ordinating circulation of CVs to employers and facilitating the interview process.
- Providing one-to-one guidance interviews to students.
- liaising with employers during placement to ensure all is satisfactory.

- providing ongoing support for the student while on placement.
- visiting the student and employer during placement, where appropriate.
- liaising with the academic department on the management of the programme.
- facilitating meetings between employers and academic staff, to identify potential linkages in the context of Research and Development and innovation/technology transfer.
- preparing publications and information materials in consultation with the academic department.
- Researching and preparing reports and statistics for the use of students, the university and other interested parties.

Once you have identified a need for a student, you must complete a [Job Description](#), providing details of the role(s) they wish to fill. The details required are:

- Organisation Name
- Job Type
- Job Description
- Location
- T&C (salary, hours etc)
- Application Deadline
- Start Date

Details of each opportunity are circulated within the class. Students submit required application material to the Placement Manager on or before the application deadline. CVs of interested students are forwarded electronically to the work placement organisation. The organisation shortlists and interviews. Students are allowed to apply for several organisations but are instructed to accept the first firm offer of placement made to them via the Placement Manager. Organisations are advised to interview as soon as possible after receipt of CVs, as students may be placed elsewhere in the intervening period. UCC will organise all interviews and provide interview rooms for those employers who wish to use these facilities. Students are given advice on how to prepare for interview. We ask employers to fill out an [Interview Feedback Sheet](#) for each student and to return it to the Placement Manager, who will discuss it with the student after the interview.

How should I make an offer of placement to a student?

All work placement offers must be made via the Placement Manager. Once a firm offer of work placement has been made to a student, that student's name is removed from all other work placement positions. Following the offer of work placement, the organisation will send a contract directly to the student, with a copy UCC.

What is the usual pay for students?

There is no set rate of pay for placement. It varies, depending on the industry sector, the size of the organisation and its location. The Placement Manager will advise you of the going rate for your industry and location and for the student group that interests you. However, the expectation is that employers will pay no less than the minimum state wage as agreed by the Government at the time of recruiting the student.

Can I recruit an international student?

UCC welcomes over 2,000 international students from 75 countries across the globe, with the number of foreign students representing 12% of the overall student population. The presence of international students greatly enriches the University as a whole. These students follow a range of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate.

Who should I nominate as Work Placement Supervisor for the student?

Before the student starts placement, we ask you to nominate a person, who will agree to act as Work Placement Supervisor to the student during placement. The role of the work placement supervisor forms an integral part of the process and is an important element in ensuring the success of the placement. Placements are between 3 -12 months in duration, depending on the programme, so it is important that the person can commit the time to supervising and monitoring the work of the student during this period. We ask the employer to provide a safe place of work for the student in line with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and to satisfactorily complete a [Health and Safety Checklist](#) for the Placement Manager. We send the work placement supervisor a Placement Handbook, which contains practical information on all matters related to Placement.

What is the role of the Work Placement Supervisor?

We ask the employer to nominate a person, who will agree to act as work placement supervisor to the student during placement. The role of the supervisor forms an integral part of the process and is an important element in ensuring the success of the placement. Ideally, the work placement supervisor will:

- Give the student a short induction on company codes and practices.
- Prepare a work programme of tasks, activities and training and agree this with the student.
- Agree with the student, at the beginning, the goals they have set about what they hope to achieve from their placement.
- Provide work experience compatible with the student's knowledge and experience.
- Arrange a work email address, for the student, where appropriate.
- Arrange weekly meetings with the student to discuss progress and sign the Learning Journal.
- By means of the Learning Journal, assist the student to reflect on their experience and to develop a realistic understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Encourage the student to think things out for themselves and to use their own initiative.
- Help the student to make full use of the work experience and to take responsibility for their own progress.
- Encourage the student to attend company training courses, where appropriate, to develop skills that are related to their course as well as general skills for personal development.

- Encourage the student to find out about company activities outside their own department and to relate these to the areas in which they work.
- Supervise and monitor the progress of the student and provide sufficient instruction to maximize their contribution during placement.
- Facilitate the *Three-Way Meeting* which usually takes place half way through the placement period.
- Approve and sign the student's Learning Journal, to ensure that they meet with organisation's policy on confidential information.
- Complete the *Student Performance Appraisal* which is your evaluation of the performance of the student and which will be used as part of their academic assessment.
- Notify the Academic mentor and the Placement Manager of any problems, in particular of any aspects of student performance that are unsatisfactory.

What about Confidentiality?

At the beginning of the work placement, it is essential that the organisation makes clear to the student the areas of work regarded as confidential and any other specific requirements it may wish to be respected. Usually, a confidentiality clause is incorporated into the student's contract. Students are considered employees of the organisation, and are subject to the organisation's disciplinary policy and procedures. These should be outlined to students at the start of work placement.

Should I offer Induction and Training?

Placement students should be provided with the same induction and training as you give to other new employees, in compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The work placement supervisor should inform personnel in the relevant department and in Human Resources about the student's start date and their agreed work role. If possible, the team who will be working closely with the student, should be available on the start date to meet them and to introduce them to the workplace. We appreciate the time and effort that you take in training our students, both in skills that are related to their course and in general skills areas for their personal development. If there are training opportunities available, please let the student know about them and encourage them to take part. All work-related training is valuable and will enrich their placement experience.

What documentation is involved?

For most courses, placement is a formal and academically accredited part of the student's course and they are assessed by their Academic mentor, in consultation with the relevant academic department.

The grade is based on a number of criteria, one of which involves preparing documents for submission to the academic department. We ask you to check, approve and sign these documents to ensure that they meet with the organisation's policy on confidential information.

Why does the Academic mentor visit?

Each placement student is assigned an Academic mentor, who is normally a member of staff in the academic department. The Academic mentor will normally make a visit

to the workplace, to meet with the student and the employer and the visit will usually be half way through the placement period. The purpose of the visit is to review the student's progress and to make an initial evaluation of their performance on placement. For international placements, a visit may not always be practical and in this case, the Academic mentor will normally contact both you and the student by telephone instead. The Academic mentor will complete a report – [Visit Form](#) - after the visit, on the basis of the discussion with you and the student and this will be used as part of their academic assessment. The visit is also an opportunity for you to discuss non-placement matters with the academic member of staff, such as projects for final year students, research and development activities in collaboration with UCC or technology transfer initiatives/innovation.

What if there are problems during placement?

We anticipate that the placement experience will be a positive one for you and for the student. However, sometimes, problems do arise. Students are subject to organisational disciplinary policy and procedures. Please contact the Academic mentor if problems persist.

What if you have concerns about the performance or approach of the student?

If you are not happy with the performance of the student or with their approach to their work, we ask you to talk to the student about this. If the problem persists, we will support you in implementing your own internal disciplinary procedures, just as you would for any other employee. Please let the Placement Manager and the Academic Mentor about any problems and the disciplinary procedures you are following. If the problem still persists, the Placement Manager and/or academic mentor will visit the workplace to address the problem and to help in identifying an appropriate remedy. If, despite these interventions, the problem continues, UCC will support any decision you make to terminate the student's employment. Termination of employment under these circumstances may result in the student failing the placement.

What if the student has concerns about their placement?

Some students experience difficulties with their work or place of employment. If a problem arises, we ask the student to talk to their work placement supervisor. If the problem persists, we ask the student to contact the Placement Manager and the academic mentor. We will contact you on behalf of the student and arrange a meeting to address the problem.

Will I do an Exit Interview with the student?

We appreciate the time and effort that you take with our students on placement and hope that it will be a positive experience for all involved. At the end of placement, we encourage you to have an exit interview with the student and to review the experience from both your perspectives. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss and complete a [Student Performance Appraisal](#) and to talk about the student's overall performance. It is a chance to highlight the skills the student has learned and to identify those that will benefit from further development. We advise students to ask you about future graduate vacancies, so this is a good time to talk about this. The student will ask for

permission to use your name as a referee on their CV and we appreciate your support in this respect. We also encourage them to keep in touch with you, so that you will remember them when it comes to the time to give a reference. The student may have a final year project that they could complete on your behalf and this is an excellent way to build on the work relationship you have developed during placement.

Can the student do a final year project for our organisation?

For some courses, students are required to do a final year project, which can be theoretical or alternatively, based on a real organisation situation. If your placement student is doing one of these courses, it is an ideal opportunity for you to offer a suitable project that he/she can carry out on your behalf. We encourage the student to discuss this with you and with their academic mentor during the three-way meeting. They are also advised to be proactive in coming up with ideas for potential projects that would be of benefit to you and of interest to themselves. The academic mentor will let you know the required criteria in order for the work to qualify as a suitable project for the student. Later, at the exit interview, you can discuss this further with the student and, if appropriate, agree on how to bring the project forward.

What about a work reference for the student?

At the exit interview, the student will ask for permission to use the work placement supervisor's name as a referee on their CV. This may be the first job the student has had that is relevant to their course. So, it is a very valuable addition to their CV and will be significant in attracting potential employers in the future. We encourage students to keep in touch with you, so that you will remember them, when it comes to the time to giving the reference!

When can I give feedback on the placement programme?

We ask employers to give us feedback to identify any obvious shortcomings in the student's prior knowledge. The academic department will use your feedback to critically examine course content and to change it, where appropriate, so that it meets the requirements of industry. We also invite your comments about the management of the placement programme, the method of selecting students, the visit by the academic mentor and other areas. We appreciate your feedback as it contributes to the further development of our Placement programmes.

What Graduate Recruitment activities are on campus?

If you were happy with your placement student and would like to consider them for a graduate job, we encourage you to discuss this at the exit interview. Keep in touch with the student when they return to college and to let them know of graduate vacancies that arise. UCC's Career Services organises a number of graduate recruitment events on campus, such as the Milk-round, which runs from November through to February and the Recruitment Fairs, which are held in October and March. At these events, you can meet final year and post-graduate students and promote your graduate vacancies or graduate training programmes to them. To find out more about these activities, visit the Career Services site at www.ucc.ie/careers/