

Undergraduate Work Placements

A guide for Placement Providers

Psychology



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH



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Welcome to our undergraduate placements

The University of Bath is now firmly established as a top ten UK university with a reputation for world-leading research and teaching excellence. We attract some of the highest-achieving students, much sought after by leading graduate employers, and we are focused on getting them ready for a competitive work environment.

Nearly two thirds of our students undertake a valuable work placement as part of their degree. Thanks to the support of our placement providers, we are able to offer our students professional placement opportunities in a wide range of organisations in the private and public sectors.

Benefits to you

Our placement providers enjoy multiple benefits from employing one or more of our students. Employers find that these highly motivated and talented individuals offer fresh ideas and up-to-date knowledge, adding real value to their organisation. We also know that working with private and public sectors ensures our curriculum is relevant to prospective employers and our students have the right employment skills.

Benefits to the student

The skills and knowledge acquired by our students throughout their degrees are put into context through the variety of tasks and responsibilities they undertake on their placement. Students benefit from experiential learning, are able to adjust quickly to the workplace, provide specialist knowledge, take on an increasing degree of responsibility and handle a variety of different tasks and projects.

Students return to university with a wealth of experience that they apply to their final year/s, often choosing to do a dissertation based on aspects of their placement they want to explore further.

We look forward to working with you

Here in the Department of Psychology we have a long-established, outstanding placement programme. We pride ourselves on the support and preparation we give our students and the strong professional links we have with organisations in the UK and overseas.

We welcome any new organisations who wish to join us. Many of our graduates have gone on to work for the organisation they spent their year out with, and the University of Bath has an outstanding alumni network of past students who go out of their way to assist current students, by either offering to be a mentor, or even creating new placement roles. This is a relationship we hope to continue long into the future.

Why employ a placement student from Bath?

The benefits to your organisation

- High quality employees without long-term commitment
- Fresh ideas and talent from a motivated student
- Up-to-date with knowledge of research in Psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society
- Knowledge and skills to tackle 'one off' projects
- A cost-effective additional staff resource
- Access to the latest research through closer links with the University
- A chance to raise your profile on campus among a future graduate workforce
- Investing in the next generation.

Typical tasks our students can undertake

- Undertake research using quantitative and qualitative skills
- Use computer software packages and databases including SPSS and in-house systems, to analyse, interpret and present data
- Attend team meetings, etc.; listening, minute-taking, evaluating and contributing where appropriate
- Deliver presentations
- Support and/or set up locations for group sessions with specialists
- Project management
- Write reports in a professional manner
- Carry out literature reviews
- Facilitate and run workshops with specialists and service users.

“

The iCope team have had Bath students on board for a number of years, and we absolutely love having them! It's a great opportunity to work within a busy frontline NHS setting, to get involved with different projects and observe work at every level of the service. Having personally completed the placement year within iCope, I am now in the position of placement supervisor and I am passionate about the placement experience and making sure students experience a variety of different tasks and roles.

”

Eleanor Popp

Senior Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner
iCope: Camden Psychological Therapies & Wellbeing Service

What type of organisations offer placements?

Students from our Psychology degree courses have been placed in a variety of sectors including:

- Therapy and psychological support work
- Clinical services
- Local Government
- Charities/not for profit sector
- Analyst roles in the business sector
- Research assistant roles in academic departments.

Organisations who offer placements to our students have included:

- FELL Research Group, University of Oxford
National Crime Agency, UK
Traumatic Stress Clinic, St Pancras Hospital
iCope, London
Walt Disney, UK
Great Ormond Street Hospital, London
NHS England, UK
Laboratory for Developmental Studies, Harvard University

- Bethlem Royal Hospital, Bromley
Margaret Coates Centre, Bath
Ministry of Justice, UK
National Institute for Stroke and Applied Neurosciences, Auckland University
Autism Research Centre, University of Cambridge
Julian House, Bath
Lane 4, Berkshire

“

We have worked with Bath students for more than 15 years and they have added immeasurably to our research work. They are involved in a variety of funded research projects, which can involve office-based work, data collection in schools, and often even contribute as authors to research publications.

”

Kathy Silva

Professor of Education Psychology
Families, Effective Learning & Literacy (FELL)
University of Oxford



Joseph Sherlock
BSc (Hons) Psychology
Placement with Clear, London

“I spent my placement at a branding consultancy called Clear. I worked in the quantitative research team as a research assistant. I thoroughly enjoyed the year! I learned some essential skills, made some extremely helpful contacts and some really good friends.

My placement has been an essential learning experience; it has helped me understand what I am good at, what I enjoy doing and therefore the career path I want to take. I have also developed some skills that will be really helpful in my final year, such as time management, organisation, analytical thinking and synthesis.”

BSc (Hons) Psychology

Our Psychology degrees provide students with a grounding across the discipline and insights into many aspects of psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS), with a focus on biological psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology and individual differences.

The degrees are designed to enable students to develop:

- an in-depth knowledge of basic concepts, methods and theories in psychology
- an understanding of the core areas of psychology and be introduced to research methods and project work
- skills in experimental methods, questionnaire research and qualitative analysis
- experience in oral, visual and written presentations of research topics
- the ability to assimilate information quickly and develop strong team-working skills
- knowledge of topics that are not always found in psychology degrees, such as health psychology and clinical psychopathology
- effective communication and analytical skills, with the ability to interpret and present information through innovative means to an array of stakeholders.

Compulsory units currently being studied by our students include:

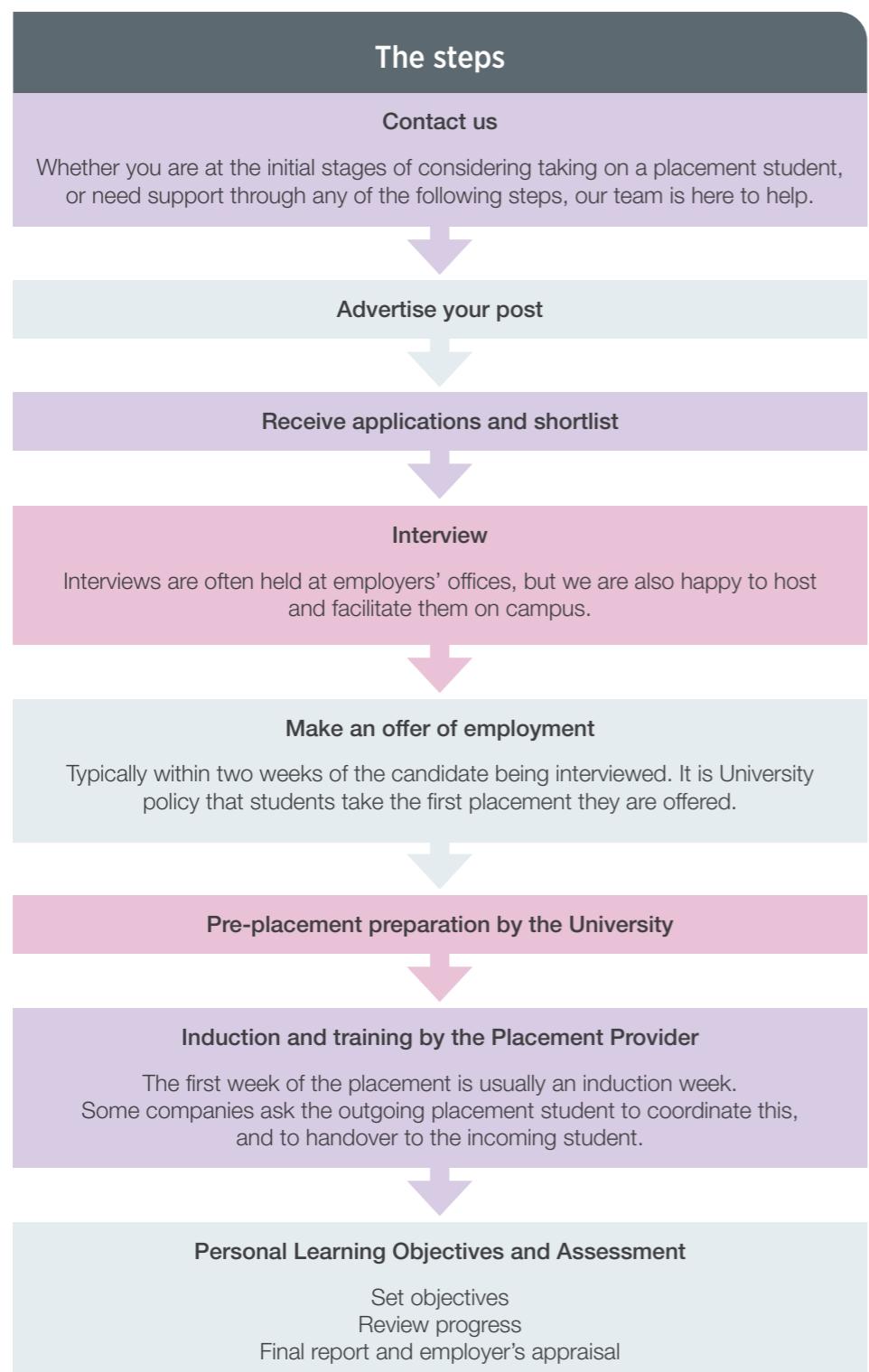
- Applying psychology
- Mind and behaviour
- Controversies in psychology
- Cognitive neuroscience
- Developmental psychology
- Social psychology, personality and individual differences
- Quantitative research methods
- Research methods and design
- Research project

Optional units include for example:

- Clinical psychology
- Organisational psychology
- Developmental psychopathology
- Contemporary educational psychology
- Forensic psychology

We may make changes to our courses in response to, for example, feedback from students, developments in the field of studies, the requirements of accrediting bodies, or any unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. Please check our online course pages to ensure you have the most up-to-date information

The placement process step-by-step guide



What are the time frames?

- **Recruitment period:**
September to April
- **Earliest start of placement:**
June
- **Duration:**
30 weeks to 1 year (not including annual leave)

How much does it cost?

We try to encourage organisations to pay the student either a salary (commensurate with age and experience), or an allowance to cover their daily travel and subsistence costs (essential if the post is unpaid), as well as cover training/professional development costs.

Our Placements Team

Each of our degree subjects has a dedicated Placements Officer who can advise you on all aspects of the placement programme and we have an outstanding administration team who will provide full support with each step of the process. Please see back cover for full contact details.

Your role

- Early in the placement, set clear aims and objectives with the student and establish good two-way communication
- Facilitate integration in the project and the team
- Delegate day to day supervision to another staff member (the Placement Provider Supervisor)
- Facilitate visit from University of Bath
- Meet regularly to monitor progress and discuss future development
- Offer an Employer's Appraisal on completion of the placement.

Our role

- Be available for the student (or Placement Provider Supervisor) to contact at any time throughout the placement
- Visit the student on placement, as well as the student and Placement Provider Supervisor together to offer advice and support to both parties (UK-based only)
- Ensure both student and provider receive maximum benefit from the placement.

The placement process in detail

Advertise your post

Please contact us should you wish us to send you our Job Description/Advertisement form. We recommend you include the following:

- **Organisation:** Name of organisation; brief outline of history/aims of organisation; website link
- **Role:** What is the opportunity e.g. assistant psychologist, support worker, SEN teaching assistant, research assistant; brief description of the job role, examples of tasks that would be performed, responsibilities, projects etc.
- **Requirements:** What key skills and attributes are you looking for? For example; experience working in a professional setting, ability to work independently, understand and interpret instructions, particular competencies in working in a multi-disciplinary team, written communication or presentation skills etc.
- **Where and when:** Location of placement; start date and duration; remuneration
- **Application and interview:** How to apply (online and/or CV and covering letter); name of contact; closing date for application; location of interview or if Skype
- **Any other information** you feel you would like to include in the advertisement/job description.

Receive applications and shortlist

Use online application forms through your own website, or covering letters with a CV may be sent directly to you.

Make an offer of employment

Students selected by the employer can be contacted by mobile phone initially. A written offer should follow, and a contract of employment provided, setting out terms and conditions. In the case of unpaid or overseas placements, a placement agreement is drawn up by the Placement Officer. (Feedback for unsuccessful candidates is always well received.)

Normally, the Placement Provider Supervisor and student agree start and finishing dates, and holidays. The Placement Officer can liaise with the employer to set up a suitable work programme.

Pre-placement preparation by the University

All students are required to attend a development programme before going on their placement. This programme includes application and interview skills development, presentations, mock interviews and opportunities to speak to former placement students. Students are briefed on their responsibilities to the employer, work etiquette, ethical issues, the correct use of internet and email at work and areas such as confidentiality. The briefing also informs students about the reports we require from them, and how to keep in touch with the University over the placement year.

Some placements, particularly those that are based in education/teaching or health care settings may require the student to have DBS clearance and/or a Research Passport. The DBS check may be undertaken by the placement setting in line with the guidelines and procedures of the organisation.

Induction and training by the Placement Provider

It is important that the student has an induction to the organisation in whatever form is appropriate. It is particularly useful if students can be helped to attend training courses in areas relevant to the work they are doing, for example safeguarding, manual handling. Visits to other departments, if time permits, are also very useful, enabling students to see the wider context of the work.

Aspects which have proved most useful in the past have been:

- A handover period between the existing placement student and the new one, if possible
- An overview of the entire host organisation, explanation of departmental structure, an introduction to members of staff and an explanation of their roles and the communication channels
- An introduction to the use of equipment, e.g. computers, copiers, scanners, books, resources, telephone system

- Expectations about punctuality, attendance and a clarification of working hours
- Sickness and absence reporting, how to book any leave, appropriate dress and other practical issues. Disciplinary and grievance procedures should be explained. Most problems on placement arise because expectations about such ordinary aspects of day-to-day behaviour are not made explicit.

Personal Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Each student is required to submit their Personal Objectives and Learning Outcomes (POLOs). We ask that their line manager works with them to set learning goals at intervals on their placement. Students also complete a First Report, which outlines their progress and ideas for research dissertations. They will complete a poster reflecting on their placement, to be displayed at their Placement Conferences during the placement year. A 2,500 word final report is the last part of assessment along with an Employer's Appraisal.



Our role in detail

All students are assigned a **Department Tutor** within the University of Bath with whom they should keep in regular contact. If any problems arise, both student and Placement Supervisor are urged to contact the Department Tutor or Placement Officer as soon as possible.

A visiting tutor will be assigned at the start of the placement and they will visit the student, usually between November and February. Visits may take place in person (primarily UK based) or virtually.

The visiting tutor will arrange the visit in advance with the student to ensure sufficient time is set aside for it, normally not more than one hour. The student is expected to liaise with the visiting tutor and organise this as part of the placement experience. Students will also have been informed about the purpose and format of the visit and are encouraged to be prepared to discuss the points listed below with the tutor and the supervisor.

During the visit, the tutor will ask to speak to the student separately first and will then, if appropriate, also speak to the supervisor separately. That is followed by a joint meeting with both student and supervisor where progress can be discussed. The visit is designed to help the student and placement provider to identify opportunities for learning, to discuss dissertation ideas, for doing useful work for the host institution and for the student to relate the placement to the degree course.

The visit is an important means of keeping students in touch with the University during the placement period, to inform them of any changes which may affect their final academic year and generally to offer advice and support.

The main purposes of the visit can be summarised as:

For the Student

- To enable the tutor to see how the student has settled with the host institution
- To check that a work pattern has been established, mutually agreed by the student and supervisor
- To ensure the work programme is suitable and contains sufficient variety and responsibility

- To discuss the development of the work programme over the remaining months
- To ensure that relationships with the supervisor and co-workers are satisfactory, and offer advice on how to resolve any difficulties if they have arisen
- To make sure that practical matters, such as accommodation, travel, etc., are satisfactory
- To discuss any plan the student may have formulated for their final year dissertation.

For the Placement Provider

- To establish closer links with Department of Psychology at the University
- To discuss whether the arrangement is progressing satisfactorily and is maximising the student's contribution to the organisation
- To discuss whether a satisfactory supervisory relationship with the student has been established
- To identify any problems and discuss possible action.
- To explore the possibility of taking further placement students, either in the original department or in other areas of the institution.

It is hoped that good two-way communication between student and Placement Supervisor will be established early in the placement and that there will be time for regular reviews, formal or informal, of the student's progress. However, should any problems have arisen, the tutor visit can be extremely valuable in clarifying any misunderstandings that may have occurred regarding the suitability of the student's work programme and in general improving the communication flow between the two parties. This ensures both receive maximum benefit from the placement.

Your role in detail

- Placement Supervisors** should, very early on, discuss with students their expectations about the work programme, set aims and objectives with the students and allow time for regular reviews
- Students will need guidance about background reading, and information on where they can acquire the skills that will be of use in their placement work
- Supervisors should integrate the student into project or teamwork, and facilitate contacts with colleagues in related fields, providing a level of social contact
- Supervision should be provided overall or day to day either by a qualified psychologist or persons qualified to degree level in psychology
- It is good practice if the student and the supervisor can meet on a regular basis to discuss progress of the placement, any future plans, how the work is developing and to monitor progress.

Students are expected to develop their own initiative and find out what is going on in the place of work, but they may need help initially in their new environment.

Opportunities to get more involved

Several of our employers have become more involved with the placement process throughout the year and participate in the following:

- Video conference Q&A sessions
- Speed networking
- Employer presentations
- Careers talks
- Skills sessions

If you would like to visit campus to hold some mock interviews, to give a presentation to students about your company and the opportunities you offer, or run a skills session with practical information and tasks to help our students be more prepared for the application and interview process, please contact us.



Luke Treglown

BSc (Hons) Psychology

Placement with University College London

"I have developed skills that will be useful for my final year and I have learnt that psychology has such a large presence. I have much greater insight into where I can go."

Dissertation information

During the placement we ask that students have the opportunity to gather either primary data or use secondary data to use for a research study. We understand that in some cases this may not be possible. This research will be written up by the student as an 8000 word dissertation and will be the main piece of work in the final year on returning to university.

The placement usually presents plenty of ideas to inspire the student for the dissertation. We hope that there will be opportunities for the student to do his/her own research in the placement setting, collecting data, designing a questionnaire or survey or be able to use your statistics. Alternatively, if the student could be allowed to use data belonging to the host organisation, we hope that the student will interpret the data in an original way.

The student will be assigned a dissertation supervisor here in Bath with whom they are asked to communicate throughout the placement year to develop ideas for the dissertation and to monitor progress. We would also hope that the supervisor(s) in the placement setting could provide the student with some guidance and time once a week or once every couple of weeks to discuss progress, readings, and developments.

“

Students on placement with us have consistently made valuable contributions to our research efforts to improve health and outcomes in people with major neurological disorders. We have always found placement students to be of high academic standing for their current level of study, becoming valued members of the team.

”

Kelly Jones

Senior Lecturer
National Institute for Stroke
and Applied Neurosciences
Auckland University of Technology

Initially students will be asked to send in a short research description and this will be followed by a full research proposal and an application to the Department of Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Bath. This ensures that the student has discussed the dissertation with both the supervisor in the placement setting and at the University of Bath, and that the research is viable, ethical, and approved by all parties.



Michelle Tsang

BSc (Hons) Psychology
Placement with Harvard University

“I was fortunate to spend my placement at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, one of the many renowned graduate schools of Harvard University. I worked as a full time research assistant to a reputed professor whose work informs the field of Educational Psychology, with an emphasis on moral, interpersonal and social development research. My placement at Harvard was by far one of the most rewarding things I have done; it has provided challenges and experiences that university alone could never really bestow. The skills that I have acquired and developed have equipped me with the confidence and desire to pursue a career as a professional psychologist. I would strongly recommend any aspiring psychologists to take this placement year very seriously because not only does it teach you about the world of work beyond academia, it also equips you as an individual with transferable skills that you will need to differentiate yourself from other students and graduates.”

Department of Psychology
Undergraduate Work Placements

If you would like further clarification or any additional information, please contact us:

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