

The Faculty of Life Sciences

Industrial Experience/Language Placement Programme

Supervisor Guidelines

Introduction

The Placement Scheme in this Faculty is designed to equip our students with valuable experience and skills gained while working for a year in a professional setting. Many students wish to undertake a laboratory or field based project but some others do not and are more interested in related areas such as scientific writing, bioinformatics, database work or more theoretical research projects. The students may have a 'service' element to their jobs but are expected to carry out an in-depth research project during their time away under the supervision of a member of staff at the host organisation. This should include a piece of work, which the student can take ownership of. It could be for instance a hypothesis driven research question but may equally be optimising a protocol or technique or tracing and evaluating weaknesses in a procedure. Students must write up their project work as a report on which they are examined and vivaed on their return to Manchester. This report is similar to a short thesis. The mark for the placement report and viva amounts to roughly 10% of their degree.

The Faculty is happy to encourage these programmes because they provide students with a number of benefits, such as experience of applying the knowledge gained in the two years at University to real world situations. It is also usual that students develop many transferable skills that do not develop as fully during the academic part of the degree curriculum. Students who have spent time in a professional setting often return with a much clearer idea of the way they see their career progressing, and are highly motivated during their remaining year of study.

The programmes followed by students in the Faculty are designed to enable graduates to gain a high level of practical and theoretical skills over a range of biological science subjects together with knowledge of currently available techniques and technologies. Ultimately we hope to develop competent professionals able to play a leading part in many different commercial, industrial and academic activities with the ability to adapt rapidly to changing technology and in so doing meet the demand of industry for high calibre graduates.

University Involvement in Industrial Placements

Every student has a staff member from the University visit during their time on placement. The visit involves discussion with both student and their placement supervisor, to sort out any problems that the student or employer may have and to monitor student's progress.

The second visit will be in the form of a "virtual visit" with the student uploading a PowerPoint presentation to his/her allocated "visitor" based within the Faculty. On the pre-arranged date and time, the visitor will telephone the student and the PowerPoint presentation will be discussed. It is also hoped that the Placement Supervisor will be available to comment on the presentation and to discuss any issues with the academic member of staff.

Students remain registered at the University so maintain their support network (email, library, academic advisor) during their placement.

Commitment from the company/institution usually comprises:

- Providing the student with a placement for a minimum of nine months and a maximum of twelve months;
- Providing a named Supervisor within the company;
- The placement must be relevant to the student's degree programme.

Company benefits:

- Enable the entry of skilled undergraduates providing a cost-effective solution to short-term recruitment needs;
- Allow the injection of fresh and innovative ideas into the company;
- Placement students provide extra resources to focus on specific projects;
- Opportunity's to assess the potential of future employees;
- Enhance the company profile with the student population;
- Gives an insight into the current standards of academic development in specific disciplines;
- Forge strong links with the University, which may facilitate future collaboration in research and teaching.

Successful completion of the placement

Students must fulfil the following criteria to be considered to have 'successfully completed' the placement –

- Reports throughout the year from visiting tutors, and the Supervisor Report at the end of the year, are used to check that the placement has been completed satisfactorily;
- The student must complete a minimum nine months of approved work experience;
- At the end of the year out the student must submit a report on the research project carried out during their time on placement;
- On return to University the student attends a viva at which they are examined on their placement work.

Health and Safety

Companies in the U.K. operate under the same health and safety legislation that operates in the University, the placement student must be made aware of any special local requirements.

If you are offering a placement working overseas the student may have no knowledge of the prevailing Health and Safety requirements, the University requires that information on local requirements is made available to the placement student.

Student responsibility to the Placement provider

For your information the following advice is given to the placement students –

While away from the University on a placement you will normally be an employee of a company. It is vital that you behave in a sensible manner and abide by all the rules and regulations of your employer. This applies to all aspects of your placement, but pay particular attention to aspects of Health & Safety, confidentiality and computer use.

In some cases the company/institution will require the student to produce an internal report in a different format to that expected by the Faculty - if that is the case we may be happy to accept a copy (subject obviously to the agreement of the company) if it is appropriate rather than making you produce two separate reports. If this is the case you should contact the placement officer first to ensure that the format of the report will be acceptable. Remember also that in industry you may be subject to confidentiality arrangements and so you should not release information without consent. Companies/institutions normally wish to examine the report, which you submit - make sure to allow time for this.

Contacts

The Faculty's Placement Office can be contacted at placementoffice.fl@manchester.ac.uk or on +44 (0) 161 275 1540.