

# STUDENT GUIDE

PREPARING FOR YOUR  
INDUSTRY PLACEMENT



THE CORNWALL COLLEGE GROUP

# Your industry placement journey...

Congratulations on being a part of the industry placement scheme!

An industry placement is a minimum of 315 hours (approx. 45 days) and involves actively contributing to the workplace whilst working on targets which you have set yourself. These targets may be hard skills i.e. knowledge and skills related to the industry, as well as soft skills i.e. behaviours, values and employability.

This will add immense value to your studies, giving you a much more rounded experience of the subject and providing you with a career edge when you look to enter the workplace.

This guide provides you with advice and signposts you to useful resources to help you prepare for your placement and make it a success.

Remember, once you have secured your placement or if you are struggling to find a placement, please notify your Industry Placement & Work Experience Coordinator (IPWEC) on [skillstobusiness@cornwall.ac.uk](mailto:skillstobusiness@cornwall.ac.uk)

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# Essential information about your industry placement

To complete your placement and gain a certificate for this, you must:

1. Make sufficient progress towards your learning goals, which will be developed by your Industry Placement & Work Experience Co-ordinator and the employer before you start your placement. Your progress will be reviewed at regular review meetings with your Industry Placement & Work Experience Co-ordinator and manager at the organisation.
2. Spend at least 315 hours on your placement. This could include up to 35 hours of work taster activities, such as job-shadowing and visits to different employers.
3. Work directly with one or two employers, in a real-life, working environment.

Some employers may pay you a wage or cover your expenses, but this is up to them. If you are eligible for support for expenses, such as transport, you will continue to receive this. If you are not sure, ask your education provider.



# What you will gain from your industry placement

Your industry placement gives you a great opportunity to put your learning into practice and develop your technical skills and knowledge for the industry your placement is in. It will help you to progress once you have finished your study programme, whether that is directly into employment, an apprenticeship, or more education.

Your industry placement is also a really important addition to your CV. It will make a big difference to your future job opportunities as it will help you stand out against other job applicants.

Your industry placement will help you to:

- ◇ gain the experience of being in a workplace setting
- ◇ step out of your comfort zone and build confidence through interacting with professionals and meeting new people
- ◇ identify what sort of job you would like to do, and what sort of organisation you would like to work for
- ◇ build your network in the industry, connecting you with people who can give you advice and help you to find future jobs
- ◇ potentially secure a job or apprenticeship with the employer after you have completed your course

**TOP TIP: You might want to check out student views on industry placements!**

## Before your placement starts

You need to be prepared for your industry placement so that you can make the most out of the exciting opportunity.

Before you start your placement, your education provider will make sure:

- ◇ you've been taught the technical skills and knowledge you need for the industry
- ◇ you've been taught the employability skills you need
- ◇ you understand the professional behaviours and attitudes you need to show
- ◇ you know how to produce a good CV and prepare for an interview
- ◇ you have researched the organisation your placement will be with and understand the work it does, the products and/or services it provides, its culture and values, whether it has a local, national or international focus and its size and structure
- ◇ you understand what your role will be and the activities you will do
- ◇ you understand what to do if you have a problem or are anxious and have the confidence to ask questions if you are unsure about anything
- ◇ you are clear how your progress towards your learning goals will be measured



If you have a special educational need or disability, or anxiety, you should make sure your Industry Placement & Work Experience Co-ordinator knows. This is for any special need you have, and it doesn't matter whether you have an education, health, and care plan. For example, you might have a medical condition or find it difficult to travel by yourself. Your education provider will help you to prepare and plan for your placement, make sure you have the support you need and that the employer knows about your needs so that any adjustments can be made, if required.

## Developing your employability skills

### What are employability skills?

Your industry placement will allow you to develop your employability skills, which will help you to get a job and progress in your career. They are the skills that allow you to do well in the workplace and include communication, teamwork, problem solving, using your initiative, time management, agility, creativity, and independence.

### What employability skills do you have?

Your education provider will help you to explore what employability skills are and how to use them in the workplace. You may be surprised to learn you have many examples within your education, home life or hobbies where you demonstrate these skills regularly.

To help identify what employability skills you already have and which you need to develop before you start your placement, your education provider will ask you to do a self-assessment. They will then tailor employability skills training to meet your needs. This might include discussions with your education provider's career guidance service, job-shadowing, visits to different employers, talks from employers, volunteering, CV writing and interview skills workshops, and class projects or activities.



- ◇ Barclay's **LifeSkills** has interactive tools, films and activities to help you identify your skills in the context of work. You just need to create an account and log in
- ◇ Accenture's **Skills to Succeed Academy** has interactive training modules to build your skills and confidence for the workplace. Just create an account and log in
- ◇ The **Skills Builder Framework** has an online tool to help you develop the essential skills you need for the workplace
- ◇ **Youth Employment's Skills and Careers Hub** has free resources, tools, training, and advice to help develop your employability skills
- ◇ **The Prince's Trust** has online tools and resources to develop your work skills
- ◇ **BBC Bitesize Careers** has articles and videos to help you develop your work skills including teamwork, organisation, communication, and initiative
- ◇ **Bright Knowledge** has useful articles and tips about how to enhance your employability skills, such as motivation and time management
- ◇ **Success at School** has resources to help you develop your employability skills including critical thinking, networking, decision making, and presentation skills
- ◇ BT's **Skills For Tomorrow** offers advice and training to help you become work ready

**TOP TIP:** You might also want to do your own self-assessment to help you reflect on your skills and recognise areas where you might want to develop. A self-assessment tool you can use is on page 18.

## Engaging with prospective employers

### Industry placement search

All students are encouraged to find their own industry placement where possible so you are developing your job searching and application skills. Please see <https://www.cornwall.ac.uk/16-18/work-experience-and-industry-placements/> for advice and guidance with applying for placements, this includes CV, cover letter guidance and interview tips. There is also guidance below for making initial contact by phone. If you require assistance with securing your placement please contact your Industry Placement & Work Experience Coordinator on [skillstobusiness@cornwall.ac.uk](mailto:skillstobusiness@cornwall.ac.uk).

### Useful resource

Association of Colleges' self-sourcing placements guidance provides helpful advice on how to find a placement.



## Writing a CV and cover letter

You will probably need to provide a CV and cover letter to prospective employers, either when you are finding your industry placement or because it is part of an employer's recruitment process.

Your education provider will help you to write your CV and cover letter. Generally, a CV should be no more than two pages long and it should show you in the best possible light. On the right are some useful online resources that you might also want to look at.

## Preparing for an interview

You might also have to attend an interview before being offered your industry placement. Your education provider will help you to prepare for your interview. This section also gives you some interview tips and useful websites to look at to help you prepare.

## Interview hints and tips

Identifying your skills, achievements and abilities and being able to articulate them will give you an edge during your interview. You can use this table to get you thinking.

Your experiences	Your abilities	Your achievements	Transferable skills
Personal qualities	Things you've learned	Your skills	Your work values
Your career aspirations	What you're good at	What you want to do in life	What you want to gain from the placement
What you like about their organisation and how it fits with your aspirations		What you can bring to the workplace and what you would like to learn	

### Examples of useful CV resources

- ◇ The National Careers Service has a guide on how to create a CV and cover letter
- ◇ Barclay's LifeSkills offers a free online tool to build your CV
- ◇ Success at School and Get My First Job provide links to free CV templates
- ◇ Accenture's Skills to Succeed Academy, the Youth Employment Skills and Careers Hub, Prince's Trust, BBC Bitesize Careers and Bright Knowledge offer tips in writing CVs and cover letters



Here are also some useful tips to help you do the best in your interview:

- ◇ Research the organisation in advance: aim to discover as much as you can about the products or services they provide, its vision, values and culture, the organisation structure, the role you will be doing and read up on their recent news
- ◇ Practice your responses: read your responses out loud to your reflection/family member or friends. Practice makes perfect
- ◇ Prepare questions to ask at the interview: remember it is a conversation, so go armed with two or three questions that demonstrate you have researched the organisation and have a genuine interest in it, e.g., What challenges does your team face on a day-to-day basis? What qualities are necessary for someone to do well in this role? What are the strategic challenges you are facing as a business?
- ◇ Have interviewers' contact details to hand: it is important to remember names if you are entering a large workplace with a reception, and have their contact details to call if you are delayed
- ◇ Dress appropriately for the industry: if in doubt, check with your Study Programme Manager or the employer but as a rule of thumb, dressing smartly will give a good instant impression and show you are serious about the role. If you are struggling financially, you can approach organisations **Smart Works** for women, and **Suited & Booted** for men, who can help
- ◇ Arrive on time: punctuality shows you are organised and reliable. Plan your journey ahead of time and aim to arrive 5-10 minutes early. Use **Google Maps** to help with this
- ◇ Put your phone on silent and make sure it is tucked away so you can focus on the interview questions
- ◇ Give a good first impression: start the interview with a confident manner, by keeping your head up, making eye contact, having a smile on your face, and offering a firm handshake (if appropriate)
- ◇ Be enthusiastic, energetic and smile: coming across as being passionate about the area and using open body language leaves a lasting impression
- ◇ Be organised: have a notebook and pen ready so you can take notes during your interview if you want to
- ◇ Show enthusiasm and a willingness to learn

After your interview and being told the outcome, remember to ask for feedback whether you have been successful or not. This will help you prepare for future interviews.

### Examples of useful interview resources

- ◇ Association of College's Student Handbook provides example interview questions
- ◇ National Careers Service has helpful interview advice
- ◇ Barclay's LifeSkills has a tool that allows you to do a practice job interview online
- ◇ Accenture's Skills to Succeed Academy, the Youth Employment Skills and Careers Hub, Prince's Trust, BBC Bitesize Careers and Bright Knowledge offer interview tips and tricks



## Practical arrangements before you start your placement

You should plan for your first day of placement to make sure you are organised and give a good first impression by making sure you:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Know the days you need to attend your placement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know the start and finish times for each day and the break and lunch times
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have planned how you will travel to and from your placement, including finding out the train/bus/tram times, to make sure you arrive on time. Be prepared, as you might need to travel further to your placement than you normally do to your education provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have enough money with you to cover your bus fares, lunch etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have suitable clothes and any equipment you need, including a notebook and pen so you can take notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the contact details for your employer, and know who to ask for when you arrive at your placement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the contact details for your tutor at the education provider, so you can keep in touch with them on your placement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have five questions that you can ask your manager and colleagues on your first day to help start a conversation and to show interest in your colleagues. These could include: What does your job involve? What do you enjoy about your job? How did you get into this industry? How would you describe the organisation's culture? What is the biggest priority or challenge you are working on now? How can I be a valuable team member? Do you have any advice to help me make the most out of my placement?



During your placement, you are expected to:

- ◇ complete the organisation's induction programme and any important training
- ◇ apply the knowledge and skills that you have learned in the classroom
- ◇ work towards your learning goals and record your progress against them in your logbook
- ◇ attend regular meetings with your manager, IPWEC and tutor to discuss your progress
- ◇ display professional standards of behaviours and attitudes
- ◇ follow the organisation's policies and procedures
- ◇ complete the agreed number of placement hours, making sure you record your hours in a timesheet on a weekly basis



Your education provider and employer will support you throughout your placement. You should let them know straight away if you are anxious or have any worries or concerns.

Your education provider will explain how to record your progress against your learning goals and how to prepare for your review meetings. They will also help you understand the behaviours and attitudes you need to display on your placement.



Employers will expect you to behave in a professional way on your placement. You should have a positive and enthusiastic attitude, want to learn and develop your skills, be happy to receive feedback, and want to make the most of the exciting opportunity.

You should have a notebook and pen so you can take notes, for example of the names of people you meet and the tasks you have been asked to do. This will help you to be organised. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure about the work you are doing, as it is important to speak up and ask for help if you are worried about anything or have any safety concerns.

### Examples of useful interview resources

- ◇ The work etiquette website gives information on how to behave in the workplace
- ◇ This video on BBC Bitesize Career explains how to make a positive first impression in the workplace

**TOP TIP:** the table in your Student Workbook for Industry Placement sets out the professional behaviours and attitudes that you must demonstrate during your placement.

## Organisation policy and procedures

When you start your placement, your employer will put you on an induction programme. As part of this you will be told about the organisation's policies and procedures, which will explain what you can and can't do in the workplace. It is important you always follow them.

Organisations will have policies and procedures in areas including health and safety, dress code, acceptable behaviour, appropriate IT use, the use of your personal mobile phone, the use of social media, working hours, breaks and lunch practices, equal opportunities, equality and diversity, looking after the organisation's property, disciplinary procedures and confidential information handling.



High risk working environments, such as car manufacturing sites, will have additional health and safety policies that you must follow to protect you and others from getting hurt. Some organisations will also require you to wear a uniform or personal protective equipment for health and safety reasons, e.g. on a construction site or in a health setting.

Organisations will also have a drugs and alcohol policy, which will prevent you from being under their influence in the workplace due to their negative impact on your performance and safety. If you are found to be using drugs and alcohol on your placement the employer will most likely remove you from their premises and stop your placement.

You should make sure that you know who to contact at your education provider if you have an accident whilst on your placement, or if any issues arise.

**TOP TIP:** use the student induction checklist in your Student Workbook for Industry Placement to make sure the employer has told you about their policies and procedures. If you're worried you haven't been told all the information you think you should know, speak to your manager at the placement, your IPWEC or speak to your tutor.



## Dress code

Some industries and organisations will have dress codes that require you to dress in a certain way on your placement. For example, in an office environment you may have to wear smart clothes to promote a professional atmosphere. Workers who deal with the public often must wear a uniform to promote the organisation's brand or to provide easy recognition for customers. Other industries, such as agriculture or animal care, will require you to dress in clothes that are more suitable for physical activity. If you are worried about getting the appropriate clothes for your industry placement speak to your tutor or IPWEC.



# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Hi- vis vest and overalls

Steel toe-capped safety wellingtons / work boots

### Agriculture



Hair tied back and jewellery removed

Goggles

Lanyard worn on person (on top or under lab coat)

Lab coat

Gloves

Steel toe-capped boots or wellingtons

### Horticulture - Lab Work



Hair tied back and jewellery removed

Lanyard worn on person (on top or under boiler suit)

Boiler suit

Gloves

Steel toe-capped boots or Wellingtons

Note:  
• Ear defenders and goggles needed when operating machinery

### Horticulture - Outside Work



Hair tied back and jewellery removed

Lanyard worn on person (under overalls)

Boiler suit

Steel toe-capped boots or Wellingtons

Notes  
• Gloves to be worn when handling large animals

### Animal Care



Navy blue proban or fire retardant overalls,

Steel toe-capped safety work boots

### Land-Based Engineering



Welding/Grinding Goggles

Lanyard (may be removed for practical's or tucked inside overalls)

Leather Gauntlet Gloves

Leather Apron

Overall

Safety Boots with steel toe cap

### Land-Based Engineering Welding and Hot Works





Equine - Riding



Equine - Yard Work



Arboriculture



Hospitality



Catering



Hairdressing



Engineering



Furniture Making



Electrical



Automotive



Carpentry



Bricklaying

## Importance of networking

Your industry placement gives you an excellent opportunity to network. Networking is about building relationships with the people you know, and the people that they know, to receive advice and support, to help others and to find out about job opportunities.

The most useful contacts on your placement will normally be the people you work with day to day, and especially your manager or supervisor. However, anyone you meet whilst on your placement could be a useful contact. Networking can feel intimidating at the start so if you feel nervous or shy, ask the person you're talking to something about themselves or ask for their advice on something. This takes the pressure off you and shows them that you're interested in them. To make the most out of your contacts whilst on your placement:

- ◇ Introduce yourself to colleagues whose work you are particularly interested in, and see if you can work with them more closely during your placement.
- ◇ Keep a record of the people you meet, including who they are, who they work for and how you met them.
- ◇ If you think it would be useful, ask people if they are happy for you to stay in touch after your placement. Professional networking sites, such as **LinkedIn**, makes this easier, so if you don't already have one, set up an account.
- ◇ Have a sensible email address that you can use for contacts and job applications.

## Professional networking websites

LinkedIn is an example of a professional networking site. It lets you create an online profile, like a CV, to highlight your skills and the things you've done. It also allows you to research companies, look for jobs and join groups.

Employers often use social media to find out about employees they want to recruit. Make sure you're creating the right sort of online presence that your prospective employer will be looking for. Be careful with the information and images you put online. Most social media is public, so if you would not be happy letting your manager or colleagues see it, think twice before adding it online.





## Useful networking resources

There are online resources that you give you useful hints and tips for networking:

- ◇ **National Careers Service** has a helpful guide on networking
- ◇ The **LinkedIn** website has hints and tips on how to use it effectively
- ◇ Barclay's **LifeSkills**, Accenture's **Skills to Succeed Academy**, the **Prince's Trust** and **Bright Knowledge** offer online advice and tips on networking



# Troubleshooting issues with your placement

With the right preparation and attitude, your industry placement is likely to go very well. The following issues are unlikely to occur but if they do, here are some tips on how to troubleshoot issues that come up during your industry placement. In most cases you should talk to your IPWEC or Study Programme Manager first before taking any action.

Issue	Action
The work you are doing is not what you had expected or hoped for	Speak with your Study Programme Manager about what you are doing and how it is not meeting your expectations. Remember that almost any job involves aspects that we enjoy and others which we are less keen on, so a degree of flexibility is important! You are contributing to a real business in real time and business needs can change. Your Study Programme Manager and IPWEC can help you review the situation and, if necessary, plan how to raise it with your manager by reference to your agreed learning objectives. If the problem persists, your IPWEC may contact your manager directly.
You feel unable to do the work you are given	This may be due to assumptions by the employer about your skills/confidence levels to perform a task. Be honest. Your manager knows that you are learning, is likely to appreciate your honesty and will be happy to teach you the skills required. Also speak to your tutor.
You have an issue with transport	Speak to your Study Programme Manager for support and create a contingency plan for when your regular travel route is not available.
You are unable to purchase workwear	If you are struggling to purchase the correct workwear, speak with your IPWEC as they should be able to support you in getting hold of appropriate work clothes.
You are being asked to work longer hours than you expected	If your placement is asking you to exceed the hours agreed, talk to your IPWEC in the first instance about what is happening, and you can decide next steps together.
You are experiencing wellbeing issues	If you are experiencing issues with your wellbeing, do not hesitate to speak to your Study Programme Manager about it and you can decide the next steps to resolve this.
You feel you are being treated unfairly by colleagues	Speak to your IPWEC about what is happening, and they will help you address things in the most suitable way.



# At the end of your placement

## Reflecting on what you have learnt

At the end of your placement, you should reflect on your progress and what you have achieved. You may be asked to give a short presentation about your placement to your employer and/or education provider. This won't be assessed but will be a good way for you to reflect and show what you have learnt. Your Study Programme Manager will help you with your presentation skills.

## Handing over work

You may need to handover the work you have done on your placement to the employer so that they can carry on with it when you have left. Your employer will tell you what you need to do to handover your work and who to hand it over to.

## Things you must not forget to do

It's important to make sure you haven't forgotten anything that could help you get the most out of your industry placement. Make sure you:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a note of any work email addresses and/or work phone numbers for people you met during your placement that you want to keep in touch with, including your manager, or add them on a professional networking website, such as LinkedIn
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your manager if they would be willing to give you an employer reference in the future
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't leave any personal documents or files on the employer's IT equipment, such as your industry placement logbook and timesheets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't take any other files or documents from the placement without written permission from the organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thank anyone that you feel has made your placement a positive experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Write a thank you letter or email to your manager and set out what you have gained from your placement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update your CV with the details of your placement, including what you achieved and the employability skills you have developed

If you forget anything, you might be able to get back in touch with the organisation to sort it out after you leave, but it's easier and gives a more professional opinion of you if you don't have to do this.



**How confident do you feel with regards to each of these statements?**

	Not confident at all	Not very confident	Neutral	Confident	Very confident
I know how to write a good CV and cover letter					
I can speak clearly to employers about my skills and experiences at an interview					
I know how to research the organisation that my industry placement will be with					
I have the employability skills that I need for my industry placement (e.g. teamwork, communication and problem solving)					
I have the technical skills and knowledge that I need for my industry placement					
I understand the professional behaviours and attitudes that employers will expect me to display on my industry placement (e.g. time keeping, dress code, adhering to health and safety rules)					
I understand that the industry placement will be a valuable addition to my CV					
I understand how I will benefit from completing my industry placement					



## To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree / disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am good at communicating my thoughts and ideas in a way that is easy for others to understand					
I am confident in my writing skills					
I listen well to other people					
I respond positively and can adapt when things aren't going to plan					
I am confident at working in a team					
I respect the different opinions of others					
I am good at being on time					
I am good at organising the things I have to do					
I am motivated and eager to learn in a workplace setting					
I am always keen to improve and like to receive feedback on my performance					
I can often think of creative solutions to problems					
I am confident in making decisions					
I am confident in asking questions if I am unsure					

You should now feel more prepared for your Industry Placement. If you have any queries please contact your IPWEC on [skillstobusiness@cornwall.ac.uk](mailto:skillstobusiness@cornwall.ac.uk).

