

# Finding Work Experience



## What's available?

### Industrial placements

Some degree courses offer the chance to spend up to a year in industry between your pre-final and final years. These provide an opportunity to gain experience and put your academic knowledge and skills into practice. At Surrey we have the Professional Training (PT) placement which is well established and offered in most subject areas. The PT placement is facilitated by the subject departments who have developed a network of placement contacts. There are designated Placement Tutors whose role it is to help prepare students for applying to organisations, support them on placement and ensure that the experience is reflected upon positively. For more details on the PT placement go to [www.surrey.ac.uk/professional-training/about](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/professional-training/about)

Most industrial placements are paid with the possible exception of charities, health and social care, media and some in law. Students on placement pay a reduced university fee for the year. You will earn a salary, typically £15,000 – £19,000 or potentially higher in multinational companies.

### Summer/Vacation Internships

Summer Internships offer a short placement, giving you a brief exposure to what it's like working for an organisation. They are typically 8 -10 weeks, though some can be as short as 4 weeks. Some organisations also offer short internships over Easter or Christmas vacations. Internships are typically paid at a similar rate to industrial placements, but pro-rata to reflect the shorter length of time.

### Casual summer work

You can also find jobs over the summer, which are not necessarily related to a graduate career but which can help you to develop good transferrable skills. For example these jobs could be in tourism, children's summer camps, assisting at conferences or festivals, or agriculture. You can often find these opportunities abroad, which can help you to develop your foreign language skills. Salaries vary a great deal and may include benefits like accommodation and meals instead of a full salary.

## Placements and internships abroad

Working abroad can develop your language skills and understanding of other cultures. Some organisations advertise directly with the Employability & Careers Centre, and there are a large number of websites and organisations that can help you find work experience abroad.

Unlike in the UK, placement and internship students are not necessarily paid a salary, so you need to evaluate the benefits of the experience and think carefully about how you can support yourself. You should also be aware that there is no regulation of international work experience opportunities and some companies charge high fees to help you arrange your visa, find opportunities and plan your experience. Ensure you shop around, google the organisation and ask lots of questions before committing yourself. Try to find independent reviews by people that have used the organisation before.

For information on international work placements talk to your department's Placement Tutor and look at [www.surrey.ac.uk/student-exchanges/study-abroad](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/student-exchanges/study-abroad) which gives details on opportunities available through the Erasmus+ programme.

The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) provides paid course related summer placements abroad for science, engineering and applied arts students: [www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/iaeste-uk-students](http://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/iaeste-uk-students)

AIESEC UK promotes global understanding through international exchange and offers international internships: [www.aiesec.co.uk/students/](http://www.aiesec.co.uk/students/)

The website Goingglobal also features internship and job opportunities: [www.surrey.ac.uk/goingglobal](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/goingglobal)



## ***Did you know?***

You can access our leaflet series and further resources on Surrey Pathfinder:  
**[surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder](http://surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder)**

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## Work shadowing / work taster

Work shadowing is an informal type of work experience where you observe someone in their role to understand how they do their job. This is usually a short term activity – a few days at most – aimed at providing an insight rather than hands on experience. This can be useful experience to gain in careers where few formal internships exist, or where the role is not one an intern or placement student can do with their level of experience, e.g. solicitor. A work taster is a more hands-on insight into a role or field which may be organised by a professional body or a particular employer.

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## Part-time work and Volunteering

A valuable source of work experience, it can help you build transferrable skills like team work and problem solving. See our 'Student jobs & Volunteering' leaflet for more information.

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## How can I find placements, internships & work experience?

Treat your search for a placement or internship the same way you would approach getting a graduate job. For many large organisations, internships and placements are the first stage in their graduate recruitment process. There can be a lot of competition for these type of opportunities with big companies and in most cases the selection process is similar to graduate level jobs. Maximise your chance of being offered an interview by getting advice on your application at the Employability & Careers Centre.

If your degree includes a Professional Training placement year your department should have a Senior Professional Training Tutor who may be able to help you to identify organisations to apply to. Search for opportunities on Surrey Pathfinder:

[www.surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder) If you need or wish to arrange your own work experience then you should research the organisations that you want to apply to. Do they advertise vacancies or will you have to apply speculatively?

In addition to the websites listed below, please note that:

- ▶ Many exhibitors at our Autumn Careers & Placements Fair advertise placements and internships as well as graduate jobs
- ▶ Some sectors/occupations have websites which feature opportunities specifically relevant to their field or you may need to do more proactive job-hunting
- ▶ For insights into how students felt about their placement or internship and details on opportunities see [www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/](http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/)
- ▶ Also see our leaflet 'Job Seeking – Advertised Vacancies' at [www.surrey.ac.uk/employability-and-careers/resources/information-leaflets](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/employability-and-careers/resources/information-leaflets)

## General Graduate and Internship Vacancy Sites

Most of the sites below offer both internship and new graduate positions in a range of career sectors. Most sites will allow you to register and receive vacancy updates.

- ▶ **Prospects** [www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience)
- ▶ **Targetjobs** <https://targetjobs.co.uk>
- ▶ *Collect Free Directories from Employability & Careers Centre*
- ▶ **Inside Careers** [www.insidecareers.co.uk](http://www.insidecareers.co.uk) (Finance / Consultancy positions)
- ▶ *Collect Free Directories from Employability & Careers Centre*
- ▶ **Milkround** [www.milkround.com](http://www.milkround.com)
- ▶ **All About Careers** [www.allaboutcareers.com](http://www.allaboutcareers.com)
- ▶ **The Job Crowd** [www.thejobcrowd.com](http://www.thejobcrowd.com) (Useful search facility by sector)
- ▶ **GradDiary** [www.graddiary.com/](http://www.graddiary.com/) (Includes details of key closing dates)
- ▶ **Jobonline** <https://jobonline.thecareersgroup.co.uk/careersgroup/student/>
- ▶ **All About Finance** [www.allaboutfinancecareers.co.uk/](http://www.allaboutfinancecareers.co.uk/)
- ▶ **Wikijob** [www.wikijob.co.uk/graduate-jobs](http://www.wikijob.co.uk/graduate-jobs)
- ▶ **The Big Choice** [www.thebigchoice.com](http://www.thebigchoice.com) (Graduate vacancies, placements, school leaver opportunities)
- ▶ **Bright Network** [www.brightnetwork.co.uk](http://www.brightnetwork.co.uk) (Internships and graduate opportunities)

## Graduate & Internship Sites (Science/Engineering/IT)

These sites specialise in STEM opportunities – use in addition to those listed above.

- ▶ **Gradcracke** [www.gradcracker.com](http://www.gradcracker.com)
- ▶ **Jobs in Science** [www.jobsinscience.com](http://www.jobsinscience.com)
- ▶ **STEM graduates** [www.stemgraduates.co.uk](http://www.stemgraduates.co.uk)

## Placement and Internship Only Sites

**Note:** Whilst many of the graduate vacancy sites above include internship opportunities the following sites focus solely on internships.

- ▶ **Rate My Placement** [www.ratemyplacement.co.uk](http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk)
- ▶ **STEP** [www.step.org.uk](http://www.step.org.uk) (Internships for students & graduates)
- ▶ **Graduate Talent Pool** <http://graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk> (Internship opportunities for recent graduates)
- ▶ The South East Physics Network (SEPNET) provides funding for physics undergraduates in their second and third year to conduct eight week internships: [www.sepnet.ac.uk/students-employers/for-students/careers-information/summer-placement-scheme/](http://www.sepnet.ac.uk/students-employers/for-students/careers-information/summer-placement-scheme/)

## Jobs at the University of Surrey

- ▶ <https://jobs.surrey.ac.uk/Vacancies.aspx>
- ▶ [www.unitemps.com](http://www.unitemps.com)

## When should I apply?

Many organisations advertise opportunities months in advance of the start date. Most large or multinational organisations start advertising in September for students to start work the following summer, so the earlier you start looking the best chance you have of securing what you want. Positions are often filled before the official closing date, so apply as soon as you can!

- ▶ Many big companies advertise between September and December.
- ▶ Local or smaller companies may also have positions available over the summer and these tend to be advertised after Christmas.
- ▶ Casual summer jobs are also advertised later in the academic year, often between January and April.

## What's the application process like?

Employers will expect a professional CV with covering letter or application form, and many large organisations require online applications. Some may also use psychometric tests as part of the selection process.

## Are there any other places to look for opportunities?

Not all employers offering placements, internships and work experience widely advertise their opportunities. See our leaflet 'Job seeking: the hidden job market' for further advice on how to identify and reach these organisations.

## Should I consider unpaid experience?

Some work experience opportunities or internships are unpaid, and whilst it is your decision whether to work unsalaried, there is a legal minimum wage which employers should pay where you are undertaking real work (unless you are volunteering for a legitimate charity/not-for-profit organisation). Weigh up the benefits and drawbacks before you decide to take any unpaid experience.

- ▶ Plan your experience to get the most benefit from it
- ▶ Agree a clear structure with the organisation in advance
- ▶ Negotiate to be paid at least expenses if you can
- ▶ Understand your rights and when the minimum wage should apply

## What about opportunities for international students?

Please see our Useful Information leaflet *International students: Getting a job* on Surrey Pathfinder.







**Employability & Careers  
Centre** T: 01483 689001/2  
E: [careers@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:careers@surrey.ac.uk)  
W: [surrey.ac.uk/careers](http://surrey.ac.uk/careers)

**Find out more:**  
[surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder](http://surrey.ac.uk/pathfinder)

