

What is a University of Surrey placement year?



The Professional Training placement year provides the opportunity for you to spend twelve months working in industry, commerce, the public sector or in a research institute. It increases your understanding of your subject, gives you real insight into your career potential, and develops your professional experience. It can be invaluable in developing work-based skills and helping you secure your graduate career.

A unique feature of the Professional Training placement is that it is part of the degree, is assessed and counts for 120 Level P credits towards the total credits for your degree (480 credits for four-year degrees and 600 credits for five-year degrees).

▶ When does it happen?

For the majority of programmes the placements occur during the third year of study. Some Engineering programmes provide the option to undertake Professional Training in either the third or fourth year of a five year degree.

▶ How will the University support me?

The **Professional Training Senior Tutor** for your academic department will be a useful source of advice about where to secure a suitable placement. They will deliver a series of briefing sessions during your second year, to equip you not only for the challenges of securing a placement but also to ensure you are appropriately prepared for undertaking the placement itself.

You will also have a dedicated **Professional Training Administrator** from the Central Professional Training Team, located in the **Employability & Careers Service**. The team's various responsibilities include ensuring students have access to a wide variety and large volume of approved placement opportunities. All placement opportunities will be advertised on Surrey Pathfinder.

Access to the placement vacancy listings on **Surrey Pathfinder** is granted to students approximately 1 month prior to the start of their second year of undergraduate study.

Assuming you are successful in securing a suitable placement, you will continue to be supported throughout the Professional Training Year by both your Senior Tutor and Administrator. In addition you will be assigned a specific Placement Tutor who will provide the equivalent of Personal Tutor support to you, including conducting the necessary meetings with you and your placement host.

▶ **Should I wait until Year 2 to start thinking about placements?**

Definitely not! Whilst it is important to focus on settling into academic life when you first arrive at university, we recommend that you spend some time in the Spring Semester of Year 1 researching your options for the Professional Training Year. This module has been created to enable you to start the research and decision making processes early, so you can really hit the ground running when the first placement vacancies begin to appear at the start of your second year. Placements are highly competitive, not only amongst your fellow surrey students but also nationally, especially for large recruiters such as Microsoft, IBM, GSK, and Airbus to name just a few.

If your department offers an introductory briefing session towards the end of your first year we highly recommend attending. It could be the best chance you get to find out more and ask questions before you head into exams and the long summer break. Likewise you do not have to wait until your second year to come and speak to the Central PT Team in the Employability & Careers Service.

▶ **How long are placements?**

Most Professional Training placements last for a year (they must last at least 30 weeks, but generally most employers want students to work up to a year). Students on some degrees can opt for a six-month work placement and a six-month study exchange at a partner university as part of their placement year.

▶ **I have further questions about Professional Training...**

Please continue to work through the information and resources in this module, which has been specifically designed to answer all the most commonly asked questions students should be asking before embarking on this potentially life-changing journey of personal and professional development. Whether you want to know more about sourcing your own placement, working overseas, sharpening your interview technique, or anything else, the answers are in the actions and tasks of this module.

If you are reading this you have taken the first step towards Professional Training. We wish you the very best of luck and are ready to support you every step of the way.

Any questions or comments? Please email placements@surrey.ac.uk