

Computer Science Placement Handbook for students at the University of Manchester

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Welcome to Industrial Experience (IE)

Welcome to the Industrial Experience (IE) placement handbook. This book is primarily for undergraduate students studying Computer Science in the School of Engineering at the University of Manchester. The handbook has been written to help you (and your personal tutor) before, during and after your year-long placement in industry.



Figure 1: A panoramic picture of the Nancy Rothwell Building, home to the School of Engineering at the University of Manchester

0.1 The Placements Team in Computer Science

The placements team are here to provide support for your Industrial Experience alongside the support you get from your employer. The team consists of:

1. **Duncan Hull:** Employability lead, Computer Science manchester.ac.uk/staff/duncan.hull/contact, see figure 2
2. **David Petrescu:** Placement year tutor for Industrial Experience in Computer Science manchester.ac.uk/en/persons/david-petrescu, see figure 2

3. **Your personal tutor:** in *most* cases this will be the same personal tutor you had in first year. If you are not sure who your personal tutor is, get in touch with the second year tutor listed in undergraduate handbook [Nutter, 2024] and the Monday Mail [Nutter, 2025]
4. **The placements admin team:** A group of professional services staff providing administrative support in the School of Engineering, see section 11
5. **Your employer:** Principally your line manager(s), colleagues and Human Resources (HR) department, see chapter 6

Some of the placements team above are pictured in figure 2.

0.2 What is an Industrial Experience placement year?

A Industrial Experience (IE) placement is a formal period of paid work that is an assessed part of your study as an undergraduate. [CareersService, 2025i] The length of the employment varies with employers. In **this** guide a placement (also known a year-in-industry or sandwich year) is a **full year** of paid employment. Placements take place in the penultimate year of your study, for Bachelors students, that's *after* your second year of study and *before* your final year of study.

- a placement is *not* a summer internship, although these are also good things to do and lots of students do them
- the usual duration of a placement is 12 months, typically starting between June and August, depending on the employer. At the University of Manchester, the minimum length of employment for placements is 9 months, though 12 months is much more common.

During your placement you are a both full-time student and an employee of an organisation at the same time.

Placements aren't the *only* way to get experience before you graduate, but they are one of the most popular. For a discussion advantages and disadvantages of placement years over summer internships see cdyf.me/experiencing#interns [Hull, 2025b]

0.3 Placement year fees for IE

You pay reduced tuition fees for your placement year, these are not the full tuition fees you pay while studying at University full time, although for tax

purposes you are still a full-time student, see section 8.7. The fees you pay depend on if you are an international student (or not) see Study Abroad, Placements and Other fees [StudentSupport, 2025b]

0.4 How this handbook is structured

The rest of this placement handbook is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 outlines the value of a placement for you, your employer and your University
- Chapter 2 describes the aims of your Industrial Experience (IE) year
- Chapter 3 describes the requirements that need to be met for IE
- Chapter 4 discusses placements outside the UK
- Chapter 5 outlines your responsibilities to your employer and the University
- Chapter 6 outlines your employers responsibilities to you
- Chapter 7 outlines what you can expect from the University to you while you are on placement
- Chapter 8 is a starter guide for those finishing their second year of study
- Chapter 9 describes how your placement year is assessed
- Chapter 10 is the guide for your personal tutor who visits you on placement
- Chapter 11 lists all the most important contacts you're likely to need for your year in industry

0.5 Editing this handbook

We have tried to make this handbook as useful as possible but if you spot any errors or omissions, we appreciate your contributions and corrections. You can do this in several ways outlined below.

EITHER:

- Edit the placement-handbook.docx file, make sure you turn on track changes in Microsoft Word so other editors can see your changes. Please note, the images do not render well in the word document so it should only be used for editing the text, not the images.

OR:

- Edit the source in markdown. That's all the *.Rmd files available on github (github login required), which are used to generate all the outputs including:

- the placement-handbook.pdf
- the placement-handbook.docx, for editors only
- the *.html files you see if you are viewing this text in a web browser
- Raise new issues at github.com/uomcs/placement-handbook/issues/new (github login required)
- Fork the repository github.com/uomcs/placement-handbook, make changes and submit a pull request
- Email us any updates, see section 0.1

0.6 Academic leads for IE

By your second year, you should have already met us, but in case you've forgotten who we are or what we look like, there's a reminder in figure 2



Figure 2: Hello and welcome from Duncan Hull (left) employability lead for the Department of Computer Science and David Petrescu (right) Placement year tutor for your Industrial Experience, our contact details are shown in section 0.1

Chapter 1

Introduction to Industrial Experience

Studying engineering at the University of Manchester helps you to gain technical skills and knowledge during their lectures, laboratories and projects. With this knowledge you will be able to solve problems, develop new ideas, and design innovative solutions to solve a wide range of engineering and social problems. A year of **Industrial Experience (IE)** will consolidate, broaden and deepen what you are taught at University while preparing you for your final year of study back at University.



Figure 1.1: Industrial Experience (IE) is an entrance way to new opportunities provided by your employer to develop your skills and knowledge. Panoramic picture of entrances and the Queen's Arch of the Whitworth Building at the University of Manchester

1.1 The value of IE for you

You will gain valuable experience and can further explore your career interests while you are on Industrial Experience. [Hull, 2025b, UCAS, 2025, Gordon-Lanes, 2022] The “with Industrial Experience” (IE) scheme of our undergraduate degrees provides a valuable opportunity for you to experience employment before you graduate. There are many advantages to this, including:

- The experience of industrially focused engineering and applying it to real-world scenarios
- The responsibilities associated with commercial employment
- Working within a team, collaborating with the wider organisation that you have joined
- The satisfaction of contributing to products and services that will influence the future development of society
- The consolidation of your education to date
- The increased likelihood of return (or extended) job offers after graduation. It is common for students who perform well to receive return offers from their placement providers
- For many, Industrial Experience is the start of a transformation from student to engineer and from student to professional

1.2 The value of IE for your employer

There are many advantages for employers who host students on placement:

- The opportunity to have a year-long “interviews” with undergraduate students who have two years (or more) experience at university.
- The ability to familiarise students with working practices leading to fast-track interviewing and graduate training as a prospective future employee.
- Access to high quality students as industrial trainees who can offer the employer valuable resources and fresh insights
- Employers with a long-term commitment to the placement of students will have access to potential recruits by maintaining contact with the University through the student

1.3 The value of IE to the University

The are many advantages to the University of you doing a placement year

- The University produces better graduates because you will develop skills and gain knowledge that are difficult to teach and learn in a traditional academic environment

- Graduates from the University with placements get paid more, get better jobs and progress more quickly in their chosen careers. We know this from many different sources such as the annual graduateoutcomes.ac.uk survey [HESA, 2025]
- Students returning from placements tend to do much better final year (honours) projects and perform better in exams and coursework

1.4 Industrial Experience: Win-win-win?

So Industrial Experience placements can be a *win-win-win* situation for all three parties involved:

- they are a win for your employer, for the reasons outlined in section 1.2
- they are a win for the University, for the reasons outlined in section 1.3
- they are a win for *you*, for the reasons outlined in section 1.1

So, we hope that you enjoy and make the most of your Industrial Experience placement year in industry. The rest of this guide helps you to do just that. We wish you the best of luck on your journey and look forward to hearing how you get progress.



Figure 1.2: Industrial Experience can be a win-win-win situation for all three parties involved: *you*, your employer *and* your University. Creative Commons BY image of the UEFA Champions League Trophy by David Flores on Wikipedia Commons [w.wiki/6Ubh](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6Ubh)

Chapter 2

Aims of Industrial Experience

A key part of Industrial Experience is developing professional skills in the workplace, which you will audit at the beginning and end of your placement.



Figure 2.1: Your placement year shouldn't be like the Battle of Waterloo but it should be an adventure. Understanding the aims of Industrial Experience will make for a more enjoyable year. Panoramic picture of Waterloo Place on the Oxford Road in Manchester

2.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the placement year are

- To learn how to operate in a professional environment
- To apply the skills and knowledge you've learned at University in the workplace as directed by your employer

- To grow as a professional by seeking out development opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge in the workplace
- To meet (or exceed) the expectations of your employer, as set out in your contract of employment
- To describe your development as a professional in a short written report and (optionally) to share your experience other students on your course via PASS, Student Societies and other teaching activities

Some of this will involve developing softer skills, digital skills and knowledge beyond your University curriculum, some of which are described below. The assessment of the ILOs above is described in chapter 9.

2.2 Developing your professional skills

Most engineering education tends to focus on technical skills and knowledge. While these are important, they are not everything that you'll need to succeed as a professional.

You may have done some group work during your undergraduate study, but most of the assessment at University (and school) is based on your individual performance such as:

- Exam performance: exams try to measure your skills and knowledge as an individual, collaboration (as in plagiarism) is punished
- Coursework submission: most coursework tends to be solo projects, that you do on your own, collaboration (as in plagiarism) is usually punished

The workplace is different. You will probably spend a significant amount of time collaborating with more diverse teams of people than you did at University. This means that professional skills, sometimes called soft skills , are important such as:

- Teamwork [CareersService, 2025g]
- Leadership [CareersService, 2025h]
- Adaptability [CareersService, 2025e]
- Negotiation [Hull, 2025i]
- Communication:
 - Reading [Hull, 2025f]
 - Writing [Hull, 2025j]
 - Speaking [Hull, 2025g]
 - Listening [Hull, 2025d]

Your placement is an opportunity to develop these professional skills, while also deepening and broadening your technical knowledge.

2.3 Audit your professional skills

We require students to audit their skills at the beginning and end of their placements as shown in figure 2.2. Your employer will probably ask you to do something similar during your regular meetings with your manager.



Figure 2.2: The skills audit you complete at the beginning and end of your placement will help you track your progress during your Industrial Experience year. The audits will also develop your self-awareness and better articulate what you have to offer to prospective employer in the future, find out more at www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/options/skills/myskills [CareersService, 2025a]

2.4 Exploring your digital capabilities

Part of becoming a professional means developing your digital capabilities. Digital capabilities enable us to ‘live, learn and work in a digital society’.

The Jisc Discovery tool is a supportive online tool, that can help you understand and develop your digital capabilities. By completing a question set within the tool you can gain a personalised report that includes links to suggested resources in the tool’s resource bank to support your further development. It is recommended that you repeat the question sets annually, to recognise your progress across the different elements of digital capability. You can access the Discovery tool through

- My Learning Essentials: Develop your digital capabilities resource.

education.library.manchester.ac.uk/none-programme-content/digital-capabilities/

- My Skills Development – on CareerConnect www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/options/skills/myskills/ [CareersService, 2025a]

These resources support you in reflecting on your development on your reports
- providing an action plan template for you to complete.

For placement students, we recommend taking the:

- ‘Current student’ digital capability question set, which provides an in-depth exploration of your digital confidence and experience.
- ‘Digital skills in AI and generative AI’ question set, which also has its own resource bank

2.5 Recording your development

From work with employers, we know they value narratives around how you have developed your skills and capabilities through your studies. You can use the language from your Discovery tool reports to update your CV / online professional profile to help you record your digital development. This blog by the Careers Service can further support you with capturing and articulating the capabilities you develop during your placement. [Conway, 2020]

Chapter 3

Requirements for Industrial Experience

There are several requirements for Industrial Experience (IE) described in section 3.1 and illustrated in figure 3.2



Figure 3.1: A panoramic picture of University Place Manchester

3.1 Basic requirements

The basic requirements for Industrial Experience, shown in figure 3.2 are:

1. You should be registered on IE, this may require that you change degree program. Bachelors students can change onto and off IE any point up until the end of your by filling in the change of degree form, either in print or pdf and getting it signed-off by the year tutor and employability lead [UoM, 2025a]

2. You have received a job offer and make an application for IE via My Placement at [UoM, 2025f]
3. The University formally approves your placement application before you start work
4. You formally accept the job offer from the employer and sign a contract of employment



Figure 3.2: Once you've received a job offer you need to: (1) check you are registered on IE (2) Tell us where you are going (3) Wait for approval and finally (4) Have your placement formally approved against the requirements outlined in section 3.1

3.2 Finding a placement

The basic requirements might sound simple but finding a suitable placement requires a significant amount of your time and energy, and you'll have to balance these requirements with those of your study.

1. You will need to prepare and debug your CV, as covered in COMP101 and COMP2CARS, see Debugging Your Future [Hull, 2025a]
2. You need to find and apply for jobs, see Finding Your Future [Hull, 2025c] Your placement needs to be something broadly related to your degree but this can encompass a wide variety of activities from business analysis, software engineering, software testing, hardware design, data science etc. You can self-arrange a placement but it needs to be approved before you can go on placement.

3. You will need to attend any job interviews, assessment centres etc on-line or in person, sometimes multiple rounds, that you apply to
4. If you are made job offer that you'd like to accept you need tell us about it, BEFORE you sign any formal contract of employment

3.3 Grade requirements

There are no minimum grade requirements besides passing the first and second year of your degree. Ideally you will pass first time, but its OK to pass with resits, see section 8.4. Your placement year doesn't count towards your degree classification, but it **does** appear in the title of your degree e.g.

- BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Industrial Experience

Instead of:

- BSc (Hons) Computer Science: the “vanilla” degree

Your placement year is also assessed, as described in chapter 9.

3.4 Visa requirements

You MUST do the following if you want to do Industrial Experience (IE):

1. **CHECK** your visa. If you're not a UK or EU student and have a Student visa, you will need to extend your visa an extra year to include your placement year if you're not already registered on IE. See Student Visas: Changing your Course [UoM, 2025b]

3.5 Your right to work in the UK

If you are not a UK resident, a placement year gives you the right to work **full time** in the UK because it is an assessed part of your undergraduate study. [CareersService, 2025f, StudentSupport, 2025f] This applies to:

- Students from the UK and EU
- Students from *outside* the UK and EU (e.g. Tier 4 visa holders)

This means you don't need to apply for a work permit, as your Tier 4 visa entitles you to work when it is an integral part of your degree.

During term-time, student visa holders are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week *during term time* and *full-time during vacation periods* according to the University's vacation dates [UoM, 2025e], including Christmas, Easter and Summer. See Student Visas: Working during your Studies [StudentSupport, 2025f]

3.6 Working outside the UK

It is possible to do a placement year outside the uk, these are described in the next part, chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Industrial Experience Outside the UK

Some degrees at the University of Manchester incorporate a period of study or work outside the University. [UoM, 2025i]

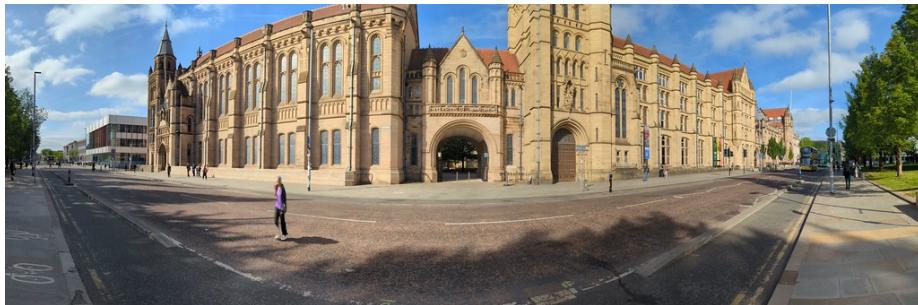


Figure 4.1: A panoramic picture of the Queen's Arch and the Whitworth Building in Manchester. Many students do their Industrial Experience in Manchester, see git.io/manc [Hull, 2025e]. Most students work in the UK where London is often the most popular destination for IE. If you'd like to, it is possible to work *outside* the UK provided certain conditions are met. Those conditions are outlined in this chapter.

4.1 Study Abroad

Study Abroad is **not** currently an option for Computer Science degrees at the University of Manchester, however, you can *work abroad* (outside the UK) for your placement year. While most students do their placements in the UK, it

is possible to do placements outside the UK as well provided you can find a suitable employer and can get (or have) the right to work in the that country.

In Computer Science for example, many students have done placement years at CERN in Switzerland. [Engineer, 2025a]

To work outside the UK, **YOU** (and your employer) will need to sort out an appropriate visa that allows you to work in that country. For example, working the USA requires a J-1 visa - you'd need to find a sponsor. There is more information from the careers service at on working outside the UK at:

- GoinGlobal [CareersService, 2025c]
- Finding international jobs. Information for students looking for opportunities outside the UK [CareersService, 2025d]

The University requires that the employer meets certain requirements before we approve year-long placements. Approval for summer internships is only required if they are part of the integrated masters (MEng) programme, speak to the MEng tutor.

In some cases you can apply for funding from third parties such as the Turing Scheme which provides funding that was previously available through the Erasmus Programme of the European Union. [CivilServant, 2024]

4.2 Applying for a placement outside the UK

Students taking a placement outside the UK should apply to the University using MyPlacement in the usual way as described in section 3.1.

See also Fees & funding and Student visa holders



Figure 4.2: You can do your Industrial Experience year outside the UK provided you have the right to work in that country or an employer is willing to sponsor the appropriate work visa for you. Either way, the University also needs to formally approve the placement. Creative Commons BY SA licensed map of Europe by Rob984 via Wikimedia Commons w.wiki/3FXK

Chapter 5

Your Responsibilities on Industrial Experience

As a student on Industrial Experience you have a range of responsibilities to your employer, the University and yourself.



Figure 5.1: A panoramic picture of the Manchester Museum.

5.1 Students responsibilities

As a student, you are expected to complete documents for the University as part of the myPlacement application at studentmobility.manchester.ac.uk. This includes: **UNIV+: Work Placement Declaration** (subject to updates, check online for latest version). This document sets out some of your responsibilities. When you sign the document, you agree to the following:

1. You will declare any disability or serious, unstable or difficult to manage physical or mental health conditions to my placement administrator at the

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earliest opportunity. You understand that my placement administrator will work alongside specialist services, such as the Disability Advisory and Support Service and Occupational Health, to investigate the support systems available to you from your employer and any additional funding that you may be entitled to.

2. For your attention: By sharing information with The University of Manchester about a disability or serious, unstable or difficult to manage physical or mental health conditions, you enable us to provide any necessary additional support during the application process, pre-departure preparation and during your placement.
3. It is rare that a health condition or disability would result in you being unable to participate in a work placement, but you should be aware that the ability to support health conditions or disabilities varies significantly by country.
4. If you have an approved mitigating circumstances case, you will inform your placement administrator at the earliest opportunity.
5. If your placement application is approved, you understand that you will need to complete all requirements, such as the health needs self-assessment. You will take preparation for your placement seriously and understand that it will require a considerable time commitment.
6. You declare that the information presented in your my placement application and the accompanying documentation is true and complete.

5.2 Contact with the University whilst on placement

During your placement, you are a full time student of the University. Outside of prescribed contact points you can contact us directly at any point. If you have any concerns or questions, you can contact the usual teams or the Placements team soe.placements@manchester.ac.uk

As a student at the University and employee of your placement, you should familiarise yourself with the practical and professional requirements including breach of contract of the placement provider and, if relevant, the cultural life of the host country. It is your responsibility to source any additional insurance required over and above the standard University insurance.

Remember you remain a registered University of Manchester student and must conduct yourself accordingly and with due regard to the University's requirements and regulations and must adhere to the University's Conduct and Discipline of Students: Regulations XVII [UoM, 2025g]

Once your placement has been formally approved by the Placement academic, you should complete the UNIV+: Work Placement Statement of Commitment

(subject to updates, check myPlacement for latest version). This document includes:

1. **Time commitment:** I understand that I must dedicate the necessary time and effort to prepare for my work placement, which includes undertaking independent research, completing any application forms, making my own travel arrangements (if required), obtaining the relevant immigration documents if my placement is overseas, arranging my own accommodation, adhering to deadlines, and attending all required briefings.
2. **Costs:** I have researched any additional costs that may be involved in undertaking a work placement, such as accommodation or travel, and I am confident that I can cover any extra expenses involved. I understand that should I decide to return early from placement / not successfully obtain a visa (if required), I will not be entitled to a reimbursement of costs and will need to pay back any additional funding or scholarships that I may have received.
3. **Declaration of disabilities or health conditions:** I understand that I should declare any disability or serious, unstable or difficult to manage health condition, including mental health conditions, to my placement administrator as early as possible, so that I can access any necessary support. I recognise that failure to declare any disabilities or serious, unstable or difficult to manage health conditions, or doing so later in the process, will limit the amount of support available to me, or could have implications for my participation in the exchange programme.
4. **Emergency contacts:** In the event of an emergency, I give The University of Manchester permission to communicate with my named emergency contact person(s), partner university staff and appropriate University services (specifically the University insurance provider and emergency assistance provider) regarding all issues surrounding my exchange placement. This may include but is not limited to student account information, student conduct issues, health and safety, or academic concerns; such contact may occur before, during, or after the programme.

5.3 Responsibilities to your employer

As an employee you have the following responsibilities to your employer:

- Carry out the work programme specified by the placement provider under the supervision of the specified supervisor(s) or manager(s)
- Abide by all rules regarding health and safety requirements, and other practices and procedures of the employer or placement organisation.
- Inform the placement provider of any health concerns or disability that may require adjustments.

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- Report any concerns about health and safety at your placement to your placement provider.

See chapter 5 for further details

5.4 Responsibilities to the University

Although an employee, you are still a student at the University and we expect you to:

- Attend briefing sessions before going on placement and familiarise yourself with all information provided and in the placement handbook
- Inform the University of any personal factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or cultural) that may affect the level of risk or may require adjustments
- Consult with the University prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement
- Read your University email on a regular basis, see section 8.6

Report any incidents in which they are involved and any health and safety concerns that are not addressed by their placement provider to the University.

Chapter 6

Employers Responsibilities to Students on IE

Your employers responsibilities to you as their employee are outlined in the contract of employment you have signed. [CivilServant, 2025b] You should read your contract of employment carefully before signing it.



Figure 6.1: A panoramic picture of the Oxford Road with University Place on the left and the Kilburn Building on the right of the picture.

6.1 What your employer needs to do

Your employer must treat you with respect, just like they would any other employee. Yes you are a student but you're also an employee like any other. Specifically this means that they must:

- Give you a fixed term contract of employment. That's usually 12 months, but anywhere between 9 and 15 months is acceptable, starting between June and September and finishing by the following September in time for the next academic year [CivilServant, 2025g]

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- Pay you minimum wage or higher. [CivilServant, 2025j] The job market for computer scientists is such that you will usually be paid more than minimum wage, but some employers (even big ones) pay lower wages. In the UK, placement salaries range from minimum wage to £60k+ depending on the sector and location of the employer, see cdyf.me/finding#undersell [Hull, 2025c]
- Provide you with projects to work on where you can apply the skills and knowledge you've learned at University
- Help you learn new skills and acquire new knowledge from your colleagues and their customers, clients or other stakeholders
- Treat you with respect. Although you are probably one of the most junior employees, you should not just be the office dogsbody, who's main responsibilities are making cups of tea and running errands for your colleagues.

6.2 If your employer treats you unfairly

If you don't think an employer can offer you the working conditions described in section 6.1, we encourage you to look elsewhere for employment before signing a contract of employment.

If you feel that your employer has withdrawn conditions in section 6.1 *while* you are employed on a placement year, please speak to your line manager about it and/or get in touch with the placements team sooner rather than later, see section 0.1.

6.3 Know your rights and responsibilities

We discussed your responsibilities as a student in chapter 5. You also need to familiarise yourself with your rights and responsibilities as an employee and what to do if things go wrong. In the UK, these are clearly specified via information at gov.uk, see figure 6.2. For example:

- Contracts of employment and employee status [CivilServant, 2025b,g]
- Minimum wage [CivilServant, 2025j]
- Your rights and protected characteristics [CivilServant, 2025e]
- Taxes, see discussion in 8.7 [CivilServant, 2025k,a,c,h]
- If things go wrong: disciplinary action, dismissal and handing in your notice [CivilServant, 2025d,f,l]

If you're not working in the UK you'll need to familiarise yourself with your rights and responsibilities as an employee in the country you are living in, see chapter 4



Figure 6.2: All employees have an employment contract with their employer. A contract is an agreement that sets out an employee's employment conditions, rights, responsibilities and duties. The gov.uk website gives you basic information on what to expect from UK employers. It is worth familiarising yourself with this information. [CivilServant, 2025b,g]

Chapter 7

University Responsibilities to Students on IE

The University has a duty of care for students on campus *and* on placement. We take that duty of care very seriously.



Figure 7.1: A panoramic picture of the Samuel Alexander Building from Burlington Street in Manchester.

7.1 Your personal tutor

In addition to checking that your placement provider is a suitable employer, an academic member of staff from University will also have at least two scheduled meetings with you during your placement:

1. A one-to-one early on in your placement to check everything is OK, this is usually your personal tutor, see section 8.3

2. A three-person meeting nearer the middle or end of your placement with you, your manager and your tutor to talk about your progress, see section 8.3

The placement team are on hand throughout the year if you need them

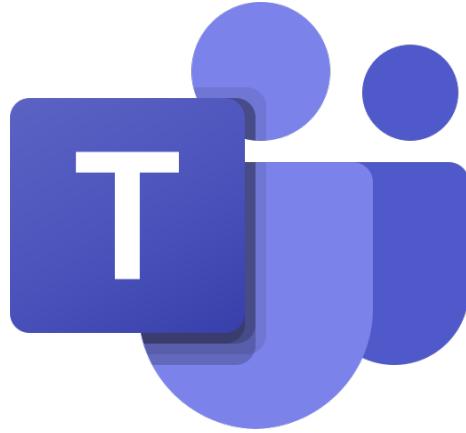


Figure 7.2: Your @student.manchester.ac.uk email is the main way the University will keep in touch with you while on Industrial Experience. For example, the placement visit meetings described in section 8.3 will be conducted remotely using either teams.microsoft.com or zoom.com, you'll be notified about these meetings by email, so please make sure you read your University email regularly.

7.2 Placement and employability tutors

As well as your personal tutor, the placement and employability tutors are responsible for you on Industrial Experience. If you can't (or don't) contact your personal tutor, see section 0.1

Chapter 8

So, You're Going on Industrial Experience?

Congratulations, if you've accepted a job offer and its been approved, you're ready to start your Industrial Experience placement.



Figure 8.1: So, you got “on your bike” [Elledge, 2023] and you are going away on a new adventure? Now your job is to ride that metaphorical bike somewhere interesting with the help of your new colleagues. Panoramic picture Starling Bank Bikes, available for hire from beeactive.tfgm.com/cycle-hire

8.1 Congratulations!

You've done very well to find a placement during a year when graduate application ratios hit a record high of 140:1. This means that in 2014 the average *graduate* vacancy had 140 applicants, with similar ratios for placement year applicants. [Greer, 2024] This confirms what you've probably already found out

in your job hunting. It is an incredibly tough job market for *everyone* at the moment and that includes students seeking employment through:

- summer internships
- year-long Industrial Experience placements
- graduate vacancies

So, you've done incredibly well to find a placement in a very competitive job market. Give yourself a pat on the back!

8.2 Dive, Survive or Thrive?

Crudely speaking there are three scenarios for your placement year shown in figure 8.3, they are:

1. Dive - you **won't meet** the expectations of your employer
2. Survive - you **will meet** the expectations of your employer
3. Thrive - you will **exceed** the expectations of your employer

Most students **meet** or **exceed** the expectations of their employers. We want to help you achieve this while avoiding the first scenario and pointing you to help and advice if you think you might be starting to (or you actually are) struggling on placement.

8.3 Key placement dates for IE

There are seven key dates you need to pay attention to before, during and after your placement:

1. Placement approval, see section 8.3.1
2. First check-in, see section 8.3.2
3. Second check-in, (outside UK only) see section 8.3.3
4. Three way progress meeting, see section 8.3.4
5. Project selection, see section 8.3.5
6. Report submission, see section 8.3.6
7. Industrial Experience panel for incoming year 2 students, see section 8.3.7

8.3.1 Placement approval

Obtain and submit plans for formal academic approval of your placement, deadline **31 August 2025**, see section 3.1

8.3.2 First check-in meeting

Initial one-to-one check-in meeting, **30 September – 31 October 2025**. Students should coordinate with allocated academic to arrange a suitable time and date.

8.3.3 Second check-in meeting

For students on placement outside the UK (only) **20-31 January 2026** Students should coordinate with allocated academic to arrange a suitable time and date.

8.3.4 Manager, Tutor and You meeting

Academic tutor, personal tutor and student meeting, **31 March – 25 April 2026**. Students should coordinate with academic, supervisor/line manager to arrange a suitable time and date. If you are not able to arrange a date during this time period, the meeting needs to take place before the end of your placement year

8.3.5 Honours Project selection

The (Hons) in your BSc (Hons) Computer Science with Industrial Experience comes from your **Honours Project**, aka 3rd year (of final year) project. In April/May of your placement year you'll need to either:

- Pick a project proposed by an academic from the honours project book

OR

- Propose your own project and find an academic who will agree to supervise it

You'll get an email from Terence Morley, make your project selections or propose an own project early **April/May 2026**.

8.3.6 Placement report submission

For Bachelors students, your placement report is due at the **end of welcome week 2026**, submit placement report using the form described in section 9.1 which documents some of the reflection you did with your personal tutor outlined in chapter 10.

8.3.7 Industrial Experience panel

If you'd like to serve on a IE panel during welcome week lecture for next years incoming year 2 students, we invite a selection of students who've been on placements to describe their year in industry to students in a *welcome back to year 2* lecture at the beginning of term. There is a check box on the placement submission form that allows you to indicate if you'd like to serve on this panel.

8.4 Resitting exams while on Industrial Experience placement

If you fail any of your second year exams, you may need to resit them. This doesn't prevent you from doing your placement, but you will need to negotiate some time off to resit any exams and these will need to be done in person in Manchester. [UoM, 2025h]

8.5 Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating Circumstances is a policy and procedure in place whereby if students experience personal circumstances that affect their ability to perform to the best of their ability across exams, assessments, or their attendance to teaching activities (such as labs or workshops) they can apply for Mitigating Circumstances or Coursework Extension. [StudentSupport, 2025c]

8.6 Don't forget to read your University email!

Your employer will expect you to read your work email on a regular basis, we also expect you to read your University email @student.manchester.ac.uk too as it is our primary form of communication with you on your Industrial Experience placement.

For example, your personal tutor and the placement year tutor will be sending you important information by email, so please make sure you read it regularly, we recommend somewhere between at least once a day and once a week.

8.7 Paying your taxes

Moving from student to professional means you'll be paid a salary. Yay! Unfortunately this also means you'll have to start paying taxes too. Taxes are one of only two things we can be sure of in life:

1. Death [Bullock, 1716]
2. Taxes [Bullock, 1716]

In the UK the relevant taxes are:

- **Income Tax:** is taken out of your salary before you receive it, see gov.uk/income-tax [CivilServant, 2025i]
- **National Insurance:** see gov.uk/national-insurance [CivilServant, 2025k] and applying for a National Insurance gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number [CivilServant, 2025a]
- **Council Tax:** you will need to apply for a council tax exemption see gov.uk/council-tax [CivilServant, 2025c]. If you're moving to a new location (e.g. away from Manchester) to where you were living as a student, [StudentSupport, 2025a, CivilServant, 2025h]

8.8 You are an Ambassador

One of the reasons we have the biggest elective program of Industrial Experience (IE) at the University of Manchester is that students like you have gone on placements before you and set a good reputation with their employers. Employers come back recruiting more students and frequently make return offers of employment after graduation.

While on placement you are an ambassador, see figure 8.2. You are an ambassador for:

1. The Department of Computer Science
2. The University of Manchester
3. Your fellow and future students

We hope that you can continue to uphold the good reputation of our department and its students while you are on placement so that employers keep coming back to recruit more students like you in the future.

8.9 Starting Your Future

This chapter has described some basic information to help you get started on a placement year at the University of Manchester, for a broader discussion of how to prepare yourself for the workplace, see *Starting Your Future* at cdyf.me/starting. [Hull, 2025h]



AMBASSADOR

Figure 8.2: You are an employee **and** you are also an ambassador for the Department of Computer Science, the University of Manchester and its students too. Public domain image adapted from *Hello my name is ...* sticker by Eviatar Bach on Wikimedia Commons w.wiki/32RV



Figure 8.3: How can you survive and thrive on your placement year? Jungle survival sketch by Visual Thinkery is licensed under CC-BY-ND

Chapter 9

Assessment of your Industrial Experience year

Your placement is formatively assessed by visits during your placement and a short report you write at the end of the year. The title “with industrial experience” appears in the title of your degree and your degree certificate.

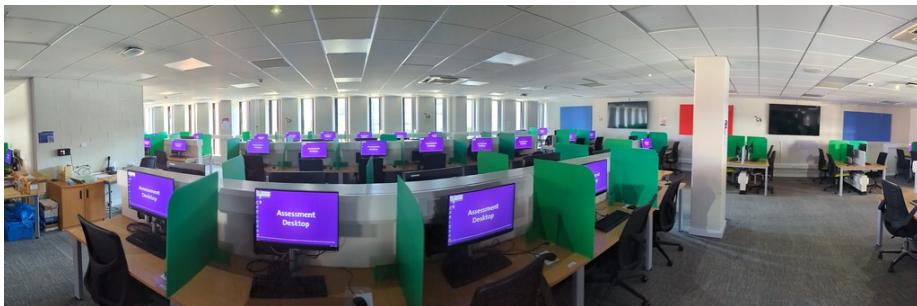


Figure 9.1: Your placement year is an assessed part of your undergraduate degree, but you won't have to sit any traditional university exams. Your tutor and the placement team will be assessing your progress on placement as outlined in this chapter. Your performance will also be “examined” and judged by your employer, though not all will give you a grade or classification for this. Panoramic picture of Assessment Desktops during exam season at the University of Manchester.

9.1 Bachelors degrees: BSc

At the end of the year, we ask you to complete a short report using this Microsoft form (UoM login required) bit.ly/placement-report-form

As part of that we ask you to complete a skills audit at the beginning and end of the year and compare the results, see My Skills Development – on CareerConnect [CareersService, 2025a]

9.2 Integrated Masters degrees: MEng

If you are on the Master of Engineering (MEng) programme, the IE processes are mostly the same as for the BSc programme. The differences are:

- The IE year is taken after year three, not year two
- To stay on the MEng programme you must have a year end average of at least 60% in years one and two. If you don't, you'll be transferred to the equivalent bachelor's programme. If your year three average is below 60% you will graduate.
- The Meng students who don't do an IE year will do a short (9 – 12 week) placement over the summer between years three and four.
- The placement is assessed in COMP40901 by a report you submit at the end of September and a seminar you give during Reading Week. This unit is worth 25 credits of the final year.

Speak to the MEng tutor to find out more

Chapter 10

Tutor Guide for Industrial Experience Visits

Information for personal tutors (academic staff) interviewing students (and their managers) on their Industrial Experience (IE) placement year.



Figure 10.1: A panoramic picture taken outside the Turing Lounge in the Kilburn Building at the University of Manchester.

10.1 Purpose of the meeting

The purpose of the meeting between you (the tutor), your tutee (the student) and their manager(s) is to:

1. Find out what the student has been doing, see section 10.2
2. Get students to reflect on what they've done well, with their manager, see section 10.3
3. Get students to reflect on what they could do better, with their manager, see section 10.4

4. Record that the meeting has taken place, using the bit.ly/placement-visit-form [Hull and Petrescu, 2025]
5. Any other business? See section 10.5

Most employers can do these visits remotely via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or similar video conferencing software.

Once you've visited your tutees, please fill in the short tutees form at bit.ly/placement-visit-form [Hull and Petrescu, 2025] to capture this information and so that we know which students have been visited. The meetings usually last somewhere between 15 and 30 minutes, we've a suggested agenda below.

10.2 What have you been doing?

Ask the student to describe what they have been doing since they started on placement and how that fits into the wider organisation they are a part of. Some students need more prompting than others, here are some suggestions:

- Tell me about your employer and the products or services they provide?
- Which products or services have you been working on?
- What methodologies and tools have you been using?
- What have you been surprised by since you started work?

Encourage students to avoid use jargon and explain from first principles. Some students have signed non-disclosure agreements and/or are working on commercially or security sensitive areas, so may not be able to share the full details with you. If in doubt, check with their manager.

10.3 What Went Well (WWW)?

What is going well? Ask the student first, then their manager. Compare results.

- Are there any projects or achievements you are particularly proud of (ask student first, then their manager) compare results
- What skills or knowledge have you managed to build so far, include soft & hard skills?

10.4 Even Better If (EBI)?

What do they need to improve

- What areas have you identified for improvement in the future (ask student first, then their manager) compare results
- How are you planning to develop these skills? Include soft & hard skills
- Are there any other things you want to work on before the placement finishes?

10.5 Any Other Business (AOB)

This is an opportunity to remind students who don't read their email that:

- They need to choose a 3rd year honours project: This is a good opportunity to check that the student has chosen or proposed a final year project. They've already received information about this from Terence Morley, but it might help to remind them.
- They need to write a placement report:
 - For Bachelors students, there's a short placement report form to fill in by September at forms.office.com/e/K1gAuWrnex (UoM login required)
 - For MEng students, the details for MEng report submission see COMP40901
- Ask the employer if they are interested in joining our industry club, careers fairs etc record any contact details (names, email addresses) at bit.ly/placement-visit-form

10.6 Scheduling meetings using Outlook

Students typically finish their placements anytime between June and August, so it's usually best to have the meeting before end of May or early June.

You may find the tools in Outlook useful for scheduling the meeting, there are a few ways of doing this:

- outlook.office.com/bookwithme
- Bookings with me is a service you may need to ask IT services to activate, see www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/ourservices/popular/microsoft365/bookings
- an alternative is to use a scheduling poll, works on Windows, Mac and the browser version of outlook.office.com [Engineer, 2025b]

Chapter 11

Key Contacts for Industrial Experience

This page lists contacts that will be useful to you on your placement year



Figure 11.1: A panoramic picture of the Kilburn building from the Oxford Road in Manchester

11.1 Main placement contacts

- For academic contacts see section 0.1
- Computer Science placements team: CSPlacementsAcademicTeam@manchester.ac.uk
- Engineering placements administration team: Soe.placements@manchester.ac.uk

11.2 Emergency contacts

In an emergency if you are a Manchester student working overseas please contact AIG tel:+441273552922 or CorporateAssist@aig.com

The University operate a 24 hour emergency helpline tel:+441613069966

Whilst on placement the responsibility for looking after your health and safety rests with your employer, see chapter 6

Students should raise any concerns in the first place with the workplace supervisor (your manager) and then either through the management line of with the Health & Safety contact. If issues are not resolved, then you should contact the placement academic or placements team soe.placements@manchester.ac.uk.

11.3 Careers service

The Careers Service offers support and advice throughout your time at the University of Manchester to help you make the most of your time here and best prepare you for your future. They can also advise you about your placement and career plans, see www.careers.manchester.ac.uk [CareersService, 2025b]

For students interested in international placements see GoinGlobal. [CareersService, 2025c]

Careers service consultants for the University are listed online. [Conway, 2025]

11.4 Wellbeing Support Services

There are a wide range of support services available to you across the university and externally:

Wellbeing Support Services, see <https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care> [StudentSupport, 2025e]

- **University Counselling and Mental Health Service** at counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk [UoM, 2025c]
- **GP Services** If you are on placement in England, you'll need to register with a GP surgery. [NHS, 2025b] If you are on placement in Manchester, you can use the University campus medical GP practice provided by the Robert Darbshire Practice. It is located in Crawford House and you can register as a patient at rdp.org.uk/form/new-patient-registration. Find out more about the University GP Service on the Robert Darbshire Practice website at rdp.org.uk.[NHS, 2025a]

- **Health Assured 24/7 Helpline:** The service gives you access to empathetic and compassionate support over the phone, in person or online with a trained counsellors. Freephone: 0800 028 3766 or download my healthy advantage app for live chat at healthassured.org/wisdom-app
- **Manchester Mind:** A mental health charity that offer support and advice, and also have a Self-Care Hub which you might want to look at for wellbeing resources: manchestermind.org/our-services [Mind, 2025]
- **Qwell:** An online community that offers mental health support 24 hours per day. You can join Qwell at studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care/qwell [StudentSupport, 2025d]
- **Crisis Point :** A mental health crisis support service based in Manchester City Centre provided by Turning Point for people who identify themselves as experiencing a mental health crisis, but do not require immediate medical assessment. There are various support options, including face to face or telephone contact for up to 10 days. You can self-refer between 12 noon and 11pm via 0161 238 5149.

This is not an exhaustive list, and in addition to these suggested resources, we always recommend that you seek advice from your GP or a professional support service regarding any concerns for your physical and emotional health. You can also check out this external resource help.miricyl.org that can help you to find the right service for you in your local area. If you have any questions about any of the above or wish to discuss support in a further conversation, please contact soe.wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk or you can visit your student support hub.

11.5 Disability Advisory and Support Service: DASS

The Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) provides equity of services to everyone regardless of people's age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

DASS supports a variety of different groups, where students, staff or supporters. They provide practical support by working with you to identify the practical adjustments you need to enable you to succeed in your study, work and the rest of your University experience.

You can find information on who DASS supports, what support is available and how to get support www.dass.manchester.ac.uk [UoM, 2025d]

DASS is open for calls Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and the University of Manchester Assessment Centre Monday to Friday 9-4.

- Tel (Disability Service) +44 (0)161 275 7512
- Tel (Assessment Centre) +44 (0)161 275 0990

- Mobile Number (Text only for d/Deaf students) 07899 658 790
- Email (Disability Service) dass@manchester.ac.uk
- Email (Assessment Centre) assessments@manchester.ac.uk

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