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1. USE OF SLACK

Question	Answer
Where do I go if I need help with something?	<p>CyberFirst Slack is the first line for student support. The Slack social media platform gives you access to support material, announcements and general interest messages from us. In addition, you can use it to ask questions, collaborate and chat amongst fellow students, graduates and other techies. We suggest you try looking for the answer in this order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Check Slack FAQs (this document)2. Search within Slack to see if someone else has had a similar question previously3. Ask the community in #general_cyber_chatter or other appropriate channel such as #ask_the_admin or direct message an admin (just one of us, don't spam all of us!)4. If you still can't find what you want (or for sensitive enquiries such as personal, financial, security or vetting related) then email cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk
How soon can I expect answers to questions from the CF Bursary team?	<p>We will answer as soon as we can. Please note that CF Bursary team do not offer 24 x 7 support. Unless your question is on a sensitive subject you will probably get an answer sooner by asking on Slack.</p>

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Question	Answer
What should I do if I feel I am being bullied or harassed in Slack chat or see something inappropriate / contentious therein?	<p>If this occurs in private chat not visible to Slack admin's then please make one of the admins aware through a direct message.</p> <p>The CF Acceptable Use Policy sets out the standards all users have agreed to. If you feel this has been broken, then please report to a Slack admin.</p> <p>Similarly, do not hesitate to report any form of bullying or harassment.</p> <p>Bullying is "offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient"</p> <p>Harassment is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics as described in the Single Equality Act 2010 that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.</p>
Which topics are off limits for chat on Slack?	<p>See the CF Acceptable Use Policy for the full list. No personal, financial details or use of surnames. Nothing sensitive in terms of security or vetting. Do not discuss or speculate on national or international incidents.</p>
Can I post a link on CF Slack which relates to a national or international incident if it is of general cyber security interest?	<p>Yes, if it is from a reputable source and you think the link is informative or of interest to CF Slack community, provided you do not add comments, even if direct quotes from another source as this could be misinterpreted as personal opinion or if made public could be taken as NCSC commentary. Please refer to CF Acceptable Use Policy on speculation. If in doubt, don't post it.</p>

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Question	Answer
What to do if I forget my slack non-attributable email account password?	You will need to create another non-attributable Gmail (following the instructions in your initial Slack Joining e-mail) and pass that to cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk along with your Slack Name. Your Slack account will be deactivated and a new invite will be sent to your new non-attributable Gmail inbox re-inviting you to join Slack.
What if I forget my Slack email?	Click on your name within Slack then select Profile and Account. Your Slack e-mail address will be in the profile window.
My phone / laptop has been lost / stolen. How do I stop unauthorised access to my account?	Let us know immediately at CyberFirst_Student_Support@ncsc.gov.uk We will deactivate your account until you inform us you have either recovered the device or have a replacement. You will need to create a new non-attributable e-mail if the device is not recovered and re-register in Slack.

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Question

Are Slack Direct Messages completely private and unread by anyone not in the DM?

Answer

Direct messages are only accessible to the participants in the DM, apart from a highly unlikely exception. We believe this makes the Slack DMs a sufficiently confidential communication tool for student use to chat about matters such as wellbeing concerns. All students are reminded to still adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy (copy in Slack files).

The only exception is in the highly unlikely event that the workspace owner requests a 'corporate export' from Slack. The export can (depending on the request) provide a dump of any retained workspace data, including DMs. However, Slack will only allow a corporate export where the workspace owner shows in each instance:

- (a) valid legal process or
- (b) consent of members or
- (c) a requirement or right under applicable laws to export data.

Further reading can be found at: <https://get.slack.help/hc/en-us/articles/204897248-Guide-to-Slack-import-and-export-tools#toolsbyplan>

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2. BURSARY, PAY AND EXPENSES

Question	Answer
When will my Bursary be paid?	<p>For students not on their first year of the scheme, the bursary payment will be on the last working day of October provided you have returned your End of Year review and completed all required CBay tasks.</p> <p>For students on their first year in the scheme, your bursary payment will be dependent on you obtaining your SC clearance, completing your registration in Slack (including two-factor authentication) and CBay, returning your bank details form and Official Secrets Act & Foundation Legal Overview documents.</p> <p>All payments are made on the last working day of the month following completion of all these tasks. For example: All tasks completed 31 October, payment last working day of November. All tasks completed 1 November, payment last working day of December.</p>
Is the Bursary payment tax free?	Yes. For HMRC tax purposes, the Bursary payment is <u>not</u> taxable income and need not be declared e.g. on tax returns
Do I declare my bursary payment to student finance England, or if in Scotland, the Scottish SAAS?	No. As with university bursaries this is not counted.
Can I get an advance on a bursary payment?	No

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Question	Answer
What are the “relevant” activities which I should budget for from my annual bursary payment? (excluding “pilot” students on different T&C)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. One CyberFirst induction / community day, including travel and one overnight stay, if required (for non-academy students in first year of scheme) in Cheltenham.2. One-off cost of return travel from home to your summer placement location in UK (if you choose to make trips home during the placement this will be at your own cost).3. Any shortfall between the cost of summer travel / accommodation and the CyberFirst discretionary contribution towards travel costs and living accommodation (fixed banded payment).4. Other ad hoc costs related to summer activities such as travel and accommodation for placement interview, industry mandated security clearance costs (infrequently required).
Will I be paid a bursary for a year spent in industry as part of my degree course?	No. Only years of study in the UK are eligible for bursary payment (see your offer letter / T&C)
Do I have to achieve at least a 2:1 equivalent at the end of each year’s study to remain on the Scheme?	<p>This is desirable but not essential.</p> <p>A 2:1 is one condition for many offers of employment on graduation so although yearly results of less than a 2:1 won't affect your place on the bursary scheme we do like to check that things look on track (remember: results to be included by all students in their End of Year review).</p>

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Question	Answer
What if I leave the scheme early?	If you leave the scheme early you will be required to repay your bursary for the current academic year. See the T&C's in your offer letter.
Do I have to pay for my summer placement living accommodation and /or travel expenses from my bursary?	Generally no, but you may need to use a small portion of your bursary to cover any shortfall between the CyberFirst discretionary contribution and the actual cost. See "Who pays my summer placement living accommodation?" question below.
What expenses can I claim for from CyberFirst? (excluding "pilot" students on different T&C)	None, unless you agree to attend any additional events over and above those listed as "relevant" activities above representing / in agreement with CyberFirst (this is rare). In such exceptional circumstances, reimbursement of expenses incurred will be considered on a case by case basis. Please check with CF team before you make any arrangements.
Is the Summer Placement activity payment tax free?	<p>No, the payment for the Summer Activity <u>is</u> taxable. You will also be required to pay National Insurance.</p> <p>To avoid being placed an emergency tax code make sure you return the New Starter form (Slack #General channel) promptly when advised via Slack. Note that the form must not be sent to CF student support but to the e-mail address given in the announcement.</p>

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Question	Answer
Can I get an advance on pay?	Under certain circumstances, yes. Complete the 'Advance of Salary' form (available as Slack file) print, sign, scan and email to cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk (contact us first if you need help with the form). If requested, a salary advance of up to a third of the usual monthly take home pay may be authorised. This authorisation is required by the Pay Team who will arrange the advance payment into your bank account and agree a repayment date (deduction from future salary payment).
How do I get a tax refund if tax has been deducted from my pay in error?	<p>If you notice this before your placement ends (i.e. as soon as you receive your first month's pay) complete a New Starters Checklist (see Slack files) then submit to pay@gchq.gov.uk.</p> <p>After completion of your placement you will need to contact HMRC directly - Public Department 1 (PD1) tax office. They can advise or redirect you. Their telephone number is 03000 534730 (Mon-Fri 0830-1700)</p>
What should I do if pension contributions have been deducted from my pay in error?	Email pay@gchq.gov.uk
What should I do if I think I have been overpaid or underpaid by PMG into my nominated account?	Email pay@gchq.gov.uk

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Question	Answer
If I must complete a tax return/self-assessment who should I ask for advice?	Most students won't have to complete a tax return but you might e.g. if you do part-time contract work. Contact Public Department 1 (PD1) tax office with queries. They can advise or redirect you. Their telephone number is 03000 534730 (Mon-Fri 0830-1700)

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3. CHANGES TO YOUR UNIVERSITY COURSE & RETAKE YEARS

Question	Answer
I am a student at a Scottish University where a Bachelor's degree takes 4 years not 3. Can I extend the period of study specified in my CyberFirst T&C (offer letter from CyberFirst) to add a one year Masters to the original Bachelor's degree agrees and be paid an annual Bursary for the additional year?	<p>If you have already been paid 4 years of Bursary, then additional annual bursary will not be granted. This is in line with the Maximum 4 years bursary payment rule applied to all students.</p> <p>If you have received 3 years or less of bursary contact cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk for advice.</p>

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Question	Answer
Can I change my university course from the one specified in my CyberFirst T&C's offer letter from CyberFirst and be paid an annual bursary for every year of study?	<p>This may be possible provided the number of years of study (hence years of bursary payments) agreed in your T&C is the same. For example, we would not in general award an extra year of bursary to enable you to resit a year or restart a different degree a year behind your current year. If you choose to take an additional industry year which was not in your T&C then no bursary will be paid that year.</p> <p>Contact cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk with the details of your plans and we will advise</p>
Can I extend the period of study specified in my CyberFirst T&C to add a one year Masters year to the original Bachelor's degree agreed and be paid an annual bursary for the additional year?	<p>This may be possible in consultation with the CyberFirst team, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) This takes the total number of years bursary being paid to no greater than 4 years. <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b) The Masters is cyber security related, in particular we recommend a GCHQ certified masters. <p>See: https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/gchq-certified-degrees</p>
Can I stay in NCSC CF Bursary Scheme if I need to re-sit a year at uni?	<p>It may be possible to stay in scheme and on Slack but have a bursary scheme "gap year" where no bursary is paid, and no summer placement provided by CF (except perhaps is there is a surplus / drop out placement we can slot you into). This will be considered on case by case basis. Please email cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk with the details of new year of graduation and an explanation of the circumstances behind the need for the re-sit.</p>

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4. CYBERFIRST COMMUNITY

What should I do if I have ethical concerns in relation to my participation in CyberFirst?

Do not hesitate to get in touch with one of the admins on Slack or via e-mail at cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk if you have ethical concerns, for example about something you read in the press. Admins have access to further support and guidance.

Can I create and release my own website?

Yes, CyberFirst see this as an innovative personal development project (particularly if cyber security related) and this does not conflict with T&C of CF bursary scheme provided:

1. There is no affiliation between this independent website and CF
2. The website is not linked from CF Slack
3. Precautions have been taken to hide all personal information, protecting identity of website creator
4. You adhere to T&C within the CyberFirst Slack Acceptable Use Policy with regard to professionalism and code of conduct
5. You are aware of the potential risk of a personal digital footprint which might impact your future career options

Do I have to attend CyberFirst events such as induction / community / development day?

Yes. This is part of your CyberFirst contract. A letter to authorise absence from University is available from CyberFirst Slack files. Consult cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk if you have exceptional circumstances which may prevent attendance. There is a form linked from the Slack #General channel you can use if you require reasonable adjustments to support attendance.

What are the compulsory CF activities for 2019?

See [new@cyberfirst_bursary_scheme](#) file in Slack.

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As a CF Bursary student, how can I get involved with other CF activities?

In summary: By helping to facilitate one of the CF Adventurers courses or by telling students about CyberFirst at your University / old school. These are one-day development courses aimed at Year 7, 8 & 9 students which are designed to show how studying computer science could potentially enhance their future career prospects.

Details of and sign up for Adventurers courses facilitation are posted in the #Facilitator_Chat channel

For more information and a brief set of FAQs check out the All_Things_Facilitators Slack file in the #General channel

How can NCSC / CF get involved at my University?

In summary: We can provide some talks at accredited Universities but CF Students need to be willing to help make arrangements (see link below for conditions that need to be met first). However, we cannot sponsor / endorse your local activities such as hackathons / CTF. This is due to resource constraints and risk to reputation of brand if unregulated events have any negative outcomes / publicity.

See slack <https://cyberfirst.slack.com/archives/C29G7QMQS/p1511181245000087> for conditions that need to be met and who to contact for help.

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Why are there both industry and NCSC sponsored CF Bursary students on Slack and industry specific channels e.g. #BAEsystems?

CyberFirst is a government and industry backed initiative, led by NCSC. Each year, an increasing proportion of each cohort is sponsored by CF “Partner” member organisations instead of NCSC. Since most admin announcements on Slack are NCSC student specific, the industry channels give students on placement and graduates in employment with that company a forum to chat and exchange industry sub-community specific information.

Can I “transfer in” to another CF bursary Scheme?

Yes, transfers are possible. After you have undertaken one or more successful placements with a non-government CF member they may wish to take responsibility for your bursary payments and future development (including work experience) within their own CyberFirst Bursary scheme. If this is mutually agreeable, you can transfer out of NCSC sponsorship (security clearance will be lapsed) but remain on CyberFirst Slack as part of the community.

5. SUMMER ACTIVITY (WORK, ACADEMY OR ACADEMIC RESEARCH)

Question	Answer
Do I get a choice?	<p>If your preference is to attend a CyberFirst Academy, then we should have enough places to honour your choice. If you prefer to have a work placement in government or industry there may be some choice depending on availability and suitability of placements. We will take preferences into consideration but there are no guarantees.</p> <p>If you identify another type of relevant cyber security themed placement e.g. academic exchange through your university, then please let CF team know of your intention and look to approve this.</p>
How are placements assigned?	<p>As far as possible, your skills and experience are matched to a suitable summer activity through CBay our bespoke student and host management tool. If you are hosted by industry or a government department they may have particular projects to be progressed and will choose students who look a best fit for that work. Hosts may also have other criteria such as “must be in penultimate year of study” to fit with their graduate workforce planning.</p> <p>A small number of placements are available outside of CBay and these are announced on Slack (#announcements and #summer_placements channels)</p>
If I were to do summer retakes, in order to improve my grade, would that impact my place on the scheme?	<p>No so long as it does not adversely affect your summer placement. Some CF students have done retakes and perhaps needed to work around this with work placement hosts. It would be more difficult if you choose to do the CyberFirst Academy as the start and end dates are fixed.</p>

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Will I be assigned a CF summer placement during the year in which I finish my final exams?	No, just between years of study. Your next placement after finals will be in a permanent graduate post (if one is offered)
What is SST?	<p>SST is “Student Scheme for Technologists”, GCHQ’s internship scheme (11-week summers and 12-month industry years). DV is required (see Section 8 Security Clearance for more information on this).</p> <p>See section 9 for more on “Year in Industry” options.</p> <p>CF propose students who have stated a preference for SST placements by providing CBay CVs for consideration by GCHQ host teams. CF students should not apply externally (if you submitted an application prior to confirmation of place on CF Bursary scheme please inform CF team).</p> <p>The number and nature of SST places (summers and industry years) varies year on year, depending on business requirements. Typical disciplines might include Software Engineering, Network Security/IA and Applied Research.</p> <p>Currently no technical interview is required. Host teams select students based on Cbay CV. Conditional offers will be sent by GCHQ Recruitment and on accepting this offer DV application begins. This will involve vetting interview. It is recommended that students under SST conditional offer continue summer placement matching through Cbay in parallel (see section 12 CBay).</p>
What happens if I am not offered a GCHQ permanent graduate job after an SST placement?	Contact cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk on other options (subject to security clearance). Other CF member companies and government department may view your CV through Cbay and potentially contact you re interview.

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What if I am offered a permanent GCHQ graduate job after SST but I am considering an extra year of MSc instead?	<p>Talk to the SST co-ordinator about whether deferring entry is possible. Contact cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk about whether an extra year in bursary scheme is possible.</p>
What will the summer activity consist of?	<p>Placements may be work packages / projects in government or industry or in the form of a training based residential “Academy”.</p> <p>Work packages / projects will vary in content depending on the placement provider but will have some cyber security context.</p> <p>The CyberFirst “Academy” is aimed at increasing understanding of cyber security. This will comprise classroom training (e.g. networking, OS, information security, vulnerability assessment, programming and scripting) and practical exercises as well as guest speakers and external visits relating to cyber security.</p>
How do I apply for summer placements?	<p>For the majority of students placements are arranged using the CF matching tool ‘Cbay’. You will be asked to upload your CV, specialisation preferences and preferred location to this tool. Hosts will upload the specialisations and number of placements on offer (including locations) and Cbay will do the matching.</p> <p>If you are considering arranging your own placement please contact cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk with brief details of your plans (when, who will host, content of placement).</p>

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Do I have to accept and attend the summer activity offered?	Yes, in general this is part of the CyberFirst T&C. There may be exceptional circumstances when this can be relaxed e.g. medical reason not to attend or a clash with compulsory industry placement (within sandwich course) required for University degree.
What are the dates, duration and location for my summer placement?	<p>CF Academy dates are fixed with training provider and not negotiable (1 July – 23 August 2019 for both northern and southern academies).</p> <p>Students on summer placements with industry or government departments should discuss exact dates directly with their placement host, so long as a minimum of 8 weeks in total are worked.</p> <p>Some placements are not 8 weeks long e.g due to an existing internship programme format GCHQ's SST is 11 weeks long, occasionally hosts offer 10 or 12 week placements.</p> <p>Work placements locations vary across the UK and occasionally outside UK.</p>
Who pays my summer placement wages?	Usually CyberFirst. There are a few exceptions where host pays wages.
How much will I be paid?	<p>£250 for every week worked whether Academy or work placement.</p> <p>CyberFirst also pay a discretionary contribution towards travel and / or accommodation the amount of which varies depending on location of the placement (see who arranges and pays for my summer accommodation below).</p> <p>Exception for those on SST scheme – £380 a week of which £130 is for accommodation / travel. There is no additional contribution from CF for accommodation or travel.</p>

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Who pays travel and overnight expenses if I need to attend an interview for a summer placement.

You are expected to fund this from your bursary, CF do not pay interview expenses. Interviews are usually by telephone and it is rare that students are required to attend a hosts site for an interview.

Do I need to write and submit my CV to CF by email to enable arrangement of placements or employment?

No, you will create a CV in CBay. The matching process will ensure this is shared with potential hosts.

Who arranges and pays for my summer placement living accommodation?

For students on the Academy living accommodation is booked for you (it does not include meals) and transport is arranged centrally. No additional contribution towards travel / accommodation will be given by CF. No action is required by Academy students unless you have specific requirements linked to disability / health matters in which case use the form in Slack to tell us of your need for a reasonable adjustment.

SST students should follow instructions from scheme organisers on when to book accommodation reserved specifically for SST students at local university halls. No additional contribution towards travel / accommodation will be given by CF as your wages will include £130 a week to cover this.

If a **government department or industry work placement** has been arranged, then you should expect to **find your own accommodation** – CF have asked your placement host to assist or at least give some local pointers on finding accommodation. You are advised to arrange travel / accommodation as soon as your placement location is confirmed to maximise choice and minimise cost.

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CF accommodation and travel contributions will be as follows:

Band	Expense Type	Payment Amount £ (fixed)
A	Travel from home / existing regular accommodation incurring costs (including London)	500
B	Non-London accommodation arranged and incurring costs specifically for summer placement	1500
C	London accommodation arranged and incurring costs specifically for summer placement	2500

Payment of Band B or C is determined by postcode of where you will attend your placement (not their HQ location). Summer placements in Paris will be paid at the London rate. For any other locations outside the UK please contact us for details of the rate that will be paid.

Payments are not taxable, NI-able nor pensionable. Payments amounts are fixed, and in the unlikely event of a shortfall, this should be met from your bursary. Where students have 10 or 12 week placement then the amount will be increased pro rata.

A form will be posted in the Slack #General channel for you to submit your travel and accommodation claim. Note that we are required to exercise due diligence with funding and

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do check against your placement location before authorising payment. We will then arrange appropriate payment to your nominated account (**on last working day of the month following receipt of your declaration response**).

What hours will I work and what if I need to take leave during summer placement?

You must comply with the particular contract / T&C's of your placement provider and agree hours of work and any leave with them. For academy and non-SST placements, no sick pay or paid leave is due during the agreed placement period.

SST students should follow advice from the scheme managers.

Who can provide a reference for me from CyberFirst if requested by my placement provider?

Email cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk

What if I'm asked to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) or Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) document?

An (NDA) is an agreement between the parties involved that confidential material can be disclosed to each other. An IPR agreement will transfer rights in any intellectual property you create while on placement to your hosts

You can sign these agreements but make sure you read them carefully to be content you are signing on behalf of yourself and not GCHQ.

Can I apply for independent paid or unpaid internships which do not clash with CyberFirst events /

Yes, in principle. Organisations you propose will be considered on a case by case basis, e-mail brief details to cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk. Remember CyberFirst T&C do not permit you to accept sponsorship or employment offers which clash with CyberFirst activities.

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placements e.g. spring
/ Easter break?

When I have my “final evaluation / review” with my summer placement host can I discuss future career options such as further placements, sponsorship or graduate employment and stay in touch with them?

Yes, if you would like to stay in touch with your summer placement host, you may share your personal email address with them in the final evaluation talk (although they should already have this e.g. through Cbay CV). Please let CF know if you make any tentative or firm arrangements with the host e.g. agree to return for another placement or transfer into that host's CF Bursary scheme. Note: If you have only one year left to study, this will be your final summer placement and the host you are with has first priority on making you a graduate offer.

6. WHAT YOU CAN SAY ABOUT BEING ON THE CF SCHEME

Question	Answer
Can I mention the company I work for on placement on LinkedIn?	On LinkedIn, it is no problem to mention the company you are on placement with (as long as they agree) BUT, you <u>MUST NOT</u> mention NCSC, GCHQ or any terminology which is unique to those organisations.
What can I say about my sponsorship when I am on placement?	<p>Fine to say you are sponsored through the CyberFirst Bursary Scheme (a Government and Industry backed initiative). Your hosts (supervisor / line manager and HR) have an agreement with us at NCSC so are aware of this connection with NCSC but in any wider circles, at work and outside, it is best not to mention NCSC, GCHQ or any terminology which is unique to those organisations.</p> <p>If you are personally referenced or appear in any publications(s) relating to your placement with NCSC / CyberFirst, then use your first name only and no photos.</p> <p>If you are personally referenced or appear in any publication(s), that does not refer to you being part of NCSC / CyberFirst, then photos and full name may be used. However, do remember that using full name could have a potential longer-term impact on future employability in UKIC (negligible risk unless link made back to NCSC) – use your own judgement.</p>

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Question	Answer
What can I tell people or write in an external CV/application about CF and the CF academy?	<p>It is fine to say you are sponsored through the CyberFirst Bursary scheme (a government and industry backed initiative). It is best not to mention specifically NCSC, GCHQ or any terminology which is unique to those organisations. Similarly, for those who attended the Academy, it is fine to mention unclassified cyber security topics covered during academy but do not mention anything operational you were privy to at site (procedures, talks from staff etc).</p> <p>Remember, if you are personally referenced or appear in any publications in relation to NCSC / CyberFirst then use your first name only and no photos.</p> <p>If you are personally referenced or appear in any publications with no direct link or mention of NCSC / CyberFirst then photos and full name may be used. However, using full name could have a potential longer-term impact on future employability in UKIC (negligible risk unless link made back to NCSC) – use your own judgement.</p>
My university want to publish my dissertation. Is that allowed?	<p>A published dissertation will not affect your position on the CyberFirst bursary scheme. However, you must not include any reference to NCSC/GCHQ or information gained from your association with us.</p> <p>We define a dissertation as an extended and bound “essay” or “project” which <u>does not</u> include your photograph. If this is not the case, please contact cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk for advice.</p>

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7. SECURITY CLEARANCE

Question	Answer
Who can confirm my security clearance status if requested by my summer placement provider?	Email cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk
Department Drug Policy	<p>Anyone who holds a security clearance with GCHQ is subject to a no drugs policy to reflect the adverse impact of illegal drug use and the misuse and abuse of other substances on behaviour, judgement, physical and mental health. The policy prohibits the use, possession, or supply of illegal drugs and psychoactive substances (including substances formerly known as legal highs). Misuse or abuse of prescribed medication or any other substance, is also incompatible with holding security clearance which can be refused or withdrawn if this policy is not observed.</p> <p>As of 1 November 2018, medical cannabis can be prescribed by a specialist doctor for a limited number of conditions. You must inform vetting immediately if you are prescribed medical cannabis.</p> <p>Please remember that substances which are illegal in the UK should not be used while travelling even if they are legal in the country you are visiting.</p>

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Which students need to undergo Developed Vetting and what are potential implications/risks?

All NCSC CF students have SC granted in order to join the scheme (hence month or two wait before first bursary is paid after signing and returning your T&C / offer letter). SC is sufficient for CF Academy and most summer work placements in government and industry.

If you have a summer government or industry summer placement, and the host asks for your SC reference and/or start/end dates, these can be provided by asking:
cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk

If the placement provider needs anything different to this (e.g. CSSRA, BPSS etc) you should follow the process they provide completing forms and providing documents as necessary.

If Developed Vetting (DV) is required for any summer placements you will be asked to start the DV process several months in advance as this requires more depth than SC. It will only be initiated if a summer placement, industry year or employment on graduation requiring DV has been arranged/offered (conditional on DV).

If DV is refused then there is a high probability that SC will be withdrawn (although on a case by case basis). If SC is withdrawn then eligibility criteria for CF bursary scheme are no longer met and (as with any other failure to meet eligibility criteria) you will not be able to continue on the scheme (see your T&C / offer letter for eligibility criteria and recovery of bursary).

Further guidance on the different vetting levels can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/security-vetting-and-clearance>

Why is Overseas Citizenship of India considered as a “dual nationality”?

We understand that the Indian constitution does not give holders of Overseas Citizenship of India the full spectrum of rights dual citizenship would and therefore the Indian government does not consider it “dual citizenship”.

However, based on official interpretations of the British Nationality Act (1981), the UK government does. Therefore, to maintain your SC clearance we need to obtain a copy of your OCI card on an annual basis.

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Who should I ask about any decisions regarding clearance applications I have made?	Any queries or challenge on clearance decisions made should be sent in writing to: Head of Vetting Hubble Road Cheltenham GL51 OEX
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8. YEAR IN INDUSTRY

Question	Answer
Whilst on CF Bursary Scheme can I take an industry placement / year in industry / sandwich year as part of my degree course?	Yes, CyberFirst summer placement attendance can be relaxed if required but remember T&C do not permit you to accept sponsorship or employment offers which clash with CyberFirst activities. Where possible CyberFirst will facilitate industry placement with a CyberFirst stakeholder organisation which also meets your university criteria. Consult cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk
Will CF make a bursary payment on my year in industry?	No. Bursary payment are only made for years of study. Refer to your T&C/offer letter.
Will CF pay any expenses such as living accommodation / relocation for my YII?	No. You would be expected to fund from your wages paid by host.

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Question	Answer
How much will my salary be for YII?	Variable depending on host organisation. This is not governed by CF, even when we facilitate the match between student and host.
Can I do a CF summer placement immediately before (or after) my year in industry?	Yes, if your industry year starts in Sept, we can arrange for you to have a different type of CF work experience for 8 weeks before your placement starts (apply for both through Cbay). If you start your Year in Industry in say June, then we can arrange a CF summer placement immediately following it (July-August).
Will CF help me find a year in industry host company from those organisations (gov and industry) who are CF members?	<p>Yes, generally (apart from sensitive posts) by sharing your Cbay CV with potential hosts, but please only ask for CF effort to facilitate an industry year if you have considered options, benefits and experience available through summer placements then made a definite decision to do a year in industry. We are more than happy to ask the growing group of CF members to help but do not want to risk the good relationship if students drop out of appropriate matches after members investing time in selection process.</p> <p>See FAQ section on Cbay for more information Year in Industry placements</p>
Can I arrange my own YII? i.e. do my YII with a company I have contacted independently of CF e.g. a contact provided by my uni?	This will be considered on a case by case basis. Yes, is the most likely answer but you must inform CF (cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk) of a non CF proposed host if you are close to agreeing placement with them, so we can obtain approval where necessary (through our CF “industry deconfliction” process).

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Question	Answer
Can I do my YII if the placement role is not specifically cyber security related?	Yes, if your university agree the placement content is sufficiently relevant to your degree (meets your university's criteria). Remember to inform CF if you arrange a placement outside of CF community.
How do I get an employer reference (headed from HR) for a landlord when booking accommodation for a GCHQ (usually SST) industry year?	Email recruitment@gchq.gov.uk
Will CyberFirst be able to provide me with a reference for my potential YII host?	The CF Team will be able to provide a fact based reference stating dates in scheme and related employment.
Will CF provide YII offer letter, joining instructions and any paperwork such as Health & Safety Checklist mandated by my uni?	No. You need to communicate directly with your host for these documents. CF only put you in touch.

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Question	Answer
What if I change my mind after a placement has been arranged?	If you turn down a YII placement we have facilitated to point of offer – you will receive no further assistance unless there are extenuating circumstances. Be aware that once a CF facilitated placement has been accepted with a host you are committed to honour this agreement.
What if my placement is “sensitive” but my Uni likes to run their own checks on the company/agency which involves a visit from uni tutors?	Your tutor will be given an official (unclassified) brief on the aims of the placement. If a visit is a must and your tutor is not suitable to visit for any reason your university will be asked to send someone who is. You can arrange to meet the university representative in an unclassified environment if necessary.

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9. GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Question	Answer
Should I apply for graduate jobs through “milk round” etc in my final year of university?	CyberFirst do not guarantee an offer of 3-years employment in on graduation (dependency on clearance status etc) so you may wish to apply for other jobs but remember your T&C state you are expected to accept an employment offer if a CyberFirst member organisation make one.
When am I likely to start a permanent graduate job after I finish final exams?	Depends on the organisation. June at earliest but more likely to be September / October.
What happens if I do not accept any graduate offers of employment facilitated through CF?	Your last bursary payment will be recovered (usually £4000) as detailed in your offer letter / T&C's
If my current summer/year placement host makes me a grad employment offer do I have to take it?	No, we can also share your CV with other CF members through Cbay but if no other offers are made / accepted you would need to reconsider the first offer or your last £4000 bursary payment may be recovered. We would encourage you to discuss with host at your “final evaluation” of summer / year as to whether a grad offer was likely to be mutually agreeable before it is formally made.
If my current summer / year placement host do NOT make me a grad employment offer what happens next?	Your CV will be shared with other CF members through Cbay (government and tier 1 partners first). Please follow instructions from CF on when and how to input your details and preferences in CBay. (It is important to follow the instructions exactly – jumping ahead and completing other items may mean you are locked out of the system prematurely).

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Question	Answer
If I am at the CF academy in my summer before final year at uni, how will I be put in contact with potential CF member graduate employers?	Through Cbay. Please follow instructions from CF on when and how to input your details and preferences in CBay. (It is important to follow the instructions exactly – jumping ahead and completing other items may mean you are locked out of the system prematurely).
Will I be allocated a CF summer placement in the year I graduate?	No. Even though your graduate employment may not start until Sept/Oct we will not provide a summer placement after you finish final exams.
If I am made a graduate employment offer will it be a “CyberFirst” employment contract?	<p>No. Each CF member organisation will have their own contract which they use for employees. The details will vary (pay, conditions, probation period etc) depending on the organisation making the offer.</p> <p>Remember the T&C of CF Bursary Scheme apply i.e. we expect you to stay in a CF member organisation’s employment for a minimum of 3 years or pay back your last bursary payment. If you want to change employer for any reason please e-mail cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk to discuss your plans and any impact they would have on repayment of your last bursary.</p>

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10. TRAVEL ABROAD (HOLIDAY, STUDY OR WORK PLACEMENT)

Question	Answer
Can I do my sandwich year placement / year in industry outside the UK?	<p>This will be considered on a case by case basis – e-mail details to cyberfirst_student_support@ncsc.gov.uk</p> <p>Remember you do not receive a bursary from CyberFirst during non-study years.</p>
What do I do if I have potential travel/study abroad and I am concerned about security or impact on future security clearance?	<p>Your starting point should be the FCO foreign travel advice pages (https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)</p> <p>If you are still concerned you can contact Personal Security Helpdesk on 01242 221491 Extension 34328 stating country of travel</p>
What do I do if an emergency occurs whilst I'm overseas? (Lost passport, arrest etc)	<p>If something does occur, speak to a representative from the local British Embassy. Check and note the details for the country being visited on the FCO foreign travel pages before departure.</p> <p><u>Do not</u> contact 'the Department'.</p>
Can I continue to access CF Slack whilst abroad?	<p>Yes, but avoid using untrusted/free wifi, use your mobile data instead.</p>

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Question	Answer
If I am abroad what should I do to minimise my profile in association with NCSC?	Be cautious and discrete when dealing with non-UK nationals. Avoid mentioning links to the department/GCHQ / NCSC. Think carefully about what devices and documents you are carrying. Consider purchasing a cheap basic pay-as-you-go mobile for essential communications rather than taking the device you usually use to access Slack / CBay etc.
If I spend longer than 6 months out of the country will this have an impact on my clearance?	Unless this is travel to a restricted country this will not be an issue. However, if you hold DV clearance then it's possible your clearance could be lapsed.

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11. CBAY

Question	Answer
What is Cbay?	Cbay (CyberFirst Bay) is a bespoke AWS based student and stakeholder management tool, primarily for capturing and sharing CF student CVs securely with CF member organisations (industry and government). This is required for sponsorship, summer placement, year-long placement and graduate employment matching between students and CF members.
Cbay says an admin needs to confirm I'm a student. What does this mean?	On initial registration in Cbay all students are, by default, marked as 'unconfirmed' until an admin has changed their student type to either Summer, YII or Graduate. This is to ensure that students are placed into the correct category ready for their next Cbay match. There is no need to contact us about this as admins check daily for any confirmations needed.
What should I include in my Cbay personal statement?	As a guide, answer the prompt questions in CBay and tailor to the next type of placement you will be matched to (i.e. summer, industry or graduate). We advise against using a template or collaborating closely with other students as your statement may then lack originality and might be detected by potential hosts viewing your CV as not your own work. This may impact unfavourably on their selection decisions. You are limited to 300 words.
What should I include in my degree course title?	Only the level and title of your course e.g. BSc Computer Science. Do not include the name of your university nor your predicted / forecast class of degree
Why are there no skill levels given for the skills I have / desire? Similarly for details of	This is only a guide for you to discuss should CF members contact you after reading your CV.

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Question	Answer
my university module content?	
Can I continue to update my CV once saved in Cbay?	Yes, so long as you have not yet completed and submitted your preferences for inclusion in a matching round. Once preferences are submitted the CV is locked for the duration of matching.
When should I complete and submit Cbay “Preferences”?	Timing will vary depending on whether you are applying for summer placements, year in industry or graduate posts. CF team will advise you via Slack when you need to take action
Can I make changes to my “Preferences” once submitted to Cbay for a matching round?	In general no, however if a suitable match has not been agreed in one round of matching, CF team may ask you to review your choices before the next round of matching e.g. remove location requirement to increase number of potential matches.
How will I be matched to a summer placement?	<p>The Cbay matching algorithm is based upon your preferred cyber security specialisms (top 3 areas of expertise chosen from those proposed by hosts) and preferred location by County (this is optional and will reduce the number of options especially if you want to be outside London and the south east). For summer placements you do not choose by organisation so will not see the host organisation names at this stage.</p> <p>You may not be able to choose some specialisms which appear in the reference document on Cbay because they are not being offered by hosts this year.</p>

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Question	Answer
	<p>Hosts will then review CVs matched to them and contact you (using the contact information within your CV – ensure this is up to date) if they are considering you a placement.</p> <p>Once a host changes you to “contacting” you will be able to see the host name in Cbay on your matches page. You will not receive an automatic notification that your status has changed to “contacting” therefore you should check Cbay regularly following a matching round.</p>
What different does the order I make preferences have?	Hosts will see the priority order in which you ranked your top 3 specialisms/locations and may decide to look at students who put the organisation’s proposed specialism top.
Sometimes when I log into Cbay it tells me that my CV is no longer there and asks me to fill it in again when I know I’ve already completed it. Why is this?	This can sometimes happen when the system is in heavy use by host/students/admins. Be patient, try logging out and back in again or give it an hour and try again. It is unlikely that your CV has disappeared.
Where can I read more about the cyber security “specialisms” and get an idea of skills which may be required for each?	Details are in the Cbay library of useful documents (click the “book” symbol in top right-hand corner).

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Question	Answer
Why can't I choose the summer placement host organisation through Cbay?	In order to spread students across the CF members and provide role / specialism specific experience we match to the areas of expertise you would like to pursue or develop rather than the host.
The potential matches section on Cbay is blank, does that mean I've not been matched to anyone?	<p>You will only see information in potential matches when a host changes your status from 'Pending' (all students are set to 'Pending' following a match) to 'Contacting'. Contacting means that the host is interested in your CV and will contact you to discuss the summer placement on offer.</p> <p>Some hosts have dozens of CV's to review so it may take some time before they decide who they wish to contact.</p>
Do we get multiple potential matches or just one?	It is probable that you will get multiple matches depending on the preferences you made. If the location field was left blank, you will be matched against ALL of the hosts offering the specialisms you selected. If you specified a location then the potential number of matches is likely to be smaller, especially if you stated a location outside London and the south east.
What do I do if more than one host wants to talk to me / offer me a placement?	We advise you to respond and progress all contacts in parallel. The first may not make you an offer (or 'Accept' you in Cbay terms) so keep your options open. If you do get multiple hosts 'Contacting' you, we advise not to keep too many waiting as other students will be looking for places. Remember, it is just an 8-week placement, so if you get an acceptable offer finalise it sooner rather than later. If it was a permanent job you would probably take longer and discuss in more detail.

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Question	Answer
A potential match has recently contacted me and asked for a CV. Do I need to send them a separate CV in addition to the CBay CV, or is the CBay CV sufficient?	<p>Cbay CV is a standardised format to help hosts make the initial paper based sift. Once a host contacts you please send the requested information.</p> <p>Sending personalised CVs prior to Cbay introduction makes CF oversight/tracking of all placements much trickier hence the instruction to go through CBay initially.</p>
What happens if I am not contacted by a host following Round 1 summer placement matching?	<p>Admins will see that you have not been placed with a host in Round 1 and will contact you separately to adjust your preferences in time for Round 2 matching.</p>
What if I meet a CF member I am really interested in joining for a summer placement at the Careers Fair?	<p>Please let CF member have your Slack / CBay profile name and ask them to contact CF team and we may be able to manually match you through to them prior to Cbay matching rounds.</p>
How will I be matched to industry year host or graduate employer?	<p>Unlike summer placement matching, you get to choose CF members from a list of named organisations (not by specialism) that you select in "Preferences". Cbay will share your CV with all CF members you have chosen in preferences – there is no limit to number you choose from those proposing roles.</p> <p>You will not be invited to enter a "matching round" if you already have arrangements made through CF e.g. graduate offer following a summer placement.</p>

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Question	Answer
Can I add any sensitive / classified detail to my personal statement?	No. Cbay is accredited for use up to OFFICIAL only (unclassified) If you signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement with a host you should also think carefully about what details from that placement you include in your personal statement / CV
Which browser should I use when registering on Cbay?	We recommend using Google Chrome browser if you can. Some other browsers may cause issues
In the Personal Details section, which email address should I put?	Use your own day-to-day email address as this will be the one that potential hosts will contact you on. Do not use the anonymised email address you created specifically for CF Slack and Cbay registration.
How do I find my user name / password for CBay?	Cohort 3 (2018 intake) and onwards: your user name is your CyberFirst Profile name. Earlier Cohorts: use your SLACK name but using a full stop to fill the space e.g. Horatio.N. You can reset your password from the CBay log in page
What do I do if I make a mistake when completing my Cbay registration (e.g. wrong Profile (Slack) name/mobile)	Contact CF support team through CF Slack #cbay channel informing them of the mistake and ask to have your Cbay account re-set. All information that you may have already entered (personal statement, A-level grades, etc) will be lost so make sure you have taken a copy. CF will inform you when you can re-register.

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