School of Computing Science

Newcastle University

Undergraduate Placements Handbook

2016-17
# Table of Contents

2016-17 .................................................................................................................. 1  
1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 3  
2 Types of Placement ............................................................................................ 3  
  2.1 Undergraduate Industrial Placement............................................................. 3  
    2.1.1 Responsibilities ..................................................................................... 4  
      2.1.1.1 Your responsibilities .................................................................... 4  
      2.1.1.2 Responsibilities of the School of Computing Science ................. 5  
      2.1.1.3 Responsibilities of the Placement Provider .................................. 5  
    2.1.2 Assessment ......................................................................................... 5  
    2.1.3 Fee Status ......................................................................................... 6  
  2.2 Undergraduate Year Out (informal) .............................................................. 6  
    2.2.1 Responsibilities .................................................................................. 6  
    2.2.1.1 Your responsibilities .................................................................... 6  
    2.2.1.2 Responsibilities of the School of Computing Science ................. 7  
    2.2.1.3 Responsibilities of the Placement Provider .................................. 7  
    2.2.2 Assessment ....................................................................................... 7  
    2.2.3 Fee Status ....................................................................................... 7  
  2.2.4 Student Finance Guidance for Students Going on Placement .................. 8  
3 ePortfolio and Ness ........................................................................................... 10  
4 Visits ............................................................................................................... 10  
5 Health and Safety and Employers’ Liability Insurance .................................... 10  
6 Contacts ......................................................................................................... 12  
7 Acknowledgements .......................................................................................... 12  
Appendix: Placement Forms................................................................................. 13  
  Form 1: Placement Approval Form (for all students) ...................................... 13  
  DPD Request form ......................................................................................... 13  
  Placement Report Form .................................................................................. 13  
  Learning Agreement ....................................................................................... 13  
  Placement Visit Form .................................................................................... 13
1 Introduction

This handbook provides information on the undergraduate placements offered by the School of Computing Science, Newcastle University. It should be read in conjunction with the appropriate degree programme handbook. A placement will provide a period of practical experience which will benefit your further academic study and longer term career; some also provide the opportunity to recognise and record the development of work-place skills.

This handbook sets out different types of work experience available for undergraduates and the different responsibilities, assessment and fee status (where relevant) for each type. In case of questions please contact the Placements coordinator, Dr Steve Riddle.

The aims of a placement, of any form, include the following:

- provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer
- provide a period of practical experience which will benefit your academic study and longer term career
- provide the opportunity to recognise and record the development of work place skills
- facilitate personal development in a non-university setting

2 Types of Placement

The University defines a placement as “The provision, as a planned and intended part of an academic programme, of learning opportunities (work and/or study) typically outside the University.” For the purposes of this document, this definition covers BSc/MComp “thick sandwich” placements and the more informal arrangement of an Undergraduate Year Out. This section covers both types of placement.

2.1 Undergraduate Industrial Placement

If you are registered on one of the “thick sandwich” versions of the Computing Science degree, an industrial placement after completion of Stage 2 is compulsory. This applies to the following degrees:

- BSc (Hons) Computing Science with Industrial Placement
- BSc (Hons) Computing Science with Industrial Placement (Mobile and Distributed Systems)
- BSc (Hons) Computing Science with Industrial Placement (Games Engineering)
- BSc (Hons) Computing Science with Industrial Placement (Software Engineering)
- BSc (Hons) Computing Science with Industrial Placement (Bio-Computing)
- BSc (Hons) Computing Science with Industrial Placement (Human-Computer Interaction)
- MComp Computer Science with Industrial Placement
- MComp Computer Science with Industrial Placement (Mobile and Distributed Systems)
- MComp Computer Science with Industrial Placement (Security and Resilience)
• MComp Computer Science with Industrial Placement (Bio-Computing)
• MComp Computer Science with Industrial Placement (Game Engineering)
• MComp Computer Science with Study Abroad

2.1.1 Responsibilities

2.1.1.1 Your responsibilities

• It is your responsibility to find your own suitable industrial placement. Placement opportunities are advertised via the Computing Science Jobs and Placements page, which can be found from [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/). The University Careers Service can also offer advice and help with finding placements, completing application forms, interviews etc. Further information about placements, including vacancies, may be found on The National Council for Work Experience’s web page ([http://www.work-experience.org/](http://www.work-experience.org/)).

• If you are not able to find a suitable placement, you will need to transfer to the equivalent degree programme without an industrial placement.

• Official approval for the placement must be obtained not later than the end of the summer term of Stage 2. This means that you must have a Placement Approval Form (Form 1 in the Appendix) signed by the Placement Coordinator and the Degree Programme Director. In addition to providing contact details, this form requires you to confirm that you understand your commitments to the University and your employer during the placement year.

• No later than four weeks after starting work you must complete a Placement Report Form (available at: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/)). This form gives the School details of how to contact you and allows us to ensure that you are settling in to the placement, and are aware of the duties and responsibilities required of you by your employer. At the same time, complete a Learning Agreement in discussion with your workplace supervisor. The form can be found on the ePortfolio community and on Blackboard. It sets out the agreed objectives for the placement. When completed the form should be sent to the placements coordinator by email or post.

• While on placement you must endeavour to derive maximum academic and personal benefit from the opportunities offered by the employer, to develop interpersonal, teamworking and other relevant skills, and take advantage of all work-based learning opportunities presented during the industrial placement.

• As an industrial placement student you are an employee of the company. You are responsible to the employer for matters related to performance, health and safety, time-keeping, discipline and illness. You must ensure that you understand work objectives and targets set by the industrial placement provider, and pursue the allocated tasks diligently and to the best of your ability.

• As an industrial placement student you are also a representative of Newcastle University and the School of Computing Science. You should ensure you create a good impression with the employer, as you are in a position to influence the placement provider’s willingness to take subsequent placement students.

• You must inform the School if the agreed placement arrangements are substantially altered by the employer.

• If difficulties arise you should first seek advice from the placement provider (e.g. from a mentor). If you are unable to resolve the problem you should contact the
School’s Placements Coordinator, your personal tutor or the Degree Programme Director.

2.1.1.2 Responsibilities of the School of Computing Science

- The School will take appropriate care to determine that placement opportunities are suitable and advertised widely.
- The School will provide support for the student during the placement year in matters related to the placement.
- The School will monitor placements by ongoing contact with both students and industrial supervisors. For a placement on UK mainland a member of School staff will visit within the first 5 months, to observe the workplace environment and discuss progress between placement student and supervisor.
- The School will mediate between employer and student in the event of any misunderstanding or difficulty concerning the placement.

2.1.1.3 Responsibilities of the Placement Provider

- A placement should ensure that a student is exposed to real problems and is encouraged to develop intellectual and judgemental skills.
- The Placement Provider will identify an industrial supervisor, or mentor, who will closely monitor the progress of the student and report this to the School.
- The student should be encouraged to develop a mature capacity to work with people at all levels with all skills and readily to accept responsibility.
- The student must be a valued member of the team who makes a real contribution to the company.
- Students expect to be assigned a number of tasks of a demanding nature which they should pursue under supervision and they will anticipate exposure to many relevant aspects of the industry.
- Although day-to-day repetitive tasks are recognised as a necessary part of work, they should not comprise a major proportion of the activities undertaken on placement.
- Both professional training and work-based learning opportunities should be provided with opportunity for personal development.
- Since the student is an employee of the placement provider, the provider must provide the student with an employment contract.
- Health and safety regulations and responsibilities must be made clear to the student and applied in all working environments.

2.1.2 Assessment

During the industrial placement you will be expected to enhance most, if not all, of the Knowledge and Understanding, Practical Skills, and Transferrable Skills outlined in your Degree Programme Specification, although the precise details will vary from placement to placement. The main Intended Learning Outcomes will be centred on the ability to develop Transferable/Key skills related to interpersonal communication, working within a team, and planning and organisation.
There is no formal assessment of the placement in the context of your final honours classification. However you will be required to complete reports related to your placement that will be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. These reports will cover your overview of the organisational structure in which you are placed (20%), a logbook of the tasks undertaken (40%), and a reflective self-analysis of your work experience and the skills you have exercised and gained (40%). Students who do not complete the placement year, or who fail the assessment, may transfer to Stage 3 of the equivalent “non-industry” programme in September of the following academic year.

On return to the University you will take what equates to a ‘normal’ Stage 3. The final degree classification is based on the performance at Stages 2 and 3 only, if you are a BSc student, and Stages 2,3 and 4 if you are an MComp student.

2.1.3 Fee Status
As you are on a sandwich degree programme you will continue to have student status. This means that you will be liable to pay an ‘intercalating’ fee (this is a reduced type of tuition fee). The current fee level can be seen on the University's web page at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance/ tuition-fees/.

2.2 Undergraduate Year Out (informal)
Undergraduate students in the School of Computing Science taking degrees in Computing Science (including specialisms in Software Engineering, Mobile and Distributed Systems, Game Engineering, Bio-Computing, Human-Computer Interaction) can undertake an informal, unassessed industrial year out during their course, normally between Stages 2 and 3, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director.

2.2.1 Responsibilities

2.2.1.1 Your responsibilities

- It is your responsibility to find your own suitable employment. Opportunities are advertised via the Computing Science Jobs and Placements page, which can be found from http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/. The University Careers Service can also offer advice and help with finding placements, completing application forms, interviews etc. Further information about placements, including vacancies, may be found on The National Council for Work Experience’s web page (http://www.work-experience.org/).

- Official approval for the year out must be obtained not later than the end of the summer term of Stage 2. This means that you must have a DPD Request Form signed by the Degree Programme Director allowing you to undertake the year out and defer your next stage of study for a year. A copy of this form can be obtained from Computing Science reception or from the Student Progress website, http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help.

- While a year out does not form part of the Degree Programme and is not supervised in any way by the School of Computing Science, you should endeavour to derive maximum academic and personal benefit from the
opportunities offered by the employer, and take advantage of all work-based learning opportunities presented.

- As an employee of the company you are responsible to the employer for matters related to performance, time-keeping, discipline, health and safety, and illness.
- If difficulties arise you should seek advice from the employer (e.g. from a mentor).

### 2.2.1.2 Responsibilities of the School of Computing Science

- The School will take appropriate care to determine that opportunities are suitable and advertised widely.
- On approval of a completed DPD Request Form, the School will inform the Student Progress Office of your changed status.

### 2.2.1.3 Responsibilities of the Placement Provider

- A placement should ensure that a student is exposed to real problems and is encouraged to develop intellectual and judgemental skills.
- The student should be encouraged to develop a mature capacity to work with people at all levels with all skills and readily to accept responsibility.
- The student must be a valued member of the team who makes a real contribution to the company.
- Students should expect to be assigned a number of tasks of a demanding nature which they should pursue under supervision and they will anticipate exposure to many relevant aspects of the industry.
- Although day-to-day repetitive tasks are recognised as a necessary part of work, they should not comprise a major proportion of the activities undertaken on placement.
- Both professional training and work-based learning opportunities should be provided with opportunity for personal development.
- Since the student is an employee of the placement provider, the provider must provide the student with an employment contract.
- Health and safety regulations and responsibilities must be made clear to the student and applied in all working environments.

### 2.2.2 Assessment

An informal year out does not form part of the degree programme and therefore is not assessed or supervised in any way by the School of Computing Science, nor does it contribute towards the final degree classification.

### 2.2.3 Fee Status

As you are taking a year out from your studies, you will not be registered as a student for that academic year. Your status will be ‘Suspended Studies’ or ‘Leave of absence’. This means that you do not have official student status and may be liable to pay Council Tax. You should bear this in mind when arranging accommodation, especially if sharing with students on “official” placement.
2.2.4 Student Finance Guidance for Students Going on Placement

If you are intending to go on placement in the next academic year it is extremely important Student Finance England (or equivalent in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, EU) are informed of this. Failure to do so can lead to funding delays and incorrect financial assessments.

Student Finance Application

You can normally apply for Student Finance up to 7 months before the start of the academic year (classed as 1st September). The quickest and easiest way to apply is online, although non-UK EU students currently only have the option of applying on paper. Regardless of whether you apply online or paper it is really important you select / write down your placement year course name. You should also select the correct course year (usually year 3). You will be asked a range of questions on the application which will give you the opportunity to inform Student Finance of placement location, type etc. This will dictate the amount of tuition fee loan and maintenance funding you can apply for - please see ‘Useful Placement Year Funding Information’ at the end of this document.

Application cycles usually open as follows:

Student Finance England – opens in February

www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login

Student Finance Northern Ireland – opens in February

www.studentfinanceni.co.uk

Scottish Award Agency Scotland (SAAS) – opens in April

www.saas.gov.uk/

Student Finance Wales – opens in February

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/

Student Finance Services (EU students) – opens in April

www.gov.uk/student-finance-forms (paper application only)

Advised to Apply Early

As in any other year, you should make an application for Student Finance as early as possible to avoid delays in your funding. This message is even more important if you are intending to start a placement in June / July as it can take up to 6 weeks for Student Finance to process applications.
Student Finance Deadline

You can apply for Student Finance up to 9 months after the start of the academic year (31st May), although the deadline for SAAS is only 6 months (28th February).

Are you going on a part year or full year abroad before mid-August (Student Finance England students only)

Student Finance guidance will be sent by the University Mobility Team in late May / early June. All students intending to do a placement abroad will be sent this guidance by email, even though it is only intended for those receiving funding through Student Finance England. It is important you read the guidance carefully and if applicable, return the spreadsheet ASAP to ensure you receive the correct funding for the start of your placement. If you are applying through SAAS, Student Finance Northern Ireland or Student Finance Wales you cannot request early payment.

What happens when you agree to a placement after you have already applied for your student finance or your student finance application has been automatically rolled over from the previous academic year?

Before 1st September - You can make changes to your student finance application via your online student finance account as long as it is before 1st September. The School / Careers Service should give you the course name you are transferring to - please see ‘What happens first?’ for more information.

After 1st September – If you are transferring to placement year course after 1st September you will not be able to amend the course details section of your student finance application. The School will need to notify Student Progress (via their usual internal transfer procedure). The information should then be passed to the Interaction Team (Student Services) who will submit a change of circumstances to Student Finance so you can be reassessed. Reassessments can take up to 6 weeks so you need to be prepared for a potential funding delay if you have not already received funding. If you have already received funding you are strongly advised to contact the Student Financial Support Team for further guidance: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/contact/

What happens if you intend to study your placement on a reduced hour’s basis?

When applying to Student Finance for funding you should still select the full time version of your course. Under no circumstances should you apply as a part-time student or try and access part time funding.

What happens if you do not complete your placement year?

There could be various reasons for not completing a placement year. Before leaving a placement you should contact the Student Financial Support Team so we can make you aware of the financial implications: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/contact/
Useful Placement Year Funding Information

Detailed placement year funding information can be found on the Student Financial Support Team web pages:

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/ukstudents/studentfinance/placementyear/

3 ePortfolio and Ness

The University’s ePortfolio system provides a mechanism for recording (via blog posts) your progress on the placement, and for engaging in discussions using a placement community. For assessed placements, information on joining the community and sharing your blog posts with the community will be sent to all placement students once their placement is approved.

Ness is used for submitting assignments in the usual way. Placement students will be registered on the Placement module, ICM0043, and assignments submitted as coursework on that module.

4 Visits

During the course of your placement you will normally be visited at least once by a member of academic staff. This visit usually takes place during the first semester. We will contact you to arrange a date for the visit. Ideally you should find a time when your supervisor is available to join for at least part of the meeting.

It may not be possible to visit students who are taking a placement outside the UK. In these cases, we would normally arrange a call using Skype or Lync to take the place of the visit.

5 Health and Safety and Employers’ Liability Insurance

While you are on placement your employer is responsible for your health and safety. Health and Safety provision is only effective if you take note of your Health and Safety induction at the company and any subsequent briefings.

You must have a written contract of employment and be formally included on the payroll of your employer in the placement. You should ensure that you:

- have received a copy of your placement provider’s Health and Safety guidelines
- are aware of the action to be taken in case of an emergency
- have familiarised yourself with the layout of the building, the location of fire fighting appliances and how they work, position of emergency exits, position of telephones and first aid arrangements
- know of any specific health and safety requirements if you are required to work off-site or out of normal working hours
- report any accidents or incidents in accordance with placement provider's requirements
- have received a copy of the Employers’ Liability Insurance certificate

An online form is provided for students on an industrial placement to confirm these points. It should be completed, and a copy of the Employers’ Liability Insurance
certificate uploaded, 4 weeks into the start of the placement. A link to the form is available from http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/

If there are any difficulties in obtaining any of this information, the School Placement Coordinator should be informed as soon as possible.
6 Contacts
For undergraduate placements the Placement Coordinator is
Dr Steve Riddle (Steve.Riddle@ncl.ac.uk, 0191 208 5156).

7 Acknowledgements
The School wishes to thank Dr Mike Bird of the Department of Chemical Engineering
at the University of Bath, and Stuart Challinor of the Newcastle University Business
School, for allowing us to base this document on their Industrial Placement
Handbooks.
Appendix:

Placement Forms

Form 1: Placement Approval Form
(for all students)
The form can be found on the Computing Placements page
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/, and must be completed, signed
by the Placements Coordinator and submitted to the Degree Programme Director in
order for approval of the placement to be given.

DPD Request form
(for students not on an Industrial Placement Programme)
The form is available from CS reception or from
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help
This form must be completed and submitted to the Degree Programme Director in
order for approval of the year-out to be given.

Placement Report Form
This online form, linked at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/computing/current/placements/,
should be completed within four weeks after starting work. The form gives the School
details of how to contact you and allows us to ensure that you are settling in to the
placement, and are aware of the duties and responsibilities required of you by your
employer.

Learning Agreement
This form should be completed at the same time as the Placement Report Form, in
discussion with your workplace supervisor. The form can be found on the ePortfolio
community and on Blackboard. It sets out the agreed objectives for the placement.
When completed the form should be sent to the placements coordinator by email or
post.

Placement Visit Form
A form completed by a member of CS staff when visiting a student on placement. On
completion the form is signed by visitor, student and employer and kept by the
University.