

e-skills internship

the professional placement

Still not convinced that doing a placement is right for you?

There are many reasons given by students for not doing a placement, but when they are talked through, almost all of them can be dispelled.

In an attempt to boost numbers for the IT sector, this brief document attempts to capture and address these commonly used arguments. If you are still not convinced then do let us know.

Won't I forget everything I learned while on placement for a year?

The opposite usually happens. Rather than forgetting what you have learned, you will broaden your skills and put into practice some of the theory that you have acquired at university.

Even if your work is not directly relevant, the elapsed time away from studies is really important. All the evidence we have gathered from all over the country shows that students perform much better when a placement is taken as a break in their degree. In general, students can lift their overall result by as much as a grade. If you are on for a 2:2 now, you could well get that all important 2:1 after you have taken a placement. And don't forget, a placement puts you into a much stronger position to take on that final year project!

Won't it be much harder to get back into studying when I return?

There is no evidence of this. In fact, the contrary is true. Being out on a placement helps you appreciate what your education is really all about. The break from your studies gives you time to reflect on what you have learnt and this in itself can often reinvigorate your desire to learn.

Being on a placement often requires you to be more disciplined and more productive with your time: up at 7, off to work, home at 6, relax for a few hours then off to bed. This more disciplined pattern makes it a lot easier to get back into studies as you will often be more self-disciplined and self-motivated.

Think about it – are you ready to start on that final year project now or should you put it off a year!

I want to get out of university as soon as possible and start my career.

Lots of students get fed up with study. Let's face it – lectures, exams, assignments – it's all hard work.

You need a break so why not start your career a year earlier? Get a placement, earn some money, then come back next year – your career will be in a much stronger position and you will appreciate university much more after having a year away.

Remember that the majority of companies prefer graduates who have taken placements.

If I go straight through, I can get onto the ladder and start earning a graduate salary sooner. A student who takes a placement will never catch up with me.

Whilst it is true that placement salaries tend to be slightly less than graduate salaries, your offer of graduate employment and the salary that goes with it is very likely to be dependent on degree result. A placement is very likely to raise your earning potential after graduation – taking you onto a different ladder, higher and steeper than your non-placement peers. And don't forget, salaries on the e-skills professional placements are very competitive. The average is 14-16K which is only slightly lower than a graduate salary. It's also much higher than living on unemployment benefit which is more likely if you don't have a placement!

I want to stay with my friends who are not doing placements.

This is perhaps the most cited reason for not doing a placement and it's difficult to address. But going on placement doesn't mean losing friendships. Many students still work near their friends and still meet up with them at evenings and weekends. And, of course, you'll make new friends on your placement. As many students return to their placement company on graduation, you'll already have a whole bunch of your friends there waiting for you.

Don't be put off if your friends don't want a placement. Maybe they just can't get one. Maybe they just can't be bothered. And, just maybe, they won't have a job on graduation.

I have 5 years work experience. Why do I need any more?

Some mature students say they already have work experience so don't need a placement. That is fine if they intend returning to the same job type with the same skills. If not then it's a dangerous situation. If you have retrained you need evidence to show employers that you are fully committed to this change, that you are fully capable of working in this new area. A placement gives you evidence of that commitment.

Challenge us?

If you have any questions that are not answered here, please do send them to the e-skills Professional Placement team at professionalplacement@e-skills.com. We would love to hear from you.