

Guidance to Industrial Supervisors

The principal goal of a placement is to provide training to enhance the student's potential to be a Professional, and to this end the student should obtain 'hands on' experience, under the supervision of a suitably qualified person.

Just as valuable is the experience of the world of work - learning how a working environment operates and how to be effective in that environment.

If supplementary training is available this will make a welcome addition to the student's training portfolio.

This is a very broad brief and the actual arrangement will vary widely from organisation to organisation, matching the needs of the organisation, the projects it has in hand and the people available to supervise.

Taking a broad brush summary from the hundreds of placements we have secured, a fairly typical scenario is that the student is given small tasks for the first month or so to allow them to settle in and become familiar with the people and the way the company works. This can be followed by a larger task lasting for one to two months that allows the student to take some responsibility, while still being monitored. In Computer Science, for example, a small coding or design task is often given.

From this point practice seems to diverge, depending on the company and on the capabilities of the student. Some companies give multiple tasks of greater difficulty but with short completion times, while other companies will opt for a substantial three to four month project, or even a project that will occupy the remainder of the student's stay. These projects will normally be expected to provide a significant return for the company.

In this project we would hope the student can gain experience of a substantial piece of work under 'real world' conditions. The reported experience from companies is that students can be treated as a full team member by the second half of their placement, and usually earlier.

A small number of companies offer accreditation placement training, for example, the IMechE's Monitored Professional Development Scheme (MPDS).

The guidance given here is necessarily broad. We are happy to discuss training with employers either at the start of the placement or when we visit the student at their placement location.

Visits

One of the lecturers will visit the company during the placement year. We will make arrangements for these visits through the student. However should you feel that there are any serious problems at any time during your industrial year, you should notify the subject group's Placement Tutor.

Normally the visiting tutor will contact the student and ask them to liaise with you to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. The meetings usually last less than an hour. It is usual for the visiting tutor to discuss with the student and their industrial manager/supervisor:

- ❖ the work the student has done to date

- ❖ the student's performance on this work
- ❖ the work planned for the next few months

If you have a work plan for the student it would be helpful if we could have a copy for our records. The discussions are quite open and frank, but sometimes the manager may wish to make one or two comments in private or the visiting tutor may wish to discuss some aspects with the manager only. Usually there will also be an opportunity for the student to discuss University related business.

The School has certain requirements of the student during the year. They will have to submit one or more report covering the work they have been doing. We would ask supervisors to check that there is no confidential information in the student's report. Where it is not possible to avoid confidential or commercially sensitive material the report requirements should be discussed with the Placement Tutor.