



Placement year and year abroad

Did you know?

Aston's excellent record for graduate employment success is in part down to the placement year......

- ➤ The Government's new Framework for Higher Education makes specific reference to the benefits of work experience as part of a degree and/or exposure to international contexts via a year abroad.
- ▶ There is strong evidence that taking a placement year increases your chances of being in a graduate level job or career within six months of graduation.
- Aston is one of five of the top ten UK Universities for graduate level jobs success (Sunday Times rankings 2009 and 2008) which offer students an extensive range of placement years.
- ▶ Aston is now one of only five UK Universities where more than 50% of eligible students take placement years: Aston, Bath, Surrey, Ulster and Bournemouth.

- ▶ In a competitive graduate labour market this issue is especially important and even though our Careers and Employability Centre and reputation with employers and industry is strong, this alone will not secure you a graduate career.
- ► The vast majority of Aston students are paid a salary on their placement year up to £15,000 per year.
- ▶ Placements allow you to consider your career options, the placement year is the ideal opportunity to help make informed career decisions.
- ▶ A placement year introduces students to the graduate level job selection process and career itself as well as improving confidence and independence.
- ▶ Final year students who have taken a placement year tell us that they have better time management and are able to plan their final year like a 9-5 job.
- ▶ The wide range of companies and organisations that 'target' or visit Aston University (around 200 in 2008-9) do so because they know that many students have taken a placement year. Where a placement year is offered in a degree and a graduate has not chosen to take one, some employers may want to know why.
- ▶ Across the University there are now more placements available than there are eligible Aston students. The economic climate does mean however that competition has increased, but so have the clear benefits of taking a placement year.
- ▶ There are now over 3,500 placements each year advertised in the various offices, notice boards and websites across Aston University.
- ▶ We consider the support we give to placement and year abroad students at Aston to be extremely strong and it is consistently praised by the Government and in the National Student Survey. Our own research and government audits have shown that our support is far more extensive than most other Universities in the UK.



Did you know?

The fee for the placement year at Aston University

- ► Currently Aston University UK/EU students pay a fee of £1,640 (in 2010/11) for the placement year (half the current full fee).
- ➤ All UK/EU students are automatically given £1,000 of that back in the form of a placement bursary in two instalments – March and June during the placement year.
- ▶ Students on unpaid placements or those who undertake a placement year abroad receive an additional £500 during the year to support living and travel costs.
- ► For unpaid placement students as well as the £1,500 Aston bursary support UK/EU students can normally claim the full student loan for that year, irrespective of family income, and may also qualify for grant support from the UK Government.
- ► This payment is made later in the year than you or we may prefer but is linked to our requirements to inform the Government of our student numbers and the timing of when fees are paid to us by the Government.
- ▶ Because of the bursaries on offer for students at Aston this means that the 'real fee' for the placement year is brought down to £640, or £140 for those on unpaid/year abroad placements. This is the same fee (allowing for inflation) as it was before fees were increased to £3,000 in 2006.
- ▶ Please note that UK/EU students on Erasmus Year Abroad do not normally pay a fee for the year abroad (and receive other Erasmus support) so are not entitled to the year abroad/placement bursary.
- ➤ Overseas students are strongly encouraged to undertake a placement year and the fee for the placement year in 2010/11 is £1,890 (less than half the overseas fee).
- Overseas students can do a work placement in the UK under the terms of their study permit.
- ▶ Because most placements cross two tax years (August-August each year) this means that many placement students pay less tax than a £15,000 salary might normally generate. For most students on placement this means that a £15,000 salary equates to c£1,100 per month earnings after any tax and national insurance. Many students claim tax back in final year. Even a salary of £11,000 per year (at the lower end) would mean close to £900 per month.

What does my placement year fee pay for?

- ▶ In 2009 there are a total of 15 specific administrative staff across the University supporting placement year or year abroad. Some academic staff in Schools/Departments also have involvement in placements via visits, essays and reports. Three additional staff were recruited in summer 2009 in the Careers and Employability Centre to provide a further central support to School/Department placement offices.
- ▶ Most placements for Aston students are the result of the work of these staff in sourcing, finding, checking and evaluating their quality as well as finding new ones each year. Links with study abroad partners across the world are also forged and cultivated by Aston staff. If you have found your own placement we have to check and research into its suitability and evaluate its success.
- Students receive access to support in preparing for the placement via help on drawing up CVs, mock interviews, undertaking psychometric tests and assessment centres.
- ▶ In many subjects there is a placement essay or project which has to be assessed and marked, along with placement visits, placement packs, placement fairs, 'back to Aston' events (returning final years share their experiences with future placement students) and websites.
- ➤ As a placement student you are exactly that a student, this means you still have physical/remote access to all Aston University facilities just the same as other students.
- ▶ Placement mentoring second year students considering a placement can be matched with final years returning from their placements for practical information and support on their placement search and experience. Find out more at www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/getinvolved/peermentoring.

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Full details at www.aston.ac.uk/fees