



University of
Reading

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PLACEMENT YEAR

BSc International Development

HOW DOES A PLACEMENT FIT WITH MY DEGREE?

A placement is a fantastic opportunity to gain 12 months work experience in an area that is directly related to your degree programme or potential career path, giving you the freedom to find a placement that suits you and your career aspirations.



The placement will be undertaken during the third year of your programme. Your first two years will be based at University where you will develop a thorough knowledge of your chosen subject, which can then be applied in an industry-specific setting in your placement year, before returning to University for your fourth and final year.

Why a placement makes you more employable

There are many reasons why students decide to take a 12 month placement

- Most donors, non-governmental organisations, businesses or charities require applicants to have relevant work experience. Those that do have an added advantage over applicants that have not undertaken work experience.
- Many employers use their placement schemes to identify potential candidates for their graduate recruitment scheme.
- If you have no idea what graduate level career path you'd like to explore, or what company you'd like to work for, a placement allows you to investigate a career or company with a view to helping you make a more informed career choice.
- Not only are you encouraged to apply and develop the skills that you are learning at university, you'll also have opportunities to learn new ones depending on the nature of your placement. These could include business skills and communications, specialist software and databases and client-facing skills.



WHAT ARE MY PLACEMENT OPTIONS?

The organisations you can apply and work for will depend on the career you are interested in pursuing in international development.

Many of our students apply for placements with large, global organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme, or big multinational corporations, such as the American telecommunications firm Verizon (based in Reading). Other interesting opportunities have been with the Corporate Social Responsibility programmes of major organisations like Panasonic.

Students have also spent a rewarding year working for smaller-scale non-governmental organisations or charities, both abroad and here in the UK. Placement students gain broad based experience, for example in project management, day-to-day operations and communication, depending on the goals of the organisation. Typically students will have responsibility for a specialist task. This may mean working with end-users, liaising with clients, delivering presentations or writing reports; learning many new employability skills as part of their role.

Preparation and training

The School's dedicated Placement Team will support you throughout all aspects of the placement search and application process. They will cover everything you need to know about placements, including how to:

- Fill out an application form
- Create an effective CV
- Write a covering letter

We also work closely with the Careers Centre and Placement Team who provide support and advice on all aspects of the application process, and give you the opportunity to participate in telephone and mock interviews and psychometric assessments (ability tests) to ensure that you are thoroughly prepared for the application process.

Support during the placement

Once you are on your placement you will continue to have access to support and guidance from your Academic Tutor and our Placement Team, and we will arrange a placement review meeting during the course of the placement.



Recent placements

The Otra Cosa Network in Peru

Gamos Development Consultancy, based in Reading

Verizon - Reading

UNA Exchange Wales

Concern Universal, a UK registered charity, based in Malawi

United Nations Environment Programme in Thailand

Honduras Child Alliance

EduCare in Northern India

International Development Select Committee

'I learnt something new every day on my placement. It certainly opened my eyes and I was able to exercise a lot of what I have learnt at Reading and was able to draw upon my knowledge and skills gained from the Reading Experience and Development (RED) award'

Phoebe Russell,

BSc International Development
with Placement Year

FINDING A PLACEMENT

There are lots of ways to find a placement. Employers look for students who are proactive and self-driven so be prepared to use a number of different methods to find your ideal placement.

Resources available to help you search for a placement

We have lots of resources to help in your search for a placement, including:

- An employer database with details of companies who offer relevant placements, or who have taken on our students previously
- Our annual Careers and Placements Fair, attended by a range of companies who have vacancies for Placement Students
- Support from dedicated Placement Team, Careers Consultants and access to My Jobs Online, where employers advertise placements and you can sign up to receive daily or weekly email alerts.

Networking and direct contact

Don't feel you have to wait for your ideal placement to be advertised. If you know what company you would like to work for you can approach them directly. Our students have gained placements via a direct approach, by:

- Phoning the company and discussing potential opportunities
- Giving their CV directly to a manager, either at Trade or Career Fairs

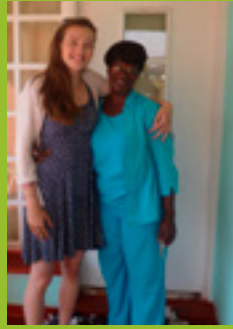
Using existing contacts – friends, family, colleagues – can also help you secure a placement.



'I knew little about development consultancy prior to my placement. It was a fantastic opportunity to gain an insight into the sector and see first-hand how a small organisation is run. The diversity of the work enabled me to get involved in a wide range of projects.'

Josephine Helen Mcallister,

BSc International Development
with Placement Year



'I went to Zimbabwe and worked with a local NGO conducting small-

scale learning sessions and workshops with vulnerable children aged 5-22, following the themes of HIV/AIDs, child rights and responsibilities, sexual and reproductive health awareness and sustainable livelihoods. It was invaluable experience.'

Harriet Hemmings, BSc International Development with Placement Year

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I didn't register for the 4-year degree course – can I still do a placement?

Yes, when you've accepted your placement we can arrange a transfer to the relevant 4-year degree course. Alternatively, for a 'taster' within either the 3-year or the 4-year degree course we offer an optional 'mini-work placement and professional development module'.

You can also do a 'micro-placement' in the summer holidays.

When will my placement start?

This is often dependent on your employer – some schemes run from July, others from September. If you are unclear about this or any aspect of the placement speak to your Placement tutor who will be able to advise you.

Will I be assessed?

Yes, the placement is allocated 120 credits and there are three pieces of assessment including a report from your employer.

Will I be offered a graduate job position?

Companies may use their placement scheme as way of recruiting for their graduate roles – so you could return to University for your final year with a graduate job already secured.

PLACEMENT YEAR

i For more information, please contact the Placement Team:

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Disclaimer

This brochure was issued in 2022 and is aimed at prospective undergraduate students wishing to apply for a place at the University of Reading (the University) and start a course in autumn 2023. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in the brochure is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (May 2022). However, it may be necessary for the University to make some changes to the information presented in the brochure following publication – for example, where it is necessary to reflect changes in practice or theory in an academic subject as a result of emerging research; or if an accrediting body requires certain course content to be added or removed. To make an informed and up-to-date decision, we recommend that you check reading.ac.uk/study. The University undertakes to take all reasonable steps to provide the services (including the courses) described in this brochure. It does not, however, guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the University interfere with its ability to provide the services, the University undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption to the services.

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Year abroad and placement fees

Some courses include an optional or compulsory year abroad or placement year. During this year you will only pay a partial fee which is currently set at 15% of the normal tuition fee. Check the website for the latest information: reading.ac.uk/fees-and-funding

Placements disclaimer

Programmes with a Professional Placement Year (also known as 'Year in Industry' or 'Placement Year') are fully dependent on students securing their own placement opportunity, normally through a competitive recruitment process. The University provides dedicated career and application support for placement year students. Students who do not secure a placement or who are unable to complete the placement year due to extenuating circumstances, have the option to transfer to a three year variant of their programme with agreement from their School/Department.

