



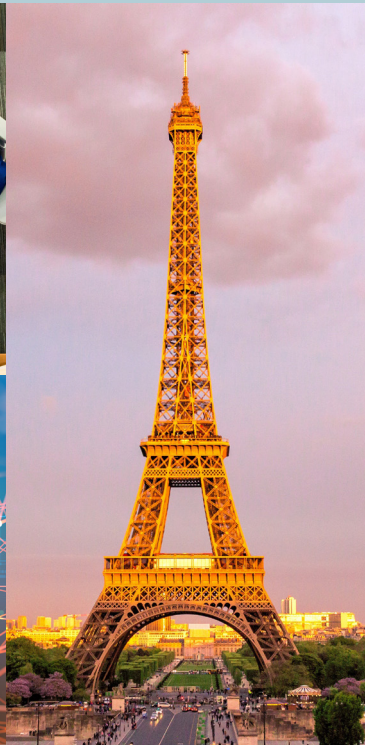
Durham
University

Careers & Enterprise

Inspiring the extraordinary

Placement Years

A Complete Guide for Students





I can't stress enough how beneficial my year in industry has been to my personal development, commercial awareness and career aspirations.

Lucy Buckley, Johnson & Johnson



A globally outstanding centre of teaching and research excellence, a collegiate community of extraordinary people, a unique and historic setting – Durham is a university like no other. With employers increasingly looking beyond qualifications and an emphasis on practical experience and transferrable skills within the recruitment process, a Placement Year from Durham University could really help you stand out from the crowd.

Completing a Placement Year as part of your degree at Durham University can provide you with an opportunity to apply your knowledge in a real world environment whilst also gaining the necessary skills and expertise to secure that ideal job when you graduate.

Over a third of recruiters state that graduates who have had no previous work experience at all are unlikely to be successful during the selection process for their graduate programmes (High Fliers Research 2019).

Why do a Placement Year?

We strongly encourage undergraduate students to do a Placement Year as part of your degree if you feel it is the right option. We have found that not only will it help you decide what you want to do when you graduate and potentially lead to graduate job offers, but research suggests that those who have completed a placement have a higher degree classification overall. Generally, significantly more people who do a placement get a first than non-placement students.

You will develop a number of **transferrable skills** whilst completing the placement as well as sector specific experience and knowledge which will support you in future job applications upon graduation whether or not you choose to stay in your chosen industry or role.

- **Futureproof Your Career** It is very common for employers to use their placement schemes as a pipeline for **securing talent** for their graduate schemes. Many of our students enter final year with a graduate role secured.
- The connections made during your Placement Year, as well as the recruitment process, will **help expand your network** and enable you to secure roles in the future beyond graduation.
- You will have the opportunity to apply the **knowledge from your degree** in a practical setting and for some decide whether you want to enter the job market or pursue a career in research.
- Placements **will most likely be paid**. On average a placement student earns between £15-£25k. Within the third sector, NHS and other public sector bodies you are most likely to encounter unpaid or expenses only placements. It should be transparent on the job description whether a job falls into the paid or unpaid category but we would advise you ask in advance before applying.

Top Tip

Placement Years offer you the chance to trial a future career before committing to training or further study.



Requirements of A Placement Year

Once you have decided to undertake a Placement Year, you should let your department know as soon as possible within your second year so that they can inform you of the next steps.

Durham University is ranked in the Top 50 globally for employer reputation (QS World University Rankings 2019), and is in the Top 10 UK institutions targeted by leading graduate recruiters (High Fliers 2019).

Speak to your faculty placement manager about accessing the correct Module Handbook for your department. In general, the requirements are that:

- You must pass all Level 2 modules of your programme (achieving the minimum pass mark for your department)
- You must have secured an approved placement of no less than 40 weeks (made up from one long placement, or if your department allows up to a maximum of three shorter opportunities)
- You must have attended a pre-placement briefing.

Those students who have entered the university on a four year degree including a Placement Year already i.e. Business and Management with Placement Year (N203) or Chemistry with Industrial Route (F111) will not need to change the degree title.

There may be other requirements specific to your department or programme which you should check in the module handbook before applying.

Placement Year Fee

The tuition fee for your Placement Year will be reduced to 20% of the standard fee you would normally pay.

As you will remain a registered student of Durham University while on placement, you maintain continued access to the following:

- Your student loan and financial support from Student Finance England or equivalent
- Financial advice and support from the Student Funding Office
- Academic support for any on-going assessment and for dissertation planning for when you return to study
- Placement support from your placement tutor
- A face to face visit or a skype call where possible
- Library facilities including all online resources
- Online careers resources provided by the Careers & Enterprise Centre
- IT support through the online helpdesk
- Support services such as; Student Wellbeing, Counselling and Disability
- Immigration and visa support
- Continued membership to Durham Student Union and your college.

Assessment

The Placement Year is a pass or fail (aside from Chemistry). It does not contribute to your overall degree classification however, it will change your degree title to include “with Placement Year”.

Details of the specific assignments that you need to undertake will be provided by your faculty or department. In order to pass you will need to successfully complete the 40 weeks placement and have passed the summative assignments.

For whatever reason should you not complete the Placement Year your degree will revert back to the original programme title.

If you are a student of Modern Languages and Cultures (MLaC) you will have a separate process for approval of work opportunities abroad and a Target Language Research Project [TLRP] to complete. The TLRP is not credit-bearing, but a mark for each essay will be shown on your degree transcript. For details and support please contact your Year Abroad Administrator for MLaC.

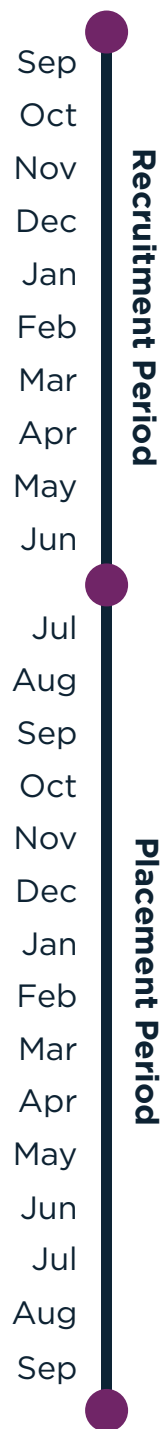


The Placement Year enabled me to begin a professional qualification whilst still a student which is extremely valuable and also influenced my final year module choices for university.

Ellie Hardy, EY

Durham also has the highest graduate recruitment rate of any UK university (Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Longitudinal Survey 2016).

How To Find A Placement Year?



Securing a Placement Year is a competitive process whereby you need to pro-actively apply for a job.

Advertised Vacancies:

Thousands of placements will be advertised as vacancies on company websites, jobs sites and the Student Services Portal where you will apply and be assessed alongside other candidates in a competitive application process.

There are a few prominent websites that are useful for identifying Placement Year opportunities:

- ratemyplacement.co.uk
- magnet.me
- indeed.co.uk/student-placement-jobs
- milkround.com
- targetjobs.co.uk/internships
- linkedin.com/jobs
- e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs

You can access the Student Services Portal here: careers.dur.ac.uk

Speculative Applications:

An alternative source of opportunities can be found by completing what is known as speculative applications. A speculative application means approaching employers that you would be interested in working for directly to enquire whether there are any unadvertised vacancies within their organisations. The process typically involves sending a speculative covering letter and a CV to organisations and following up with a phone call.

Networking:

Utilising your existing networks to locate opportunities is a very resourceful way to secure a placement offer. Consider exploring contacts within any past work experience or close family and friends as they may have the leverage you need to create a role suitable for a Placement Year. Use LinkedIn or speak to your department about alumni they are in contact with or colleagues who work in the area you are interested in.

For information on networking visit:
durham.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs/graduate/networking

Student Employability Fund

The fund is to enable students from low income households to participate in employability and recruitment activities, by supporting with expenses such as travel, clothing and subsistence:

durham.ac.uk/study/ug/finance/uk/scholarships/studentemployability/

Application Process:

The application process can vary from company to company. Generally the big multinational organisations will have several stages starting with an online application or CV upload, followed by video or telephone interview and then face to face interviews and/or assessment centres. As well as many online resources available on the Careers & Enterprise website, there are specific opportunities across the University to practise the face to face elements of the recruitment process (see pre-placement support).

For help with making applications visit:

durham.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs/applications

You can practise online tests here:

durham.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs/interviews/psychomet

You can access interview stimulation here:

durham.ac.uk/careers/password/students/jobs/interviews/interviews/shortlistme

Your faculty or department will have bespoke ways in promoting interesting placement opportunities that are relevant for you such as via social media and newsletters, make sure you make the most of these resources by signing up.

Top Tip

Join our LinkedIn group for Placement Year support and opportunities at: linkedin.com/groups/13678269 or for Science: linkedin.com/groups/12147668



Durham University is ranked in the world top 50 for the employability of our students by blue-chip companies world-wide QS World University Rankings (2020)

International Placements

You have the option to make your Placement Year experience an international one by working outside of the UK.

International placements often take longer to secure as placements of 40+ weeks are less common however a global experience enables you to combine both work experience and cultural immersion making it a unique way to spend a year.

Things you need to consider:

1. It's important to have a professional online presence as much of your searching will be done online, make sure you create a LinkedIn profile
2. International placements are often secured using speculative applications and through utilising networks so it may take longer than a "standard" application (although there is no such thing when it comes to applying for placements!)
3. You may want to look at larger UK companies which have international offices or focus your search on a specific region or industry to find smaller organisations
4. The role should be of a suitable professional level, your day to day duties will need to reflect this

5. Depending on your nationality, you may need to apply for a visa to work in some countries
6. For some placements you may need to be proficient in another language, please check the job description before you apply. For additional support, The Centre for Foreign Language Study offers a variety of language courses which may be of benefit: durham.ac.uk/cfls

The Careers & Enterprise Centre has resources available to help start your search

durham.ac.uk/careers/students/careerplanning/research/outsideuk



Top Tip

GoInGlobal is an online resource which provides vacancies and country specific labour market guides.

Remember the first time you use GoInGlobal you will need to create an account whilst connected to the Durham University server.

For help using GoInGlobal you can access their user guide online:

online.goinglobal.com/training/user-guide
online.goinglobal.com



Pre-Placement Support

In addition to the support offered through the Careers & Enterprise Centre each faculty has a designated Placement Manager who is available for consultation appointments. These sessions will enable you to explore options for Placement Year and provide bespoke support and guidance.

The Careers & Enterprise Centre run a range of events and fairs which are attended by a number of employers who are there to recruit, also providing opportunities to have your CV checked by a member of staff. An extensive programme of support and employer events are also aimed at placement students including mock interviews, mock assessment centres and skills workshops.

The Placement Showcases take place each November and we invite many placement providers to attend the event to promote and discuss opportunities within their organisations.

💡 Top Tip

Your department may offer a range of bespoke workshops and events. Look out for them being advertised and sign up early to avoid disappointment

Completing a year placement has been invaluable, allowing me to gain skills, improve employability prospects and give me knowledge of the real working world. This allowed me to come back to Durham for my final year, prepared and more knowledgeable, able to relate learning to personal experience.

Ellen Gibson, Aldi

Accepting an offer

If you have been offered a Placement Year role, you can start the approval process on PebblePad by visiting: bit.ly/DUPlacement.

This allows your Faculty Placement Manager and department to review your offer, organise some additional checks and generate a contract to ensure you have a fantastic and safe placement experience.

The process will involve confirming that the placement:

- Meets the minimum requirements and learning objectives set out in your Placement Module Handbook
- Offers work of a professional level similar to that of a graduate job
- Host organisation provides a named supervisor who will support your workplace development and liaise with the University
- Provides you with a safe working environment that complies with the University's requirements
- Host organisation provides reasonable adjustments if you have a disability or health conditions (where necessary)
- Complies with the requirements of your visa as set out by the Home Office, if you are International student with a Tier 4 visa.

Once you have accepted a Placement Year opportunity, we would strongly encourage you to withdraw your applications from other roles to ensure you maintain a professional relationship with other organisations – you never know who you may be seeking employment with in the future!



Practical Considerations

Accommodation

When applying for a Placement Year one of the things you may want to consider before you begin your search is location and accommodation. Many students may choose to relocate for their Placement Year and will find accommodation in the same city where they will be working. If you have already secured accommodation in Durham, it may be that you will be searching for a placement at an organisation which is commutable from Durham.

London

When searching for accommodation in London remember that for some parts of the city it can be just as competitive finding somewhere to live as securing your placement in the first place!

It can often be quite a fast paced process with rooms only being advertised 1-2 months before they are available. This can sometimes feel a bit daunting if you manage to secure a placement early on in the academic year and want to organise your accommodation in advance or if you have plans to travel before your placement starts. For this reason it would be a good idea to put aside some time before your placement to look around potential homes.

Durham Students' Union Advice and Help Centre has some great Housing Support resources available online including a contract checking tool and a Guide to Living Out in the Community. Some of these resources specifically refer to private renting accommodation in Durham (either as an individual or a group) but the advice also applies to renting more broadly.

See: durhamsu.com/advice-and-support/housing-support

Durham

One of the main concerns which students have when deciding whether to do a placement is whether to sign for a house with their friends during second year. The choice is an individual one but there are a couple of things to consider:

- You may want to avoid signing for a house as housing contracts can be difficult to get out of, in most cases you will need to find someone to take your place
- Speak to your college, if you don't manage to secure a placement (which is unlikely!) then you may be able to sign up for a room in college for your final year
- If you have already signed for a house in Durham, you can still search for placements as there are lots of local employers who could offer opportunities.

Council Tax

- As a student you are exempt from paying council tax, this is the same for when you are on Placement Year. You will need to provide evidence of this with a council tax exemption certificate which you can apply for online gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-full-time-students
- You may choose to live with other working professionals on placement and although you are exempt, they may still expect you to contribute to the cost of paying for the council tax.

💡 Top Tip

Did you know that you can book an appointment with your Faculty Placement Manager to discuss anything to do with Placement Years via the Student Services Portal?

Here are some ways to start your search

Buddy Up

It may be worth asking other placement students if you would like to "buddy up" and rent a house or flat together.

HR Department

You can ask the Human Resources department of your host organisation if they can connect you with other placement students.

Friends, Family and Social Media

Asking friends and family to share posts on Facebook or LinkedIn may also help you in your search, especially if you are relocating.

Searching the Web

Here are just a couple of websites which you can use to start your search:

- spareroom.co.uk
- gumtree.com
- rightmove.co.uk
- unitestudents.com

International

Securing accommodation in another country can seem a little daunting however a lot of research can be done online which can help your search when you relocate.

- Use Going Global and read the “Country Career Guides” to understand more about the accommodation market in that country online.goinglobal.com/training/user-guide
- Read the Foreign and Commonwealth Office “Foreign Travel Advice” for the country you will be relocating to. It provides specific safety advice which relates to your chosen country and individual regions/ area of cities which you may be considering moving to gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
- Check with your host organisation about suitable locations to live and reputable companies which advertise suitable accommodation. They may also have a Relocation Manager/HR representative who can offer this assistance to you
- You may want to book and stay in a hostel for a couple of weeks before your placement starts so you can physically go look at possible flats and houses rather than committing online (it can also be a great way to meet new people).

Travel and Transportation

If your placement is in London you are able to apply for a Student Oyster card. You will need to apply on the Transport for London website and the University will then be asked to confirm that your placement is eligible.

The placement must be for a minimum of 14 weeks and must be a mandatory part of your course (which approved Placement Years are). When you set up your account to apply for the photocard, you will need to select the ‘Coming to London on a work placement?’ option.

tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/18-plus-student-oyster-photocard

Your host organisation may also be able to offer employee travel benefits so make sure you get in touch with them before signing up for any season tickets for bus, train or tube/Metro.

You may have access to a car whilst on placement and choose to use your car for work. In this instance be mindful that this may affect your insurance and you may need to take additional cover for business use.

If undertaking a placement internationally, your placement will have been approved and insurance issued using the VIATOR system. If you plan on taking additional trips or extending your stay in a foreign country for travelling purposes then we would advise you to take out additional insurance as you will not be covered by the University travel insurance.

Top Tip

Download the Global Risk Manager app from Drum Cussac to your phone and keep up to date with the latest travel advice and alerts for the country you are in.



Finance and Funding

The tax year runs from April to April which means it is likely that your Placement Year will cut across the two tax years.

If on a paid placement, you will have to pay income tax and national insurance on any earnings which are above the personal allowance amount. You should keep all of your financial documents during and after your placement as in some instances you may need to make a claim if you have overpaid. This is something you can do yourself:

gov.uk/claim-tax-refund

We encourage all students to undertake a paid placement but acknowledge that in some sectors there will be limited opportunities and you may have to undertake an unpaid Placement Year. We would encourage all students to think carefully before accepting an unpaid placement and to consider the following:

- As a minimum request expenses that will cover travel and subsistence
- If you will be working part-time negotiate a shorter working week over a longer duration to ensure a better work/life balance
- Download an app such as “Spending Tracker” and plan what your outgoings will be each month to work out how much money you will need to live off (don’t forget budget for fun things too!)
- Your college may have bursaries/ scholarships or other financial support available to support you through the application process and whilst out on placement. Contact your college support team for further information.
- For some unpaid placements you may be eligible for “special cases” funding if you are in receipt of support from the Student Loans Company. For more information download the Placement Year finance factsheet.

Download our Placement Year finance factsheet here: durham.ac.uk/careers/students/jobs/workexperience/placements

Professional Etiquette

Your placement is a professional experience that requires professional attitudes, an eagerness to learn and appropriate behaviour.

For the duration of your placement, you are an employee and therefore will be expected to behave like all other employees. Whilst no one will expect you to know everything, it is important that you meet certain expectations. During your placement, you should try to:

- Clarify expectations regarding assigned responsibilities and activities
- Demonstrate a positive, enthusiastic attitude
- Meet deadlines
- Avoid office politics and gossip
- Interact professionally with colleagues, customers, and supervisors
- Follow office policies regarding use of phones, computers, email, etc.
- Dress appropriately as clarified by supervisors
- Exercise wise time management skills. Do not be late and if you are for any reason then apologise. Make sure you allow yourself ample travel time to avoid delays
- Consult regularly with your supervisor and/or placement tutor about your placement experience. It’s good practice to do as much as you can and have a list of questions ready when you check in. Communicate your progress and follow instructions
- Ask for assistance and advice as needed.

You are still a student of Durham University and as such, you must conduct yourself in accordance with the policies of Durham University.

If you are in receipt of a loan from Student Finance England or equivalent it is likely that the amount you received on your Placement Year will be different.



Before going on placement these are some of the things you might need to consider:

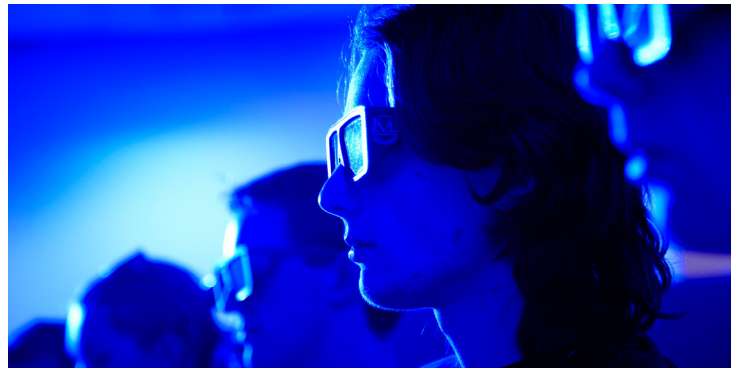
- Do you know your route to work?
- Who to meet on your first day and at what time?
- Organise clothes for the first couple of days
- Have a pen and paper so you can take notes at meetings
- Student Oyster card (if in London)
- Lunch arrangements (bring snacks if necessary!)
- Make sure you get to work on time for your first day (and every day after that!)



The average Placement Year salary across the UK is

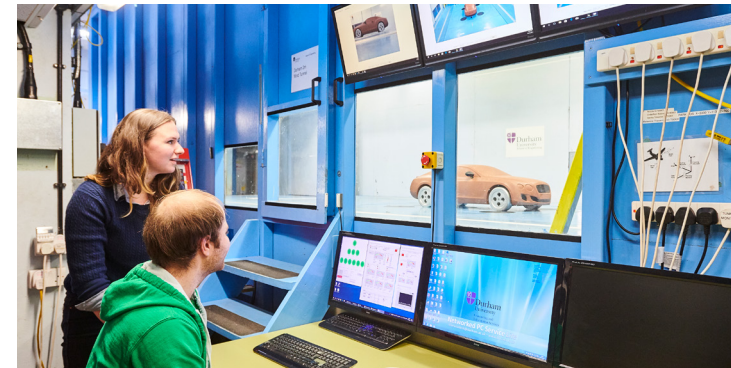
£17,574

(Rate my Placement)



52% of placement students who graduated in 2019 achieved a first class honours degree compared with 13% for students who did not complete a Placement Year

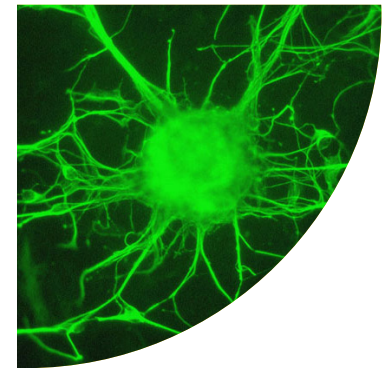
(Durham University Business School)



Durham University is ranked

78th

in the QS World University Rankings (2020)



61% of voluntary sector workers in 2018 were employed in workplaces with less than 50 employees

(NCVO)

Two professionals join LinkedIn every second.

(LinkedIn)

In 2018 **54%** of graduate hires for the Top Undergraduate Employers comprised of previous placement students and interns.

30 mil companies have LinkedIn profiles.



SMEs account for **around 99%**

of Britain's 5m businesses.

(Business Population Estimates)

Five years

from now, over one-third of skills (35%) that are considered important in today's workforce will have changed.

(World Economic Forum)

59%

of graduate hires from companies in Rate My Placement's Top Undergraduate Employers last year were students that had completed an internship or Placement Year during their degree



Over **2/5** of employers offer placements for undergraduates.

(High Fliers)

Durham placement students have worked all over the world, including Europe, Asia and in the USA.



Students who go abroad **are 20%**

less likely to be out of work when they graduate than those who did not.

(UUKi's Go International report)

The North East of England is home to over 67,000 companies, and experienced one of the highest growth rates in company numbers in recent years, second only to London.

(Invest North East)



Durham remains in the **top 10** universities most targeted by the largest number of graduate employers.

(High Fliers)

Students who go abroad **are 19%**

more likely to get a 1st in their degree compared with those who don't.

(UUKi's Go International report)

Useful University contacts

Whilst you are on placement, you are a registered student and, as such are entitled to make use of the full range of professional support services that the university has to offer. This includes:

Student Experience and Welfare Support

As a Durham student you'll find a wide support network available at the University. For more information please check website for details: durham.ac.uk/experience/support

Colleges

Remember to stay in contact with your college who each have a welfare officer and can be a great source of support whilst searching for placements and out on placement itself should you need it.

As an intern, I expected relatively low responsibility, however, when there was work to be done I was the first they relied on. For the most part, I was a fully-fledged member of the team. I firmly believe they took my opinions to heart and listened to what I had to say.

Takaki Lievre, Healthy Tokyo

Disability Support

If you have a disability, health condition or learning difficulty such as dyslexia, you may require some reasonable adjustments when applying for a Placement Year or whilst you are out on placement. We would encourage you to tell your prospective employer so that these adjustments can be made. It is understandable that you may not wish to talk about the nature of your disability to your employers and you

are under no obligation to do so. However if you do choose to tell them you will be protected by the Equality Act 2010.

Disability Support can provide you with advice and support in a range of areas, including:

- Guidance on obtaining diagnostic evidence
- Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) and other disability funding, such as charitable trusts
- Advice on how to access support
- Liaising with other staff about setting up support, including Departmental Disability Representatives (DDR)
- Signposting to other services, including those at the University and externally, such as the NHS, Social Services departments etc
- Advice about what the University can do to support you

The Careers & Enterprise website has a wide range of resources and diversity guides available to support students here:

durham.ac.uk/careers/students/careerplanning/diversity

For more information please check the website for details:

durham.ac.uk/disability.support

Tel: 0191 334 8115

Email: disability.support@durham.ac.uk

Counselling Service

Some employers may offer a workplace counselling service which you could access whilst on placement, you may wish to use this to help manage any difficulties that are impacting your successful engagement within your Placement Year.

If this service is not on offer you can contact the University's counselling service, who are a team of trained and experienced practitioners available all year round to registered students via self-referral.

For more information please check website for details:

durham.ac.uk/counselling.service

Email: counsel.service@dur.ac.uk

Careers & Enterprise

You can access the Careers & Enterprise service throughout your Placement Year via phone, email, in person or skype. Opening times are 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday all year round including vacation times. The Careers website is also a great comprehensive resource, covering a broad range of career related topics including career planning, employability skills and CV writing which you may find useful during your time away.

You can book in with one of the experienced Careers Advisors for tailored support and guidance during any point of your Placement Year, or upon your return ahead of preparing for future applications in your final year.

For more information please check website for details:

durham.ac.uk/careers/students/careerplanning/appointments

Tel: 0191 334 1437

Email: careers@durham.ac.uk

Student Funding Office

The Finance department are here to help you to keep your financial affairs with the University in an order whilst you are out on a Placement Year. This could include information on tuition fees, maintenance loans, travel grants and bursaries. There are a range of resources online for you to access.

For more information please check website for details:

durham.ac.uk/treasurer/students

Tel: 0191 334 6292

Email: financialsupport.undergraduate@durham.ac.uk

Student Immigration Office

The Student Immigration Service provides advice for international students looking to enter or extend their leave to remain in the UK to study. It works with departments across the University

to ensure compliance with UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) regulations.

The Student Immigration Service has dedicated Immigration Advisors who are the only official provider of visa and immigration advice in the University and advice should not be taken from any other source.

If you are an international student you may be required to extend your visa if undertaking a Placement Year, and we would advise you to contact the Student Immigration Office in this case.

For more information and to contact the Immigration office please check website for details: durham.ac.uk/immigration

Contact Details

For further information on placement years, please contact your Faculty Placement Manager at:

artsandhumanities.placements@durham.ac.uk

business.placements@durham.ac.uk

sciences.placements@durham.ac.uk

socialsciences.placements@durham.ac.uk

Before going on placement, please make sure you:

- Complete all relevant sections on Pebblepad
- Inform your department and college
- Share key contact details with the University and family
- Check your University emails during placement
- Take out health insurance (international placements)
- Register for University and pay tuition fees
- Get in touch with your placement tutor after the first two weeks



Careers & Enterprise Centre

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Palatine Centre
Stockton Road
Durham
DH1 3LE

Telephone **+44 (0)191 334 2000**
duram.ac.uk/careers

 [Careers@Durham University](https://www.facebook.com/Careers@DurhamUniversity)

 [@careersatdurham](https://twitter.com/careersatdurham)

 [@careersatdurham](https://www.instagram.com/careersatdurham)