

National College of Ireland

Work Placement Handbook

Guide for Students

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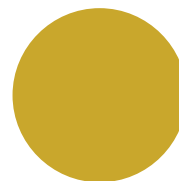
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TABLE 3
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Welcome to one of the most exciting aspects of your degree programme – The Placement Year

This is a unique opportunity to apply all the knowledge you have developed during your studies and discover what the working world is like within your career area of interest.



What is work placement?

The work placement is a year-long trial of the world of work upon completion of the second year of the degree programme. It involves integrating academic knowledge and work-related practice.

The work placement is a formally and academically accredited element of the degree programme. It is embedded in the degree as an optional one-year 60 credit module for students enrolled in the following programmes:

- BA Hons in Business
- BA Hons in Accounting & Finance
- BA Hons in Marketing Practice
- BA Hons in HRM

Those students who successfully complete the work placement graduate with a 4 year 240 credit award rather than a 3 year 180 credit award.

What are the benefits of completing a work placement?

Your work placement will be challenging but extremely rewarding, offering a range of benefits:

- During placement you can earn a competitive salary for this level, and develop transferable skills such as time management, professional communication, team work, and industry knowledge. It also aids in building your professional network.
- Students who do a work placement tend to achieve better results in their final year of studies. Research shows that students who do a placement are more confident in a wide range of competencies, and boost their graduate employability and career success by increasing the chances of finding graduate jobs that fit their career. By adding their work placement experience in their CVs, they become more attractive to graduate employers.
- Many employers use work placements as an opportunity to recruit graduates, meaning that students often have opportunity to return to their placement employer once they finish College.

Eligibility for Placement

The work placement module takes place during the 3rd stage/year of the below programmes.

BA Hons in Business

BA Hons in Accounting & Finance

BA Hons in Marketing Practice

BA Hons in HRM

To be deemed eligible for work placement:

1. Students should be on track in first and second year semester 1 to achieving a 2.1 honours average. (average of 60% or better). If students fail to meet this grade, they may still be considered for work placement on approval from the Vice-Dean for Undergraduate Studies, the Programme Director, or a nominee.
2. Students must opt for, and pass the Career Management Skills module at Stage 2.
3. Students must have passed all their second year exams before undertaking a placement.



Jamie Larcombe
CRH

I gained insights to multiple HR functions, that would simply be unattainable without the work placement. I gained so much experience during my work placement and it has helped me develop so many skills that I will utilise in work and college. I feel more confident and eager to enter the work force now, replacing my old fears of the unknown.

Eligibility for Placement

Placement Practicalities

- The placement must be appropriate to your programme of study and/or future career plans and provide an appropriate level of experience.
- Placements are expected to be full time and paid.
- You must be able to afford to live on the salary provided and get to your placement on time every day. Ensure you investigate transport options before you attend interview.
- Your placement must be in a legally recognised registered organisation where you will experience working with colleagues in a professional environment.
- Your employer must complete the tri party agreement and be prepared to liaise with NCI.
- Your placement can take place in Ireland or internationally.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that if you are an international visa that your placement complies with GNIB visa requirements.

Dates for Placement

- The work placement is at least eight months (minimum 33 weeks) in duration and commences in the September of the third stage of the programme. You must be available for this entire period.
- It is possible to start with your employer earlier than September and to remain in employment later than May. You may start your placement any time after exams finish in Year 2 upon approval by the Vice-Dean for Undergraduate Studies, the Programme Director, or a nominee.
- You must have secured a placement by the 1st September or transfer back to the 3 year degree programme.
- You must be ready to return to your studies at the start of semester 1 of your 4th year.



Ellie Wong
IE Domain Registry

My work placement has given me a chance to put marketing theories and knowledge into practice. I enjoyed working as a part of an efficient and productive team, I was able to grow personally and professionally through this placement and it's one of the best decisions I've ever made!

Placement Preparation

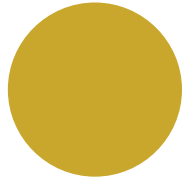
The 12 week, 5 credit Career Management Skills Module is open to all students and not just those with an interest in work placement. However, all students interested in undertaking a work placement must enrol on the Career Management Skills module.

The Careers Management Skills Module will be delivered by The Career Development & Employability team with input from alumni and a variety of experts from industry. In addition to developing your skills, this module is a great opportunity for you to start building your professional network.

Over the 12 weeks, sessions will include:

- Skills Analysis and Reflection
- MBTI Personality Profiling
- Effective CV and LinkedIn Preparation
- Mock Interviews
- Assessment Centres
- Presentation Skills
- Job Search Strategies

Finding a Placement



The placement must be appropriate to your programme of study and/or future career plans — if you have any questions please discuss these with the Career Development and Employability Office.

The placement must be appropriate to your programme of study and/or future career plans— if you have any questions please discuss these with the Career Development and Employability Office.

The Career Development and Employability Office will advertise placements on the NCI jobs portal. It is your responsibility to check the jobs board daily and apply to the roles in the manner highlighted in the job specification. Work placements will also be promoted on the physical jobs board in the atrium, via the weekly vacancy newsletter and on twitter, facebook and LinkedIn.

You may also use your own network to find a work placement. The placement must be approved as suitable by the Career Development and Employability Office before you attend interview.

It is important that you are flexible and open-minded towards the opportunities that are made available; the fewer constraints you put on your placement, the wider your choices will become and therefore the easier it will be to find a placement. Some students place too much emphasis on the company they wish to work in, and do not look carefully at what each role could offer in terms of professional and personal development.

Students wishing to take part in a placement year can expect to complete 10—20 applications before securing a suitable work placement. We encourage you to ensure that your applications are of a high standard; keep in mind that hundreds of other students might be applying for the same role as you, so the quality of your applications determines your success.

Applications will start in earnest from Semester 2 of 2nd year, however as some programmes close early it is wise to start searching at the start of the second year if you are committed to securing a particular placement.

If you are a first year student thinking about doing a placement, increase your employability by doing a summer internship.

Many companies attend on campus events in NCI throughout the year so make sure you attend these as it is a good opportunity for you to network.

Making Applications

Securing a work placement is a competitive process and is not a guarantee. You will be in open competition with students both from NCI and other third level institutions.

You are free to choose which work placement opportunities you would like to apply for however it is a requirement that students engage fully in the placement process, make an appropriate number of applications and of an appropriate quality.

It is your responsibility to review the job specification, location etc. before expressing an interest and making an application for the role. If you apply for a role and are called for interview you are obliged to attend the interview.

You must accept the first work placement offer you receive through The Career Development & Employability Office. This may be waived only in exceptional circumstances for example: The salary is different from that advertised and below the national minimum wage. The placement does not satisfy statutory health and safety requirements.

After you have accepted an offer, you must withdraw all other open applications, including any other interviews you may have lined up. Any subsequent offers you receive will not be ratified as a work placement position. You cannot accept an offer and later decide to renege on this acceptance and return to the three year degree programme.

Whilst on Placement

Visits by Academic Staff

- Each student on placement is allocated an academic supervisor who will oversee the student's professional development.
- If you are doing your work placement in Ireland, you can expect to be visited at least once throughout the eight months. You will be contacted in advance of the visit and you must be available on the day.
- The purpose of the visit is to review your progress, work and employability skills with the employer and to get your feedback on your placement to date.
- On the basis of their discussion with you and your employer, the Academic Supervisor will return a feedback form to the School of Business and The Career Development and Employability Office for review.

Assessment

Professional development portfolio (30%)

Placement students will build and maintain an e-portfolio on the virtual learning environment which will capture their professional progression and development of skills, knowledge and dispositions relevant to their career path.

Oral Presentation (30%)

Placement students will deliver an oral presentation within a conference format at NCI.

Final Work Placement Report (40%)

Placement students will submit a written report demonstrating that the learning objectives of the work placement have been met. Detailed information on submission deadlines and guidance will be provided on the virtual learning environment.

My work placement was a phenomenal experience. I gained invaluable real world experience that opened my eyes to the wide variety of careers in HR. I am so delighted to have been giving the opportunity to work in a professional setting alongside great teams that supported and developed my skill set. I would absolutely recommend all students undertake the placement year as not only is it a great opportunity but it also helps you understand what path you would like to go down post grad.

Naomi Halpin
Takeda



Assessment

Work placement is a formal and academically accredited element of your degree programme. Your performance on the Work Placement Programme will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Your participation in and satisfactory completion of the employment.
- Your achievement of the learning outcomes of the work placement program.
- Monthly Learning Report/Portfolio.
- Final Work Placement Report and Poster.
- Performance assessment by Academic Supervisor and informed by the Company Supervisor.

Learning outcomes of the module

On successful completion of the work placement the learner will be able to:

- LO1:** Demonstrate an understanding of the role of reflective practice in career development.
- LO2:** Document and analyse the business domain of the host organisation, its operational practices and the learner's role in the placement period.
- LO3:** Demonstrate the application of team working and communication skills appropriate to the role in the business placement.
- LO4:** Reflect on their career motivations — and consider career options open to them taking into consideration internal and external motivations and influences.
- LO5:** Reflect on the skills employers seek and be confident in mapping and presenting their competencies to recruiters.
- LO6:** Reflect on and analyse their own strengths and weaknesses within the business placement, and their implications for future career development.
- LO7:** Demonstrate new learning with regards to the skills, knowledge and dispositions required for effective functioning in the workplace, and the application of skills acquired on the academic programme.



My placement gave me such valuable hands-on experience and the opportunity to consolidate what I had studied in college and apply it to real-life situations as a HR Intern. I would encourage all students to apply for the placement year!

**Alkris Bontoyan
Ryanair**

Dos and Don'ts

The rules (written and unwritten) of the workplace can be quite different to the experience of studying at College. The list below has been formulated to give you some important reminders of what will be expected of you during your placement.

Do

- Act professionally. Turn up on time, stick to prescribed breaks and respect start and end times of the working day.
- Plan and prioritise your workload.
- Address colleagues and customers formally, particularly in the early days of your placement.
- Check what your organisation's dress code is before starting your placement.
- Think carefully about the recipients of emails before clicking 'send'.
- Be an NCI ambassador.
- Familiarise yourself with your placement provider's health and safety, fire, security, absence, time keeping, dress code and disciplinary regulations.
- Inform us of any problems that cannot be resolved at a local level.
- Report any absence to your workplace supervisor as soon as possible and let the Placements Office know if you are absent for 3 or more consecutive working days.

Don't

- Extend lunch breaks or take lots of shorter breaks throughout the day.
- Keep quiet if you think your workload is too much or too little!
- Use slang in emails and correspondence.
- Wear revealing or inappropriate clothes.
- Use office internet, email, or mobile phones for personal use.
- Forget that you are representing both yourself and NCI whilst on placement.
- Leave it until you encounter a problem to ask about your placement provider's policy.
- Keep quiet if you think you are being bullied, harassed, or have concerns regarding your placement.
- Take unapproved absences from work.

Difficulties on Placement

If you experience difficulties on placement you should report the problem to your workplace supervisor and/or line manager.

If you do not feel comfortable doing this, there are a number of other sources of help: Your Academic Supervisor and your Careers and Placement Advisor will deal with queries confidentially and appropriately.

National College of Ireland counselling service is also available to you at any stage. You can contact the service on any campus or whilst on placement all year round. The service is free and confidential, you can find more information by contacting The Career Development & Employability Office.

In the event of a total failure of the relationship between you and your employer, you will be either:

- A. Facilitated in finding an alternative placement where such an option is feasible to complete the full placement, or
 - B. Counselling and supported in returning to the 180 credit degree.
1. Where student performance gives rise to fears of module failure the student may, after an interview with the Vice-Dean for Undergraduate Studies (or a nominee), be counselled and supported in returning to the 180 credit degree the following year.
 2. Personal reasons or extenuating circumstances may result in it being advisable for the learner to suspend or return from placement.

Transfer to back to the 180 ECTS degree will be facilitated within the first 4 weeks of stage 3. Requests to return to the 180 ECTS award after that date will be considered on a case by case basis as the learner will have missed a significant amount of the award year and deferral may be a more appropriate outcome.

If you do not pass your placement year, you cannot repeat it, and will be subsequently transferred to the 3 year programme.

National College of Ireland's Disciplinary Procedure

The behaviour of the vast majority of National College of Ireland students is exemplary however any student on placement whose behaviour does not meet our expected standards may be dealt with through NCI's Regulations Governing Student Discipline. Placement students should be aware that behaviour in breach of criminal law or behaviour that poses a risk to the College Community or reputation of the College as a whole is deemed a major infringement and may result in disciplinary action being taken. This could result in you failing the Placement Module or in more serious cases you could be suspended or expelled from the National College of Ireland.

FAQs

Can I source my own placement?

Yes, but it must be approved by The Career Development & Employability Office as being suitable before you attend interview. Final approval is given once you complete a Secured Own Placement Form and return it, together with a written job offer, to the Careers Office.

What happens if I don't secure a placement?

It may not be possible to find appropriate placements for all eligible learners. Students who have not secured a work placement will be transferred to the 3 year 180 ECTS award. Every effort will be made to assist learners in finding appropriate placements. The final selection of a learner for placement is made by employers providing placements.

How much will I earn?

There is no set pay for work placements. A minimum salary is recommended to cover your living expenses but there is some variation in what is paid by individual employers. The market determines the rate of pay.

Will the company require me to sign a contract?

- NCI, the student and the employer will all co-sign a tri party agreement.
- Some companies will also require you to sign a contract. Other employers are more informal in their approach and may not issue a contract.

Student fees

Whilst on placement, you remain a registered student of National College of Ireland and pay fees as normal to the fees office.

What happens if I secure and accept a work placement offer during Semester 2 and then do not achieve an overall 2:1 result in 2nd year?

Students on track for a 2:1 will be eligible to apply for work placements throughout Semester 2 of 2nd year. It is likely that work placement offers will be issued and accepted before the summer exams have been completed and before results are issued.

A student who has accepted a work placement offer and subsequently does not achieve an overall 2:1 in their 2nd year exams should contact The Career Development & Employability Office immediately. An interview will be scheduled with either or both the Programme Director and Vice Dean of the School of Business and cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

What should I do if I experience a problem on placement?

- If a problem arises, you will firstly need to speak to your direct supervisor to explain the difficulties you are experiencing.
- If this fails to resolve the situation, you should contact The Career Development & Employability Office immediately.
- You must not leave your placement without the permission from The Career Development & Employability Office.

What happens if I accept a placement and then change my mind and wish to return to the three-year degree programme?

We ask that students think carefully before applying for the 4 year work placement programme. Once a student has requested and been approved for the 4 year 240 credit degree programme they have then committed to this option. Students cannot accept and offer with an employer and later decide to return to the three year degree programme.

Placement Timeline

Year 1

Deliverable/Protocol

Attend events, presentations and initiatives run by The Career Development & Employability Office. Take an active role in clubs, societies or other team based activities outside College to develop your employability skills and broaden your network.

Year 2

Students register their interest in the 5 credit 'Career Management Skills' module that is offered in Semester 2 of 2nd year.

Semester 1

- Begin the 12 week 5 credit Career Management Skills module.
- Submit a high quality CV and LinkedIn profile to The Career Development & Employability Office. This will be reviewed and returned for final changes.
- Students wishing to undertake the work placement must submit a signed application form.
- Potential employers will be contacted by Careers Office from the start of Semester 2 until the August preceding commencement of placement.
- Work placement opportunities will be posted on the online jobs board. Students self-select for the roles they are interested in and the Career Development and Employability Office send CVs to employers.
- Students attend interview preparation workshops as part of the Career Management Skills Module.

Year 2

Semester 2

- Students continue to apply for placements until they receive an offer of employment.
- Students attend client interviews/assessment centres or undertake other recruitment and selection tests as specified by the employer.
- As is practice across the sector students must accept the first offer they receive through the Career Development and Employability Office.

Year 3

Placement

- Before starting placement, complete the tri party agreement and submit a summary of your placement goals to The Career Development & Employability Office.
- Placement begins in September or earlier depending on arrangements agreed between the employer, student and NCI.
- Academic Supervisor assigned and will visit students at least once but probably twice during the placement.

Application for Work Placement

I hereby apply to enrol in the Work Placement Module and transfer to the 240 credit 4 year BA (Hons)
_____ programme.

I understand I must abide by the guidelines and rules surrounding work placement applications and behaviour and that I will be required to pay fees/registration fees for this the third year of the programme.

Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Mobile: _____

Email Address: _____

Exams Results to Date

Overall Year 1 result shown as a %: _____

Year 2, Semester 1 result shown as a %: _____

Visa Status

Are you an EU Student? Yes: _____ No: _____

Do you require a work permit to work in the EU? Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, do you have a visa/work permit?
(Please indicate type of visa/permit held): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Work Placement—Learning Contract

Prior to Placement we require that you:

- Meet all deadlines as indicated by the Career Development and Employability Office.
- Provide a CV, to a professional standard and deadline as set.
- To attend all Career Management Skills classes and Career appointments arranged or to notify the Careers Team beforehand of unavailability.
- To be available for work from September to May.
- Respond to work placement advertisements within 24 hours.
- Acknowledge that work placement is a joint effort – you will need to make sufficient number and variety of applications to ensure you achieve a placement by the required date.
- Ensure you properly researched the vacancies and companies before interview.
- To arrange for own travel insurance if you have secured a placement outside of Ireland.
- To keep the Careers Team informed of any other work placement arrangements made directly by you and ensure the placement has been validated by the Careers Team.
- To attend all interviews arranged by and agreed with, the Career Development and Employability Office.
- To accept the first firm offer of employment received on your behalf by the Career Development and Employability Office.
- If you have any concerns about your proposed host employer, you should raise these in advance with the Careers Team.
- Before arriving at the host employer you must undertake any programme of preparation offered by the College and attend pre-departure preparation or briefing meetings of which you are notified.

On Placement, you are required to:

- Contact to the Careers Team at NCI to confirm commencement of the placement.
- To familiarise yourself with and abide by the company's work practices, paying particular attention to hours of work, dress code and use of email and phone.
- To be A REPRESENTATIVE of NCI and to behave in an appropriate and professional manner at all times in accordance with the Company's code of work practice.
- Acquaint yourself with any traditions, codes of conduct or internal regulations of the company and should comply with such traditions, regulations or codes of conduct.
- To start and finish work on dates and times agreed with Employers and the Placement officer.
- Keep the Careers Team informed of any problems relating to the quality of the placement that cannot be resolved at a local level.
- To NEVER WALK OUT or leave a placement without prior consultation with Academic Supervisor or Academic Coordinator/Placement Co-ordinator/Work Supervisor.
- To inform Academic Supervisor/Coordinator/Placement Co-ordinator immediately if you are involved in any type of harassment incident at work.
- To consult with Academic Supervisor/Work Supervisor/Placement Officer to agree time off to repeat exams.
- Should you be required to repeat exams, to take books with you on placement and study in evenings and at weekends.

Work Placement—Learning Contract

- To abide by company policy re holiday entitlement.
- To be attendance in college, on the first day of the first term of fourth year.
- Complete end of placement feedback questionnaires.
- Provide supervisor with end of placement feedback questionnaires.
- The College does not accept liability for loss and/or damage to personal property, and students are required to make their own insurance arrangements in this respect.
- The College does not accept liability for third party claims arising out of the use by students of their own vehicles for course trips and travel to placements. Students must therefore inform their own individual insurance company/broker and have policies adjusted to reflect vehicle use outside the standard 'social and domestic' cover.
- To monitor your progress the College will maintain regular contact with you (through email or other channels) during your work placement. There will also be a clear schedule for submission of any learning material or progress forms. You will be responsible for ensuring that you acknowledge such contact and comply with the schedule.
- Upon return to the College you will be required to provide a brief practical report on the experience. You may also be required to attend an interview to help with the assimilation of your experience, ease your return to the College, and provide information to the College on the host employer.

Termination of Employment

- In the event that you are asked to leave your work placement early for failing to comply with the company's code of practice, you will be required to fulfill the remaining weeks of your placement in a project at the discretion and supervision of your Academic Supervisor. Your final result will reflect your failure to complete your placement.

What you can expect of us

- An initial briefing on the placement process, inclusive of Guidelines, key dates and assessment.
- Presentation and advice in second year on the production of CVs.
- Follow up CVs clinics, to examine the structure, language and presentation of your CV and to highlight mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- A one to one meeting with the Career Development and Employability Office to discuss placement options, inclusive of sector/location etc., and to identify personal strengths/weaknesses.
- Presentation and advice on Interview Technique.
- Mock interviews and follow up individual meetings where appropriate to support students with interview process.
- Appropriate support and guidance in finding own placements.
- Pre-placement talk on preparing students for placement.
- On-going support while on placement.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above conditions.

Signed: _____

Name: (printed) _____

Date: _____

Secure Own Placement Form

Undergraduate Work Placement Job Description Form

If you secure your own work placement you must submit this form to the Careers Team for approval.

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Employer Details

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Title: (must be relevant to role) _____

Contact Email: _____

Contact Mobile and Landline Numbers: _____

Job Details

Title of Position: _____

Dates (from/to): _____

Terms of Employment: (pay/hours of work) _____

Duties and Responsibilities: _____

Tri Party Agreement Contract for Placement

1. General

This contract regulates the modalities of the placement which forms part of the BA (Hons)

_____ at National College of Ireland.

2. Responsibilities of the contracting parties

2.1. The Company commits itself to

- a. Host the student _____ for an 8 month period as required to meet the Academic Work Placement requirements.
 - i. Start Date
 - ii. End Date
- b. Provide induction training including an outline of Health and Safety and emergency arrangements.
- c. Draw up the goals and job description for the internship in collaboration with The National College of Ireland.
- d. Provide adequate supervision and feedback for the Student during the placement.
- e. Sign the students monthly learning report

2.2 NCI commits itself to

- a. Provide the Student with the necessary information on the placement.
- b. Provide adequate support for the student during the placement.
- c. Make the Student aware of the placement code of practice and their rights and responsibilities during the placement.

2.3 The Student commits herself/himself

- a. To make the most of the learning opportunities which the placement offers.
- b. To carry out carefully the tasks which he/she is assigned according to the goals and contents of the placement drawn up in advance.
- c. To follow the instructions of his/her Mentor in the Company.
- d. To follow the official rules and regulations of the Company and to inform the Company immediately in case of absence (such as in the case of sickness).
- e. To adhere to the Company's pledge of confidentiality and to commercial sensitivity (e.g. copyright) to the same extent as any employee of the firm.

Tri Party Agreement Contract for Placement (cont.)

3. Supervision

_____ will assign _____ as Placement Supervisor National College of Ireland will assign _____ as Academic Supervisor.

_____ will visit _____ at least once over the 8 month placement. This visit is likely to take place 3 months after _____ begins their contract.

4. Remuneration

The Student will receive a salary of _____ per annum on a pro rata basis.

5. Working hours

The Student will be required to work from _____

6. Title of Role Student will have on placement _____

7. Termination of the Contract

The contract can be terminated for reasons including: breach of discipline, unsatisfactory placement or placement conditions, inability to carry out the placement without prior notice by both the Company and the Student after consultation with the National College of Ireland.

8. Contract Copy

Three copies of this contract must be signed. Each contracting party will receive one copy.

Signature on behalf of Company: _____

Signature on behalf of National College of Ireland: _____

Signature of the Student: _____

Site Visit Report Form

Date of Visit: _____

Name of Employer: _____

Representatives met and job titles: _____

Based on your meeting with the Student and the Placement Organisation Supervisor, please assess or rate the following:

Work Experience

	Yes	No
Is the placement challenging?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the placement of relevance to the Student's course of study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there well defined targets/projects/roles to be completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there adequate support/supervision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Placement Organisation Supervisor's Evaluation of the Student's Performance

	Poor			Excellent	
Student's level of technical knowledge for this placement	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of work carried out by Student	1	2	3	4	5
Ability of Student to work with others	1	2	3	4	5
Attendance of student	1	2	3	4	5
Timekeeping of Student	1	2	3	4	5
Ability of Student to manage their time effectively & to meet deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
Ability of Student to show initiative	1	2	3	4	5
Level of interest	1	2	3	4	5

Overall view of the Student's learning and development based on this placement: _____

Overall view of the placement/placement organisation: _____

Any areas of concern: _____

Any actions required: _____

Comments/suggestions from employer or student: _____

Academic Supervisors Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____





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