Work Experience, Placements & Internships
Work experience is a great way for you to build up your skills, explore your options or gain experience in an industry of interest. Work experience enhances the skills and knowledge gained throughout your degree, and in today's competitive job market, employers are more likely to recruit graduates who have gained work experience alongside their studies.

**Types of Work Experience**

Work experience is any opportunity that gives you the work-related learning that will help to prepare you for employment. It can take many forms including part-time work, vacation work, work shadowing, voluntary work, placements and internships.

**Part-time & Vacation Work**

An increasing number of students choose to work part-time throughout their degree or during the holidays to fund their studies and enhance their employability. For detailed information on how to find part-time and vacation work on and off-campus, read our ‘Finding Work’ guide: mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides.

**Work Shadowing**

Work shadowing is an informal type of work experience where you observe someone in their role and aims to provide an insight rather than hands on experience. These opportunities are usually short term, unpaid and arranged through speculative applications.

**Work Placements**

A work placement will allow you to put the knowledge and skills you have gained throughout your degree into practice in the world of work. The length of time spent in a work placement will depend on the sector and employer. Some work placements are undertaken during holidays and last between one and three months, whereas on some degree courses you will need to spend a year in industry, this is often referred to as a 'sandwich placement'.

**Sandwich Placements**

A sandwich placement enables students to gain graduate-level work experience with one or more organisations, lasting around twelve months, as part of their degree. Undertaking a sandwich placement is a great way to gain experience in the industry or sector you’re interested in, and develop the key skills and competencies sought by graduate recruiters. Learn more on our website: mmu.ac.uk/careers

**Internships**

An internship is a fixed or limited period of work experience offered by an organisation. Internships are usually undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field. Read the TARGETjobs Internships guide for detailed advice on how to secure an internship: hviewer.zmags.com/publication/f408bfae#/f408bfae/1

After you graduate you can apply for paid internships across the University in a wide variety of roles through the Manchester Met Graduate Internship Scheme: mmu.ac.uk/intern/
Finding Work Experience

If you would like help finding and applying for work experience opportunities, the Careers & Employability Service offers a range of support to Manchester Met students and graduates.

We advertise work experience opportunities on My Career Hub. Login to find paid placements, internships, part-time and vacation job opportunities: mmu.ac.uk/findajob

Jobs4Students offers a range of exciting paid on-campus opportunities for Manchester Met students, including Residential Advisors, IT Rovers and Outreach Ambassadors. Visit the Jobs4Students webpage to learn how you can get involved: mmu.ac.uk/jobs4students

Finding your own work experience demands time and effort, but can be a worthwhile approach if you want something specialist or have specific requirements, such as location. A ‘speculative application’ is the term used when a person approaches an organisation directly, rather than responding to an advert, to ask whether there are any jobs or other opportunities available. For more information on speculative applications read our ‘Finding Work’ guide, in the Jobs, Placements and Work Experience section: mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides

Manchester Met’s Student’s Union run the online volunteering hub, where you can search for volunteering opportunities and keep a record of your hours and skills: theunionmmu.org/your-opportunities/volunteering/

Learn about potential opportunities with organisations you are interested in by linking to them through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. For more information on how you can use social media to find work experience read our ‘Using Social Media for Job Hunting’ guide, in the Jobs, Placements and Work Experience section: mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides.

Learn more about finding work experience opportunities on the Prospects website: prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/work-experience-and-internships
When to Apply

Apply in plenty of time - for example, if you are looking for summer work, contact employers between January and Easter. Some of the structured schemes have closing dates in the Autumn term so the earlier you start your research the better.

Many employers have no need to advertise vacation and placement jobs because they receive significant numbers of applications. Be pro-active and contact organisations that interest you with a well-prepared CV and covering letter. If they have not responded, follow this up a week or so later with a phone call.

Employers will use your applications to decide whether you will be invited for interview. If you are submitting a CV, application, covering letter or portfolio, your applications are a critical part of securing your work experience.

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of application support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- **Read our ‘Applications’ and ‘CVs and Covering Letters’ career guides**, available on our website: [www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides)
- **Visit the Jobs Hub Drop-in.** Available Monday-Friday, 1pm-4pm in the Employability Hub, Business School Building. The Jobs Hub Drop-In offers individual CV, covering letter and application support services. Tip: to make the most of the Jobs Hub Drop-In service please ensure you have attempted to draft your CV before attending.

Making the Most of Your Experience

**Build up your network**

Work experience will put you in touch with a wide range of people opening your professional network. Identify people whose work interests you and actively ask for their advice. It may be possible to organise some work shadowing or do a short project for them.

Use the professional networking site LinkedIn to connect with your co-workers, enabling you to stay in touch after your work experience has ended. The contacts you make can be a valuable resource when you are looking to source further experience or a job opportunity in the future. Read our ‘Creating your LinkedIn profile’ guide for information on how to set up a profile and build your network: [www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides).

**Be Proactive**

Whilst completing your work experience, take an active interest in getting involved in every opportunity, being enthusiastic will go a long way in the workplace and will open doors to taking on further responsibility and stretching your abilities.
Don’t be afraid to ask questions and make suggestions, take an active interest in the company and the sector to build your commercial awareness. Even if the sector isn’t the career you intend to be in once you graduate this can help you to make a good impression with your manager and colleagues.

**Record your Achievements**

This can be as simple as keeping a word document or a notebook of your achievements, and any challenges you have overcome. Reflecting on what you have done and the skills and attributes you have developed, will be extremely useful for future job applications as you will have a bank of examples to draw from.

**Before you leave…**

- Ask if your employer will write you a reference
- Have the contact details of colleagues who may act as mentors, sources of advice, or help in finding employment in the future.
- Ask for feedback on your performance. Get your manager’s perspective on what you need to do to further develop your employability in order to be successful in this work.
- Make sure you are completely clear about what you have gained from the placement in terms of skills, experience and personal development.

**Careers & Employability Support**

The Careers & Employability Service offers range of work experience support to Manchester Met students and graduates. For more information visit mmu.ac.uk/careers