

# **FLEXIBLE SANDWICH PLACEMENTS**

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REFERENCE, SUPPORT & DELIVERY GUIDE

Business and Enterprise

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## INTRODUCTION

As the university increases its commitment to enable students to undertake meaningful work experience this guide provides an update on changes/developments/adaptions course teams can consider in order to offer a more flexible approach to sandwich placements (SwP) in which students and employers can better engage. We know placements have a transformative impact on students. Hallam is committed to being both flexible and supportive to ensure students take up this opportunity and employers are able to offer placements. The purpose of this guide is to provide course teams with clarity of the broader university offer to support students and employer to engage with SwP along with suggestions of more flexible ways students can fulfil SwP requirements.

While undertaking a SwP year Tuition Fees will be charged at £1,850, which Hallam has reduce further to £1,200 in line with competitor institutions. To mitigate the fee and to provide value for money, Hallam has put together a meaningful and varied package of activities, support and flexibility available both centrally and through courses. This aims to meet the needs of all students during their placement journey including searching for, securing, completing and harnessing their learning for graduate employment.

### COVID-19

Economic data demonstrating the impact of Covid-19 provides a disturbing evidence base of the employment market our current and future graduates will enter. Universal Credit claims and unemployment are increasing while job vacancies are down suggesting we are approaching a large scale depression. For students, employers are stating they will be reducing the number of placement and internship opportunities which will inevitably increase competition for placements and recruitment methods are becoming more virtual, contributing to increased anxiety amongst graduating students.

### SAFETY FIRST

There is a full and resolute commitment to ensure placements are safe and in line with changing Government guidelines. All placement processes and procedures are aligned to the Universities Health and Safety Association (Guidance for Health and Safety on Placements) and ASET Good Practice on Placement Guide along with our own university policies. Placements are only approved once all health and safety process have been completed by the student, the employer and a Hallam representative. These practices may differ for specific courses, individual specialisms and employer requirements, all of which are considered to ensure student safety.

- Information for students about safety at work (*this will change in response to guidance*)

## **BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE**

To counteract the impact of Covid19 on placements, Hallam must do all we can to increase each student's level and quality of work experience. The Highly Skilled Employment commitment seeks to achieve this through curriculum delivery, with every standard UG course now offering a SwP. The benefits of sandwich placements are clear: they result in improved attainment outcomes, graduate outcomes and earnings levels, as well as less measurable benefits such as improved confidence. For SHU students, there is a stark "placement gap" of 30% for good honours, 16% for highly skilled employment and £4,500 for earnings. Research for HEFCE in 2015 noted that a series of recent studies and research overviews have confirmed work experience (in the form of placements and internships) is an enabler of success in the graduate labour market (Bennett et al., 2008; Edge and SCRE, 2011; Pennington et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2013). In addition, the latest [LEO data](#) also reports an overall salary premium for students from sandwich courses of approximately £6000, which remained steady at 3, 5 and 10 years.

- More information on the collection of support and opportunities available for students is available on the [Student Placement site](#)
- Information for students on placement preparation and recruitment and selection activities is available through [Careers Connect](#).
- [10 things student need to know about placements](#)
- [Placement FAQ's for students](#)
- [Information for students on what they need to do in order to have their placement approved](#)

## **SANDWICH PLACEMENT GUIDELINES**

### **Number of weeks**

The minimum number of weeks a student is required to be employed to fulfil the conditions of a SwP is 24 weeks, as identified within the Academic Awards Framework. All courses have now reviewed their SwP, and where course documentation differs from this a course modification or similar considerations / amends will be required. The maximum number of weeks should be agreed between the student and the employer .

### **Distinctiveness of Sandwich placement and short term work experience**

The distinction and benefits of short work experiences versus SwP should be clearly presented to students. Short work placements should not be 'double counted' when a student takes up a SwP following a short work experience e.g. 120 hours. A short work experience should be a meaningful 'stepping stone' toward securing a SwP along their journey toward highly skilled employment. The differences between the two should be clearly stated and understood by students, with SwP representing the premium work experience.

## **Applied Professional Diploma (APDip)**

This is a new non-credit bearing University award available to all students who undertake a SwP as part of their degree which will align to one of five work experience 'settings': Community, Industry, International, Research Consultancy, Enterprise. The Diploma will give students reward and recognition for their learning and experience. It will do this through a consistent and clear structure providing an opportunity for students to expand their applied learning and articulation of success through an impactful synoptic portfolio. Students will receive regular virtual 'Keep-in-Touch' points from an academic 'supervisor' or local equivalent, and will be able to access support resources through Careers Connect.

- [Further information for students on the APDip](#)
- [Further information about designing and delivering the APDip](#) (*this site will be updated regularly*)

## **Placement Preparation and student engagement**

Preparing students for their placement should involve the design of activities within curriculum supported by a relevant and meaningful central offer involving academic and Careers and Employability colleagues, alongside a digital offer within Careers Connect 360. College Employability Consultants and Dept. Employability Advisers are on hand to fully support placement preparation. This preparation should respond to the increased competitive nature of placements and a more digitally focussed recruitment and selection process e.g. video interviews and online assessment centres. The local and central support must complement each other and provide students with the tools, skills, awareness and confidence to succeed in securing and completing a successful SwP.

- [Further information for students to help them prepare for a placement](#)
- [Further information for students on what to expect during placement](#)

## **Student supervision**

Academic supervision of students during their placements enables students to best articulate and achieve their learning and personal development along with maintaining a student's connection to the University. While there are mixed approaches across SHU we need to be more consistent, manage expectations and provide a meaningful and impactful supervisory offer. By aligning to the APDip requirements, managing expectations and ensuring all three placement touch points are completed, we are providing a consistent student experience. It is also recommended that the supervising academic is known to the student prior to the commencement of the placement, and a commitment is made to ensure the touchpoints are completed or covered by an alternative member of staff during absences.

- [Information on the wider support for students available during their placement](#)
- [Signposting students to make an appointment with an employability adviser](#)

### **Access to bursary - Student Success Scholarship**

It has been agreed, via the Access and Participation Group, that students who are on the Student Success Scholarship (SSS) will receive a bursary to help them to secure and complete a SwP. The amount a student receives is dependent on their personal circumstances. A series of activities and resources will provide these students with a support package from BESE to boost confidence, opportunities and overall success.

- [Further information on the general funding support available to students](#)

### **Support and flexibility from Accommodation**

If students book accommodation that is managed by Campus Services (Charlotte Court; and Bramall Court), the University can release them from their contracts, and either refund them in full (including deposit) if they do not use the room, or bill them to the point of departure if they leave early to go on placement.

- [Further advice on accommodation and travel for students on placements](#)

### **Regional alignment and employer engagement**

BESE is working to engage with local and regional employers and associated stakeholders to boost the number of SwP opportunities for students locally and regionally. These will be advertised to students through Unihub.

- [Further information for students on how to find a placement](#)

## **FLEXIBILITY IN SANDWICH PLACEMENT**

In order to meet the changing demands of both students and employers we should be flexible in the delivery mode method of the SwP models. Full time, part time and mixed method delivery of SwP should be considered and made available as long as a minimum 24 weeks are completed. This is already an option for students but is not well promoted and often needs careful supervision and management. This could attract increased engagement with different employers who could not previously accommodate a full SwP. It may also allow students with differing circumstances to continue with their life commitments while still benefiting from a SwP in a supportive and structured way.

The alignment of the choice of SwP to the degree should also be considered. In many cases graduate employment is not necessarily directly related to the discipline of the students degree and therefore, is non-linear. As such, sandwich placements do not always need to be directly linked to the discipline of study but should be developmental for a student in terms of their graduate employment, personal growth and development of their broader skills, knowledge and attributes. It is expected that all placements are paid, however, due to the nature of some

industries, students may choose to undertake a non-paid placements and receive financial support from different sources dependent on circumstances. Options include:

### **Individual project/portfolio placements**

- Students employed to establish, continue or complete a specific project, mentored throughout the duration towards an end product/output.
- Could be co-mentored by previous SwP students and or academic colleagues as appropriate.
- Virtually and/or face to face delivery options available.
- Possible links to Alumni, business start-up, internal SHU projects, Scale-up 360, Civic Engagement etc.
- These projects could then be re-purposed to support authentic work experience opportunities for related modules in Level 4 or Level 5.

### **Interdisciplinary mentored Project/portfolio placement**

- A project is identified whereby a group of students from different disciplines collaborate, using their skills set to achieve the objectives/output.
- Possible links to i-Lab, AWRC, Alumn, Scale-Up 360, Civic Engagement.
- Could be co-mentored by previous SwP students and or academic colleagues as appropriate.
- These projects could then be re-purposed to support authentic work experience opportunities for related modules.

### **Research Placements**

- Partner with Hallam or other research centres to support specific research projects and outputs.
- Partner with academics on specific research projects PhD students.
- Could be co-mentored by previous SwP students and or academic colleagues as appropriate.
- These projects could then be re-purposed to support authentic work experience opportunities for related modules.

### **Portfolio Placement**

- Students *collect* their 24 weeks *across a number of employers*, building their network, gaining different experiences and broadening their perspective across different industries.
- This can be in blocks to suit students and employers e.g. 2x12 weeks or 3x8weeks.
- This could be part time over a year still completing the equivalent of 24 weeks or over a full time 24 weeks.

### **Flexible Placement**

- Students *collect* their 24 weeks on a *schedule which suits the demands of the employer*. This could be across different timings throughout the year to support business demand e.g. seasonal or product services appropriate or within different parts of the business as demand dictates.
- This can be in scheduled in blocks to suit students and employers.
- This could be part time over a year still completing the equivalent of 24 weeks or full time over 24 weeks.

### **Incorporated placement**

- With a current employer who a student may be working for on a part time basis.
- A formal enhancement into a SwP of a student's current work practices as negotiated and agreed by an appropriate academic.
- This includes agreed incorporated placement responsibilities with a current employer which should be at an appropriate level of responsibilities / output. This will result in a differentiated, meaningful and relevant work experience than is typically undertaken in their usual employment.

### **Work for yourself (Enterprise)**

Enterprise based placements offer students an opportunity to develop their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and attributes which are essential for either running a successful business venture or in securing a great graduate job. We currently offer a number of sandwich year options for students:

- Work for Yourself: Test out your own business idea or venture
- Enterprise Magazine Publishing: Be part of a small team running our online magazine (articles, photography, interviews, marketing)
- Hallam Pop-up Shop Management: Be part of a small team managing the pop-up shop (bookings, running events & exhibitions, marketing)
- Innovate. Create. Develop.: Work as part of a team to improve people's lives, the community or the environment.