



**Frequently Asked Questions
School of Biosciences
Year in Industry for undergraduate students**

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Eligibility

Which students can undertake a year in industry placement?

All BSc and MSci undergraduate students can undertake a year in industry placement. Students studying for MNutr Nutrition and Dietetics and the Pre-Veterinary Science Certificate are not eligible.

Can I undertake a year in industry placement if I study abroad during Year 2?

Yes, you can undertake a year in industry placement as well as studying abroad during year 2. You need to be organised in order to work with the Placement Team to plan your application for placements. You will need to update your CV and send it to the Placement Team by email, take part in Skype conversations, plan your time effectively and meet placement deadlines. You should also be aware that some companies will refuse to interview candidates who are not able to attend the interview in person. This may mean that you cannot be considered for some placements that would otherwise have been of interest to you.

Can I undertake a year in industry placement as well as the International Year?

No, it is not possible to undertake both the year in industry placement and the International Year. As you change degrees title, you have to choose between "...with Industrial Year" or "... with an International Year" – both programmes take place during an additional third year following year 2 and prior to your final year. The only degree programmes that would allow for a full year studying abroad and a year in industry placement are: BSc International Agricultural Science, BSc/MSci International Environmental Science, and students on the following degree programmes who choose to study abroad at the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus for their full second year: Biotechnology, Environmental Science, Environmental Biology, Agricultural and Crop Science, Nutrition or Plant Sciences.

It may be possible for you to study abroad for semester 1 and work abroad for semester 2 within the International Year. However, this will depend on your host university and a number of other factors. For further information, please contact Rachel Jessop on rachel.jessop@nottingham.ac.uk

Looking for a placement

Where do I look for possible host companies?

[Mahara](#) is an excellent resource to find out about different companies who may offer a year in industry programme. There is a page for each academic area represented in the School of Biosciences with lists of relevant companies and useful websites.

There are also many websites that advertise year in industry placement opportunities, and provide information about possible roles, as well as industry sectors. You can subscribe to these to receive a regular update by email:

- [My Career](#) – the University's online jobs board
- [RateMyPlacement](#) – lists placements and internships by sector, as well as giving advice
- [Gradcracker](#) – lists placements and graduate jobs
- [Cogent Skills](#) – not-for-profit agency for science companies (good for Biotechnology/Microbiology)
- [New Scientist](#) – science and technology jobs
- [SRG](#) – scientific recruitment agency used by many science companies to recruit
- [Access-science jobs](#) - a specialist job site for the UK science industry
- [Indeed](#) – a worldwide job site that brings together roles posted on other websites
- [Prospects](#) – useful information about placements, lists placement opportunities by employer
- [Farmers Weekly](#) – agricultural and farming jobs
- [EnvironmentJob](#) – environmental jobs

Some placements are advertised directly on company websites – you can sign up to receive email alerts once opportunities are available, or follow the relevant companies on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

Not all placements are advertised publicly. Smaller businesses may be interested in employing a placement student but do not actively advertise this, often because of the time and expenses involved. If you are interested in a particular company, product or location, you can make a speculative application that could open up an opportunity that you might not otherwise have found. The Placement Team can work with you if you are interested in undertaking a placement in a specific field/country. We can support you as you research the possibilities, look for suitable companies and helping you write a speculative application.

If you're not sure what kind of placement you want, it may be useful for you to meet with a Careers advisor who can help you think about your previous experience and future plans post-graduation. You can [book to meet with a Careers Advisor](#) on the Sutton Bonington campus; the Careers and Employability Service offer appointments each week during termtime. One way of thinking about which sector or area to aim for is to think about which modules you enjoy most and why you enjoy them – then consider what kind of company or role would match these.

Are there any companies that have an agreement with the University to take placement students?

The majority of year in industry placements are advertised nationally to all students across the UK. In some instances however, companies will only target a small number of selected universities to recruit students to their year in industry placement, which includes Nottingham. On other occasions, the Placement Team or the Careers and Employability Service will receive information directly about an available placement, which is only available for Nottingham students.

What support is available from the University regarding looking for a placement?

The Placement Team work with you in partnership to support you through searching for and applying for a placement. Once you have expressed an interest in doing a year in industry placement, you are entered onto the placements contact database and will receive a weekly email during term time listing all of the placements of which we are aware in your specific academic area. You will also receive a regular Careers Bulletin from the Careers and Employability Service that highlights key placements.

At the start of the Autumn Term each year the Placement Team run Kickstart Placements in collaboration with the Careers and Employability Service. At Kickstart Placements you will have the opportunity to hear about possible placements linked to your degree programme, meet with students who have undertaken a year in industry placement in the past and hear what you can do in order to secure a placement.

During your second year, the Placement Team organise employer presentations on campus for employers who are looking to recruit Nottingham students, as well as offering weekly appointments during term time. We review your CV/application/cover letter and suggest improvements; and advise you on possible host companies. The Careers and Employability Service also run a [range of events](#) during the academic year, including careers fairs, "Spotlight On...." events for specific degrees, and skills workshops.

Duration

How long is the placement?

The standard placement is 12 months in length. Most placement contracts are for 12 months. The minimum duration of the placement is 9 months, and the maximum duration of the placement is 15 months. It is also possible to complete 2 placements during the year in industry, of 6 months each. Students are expected to work full time.

When does the placement start and end?

The placement starts once you have completed your exams in May. The earliest date that you could start your placement is late May, depending on the dates of your exams. The latest date that you could start your placement is prior to the start of the following academic year in late September. Most students undertake a 12 month placement starting anytime between July and September. Please note that the placement start and end dates will depend on your host company. Dates will be agreed with your host company and must be confirmed to the Placement Team in advance of your start date.

Location**Where can I undertake a placement? Does it have to be in Nottingham?**

The placement can be located anywhere; there is no requirement to undertake your placement in Nottingham or even in the UK. There are some opportunities for placements in and around Nottingham, but the majority of year in industry placements in the past have been located elsewhere in the UK.

Travel is an important consideration when thinking about your placement. Agricultural companies and food factories can be located in remote locations, without access to public transport. Some locations will require a car, whereas other companies may be located in an urban environment with good public transport links. If you do not have access to a car, or cannot drive, then you will need to think carefully about the location of your placement, and whether it is practically possible for you to undertake a placement there.

Can the placement take place outside the UK?

Yes, the year in industry placement can be abroad. In the past, some international students have chosen to return to their home country, whilst other students have chosen to undertake their placement in another country outside the UK. Those who choose to undertake a placement in Europe may be eligible for Erasmus+ funding.

If you are interested in undertaking a year in industry placement abroad, then please let the Placement Team know early in the process. Sourcing and applying for an international placement will require more time than a UK-based placement and the Placement Team can support you with this.

Applying for the placement**When do I start applying for a placement?**

You start applying for placements at the beginning of your second year. It's not possible to apply for placements before they have formally opened for applications. However you can prepare to apply for placements by updating your CV and researching possible placement companies over the summer holiday.

When are the application deadlines?

The earliest placements are open for application in August, with application deadlines in late September. Most multinationals will have application deadlines in October and November. Others will extend application deadlines into January. Other companies, including SMEs, will have deadlines after Christmas.

Some companies do not have application deadlines and only close applications once they have found the right candidates. So it's a good idea to apply as soon as possible rather than waiting for the application deadline.

What support is there for me from the University regarding the application process?

The Placement Team offer weekly appointments and drop in sessions during term time. We can also help to prepare you for interview and, where relevant, assessment centres. There is lots of support and advice on [Mahara](#) regarding CVs, assessment centres, interviews and applications.

The Careers and Employability Service run [a range of events](#) during the academic year, including skills workshops to help you prepare for interviews and assessment centres. The Faculty of Science's Career Consultant, Pauline Maden, also offers individual mock interviews that you can [book online](#).

It's very normal for students to apply for multiple placements before being successful, particularly if the placements are very competitive and are advertised nationally.

What does the application process entail?

This very much depends on the company. Typically large multinationals will have a multi-stage application process, including online application, video interview, online aptitude tests and an assessment centre including multiple interviews. Smaller companies are more likely to have a simpler application process, consisting of submitting your CV and a Cover Letter, followed by an interview at the company premises for shortlisted candidates.

It's important to take the time to research the full application process so that you know what to expect – the company should provide information in advance. Details may be provided at employer presentations and on the company's website. The Placement Team can also provide information about the application process at placement providers where Nottingham students have worked in the past.

When will the placement interviews take place?

The date of the interview will depend on the application deadline. The earliest interviews are in November whereas others will be during the spring term. A small number of companies may interview students after the Easter holiday or during the summer holiday.

Do I need to complete particular documents in order to undertake a placement?

Once you have secured a placement you will need to transfer course to "...with Industrial Year". In order to do this you will complete the Course Transfer Form to change your degree course e.g. BSc Microbiology to BSc Microbiology with Industrial Year. Further information regarding how and when to complete the Course Transfer Form will be provided to students who have secured a year in industry placement during the Spring Semester. The Placement Team will work directly with you and the Student Services Centre and your Course Director to get the form completed, submitted and processed.

International students will need to speak to the Visa and Immigration Team to get immigration advice regarding their UK visa prior to changing course.

If you are doing a placement outside the UK, you'll need to ensure that you meet immigration requirements. Further information will be provided by the Placement Team.

Finance**Is the placement paid?**

The vast majority of placements are paid, with salaries ranging from approx. £16k up to £20k. The highest paid placements are offered by Aldi, who pay £25k.

However some placements are unpaid, paid below the UK national minimum wage or paid in kind; these usually include placements based at zoos, conservation placements, and projects funded by charities. As a University we do not condone unpaid placements; however we consider that certain opportunities may be of benefit to students' careers even if they are unpaid.

All eligible students can receive a tuition fee loan and a reduced maintenance loan, there is no additional funding available from the University and the maintenance loans from Student Finance is reduced for students on a placement. In some instances, students who are undertaking an unpaid placement can be offered payment "in kind" which may be accommodation on site or a weekly allowance. Students who choose to undertake an unpaid placement should be aware that there is no additional funding available from the University.

It can be difficult to finance your placement year if you are not paid. One option is to apply for a paid placement for part of the year to help you fund the unpaid part. Some students opt to work part-time in addition to an unpaid placement. Others live at home or with a friend/relative to save money. Before applying for any of these opportunities, you need to consider carefully whether you are willing to accept that the placement is unpaid and also whether you can afford to undertake the placement.

Do I need to pay a tuition fee to the University whilst I'm on placement?

All students who undertake a placement remain a fully registered student, and continue to have access to all of the University's support services and resources during the year in industry. As such, you are required to pay a reduced tuition fee to the University for your year in industry, and this is further reduced for those who undertake a placement outside the UK. Please see the University's [tuition fee webpages](#) for further information.

Will I still be eligible for student finance?

As you remain a fully registered student during your year in industry, you will continue to be eligible for Student Finance if you have accessed this during years 1 and 2 of your degree and your circumstances have not changed. Please see the University's [Financial Support pages](#) for further information.

If I undertake a placement outside the UK in Europe can I get Erasmus+ funding?

If your placement is in a European country outside the UK and lasts for a minimum of 2 months, then you may be eligible for an Erasmus grant, although this has not yet been confirmed for 2018/19. If Erasmus funding is available, you will be required to complete an online application, sign a contract and complete the required documents in order to be eligible for the funding. Your placement must be approved by the Placement Team before you apply for Erasmus funding via the Office of Global Engagement.

Accommodation

What have previous students done in terms of accommodation whilst on placement?

Most students have sourced private rented accommodation close to their placement provider. Sometimes the company will advise you as to suitable areas to live in or put you in contact with other placement students. Some students opt to live with their family, a family friend or relative. Others source a placement in the Nottingham area and continue to live in student accommodation or in shared accommodation with other Nottingham students. Depending on your placement, you may have the option to live with other placement students, or you may lodge with a family. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have suitable accommodation so that you can complete your placement, although the Placement Team can support and advise you through the process.

Do I need to change my address formally for tax purposes or on my driving licence?

Our advice would be to retain your permanent home address for tax purposes and for your driving licence, just as you would if you were studying at the University. If you have further questions regarding this then please contact [Student Services](#).

Am I still classed as a student for Council Tax purposes?

As you remain a fully registered student at the University of Nottingham during your placement, you are still classed as a student for Council Tax purposes. Therefore it's likely that you will not need to pay Council Tax. Please visit the [Student Services website](#) for information regarding whether you need to request a council tax exemption certificate.

During the placement**Will the company formally employ me as an employee?**

Yes, you will be formally employed as an employee and treated as one of the team by your host company. You will be required to undertake all of the responsibilities of a standard employee, including completing Health and Safety training and attending an induction. You will have agreed hours of work, agreed holiday entitlement and will be required to sign a contract. You may have a formal title and/or a specific role, or you may work on various projects throughout the year. You will have a specific line manager and this person will explain what is required of you during the year in industry.

What's the dress code?

The dress code will depend on the company where you are working. Some companies have a very formal dress code, whilst others are much more relaxed. You can get a good idea of the dress code by observing what colleagues are wearing during the interview and on your first day. If you are working in a lab environment then you must wear closed shoes. You will need to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) depending on your role and if this is required by your company.

What if I don't like my placement?

It is possible that your placement may not be as you had hoped. Sometimes how you have imagined the placement is not how it turns out in practice. Starting a new role is a challenging time for everyone and the first few weeks of the placement, although exciting, can also be difficult. It's therefore very important that you are proactive in dealing with any issues you may encounter at the start of your placement. Doing a year in industry placement takes you outside your comfort zone and isn't always easy. It's important that you keep in touch with the Placement Team and let us know of any problems as soon as they occur. We are here to help and support you and can come to visit your place of work in person as required. At the end of the placement you may decide that you don't wish to work in this particular area or for this particular company in the future. This is a positive outcome and a useful insight when applying for longer term graduate roles.

Will I get a mentor during my placement?

Some companies run buddy schemes or offer to provide a mentor for placement students. We would strongly recommend you sign up to this if it is offered. If this is not an option at your company, you may wish to consider the [Careers and Employability Services' e-mentoring programme](#) with a University of Nottingham alumnus/alumna.

How does the University monitor my progress during my placement?

The Placement Team keep in touch with you by email and via Mahara during your placement. As you are required to create and regularly update your placement page on Mahara, the Placement Team can stay up to date with your progress, and comment on your page. A member of staff will also visit you in person during your placement. The Placement Team are always available if you would like to talk through an issue, problem or question by phone or Skype. Just get in touch!

How do I talk about what I'm doing on my placement if it's confidential?

If the nature of your placement is confidential, then it's important to be able to learn how to talk about it without breaking confidentiality. You should focus on the skills and techniques that you have gained, and use code words like "product x" or "gene y" so as not to break confidentiality. You will be required to summarise the skills and techniques that you have gained during your year in industry, so talk this through with your manager. You can then use the techniques you've learnt when applying for future jobs, including graduate positions.

Will I be visited during my placement?

Yes, a member of staff will visit you in person during your placement, normally between February and April. Where this is not possible, a Skype call is arranged instead. The visit or Skype call will normally be a member of the Placement Team, but could be with an academic member of staff. We will contact you in January/February to arrange the visit/Skype call at a mutually convenient time.

How should I keep in contact with the University during my placement?

One of the main ways that you keep in touch with the University is via your Mahara placement page, which summarises what you have been working on and the training you have completed. You should also ensure that you [update your address](#) and contact details via the student portal.

Am I still entitled to access University support services and resources whilst on placement?

Yes, you are entitled to access all of the University's support services and resources including Financial Support, Welfare, University libraries, Students' Union and sports facilities (if your placement is in the Nottingham area). The Placement Team are also available to discuss any issues you encounter or any questions you have.

Assessment of the placement**How will the placement be assessed?**

In order to pass the year in industry you must complete a minimum of 9 months on placement, and then either apply to become a Registered Scientist or a Registered Technician with the Science Council, or submit a Year in Industry report.

How can I apply to become a Registered Scientist with the Science Council?

In order to work towards applying to be a Registered Scientist or a Registered Technician with the Science Council, you will need to collate evidence of 5 competencies during your placement. The process will include a Skype interview on your return to Nottingham. You will be provided with clear guidance regarding the requirements during the pre-placement briefing and via Mahara.

How do I record my evidence to apply to the Science Council?

Your Mahara placement page is where you collate your evidence that you will submit to the Science Council on completion of your Year in Industry.

What is the Year in Industry report?

The Year in Industry report is a formal summary of your placement of between 4500 and 5000 words long. It includes details of your host company; what you worked on; how your placement links to your degree; the key skills that you gained; and a review of your experiences. You can choose to submit a Year in Industry report instead of applying to the Science Council, if you wish.

When do I submit my assessment?

If you wish to apply to become a Registered Scientist or Registered Technician with the Science Council then you will collate your evidence at the end of the year in industry from September of your final year. Working directly with Dr Judith Wayte, you then apply to the Science Council and have a Skype interview as part of the application process. This will take place during October-November of your final year.

If you wish to submit the Year in Industry report instead, this must be submitted by 30 November to Dr Judith Wayte judith.wayte@nottingham.ac.uk

After the placement

How many students are offered a permanent job after completing a placement?

In the past, some of our students have been offered a permanent graduate job with the company where they complete their placement. Sometimes this happens immediately following graduation; sometimes this can happen at a point later in your career.

If you are an international student studying in the UK under a Tier 4 visa you need to be aware that a UK company must be formally registered as a sponsor with the UK Home Office in order to sponsor and employ people who fall under Tiers 2 and 5 of the Points-Based System. It is likely that you will need to return to your home country and apply for the appropriate visa before starting a permanent job in the UK. The Home Office keeps a [register of sponsors](#) under the Points-based immigration system. For further information please contact the Visa and Immigration Team on immigration-support@nottingham.ac.uk

What support is available from the University after my placement?

The [Careers and Employability Service](#) provide comprehensive support to final year students.

Food Sciences students can take the *Personal and Professional Development for Food Scientists* module during their final year to build on their placement experience and prepare to apply for graduate jobs.

Some students do find it difficult to readjust to studying full time after working for a year. The Placement Team run a re-entry session at the start of the final year to help students think through what they have learnt whilst on placement, and how they can adjust to University life.

Further questions

Contact us

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