

# Science without Borders UK

## Undergraduate Placements – Guidance for HEIs

All undergraduate students taking part in the Science without Borders scholarship programme are required to complete a placement. The purpose of the placement is to expand a students' knowledge in their subject area, beyond that of the normal curriculum. The placement is a compulsory element of the programme. Please see a summary below:

- The placement should last approximately three months.
- The placement must not replace a taught period of a student's course, although it may run concurrently.
- The student must be engaged in placement activities during the three month summer break.
- It is the responsibility of the host HEI to arrange a placement for SwB students.
- However, students are free to organise their own placement, providing they gain approval from their host HEI.
- Upon completion, HEIs must issue a letter to evidence the placement
- The host HEI retains responsibility for pastoral care during the placement period, or must negotiate the transfer of the duty of care to a trusted partner (academic, industrial or institutional).
- There are currently no additional funds available to cover bench fees or travel expenses. Careful consideration should therefore be given to each placement opportunity by both the host HEI and the student. We are in the process of negotiating changes in regard to this with the Brazilian funding agencies.

### Types of placement

The placement can take a number of forms at the discretion of the host HEI. Below are three common examples:

*HEI arranged Industrial placements* – many HEIs have industrial partners ready to incorporate students into placements or internships. Such placements should be relevant to their course of study, and designed to enhance their skills and experience. Students may receive a small amount of payment from an industrial partner, at the partner's discretion.

*Student arranged Industrial Placements or offers of placements from companies* – a student may find their own industrial placement without HEI assistance.

- Please note that we expect student arranged industrial placements to constitute a small minority of cases.
- The student must have the HEIs express permission to undertake any placement.
- The UK HEI is free to accept or decline the student's choice of placement.
- Some industrial partners who provide placements will help the student find accommodation.

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- Where an industrial partner does not provide accommodation for a student during the placement, HEIs are asked to contact SwB UK to discuss financial arrangements directly.
- Please note, SwB UK may be approached by companies interested in providing industrial placements to students. We will inform UK HEIs first before advertising these placement opportunities to students. Please remember you are free to accept or decline a student's choice of placement.

*Supervised research projects* – a student can embark on an extended research project/essay set by their host HEI. This can be laboratory, library, classroom or field based. HEIs are free to pick a relevant topic, or work with the student to tailor the project to their interests.

It may be appropriate for students to combine placement types. For example, a student may have their main placement as a library based supervised research project, with a short period of one or two weeks spent with an industrial partner, on a training course or gaining work experience. In such cases, we ask host HEIs to contact SwB UK, to discuss financial arrangements. Even a day visit to a company or a day course can enhance the student's experience and add value to the placement.

Students may be 'grouped' on placements; however students should undertake a reasonable amount of independent work. In all cases HEIs are required to have a reasonable level contact with SwB students during the placement period.

### **Length of placement**

The placement must take place over the three summer months. Universities may choose to ask students to become engaged in a research project/placement before or beyond this if they wish, providing there is no interference with the taught parts of the course.

With the permission of the host HEI, students are allowed a short break before or during the placement period; however they are not permitted to return home to Brazil during this time.

### **Evidencing the placement**

UK Universities may choose to award credits for the three month industrial placement / research project. This decision is entirely up to each UK HEI, as is the number of credits awarded. Some Universities already have credit bearing placement modules available and students may fit into this model. Other HEIs have designed specific modules for this purpose. There is no requirement for credits to be awarded.

Please note that in all cases, UK Universities will need to provide every SwB student with a formal letter to indicate that they undertook the placement / research project. This letter needs to state the following:

- The dates of the placement

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- The type of placement (i.e. a short description indicating for example was it research project / library based, industrial placement)
- The name of supervisor or employer
- Confirmation that it was completed satisfactory in the view of the supervisor/employer

Please note that, at the moment, this official HEI letter is the only requirement from the Brazilian funding agencies, and that no grades are expected in order to evidence the placement.

### **Finance and Accommodation**

The UK HEI has agreed to provide the student with appropriate accommodation for the full duration of their scholarship in the UK. This includes the period of placement by default. Should a student wish to carry out their research project/placement elsewhere, we would ask that HEIs contact SwB UK to discuss financial arrangements for accommodation directly. The host HEI is free to approve or decline any request of a student to spend their placement period elsewhere.

SwB UK is currently unable to provide any extra funding for placement activities, including bench fees and travel expenses. The students will continue to receive their monthly stipend for the duration of their placement.

### **Informing the student**

HEIs should contact students early into their scholarship to remind and reassure students of the HEI's leading role in securing placements, as well as to discuss possible placement options. We are also asking students to be pro-active about their placements and contact their institution to discuss possible placements or research projects

We are requested by the Brazilian funding agencies to provide a list of all arrangements regarding placements for SwB students; therefore, we will survey all HEIs in January of each year to compile this list.

### **Further information**

For more information or assistance, please contact: [swbadmin@international.ac.uk](mailto:swbadmin@international.ac.uk)