

Work Placements

Work placements are a great way to get immersed in the social and cultural life of the country where the target language is spoken. The professional experience will not only greatly enhance your CV; it will also equip you with the essential skills and qualities required for the world of work.

Note that you are **entirely responsible** for finding your own work placements. As much support and guidance as possible will be given, including meetings with the University Careers Service and training with CV writing and interview preparation. However, tutors in the Department of Language and Linguistics **are not able to actively help you find a placement**.

It is essential that you do not underestimate the amount of time and effort that finding a suitable work placement takes. For this reason, we recommend that students interested in doing a work placement as part of their year abroad start their search as early as possible – over the summer vacation before their 2nd year. The internship agreement should be finalised by the beginning of May. That way, if you fail to secure a work placement, you will still have enough time to apply to one of our exchange universities. If your work placement is to take place in the second semester, we still recommend that you apply to a university as a back-up plan. However, you may want to consider dropping the university placement later on if you manage to secure an internship in between.

Both the application process and fulfilling the requirement of any employment demand a clear sense of responsibility. You will have to go through a rigorous selection process which might include telephone or skype interviews. Tutors will have to provide references. These will be based not only on your academic achievements but also on your general suitability for the post in terms of reliability, attendance and commitment. **As for all year abroad placements, language coordinators reserve the right not to support a student in their request to go on a work placement if there is evidence of poor academic standing** (see relevant section in handbook).

Placements should be in a suitably challenging linguistic environment, where the target language is used regularly. They should be full-time wherever possible and should last for a minimum of 7 months for a full year and 4 to 6 months if splitting the

year abroad. Assessment of the suitability of the placement will be made on a case by case basis. All placements must be approved by the relevant Year Abroad Coordinator. **The Year Abroad Coordinators reserve the right to reject any placement they believe is unsuitable, for any reason.** Examples of unsuitable work include bar work and au pairing.

Students with personal contacts that may be of assistance in finding a placement are advised to use them – they can be extremely useful! However, the majority of students find a placement by direct contact with a foreign organisation. This can be done by searching and replying to advertisements for internships either online or elsewhere, or by using a recognised work placement agency that will help you find and negotiate a suitable work placement, but may charge a fee.

For advice on how to go about searching for international job opportunities, please look at the University's Careers Service 'International Work' website <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/explore-options/research-ideas/international-work/> . It includes tips in writing CVs and preparing for interviews.

For a list of companies which have sent us offers of internships in the past please see the VLE. Note that the Department is simply passing on the information sent us. We do not have direct contact with these companies. Similarly, you will find many websites providing details for foreign work opportunities. However, the Department cannot vouch for the reliability or otherwise of many of these websites, so please exercise caution.

The usual advice concerning accommodation and planning your budget applies (see *Key Information for the year abroad* hand-out). The payment you are likely to receive can vary greatly from one job to another, as well as from one country to another. In some cases, the allowance/wage you will receive might not cover your living costs. You might also opt for voluntary/unpaid work. It is your responsibility to ensure that payment is discussed with your future employer and that you agree terms and conditions in writing before accepting an offer. Note that students undertaking a work placement in Europe are eligible for Erasmus funding, as long as the placement matches the criteria as described in the Erasmus Student Work Placement Guide. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus-student-work-placements.htm>

When negotiating your work placements make sure you check on the following points and reach an agreement **in writing**:

- Duties and responsibilities
- Support in place (e.g. mentor, training)
- Length of placement, including starting and finishing dates
- Working conditions and pay
- Holidays entitlement
- Tax regulations
- Accommodation

Once you have secured a work placement and it has been agreed by your language coordinator, you must complete a tripartite agreement which covers you, the employer and the University of York. **If by May you have not managed to secure a work placement, you must apply to one of our exchange universities.**

During your placement, the same guidelines apply as for the other options for the year abroad. In particular, once you have taken up a post, you cannot change your mind even if the work is not up to your expectations. **Under no circumstances should you terminate your contract without having discussed the situation with your coordinators in York.** However, you must let us know immediately if there are mitigating circumstances that are affecting your situation. Language coordinators will contact you on a regular basis, and if possible organise a visit. It is crucial to maintain communication throughout your placement. If for some reasons the work placement is cancelled by the employer, through no fault of your own, this will be regarded as Mitigating Circumstances.

Reminder of key point and deadlines

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Deadlines</i>
Students have a CV in the target language. They have some practice in interviews.	End of Year 1.
Students look for suitable work placements. They liaise with Language coordinators to ensure suitability of placement.	Search should start as early as the summer vacation before the start of Year 2. Students should have secured a placement by the beginning of May whilst in Year 2.
Tripartite agreements are filled in by all parties.	Beginning of May.
General preparation; attending sessions organised by the department and the Study Abroad office.	Over summer term.
Contacting year abroad coordinators to inform them of progress.	Two weeks after starting work placements.