



MAPU509: **Work Placement Employer Information**

The work placement is a very important part of the course here in Plymouth - it is an opportunity not simply to observe the publishing process, but to become a part of it - it allows students to put into practice the knowledge they have thus far gained, and to develop the skills they are learning. In this sense it is the most important part of the course as it allows them to form ideas about their future career paths, and where they feel they would be able to contribute most to the industry.

In light of this, students feel that a few guidelines for both the companies who generously offer their time and resources, and for the students who visit them, would be advantageous. Students inform the host company of their intentions during placement, this prepares the student with an understanding of what they may expect. In this way an agreement can be reached which will fulfil the needs of both company and student.

As far as the student is concerned, they have acquired knowledge of the publishing industry, which has yet to be put into practice. Students would hope therefore that opportunities will be available to participate fully in the processes, while at the same time the necessary guidance and supervision could be offered. The degree of this supervision should be discussed by the student and company, and assessed as the student progresses.

The Work Placement in Context

Students come to Plymouth to follow the course from a variety of academic backgrounds. First degree subjects range from English Literature to Physiology. Each member of the course has a different career aim in mind and has every chance to pursue any relevant opportunities which present themselves to this end. Copy editing and proof reading of manuscripts which are being produced by authors are often offered to students. Similarly assignments are taken on which have direct relevance to a commercially produced publication for the University of Plymouth Press.

The course typically caters for about ten students per year and is centred around a well-equipped course base which contains ten computer workstations with scanning and laser printing facilities. Students attend seminars on all areas of the subject, have personal tutorials, and are able to put into practice many of the techniques of design and printing that have been discussed. Visits from representatives of publishing companies and excursions to such sites as printers clearly place all theoretical knowledge into a commercial context. The work placement will provide students with more practical experience in addition to the visits and excursions.

Length/Time

Each placement should last for at least 2 weeks and fall between the beginning of April and the end of May. However both timing and length of placement are negotiable.

Department

A 1 to 3 day induction is desirable to provide an overview of the company, followed by time spent between one or two departments, depending on the specialisation of the student, and with due consideration for company structure.

Responsibility/Supervision

Students were asked to give their views on a preferred working environment, and the consensus was as follows:

- Increasing responsibility as the placement progresses
- Responsibility for an overall process
- Decreasing level of supervision as the placement progresses

Level

Whereas students realise that to gain experience in the industry it is necessary to perform basic tasks, they would welcome the opportunity to observe and assist with major projects.

Payment

A recent survey of opinion regarding the expenses inherent in the work placement revealed that students of the publishing course would be anxious to find as much financial assistance as possible. Although students appreciate that such positions are seldom available, occasionally in the past work placements where payment is offered have been secured. Students also understand that they are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements, though many would welcome any assistance with travel or accommodation expenses, if at all possible.

Liability

Students are reminded that when on work placements the public or employer's liability insurance of the placement company provides cover. If in doubt, the University recommends that students concerned should take out their own insurance for personal accident and third party liability. If required an indemnity form, signed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, is available. This indemnity will in no way limit the liability of the organisation concerned for its own negligence.

Conclusion

Students of the MA Publishing course are assessed on their performance during their placement. It is the aim of the course, through these placements, to develop a rigorous professional approach to publishing which should compliment the high standard of academic inquiry attained in course work.