



University of  
Reading



DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

# PLACEMENT YEAR

BSc Bioveterinary Sciences

## HOW DOES A PLACEMENT FIT WITH MY DEGREE?

A placement year is a fantastic opportunity to gain 12 months work experience in an area that is directly related to your degree programme or potential career path, giving you the freedom to find a placement that suits you and your career aspirations.

The placement will be undertaken during the third year of your programme. Your first two years will be based at University where you will develop a thorough knowledge of your chosen subject, which can then be applied in an industry-specific setting in your placement year, before returning to University for your fourth and final year.

## Why a placement makes you more employable

There are many reasons why students decide to take a 12 month placement

- Most companies demand applicants have relevant work experience and those that do have an added advantage over applicants that have not undertaken work experience.
- Many employers use their placement year scheme to identify potential candidates for their graduate recruitment scheme.
- If you have no idea what graduate level career path you'd like to explore, or what company you'd like to work for, a placement year allows you to investigate a career or company with a view to helping you make a more informed career choice.
- Not only are you encouraged to apply and develop the skills that you are learning at university, you'll also have opportunities to learn new ones depending on the nature of your placement. These could include animal handling skills, specialist scientific equipment, client facing skills, business and digital skills.



# WHAT ARE MY PLACEMENT OPTIONS?

The companies you can apply and work for will depend on the career you are interested in pursuing.

Many of our students apply for placements with large, established organisations such as; DuPont or WALTHAM Petcare Science Institute (part of Mars Inc). Other students have spent a rewarding year working for smaller-scale organisation to gain a broad experience of the whole operation.

Students have also spent a rewarding year working for charities, both abroad and here in the UK. Placement students gain broad based experience, for example in project management, day-to-day operations and communication, depending on the goals of the organisation. Typically students will have specialist tasks. This may mean working with end-users, liaising with clients working in laboratories or with animals, delivering presentations or writing reports; learning many new employability skills as part of their role.



## Preparation and training

The School's dedicated Placement Team will guide you through the career planning process, and covers everything you need to know about your placement year, including how to:

- Fill out an application form
- Create a winning CV
- Write a covering letter

We also work closely with the Careers Centre and Placement Team who provide support and advice on all aspects of the application process, and give you the opportunity to participate in telephone and mock interviews and Psychometric Assessments (ability tests) to ensure that you are thoroughly prepared for the application process.

## Support during the placement

Once you are on your placement you will continue to have access to support and guidance from your Academic Tutor and our Placement Team, and we will arrange a placement review meeting during the course of the placement.

## Recent placements

Chester Zoo

WALTHAM Petcare Science Institute

Jersey Zoo

RSPCA Westhatch Animal Centre

Centre for Dairy Research (Research Assistant)

Danisco Animal Nutrition (DuPont)

GVI - Marine Conservation

RSPCA Stapeley Grange Wildlife Centre

PD Hook Hatcheries Ltd.

'My first nine months were spent on a breeder farm where my day-to-day responsibilities involved grading eggs and looking after the general wellbeing of the flock. Then based at a hatchery, I spent my days grading chicks, checking the fertility of flocks, and carrying out data entry. My knowledge of the poultry industry broadened vastly, and the hands-on experience was invaluable.'

**Isla Frame, Department of Animal Sciences Graduate (Placement at PD Hook Hatcheries)**

## FINDING A PLACEMENT

There are lots of ways to find a placement. Employers look for students who are pro-active and self-driven so be prepared to use a number of different methods to find your ideal placement.

### Resources available to help you search for a placement

We have lots of resources to help in your search for a placement, including:

- An employer database with details of companies who offer relevant placements, or who have taken on our students previously
- Our annual Careers and Placements Fair, attended by a range of companies who have vacancies for placement students
- My Jobs Online, where employers advertise placements and you can sign up to receive daily or weekly email alerts



### Networking and direct contact

Don't feel you have to wait for your ideal placement to be advertised. If you know what company you would like to work for you can approach them directly. Our students have gained placements via a direct approach, such as:

- Phoning the company and discussing potential opportunities
- Giving their CV directly to a manager, either at Trade Fairs or Career Fairs

Using existing contacts - friends, family, colleagues - can also help you secure a placement.



"I had an amazing opportunity to work alongside the mammal and bird departments, working with many endangered animals such as Livingstone's fruit bats, tamarins and pink pigeons. I have learnt so much from the keepers such as nutrition and food prep, enrichment, animal training, health checks, egg incubation and enclosure maintenance. This experience will prove invaluable when I start looking for a job after graduation."

**Minnie Payne.** Department of Animal Sciences Graduate (Placement at Jersey Zoo)



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## I didn't register for the 4-year degree course – can I still do a placement?

Yes, when you've accepted your placement we can arrange a transfer to the relevant 4-year degree course.

## When will my placement start?

This is often dependant on your employer – some schemes run from July, others from September. If you are unclear about this or any aspect of the placement then you just need to contact the Placement Team.

## Will I be assessed?

Yes, the placement year comprises of 120 credits and is a formal part of your degree: you will be required to submit assignments to demonstrate your learning.

## Will I get paid?

Some employers offer paid placements but some, particularly if you want to work for a charity, are voluntary.

## PLACEMENT YEAR

**i** For more information, please contact the Placement Team:

School of Agriculture, Policy and Development  
University of Reading  
Whiteknights  
Reading, RG6 6EU

sapdplacements@reading.ac.uk

[www.reading.ac.uk/apd](http://www.reading.ac.uk/apd)

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## Important Information

This brochure was issued in 2023 and is aimed at prospective undergraduate students wishing to apply for a place at the University of Reading (the University) and start a course in autumn 2024. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in the brochure is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to press (May 2023). However, it may be necessary for the University to make some changes to the information presented in the brochure following publication – for example, where it is necessary to reflect changes in practice or theory in an academic subject as a result of emerging research; or if an accrediting body requires certain course content to be added or removed. To make an informed and up-to-date decision, we recommend that you check [reading.ac.uk/study](http://reading.ac.uk/study)

The University undertakes to take all reasonable steps to provide the services (including the courses) described in this brochure. It does not, however, guarantee the provision of such services. Should industrial action or circumstances beyond the control of the University interfere with its ability to provide the services, the University undertakes to use all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption to the services.

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## Placement fees

During this year you will only pay a partial fee which is currently set at 15% of the normal tuition fee. Check the website for the latest information: [reading.ac.uk/fees-and-funding](http://reading.ac.uk/fees-and-funding)

## Placements

Programmes with a Professional Placement Year (also known as 'Year in Industry' or 'Placement Year') are fully dependent on students securing their own placement opportunity, normally through a competitive recruitment process. The University provides dedicated career and application support for placement year students. Students who do not secure a placement or who are unable to complete the placement year due to extenuating circumstances, have the option to transfer to a three year variant of their programme with agreement from their School/Department.



Athena  
SWAN  
Silver Award



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZE  
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2023