

## Make the most of your placement or internship for professional registration

Recruiters are increasingly looking for graduates to have practical experience and transferable skills. This has led to work placements and internships becoming a popular way for students or new graduates to gain experience in the workplace either before or immediately after graduation to enhance their CV and improve their prospects.

A placement allows you to increase skills and develop your knowledge whilst gaining an insight into a particular role or industry. As well as developing your engineering skills and showing how engineering concepts are applied in a real world environment, it will help you get an understanding of the more practical aspects of a working environment such as meeting deadlines, working in an integrated team of engineers, technicians and managers.

In order to make the most of your time at a placement it is important to plan ahead. You should aim to write a development plan as near as possible to the start of your time there. You may find that one has already been put into place for you by your employer, if this is the case then you will need to familiarise yourself with this. If you are writing your own plan you can use any role or job description for your placement as a starting point to consider what learning opportunities there might be.

If you have an induction session then ensure that you make the most of any introductory meetings to make contacts and ask insightful and relevant questions about the company and role to gain an understanding of how things work. This will show any research you have done on the company or industry sector and show your willingness to learn as well as giving you the chance to clarify anything that you are unsure about.

Once you are in position it can be useful to set up regular meetings with your line manager or mentor to gain feedback on your progress.

If professional registration is something that you are considering in the future then it is important for you to keep accurate records of what your placement or internship involved. As you work on different projects and tasks it is recommended that you keep a record of the work that you are doing and consider how it meets the [UK-SPEC competences](#) for professional registration. Even though it will take several years for you to develop all of the competences for CEng or IEng it is not too early to understand the requirements and relating these to your engineering experience.

To support you in assessing yourself against the competence requirements, the IET online professional development system [Career Manager](#) allows you to select the category of professional registration you wish to gain in the future and provides levels of self-assessment which allow you to record evidence as you go through your development. This will demonstrate the progression of your competence as you work towards professional registration. You can also use Career Manager to produce a report for discussion with your mentor or line manager to gain their insight and help you to benchmark your development. Career manager also provides functionality for you to set goals to gain future competence and plan any development activities to help you achieve these goals. This can also be exported as a report for discussion with your mentor or supervising manager.

As you reach the end of a placement or internship, as well as considering any final reports required by your university or letter of recommendation, you may wish to produce an assessment summary of any competences gained during your placement to support future professional development. Such a report will also show potential recruiters (especially those from companies with accredited professional development schemes) your commitment to your own development and your understanding of the requirements for professional registration.

Ensure that you keep records up to date as you continue to develop when you start a new job or join a graduate scheme as you pursue professional registration in the future.

### **Checklist for your placement**

The below checklist will help you to plan and make the most of your time on placement or internship, particularly if you are working toward professional registration or planning to in the future.

#### Before you start

- Have you written a development plan? Does it cover the aspects of your job role or meet requirements set by the company or university?

#### Once you have started

- Have you discussed and shared your development with your manager on placement?
- Have you booked induction sessions with relevant people?
- Have you set regular meetings with a mentor or manager to discuss progress?
- Have you considered how the work you are likely to be undertaking meets the UK-SPEC requirements?

#### While on placement

- Are you meeting regularly with your mentor or manager to discuss progress?
- Have you gained feedback on your progress?
- How does the work you are undertaking meet the UK-SPEC requirements? Does it cover more than one competence area?
- Have you started to use Career Manager?

#### Toward the end of your placement

- Have you been issued with or written a final report of your time on placement?
- Have you reflected on how your placement year helped your personal development?
- If you used Career Manager have you had a competence assessment of your time on placement verified?
- Have you updated your CV to include the knowledge, skills and competences you have gained?