The phenomenal guide to
Securing a work placement

MDXworks
Tell Your Story | Shape Your Career

Middlesex University London

What is a work placement?

A placement is an opportunity to gain valuable work experience as a part of your degree. The placement options that are available to you will depend on the course you study, however, many courses at MDX will allow you to complete a year-long placement where you can immerse yourself in a relevant role.

A year-long placement is sometimes known as a 'sandwich' placement, as it is sandwiched between your 2nd and 3rd year of study. This means you'll delay your final year of study while you complete the placement, but you won't pay tuition fees while on your year-long placement.

> "Some things you just can't learn from reading a book... you have to Experience them! It blows my mind how much my knowledge and proficiency has grown. I'm glad to have stepped out of my comfort zone."
> - Emmanuel. BSc Computer Networks undergraduate on placement as a Technology Analyst at Goldman Sachs

Why do we recommend completing a work placement?

Completing a work placement during your studies, could give you a significant advantage when competing for graduate jobs. Many employers prefer to hire graduates with 'real world' experience and up-to-date industry knowledge which you can gain through a placement. A placement is a great opportunity to enhance your CV or portfolio and showcase your skills as you work on real projects, perhaps working with well-known organisations or 'big names' in your chosen industry.

While on a placement, you'll also have opportunities to meet industry professionals and build your network of useful contacts, which could help you later when you're looking for a graduate job. Students that perform well on their placements may also be offered permanent roles.

If you're unsure about what you want to do after you graduate, then a placement can also be an ideal way to explore a role.

> "What have I enjoyed about my placement? Everything! This placement has reassured me that I'm on the right career path"
> - Sam. BSc Biology undergraduate on placement as a Woodland Conservationist at Essex Wildlife Trust.

> "By the end of my placement, I was offered a full-time role as a Software Engineer starting soon after graduation."
> -Ritchie. BEng Computer Systems Engineering undergraduate on placement as a Software Engineer with Thales Group.

If you're interested in completing a placement please complete the Placement Expression of Interest form for your faculty: Business, Science & Technology, Arts and Creative Industries, Law, or Health & Education. This will help ensure that we can keep you updated with any relevant opportunities and can support you in your search for a placement.

Placement paperwork

There is some important paperwork that you and your placement provider must complete as soon as you've secured a placement. You can find the placement paperwork on My Learning, under the 'Pre Placement Module' for your course.

You and your placement provider must complete this paperwork, and you must upload it to My Learning. This is very important, as your paperwork must be checked and authorised by MDXworks in order to grant you permission to start your placement, and register you for the placement module (counting towards completion of your course).

The 'assignment' attached to the Pre-placement module will explain what you need to do. The paperwork is straightforward, however, if there's anything you're not sure about, please don't hesitate to contact the MDXworks: mdxworks@mdx.ac.uk

Your placement must be relevant to your studies. If you're not sure if your placement is suitable, check with your Programme Leader or Module Leader. For some ideas about the types of roles that relate to your degree, you could look at 'What can I do with my degree?' on Prospects.ac.uk.

International / Tier 4 students (Important information!)

If you've come to study at MDX from anywhere outside the European Economic Area then you are an 'International student' and there are some important instructions you must follow:

It's important that you check that you have permission to work in the UK before looking for work, as the rules are complicated, and getting it wrong can have serious consequences. Students studying in the UK on a Tier 4 Visa are generally allowed to work up to a specified number of hours (stated on your passport sticker or identity card).

International students must submit the completed online 'Placement Details Form' to MyLearning at least 12 days before starting their placement and must not start working until you have permission from MDXworks.

International students may also need to extend their visas to continue their final year after completing a year-long placement. Speak to the MDX International Immigration and Visa Advice team for more information. phone 020 8411 4507 or email: intadvice@mdx.ac.uk

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Looking at a printout and wondering why the links won't work? Email MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk to request a fully-working electronic copy of this guide.

Where to look for placements (Jobs-boards, speculative applications & networking)

You can find a range of placement opportunities on our jobs-board at MDXworks.com. Other useful jobs-boards include:

- RateMyPlacement.co.uk
- Prospects.ac.uk
- GlassDoor.co.uk
- Milkround.com
- TargetJobs.co.uk

- StudentLadder.co.uk
- LinkedIn.com
- GRB.uk.com
- Placement-UK.com
- GlobalPlacement.com

- TheGuardian.com
- Indeed.co.uk
- TheStudentRoom.co.uk
- StudentEmploymentServices.co.uk
- Gradcracker.com

Don't leave it too late, or you could miss out! Employers in different industries will have very different deadlines for applications – the legal sector is a prime example, with a specific 'window of opportunity' for placement deadlines and training contracts across the industry- So don't put off your search, check closing dates, and get applying as soon as possible.

Don't just use jobs-boards. To maximise your chances of success, we recommend using a range of different approaches, including speculative applications, social-media, phoning-up or networking.

Access hidden opportunities. If there's an organisation you'd really like to work for, we recommend contacting them, even if they're not advertising placements anywhere. This 'speculative approach' is how many students find their ideal placements, particularly in creative industries. It cuts down competition, and many employers will be impressed by your pro-active approach.

If you're not sure which companies to approach, take a look at the employers mentioned in the job profiles on Prospects.ac.uk. You'll find major employers listed for each type of role. Looking at jobs-boards can also help you identify organisations to approach, even if the roles they're advertising aren't placements. You can find more information about speculative applications on TargetJobs.co.uk or Prospects.ac.uk.

Stay positive! You may face a few rejections before you succeed. If you're repeatedly getting knocked-back, make changes to your CV or try a different approach rather than doing the same thing again and expecting a different result. Ask for feedback about your applications.

Professional networking can really enhance your career prospects. 'Who you know' can be as important as 'what you know'. Organisations in some specialist or creative industries even prefer to hire through recommendations rather than applications, making those industries feel small and highly competitive.

Join a professional networking site such as LinkedIn to build your network of useful contacts. Currently, 94% of recruiters screen candidates on LinkedIn. For tips, read our blog-post *'Perfecting your LinkedIn profile'.* We also recommend that you connect with MDXWorks on LinkedIn so we can keep you updated with opportunities and employability news. With a brief search, you may find other sites for networking within a particular industry, such as CreativePool.com for creative professionals or GitHub.com for coders.

We recommend attending industry-specific events, job fairs, seminars, presentations or similar, to help grow your network and raise your profile within your industry. Look for events using the 'Events' page on MyUniHub, Eventbrite.co.uk or Meetup.com. Many societies offer networking opportunities within specific industries, such as the Society for Applied Microbiology (Sfam).

Looking for more networking tips? Read our 'Confident guide to career networking', or our blogpost: 'Not working? Try networking'.

Need more help?

Email: mdxworks@mdx.ac.uk or Tel: 020 8411 6161, or book a telephone or video-chat appointment with your Employability Adviser: via MDXworks.com or visit our 'appointments' page on MDXworks.com.

Access your online careers & employability portal at MDXworks.com where you'll find a range of resources to support you with CVs or cover letters, interviews, job-searching or career planning, placements, networking or LinkedIn and more, including resources relevant to specific faculties, subjects or industries. You can also find jobs and find out about upcoming events and workshops.

Connect with MDXworks on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to keep up-to-date with our latest news, events and opportunities.

✉ MDXworks@mdx.ac.uk	Ⓢ Chat via MDX.Employability	⟳ MDXworks.com
☎ +44 (0)208 411 6161	𝗂𝗇 Linkedin.com/in/mdx-works/	🤝 bit.ly/MDXworks_appointments
📍 MDxworks Careers & Employability Service at Hendon campus, room CG07, College Building. (10.00am-5.00pm Mon.-Fri.)		

Remember: Being able to identify opportunities yourself is a valuable skill which will help you to compete for jobs throughout your career. Ultimately your responsibility to search, apply for, and secure a work placement opportunity yourself (in other words… we do not provide a placement-matching service).

Good luck and please keep us informed about the progress of your applications, so we can continue to support you.