

## ASET Viewpoints

### The Benefits of Placement

ASET is the Work Based and Placement Learning Association, and our aim is to advance the prevalence, effectiveness and quality of work based and placement learning in Higher Education by promoting research into that system of education and publishing the useful results thereof. Work based and placement learning is that which is part of the Higher Education experience, an integrated and planned part of a programme of study, and that is structured to appropriate learning outcomes and assessment.

Research from the **High Fliers Report 2012** (High Fliers Research Ltd, [www.highfliers.co.uk](http://www.highfliers.co.uk)) suggests that graduate recruiters estimate 36% of the graduate vacancies available from employers participating in the research will be filled by applicants who have already worked for the organisation as a placement student.

The **new tuition fees** regime commences in 2012 against a backdrop of a worsening economic outlook; a concern that might emerge is the possibility of placement decline (i.e. students not wishing to spend an extra [placement] year at university because of tuition fees for that year).

However this situation also presents an opportunity for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to promote placements and broaden their appeal as a *'value for money'* provision with **real economic value for students** once they graduate. With such powerful messages, HEIs can communicate the benefits of placements under the new tuition fees regime.

ASET seeks to promote the concept of placements as a means by which to **enhance the employability of students**. The lists below summarise some **benefits of placements** for students, employers and HEIs.

#### For students:

##### Placement may provide benefits including:

- Opportunity to integrate academic theory and practice
- Development of transferable skills and competencies
- Experience of the job application process including Assessment Centres
- Increased confidence, motivation and professionalism
- Development of a personal network of career contacts
- Valuable insights into industry culture and commercial awareness
- Heightened self-awareness through reflection
- A clearer understanding of what career they want to do, or not
- In many cases, the opportunity for payment or overseas travel
- Improved chances of securing a graduate-level job
- Although tuition fees may be charged for the placement year, they vary between institutions and in some cases a bursary may be available to offset fees





#### **For employers:**

##### **Placement may provide benefits including:**

- Good value for money; students can offer enthusiasm, fresh ideas and approaches
- Opportunity to use placement as part of the recruitment process, to identify talented future employees and reduce the risk of early dropout
- Continued Professional Development for junior managers through mentoring
- Enables employers to demonstrate commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility activities
- Enables employers to develop links with HEIs, leading to other collaboration

#### **For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):**

##### **Placement may provide benefits including:**

- An improvement in the results of the National Student Survey
- An improvement in the 'Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) statistics
- Improved maturity and focus for the final year, often cited by students
- Improved degree classification profiles
- Opportunities to keep up to date with commercial/business developments
- Opportunities to develop strong links with employers, leading to other employer engagement provisions such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), Research, and careers fairs
- Returning students act as influential ambassadors for the whole process
- A strong profile of placement offerings appeals to applicants and their supporters

Placements are of benefit to all concerned in the process: students, employers and HEIs, but HEIs are probably in the best position to promote them to students, who are perhaps least likely to be aware of the benefits and implications. It is useful if the benefits are outlined at the recruitment stage and then consolidated before, during, and after placement.

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**For more information please contact:**