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ASET

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ASET
INTEGRATING WORK AND LEARNING

**From Placements to
Employability:**

Thinking about the whole
student experience

Thursday 8th December

A very full year of ASET Staff Development Workshops will shortly come to a close with the final session '**From Placements to Employability: thinking about the whole student experience**' on December 8th. The 2017 programme will be available next month, so keep an eye out on the ASET website, and in the meantime – you can [book online](#) here.

This month, ASET Trustee Jo Eaton revisits the persistent issue of unpaid placements and highlights a raised awareness and schemes that offer some hope for the future, but the question remains .. has there been any progress?

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Unpaid placements.....has there been any progress?

Jo Eaton, ASET Trustee and Careers Team Leader at the University of Hertfordshire

Yes, this is another article (*rant*) about unpaid internships and placements. I can almost hear you sigh as you think to yourself 'is there nothing new to talk about in the world of placements?' ... Well, yes there is.....We could talk about; Degree Apprenticeships ([see last month's e-Bulletin](#)), Self Employed placement years, new (*Dyson-* like) providers of specialist Higher Education and of course the DLHE review, but students working for no pay whether it be on an accredited placement year or on a summer, or even term-time shorter internship, still remains a huge issue in our sector.

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A recent article written by Sally Holt on the [Wonkhe Blog](#) talks about an English Literature and Creative Writing student who has moved to London to study towards a career in journalism, only to find it is still *'not what you know but who you know'* and, even if you know them, they are not going to pay you to undertake work experience with them.

Students are working on unpaid placements in all industry sectors but these are (and always have been) most prevalent in the creative industries.

The number of employers in Fashion, Advertising, TV, Film...the list goes on and on, who still pronounce *"well, I worked for nothing when I was studying so why shouldn't they"* is nothing short of shocking in a world that is so very different from when they 'cut their teeth' (often) back in the early 90s.

I am not saying that they didn't work hard to get where they are, they just had no Uni fees to pay back, they had maintenance grants and much lower living costs, and they weren't competing for places with a much larger number of students from a wealth (no pun intended!) of different backgrounds and locations.

HE institutions all shout about the breadth of the Widening Participation cohorts their institutions are producing, but are these students able to secure valuable work experience when they can't afford to leave their **paid** part time jobs, to commute and work nine hour days for the cost of a return train ticket and maybe a sandwich??

Did you know that many small UK fashion labels produce their London Fashion Week collections each year by using an army of student interns to make their garments? Many of them knowing that if the student is undertaking their placement as an accredited part of their degree, *'they don't have to pay them'* (yes, that has been quoted back to me by more than one employer).

The ASET viewpoint [Paid and Unpaid placements](#) from 2012, states clearly our view on placements that are not paid, and many institutions are now being tough with employers who do not offer payment for their placements.

It is slowly, starting to change as many employers are realising they are not accessing the best talent if they don't pay students for placements and by paying the National Minimum Wage they have access to a much bigger and more talented pool of students, which is of course an investment for their business.

There is great work happening in the sector to draw attention to the issue, such as the [video](#) created by the University of the Arts which explains to employers the benefits of treating interns as employees and paying them for the work they do, and also schemes such as the [Santander SME](#) scheme which gives small to medium sized employers the opportunity to gain funding to hire interns – we just need more.

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Does your institution take a stance on unpaid placements? Maybe now is the time to review your policy and help to educate employers on the benefits of paying for their placement students?

[Book Online Now](#)

There are currently still places available on the final ASET Staff Development Workshop:

Date	Location	W'shop No.	Title
08-Dec	London - Senate House	16	From Placements to Employability

From Placements to Employability: thinking about the whole student experience

Thursday 8th December (10am-4pm)
Senate House, London

- Perhaps you have expertise in supporting placement students but are now being asked to become involved in curriculum design and development more broadly associated with employability?
- Or you have experience in your subject based curriculum but are new to placements and employability?
- Do you know what you might do differently if you were assessing a first year undergraduate placement compared to a Masters level placement?

Single interventions, like the sandwich placement, are no longer sufficient in terms of determining employment success on graduation – we must consider the whole student experience. We will contrast employability in the curriculum with employability through the curriculum for example, how broader teaching, learning and assessment strategies throughout a programme can impact on employability.

The intended outcome of the session is to enable you to use your experience and expertise from placement activities to work with your colleagues in your own institutions to appropriately embed placement and other employability related activities into the curriculum.

£165 ASET members/£195 non-members

Please note the last day for booking on this workshop is Thursday 1st December

Bespoke Workshops in 2017

If you would like to talk about ideas for a bespoke workshop to suit a specific requirement at your institution, contact Debbie at the ASET Office aset@asetonline.org.

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2016 ASET Student Competition

Early entries for this year's student competition are arriving here at ASET HQ – there is still plenty of time for your students to enter, so please do continue to promote. The full entry details are available on the ASET website, where you can [download the flyer](#). This year there are **4 prizes offered**, two in each category:



- Placement/Work experience undertaken in the UK or Ireland (*1st Prize £400, HC £100*)
- Placement/Work experience undertaken overseas (*1st Prize £400, HC £100*)

Closing date for entries:

6th January 2017, 12noon

2017 ASET Bursaries

For this 2016/17 academic year ASET is offering **two student bursaries**. Both were launched at Conference in September, and full details [2017 ASET Bursaries](#) are available on the ASET website:

2017 ASET Student Research Bursary



ASET will provide payments totalling £2400 to fund a **current student or recent graduate** to carry out a clearly defined piece of small-scale research (of approximately 300hrs / 40 days) designed to grow the body of research into work based and placement learning. The work must be feasible within the timescales but may be used to fund a feasibility study, or early part of a larger project. ASET will provide a further £600 to your institution towards the expenses required to carry out the work.

ASET e-Bulletin

2017 ASET Summer Project Bursary



ASET will provide payments totalling £2400 to a **current undergraduate** to carry out a project (of approximately 300hrs / 40 days) examining an aspect of your institutional practice, or exploration of a new initiative with the goal of sharing the learning with the ASET community. ASET will provide a further £600 to your institution towards the expenses required to carry out the work.

Application deadline for both bursaries: **1st February 2017, 9am.**

2016 ASET Bursaries Update

I am pleased to advise you that the full reports detailing the outcomes of the 2016 ASET funded bursary projects are now available on the ASET website.

2016 ASET Research Bursary

Awarded to Dr Mark Turner, Associate Head of Education, Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth. The project was undertaken by Eleanor Scott-Allen, BSc (Hons) Psychology 2013-2016, University of Portsmouth:

[What determines student success and failure when searching and applying for placements?](#)

2016 ASET Exploration and Enhancement Student Bursary

Awarded to Dr Helena Pimlott-Wilson, Placements Director and Lecturer in Human Geography, Loughborough University. The project was undertaken by Ami Harty, PhD, School of Business & Economics 2016-2019, Loughborough University:

[Developing interest in work placements amongst prospective and current students](#)

ASET e-Bulletin

December Regional Hubs

Regional Hub meetings are taking place in December in London, Sheffield and Bath. ASET colleagues based at institutions in the geographical vicinity for each venue will have now received an invitation to attend.

NORTH	Wednesday 14 th December, University of Sheffield, 2-4pm
SOUTHEAST	Tuesday 13 th December, Goldsmiths, University of London, 10-12noon
SOUTHWEST	Tuesday 13 th December, University of Bath, 2.15-4.15pm

The discussion topic for the December events is **Student Engagement**.

If you would like to host a meeting in Spring, we are now looking for venues for w/c 10th April or w/c 17th April. ASET Regional Hub Meetings are free events for delegates from ASET member institutions. Places are limited and allocated on a first come first served basis. Up to two delegates per institution may register. It would be great to bring these lively events to Scotland, Wales and Ireland, so if you can offer space for 25-50 delegates for a morning or afternoon (2hour) meeting, please get in touch to find out more about being an ASET Regional Hub host aset@asetonline.org

NEW placements resource from the Engineering Professors' Council

To support their members in delivering better work-related learning, the Engineering Professors' Council has launched their Contextual Learning Toolkits which can be found on their [website](#).

Two separate, but interlinked, toolkits have been developed; the Students' Toolkit helps students to get the most out of their placement experience, and the Universities' / Employers' Toolkit supports Higher Education institutions and employers in enhancing the learning gained and the value of students' placements.

The toolkits have been specifically designed to meet the following recommendations from the Wakeham Review:

- Improve the opportunities for students to take up work experience and to maintain its quality.
- Embed the development of soft skills into degree courses and improving work readiness.
- Better matching of degree courses to employers' demand for skills.
- Improve STEM careers advice and awareness of job opportunities for graduates and students, as well as earlier in the education pipeline.

And Finally

Your next ASET members' e-Bulletin will be issued in December. Please forward your news/copy to aset@asetonline.org by Friday 9th December.

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