

Executive Summary

After the success of a set of Work Placements last year at the South Tees Trust Communications department, Teesside University's School of Arts and Media department decided to expand on this relationship and gather information about student's feelings towards such types of placement. Students that are part of the School of Arts and Media must complete assessed work experience during the summer of at least 60 hours, this is part of the Professional Development module and is part of their final overall grade.

The placement at the South Tees Trust involves a multitude of diverse activities that are often live and represent the daily activities that members of staff in the Communications team will deal with. These activities include writing press releases, creating and editing video content such as interviews and packages, creating content for leaflets and information pamphlets. The placements last 2 weeks and last five days a week for normal office hours. The placements help to provide insight into the different activities that go on in a media workplace, and arguably help students to gain insight into the skills that are needed for PR/Communications jobs, as well as traditional media jobs.

In order to assess the success of the project in terms of student and employer satisfaction, the School of Arts and Media were awarded a bursary fund from ASET to fund a research assistant to evaluate the pilot project. This project explored the feelings held by the students as well as the success of the placement from the employers stand point. Feedback was received from the students on placement, post-interview as well as before, during and post placement. The feedback was gathered via interviews as well as the students completing a journal during their time at their placement venue, James Cook Hospital in Middlesbrough. A set number of aims were decided upon prior to the commencement of the project. These aims were as follows:

- To define and assess the parameters of a "successful" partnership resulting in short term placement opportunities for TU media students within a partner organisation, in this case James Cook University Hospital
- To assess the quality and effectiveness of media placements outside traditional media institutions
- To identify the students' motivations, expectations and record their experiences whilst undertaking these placements
- To identify the employers' motivations, expectations and record their experiences whilst hosting a placement student
- To extend the level of knowledge and increase the information available relating to short term placements for Creative Arts students
- To share findings and best practice with ASET colleagues and the wider HE community

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- To develop an approach which can be utilised with many partners to extend placement provision for many Creative Arts students looking at non-traditional opportunities

As well as the primary information we gathered from the students that are on placement, surveys and questionnaires were used to gather data from other members of the School of Arts and Media at Teesside University.

After in-depth analysis, the objectives that were set before the information gathering began were accomplished.

- In terms of a “successful” partnership, this placement from the student’s perspective was hugely beneficial in terms of skill development, confidence building and eye-opening. The Placement providers felt that the students were professional and up to their standards in terms of work output and standard.
- The students all took part in a multitude of tasks that are also used within the media industry such as videographer activities, press releases and setting up and completing interviews.
- The main student motivation was to improve their job prospects and to develop better professional practice in their field.
- The employer’s motivations were to expand on a relationship built with the university so that they can help the future workforce, give students confidence in their future and to have help by people who are qualified and are up to their standards.
- Student satisfaction in terms of their expectations from short term placements with Non-traditional Media Organisations, their experience and their skill development has allowed for us to improve the School of Arts and Media’s placement provision for the future.

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Teesside University

Originally founded as Constantine College in 1930, Teesside University was officially named in 1992 as a “New University” and has grown 20 fold since its inception. Its new found university status and the appointment of Derek Fraser as Vice-Chancellor led to greater emphasis on expansion.

With a regional, national and international reputation of quality and being an award winning university, after claiming the 2009 THE University of the Year and the 2013 Queen’s Anniversary Prize, the university has a set vision and character.

Teesside University’s vision is to achieve regional, national and international recognition as the UK’s leading University for working with business and to be among the UK’s top institutions of higher education in relation to:

- Being a vibrant and effective learning community with students at the heart of everything they do.
- Enhancing academic and professional standards and producing highly employable graduates for the benefit of both individuals and organisations.
- Contributing effectively to the economic, social and cultural success of the communities they serve.
- Demonstrating a real and continuing commitment to social inclusion.

Working with employers, they tackle real world challenges, fully recognising, and committed to developing the relationship between student learning, research, knowledge transfer and business engagement, each informing the other, for the benefit of staff, students, businesses and the social, economic and cultural development of the region.

Dynamic, confidence and committed to the pursuit of excellence, Teesside goes from strength to strength as a University widely recognised as an enabling, passionate and partnership-focussed institution with a can do mentality, that organisations are keen to work with.

South Tees Trust

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the largest hospital trust in the Tees Valley serving the people of Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Hambleton and Richmondshire and more. The trust runs The James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough and the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton.

Its workforce amasses to nearly 9,000 who provide specialist regional services to 1.5 million people in the Tees Valley, and parts of Durham, North Yorkshire and Cumbria. The trust has expertise in heart disease, trauma, neurosciences, renal services, cancer services and spinal injuries.

After a report following an inspection by the Care Quality Commission in December 2014, inspectors found services were caring, responsive and well led and did not observe any examples of unsafe practice. In total, 84% of 105 individual ratings were either good or outstanding and a number of areas of excellent and outstanding practice were also identified.

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The James Cook University Hospital

The James Cook University Hospital is one of Europe's most modern Hospitals. Based on Marton Road in Middlesbrough, James Cook University Hospital is part of the South Tees Trust whose patient numbers regularly exceed one million a year.

James Cook provides a wide range of district general hospital services and specialist services including neurosciences, renal medicine as well as many more. The accident and emergency department is the designated major trauma centre for the southern half of the northern region and the hospital has a dedicated 24-hour acute admissions unit.

The hospital is equipped with multiple modern features including 19 well-equipped operating theatres, a 16-bedded intensive care unit, a 21-room imaging department equipped with the latest technology and a purpose built six-bed radiology unit. Amongst all these features is the newly completed £35million cancer redevelopment housing some of the best facilities in Europe.

Development of Placement Relationship

Past experience from providing placements for students showed that there were little to no placements available within the media sector due to Middlesbrough's small creative arts and media opportunity amount, this brought up two main issues for students wanting experience. The first of these issues being the monetary aspect, having a placement in a different part of the country good enough for our students within the media sector would often lead to the students having to spend a lot of money on travel, housing and food whilst on placement, this led to students being put off placements such as these. The other being that the School of Arts and Media student profile showed that 71%¹ of students were from the local area, this often meant that students didn't want to go far away to their placements.

Placement Provider, Mark Oxley, wanted to set up this relationship after graduating from Teesside University, believing that the work that the university did with him in terms of interview preparation and work experience was hugely beneficial and he wanted to give back. The university felt that the relationship with the Trust and with Mark could be hugely beneficial and a pilot scheme was brought into fruition with a number of students going over for a placement with the Trust.

¹ Academic Registry 2014/2015 student enrolment

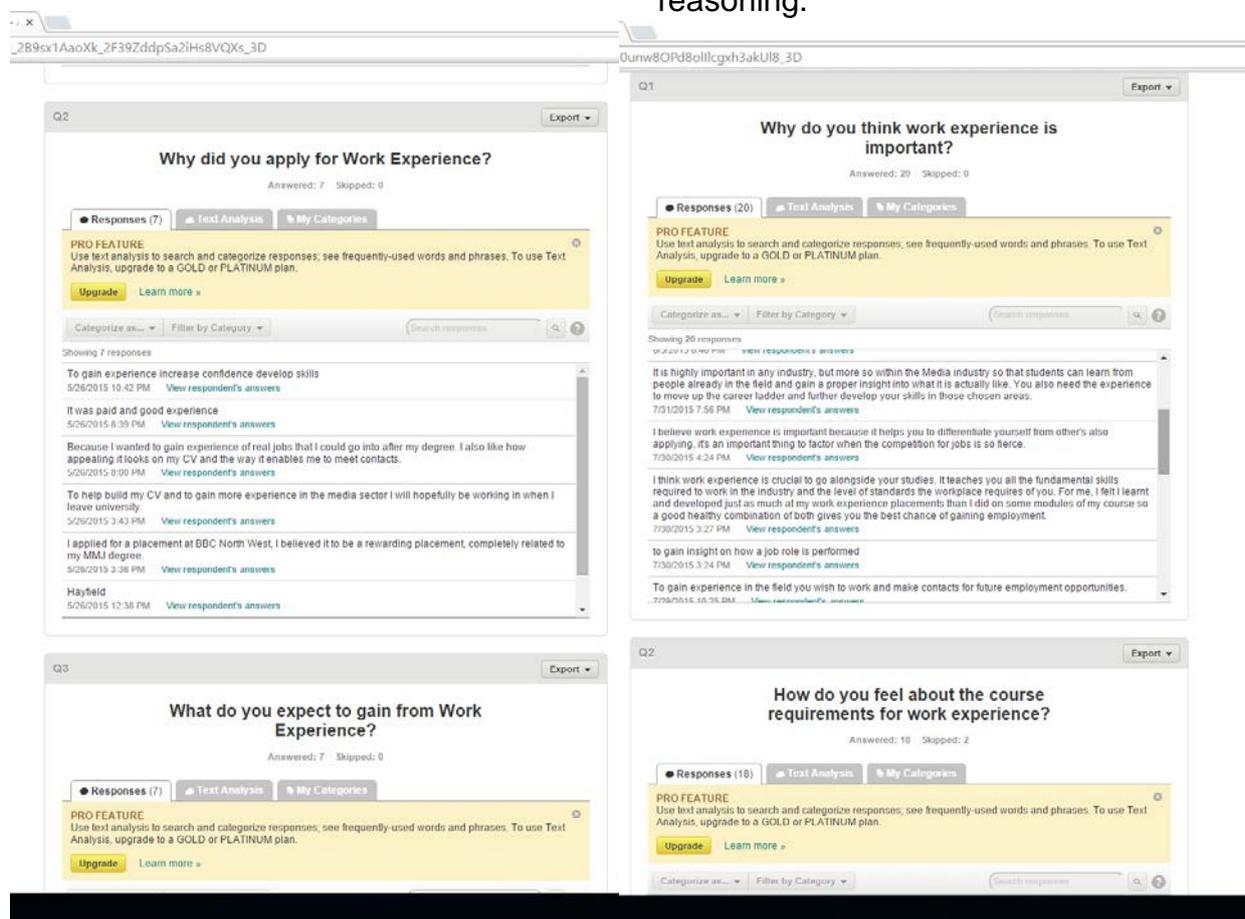
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Methodology

Primary Information Gathering

Online Surveys

The first method of information gathering that we used was to implement an online survey that could be dispersed throughout the Media sector of the university in a quick and effective way. The reason we chose to use this method was because of its ease of distribution, we believed that because of the technologically saturated world that we live in especially within the UK, we believed that students were much more likely to complete the survey if it was given to them in this fashion. The survey was created for free on the Survey Monkey website (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>), and the questions used were “open questions” to encourage the students to stay away from simple yes and no answers in the hopes of going deeper into their reasoning.



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Survey Findings

From the two surveys that were created, 27 responses were given by students that were part of the “Media@Tees” Facebook group set up for School of Arts and Media students.

The first finding was the belief that work experience is vital to the students’ development for their future.

“I think work experience is crucial to go alongside your studies. It teaches you all the fundamental skills required to work in the industry and the level of standards the workplace requires of you. “

The second finding was that the majority of students appreciated that work experience was a course requirement and an assessed module during their summer. They believed that this actually pushed them to go and do work experience which lead them to increasing their confidence as well as their skills.

The final finding and most important is that the main reason for the majority of the responses that had not yet completed any work experience was due to their low self-confidence and the fact that they have little to no experience in the field.

Questionnaires

Purpose

To gain more detailed qualitative opinions on what students felt about work experience and the effectiveness of the options that they have available to them.

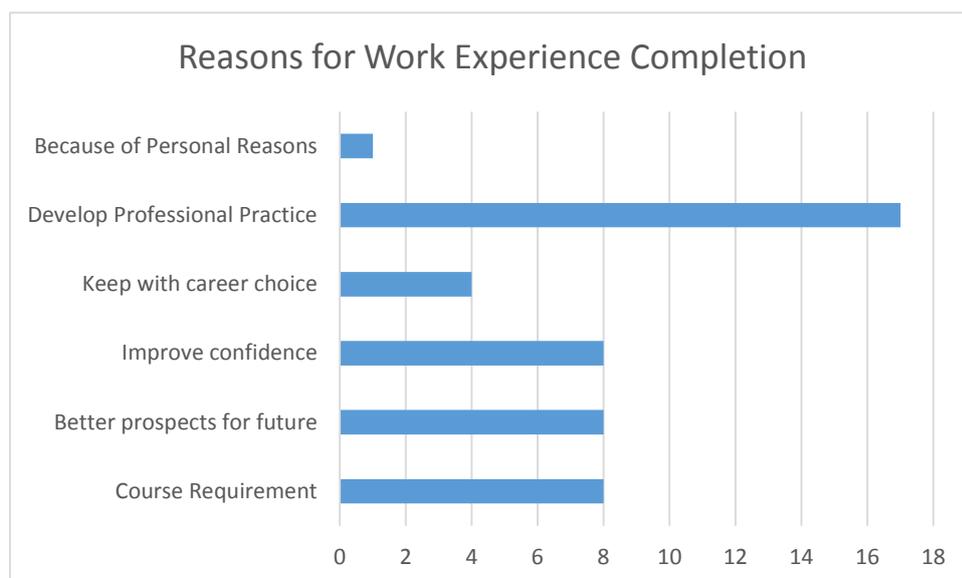
Participants

The questionnaire was handed out to a variety of undergraduate students at a screening of third year films at the local Cineworld Cinema. The students were part of a variety of courses from the School of Arts and Media at Teesside University.

Overall 28 students filled in the questionnaire, 14 females and 14 males, all of who study at Teesside University. This allowed for a varied mixture of respondents in order to gain as much detail and concepts as possible.

Questionnaire Findings

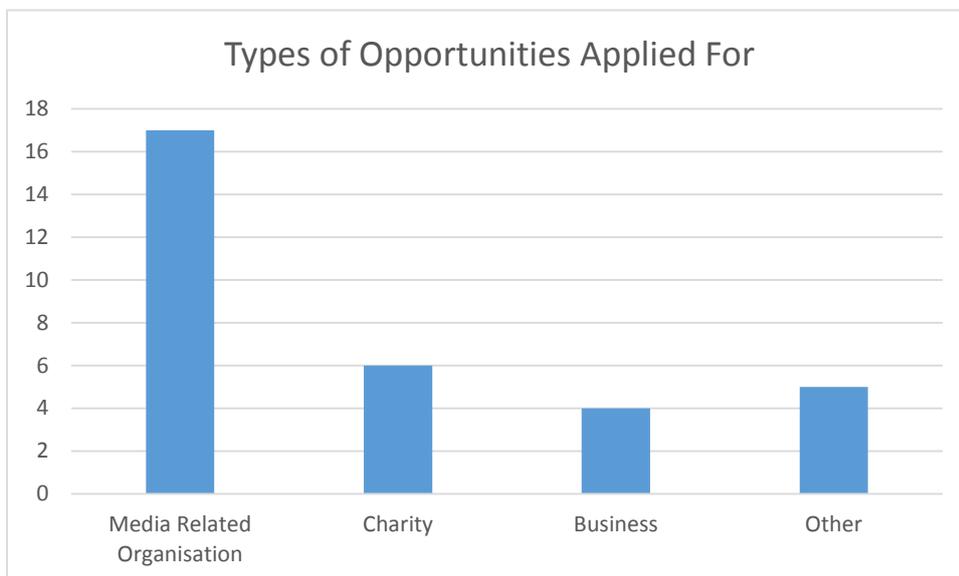
The questionnaire revealed that there was a mixture of students who had and had not completed work experience during their time at Teesside University.



The feedback from the question regarding the reasons for completion of work experience clearly shows that the main reason is to develop professional practice for their chosen career. Professional practice can come under many different facades but the one reoccurring feature is the basics of their occupational practice. For our media students that could be using a camera, creating written stories or press releases, etc. Those can be learnt from placements such as the one used for this project at South Tees Trust. The students were asked to complete multiple tasks which included using cameras in a multitude of ways as well as editing video software. These skills are highly sort after in the media industry especially for journalists and production team members.



The feedback from the question regarding the reasons for lack of work experience clearly points towards a lack of confidence as a reason for those who haven't yet completed a placement during their time at Teesside University. This coincides with the information gathered from the journals completed by the students on the placements. Confidence in their skills needed to achieve in the media industry appears to be a massive factor relating to fear of completing a work experience placement. The irony is that confidence is gained by completing activities in their field such as work experience so a two week placement is a perfect time for students to gain confidence and experience in short clusters rather than a long several month placement which could be seen as a big step for new students.



The feedback from the question regarding which types of opportunities the students questioned applied for clearly shows that a Media Related Organisation is their main choice of placement. There are multiple reasons for this but arguably the main reason is due to the belief that only Media Related Organisations are credible additions to a portfolio and a C.V. Non-Traditional Media Organisations can still be

great additions to any portfolio or C.V and this is clearly shown by the reactions to the placement by the students who had taken part, shown later in this report. A reason for this could be lack of coverage and opportunities such as this for students being spread and backed by placement officers, but also lack of information about the effectiveness of these placements.

Face to Face Interviews

I wanted to make sure that I had face-to-face interviews with those students who were selected for the placement because I wanted to ask them personal questions and I felt that by sitting with them in a comfortable environment, I could calm them down and get the best answers from them. I gave each student a selected time on my schedule which coincided with their time on placement. This allowed me to talk to the students just after having the interview for the placement, before they went on placement and after they had finished the placement. These different points in their placement gave the best opportunity of getting their feelings such as how they felt, what they were excited/fearful of and what they wanted from the placement.

Sadly during their placements we encountered logistical and time based issues so we only managed to interview three of the students and the placement provider. Both student and placement provider, Mark Oxley, were asked to take part in an interview about these placements. Each were asked what their jobs included as a placement participator and as a placement provider, how they felt about the placements and why they wanted to take part.

Face-To-Face Interview Findings

Each of the students relayed to us that the placement played on their self-confidence issues and that the thought of going to the placement made them incredibly nervous but each left the placement feeling much more confident not only in their skills but in themselves as a whole. They found that the workload was something they had never experienced but the variety allowed them to keep moving and it helped them to develop new skills as well as improve old ones. They had to keep on their toes because of the variety so this allowed them to improve their camera techniques as well as their interview techniques and their ability to read a situation.

Each student felt that the placement was invaluable to them due to the real-world experience it gave them, and the fact that it allowed them to peak into a world of media without having to either go far, spend lots of money and that each of the skills that they learnt was truly transferable to a traditional media role if needed.

Student, Michael, said: "Before I came to this placement, I really did feel nervous, I felt overwhelmed almost by the thought of what I would be doing... I was greeted by my placement supervisor and he was really friendly and he really made me feel settled in and since then I've walked in like it's my second home."

"The contrast in jobs whilst we here is phenomenal, we go from filming a surgery one minute to filming in a library the next minute. It's like going from a racetrack to an old people's home in terms of walking speed."

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Placement provider, Mark said: “It’s been both beneficial for the students and for us in the P.R team, giving us a helping hand during a very hectic time.”

Student, Rebecca said: “The most valuable thing about the placement for me is getting the experience and working in a real world environment.”

Selection process

Each of the students that applied for the placement were brought in for a formal interview with both the Placement providers from South Tees Trust and the placement officer at the University. The room was set up to recreate a real world interview that the students would have to go through in order to apply for a job in both the media as well as outside the media industry. Students were asked to dress formally as well as bring evidence of their skills to show the placement providers.

Feedback from students who applied but were unsuccessful

In order to find out the reasons for applying for the position, an interview was conducted with a student who was unsuccessful in their attempt at being part of the placement.

The first key finding from the student was that they found the placement to consist of different areas of experience that they are keen to add to their arsenal for their future in the media industry. They felt that doing work experience outside of traditional media organisations showed employers that you are willing to do something different and move out of your comfort zone.

The second key finding was regarding their opinion on placements away from NTMOs. The student felt it is just as effective doing promotional content and creating video content just as it would be working for the BBC. They felt that it is perfect for the student who wants to widen their experience and to find out what suited them for their career choice, feeling it allows for students to find out if their future actually lies away from a NTMO.

Pre-Placement Interviews

Before any of the students began the actual placement with South Tees Trust at James Cook Hospital, each of these students were asked to attend a brief interview with myself in order to gauge some of their motivations for applying for the position at James Cook as well as to discover what they hope to gain from the placement and to find out their feelings towards the interview process that they were part of.

Each of the students were asked the same questions, why they chose to apply for the position, what they wanted to get from the placement, how they felt before going into the interview, during and after the interview as well as their thoughts on having any kind of experience to show within an interview.

In terms of the findings around the student’s overall motivations for attempt to get the placement as well as what they want from the placement is experience to go on their media C.V. Each of the students were given a brief detail of what the placement entailed before applying for the position so to say that they all felt this position would

serve them in a media environment arguably says that a placement such as this gives them the experience they need to move upwards in a career in the media. An international student that was placed on the course lead to a finding in which the reason that they chose to do this placement was purely to complete the 60 hour assessment for the module.

The findings surrounding the placement was that they liked the idea of the interview being set up as if to be a real interview because it helps them to move forward in future interviews and helps them to see what to expect so that they can prepare themselves.

An international student that was placed on the course lead to a finding in which the reason that they chose to do this placement was purely to complete the 60 hour assessment for the module.

Journal

We had decided early on that we wanted to get deeper into the emotions of the student placements to get a different answer than the standard “because I need it to get hired”. One of the main objectives for our project was to find out the motivations, expectations and experiences of work experience, in particular the placement offered at South Tees Hospitals Trust, we felt that a possible effective way of doing this was to ask the students to complete a journal whilst they are on site. The journal was to be completed anyway that they see fit whether it being online or in a book, the main caveat being that they must go further than simply describing their actions during the day. We wanted the students to tell us what work they had done whilst on the placement and also how they felt while doing it, such as if they were nervous and did they have doubts of their capabilities? The biggest problem that we could think of when deciding to ask the students to create a journal was actually making sure that they were going to do it but thankfully the placement provider gave an allotted time to the students complete their journal diary for the day.

Feedback from Journals

After each of the placements had been completed, the students were required to hand over their journals. Each of the journals had in fact been incredibly successful in terms of finding out what each student had done whilst on their placement, as well as finding out what they were apprehensive of before arriving as well as how they felt during regarding their personal development. Below are some quotes from some of the journals we received:

“These past three days had been the first time I’ve worked in a serious professional environment and it has been good so far seeing what happens day to day at the hospital and PR offices”.

“I feel more confident on talking to new people and certainly more confident in interviewing people and making them feel at ease. I would definitely be interested in doing another placement at South Tees Trust and furthering my skills.”

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“I interviewed one of the military nurses. Here I used my interview skills to make the nurse feel comfortable, I stood at same eyelevel to her and I tried to make it more of a conversation than a boring interview.”

“I found my confidence in communication with people outside a production crew had increased.”

Issues with Journals

Throughout the placement process with each of the students, as well as after the placement had ended, issues began to arise with the students completing this journal in the way that we would have liked. The placement provider had in fact allocated a space within the day for the students to write in their journals and this allowed for the information to be fresh in the student’s minds. The main issue that arose was keeping the motivation for the students to reveal their feelings in the journal high. Each student started off writing in their journal with great enthusiasm but that steadily declined as the days passed. Their descriptions became purely of what they had done during the day and not how they felt doing them. The first few days of each journal was very informative regarding their motivations as well as their own personal improvement and helped us to dig deeper into their psyche.

Conclusion

Moving Forward

After the success of this placement and the partnership in particular, Teesside University and the School of Arts and Media will continue to utilise this partnership with our alumni in order to continue to give students the best work experience that they can get within our local area. The School of Arts and Media will continue to utilise partnerships with Alumni and look to increase the number of partnerships with Alumni in the area as this placement clearly shows that both student and employer find it extremely beneficial.

Our feedback from students on and off placement show that work experience with Non-traditional Media Organisations are still of use in terms of skill development and confidence building as well as allowing students to get some experience in real world situations for a massive organisation. Each student found that they had improved themselves in some way from the placement, whether that be actual skill such as camera technique, interview techniques or communication, or something internal such as confidence in themselves and their skills.

Feedback from the placement providers showed that placements such as this are extremely beneficial for them in terms of having extra help from what they believe to be highly skilled and professional individuals as well as potential for the students in the organisation for the future.

Following from the success of this placement, Teesside University have already began to build new partnerships with the most recent being Durham Police as well as potential partnerships that the School of Arts and Media plan on pursuing such as Communication and Marketing teams with examples being Redcar and Cleveland Council Communications Team, Cleveland Police Communications Team and independent companies in the area.

The School of Arts and Media at Teesside University has already made plans to send both the School's Placement Officer and a senior lecturer to BBC Tees, Middlesbrough's local radio station to get some experience of being on placement with the organisation. This we believe will allow for these members of staff to communicate better with students about what to expect whilst on placement but also to help students on a deeper emotional level in terms of confidence and skill development.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Example of questionnaire

Teesside University Work Experience questionnaire 2015

We would appreciate it if you could spare a few minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Please circle correct answer(s).

1) Have you ever completed any work experience during your degree?

Yes/No

2) If answered no go to question 4, if yes continue to question 3.

3) If yes, why did you apply?

- * Course requirement
- * Better prospects for future
- * Improve confidence
- * Keep with career choice
- * Develop professional practice

4) If no why not:

- * No time
- * Too nervous
- * Lack of confidence
- * Not bothered
- * No attractive opportunities

5) What kinds of opportunities have you applied for?

- * Media organisation
- * Charity
- * Business
- * SME

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* None traditional media

* Other

If other, please explain:

6) If you were able to select your ideal work experience opportunity, what would it be and why?

Appendix 2. Student Journal Example

Monday 24th August

Upon arrival, find the office location was easy. After meeting Mark we had a brief introduction to the equipment, what followed was some practise shots to allow Mark our supervisor to gain more understanding into our current technical capabilities. I personally believe I preformed moderately ok, with praise on my work from Mark. After Lunch we proceeded to undergo one interview (audio only) then moved into editing footage for a volunteer's organisation. On our introduction day we were also introduced to the 'Star awards', which consisted of producing a recoded VO (voice over) and shooting footage for 40 members of staff who had been nominated.

Tuesday 25th

Today we had organised to work towards the 'LRI' (Learning resource institute). The task was to film in a surgical room while an op was being performed. This task was particularly daunting and was considered 'deep end' as an assignment. We had to capture a woman who was observing and taking notes, our supervisor wanted shots of the surgeons. This created some complications as we were not allowed to get the patient on film. Overall this big task was a new experience and really shown me how disciplined I had to be.

Wednesday 26th

Today we had a task of shooting lots of footage for progression towards the star awards, we also had more VO to capture. Today was also when my peer Adam from the university who was accompanying me on the placement was absent. Upon learning his absence I was a little worried as I believed the work would become more difficult and demanding knowing all the footage now had to be captured by myself. We also had another task after lunch which was to pull old footage from old projects to be converted and placed in a PowerPoint. Overall the tasks I performed today were not too difficult and were fairly clear.

Thursday 27th

Today held more star award footage. We had the pleasure of taking a visit to the hospital located in Northallerton, upon arrival we interviewed a doctor who had nominated his department for an award, the task was a simple VO and went smoothly, and So far my technical abilities had not been tested or improved. However I found my confidence in communication with people outside a production crew had increased.

Friday 28th

So far in my placement I have enjoyed the tasks which I have undertaken, however, I felt at this time the footage and VO became tedious in which I requested a change in jobs. I asked this to begin work on editing the pieces together since very little had been done so far. My editing skills have always been somewhat mediocre, this task allowed me to build on my skills and my editing confidence, I managed to change some previous work done on the star awards and changed some shots as the current shots edited by a previous student had seemed 'out of place' or gave off a negative signal to the 'viewer' (shots looking down on the subject etc.). The first week of my placement was fun and proved to be insightful in progressing my technical ability alongside my communication ability with the general public and those of authority (surgeons, doctors etc.).

END OF WEEK 1

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Monday 31st Bank holiday

Tuesday 1st

Today was a particularly early start as we had been asked by a lecturer at Teesside University to be interviewed as part of a short promotional piece as to why students should undergo placement. The task of being in front of the camera has always been difficult however this time I felt confident and relaxed because my time at the University and the placement had really expanding my self-confidence. The rest of the day continued with star award footage which lead us through the hospital visiting places we'd normally not have access to.

Wednesday 2nd

Today's work started with more appointments for the star awards project. The awards video deadline is approaching and we had still 20 more subject videos and VO to capture. This lead us back to Northallerton to capture footage for the previous VO we had captured here. We had the team working at their usual places, I had to walk around the department to find the members of staff and capture footage, and this proved most difficult as I was apprehensive about walking around a building where I was clueless as to where I was allowed access. However as previously mentioned my confidence was now beginning to help me and I managed.

Thursday 3rd

Today saw a change in subject, by now our usual daily appointments was to capture footage and VO for the star awards. However today we had a task of travelling out to capture a patient experience video, this piece was an interview where the patient had a complaint and was expressing it via interview. This task took up much of the day, it also proved to be a different challenge. We were joined by Mark and another member of the PR (public relations) team though we were still entering a civilian's house. We kept a professional manner and again this helped build my confidence.

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Appendix 3. Link to video accompaniment

https://vimeo.com/138179390?utm_source=email&utm_medium=clip-transcode_complete-finished-20120100&utm_campaign=7701&email_id=Y2xpcF90cmFuc2NvZGVkfDcwNzczMDFiZTVIMzJhYWE4MjE5NDE3YjExMDg2NTAxNTE4fDgwOTk3NDB8MTQ0MTI3Mzk3MXw3NzAx