

BSc Renewable Energy
Module CSM3370
Work Placement Report
Guidelines for Work Placement Report

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure that you know what is required from you in preparation of your Summer Work Placement Report.

The Work Placement is a third year module option (CSM3370) that takes place during the summer vacation after year 2 with a report to be submitted early in Semester 1 of the 3rd year. The module is worth 10 credits. The module is assessed on the basis of the Work Placement Report alone.

Prior to entering the final year, each student is required to obtain practical experience by undertaking a period of at least six weeks duration working within the renewable energy sector or a related industry or organisation. Most employers will require a longer placement usually throughout the summer months between year 2 and 3, to give the placement student an opportunity to provide some kind of tangible contribution to the business within the time frame.

The timing of semester 2 exams means you are likely to be available from early June until the middle of September and you are urged to take advantage of this when planning your placement.

You are reminded that if you are required to take any summer exams on a deferred or referred basis then you will have to plan your placement around attending those exams in late August. You will not be allowed any exemption from completing a placement due to having to sit summer exams, nor will you be allowed exemption from a resit to complete a placement.

The Work Placement Report element of the module is important as it will give you practice in report writing before attempting your Undergraduate Dissertation. Since the work placement report is the single assessed piece of work associated with the module achieving a pass mark is essential to passing the module a requirement for obtaining your honours degree. Failure to complete this module will have the same effect as failure to complete any other module on your course.

Your responsibilities

During your final year, many of you will be preparing CVs and applying for jobs as energy specialists, perhaps starting your own business or furthering your training through an MSc or other postgraduate programme. All of these fields are highly competitive. One of the key items that future employers will look for on your CVs will be whether you have completed a work placement and how relevant it was to your field. Employers will also be looking for clues about whether or not you were able to fit into your placement organisation and also indicators of whether you were valued as a placement student. Thus one of the main reasons for the summer work placement is to try to impress the people with whom you have worked in order to provide a recent employment based reference on your CV at the time of your graduation. It is also worth noting that many students have been offered paid employment following their graduation as a result of impressing employers on a summer work placement.

Another purpose of the work placement is for you to develop or improve employability skills. The classes of employability skills and what they mean (according to the University website) are indicated below. One of your responsibilities will be to record the opportunities you have had to exercise and improve these skills as part of your placement. All placements should provide you with opportunities to develop and exercise new skills. You can gain much more from a placement by actively seeking opportunities to develop skills and thinking about what you might be able to teach yourself to get a task done.

You should obey all instructions given by your placement provider in respect of Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, etc.

This list does not need to be taken as a request for the categorisation of your work placement report, but these are areas of learning that might inform your report.

Communication

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively is crucial in everything that we do, especially in the work place. Communicating clearly and effectively is not always easy and the potential for misunderstandings is huge. You should be aware that you communicate using your body, your tone of voice, and your actions (e.g. being persistently late for work for no apparent reason) as well as your language.

Assertiveness

You should identify opportunities you have had to use a range of interpersonal skills to confidently assert your needs. Try to identify differences between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour, so that you can identify and modulate your own level of assertiveness, as appropriate. This will help you to learn your own methods of managing stress in future.

Presentation Skills

The more you do, the better you are at doing it. Hopefully you will all get an opportunity to make a presentation. This is something that is worth actively seeking out, even if you are initially reticent about getting up in front of people.

Team Development

Working with other people is something that we all do, but there are situations when our ability to work with others will determine how well we successfully achieve a common goal. You should try to identify the strengths that you have which make you an invaluable member of any team, allow for the fact that you may have weaknesses and try your best to overcome them.

Meeting Skills

It is important to reflect on what has happened during a formal meeting – you will all experience at least one (interview, first day briefing or placement kick-off). Try specifically to reflect upon the role that you played, be it social, academic or work-related, so that you can develop your confidence. Try to identify the structure of meetings you have had. Over time, you will be able to describe the function and structure of a meeting, discuss the responsibilities of the chairperson, secretary and participants and apply a range of skills in a meeting situation.

Negotiation

The skill of negotiation is one that we use everyday, with all kinds of people from who in our house will make the tea, to the time we need for our essays. Successful negotiations require many interpersonal skills.

Time Management

Your work placement will give you the opportunity to develop the skill of managing your time while ensuring that you discharge your obligations to your employer.

Stress Management

All of us are under a lot of pressure to work hard, have lots of fun, meet lots of people, develop our skills, possibly with lots of financial difficulties. Being able to cope with feeling stressed, and more importantly, being able to manage stress is an important skill that we can apply socially, academically and in our future employment.

Problem Solving

Many problems that we encounter require us to be creative in our problem solving. Your work placement hopefully will give you opportunities to solve problems (which can take all sorts of forms, not just a series of calculations to arrive at a result).

Summary

You must take your work placement exceptionally seriously and try to develop a professional outlook and approach if you wish to succeed. Remember:

- ◆ The Work Placement Report also represents an excellent opportunity to demonstrate your ability to the academic staff team and to the external examiner in the world of work.
- ◆ Motivated, organized and competent students gain a tremendous amount from the experience and invariably obtain very good marks.
- ◆ As indicated previously, a good placement report is something you can put on your CV, but more importantly, if you are proud of your report you can take it along to interviews as a demonstration of what you are capable of.

Your obligations can be summarised in the statement: “Try your best!”

Work Placement Report Format

An example work placement report from a recent student placement will be issued to give you an idea of the format, style and length of a Work Placement Report. It is possible that during the course of your placement, you will work on the preparation of a report or some other formal output for your placement provider. In this instance, you can submit this report as part of your assessment but it must be appended with sections that:

1. Record your efforts to find a placement. This should detail the companies you contact, how you contact them and any replies you get. It might also usefully cover your strategy for finding a placement and how this altered over time in response to any setbacks. In the event that you fail to find a placement, this evidence will also be useful in making it clear that you made a proper effort to find a placement. Failure to present this evidence may result in your failing to pass the module on an initial basis and having to carry out your placement and submit your placement report on a referred basis.
2. Record your activities with the employer. During the course of the placement record meetings, events, visits, duties, etc as well as to make notes on your perception of the placement and the experience and skill developments or enhancements you have benefited from.
3. Reflect on your experience with the company. For example this section might reflect on the skills you were required to use, consider how you approached problems, and how, with reflection, you might have approached them differently.

You may have to sign a confidentiality agreement document with the placement provider. In this instance please make sure your placement provider is aware that the B.Sc. Renewable Energy Programme Director will need to inspect the material you prepare for assessment toward CSM3370. The B.Sc. Renewable Energy Programme Director is quite happy to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to secure confidentiality but this must be arranged by you as part of your submission process. Be aware of the fact that some placement providers may wish to vet your report before it can be submitted for your assessment. It is in your interests to make us aware of the need for an NDA to be arranged as early as possible so that the University Legal Services department can get to work on the arrangements as early as possible. Anyone who requires an NDA should let Jo Shepherd and the Programme Director know as early as possible, the Work Placement Report for any student requiring an NDA must be submitted in a sealed envelope, it will not be opened (and thus will not be marked) until Legal Services finalise the NDA with the company and instruct us that we may proceed. This process may require some additional input from you but if the company do ask for an NDA it is essential that you do as they ask.

The report is to be typed at **1½ or double line spacing** on single sided A4 paper. The report is to be bound with a standard assessment cover sheet and BART sheet attached

The more work you can complete before returning to CSM, the easier your task will be. Start preparing the draft report before you return to CSM. This will make life easier when it comes to writing up your work and helps you to keep a record of what actually happened.

Suggested Outline Table of Contents

SUMMARY
TABLE OF CONTENTS
LIST OF FIGURES
LIST OF TABLES

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
 - Purpose of report.
 - Background to the vacation employment

- 2. TECHNICAL CHAPTERS**

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- 9. DISCUSSION**

- 10. CONCLUSIONS**

- 11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 12. REFERENCES**

APPENDIX 1 – A PERSONAL REFLECTION OF THE WORK PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

APPENDIX 2 – AS REQUIRED

Work Placement Report Submission

You will need to return to CSM to re-register for your programme on the first day of the Autumn Term. Submission of the report will be on the following Monday at the start of week 2 unless you are otherwise informed.

A signed letter from the placement provider, stating the dates the student has worked, should be included with the report and should be affixed inside the rear cover.

Failure to Find a Placement

Students are expected to make all efforts to find a placement and complete it before the beginning of third year and to then submit an appropriate report by the specified deadline. Failure to do so will be taken as seriously as failure in any other module. Should you fail to secure an appropriate placement then you will typically be allowed to find one at a later date on a referred basis; that is, completing the placement and submitting a report such that the report receives a mark not greater than 40%. Exceptions to this may be made where students can demonstrate that they have made a good faith effort to find a placement. This will usually require presentation of a file indicating all efforts to find a placement, including copies of application letters, records of phone calls, email conversations with employers and evidence of any rejection letters. The expectation is that this should include a fairly substantial number of approaches to companies. Students are warned that we do not regard sending out emails to potential employers on a 'cold calling' basis alone as indicating sufficient effort has been made in finding a placement and this will not typically be regarded as sufficient to earn an exception as to the student continuing the module on a deferred rather than referred basis.

Students are also warned that where the placement is not finished in the summer prior to entering the third year then experience with the third year workload forces us to strongly recommend that a student does not attempt to complete the six week minimum in term time. The student is instead recommended to complete the work placement in the summer following their third year. An appropriate deadline for submission will be agreed with the student for the submission of their deferred or referred work placement report. BSc students following this arrangement will be unable to complete their honours degree ahead of their graduation ceremony but may graduate with an ordinary degree and await the award of an honours degree following completion of the work placement and of the full 360 credits. M.Eng students are warned that they will have to complete the CSM 3370 work placement criteria and submit a report and then also meet the requirements of their industry placement project module. Both placements for M.Eng students may be completed with the same company but each will require separate minimum six week placement to meet the requirements of each modules and of university regulations, a total of twelve weeks in all.

Confidentiality and Non Disclosure Agreements

Everyone will have to respect confidentiality rules imposed by their placement providers. As you will have to complete a written work placement report in which you may want to refer to confidential material we ask you to implement the following procedure (agreed with the University's Corporate / Legal Services Department) for preparation of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). For queries relating to NDA preparation, please contact:

Hannah Shillabeer
Contracts & Intellectual Property Officer
Legal and Insurance Services
University of Exeter
Streatham Farm
Prince of Wales Road
Exeter
Devon
EX4 4PX

Tel: 01392 722160

Email: H.J.Shillabeer@exeter.ac.uk

In many cases it should be possible for you, through negotiation with your placement provider, to edit and carefully word your placement report such that a NDA is not required. It is important to realise that preparation of an NDA should be regarded as a last resort option, when your assessment is that your work placement report would be very weak if confidential information was omitted from it. Under these circumstances, take the following steps.

1) **Before you leave your placement**, discuss a draft outline of your report with your placement provider. Find out from your placement provider whether or not they deem a non disclosure agreement (NDA) is required to cover the contents of the report you submit. If not, get this confirmed in writing. Then go to step 7).

2) If your placement provider needs a NDA, place a request for a NDA to be drafted to Hannah Shillabeer through the following web address:

http://www.ex.ac.uk/research/staff/contracts/non_disclosure_agreement.shtml

You will need your University login details to access this page. Obviously the fields for contact details etc. on this online form are important to get right, but the field for "Purpose of meeting or discussions" field should provide the detail that the NDA should cover the written content of a report of work placement activity prepared by the student such that the report can be assessed by a programme academic, only.

3) Hannah will email back a .pdf copy of an NDA which you can show to your placement provider. If the NDA content is not deemed acceptable by your placement provider, then contact Hannah by email or phone to explain the situation, and this will be treated as an exceptional case. If it is okay, then proceed to Step 4. Again, it is assumed that you will carry out Steps 1 to 3 before you leave your placement.

4) Prepare 2 **identical** hardcopies of your report by the deadline (see above).

*DO NOT INCLUDE THE PERSONAL REFLECTION APPENDIX IN EITHER COPY. *

Retain one copy yourself. Submit the second copy of your placement report in a sealed envelope addressed to your placement provider to Jo Shepherd at the CSM Office who will dispatch it. This envelope should also contain: i) a hardcopy of the non-disclosure agreement sent to you by Hannah Shillabeer **which you have signed**, ii) a postage paid envelope addressed to Hannah Shillabeer at the University's Legal Department (see below), iii) a covering letter explaining that you are providing your placement provider with a copy of your report which they can keep, and asking them to sign the enclosed NDA at the appropriate place and return it to Hannah using the envelope provided.

5) Submit the following to Jo Shepherd at the CSM Office by the deadline: i) Your Personal Reflection Appendix as a separate document, ii) a copy of your covering letter to your placement provider, iii) a copy of the NDA that you have sent to your placement provider if one is required. You should use a standard coursework cover sheet with this submission.

6) When Hannah receives the NDA signed by you and your placement provider, she will arrange for it to be signed for the University and send copies of the NDA to all parties. When you receive your copy of the signed NDA, submit the copy of your work placement report that you retained in step 3, again in a sealed envelope. Use a standard coursework cover sheet. We cannot allow an infinite amount of time to accommodate this process. So, the deadline for receipt of the second copy of your placement report is the End of Week 9 of the term. You are responsible for chasing the people involved in the process to make sure it is complete by this time. *Stop*. Do not go to step 7). You're done - phew!

7) **This section is for those who do not need to prepare a NDA with their placement provider ONLY.** Prepare 2 **identical** hardcopies of your report by the agreed deadline (Friday, end of Week 1). ***DO NOT INCLUDE THE PERSONAL REFLECTION APPENDIX IN EITHER COPY.** *Prepare a separate 'personal reflection' document. Submit the one copy of your placement report in an envelope addressed to your placement provider, to Jo Shepherd in the CSM Office. Jo will dispatch it to your placement provider. This envelope should also contain a covering letter explaining that you are providing your placement provider with a copy of your report, which they can keep. Submit, using a standard coursework cover sheet: i) the second copy of your work placement report, ii) your personal reflection document, iii) a copy of the covering letter you sent your placement provider, iv) a copy of the letter/email from your placement provider stating that a NDA is not required.

I hope these arrangements make sense to you. Please study them carefully and THEN contact your Programme Director or your Personal Tutor if things still are not clear.

Please note that these instructions form part of the assessment for this module and that students are expected to complete and submit their assignments to meet these conditions. Failure to do so can be expected to lead to reduced marks for the module.

Problems

You should always contact your tutor or programme director if major logistical difficulties develop. Whilst it is largely your responsibility to try and sort out these problems, we will provide advice and help wherever possible in a genuine emergency. It is always worthwhile directing your enquiries through Jo Shepherd, since she will be able to tell you if the relevant person is away and can re-direct the message to another member of staff if necessary. The contact numbers for telephone, fax and e-mail are given below:

University of Exeter, Cornwall Campus, General Reception Desk
Telephone 01326 371800 (switchboard open 0900-1715 Monday-Friday, answer phone out of hours)
Fax 01326 371859 (generally online 24 hours, unless it runs out of paper)

CEMPS admin team: Jo Shepherd 01326254112, CSM@exeter.ac.uk

Course Director: Ken O'Brien 01326 254111, K.O'Brien@exeter.ac.uk
Work Placement Tutor: Martyn Haywood, 01326 371833, H.M.Haywood@exeter.ac.uk

Your Contact Details during the Summer Vacation

It is very important that we are able to contact you throughout the summer both while you are away on work placements and also when "doing other things." The reasons for this are twofold:

- 1) We may need to contact you about retaking an assessment or exam for one of your second year modules.
- 2) We may need to send you the lecture materials for the earliest of the third year modules during the summer vacation, in order that you have time to read them before the face to face sessions.

Please make every effort to provide us with a reliable means of communication with you. Fill in form on following page and return this sheet to Jo Shepherd in the Education Office.

RE Work Placement Details

STUDENT

Name: _____

Contact Address _____

Contact Telephone _____

Contact Email: _____

PLACEMENT PROVIDER

Contact Name: _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email: _____