**Guidelines for Business placements**

### Assessment of your Placement

Prior to the placement report deadline in October you will need to produce a portfolio report on your topic that must be word processed and contain (1) a business report and (2) a project report. You must also submit a CV and job application cover letter for a mock job opportunity (selected from a list of suitable job opportunities which will be forwarded to you on your return). This will be followed by a mock job interview which will require you to give a presentation in front of a panel on your project report and answer questions on your Placement.

The report must be a maximum of 20 A4 pages, excluding the title page and a list of references. You should only have text on one side of the paper and all pages should be numbered. Text must be in Arial, 10point, 1.5line spacing, with margins of at least 2.5cm all around the text. ALL supporting materials such as abstracts, figures, tables, text boxes etc must be included in the page limit. A contents page is not essential, but if provided will be included within the 20 page limit. You are advised to ensure that the text in Figures and Tables are of sufficient size to be read and understood with ease. Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the page limit and for not adhering to font size and page layout. Those reports over 20 pages will have 20% per page (or part of page) deducted. Reports found not to be in the required format will be converted to said format and page count rules applied.

(**A) Project Report.** The report should be submitted electronically as a single file on Blackboard. It will consist of sections 1 & 2 below:

1. **Business component (around 10 pages – 35%).** This section should present a detailed commercial overview of the host organisation, which should include sections on:
   1. **Corporate development,** for example including background on the company’s history and who are its major shareholders and its growth over the last few years and plans for future growth.
   2. **The business sector** within which the company operates, for example identifying and discussing market trends, key competitor organisations and threats and opportunities for this sector.
   3. **The organisational structure of the company**, and the role of the placement student in relation to immediate line managers, and the overall company management team.
   4. **Scientific background - an overview of relevant scientific areas to the company's operations.** This is an opportunity to discuss scientific research relating to the company's activities. This may include some discussion of scientific principles underlying the company's products or simply outline science relevant to the company or work undertaken during the placement. This section should be written for a scientific audience, and cite appropriate academic sources from scientific journals.

and could also include sections on the following:

* 1. **The financial position of the company,** and an overview of the financial performance of the company to date. This might include an analysis of the company’s profitability, business model, sales performance and plans for raising capital through venture capital investment or flotation, if appropriate.
  2. **The marketing strategy of the company,** including an analysis of the company’s customers, the company’s longer term commercial goals, and the plans in place to deliver measurable progress towards those objectives through marketing.
  3. **An overview of the company's intellectual property** and processes for managing intellectual property, including patents, trademarks, copyright or design rights, as appropriate.
  4. **Research and development activity and product development pipeline**. This might cover topics both relevant to the placement, or in other groups within the company, and include an analysis of past and future activity.

The relative weighting of these sections will be dependent on the placement company, and the area the student has focused on during the project (the virtual visitor will advise on the balance between these sections during the placement year). Nonetheless you would normally be expected to be able to write about at least **two** of the above optional topics.

1. **Project reporting (around 10 pages – 35%).** Project work carried out by the placement student either individually, or as part of a team, will be presented in this section. A single project could be reported, or two shorter projects. In the context of a business placement, projects are highly variable but are expected to include an element of independent and/or creative work. Examples include: developing a new process for administration or management; analysis of market research data; developing or modifying a sales strategy; preparation of technical regulatory documentation; independently carrying out and reporting on intellectual property prior art searches to assess the patentability new inventions, managing clinical trials data; etc. You are encouraged to think broadly on which aspects of your placement are most suitable to write up as your project(s). The reporting should cover the following topics:
   1. Short background to the project (linking in to material covered in section 1 above)
   2. Aims of the project
   3. Description of the processes carried out to achieve the project aims
   4. Project outcomes
   5. Conclusions and discussion, including recommendations for future work.

Note: Where reporting on a team-based project you must make explicitly clear what your (technical and/or intellectual) contribution was to the work. While it is acceptable to report a colleague’s data/work, for example where it underpins or supports your own output, such inclusions should be kept to a minimum and their contribution should be specifically acknowledged in the Figure Legend / linking text.

**(B) Mock job application and Interview**

1. **Mock job application (3 pages 15% marks).** You should prepare a 1 page covering letter and a maximum 2 page CV for a job opportunity you have selected from a list of pre-approved job vacancies (these will be made available to you during the summer). This should be submitted via Blackboard at the same time as you submit your written project. Please note that these pages are not included in the 20 page limit for your report.

You may find the Careers Service pages useful when writing your CV and covering letter:[*http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/applicationsinterviews/*](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/applicationsinterviews/)Remember that you must tailor your CV and covering letter to the job for which you are applying*.*

1. **Mock interview (15% marks).** Instructions for participating in this mock interview are contained in appendix 1 and 2 of these guidelines. In brief you will be called to attend a 45 minute interview, with a mock panel. You will have prepared a 20 minute presentation on your placement host company, and the placement project work you have carried out. You will then be questioned on the content of your presentation, your report and your CV and cover letter.

**References**

Throughout your report you will need to refer to the work of others and must understand how to avoid plagiarism.

The Harvard or Numbering system may be used for the citation references. You should be familiar with Endnote, but it is possible that you may already have or will be given access to it or an alternative computer database program for storing, retrieving and sorting references - if so, this an ideal opportunity to learn how to use a new system.

**Harvard system:**

Papers should be cited in the text by the surnames of authors and year of publication: e.g. “…Bottle and Wyatt (1966) have written an extensive guide to the published literature….advice on writing scientific reports is also readily available (O’Connor and Woodford, 1971).” For three or more authors you should name only the first author followed by *et al..* Where more than one paper by the same author(s) is published in the same year they should be referred to as 1990a,1990b etc. In the final list of references, articles should be in alphabetical order, except for those by three or more authors (given in the text as “*et al.*”) which should be grouped chronologically after any other papers by the first author.

**For a paper:**

Author(s) surname(s) and initials

Year of publication (including a, b, c if appropriate)

The full title of the paper

The journal title in italics

The volume number in bold

The first and last page numbers

e.g. Sanger, F. (1981) Determination of nucleotide sequences in DNA. *Science* **214**, 1205-1210.

**For an article in a book the following details are required:**

Author(s) surname(s) and initials

Year of publication

The article title

The title of the book, including volume number in italics

The editor(s) names

The first and last page numbers

The publisher’s name and place of publication

e.g. Farr, L.A., Gasper, T.M. & Munn, D.F. (1984) Desynchronixation with surgery. In Chronobiology. Eds. E. Hans & H.F. Kabat. Pp. 544-547. Karzer, New York.

If the complete book is referred to the total number of pages should be stated:

e.g. O’Connor, M. & Woodford, F.P (1976) Writing Scientific Papers in English. Elsevier, Amsterdam. 108pp.

**Information derived from the internet:**

Author(s) surname(s) and initials (use “anon” if not cited)

Year of publication

Organisation name

The article title

Date retrieved

Website URL

e.g. Hollands, T. & Munroe, S. (1997). COAT. Occupational Therapy and Ergonomics. Retrieved 14th June 2004 from <http://www.coat.ca/default/cfm>

**A publication, produced by a key organisation, which you have only referred to via the internet you must include:**

Organisation name

Year of publication (where known)

The article title

Date retrieved

Website URL

e.g. Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (1998). Occupational Therapy and Ergonomics. Retrieved 14th June 2004 from <http://www.coat.ca/default.cfm>

When citing information from the internet, it is important to state the date the information was retrieved, because the documents and site addresses frequently change. Think carefully about the validity of internet sources which are not peer reviewed.

**Submission**

It is your responsibility to ensure that your report is submitted to the University when you return.

**Reports should normally be completed and checked with your supervisor before you finish your placement.** You are not required to submit printed copies of your report UNLESS your report is covered by a confidentiality agreement.  If your report is covered by a confidentiality agreement it must **not** be submitted online but you should instead submit two printed and bound copies, with cover sheets (available from the Student Support Office), to the Student Support Office Reception (G.483 Stopford Building) by the same deadline.

**Failure to plan ahead is not an acceptable reason for late submission and will be penalised by deduction of 10% for every late day.**

**Appendix 1**

### Business Placements: Mock job application and Interview

Imagine that your job application has been successful and you have been called for an interview. The aim of the interview questions is to help you **expand** on what is in the statement and give you an opportunity to present new evidence, thus selling yourself further.

This interview panel is focused specifically on assessing the transferable skills and experience you have gained during your placement year. As such they will **not** test you on your knowledge of the company you are applying to.

It will begin with your giving a Powerpoint presentation to the panel, which should cover the following:

1. an outline of the Placement company you have worked with
2. an example of the project work you have carried out
3. an analysis of the transferable skills and experience you have developed on placement.

The panel will then question you, firstly on your placement, and questions may be on either your report or your presentation. Secondly the panel will question you on your wider transferable skills, and these questions may be answered with reference to your Placement or other experience gained at University or beyond. Typical examples of questions you may be asked in this final section are shown in Appendix A.

There will be three or four people on your mock interview panel: Your First Marker (Virtual Visitor), your Second Marker and a Representative from the Careers/HR team. A Moderator will also be present for some interviews.

The interview will last for approximately 45 minutes and will be constructed roughly as follows:

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| **0-5 minutes** | Introduction to the Panel and Explanation of the process |
| **5-20 minutes** | Presentation by the Student about their Placement Company |
| **20-35 minutes** | Panel questions about the content of the presentation and report |
| **35-45 minutes** | Panel questions about students’ job application. You should ensure that you have looked at what skills are requested in the advert you have selected. Use the [STAR technique](http://careerservices.wayne.edu/behavioralinterviewinfo.pdf) to practise answers. Further guidance on preparing for interviews can be found on the Careers website here: <http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/applicationsinterviews/interviews/> During the interview, you can use examples from either your placement year or from your wider experience but you are encouraged to use examples from your placement year where possible. |

Practice questions can be found on the [Careers Website](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/applicationsinterviews/interviews/) and some are also listed below.

**Appendix 2: General Interview Questions:**

**Making and influencing decisions and problem solving (team / individual)**

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| Have you ever had a situation where you had a number of alternatives to choose from? How did you go about choosing one? |
| Based on your experience, what steps do you think a team needs to go through to ensure decisions are made effectively and the correct decision is made? |
| Tell me about a time when you had to make an important decision quickly even though you did not have all the information you wanted. |
| Discuss an important decision you have made regarding a task or project at work. What factors influenced your decision? |
| Tell us about a time when you had to analyse information and make a recommendation to someone. |
| Have you ever had to persuade a group to accept a proposal or idea? How did you go about doing it? What was the result? |
| Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures that saved the team time or took the project in a new direction. |
| Give me an example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem. |
| Tell me about the time when you were especially creative in solving a problem |

**Planning, Organisation & Time Management**

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| What steps have you taken to make your team work more efficiently and productively? Specifically describe an event or procedure you created or initiated. |
| How do you keep your colleagues / supervisor informed about your work? |
| Tell us about a time that you undertook a project that demanded a lot of initiative/resourcefulness. |
| Describe a situation when you had many projects due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done? |
| How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give an example of this. |
| Describe a situation in which you had to work under pressure |

**Team working, managing conflicts, leadership skills**

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| Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or help others to compromise. What role / steps did you take? What was the result? |
| Tell us about a time that you had to work in a team with some individuals who did not get along. What role / steps did you take? What was the result? |
| Tell us about the most difficult or frustrating individual that you've ever had to work with, and how you managed to work with them. |
| How have you adjusted your approach when people did not respond as you expected? |
| Tell me about a time when you found it necessary to tactfully but forcefully say things that others did not want to hear. |
| Have you ever been in a position where you had to lead a group of peers? How did you handle it? What could you have done to be more effective? |
| In what past situations have you been most effective as a team worker? |
| Tell us about the last time you worked as part of a team. What did you like about working in the group? |
| Tell me about a time when you had to get people to work together more supportively |

**Communication & Personal skills**

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| Tell us about a time when you had to present complex information to colleagues. How did you ensure that your colleagues understood your material and were able to critically evaluate your work or make decisions based on it? |
| What kinds of presentations have you made? How did you prepare for them? What challenges did you have? |
| What kinds of challenges did you face in your placement year? Give an example of how you handled them. |
| Describe a situation where you had to complete work with little or no direction from supervisors or colleagues. |
| Tell us about a time that you had to adapt to a difficult situation or a change of priorities. |
| What is the riskiest decision you have made? What was the situation? What happened? |
| Some people work best as a team member, a team leader, or their own. How would you describe yourself? Give an example of a situation where you felt you were most effective. |

**Initiative**

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| Tell me about a time when you spotted an opportunity to suggest a change. How did you put this forward and what was the outcome? |
| Give me an example of when your initiative and quick thinking stopped a problem escalating. |
| When have you had to use your initiative to cope with a change in circumstances? |

**Analytical Skills**

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| Describe the last time you had to analyse a lot of information or data. What sort of information did this involve? What did you learn from the analysis? |
| Tell us how you have developed your analytical skills whilst at university. |
| Talk to me about a time when you discovered a more efficient method to carry out a particular work related task. |