**Guidelines for Conservation and Husbandry Placements**

**Overview**. Careers in conservation and animal welfare are becoming increasingly popular, and competition for entry into these fields is intense. A strong research background (including an advanced degree or scientific publications) will open doors that are closed to many other jobseekers. Taking a research-focused placement is an excellent way to develop that research background. Your research-focused placement need not be in the field you hope to enter. Most employers regard research experience as a signal of ability, and are willing to retrain capable applicants for their specific fields. In fact, many employers prefer candidates with experience outside their specific fields, because those candidates bring areas of expertise that are otherwise unavailable within their organisations.

Nonetheless, despite their value in starting careers, not every student wants to do a research-focused placement. Therefore, the University of Manchester also offers students the opportunity to pursue placements that are specifically focused on conservation and husbandry. A conservation and husbandry placement may offer fewer transferable skills than a research placement, but can serve as a “foot-in-the-door” in a particular organisation or industry. As with other placements, each student on a conservation and husbandry placement will produce a substantial written report at the end of his or her placement year. The goal of the placement and of the report is to help students learn how to turn their education at Manchester and their working experience in the conservation and husbandry industry into paying careers.

**Main Learning Objectives.** A successful Conservation and Husbandry Placement student will:

1. Learn how their industry of choice works. This includes understanding the goals of organisations in the field, the challenges that face those organisations, and where funding for those organisations comes from
2. Learn who the organisations and leaders in the industry are. Learn to develop positive collegial relationships with those organisations and people.
3. Learn about the day-to-day activities of people who work in the industry. This will help the student to evaluate whether the industry is an appropriate career choice for him or her.
4. Learn how other people in the industry have started and built their careers. The experience of others can serve as guidance for students attempting to enter the industry themselves.
5. Begin to acquire a set of skills that is valued in the industry. These skills will help the student achieve career goals, and make him or her a more marketable employee in the industry of choice as well as on the broader job market.
6. Begin to build a track record of successful activities that demonstrates the student’s value in the chosen industry, and to employers in general.

**The Conservation and Husbandry Placement Report.** Your placement report should comprise the following:

1. Title page
2. Table of contents
3. Introduction to the host organisation
4. Introduction to the industry
5. Project report
6. Interviews (5) with people in the field

A1. Introspective statement

A2. Linked-In portfolio

Page guidelines for each section are provided below, but sections 2 to 6 combined must not exceed 30 pages. Supporting materials (*e.g*., abstracts, figures, tables, and text boxes) are part of the sections they support, and are included in the page limit. The title page, introspective statement, Linked-in portfolio, and references are *not* included in the page limit. Text must be in Arial 10-point with 1.5-line spacing and margins of 2.5cm on all sides. Pages must be numbered. Figures and tables should be of sufficient size to be read and understood with ease. Reports will be marked on quality rather than length, but **reports that exceed 30 pages will lose 20 marks for each page or part of a page in excess of the 30-page limit**. Reports that are not in the required format will be converted to the required format, and page penalties will be applied as above.

*Title page.* The title page should include your name, year, degree programme and student number; the title of your project; and the name of your host organisation and supervisor.

*Table of contents.* The table of contents should list sections 3 to 6 and the pages on which each section begins. You may subdivide sections and include appropriate sub-entries in the table of contents if you believe this will be helpful to your readers.

*Introduction to the host organisation (usually 2-3 pages; marking weight 10%).* This section should describe the goals and activities of your host organisation; the size, structure, and governance of the organisation; how the organisation is funded; and the challenges facing the organisation now and in the future.

*Introduction to the host organisation’s field or industry (usually 2-4 pages; marking weight 10%).* This section should describe the goals and activities of the field or industry; how organisations in the field are funded; and the challenges facing the field now and in the future; and a brief introduction to the most important organisations that operate in the field. You can structure this section in the way that is most helpful to your readers. For example, if all organisations have similar goals and funding mechanisms, then you might present goals and funding at the beginning of the section and then move on to describe each organisation separately. If each organisation has different goals and funding mechanisms, then information on goals and funding might be absorbed into the description of the organisations themselves.

*Project report (usually 10-15 pages; marking weight 40%).* This section should describe the main part of what you did during your placement year. This should include general and specific background; aims and objectives; methods; results; and discussion. The discussion should include an assessment of which methods achieved their goals and what could have been done differently or better.

Your precise project will depend on the goals of your host organisation. Some projects involve research in the lab or in the field. For example, a conservation organisation might need to estimate the size and genetic diversity of a population it is trying to conserve, and a student might lead that research effort. Other projects apply existing scientific knowledge. For example, a student might collect information from the literature and from other practitioners, and then use that information to help plan strategies for controlling the spread of an invasive species. The range of possible projects is limited only by the needs of placement hosts.

Regardless of the direction your project takes, the placement report must explain how you applied your scientific training to the project. This is important because the training you are acquiring in your BSc is a valuable asset. Your project is an opportunity to demonstrate that your training can be applied in your chosen field. In addition, the project report should demonstrate that you have taken a scientific, evidence-based approach to evaluating the success of your project. For example, if your project involves planning strategies to control the spread of an invasive species, it should include a method for assessing whether those strategies have worked. In some case, for example long-term projects, you might not have the data you need to know whether your project was successful. In such cases, you should be able to clearly explain how your host organisation will assess that in the future.

*Interviews (usually 8-10 pages; marking weight 15%).* This section should report the results of personal interviews with five people from the industry in which you worked. At least two of these people must be from outside of your host organisation. Interviews should aim to answer the following questions: what is each person’s background; why did they choose this field or industry; how did they get their first position in the field and how did they advance to their current position; what skills did they need to acquire; and what advice do they have for someone seeking entry into the field.

*(the following sections are not included in the page count)*

*Introspective statement (usually 3-4 pages; marking weight 10%).* This section should describe how your perception of the industry, organisation, and/or job have changed during your placement. It should also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a career in this industry; the skills you can bring to the industry and how they will be useful; any additional skills that might be useful or necessary in the industry; and how you might acquire those skills. The introspective statement does not count toward your page limit.

*Linked-In portfolio (marking weight 15%).* Your Linked-In portfolio does not count towards your page limit, but it is one of the most important parts of your placement report. Your Linked-In portfolio presents the skills and experience you can bring to the industry. Moreover, it provides a network of people in the industry that you can call on for advice or introductions to potential colleagues and employers. Do not submit the full text of your Linked-In portfolio with your placement report. Instead, simply invite your first- and second-markers to connect with you, and they will be able to view your portfolio online. If you worked in a field or industry where Linked-In is not widely used, you may wish to append a list of industry contacts to this section of your report. This list will not count toward your page limit.

*References.*Throughout your report you will need to refer to the work of others. You can support your arguments and avoid plagiarism with use of appropriate citations. 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.

Referencing should follow the 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:

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 that you have accessed via the Internet:

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 that are not peer reviewed!

**Mark Scheme**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **% Mark** | **Content** | **Organisation and presentation** | **Use of resources** |
|  | Report sections include appropriate content as described above. Content is synthesised for the reader so that the objectives of the report can be easily understood. Irrelevant text, figures, and tables avoided.  | Information presented clearly, concisely, and in an order that is easy for readers to understand. Report subdivided into appropriate sections. Tables and figures support the text, are appropriately referenced in the text, and are clearly explained by legends. English language (e.g., formatting, spelling, grammar, punctuation) is used correctly.  | Information in the report is supported by appropriate references. Referencing is accurate. Inline citations and reference list follow a clear and consistent format. |
| **90-100** | Outstanding in all areas; work of professional quality. |
| **80, 85** | Excellent in all areas; professional with minor modifications; work of very high standard. |
| **70, 75** | Very good in all or most areas; approaches professional quality, but with minor errors or deficiencies in accuracy of information, use of resources, presentation of goals and methods, or explanation/evaluation of results.  |
| **60, 65** | Good report, with adequate content and presentation in all section; some errors or deficiencies in background information, use of resources, presentation of goals and methods, or explanation/evaluation of results.  |
| **50,55** | Satisfactory in all or most areas; demonstrates some effort to understand and report the project work; there may be irrelevant information; errors or deficiencies in background information, use of resources, presentation of goals and methods, or explanation/evaluation of results; minor flaws in the presentation of figures, tables, and references. |
| **40,45** | Meets the basic criteria, but descriptions are too vague, with important deficiencies and errors or deficiencies in background information, use of resources, presentation of goals and methods, and explanation/evaluation of results.  |
| **30, 35** | Poor in most or many areas, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the project; little evidence that learning goals have been achieved; poor use of resources and little attention to presentation. |
| **20, 25** | Unsatisfactory overall, with serious deficiencies; very little content of substance and little effort to use available resources; very poor presentation. Shows little or no effort to achieve learning goals or produce project deliverables. |
| **0, 10, 15** | Fails to meet even the most basic criteria; most information is missing, irrelevant or incorrect; no literature or referencing, no attention to detail, presentation or interpretation. |

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