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| **University of Manchester**  **School of Biological Sciences** |

**Non project-based placements**

# General Guide and Instructions to Authors

**General Instructions**

The report should normally be written as outlined on the following pages, however, in some cases the company may require you to produce an internal report in a different format - if that is the case we *may* be able to accept a copy as your report (subject to the agreement of the company) if it is appropriate, rather than making you produce two separate reports. **If this is the case you should discuss this with the academic staff members visiting you or contact the Placement Office first to ensure that the format of the report will be acceptable**. Remember that you may be subject to confidentiality arrangements and so you should not release information without consent. Companies normally examine, and need to approve, the report that you submit - make sure you allow time for this!

If any procedures, processes, results or names of compounds or organisms are confidential for commercial reasons they may be omitted, but a statement detailing the reason should be given. Take care to observe any confidentiality requirements of your employer and ensure that proper approval is given before the report is submitted to the University. In the case of a confidential report, a special agreement between the University and the organisation should be prepared - the University has created its own agreement for this purpose, but an alternative agreement may be drafted by the employing organisation. This confidentiality agreement guarantees that your report will only be seen by the two Internal Examiners and by the External Examiner of your degree programme. For further information regarding confidentiality agreements, or to arrange for an agreement to be put in place between the University and your placement company, please contact the Placement Office at [placementoffice.biosciences@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:placementoffice.biosciences@manchester.ac.uk) or by telephoning +44 (0)161 275 1540.

The report will be assessed by two members of staff who will also be responsible for your oral examination (viva). The total mark will contribute approximately 9% towards your final degree classification, split 70:30 for the written report and the oral.

Vivas will normally be completed by the end of Week 8 of semester 5.

If any part of this report includes material that has or is to be published then that must be made clear in your text. There would be no need to rewrite this material. It could form part of your report or be included as an Appendix (to which you refer in your report). But to avoid unwarranted accusations of plagiarism, you must make it crystal clear that some of your report replicates text from published work. Thus, if you are not sole author or contributor to all of the work included in the report, you must make a clear statement at the start of the report which indicates exactly what your role was in the publication and cite where the material has or is to be published.

**Full Guide and Instructions to Authors**

Report writing is a necessary and important part of professional life. It is a skill which can be learned - one of the aims of requiring you to write a report on your placement year is to help you improve that skill. As with any other aspect of your programme you can learn in many ways, these include seeking advice, reading examples and by practice. When reading a report it is important to pay attention, not only to the content, but to the style, layout and construction, and ask yourself whether it is clear, readable and conveys all the important information and interpretation in a logical and engaging order.

**Length**

The report must not exceed 30 pages. This page limit includes all pages except the references and title page. This is a strict page limit, not a page goal! Quality is not measured by the length of the report - be concise and clear, but still ensure that all the important information is adequately covered. It is not necessary to write-up everything you have done, so you are advised to restrict your report to an account of the most robust and defensible elements of your “work” (see “content”). Failure to comply with this page limit will results in a deduction of 20 marks for every page or part thereof greater than the page limit.

**Layout**

All reports must be written in English using font type Arial point 10. Use 1.5 or 2 line-spacing, with margins of at least 2.5cm all around the text. Number all pages.

**Guidelines for Non project-based placements**

The report should comprise of the following:

1. Report of your placement year (60%)
   1. Title page
   2. Table of Contents
   3. Discussion of the placement organisation and the wider industry
   4. Report of your activities during the year
2. Reflective Log (20%)
3. Employability (20%)
   1. Employability Skills Audit and interview questions
   2. Interviews with people working in the field

***Title page***

This should be the first page of your report and should give your name, degree programme, the organisation where you worked (with start and finish dates) and the name of your workplace supervisor.

***Discussion of the placement organisation and the wider industry (usually around 5 pages)***

This section should provide an overview of the placement organisation and should include the sections listed below. There may be additional areas that you include (e.g. R&D activities, intellectual property), depending on the nature of the placement organisation, and if this is helpful to the reader to provide context:

* + 1. **Background of the company –** e.g. what the main goals and activities of the company are, when it would founded, what market it serves, how it has developed and what its future goals and strategies are.
    2. **The organisational structure of the company**, and your role in relation to immediate line managers, and the overall company management team.
    3. **The sector** **within which the organisation operates**, for example identifying and discussing key competitor organisations and threats and opportunities for this sector or challenges facing the field now and in the future (e.g. financial, environmental, advances in technology – whatever is relevant to your particular placement). Customer base / market share.
    4. **Scientific background (if relevant) - an overview of relevant scientific areas to the company's operations.** This is an opportunity to discuss scientific activities relating to the company. In some cases, you may have been working in a role that was not immediately science-based but this is an opportunity to discuss the scientific work that the company performs.
    5. **OR , if you were not working in a Scientific-related company or role**, you should discuss how your activities fitted into the context of the company’s operations (e.g. if you working in a school, you could discuss how the area that you were teaching fitted into the curriculum and how your teaching approach aligned with the school’s teaching strategies or, for instance, if you were working on outreach activities for a company, you could discuss how this fitted into the suite of activities run by the organisation and the company’s strategy in this area. What you write in this section will be completely dependent on your company and the work that you were undertaking. Again, this section should cite appropriate sources.

1. ***Report of your placement activities (usually around 10-12 pages)***

This section should provide an overview of the activities that you undertook during your placement year and how your role developed over the year.

You should focus in more detail on one or two areas that you worked on. This might be an area that you found especially rewarding or an area where you were able to develop a policy, a system or resource. You may, for example, expand on a particularly complicated case that you handled or you may wish to describe how a particular process worked. This will be dependent on the sort of activities that you were undertaking during the year.

Such projects should ideally be written up starting with a Strategic Aim or Objective, followed by your Tactical Approach (or Methods), then your Project Outcome (or Results) and finishing with your Discussion and Conclusions (which should relate back to your objectives i.e. whether your project successful or not). This might comprise a single report relating to a larger project, or, 2 or 3 shorter reports relating to smaller work projects (or unrelated experiments).

***Reflective Report (usually 3-4 pages).*** This section should be around 3-4 pages and will relate to your experiences and performance throughout the placement and could include:

1. Analysis of your personal strengths and weaknesses, critical incidents and how you overcame these during the placement.
2. Expectations before the placement and how those changed by experiences during your placement.
   1. The effect that the placement has had on your future goals and aspirations
   2. Targets and strategies to overcome and improve on weaknesses that you have identified. Please refer to the Employability Skills Audit in this section and highlight any areas that you did not have the opportunity to enhance as much as you would have liked to, or areas which require further work. How will you try to develop these skills during the final year of your degree programme? (For further help with this section, you may wish to refer to the Careers Service pages: <http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/skills/>)

***Employability Skills Audit & Interview answers:*** You should complete the audit with examples of the skills that you developed during your placement year. Then, using the audit, you should choose questions to answer in an interview situation (see Appendix 1).

***Interviews (usually ~2-3 pages, with full interviews in an Appendix if necessary)*** This section should report the results of personal interviews with two to four people from the industry in which you worked. At least one of these people should be from outside of your department or organisation (e.g. if you worked in the HR team, you could interview colleagues from the finance team). 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?; what advice do they have for someone seeking entry into the field? This will all help to broaden your understanding of the industry. How did this information change your perspective of the industry/sector or of these roles?

**General guidelines on your written report:**

**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.

**Late submissions:**

The mark awarded will reduce by 10% of the maximum amount available per 24 hours. The work will continue to attract further penalties for each 24 hours the work is late, until the assignment is submitted or no marks remain.

**APPENDIX 1**

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AUDIT & INTERIEW QUESTIONS**

As a first step to revealing your current skills profile, use the boxes below to note examples of how you developed these skills during your placement year. At the end of the process you will be able to identify your strengths and weaknesses. If there are skills for which you cannot think of examples, you may wish to consider how to develop these skills in your final year at University.

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| WORKING WITH OTHERS | **YOUR EXAMPLES OF USING THIS SKILL DURING YOUR PLACEMENT YEAR** |
| [Communication](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/communication/) |  |
| [Team working](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/teamwork) |  |
| [Leadership](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/leadership/) |  |
| [Negotiation skills](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/negotiation/) |  |
| [Networking](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/networking/) |  |
| SOLVING PROBLEMS | **YOUR EXAMPLES OF USING THIS SKILL DURING YOUR PLACEMENT YEAR** |
| [Innovation](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/innovation/) |  |
| [Research](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/research/) |  |
| [Analytical skills](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/analyticalskills/) |  |
| [Problem solving](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/problemsolving/) |  |
| WORK READY SKILLS | **YOUR EXAMPLES OF USING THIS SKILL DURING YOUR PLACEMENT YEAR** |
| [Commercial Awareness](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/commercialawareness/) |  |
| [Adaptability](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/adaptability/) |  |
| [Decision making](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/decisionmaking/) |  |
| [Flexibility](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/flexibility/) |  |
| [Numeracy skills](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/numeracyskills/) |  |
| [IT Skills](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/itskills/) |  |
| [Time Management](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/timemanagement/) |  |
| [Organisation skills](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/organisation/) |  |
| [Initiative](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/experience/skills/initiative/) |  |

UCE Careers Service Date

**INTERVIEW QUESTONS**

Using your notes above, imagine that you are asked the following questions in an interview scenario and respond accordingly. You must choose one question to answer from each section (maximum 400 words per answer).

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

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| 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 us 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. |

1. **Planning, Organisation & Time Management**

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| 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 |

1. **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? |
| How have you adjusted your approach when people did not respond as you expected? |
| Tell us about a time when you found it necessary to tactfully but forcefully say things that others did not want to hear. |
| 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 us about a time when you had to get people to work together more supportively |

1. **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. |

1. **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 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? |

1. **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 during your placement year. |
| Tell us about a time when you discovered a more efficient method to carry out a particular work related task. |