UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

How do placements contribute to work readiness?

Employability Conference, 10th September 2026

Eliana Lee-Gibbons - Optional Placement Manager



UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH







WHAT IS A PLACEMENT?

Placements at the University of Portsmouth allow students to gain practical work experience, either with an employer or through self-employment, supported throughout by Careers and Employability

Types of Placements

Students have two main options for their placement year:

1. **Employer Placement**: Work with a business, charity, or public sector organisation in their chosen industry. Placements typically last **9 to 12 months** and usually start after their second year, though they can also be completed after the final year. Students apply directly to employers with guidance from the university, but are not matched automatically with a role .

2. **Self-Employed Placement**: For students interested in freelancing or starting their own business. Support is provided by the **Student StartUp team**, including 1-on-1 coaching, networking opportunities, office space, and potential funding. This option is only available to Home students



THE OPTIONS FOR PLACEMENT SEEKERS IN 2026/27

- Sandwich placements for Level 5 on courses with an optional placement year
  - 112 undergraduate courses

- Year long placements with specific postgraduate courses (with professional experience)
  - MA Education Studies
  - MA Business Communication for International Leadership
  - MA Applied Linguistics and TESOL
  - MSc Educational Leadership and Management
  - MBA Global
  - MSc International Hospitality and Tourism Management
  - LLM Corporate Governance and Law GradCG

- Post Studies placements for Level 6 (AKA “Connected Degree”)



PLACEMENT OUTCOMES

	Professional Level Employment	In work or further study
No Placement	61.5%	90.6%
Placement	82.2%	94.2%

	Average Salary	Unemployment rate
No Placement	£28,944.07	9.4%
Placement	£32,428.89	5.8%



Source: Graduate Outcomes Survey Class of 2024

WORK-PLACEMENT STUDENT:

Junior Interior Designer at Morgan Lovell
- Ella Mould





SELF-EMPLOYED PLACEMENT STUDENT

Lily Beard - Sporty Origins





SEP EMPLOYABILITY PRESENTATION



LILY BEARD

HOW CAN YOU HELP

It is critical that we support and empower students to start preparing for their placement year as soon as possible.

This means making sure they understand:

- how the recruitment process will work and how early it will start (from the autumn of Level 5 and 6 for many employers with some deadlines closing well before Christmas).
- the importance of enhancing their CVs with early work experience from Level 4 (e.g. work shadowing, insight days, paid employment, volunteering)
- build an evidence bank of key transferable skills/competencies to support the placement recruitment process (part-time work, uni projects, etc)
- engage with the placement preparation programmes and other workshops offered by the Placement Advisers

The Placement Operational Team, Placement Advisers and wider Careers & Employability, can support you to empower your students with this knowledge from an early stage in their course.



ENGAGEMENT IS KEY

Students who engage repeatedly through appointments and events are securing high-quality paid placements, even when they require large numbers of applications.

Data suggests:

1. **Any engagement is better than none.**
2. **A combination of appointments and events appears more powerful than either alone.**
3. **Students who engage early tend to secure placements earlier.**
4. **Students targeting highly competitive employers often submit 20-50+ applications but still succeed when they remain engaged.**
5. **Some of the highest salaries are associated with students who attended multiple support activities.**



Any questions?

