

Work Placement

A Best
Practice
Guide for
Employers

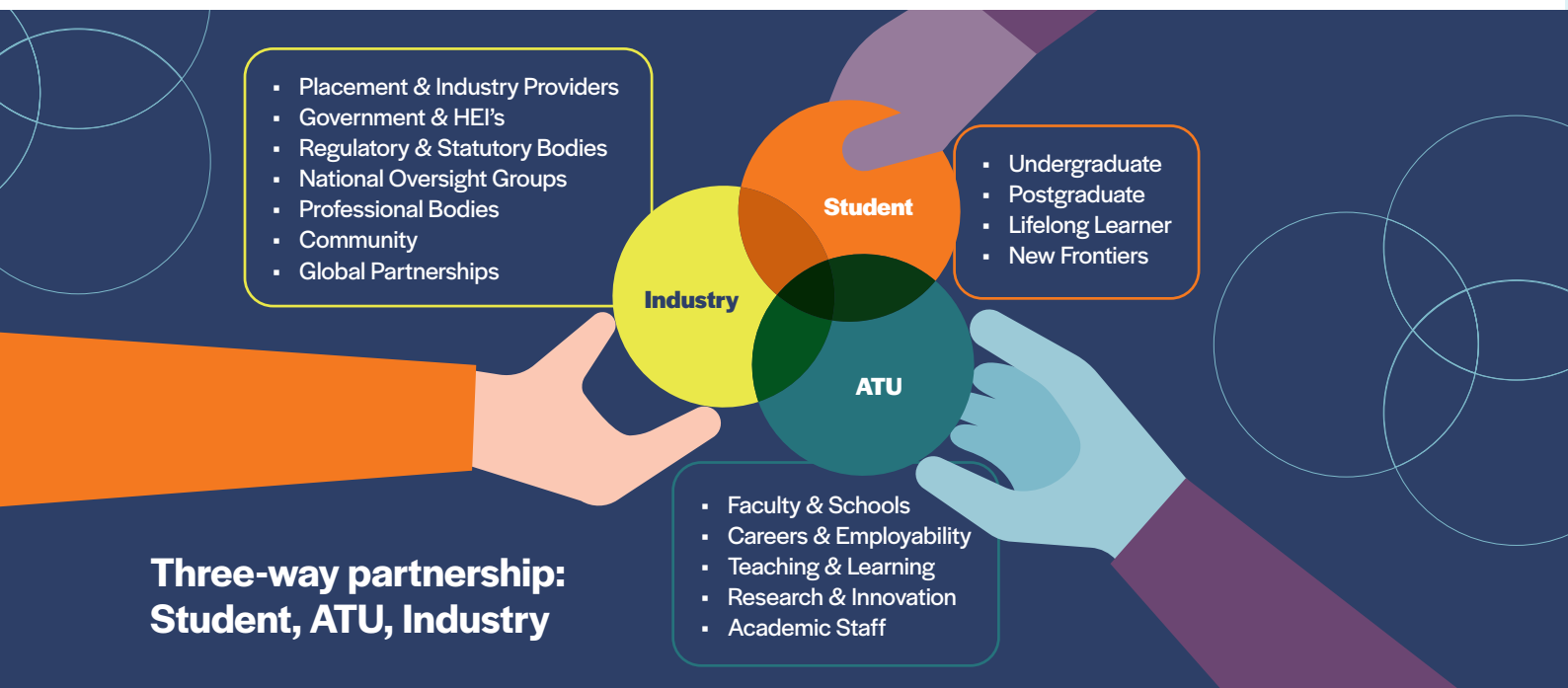


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Where Talent
Meets Opportunity

ATU Work Placement



“Work Placement is a planned period of professional learning or experience, which may be accredited, where the learning outcomes are part of a Higher Education programme or module. It is a three-way partnership between an employer, a student and a Higher Education Institution (HEI), where a student is given the opportunity to work and learn in a professional environment relevant to their studies to achieve set goals.”

- Association of Higher Education Career Services (AHECS)

This document provides guidance on best practice for employers providing work placement opportunities to students as part of a programme of study at ATU. It serves as a reference document and should be used in conjunction with course-specific information.

Work placements play a vital role in maintaining high academic standards and professional excellence, while enhancing graduate employability. Students highly value these work placements as they provide a breadth of learning opportunities that enhance their understanding of real-world work practices and professional environments. In addition, placements strengthen students' career prospects by linking theoretical learning with practical application, a critical factor in supporting employability.

Benefits of Work Placement for Employers

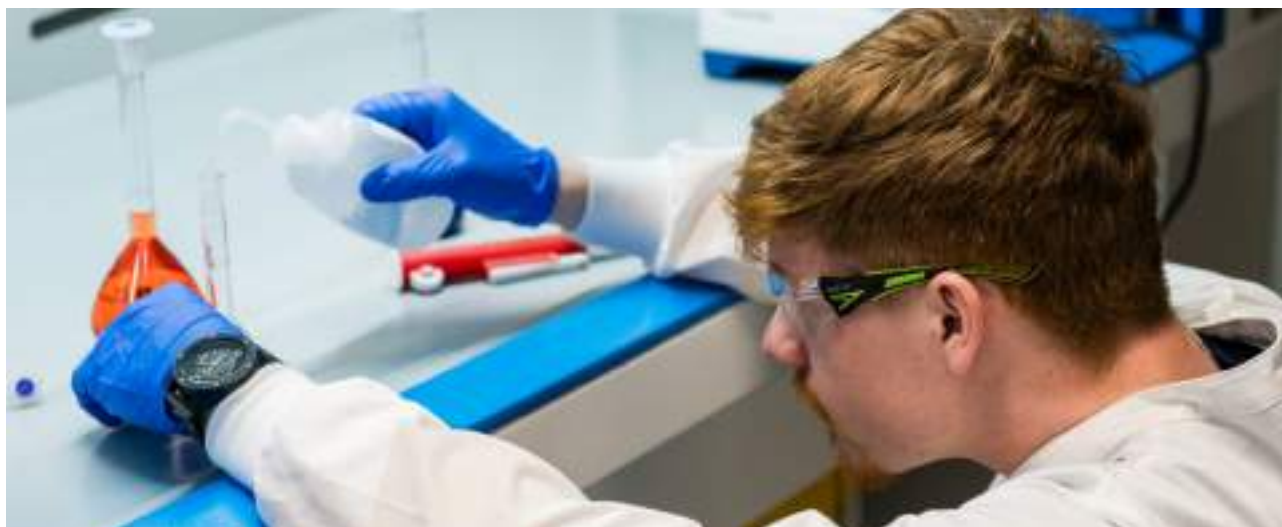
- Students offer a source of skilled labour and an insight into new practices being taught at ATU.
- Students provide a flexible and cost-effective solution to recruitment needs and help ease staff workload at busy times.
- Students bring new ideas and new perspectives into the workplace.
- Employers can recruit an additional resource to undertake projects.
- Employers can identify potential new recruits and create a feeder pool for future graduate recruitment.
- It provides people management development opportunities for staff.
- It develops links with ATU for a range of purposes, such as research and development, graduate recruitment and programme development.



Employer Responsibilities

1. Provide and maintain a safe workplace.
2. Provide contract of work & terms & conditions of employment, which is agreed and signed by all parties.
3. Share and provide appropriate mentored training, information, and supervision to enable students to perform their duties safely and correctly.
4. Support and guide the student to ensure they gain the relevant experience aligned to programme learning outcomes.
5. Ensure the student completes their full period of placement as outlined in the work placement agreement.
6. Report promptly to the relevant ATU work placement coordinator, if any issue or concern arises with a student during their placement.
7. Have clear reasons for recruiting a student and realistic expectations of their abilities.
8. Provide feedback on the student's performance as part of the assessment and monitoring process.
9. Each student should have an Industry mentor, who meets with them regularly to review progress and set objectives.
10. Allow the student every opportunity to learn and develop skills and build confidence for their next stage of development.
11. Treat the student with the same duty of care as all other employees and be mindful, that they are young adults, learning and adapting to new surroundings.
12. Keep the student active, engaged and motivated to ensure a positive workplace experience.
13. Engage constructively with students who disclose a disability or ongoing significant illness, and consider any reasonable accommodations that may support the student in carrying out their placement duties. Employers should work collaboratively with the student and where appropriate, the universities disability and learning support service, to ensure that agreed accommodations are implemented effectively throughout the placement.

Best Practice Guidelines



Conditions of Employment

- ATU recommends that students receive at least the national minimum wage during their placement, in accordance with the National Minimum Wage Act 2000 in Ireland.¹
- Placement students are expected to complete the required number of days or hours as per their work placement module and contract of work.
- Employers should ensure that students are aware of and adhere to entitlements regarding rest breaks and maximum working hours and in line with the [Organisation of Working Time Act 1997](#).
- For international partners hosting ATU students, a living wage that complies with local employment laws, should be provided.
- Employers must review and complete where required, ATU's work placement documents prior to the commencement of placement.
- Prior to the commencement of any student placement, host organisations are required to confirm their compliance with the university's insurance and health and safety standards. This confirmation ensures that the placement environment is appropriate, safe, and adequately resourced to support the student's learning and wellbeing.

Health and Safety Obligations – Employers taking students on work placement must:

- Provide and maintain a safe workplace and have an up-to-date safety statement.
- Have employer's liability and public liability insurance.
- Provide the student with appropriate personal protective equipment, if applicable.
- Provide adequate and relevant health and safety training to the student.

Placement Difficulties Procedure – For Employers:

- ATU requests that the placement coordinator be notified in the event of a student issue, accident, illness, or emergency.

¹ Where a placement involves productive work for the organisation, minimum wage legislation may apply. In purely observational or shadow-based placements, remuneration may not be required. Employers remain responsible for compliance with employment legislation.

ATU Work Placement Stages



Before Placement

- Have clear reasons for recruiting a student and realistic expectations.
- Contact ATU to find out which courses are most appropriate to your needs: [Employer Information Brochure](#).
- Prepare a job specification and engage in the selection process.
- Consider how you can meet the student's course learning outcomes.
- Appoint a workplace mentor who will support the student.
- Clearly outline reporting structures, health and safety, codes of conduct, duties and responsibilities, dress codes and payroll arrangements. (see Student Induction Checklist)



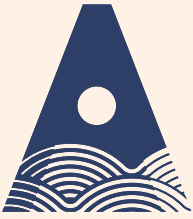
During Placement

- Provide Induction (see Student Induction Checklist) and Health and Safety training, to support workplace transition.
- Provide assessment documentation as required by ATU.
- Facilitate ATU visits where required.



After Placement

- Provide feedback on the student's performance.
- Hold a review meeting with the student before placement ends.
- Give feedback and suggestions to ATU for placement improvements.
- Explore further engagement with ATU.



Student Induction Checklist

This checklist is designed to support and align with the student's complete induction programme.

Induction Information	
Item	Completed
Orientation to the working environment, health & safety regulations including the organisation's workplace hazards etc	
Access and security arrangements	
Confidentiality, intellectual property, and non-disclosure policies	
Codes of conduct, housekeeping, dress codes	
Computer usage policies	
Workplace hazards and safe working practices	
Working hours, refreshment facilities and holidays	
Arrangements for sick leave	
Payroll arrangements	
Organisational reporting structures and procedures	
Outlining of the duties and responsibilities, and chain-of-command within the organisation	
Introduction to the student's mentor and members of the team	



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