ScreenSkills Select
Hybrid Work Experience Guidelines
For UK Educators (FE & HE) and Screen Industry Employers

Version 10
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ScreenSkills Select

INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC

BBC

CLOTHCAT ANIMATION

worker bee

Beyond Brontës

bluezoo

WESTON COLLEGE

University of Sunderland

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

University of Salford MANCHESTER

Brunel University London

Abertay University

University of Bolton

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Acknowledgements, credits and disclaimers

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Disclaimers

1. This document is intended to supplement rather than replace any government and industry guidelines.
2. These guidelines have been written to support the development of good practice but are neither prescriptive nor regulatory.
3. This document concerns work experience placements in the UK only. Different rules may apply to the different nations of the UK.
4. This document does not contain guidance regarding working overseas – please refer to relevant government guidelines regarding travel. Whenever possible, you should apply UK guidelines as a minimum.

About this document:

This document was written by Samantha Babrovskie, ScreenSkills Associate, with extensive assistance and contributions from Victoria Trachy, Head of Vocational Skills and Tim Weiss, Director of Vocational Skills at ScreenSkills, and additional support from industry and education representatives.

1.Introduction to these guidelines

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document originated in a ScreenSkills industry/educator round table in November 2020, discussing collaboration and recruitment practices between universities and colleges, and local employers. A key theme that emerged was concern about the impact of new, post-Covid remote or hybrid working practices on work placements and work experience, as screen industry companies adapted their working model temporarily or permanently following the pandemic.

This document aims to distil and share recommendations and examples of good practice in running hybrid or remote placements. This is to ensure that these are as effective as possible in developing the critical workplace experience and skills sought after in students by employers, while giving students a meaningful, fulfilling and well-supported experience. The document provides a framework of recommendations, ranging from preparing students for a hybrid placement, through to recruitment, induction, mentoring/supervision, monitoring student wellbeing, to the use of technology and platforms, and to the choice of activities and tasks.

1.2 Who is this document for?

These guidelines are firstly for course leaders and employability engagement staff in the Higher and Further Education sectors across the UK, providing a best practice framework for hybrid work experience undertaken by 18+ students.

The best practice guidelines are also intended as a guide for employers when structuring their own hybrid work experience programmes.

1.3 Who has been involved in writing this document

This document is the result of discussion in regular working group meetings comprising representatives from across the screen industries and HE/FE educators, facilitated by ScreenSkills between summer 2021 and early 2022.

1.4 How to use this document

These guidelines are for reference only, and act as a framework of best practice that should be used to help plan the different stages of a work experience placement, in conjunction with each institution's own university/college-specific module/credit bearing requirements for work experience. Each employer in collaboration with their university and college partners will take its own specific approach on how to deliver hybrid work experience based on context, provision and resource. While these are available for all screen-related courses across the UK, ScreenSkills will also use these guidelines as part of its ScreenSkills Select endorsement and annual review process, to ensure endorsed courses are providing the best possible work experience placement to their students, and support for employer partners.

2. Definition of the different forms of work experience placements.

For the purpose of these guidelines, we will refer to the following different forms of student work experience as detailed below, as discussed and devised by the industry and educator working group.

*Where the term *Work experience* or *WEX* is used, this will refer to the collective grouping of all varieties of work experience, across all ages.

- **Work experience:** this term generally refers to secondary school students, or students of FE college age 14-18, who are offered an introduction to an industry or employer for a defined period, where they "experience work". This might take the form of a taster or insight day, or a longer period where students can access the workplace (face-to-face or remotely) and observe the workflow and collaboration of different people in various roles. This type of work experience is usually unpaid.
- **Work placement:** this term is commonly used to define a student aged (18+) on a university or vocational course (Level 4 or above), who as part of their course undertakes a placement within a company, for example, up to two weeks or more, where they might observe and shadow employees, but might also contribute to the workflow, or be given meaningful projects and tasks which reflect the nature of the work of the employer, but do not directly input to any commercial output. The student would be supported by their university or college (as well as the employer) during the period of the placement, and would still be in education, so the placement would usually take place within the academic year, or during summer holidays. This type of work placement is usually unpaid.
- **Internship or graduate programme:** this type of work experience is generally aimed at university or college graduates and offers a longer period of paid work (for example, six to twelve months) which involves the intern learning "on the job" with additional training, guidance and support offered by the employer. Internships often lead to interns being taken on in permanent junior roles within the company on completing the internship and is therefore used by employers as a form of recruitment and selection for entry-level roles.
- **Training programme:** this type of work experience, as with internships and graduate programmes, would be for applicants who are 18 or over in age but might not always require a degree or equivalent course to gain entry to the programme. This might involve placing students in a series of work placements within an industry through a scheme such as ScreenSkills Trainee Finder, where successful applicants are given a year of paid industry placements as a way to gain experience with a view to networking and making contacts for future employment at the end of the scheme.

3. Preparation

3.1 Overview

The focus in this section is to adequately prepare the student with professional skills to enable them to enjoy a successful hybrid work experience placement. Both the student's college/university and the employer should work together in the early planning stages of the placement to ensure the student is fully equipped with the required software, hardware and relevant skills to take part in the placement, in a meaningful and fulfilling way. Students should not be disadvantaged due to the lack of resources, preventing them from being accepted onto the placement, or taking part fully in the programme due to digital poverty or broadband issues.

As well as equipment, software and digital skills, educators should advise students in online workplace etiquette, just in the same way they would for face-to-face work experience placements in the workplace. Some examples to include are listed in the recommendations below, but each employer should also consider their existing employee expectations, and guidelines, and ensure the student and their college or university are aware of these in advance of the interview stage for work experience. These guidelines can then be reiterated and discussed at any induction session after the onboarding of the student cohort selected for the placement.

3.2 Key recommendations

- **Technology:** *also see section 4.Technology and platform.* Ensuring the student has the appropriate technology, editing, animation, games or VFX software and connectivity platform such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Asana is essential in providing them with an engaging work experience placement.
- **Self-directed learning:** students should be guided to self-directed learning on the above software and platforms or preferably be provided **with tutor-led taught sessions**: In the case of employer "in house" systems, introductory sessions should be either delivered (by the employer) before the start of the placement or during any initial induction sessions.
- **Professional online etiquette:** before starting the work experience placement, educators need to prepare students for working professionally online, examples suggested are being aware of their background when on camera, how to dress appropriately, when to mute and be visible on camera, time keeping, safe and professional screen sharing. Also, students should feel comfortable pitching and presenting online, ideally having experienced this in an educational environment before the work experience placement.
- **Assessing student accessibility needs:** educators and employers must collaborate to ensure the work placement opportunity is inclusive, safe and supported. They should make clear to students with disabilities what specialist provision is available to support their development as part of the placement in order to avoid any barriers to either remote or in person parts of the placement.
- **Initial introductions to the client or employer:** where possible, the initial meeting with an employer or client should take place face-to-face, to provide initial introductions, and to pitch briefs and projects. This is aimed at engaging the student with the hybrid placement as well as providing context and

commitment with projects. Further instruction, support and feedback can be given online by both the employer and educator.

- **Expectations of what the placement will involve** should be clearly defined by the employer to the students and their college or university. Employers and placement providers also need to outline what they expect from the student, such as required skills, time commitment (how long the placement will be, and the attendance hours per day/week) the standard of work expectations, and the level of the involvement of the student (i.e. will the student actually be *"doing"* and be involved in projects in a hands-on way, or will they be shadowing employees and working on small aspects of the work pipeline?).
- **If the work experience placement is part of a module,** with learning outcomes to achieve in terms of assessment, this should be clearly outlined to both the student and employer. The employer, in consultation with the college or university, should plan the work experience programme, so the student has the opportunity to meet the required module learning outcomes.

4. Technology and platform

4.1 Overview

Ensuring the student has the appropriate technology, software, and online platform is essential in providing them with a successful and fulfilling work experience placement. Assessing the student's technical and digital needs to take part in the placement, in liaison with the employer, is a crucial responsibility of the college or university in advance of the recruitment process.

Changing production practices, digital technologies, increased use of hybrid working and remote communication, accelerated shooting schedules and workflows, have put even more pressure on companies to achieve more with less during the pandemic. Equipping the student with the correct technology infrastructure to undertake the hybrid placement and ensuring the student is guided through this technology from the start demonstrates to the student that the employer wants to remove any barriers to technology and isolation and is committed to their development needs. In the early stages of planning the placement, the educator and employer should negotiate and agree what additional equipment or software, needs to be supplied or be made available for the student to access. Students should not be prevented from taking part in a hybrid work experience placement due to digital poverty or be disadvantaged by poor broadband or storage to run the required software.

4.2 Key recommendations

- **Technology, software and platform,** employers should communicate to the education provider in good time the software, platform and any internal systems the students will be expected to use during the duration of the placement whether this includes editing, animation, games or VFX software or meetings platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Asana. This also applies to the technology to run these systems and platform.
- **An assessment of the student's access to adequate broadband strength, technology, hardware and software**, for online remote working, either at home or within the college or university campus should take place to ensure the student is not disadvantaged by any lack of resources.
- **Additional technology and/or software** needed by the student to enable them to take part effectively in the work experience placement should be negotiated and established at the planning stage in discussions between the work experience provider and college or university.
- **Early access to software and connectivity platforms:** students should, where possible, have access to the software and connectivity platforms (such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet or Asana) and any employer internal systems they will be expected to use on the placement, *prior* to the interview stage to ensure confidence in their use.
- **Online community:** employers should also encourage students to be online together whilst working independently on projects by setting up online chat groups through online platforms such as Slack or WhatsApp groups so that students have opportunity to network with their peers, swap ideas and give feedback.

5. Recruitment and selection

5.1 Overview

The overarching theme in this section is establishing clear communication on recruitment and selection practices between all stakeholders as well as involving all practitioners in the recruitment process in the early stages to enhance and inspire students to take part. Ensuring diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process is also an important aspect to be addressed by both educators and placement providers.

5.2 Key recommendations:

- **Encouraging engagement:** it is important to inspire and encourage students to take up offers of work experience, whether it is in situ and face-to-face, or using a hybrid, blended approach. Involving the employer or placement provider in the recruitment process can be beneficial in supporting this, for example, by the employer developing a pre-recorded webinar for applicants to learn about the opportunity, advertising the placement(s) on the careers page of their website, providing (online) taster sessions and/or hosting talks by previous students/alumni who have taken part in previous years.

- **Expectations – students:** it is important to fully outline to the student all aspects of the work experience placement, so they are informed from the start as to what is expected of them. Working with their college and university tutors with information from the placement provider, students can then assess if the work experience placement will suit them, their needs and expectations.

- **Expectations - employers** need to be given clear expectations of the student's skills and what they can expect to be delivered, so that the work experience placement is structured to meet the student's needs, but within the skills levels they have reached while studying, so that expectations are not exceeded.

- **Plan a timeline for recruitment** so there is a clear structure to work to for both the company and the applicants.

- **The selection process:** ideally, the selection process should involve both the college/university and the employer. Tutors will be aware of the student's individual skills and personal attributes and will be able to advise the employer of the suitability to match the right students to the placements on offer. Involving the employer provides the student with a professional, "real life" experience of the industry recruitment process, such as they might experience when looking for work after graduating. Also, meeting the employer in an interview situation, gives the student an insight into the company, the people, and provides a face to face (online or in the workplace) opportunity to ask questions and find out more first-hand about the placement.

- **Setting practical tasks:** employers may also want to set practical tasks for the student ahead of or as part of the interview process to help determine the student's skills, knowledge and suitability to the placement or graduate scheme.

- **Present student's portfolio:** by asking students to present their recent work, employers can assess their existing communication skills as well as giving valuable interview experience of discussing creative ideas and projects. This can also be developed further in projects during the actual placement (see section 9 below).
- **Encouraging diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process:** this section highlights examples of good practice and process shared by contributors within this working group from both the screen industries and educators in FE and HE.
    - **Ethical recruitment and selection training programmes for employers:** this focuses on non-biased recruitment and understanding the benefits of having a diverse workforce, and recruitment without unconscious bias.
    - **The student perspective:** involve students from diverse backgrounds on current or previous work placement opportunities in the recruitment and selection process for new work placement applicants.
    - **Building a diverse and inclusive student cohort through recruitment into college and university** courses in the first instance, which then leads to a more diverse and inclusive cohort of applicants for work experience, and graduate training programmes, then leading into industry roles.
    - **Lecturers not becoming the "gatekeepers"** to opportunities. Allowing industry to see as many students as possible as part of the selection process for student and graduate work experience and training programmes. All opportunities should be open to *every* student within their cohort.
    - **Blind recruitment** for internships and graduate programmes, taking out names, gender, ethnicity and any other personal details which might influence selection for interview. The recruitment is then based on the applicant's skills and suitability for the role, without any unconscious bias.
    - **Demonstrate diversity and inclusion within the workplace:** introducing groups within the company which represent and support a diverse workforce can only encourage interest from a broad and diverse network of applicants for both work experience and paid permanent positions at all levels. Examples are women's networks, ethnic minority groups, people with disability and neurodiversity, and the LGBTQ+ community.
    - **Involve interview champions:** a group of volunteer colleagues from all sections of the company who put themselves forward particularly to help ensure that the recruitment process is unbiased and to enable and encourage diversity.

6. Onboarding and induction

6.1 Overview

Maintaining productive and open channels of communication during a hybrid work experience placement is key to ensuring that the student remains motivated, excited about their placement and able to see their future career growth. Students should also be able to engage with the company culture, despite working remotely either for part or the full duration of the work experience placement. The recommendations below suggest ways in which this can be achieved, initially through an online induction programme, then throughout the work experience placement ensuring the student maintains regular communication with their mentor, supervisor and team (see also section *7. Supervision and mentoring*).

6.2 Key recommendations

- **A starter pack:** induction to a hybrid work experience placement should include a starter pack for students, which contains information on the company, but also has details on how students on a hybrid work experience placement can access any wellbeing initiatives and pastoral support.
- **Online meet and greets** should be organised at the start of the placement, to introduce the student to the company, the wider workplace and colleagues. Meet and greets are an important way of building connections and engaging students with the workplace culture when working remotely. The first week of the work experience placement, should be spent learning who is who in the company, their roles, and how they fit in to the workflow pipeline, before a student embarks on any project work.
- **Virtual tours** of the workplace provide an insight into the company environment and facilities, if in situ tours are not possible.
- **Social events** whether online or face-to-face running alongside work-based induction sessions, such as competitions and quizzes can also build community within the workplace, and amongst the student work experience placement cohort.
- **Talks or masterclasses** by industry professionals, and/or recent company or college/university alumni are a great way to inspire aspiration amongst students at the start of their work experience placement. These can be hosted online and delivered by either the employers or educators or a collaboration between the two, either prior to the commencement of the work experience placement or during early induction sessions.
- **Showcase student work online:** during online talks and masterclasses students should be actively encouraged to interact with industry professionals whether this is through a Q &A session at the end of the masterclass or through smaller break out groups with industry professionals so students have opportunity to build their industry connections and showcase their work and get on-the-spot industry feedback on their work.
- **Q&A sessions** with employees at a more senior level, enable the student to have access to the experience and knowledge from across the company.
- **Development department:** some employers purposely place students in the development department of the company from the start, so they can devise

and develop their creative ideas, delivering them internally, without the pressure of contributing to commercial projects.

- **Job profiles:** clarifying to students the different roles within the screen industries, and the pathways to move on and upwards, can be really helpful in terms of identifying the people they will be working with and alongside on a work placement and their role in a work pipeline.

7. Supervision and mentoring

7.1 Overview

The role of the supervisor during the work experience placement can be someone within the student's college or university, such as a lecturer or pastoral tutor. This role involves supporting the student from the educational and pastoral perspective during their placement through regular check-ins, tutorials, one to one sessions for feedback and feed-forward opportunities (student to tutor), ensuring the student is meeting the needs of the module outcomes (if appropriate) and the expectations of the employer. The supervisor also has responsibility to ensure the monitoring of the student's wellbeing through the course of the placement. Supervision can also be provided by an additional colleague from the company offering the work experience allocated to oversee the student in terms of the placement and their wellbeing.

A mentor is usually someone outside of an educational institution, such as an industry professional, who is partnered with a student for one-to-one sessions to support the student through their studies, but also give feedback on projects, and offer an insight into the industry, their role, and how to first gain experience and employment after graduating. A mentor programme can run as part of a work experience placement, i.e. someone in the company offering the opportunity, but could equally run separately through any part of the student's studies.

7.2 Key recommendations

- **The ScreenSkills mentoring programme** www.screenskills.com/mentoring seeks to support mentees from underrepresented groups and at different stages of their career, as well as tackling skills gaps as identified by ScreenSkills research. Mentoring relationships take place for a minimum of six hours over six months. Mentees and mentors apply via the ScreenSkills website. Mentees are asked to upload a short video or written essay on why they would like to take part in mentoring and their passion for the screen industries.
- **Set boundaries for mentor/mentee contact** to ensure a mentor is not contacted too frequently, but allowing for regular, organised, scheduled meetings to provide the student with relevant, and timely support.
- **Keeping the mentor/mentee relationship professional:** as above, it is important to set boundaries in terms of the way the student and industry professional communicate, setting out the preferred methods of contact (email, phone, social media etc) at the start of the programme, which is then adhered to throughout the length of the partnership.
- **Regular check-ins** should take place between the supervisors and the student, at mutually convenient and arranged times throughout the student's placement. Meetings with the student's supervising tutor/lecturer should be outside of the workplace or placement "office hours" so the student is able to talk freely in confidence about their experience.
- **Students should be made aware of when they are able to meet** their supervisors either from the workplace or their college or university, so they know when they have the opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback.

- **Building confidence and resilience:** receiving online advice from and sharing ideas with a mentor who is working in the industry helps to build student confidence and resilience in a competitive industry. It can also demonstrate to the student that starting a career in the screen industry which may have seemed out of reach previously is relatable and achievable. Also, by establishing a mentor and mentee relationship, this connection can sometimes continue long after the official mentor and mentee contract has ended.
- **Closing the feedback loop:** the conclusion of any work experience placement or graduate training scheme should end with both group and one-to-one appraisal to give "honest and constructive" feedback to inform the students' continuing studies and future career progression. There should always be the opportunity for reflection on the work experience placement from both student and employer, this could take the form of a presentation and feedback session. It is also useful for the employer to hear feedback in order make improvements to the work experience placement for future cohorts.

8. Pastoral care and wellbeing

8.1 Overview

Working remotely can be an isolating experience for students, even with a hybrid, blended approach where there is some "in situ" workplace activity. Pastoral support between the education provider, the employer and the student is essential in ensuring the student maintains engagement with the placement but is also looked after in terms of their wellbeing. As described in *section 9. Hybrid work placement – projects, modules and learning activities*, building flexibility into the placement (especially for remote online working) can be an advantage in providing the student with opportunities to take breaks when needed, and also enables the student to work when they feel at their most effective if the arrangement works for the employer and the intended workflow. Establishing regular check-ins with the student during their placement with a nominated person/s from the workplace as well as consistent contact from their college or university, provides a robust framework of pastoral support during their work experience.

8.2 Key recommendations

- **Working hours and schedules** should be arranged and negotiated between the employer, educator and student well ahead of the start of the work experience placement (ideally before interview stage), to enable the student to maintain a healthy work life balance especially when working remotely.
- **Pastoral care and wellbeing check-ins with colleges and universities:** these should ideally happen outside of the placement with tutors at regular intervals, to give the student the opportunity to freely give feedback about their work experience placement outside of the work environment.
- **Pastoral care from the employer:** as well as educators providing pastoral care and support to their students, it is recommended that employers should also be involved. Ideally a line manager, team leader, or the student's appointed supervisor should take the lead in maintaining regular contact in a hybrid context and giving feedback on the student's progress, as well as monitoring their wellbeing.
- **Regular check-ins:** there should always be the opportunity during meetings for the student to ask questions and provide feedback on their learning experience. This also provides the student with the experience of working with their line manager or supervisor in a professional context. With hybrid work placements, workplace pastoral care and check-ins might also take the form of a "buddy system", by partnering a student with a workplace colleague with whom they can freely ask questions and get to know the company culture, as well as expectations of the job role.
- **Preventing isolation:** regular and frequent communication is vital within a hybrid work experience placement between the student and the employer, as well as with their college or university. Regular wellbeing and pastoral check-ins should be factored into the placement with meetings outside of office hours with the student's college or university tutors. It should be clear as to when and how the wellbeing meetings will take place, so the student is aware of when they will have the opportunity to gain feedback and ask questions.

- **Creating a shared social space:** students also need to be connected with each other if there is a cohort within the same workplace. Social activities, whether face-to-face or online, can be an effective way for all students on the placement to maintain contact with each other during their time with the company, and beyond in terms of networking.

9. Hybrid work placement – projects, modules and learning activities

9.1 Overview

While the preparation, management and support for a work placement are critical to its success – especially when delivered in a hybrid format – the actual activities undertaken during the placement are equally important in successfully developing the students' skills and experience. Some tried and tested activities for educators and employers take on a different dimension when managed remotely, offering both challenges and opportunities to ensure they are equally as effective as when run in the workplace.

9.2 Key recommendations

- **Flexible delivery and longer timeframes:** students, academics and industry partners need to be ready to adapt the content and delivery of the work placements so they are effective in a hybrid format. For example, students can engage with longer, project-based work when based remotely, without the constraints of "office hours", and with a longer time frame before a deadline as opposed to smaller tasks which might require more immediate completion. This allows the student to take breaks when needed and work effectively when they are at their most productive. This of course is dependent on the requirements of the work placement and how the student's contribution fits within the overall workflow, as well as deadlines for any commercial work.
- **Flexible structure for placement:** employers (or companies organising placements on their behalf) can give students a choice in what they learn and experience during the placement, by organising the content and activities into "core" and "elective" (or optional) modules or sections. This flexible structure can help students organise their time between in-person and remote parts of the placement.
  - o The **core** sections are mandatory for all students, and can form part of the induction process (such as learning about the company history, the teams/depts, key people, their work, clients, awards etc) as well as provide essential skills as part of their learning throughout the placement, such as learning new software, or practical skills.
  - o The **elective** or optional sections provide additional modules or pathways which students can choose to study alongside working on specific projects. These might include self-directed learning in a new skill, or the advancement of existing skills depending on the nature of the employer's work.
- **Offer self-directed learning to students to broaden skills:** employers, educators and students can benefit from the increased availability of online resources, courses, and learning/teaching materials. These give students an opportunity to self-learn and upskill whether to prepare for the placement, to complement their other learning during the placement (possibly as an optional section – see above), or to apply for employment subsequently.
  - o Networking, finding out more about different roles and departments within an industry, perfecting a CV and cover letter, for example, are all

self-led online learning activities which students can access to keep up to date, and informed as well as developing and acquiring new skills.

- o ScreenSkills launched in December 2021, [Getting into the screen industries](#) a suite of five e-learning modules to support people looking to get their first break in the screen industries. This free online training is designed to open up the screen industries to a greater diversity of talent and better equip new entrants for starting work in them.
- o ScreenSkills have offered other online courses for Trainee Finder candidates during the pandemic such as Finance for freelancers, Wellbeing and resilience, Production essentials, Maximising potential through digital, Safe Management of Productions, 1-2-1 CV advice, and group sessions with each department.
- o ScreenSkills also have a [wide variety of e-learning modules](#) available in training for wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, which can complement students' in-person experience of the workplace.

- **Industry live briefs provide flexible, authentic work activities:**
  - o Live briefs can be supplied directly by employer partners, or in some cases written by educators based on tasks completed in a face-to-face setting. Employers can sometimes use briefs they have set as an early piece of recruitment, before students complete their course.
  - o These can be delivered online as well as in-person, running alongside other "core" parts of the placement (see above). The live briefs can also be used online over a longer period of time than a typical work placement, with employer involvement and feedback at key points. They can also provide an accurate reflection of typical freelance work, in pitching, briefing, producing and presenting projects.
  - o Employers can provide assets from a previous project for students to experiment with and adapt in a safe setting, rather than any genuine commercial projects.

- **Experience presenting project work and portfolio to professionals:** students should maximise opportunities during their placement to develop their presentation and communication skills when discussing or pitching creative work to colleagues. This could be during the main part of the placement, or equally as part of the interview process (see section 5 above). It can also add real-life context to skills they develop during the rest of their degree or college course. Ideally students should experience this in a remote as well as face-to-face setting to understand how to use appropriate technology and software, as well as to appreciate differences in communication styles between collaborating remotely and in-person.

- **Deliberately set activities to develop professional or employability skills:**
  - o Placements will usually offer the best possible opportunity to understand and develop these critical skills in the workplace.
  - o For example, developing students' confidence when networking and communicating at events is critical to help their employment prospects after graduating. Taking part in both online and in-person events during their placement can provide valuable learning, especially to appreciate what is acceptable and effective professional behaviour (e.g. turning on their camera when using webinar tools).
  - o Likewise mock interviews with other members of staff will help students build their experience of answering typical questions in this situation.

Appendices

Employer Case Studies

1. Case Study: Beyond Brontës, Screen Yorkshire

Established in 2019, Beyond Brontës is Screen Yorkshire's successful scheme which aims to address under-representation within the screen industries by breaking down the perceived and actual barriers that can prevent young people (aged 18-30) from diverse backgrounds starting and establishing careers within the screen industry. Successful applicants who have a passion for TV and film are offered a bespoke training package tailored to their interests, to prepare them for a wide range of industry jobs. This training involves industry masterclasses, CV and interview workshops, mentorships, one-to-one support, and detailed careers information. Also, where feasible and practical, this includes internships and work experience placements, and trainees have enjoyed experiences on *All Creatures Great and Small*, *The Syndicate*, *Saved and Remade*, and *Ackley Bridge*, and with high-profile production companies such as True North, Wise Owl Films, Button Down, and Screenhouse Productions. (www.screenyorkshire.co.uk)

With a cohort of students already halfway through the Beyond Brontës scheme by March 2020, the training team were quick to convert to remote online teaching and learning to continue to deliver the remainder of the programme for that group. With the training for this cohort ending in June 2020, the scheme took a short break for the team to assess the climate in the film/TV industry, and the possibility of students being able to take part in on set, face-to-face work experience. As confidence in Covid-safe on-set working grew, more film and TV productions were opening up again, so by September 2020 Beyond Brontës welcomed their second cohort of students. Remote learning in terms of workshops and masterclasses were delivered via Zoom by industry professionals, such as freelance guidance, interactive sessions and initial virtual "meet and greets". With a young cohort of thirty-five students, establishing and maintaining connectivity and collaboration between the students themselves and the team was paramount, so a WhatsApp group was set up, including Abigail Houseman (Beyond Brontës Senior Coordinator) in the group to post reminders and links to online sessions. The WhatsApp group was a very active group with people discussing job applications and collaborating on films as well as an opportunity to gain feedback on projects they were working on.

In addition to the WhatsApp group, interactive and social sessions online, Beyond Brontës also introduced sessions where students could log in and be online together but work independently on projects (writing a script, for example) but have the connectivity to their peers to chat, swap ideas, give feedback etc, as and when they wanted to, rather like an informal classroom environment for self-directed learning.

One-to-one mentoring sessions were also moved online via Zoom, with students meeting regularly with their allocated mentor (usually working in their chosen specialism/role in film/TV) to provide support, advice, and answer questions.

A face-to-face self-shooting course delivered by NFTS (at NFTS Leeds) was also offered to Beyond Brontës students to take up, with Covid safe protocols in place. This proved to be a popular option and was a great opportunity for students taking part to meet each other and for Abigail to check-in on them in person at the studios.

Some on set placements were able to take place for students, in a Covid safe environment. Ellie Gillard, a Beyond Brontës student secured a place on *All Creatures Great and Small* - "In December 2020, I was offered a placement as an art department runner on *All Creatures Great and Small* where I've been working since January 2021. It's a dream come true for me - I've always wanted to work on a period drama so to have this as my first job has been amazing!"

Abigail Houseman (Beyond Brontës Senior Coordinator) highlighted that through student feedback it became apparent that some students would not have previously been able to access the course before the majority went online for remote delivery due to Covid. Some students have jobs and other life commitments, as well as travel problems (e.g. location and cost), so transferring the course online has made it more accessible. When asked if online remote delivery had presented any issues for the team or students, Glyn Middleton (Head of Skills & Industry Engagement, Screen Yorkshire) commented that he had had "a few students saying they felt they 'hadn't stood out' during the course, as with issues such as broadband strength, they didn't feel confident in speaking up, to then be cut off or have technical problems". This is something which would need to be taken account of in the planning and designing of any remote work experience programmes, to give students equal opportunities to contribute without the fear of technology failure.

Since 2020, further cohorts of Beyond Brontës have been delivered using this hybrid approach, blending remote learning with face-to-face opportunities, such as the NFTS Self-Shooter course and placement opportunities mentioned above. This approach was chosen initially as a safety measure, as many members of the cohort were ineligible for the Covid vaccine, but has continued because of the accessibility such an approach offers participants, allowing the scheme to reach a more diverse audience in terms of geographical location and thus improve overall diversity for the sector.

2. Case Study: Workerbee and the University of Salford

Interview with Rick Murray, Managing Director & Executive Producer at Workerbee

Workerbee, Manchester (https://www.wbtv.uk) have been collaborating with the University of Salford since 2015, offering both work experience placements for students still in education and more recently, moving towards a graduate internship model. Rick Murray, Managing Director & Executive Producer, at Workerbee stresses that working closely with the University of Salford teaching staff is essential in selecting the right students for both programmes ("no one knows the students as well as their tutors"), with the lecturers putting forward students for interviews with the Workerbee team. As part of the interview and selection process, practical tasks are often given to the students, to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and suitability to the placement or graduate scheme. Interviews were face-to-face prior to the Covid-19 pandemic but took place via Zoom during 2020, as well as any sessions delivered for the university by Workerbee. The University of Salford strives to "build a diverse and inclusive cohort through recruitment into all its courses" (Beth Hewitt, Creative Director at Media City, University of Salford) which is reflected in the students applying for work placements and graduate schemes.

The Workerbee placements start with students and graduates being placed in the development department of the company, so they can devise and develop their creative ideas, delivering them internally, without the pressure of contributing to commercial projects. They work to real briefs, just as a development producer would, but have more time and flexibility to work on their own ideas, and pitches. The graduate internship programme is a paid opportunity for three months, usually starting in May each year when students are coming to the end of their degree course. Workerbee uses this scheme to then select and recruit employees for entry level positions within the company. Currently, Workerbee have twelve members of staff all recruited from the graduate programme. Induction to all positions, including work experience and internships takes the form of a starter pack, which contains information on the company, but also has details on how to access wellbeing initiatives and pastoral support for all employees.

Students on both schemes are supported and supervised by the Team Manager and the Technical Director, who is a senior member of the team, but Workerbee also implement a "buddy scheme" where students and interns are allocated a "buddy", who is someone in a more junior level, closer position to themselves, who can offer support and advice in a less structured or formal way. The team manager has regular, daily check-ins with interns and students throughout the duration of their time with Workerbee, providing feedback, as well as monitoring the student or graduate's wellbeing. Rick comments: "a lot of teaching goes on during that three-month period, and they learn a lot on the job", referring to the graduates first experience of working in a commercial environment. "They have done their three years at university, but this is where learning about the real world starts".

The conclusion of the work experience or graduate scheme is marked with both group and one-to-one appraisal to give "honest and constructive" feedback to take forward to the students' continuing studies, or for further work either with Workerbee or in other employment.

Workerbee are now adopting a hybrid working model for all employees, with the general expectation that office working will be Tuesday to Thursday, but this is flexible as long as "working from home isn't to the detriment of any project". As a company they have found team working and bonding, especially if it is with employees who have never met in person, can be problematic when working remotely, as well as the transferring of skills (to interns) such as learning a new software. With increased working from home, Rick hopes that in the near future at the office, desktop Macs and PCs will be replaced by laptops for all staff, to ensure as much flexibility in working to a hybrid model as possible. Zoom has proven to be the most effective platform to maintain connectivity while homeworking, with a Hewlett Packard platform used for editing remotely, which enables the user to connect to the office machines from anywhere in the world.

3. Case Study: Industrial Light & Magic (ILM)

International, award-winning Visual Effects and Virtual Production company Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) offer a variety of work experience opportunities, internships and graduate programmes, with the latter two university-level programmes being part of their aptly named *Jedi Academy.* Graduates embarking on

the *Jedi Academy* graduate training programme, will be given the opportunity to gain "valuable experience through training, mentorship and real work experience" (www.ilm.com).

Work experience placements at ILM are for students aged 14-19. The company works very closely with secondary schools in terms of onboarding for these placements, collaborating with charities such as NextGen Skills Academy and Into Film to train students aiming for an apprentice role. Over the past year, during the Covid-19 pandemic, ILM have partnered with Speakers for Schools who have helped to facilitate three large work experience (ages 14-19) programmes for different cohorts of students using Google Classroom, which has been very successful. At university level, ILM were due to offer two-week internships in visual effects, and a longer summer eight-week placement (for Level 5 students) which would include paid travel and accommodation, and internship salaries. Due to the pandemic these programmes could not run face-to-face as planned.

ILM uses Google Workspace (formerly G Suite) platform to help deliver online work experience along with Zoom (proving better for showing visual content) and Google Meet (for check-ins).

ILM trialled a blind recruitment process for graduate programmes, removing a candidate's identification details from applications, which helps hiring teams focus on skills, experience and suitability and lessens the risk of conscious or unconscious bias. Their recruitment policy upholds a gender-neutral initiative across all job descriptions. As well as promoting inclusive recruitment, ILM have also established groups within the company which represent and support a diverse workforce including: *Circuit*, for women and gender nonconforming individuals; *Mosaic*, for individuals who are ethnically and racially diverse; *Enabled*, for individuals with disability and neurodiversity, and *DNA* for the LGBTQI+ community. Students on internships and graduate programmes at ILM are able to participate in these groups and hear from colleagues actively engaged in these groups. This enables the intern or graduate to build a diverse network of contacts and contribute to more inclusive behaviours, skills and attitudes among the workforce.

In terms of supporting students and graduates through the work experience and *Jedi Academy* programmes, ILM offers a "buddy system" to partner them with one of the department teams, who provides daily check-ins, focusing on wellbeing and the pastoral element of a supportive role. In addition to the buddy scheme, ILM also has a 'new hire' mentor role, who is an employee on a similar level to the intern, to help and support with the onboarding and training aspects of the role like guiding the intern in the use of new software. Employees at ILM across all levels have the opportunity to have a dedicated mentor who is someone senior to themselves who acts as an aspirational and inspirational guide within the company.

Interns and those on the graduate programmes can take part in Q&As with employees at a higher level, to have access to the experience and knowledge from across the company. The Studio Talent Group within ILM offers employees the unique opportunity to share skills, knowledge, expertise and culture across ILM's global studios, offering ongoing technical training, a Speaker Series (talks from award-winning and industry-acclaimed filmmakers, as well as NASA

astronauts, artists, scientists, inventors and engineers), libraries (for movies, books and research and reference materials for research or fun) online learning, and enrichment classes (learning artistic skills such as sculpture, drawing, writing, improv and more) (www.ilm.com).

4. Case Study: Blue Zoo Animation

Blue Zoo (https://careers.blue-zoo.co.uk/) offer a four to six week internship programme twice a year, winter and summer.

The paid summer internship is offered for up to six candidates each year, from either the second year of a university degree or from other creative backgrounds, so studying for a degree is not an essential requirement to take part in the placement. This year the internship was a hybrid model, with the interns spending one day a week in the studio, so was applicable for UK residents only.

The recruitment process for the summer internship programme (hybrid model), started in February 2021 with a pre-recorded webinar for applicants to learn all about the opportunity. The internship was also advertised on the Blue Zoo careers page of the website, for a month. Applicants were invited to send their CV, portfolio, and showreel for selection for interview. A shortlist was then drawn up of interviewees by the hiring manager. From then it was a quick process of interviews with offers being sent out to the successful candidates within three weeks.

Diversity and inclusion are at the forefront of the recruitment process, with Blue Zoo conducting outreach work to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds. "We make this clear on our careers website, studio website and within our role descriptions. We encourage all Blue Zoo employees, including interns, to complete our diversity monitoring so that we can make sure we are targeting our outreach as effectively as possible."

Once onboarding has taken place, the interns are introduced to their teams. Their first week is spent learning who is who in the studio, their roles, and position in the workflow pipeline, then the students go straight into their project work. The students work on specific intern projects, which feed into the Blue Zoo shorts programme (internal initiative inspiring employees to make their own short films). The schedule of production and length of the short film depends on the projects, but production is usually around 4 - 6 weeks. The mentor and intern discuss the timetable of the project together, ensuring both are clear on the expectations from either side. Each intern is assigned a mentor, from any level of the company, who will then provide regular check-ins and support for the duration of the placement.

The internship is finalised with a presentation and feedback session, so both the interns and Blue Zoo can learn and reflect on the placement, acknowledge the intern's successes, and gain feedback to take forward into their careers, and also the following years internship programme.

Blue Zoo Animation has launched it's first Winter Internship (paid) this year, which will be delivered entirely remotely, opening up the opportunity globally, as well as within the UK. The Winter Internship has been created as a result of Brexit, with

the restrictions in UK working regulations for non-residents, and also with the increased interest, ability and flexibility that remote working has opened up through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Blue Zoo's recommendations in setting up hybrid internships include a clear timeline for recruitment, interviews, etc. so the process, structure and timeline is clear for applicants. They also suggest planning the intern's time too, so it is detailed, structured and supportive.

5. Hybrid Work Experience – Planning Template

This template is designed to be used:

- As a structure to discuss and plan placements between educators and employers.
- As a structure to discuss plans for placements with wider stakeholders (such as ScreenSkills) and demonstrate how they incorporate recommendations.

Section of recommendations	Evidence or notes on your approach
Preparation • Technology • Self-directed learning • Online etiquette • Accessibility needs • Initial introductions • Setting expectations • Formal learning requirements	
Technology and platform • Technology, software, platform • Assessment of student's access • Additional technology/software • Early access to software/platforms • Online community	
Recruitment and selection • Encouraging engagement • Setting expectations • Recruitment timeline • Selection process • Practical tasks • Presenting portfolio • Encouraging diversity & inclusion	

<u>Onboarding and induction</u> • Starter pack • Online meet and greets • Virtual tours • Social events • Talks or masterclasses • Showcase student work online • Q&A sessions • Development department • Job profiles	
<u>Supervision and mentoring</u> • ScreenSkills mentoring support • Boundaries for mentor/mentee contact • Regular check-ins • Building confidence and resilience • Closing the feedback loop	
<u>Pastoral care and wellbeing</u> • Working hours and schedules • Pastoral care and wellbeing check-ins • Regular check-ins • Preventing isolation • Creating shared social space	
<u>Projects, modules and learning activities</u> • Flexible delivery and longer timeframes • Flexible structure for placement • Offer self-directed learning to students • Industry live briefs • Presenting project work or portfolio • Develop professional/employability skills	