PSYU9A8 PSYCHOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE PLACEMENT

**PLACEMENT PROVIDER HANDBOOK**

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INTRODUCTION

**This guide is designed to:**

* Provide background information on the module
* Outline your role as a placement provider and/or mentor
* Highlight key dates for your diary
* Give a step-by-step guide to a successful psychology placement experience

We thank you for your participation and hope this is a positive and beneficial experience for your organisation. We are keen to engage with our hosts and welcome feedback. If you have any comments or questions, please contact us using the contact details provided at the end of this document.

This placement module aims to enhance undergraduate student employability by engagement in work-based learning as part of their training and preparation for the workplace. The placements entail 50 hours at the host or where relevant. Placements can be in person, remote, or a hybrid blend of both.

**Skills the students bring**

Our students offer wide and varied skills sets which will vary depending on the nature of each individual student, but they may include the following skills which have been obtained through their programme to date. These include:

* Critical and analytical thinking
* Cross-cultural awareness and understanding
* Research skills
* Evaluation and analytical skills
* Data/Statistical analysis
* Reasoned arguments and ethical judgments
* Problem solving skills
* Interpretation and evaluation of evidence
* Interpersonal and team working skills
* Decision making, following guidance and taking the initiative
* Written and verbal communication skills
* Negotiation skills

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of the placement, students will be able to:

• Demonstrate understanding of psychology within a work context

• Evaluate skills and knowledge gained during the placement and reflect on their own performance

• Effectively communicate experiences and reflect on their learning

The placement is run under the ethos of the University of Stirling’s Work Based and Placement Learning Policy (WBPL) which can be accessed at: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/student-academic-and-corporate-services/academic-registry/policy-and-procedure/work-placements-and-projects/>. All stakeholders i.e. the University, students and placement hosts will have to sign the Work Placement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1), available at the above link, before the start of the placement stating that they abide by the principles of this Policy.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY and KEY INFORMATION

* The University will notify placement hosts of the student(s) allocated in October/November.
* Placement providers/Mentors should, ideally, meet with their allocated student(s) as soon as possible after the allocation is complete and no later than the end of November to clarify the details of the placement and complete documents e.g. PVG Applications and the Placement Agreement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1).
* Placement Dates: The fifty-hour placement should occur between October and April, though the timing and schedule of the placement within these times can be determined by the provider and student. Please note, the students have to submit their final honours dissertation in March (date to be confirmed), therefore it is requested that they do not have to attend a placement that week.
* Mid-semester breaks occur from Mon 27 Oct – Fri 31 Oct 2025 (inclusive) and Mon 2 Mar – Fri 6 Mar 2026 (inclusive) which could affect student attendance in those weeks.
* Before placement starts, i.e. October: The Work Placement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1) should be completed, signed and submitted. **These forms must be submitted to the University and approved by the Module Co-ordinator before the placement begins.**
* Please note the Autumn Semester finishes on the 5th December and Spring Semester starts on the 19th of January. Students may be away from the University during this time.
* Mid-placement-review: Mentors should meet with their student(s) and discuss progress approx. mid-way through the placement. Timing will depend on the shape of the placement but would be anticipated to take place by early February. At this, or any point, mentors and/or students can contact the Module Co-ordinator (Sharon.Kessler@stir.ac.uk) if they feel the placement is not progressing according to the placement agreement or if there are any other concerns. Full contact details are also provided at the end of this document.
* The PSYU9A8 Psychology Placement Evaluation form should be completed, signed and submitted by Tuesday the 14th of April. This includes an evaluation and a statement confirming that the student has completed 50 hours on placement. Without receipt, the student will fail their module.
* The Psychology Conference will take place in April 2025. Mentors are very welcome at this event where all students undertaking a placement make a presentation (oral or video/blog/poster) on their placement. The conference is organised by the final year students and placement students will inform the host about the date, exact time and location (University of Stirling) nearer to the date.
* Hosts will be provided with necessary forms at the time they are informed of the student allocation. Circumstances may necessitate some flexibility in which case please contact the Module Co-ordinator. Contact details are provided at the end of this document.
* Student placement presentation: April (date to be confirmed)
* STAR Awards: May, (date to be confirmed)

**KEY STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT**

1. **Psychology Placement Allocation**

Once the placement and student allocation has been agreed, the student should arrange a preliminary phone/video conference/in person briefing with the host to discuss the details of the placement (see below). The host should make arrangements for this to suit their needs and it should be before the end of November. This meeting gives the placement host an opportunity to discuss their proposal with the student, to refine tasks and should form the basis of whether the host and the student wish to progress with the placement.

Some organisations will require the students to go through a PVG check before commencing their placement. This should be highlighted and discussed at an early stage of organising the placement and must be stated in the Work Placement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1). The University will pay the costs for the PVG check if required and students should submit their applications at their earliest convenience through the Psychology Department, Email: psych-enquiries@stir.ac.uk. Please note that even if the provider provides a PVG, the university requires the student to **also** apply for one through the university.

The host organisation should appoint a member of staff, the “Organisation Mentor”, whose role will be to support the student, monitor their progress and liaise with the University through the Module Co-ordinator to oversee the placement both formally and informally.

1. **Mentor support**

Mentors should feel free to discuss, ask questions and resolve any issues with the Module Co-ordinator (see contact details below) before and during the placement(s). The Module Co-ordinator will be happy to arrange video conference meetings if required.

1. **Academic support for the student by the University**
* Students have scheduled class sessions with the Module Co-ordinator during the Autumn and Spring semesters to prepare them for their placement, review the placement progress and evaluate / reflect on the placement.

Students selected for a placement will:

* Receive a copy of this handbook.
* Be asked to submit a completed Work Placement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1), completed and signed by all three parties before the placement starts.
* Attend scheduled teaching sessions.
1. **Student/Mentor Briefing**

Once the student has been assigned to a placement, they will be asked to make contact and organise a preliminary briefing meeting (ideally before the end of November) to discuss the placement in detail. At this meeting and if required, subsequent meetings, hosts/mentors should aim to follow the University of Stirling’s WBL Policy (see Introduction). Key points are:

* + Plan the timing of the placement i.e. how the 50 hours will be scheduled.
	+ Be very clear with the student what the aims and tasks of the project are.
	+ Specify any placement outcomes and confirm the placement meets the intended learning outcomes.
	+ Make clear the lines of communication between you and your student and how the placement will be monitored via remote means (email/video conferencing/phone, etc.) or through in person meetings.
	+ Make the student aware of the organisation’s structure, employees and volunteers, contacts for their project and relevant resources.
	+ Ensure the student is aware of any additional needs e.g. PVG
	+ Discuss: Placement start dates/times; Student induction (see below); The WBL Policy.
	+ The Work Placement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1) **must be completed and approved by the Module Co-ordinator prior to the start of the placement.** The Module Co-ordinator will co-sign and approve the submitted document on the Canvas online learning environment. This approval will be visible to the student.
	+ If host organisations wish for a report or output at the end of the placement, they should discuss this when determining the placements tasks and include it in the Work Placement and Risk Assessment Form (WBL 2.1). Students should be made aware of the length, style/format etc. required for such outputs. Providers should ensure that all tasks can be completed within the 50h placement period.

It is recommended that the student is introduced to the organisation at the start of the placement. This should include checking if the student knows about:

* Fire regulations
* Dress code
* Absence requirements (if applicable)
* Contact numbers
* Breaks/lunch times (if applicable)
* Hours of opening
* Procedures for processing expense claims
* Who they will be working with / who their mentor is
1. **Placement Review**

Hosts and students should review placement progress regularly and they have the opportunity to contact the Module Co-ordinator if there are problems. A meeting with the student and mentor should be organised if it is felt that this is required.

At the end of the placement, we ask mentors to complete the PSYU9A8 Psychology Placement Evaluation form. This is an opportune time to provide a final de-briefing discussion with the student on their progress and their personal development. The form is required to confirm that the student has completed the required hours of the psychology placement and whether the mentor felt that this was done at a satisfactory level. Without receipt, the student will fail their module. Please return it, preferably as an electronic version to the Administrator, Hazel O’Donnell: hazel.odonnell@stir.ac.uk.

1. **Student Assignments**

Students will complete 2 assignments:

1. **Reflective essay on their psychology placement** (100% of module grade, marked by university staff)
2. **Presentation on their psychology placement** at the Psychology conference to which hosts are invited (contributes to a different module grade, marked by university staff)
3. **What if a student needs additional support**

We know that students can experience personal and study-related challenges at any time, and these may occur when they are off-campus on work placement or working externally on a project. Be assured that we will continue to provide them with full support during these times.

Students have been advised that they still have full access to all [Student Support Services](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/) available including [mental health and wellbeing support](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/your-mental-health-and-wellbeing/) whilst on work placement or work-based projects.

If you become aware that a student is experiencing challenges such as poor mental health or there is a critical issue with a student whilst they are on work placement or work-based project, you should:

1. Advise the student that you will be informing the Module Co-ordinator of the situation.
2. Contact the Module Co-ordinator at the university to advise of the situation so this can be discussed and addressed with the student as quickly as possible.
3. Direct the student to the University’s Student Support Services so they can immediately access support required from the university service.

1. **Other Information**

Placement Providers can register with the Careers and Employability “TargetConnect” vacancy and events system to advertise opportunities to University of Stirling students. “TargetConnect” allows organisations to advertise vacancies, internships and volunteering opportunities as well as register for events e.g. Careers Fairs, run by our Careers & Employability Service. In the future it may also be used to organise placements. It would be appreciated if hosts register at: <https://stirling.targetconnect.net/employer/login.html>.

Placement providers can nominate their placement students for a STAR Award (Student Talent Awards Recognition) that aim to recognise the outstanding contributions our students make to organisations through work experience placements, internships, and volunteering. This celebrates students who have developed their skills and experience whilst making a valuable contribution to the wider community. Nomination forms will be sent to hosts in the Spring. Students will also be invited to nominate placement mentors. Placement providers who nominate and/or are nominated will be invited to the STAR Awards Ceremony in May (date and time to be confirmed). This is typically a smart, red carpet event held in Stirling Court Hotel, with a reception. Any enquiries to star@stir.ac.uk.

**Contact Details**

Although there are scheduled junctures where contact will take place between your organisation and the University, we welcome contact with you at any point.

**Any enquiries can be made to:**

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Sharon Kessler

E-mail: Sharon.Kessler@stir.ac.uk

Administrator: Hazel O’Donnel

 Email: hazel.odonnell@stir.ac.uk