



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ  

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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

**PDip (Data Analytics and Visualisation)**

# **Placement Handbook**

Academic Year  
2024/2025

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## I. Introduction

### A. Key Contacts & Roles

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## B. Placement Overview

Placement brings together learning in the classroom with learning on the job. It is intended to give you a practical appreciation of the needs and operations of the workplace, therefore, broadening and significantly improving your knowledge.

Host organisations provide the opportunity to make the classroom and workplace come alive as rich, mutually supporting venues for learning. Work-integrated learning creates an environment that stimulates the creative application of knowledge to real-world situations and encourages students to expand their educational experience. Host organisations assist experiential education by bringing your new, diverse points of view into their organisation. They give you the opportunity to cultivate innovation and develop competencies ideally suited for the ever- evolving global workplace

## C. Duration and Working Hours of the Placement

Students are required to engage in the process of pursuing a placement as part of the 1DDV1 programme. In the case where a student cannot secure a placement, a relevant project must be completed. Placements must be for a minimum 12-week period starting mid-May to the end of August.

The employer will outline the structure of the working week on the job description, when the placement opportunity is posted. It will also be captured on the employment contract that is signed by you and the employer within 5 days of beginning your placement. The working week may be structured in accordance with the business need and may for example involve a regular working week (9 – 5, Monday – Thursday/Friday) or shift work and irregular hours.

You are entitled to breaks, holiday leave, sick leave and compassionate leave in accordance with the employer's own HR policies and employment legislation. Holiday entitlements and break structure should be stated on the workplace agreement signed by you and the employer.

All employers are required to comply with relevant employment legislation governing working hours and leave. For more information about Irish employment law, please see [https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/publications forms/employment-law-explained.pdf](https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/publications/forms/employment-law-explained.pdf)

## II. Pre-Placement - Procedures for Securing Placement

### A. Preparation for Placement

The placement process is designed to equip each student with the employability skills (CV and interview skills) and experience (relevant work experience in chosen field) that will enable them to succeed in pursuing a meaningful career as graduates.

The process of preparing for placement is often the first time that a student will have applied for a job in a professional context. Throughout the preparation process, we enable students to represent themselves well on paper and in person, coaching them through the CV and interview preparation process and supporting them in securing a meaningful placement. This process mirrors "real-life" and enables the student to learn these skills in a supportive coaching environment.

The Placement Officer conducts a number of presentations, workshops and 1:1 sessions with students in order to prepare them for the application process. The workshops are compulsory for all students going on placement.

### B. Introduction to Placement - Workshop

At the start of the process, the Placement Officer and Programme Director deliver an overview presentation to the group informing them of how the process will take shape, what takes place when and what is required of the student in preparation for placement. This session will also address the ground rules that underpin the process, what supports are available in preparing CV's, preparing for interview, and what deliverables are required of the student at each step of the process.

### C. CV Preparation – Workshop and 1:1 Support

Students are required to create and submit a CV that they will use to apply for placement opportunities.

The Placement Officer first conducts an interactive workshop with the students, alternating an explanation of theory and examples of best practice with practical exercises.

As a follow on from the workshop, the Placement Officer (and broader team) conducts a 1:1 with each student, coaching them through how to articulate their skills and experience in the context of a professional CV template.

This CV is then reviewed and approved by the Placement Officer. Once each student's CV has been approved, they are given access to apply for placement opportunities.

## D. Interview Preparation – Workshop, and 1:1 support

Prior to attending for interview (with exception if an employer cannot facilitate later interview dates) students are required to attend an interview skills workshop. This workshop outlines best practice guidelines on interview technique, typical interview structure, how to behave at interview, and how to structure answers.

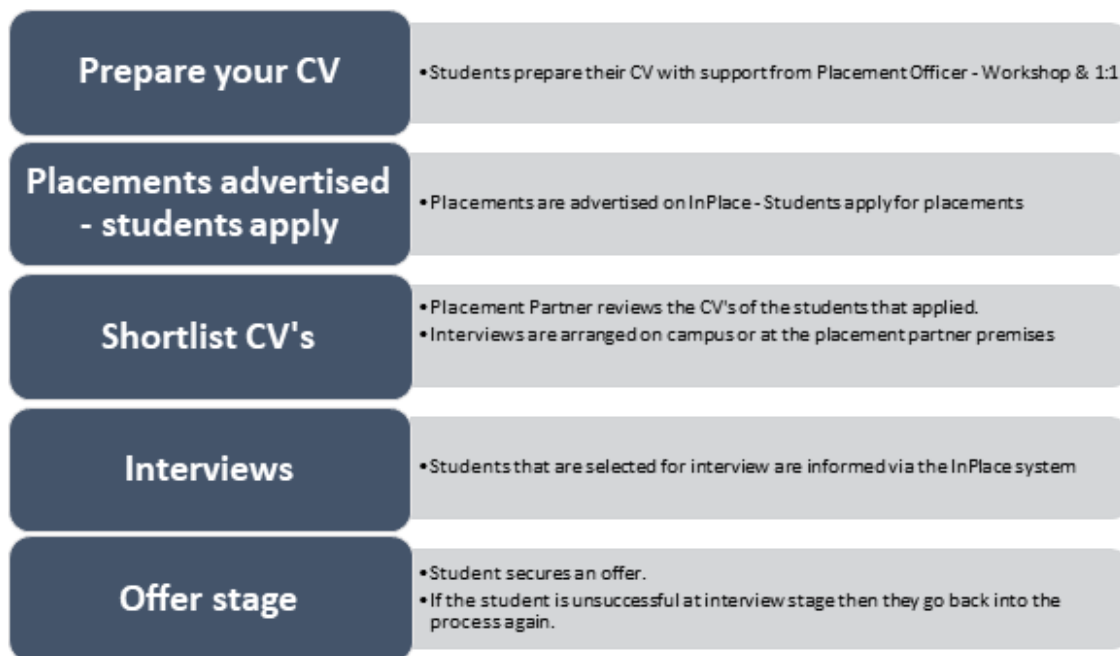
One on one support is provided for students who seek additional support. In addition, if a student has been through several interviews and is failing to succeed in securing a position the Placement Officer will identify students that are struggling and proffer additional coaching and support.

## E. Sourcing Placement Opportunities

The Placement Officer in conjunction with the academic team will contact potential host organisations seeking placement opportunities relevant to the student's programme of study. Thereafter, all activities are processed through InPlace.

## F. The Application Process

**Fig 1.0 The Placement Application process**



## G. InPlace

InPlace is an online system that facilitates and manages the interaction between the Placement Officer, employers and placement students.

The list of approved employers and contacts is captured centrally on InPlace. All potential placement opportunities are captured and published on InPlace. This system enables students to submit their CVs and once approved to apply for placement opportunities. Individual applications, interviews, offers and status updates are tracked on InPlace. InPlace is available via a web link on the Placement Office homepage <https://inplace.universityofgalway.ie>.

Students access the system by logging in with their unique username and password.

Please note that all e-mail contact from the Placement Officer and InPlace will **only** be directed to your **University of Galway e-mail address**.

## H. Applying for Placement Opportunities

As each new position is posted on InPlace, the position will have an associated closing date. The student must regularly check InPlace to view new positions.

The student logs on to InPlace and submits their application for the positions that they would like to apply for. The employer, location and outline job description will be clear for each position posted.

Students are encouraged to actively engage with the process and apply for multiple opportunities. If a student is not engaging in the process, the Placement Officer may notify the student that their application will be forwarded to employers arbitrarily on their behalf.

## I. Shortlisting, Interview and Offer process

Once applications have closed for each position all applicants are forwarded to the employer. The employer will then shortlist the student that they would like to interview.

The Placement Officer agrees interview dates and times with the employer. The Placement Officer will endeavour to schedule interviews outside of lecture hours, however the timing is largely dictated by the employer and occasional conflicts may occur. Individual schedules independent of academic commitments cannot be accommodated in this process.

The student is then notified on email that they have been scheduled for interview. Once scheduled to attend at interview attendance is mandatory.

Students are required to regularly check InPlace and their emails for updates and new job postings. Students are required to attend all interviews for which they are short-

listed. If, in exceptional circumstances, a student cannot attend for interview, they must provide timely notification (one-day minimum) to their Placement Officer along with a valid reason for non-attendance and associated formal documentation, e.g., a medical certificate if they are ill.

If the student is successful at interview, they will be offered a placement and are required to accept the first placement offered. When the offer is made by the host organisation, the student is deemed to be placed and is automatically taken out of circulation for other placement opportunities. Students are obliged to accept the position offered by the Host Organisation.

Only in the case where you interview with two different companies on the same day and both companies select you do you have the choice of which placement to accept.

Obtaining an offer from an employer depends on performance at interview. Shortlisting CV's, interviews and offers are at the discretion of the employer.

## J. Non-Compliance

In order to qualify for engagement in the placement process attendance during scheduled workshops is required. Failure to attend may result in the student being deemed non-compliant and excluded from the placement process.

A student is deemed non-compliant if s/he a.) Does not attend for interview, b.) Does not present in a professional manner, c.) Does not accept the placement offered by the company.

In the event of non-compliance, the following procedure will apply:

A status of 'non-compliant' on InPlace is entered for the student. This will mean that the student is unable to apply for positions and employers are unable to search or review that student's CV.

In the event of this occurring, the Placement Officer will discuss the issue with the student to ascertain what the concern or problem is and will brief the Programme Director on the situation.

The Programme Director, in consultation with the Placement Officer, the academic team and the student will determine whether the student will be readmitted to the placement process.

Non-compliance could exempt the student from further University support for finding placement, and they will have to source their own placement.

## K. Timeline

The timeline associated with each activity in preparation for placement is as outlined below



Activity	Dates	Group/ Self	Mandatory attendance
Introduction to Placement – Advisory Session	September 2024	Group	Yes
CV Skills Workshop	September 2024	Group	Yes
1-1 CV reviews	September 2024	Self	Yes
InPlace Process Advisory Session	October 2024	Group	Yes
CV upload to InPlace	October 2024	Self	Yes
Interview Skills Workshop	October 2024	Group	Yes
Apply for Jobs & attend Interviews	October 2024	Self	Yes
Placement begins	May/June 2025	Self	Yes
Placement finishes	August 2025	Self	Yes

## L. Seeking Your Own Placement

Students wishing to secure their own work placement may seek out a suitable placement. The placement provider and the nature of the work to be completed must be deemed appropriate and approved by the Programme Director and the Placement Officer.

Students who have found their own placement must submit a letter or email signed by the placement provider’s representative to the Programme Director and the Placement Officer. It must include the following information:

- Name and address of organisation/agency
- Organisation website
- Placement description
- Proposed Mentor/Point of contact at client company - contact details
- Terms of conditions of the placement, hours of work etc.

Once the placement has been approved, the Placement Officer will capture placement details on InPlace and will engage with the placement organisation to complete the necessary documentation.

## M. Can I seek a placement abroad?

International placements will be facilitated in the academic year 2024/2025, if approved by the Programme Director and the Placement Officer.

## N. Students with Disabilities

In preparation for placement, DSS will encourage any student with a disability to disclose to their Placement Officer. The student will be invited to a meeting to discuss this disclosure at the beginning of the pre-placement process. If the student agrees, a second meeting will follow with the student, DSS and their Placement Officer to define a placement planning report and identify reasonable accommodations which may be required when the student goes on placement. Additionally, the student will be provided with one-to-one guidance for CV preparation and interview skills if required.

The decision to **disclose is solely a personal decision for the student**. Current legislation requires that employers and educators provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and ensure that they do not discriminate against them. While, **there is no legal obligation for students to disclose** that they have a disability, it is important however, that students are encouraged to disclose a disability so that they can have access to the accommodations and supports they may need in particular during placement. The decision not to disclose may result in other consequences during the placement process and on placement. Where a student discloses their disability, they should be advised per provisions of the Data Protection Act 2003, as to the relevant third party dissemination and should be requested to expressly consent in writing.

For detailed information on support for disclosure, Click the link below:

<https://www.ahead.ie/userfiles/files/shop/free/A%20guide%20to%20Disclosure%202013.pdf>

### Reasonable Accommodations Assessment

A reasonable accommodation is any arrangement, change or modification that seeks to reduce the impact of an impairment, disability or specific learning difficulty without creating an advantage over other students in assessment, or creating undue risk for anyone during practical work. To avail of reasonable accommodations students must be registered with the Disability Support Service and have completed a Needs Assessment in advance of placement. In collaboration with the student and Placement Officer the DSS will produce an additional **Placement Planning Report** outlining the reasonable accommodations required for placement. This report with the student's permission should be forwarded to the placement organisation.

If work placement is a mandatory or desired part of the course and the student is registered already with the disability support office then he/she should have their support needs funded through the HEA fund for students with disabilities.

## O. Health and Safety

- Primary responsibility for the management of the health and safety for a student while on the placement lies with the placement provider (Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

Act 2005 and the regulations made thereafter). The student will be treated as equivalent to one of their own employees in relation to health and safety matters.

- The student has responsibilities to follow instructions and act sensibly to protect their own health and safety and that of others (Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the regulations made thereafter).
- A method and frequency for the student to maintain contact with the University should be agreed, taking into account the duration, risk level and available communication methods.
- E-mail will be our principal means of official communication with you while you are away, and your @universityofgalway.ie address is the one that we will use for bringing you any news, e.g. messages from your College/School, advice and reminders, grant information (if applicable), etc. Please ensure that you check your college e-mail account regularly and that you monitor your spam/junk e-mail folder too, as important messages can end up there.
- **The University need to know the placement location of its students and have a method to communicate with them promptly in an emergency.** Students should also be advised to ensure they carry details of local emergency contacts and, if abroad, their travel insurer, local emergency services and their local embassy / consulate. Where students are on Placement Abroad defer to the International Placement Policy [Outgoing Study Abroad Students - University of Galway](#). Your College/School may provide you with other weblinks or Facebook groups to keep you connected.
- In all cases the student will be provided with the following information:
  - Instructions about the general requirements and arrangements for the student to maintain contact or report any concerns about their health and safety while on placement.
  - Signposts to relevant sources of information about general health and safety issues in the workplace.
  - Extra information on any additional issues or concerns highlighted by the risk assessment (if necessary)
  - A copy of your expectations of the student, the placement provider, and your institution/department with regard to their specific placement.

### III. During Placement

#### A. Student Contact Details While on Placement

Please provide the following information during the first week of your placement. It will be used to arrange any on-site visits which may take place.

Your name	
Your contact phone number while on placement	
Your e-mail address while on placement	
Your supervisor's name	
Supervisor's phone number	
Supervisor's e-mail address	

#### B. On-site Visits

The Placement Officer, Programme Director or another member of staff could visit your organisation and meet with you and your supervisor during your placement. Visits could take place mid-way through the placement and could take place virtually.

#### C. Communication with University while on Placement

Throughout the placement University representatives will be in contact with you and your employer. However, if you are experiencing difficulties while on placement and require assistance, contact the Placement Officer or Programme Director (**See Introduction Key Contacts & Roles for contact details.**)

#### D. Conflict Resolution/Grievances on Placement

An issue or concern may arise for you or your employer during the placement. If possible, it should be addressed locally between you and your employer. The employer should deal with any issues as they would with any other employee/student. You are expected to work hard while on placement. Your employer should act ethically and responsibly. You are protected under Irish employment law. If you and your employer are unable to resolve the issue, you should contact the Placement Officer or the Programme Director (See Introduction Key Contacts & Roles for contact details.)

#### E. Student Conduct during the Placement

Students on placement have the dual responsibility of abiding by the University's code of ethics as well as that of the host placement organisation. You are also expected to conduct yourself in

a professional and courteous manner at all times during your placement. Any student who is found to be in breach of the host organisation's code of conduct may also face disciplinary procedures from the Management Discipline. The Student Code of Conduct is available on [University-of-Galway-Student-Code-of-Conduct](#)

Any incidents of gross misconduct while on placement will be escalated to the Programme Board for review. The Programme Board will then determine next steps. Extreme incidents of gross misconduct may result in a student failing placement and no longer being allowed to proceed with the course.

#### F. Dis-continuation of Placement / Student Withdrawal from Placement

If a student leaves a placement before completing the required hours and final assessment, the following procedure will apply.

##### **Procedure**

1. A student may request withdrawal from placement on the grounds of ill health or family circumstances e.g. bereavement or other.
2. Students must discuss their request for withdrawal from placement with the Programme Director.
3. Based on the individual circumstances the Programme Director and Programme Board will determine whether the placement completed is sufficient or whether a repeat placement is required.

## Appendix I: Organisation Evaluation of Student Intern

Student name	
Company	
Assessor	
Position	
Date completed	

**Instructions:** Please rate the student's performance under the following criteria:

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Ability to apply knowledge to organisational problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Ability to make sound, justifiable decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Self-management in a professional context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Ability to take initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Understanding of financial implications of decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Relationship with supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Interpersonal relationships with other organisational members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
Quality of work completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Time management skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Strategic thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Communication skills (written, verbal, presentation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
Ability to work in a team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment					
<p><b>Instructions:</b> If there are any other comments that reflect how the intern performed, please indicate them here. Possibly include what you consider to be their greatest achievement while on placement and/or development areas that they require to progress their career.</p>					

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent

**Instructions:** If you were given the opportunity to grade the graduate’s overall performance during their work placement, please indicate what grade you would award them.

First Class honours (70%+)	Higher Second Class Honours (60-69%)	Lower Second Class Honours (50-59%)	Pass (40-49%)	Fail (<40

**Instructions:** Please tick the statement about feedback to the student that applies.

I am happy that you share the contents of this form with the intern.	
Please do <b>not</b> share the contents of this form with the intern.	
Please do <b>not</b> share the contents of this form with the graduate. I will provide feedback directly to the graduate	

**Instructions:** Please indicate your future intentions for student interns.

We are hiring the intern.	
We are interested in acting as a host company for the 2024/2025 programme. Please contact me when you are placing students.	
We are not in a position to host a student in the short-term. Please reserve out details on file for future years.	

**Instructions:** Please indicate any way that we can make the placement process easier or more successful for your company.

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