

What is a Placement?

Objectives

To help you to think about your current situation, identify key skills you would like to develop and key areas you would like to explore

Relevance

This would be most relevant to those trying to decide what placement opportunity to apply for

Specific Outcomes

A list of your current capabilities relative to placement and a list of areas of practice that interest you for use in a consult with the placement coordinator/administrator

One of the most challenging parts of placement is actually just getting started. There are often a range of placements on offer, but, sometimes they may not suit your interests, meet your needs, or may not match your current capabilities. Most students on their first placement will probably just be looking to get started; however for later placements you might be interested in exploring certain areas, developing certain capabilities, or maximising your personal and professional growth. This worksheet is designed to help you start to think about what placements you might like to apply for.

Step 1: General Considerations

The first step in deciding on a placement is to consider your position and personal experience. For example, if this is your first placement you might want to look at placements where you have a supervisor or line manager that is a psychologist, has supervised students before and can help you to understand what a placement is all about. On the other hand, if you are feeling more confident and have accumulated more experience in your third or final placement, you may want to branch out into organisations without an internal psychologist to allow for greater flexibility, challenge and scope within a placement.

Some questions to consider:

Is there a particular supervisor you would like to work with?

Is there a particular organisation you would like to work for?

Do you want to experience an internal or external role?

Do you like the reputation or culture of the organisation?

Would you fit the organisations culture or reputation?

Is there something specific about your career aspirations that placement can help you with?

Step 3: Areas of Practice

One of the most exciting things about placement is that it provides a safe opportunity for you to explore the various areas of practice in organisational psychology.

Some students already know the area they would like to practice in whereas some prefer to explore their likes and dislikes. Either way, it is important to take the time to



consider what areas you would like to practice in, and what marketable skills you can develop.

The following set of questions has been designed to help you decide if a placement in a particular area would be useful for you. By using the areas of practice in organisational psychology listed above, or by identifying other areas (e.g. behavioural economics, analytics and big data, human factors) write down:

Areas of Practice

What are some areas you would like to work in? Why?

“I wasted a lot of time waiting around for someone else to get me a placement. Then I realised that this was my career and that I should be putting in the effort. I started building my networks and managed to get a placement in the area I hope to practice in. It has led to a lot of opportunities and changed how I approach this degree.”
Masters Student

Final Tips

Often the best learning is unplanned. Whilst planning is always a great thing to do, expect that a lot of your personal and professional development will be unexpected.

It is common to find, particularly for your first placement, that nothing is available. A lot of students don't get a placement for several months or even during the first semester. Contact the placement coordinator if you are concerned.

Often students will organise placements through developing their own networks. Ask the placement coordinator and administrator to support you if you would like to do this.

Be open to talking to students who have been on placements in your area of interest or at your organisation of interest.

Remember, you need to be registered as a provisional psychologist throughout your enrolment. Each registration period lasts for 12 months so make sure to save up for the renewal every year.

Conclusion

Taking the time to think about which placements on offer best suits your needs and interests is a great way to help maximise the opportunity placements provide. Having considered each of the questions in this worksheet, you should now have a better understanding of which placements are right for you.