



Getting Work Experience - In the UK and Abroad

Booklet written and produced by Careers & Employability 2014/15
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INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been produced for students who would like to find out more about getting work experience in the UK and abroad.

It is essential that you leave university equipped with a good degree **coupled with work experience** and skills that can be utilised effectively in the workplace.

The number of graduates entering the job market each year keeps increasing. At Cardiff University we have around 6000 individuals graduating each year. This means high competition for jobs - try multiplying 6000 by the number of Universities across the UK!

However despite the recession the graduate labour market has improved:

“A major review of the graduate job market, published today (Monday 7th July 2014), reveals that the number of graduate vacancies available at the country’s top employers has risen substantially in 2014, returning recruitment to the same level as in 2007, the highest point for the graduate employment market before the beginning of the recession.”

¹ High Fliers Research – Graduate Market 2014 (<http://www.highfliers.co.uk/>)

Yet the same research also suggests that work experience is more important than ever:

“On average, Britain’s top employers have received more than 8,600 applications each this year, which equates to 39 applications per graduate vacancy in 2014. Although the total number of applications submitted by graduate job hunters is 3% higher than last year, several of the largest recruiters closed their applications earlier-than-usual, having filled more of their graduate vacancies through their work experience programmes.”

WHAT IS WORK EXPERIENCE?

Work experience is a broad term used to describe the activities you carry out over and above your academic studies or even just after you graduate.

The most common examples we tend to see amongst students include:

- **Internships** - these vary from unpaid part time to paid full time over the summer.
- **Placements** - tend to be paid over the summer period e.g. a Santander or GO Wales placement.
- **Sandwich years** (or placement training years) - usually in the penultimate year.
- **Voluntary work** - through SVC or third sector organisations.
- **International** internships, placements and volunteering opportunities.
- **University society roles** – e.g. treasurer or event coordinator.
- **Part time casual work** - through unistaff/job shop, temping agencies.
- **Part time employment** – e.g. retail, catering roles.

Regardless if they are paid or not all count! Remember to include all your work experiences on your CV and applications – giving you more examples to draw on.

WHY DO IT?

Apart from the stiff competition for graduate roles with the increasing number of graduates in the market for a job each year, work experience will make you more confident, more employable as your employability skills will be enhanced.

Don't be one of the graduates left behind. Remember after one year in unemployment you are then also competing with another year's cohort of new graduates.

"40% of graduates are still hunting for jobs six months after leaving university".

Totaljobs.com survey Feb 2014

It's just as important to consider what employers' think about work experience and understand the important they place on it as some employers expect it [part one link below]. Note that some employers expect it as it shows commitment and understanding of the sector you have chosen to work in.

Also think about how work experience can assist you with your job hunting. [part two link below]. Some 37% of graduate roles are filled by those who had previously carried out work placements for the company.¹

So work experience has never been more important!

Career Player has bite sized clips to watch that explain this – visit:

<http://careerplayer.com/tip-and-advice/general-advice/internships/>

I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

It can be overwhelming as to where to start – it is important to find out WHAT work experience is going to be valuable to you and WHEN. This may mean taking the time evaluate and explore your careers options or it could mean you need to explore a few ideas you already have in greater detail.

There is plenty of support in the University to help you:

Careers consultants & advisers - 50 Park Place – drop in, book or email
www.cardiff.ac.uk/careers/students/careers-advice-guidance/

Careers Library – 50 Park Place – drop in and have a chat

Careers Work Experience Team – email advice experienceworks.ac.uk and sign up to their mailing list via <https://www.surveys.cardiff.ac.uk/expworks14> to hear about workshops, work zone drop ins in your academic school. Follow them on Twitter @ExpWorksHelen

Global Opportunities Centre – 37 Park Place – drop in, email to find out more about working, studying and volunteering abroad.
www.cardiff.ac.uk/global-opportunity

Placement Officer in your college/school

Personal Tutor in your college/school

There is also a whole host of online support

GO Wales - Read the Worktaster case studies about student work experiences
www.gowales.co.uk/Graduate/Tasters/CaseStudies

Careers Central – Explore career choices and options
www.cardiff.ac.uk/careers/students/career-central/

Prospects Planner - Explore “what jobs suit me” and read what experience you need to apply for them www.prospects.ac.uk

Rate my placement – Read other students experiences and get a feel for what employers are offering www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/

Target jobs – Useful sections on specific sector advice on work experience <http://targetjobs.co.uk/work-experience>

The timing of your work experience is critical. Consider you academic study peak times and quiet times, employer deadlines, availability of the work experience and sector specific peak times. By taking the time to be informed about your career, you will be aware of the best time to apply and carry out work experience.

As a rough guide to the issue of timing your work experience here is an ideal scenario for a typical undergraduate:

1st year

Term time work experience Spring term/Easter e.g. Experience Works Project
Paid role over the summer building on generic employability skills

2nd Year

Term time work experience Autumn Term e.g. Experience Works or CEProject
Focus on Summer internship applications
Paid summer role relevant to career ideas e.g. Santander or CUPID placement

3rd Year

Term time work experience Autumn Term e.g. GO Wales Tasters
Focus on graduate applications and graduate placements e.g. GO Wales placements

The work experience in the 1st year should be generic but can help secure sector specific experience in the summer of your 2nd year. This in turn assists with the graduate job hunting.

FINDING WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE UK

Here is a good starting point for you to find work experience in the UK:

The Cardiff University Work Experience Team offer – Careers & Employability at Cardiff University has a whole team of people dedicated to sourcing work experience opportunities. There is summary in [Appendix one](#) of all the schemes that we organise. The Work Experience Team have years of experience of placing students so make sure you follow them on Twitter e.g. @ExpWorkHelen and @GOWalesCU to see the latest opportunities. Some schemes are all year around, other are term time only. Get informed and make sure you know which scheme is applicable to you.

Target Connect – This is also managed by Careers & Employability and contains listings updated daily of not only work experience opportunities, internships and

placements but also graduate roles. To access the information visit <https://cardiff.targetconnect.net/home.html>. You can also set up opportunity alerts and search by sector preference. The employers listing opportunities here are targeting Cardiff University undergraduates and graduates.

Cardiff University – Look outside Careers & Employability e.g. SVC in the students union, Job shop, Mentoring schemes, Widening Access, Enterprise.

Other University websites – Why not! You can search Universities near to where your home is and see what sources of work experience they recommend in those areas. E.g. Exeter University has an excellent .pdf of sources of work experience covering Exeter to Cornwall.

Company/Sector websites – If you have a particular company in mind or occupation sector then use these websites to focus your search.

Careers publications - All of these are free – e.g. Target & Prospects publish free guides. Some are generic, some are sector specific. Drop in to the Careers Library 50 Park Place to see what they have that is relevant to your work experience search.

Placement specialists – These are organisations that focus on sourcing and advertising undergraduate placements or even specialising in sandwich year placements e.g. Rate my Placement, Symmons Madge.

It would be useful to find out if your school works with, or has links with a placement specialist. You may also like to research the placement specialists that focus on your chosen career choices.

Third Sector – There is a good range of opportunities in this not for profit sector and many opportunities in Wales! Here a few of the most common ones we see on students CV's:

The WCVA Explore internships

<http://www.wcva.org.uk/volunteering/explore-internships>

CSV <http://www.csv.org.uk/?display=volunteering>

VCS <http://www.vcscardiff.org.uk/>

For a fuller (not exhaustive) listing of sources of work experience visit Appendix Two.

FINDING WORK EXPERIENCE ABROAD

Whether you plan on launching your career in the UK or abroad following graduation, the skills that you need do not differ

It isn't all about being fluent in another language either; in a recent report by the Association of Graduate Recruiters and the CIHE, the skill cited as most highly valued by employers is the 'ability to work with teams of people from a range of backgrounds and countries.'

An international internship experience will not only enhance your CV by demonstrating key skills such as communication, flexibility and collaborative working, but will also enable you to demonstrate proactive qualities and attributes.

You will experience another cultures and viewpoints, make new friends and share unforgettable experiences during your time abroad. You will also have the chance to embrace a new language and will experience all of this safe in the knowledge that you are enhancing your career prospects.

"The market for highly skilled graduates is increasingly global. Economic and technological change is facilitating an internationalisation and de-territorialisation of business."

CIHE, Global Graduates Report 2011

International Internships/placements

The experience of working overseas and immersion in a different culture can fast track your career. You'll find yourself being considered for rewarding and challenging roles that you are capable of fulfilling. An International experience will be positive in many ways, supporting your employability, providing potential valuable networking links and credible experience as well as the adventure that it is sure to offer. So why not:

- Explore a career idea and see if it's for you
- Gain valuable career related experience in your chosen field
- Evidence your ability to take on a challenge and succeed
- Start to develop your global professional network
- Gain valuable advice from professionals working in the field and hear their stories
- Be paid whilst investing in your future
- Gain credible references
- If you impress, potentially secure your first graduate job
- Explore the country that you are staying in during your time off/ at weekends

Useful links

<http://www.goinglobal.com/> A comprehensive database with country specific information, employability and visa information and International Internships that are available.

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/working-abroad>: comprehensive resource offering advice regarding working abroad plus much more.

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/>: The UK's International organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.

<http://www.aiesec.co.uk/>: The world's largest youth-led international volunteering and internships organisation

Support available

The Global Opportunity Centre is based at 37 Park place and offers students support, advice and guidance regarding all aspects of study, work and volunteering abroad. Offering:

- Information, advice and guidance on all aspects of working, study and volunteering abroad
- One to one appointments and workshops
- Summer internship programmes
- Visa support and advice
- Support self-placing (finding/negotiating your own internship)
- Advice on securing placements with reputable providers
- Summer internship programmes developed for you
- Support in the application and recruitment process
- Support whilst you're abroad
- Bursaries, fully funded opportunities

For more information regarding the opportunities available and how we can help you please visit: **<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/global-opportunity/home>**

International internship opportunities are currently available with global companies, alumni and international partners that we work with to offer comprehensive internship packages. To find out more please visit: **<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/global-opportunity/work>**

Contact Emily Travis: International Internships Manager: **travise@cf.ac.uk**

Global Opportunity Centre, 37 Park Place, Cardiff University CF10 3BB 029 20 870536



FINDING YOUR OWN WORK EXPERIENCE

Quite often work experience is not easily found in the areas you want it to be. Here are a few methods and tools to help find your own when you can't find what you want or need.

Speculative opportunities - simply put, approaching companies and telling them what you seek. Usually done with a cover letter and CV to employers you have sourced, that you feel will give you the right experience.

For advice on CV and covering letters you can use the booklet online, workshops or visit the Careers Consultants – all available via www.cardiff.ac.uk/careers

Your list of companies needs to be relevant and focussed. Here are examples of ways to pull your “hit list” together:

Specialist Journals/Press – reading these journals will give you an insight into the companies advertising for graduates.

Professional Body – if you are a student member of a professional body this may give you access to lists of relevant companies to try.

Alumni – research where people on your course have gone before you! All academic schools have this data, then you can target those companies.

Another way to find hidden opportunities is to focus on **networking** – who do you know who knows who..... talk to friends, family, academics, tutors and find out what connections you can make. Ask for information first rather than a placement initially.

If a placement is not obviously on offer, then ask for a short “**Career interview**” with a relevant person – this can be on the phone, by Skype or face to face. You then run through a list of questions about the role they are in, how they got the role, what experience they had etc.. This information can arm you for your next job/work experience application.

LinkedIn – a professional networking site - set yourself up a professional account and start following relevant people in the field. Think of it as an organic CV that you can add to remembering the content needs to be realistic, updated and professional.

You can also get involved with sector specific online forums and discussion groups that may lead you to talking to, and connecting with, some very senior people that you can approach for work experience. Some companies have their own LinkedIn page you can join and notably, at Careers, we are starting to see an increase in jobs and opportunities posted on these pages.

Twitter – this is slowly starting becoming more popular with many companies using twitter to advertise work experience opportunities. Follow the companies you want to target and keep up to date with new developments that may affect their capacity to have someone on work experience.

Facebook – Again many companies will have their own page and will post relevant things. Is it viewed as less professional than LinkedIn and can be more casual. Yet still a useful way to see check out relevant companies. Be careful that your own Facebook pages are suitable for an employer to “see”.

Here are some useful social media stats. The CIPD survey in November 2013 revealed the following percentage of companies using social media for recruitment:

LinkedIn – 88% of companies use for recruitment
Facebook - 25% of companies use for recruitment
Twitter - 8% of companies use for recruitment

Compare this to the Rate My Placement 2014 survey with the numbers of students regularly using these social media tools:

LinkedIn - 57%
Facebook - 96%
Twitter - 63%

CIPD survey <http://www.onrec.com/news/news-archive/new-survey-highlights-how-71-of-uk-recruiters-and-hr-managers-are-successfully-usi>
Rate My Placement survey <http://rmpenterprise.co.uk/perch/resources/for-frank.pdf>

So the use of social media is vital – especially with the recent increase in the use of LinkedIn by employers.

NEXT STEPS

- Get familiar with what the Careers & Employability and the Global Opportunities Centre.
- Take the time to decide what experience you need
- Set yourself a work experience timetable
- Contact the authors of this booklet for further support

Helen Hare Internships Manager

Experienceworks@cardiff.ac.uk

Emily Travis International Internships Manager

TravisE@cardiff.ac.uk or ***globalopportunities@cardiff.ac.uk***

APPENDIX ONE

THE CARDIFF UNIVERSITY WORK EXPERIENCE TEAM OFFER

**WORK EXPERIENCE OPTIONS
FROM THE WORK EXPERIENCE TEAM**



Unpaid schemes



Scheme	Hours / weeks	Year 1	Year 2	Final Year	Post-Grad	Grad	International
Experience Works Term time internships, 4-8 hours a week based in local businesses. experienceworks@cardiff.ac.uk	To Fit Your Timetable	✓	✓				✓ <small>1st/2nd Years</small>
Classroom Experience Project (CEP) Classroom based experience for those interested in a teaching career. classroomexperienceproject@cardiff.ac.uk	To Fit Your Timetable	✓	✓	✓	✓		■
GO Wales Work Tasters All year round experience from week blocks to one-day-a-week in local businesses. tasters@cardiff.ac.uk	17-70 Hours			✓	✓	✓	★

■ Subject to providing a DBS equivalent from home country

Paid schemes



Santander Sponsored Internships 3-month internships in a variety of SME businesses, mainly over the summer period. experienceworks@cardiff.ac.uk	12 Weeks, Full Time		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CUPID Short term placements within university departments, mainly over the summer. cupid@cardiff.ac.uk	4-8 weeks, Full Time	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
GO Wales Placements Formal placements in Welsh based businesses, running all year round. placements@cardiff.ac.uk	6 – 10 Weeks, Full Time		✓	✓	✓	✓	★

★ Please check the website for further details: www.gowales.co.uk

For more information please visit www.cardiff.ac.uk/careers

APPENDIX TWO

SOURCES OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE UK

Cardiff University Careers & Employability on-line Vacancy Bulletin	www.cardiff.ac.uk/careers	Search for vacation work and work experience opportunities on our on-line Vacancy Bulletin to identify large firms with structured summer placements and internships as well as finding work experience organised through Cardiff University Careers & Employability.
BBC Work Experience	www.bbc.co.uk/workexperience	The BBC is able to offer a broad range of short, unpaid work experience placements, very competitive, apply online.
Civil Service Work Experience	www.civilservice.gov.uk	Opportunities for work experience in the UK Civil Service.
Fledglings	www.fledglings.net	Student resource for industrial placements.
Graduate Advantage	www.graduateadvantage.co.uk	Apply for paid full-time and part-time work placements, summer internships, graduate placements, and free employability training.
Graduate Business Partnership	http://services.exeter.ac.uk/businessprojects/	20-week graduate work placements into SME's in the South West region (mainly Devon, limited opportunities in Cornwall).
Graduate Talent Pool	http://graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/plcaae fg	The Graduate Talent Pool advertises a range of paid and unpaid internships suitable for graduates.
Hobsons	www.get.hobsons.co.uk	Provides sound work experience advice and advertises work experience vacancies.
Inside Careers	www.insidecareers.co.uk	Advertises placements and internships in specialist industries e.g engineering / accounting.
Prospects	www.prospects.ac.uk/workexperience	Good source of advice and a searchable database. The work experience discussion forum is worth looking at.
Rate My Placement	http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk	A website community designed by students, for students. It allows you to write a review of your experiences on placements or internships for the benefit of those looking to do the same. Also advertise vacancies.
STEP	www.step.org.uk	Provider of paid project based work placements into small and medium sized companies in England. Open to penultimate year students and graduates.
Student Employment Services	www.studentemploymentservices.co.uk/	A student placement company, register online to receive placement information
Target Events	Target-events.co.uk	Provides you with an unique opportunity to meet potential employers. Events vary annually.
Target Jobs	www.targetjobs.co.uk	Provides sound work experience advice, also advertises placements and internships.
The Careers Group	www.careers.lon.ac.uk	Up-to-date vacancies for part -time, temporary, voluntary or vacation work from the University of London Careers Service.
The Year in Industry	www.etrust.org.uk	Organise 12 month work placements across the UK. £25 fee. Suitable for penultimate year students from engineering, science, IT, e-commerce, business, marketing, finance and logistics.
The Year Out Group	www.yearoutgroup.org	Offering opportunities and advice to people taking a gap year.
Top Internships	www.topinternships.com	A website dedicated to advertising undergraduate internships; also provides useful information and advice.
Transition Tradition	www.transitiontradition.com	A portal for creative students, providing useful information and advice.
Wexo	www.wexo.co.uk	Unpaid placements across a range of sectors, mainly in London. £10 fee

Work Experience Events	Cardiff University	Make sure you attend any Careers & Employability Work Experience events e.g. fairs, workshops, employer talks etc.
Work Experience Workshops	Cardiff University	Attend these workshops to ensure your work experience really counts. Refer to our programme of events for upcoming workshops. Use our online Booking System to reserve your place. Workshops run through CMS within depts too.

Wales

BBC Wales	www.bbc.co.uk/careers/workexperience/	Lists all work experience opportunities on offer at BBC Wales, to apply complete the on-line application form.
Cardiff Works		Cardiff Council's in-house temporary employment bureaux. Information and application packs available on (029) 2087 3087.
CSV Action Cardiff	www.csv.org.uk	Places volunteers in educational based projects across the city.
GO Wales Jobs	www.gowales.co.uk	Lists vacancies in Wales, also advertises work experience opportunities.
Experience Works	experienceworks@cardiff.ac.uk	See Appendix ONE
GO Wales Work Placements	www.gowales.co.uk	Provider of paid project based work placements in small and medium sized companies in Wales.
GO Wales Work Tasters	www.gowales.co.uk	GO Wales Work Tasters provide undergraduates and graduates with support for short-term, unpaid placements with employers in Wales.
IT Wales	www.itwales.com	Up to 10-weeks paid IT placements for students studying IT-related disciplines (Wales only).
Local Government	www.direct.gov.uk www.lgjobs.co.uk/	Both websites provide a full list of local authorities in Wales (and the UK). Useful for applying for work experience.
Students in Free Enterprise	www.sifeuk.org	Student teams working on social enterprise projects which create economic opportunity for others. Team presents annually at national and international competition, sponsored and recognised by major graduate recruiters. Contact the Student Enterprise team for more information.
Student Volunteering Cardiff	www.svcardiff.org	Based in the Students' Union. SVC works with disadvantaged groups in the community.
Una Exchange	www.unaexchange.org	Although it advertises international opportunities, often there are summer schemes running in Wales with international volunteers that require leaders.
VCS - Voluntary Community Service	www.volunteering-wales.net Visit them at 109 St Mary St, or telephone (029) 2022 7625.	Offers help for people wanting to volunteer in Cardiff with information on over 300 voluntary organisations in areas such as youth work, mental health, disability, older people, advice lines, environmental projects, administration and community work. Visit them at St Mary's Street, Cardiff.
Volunteering Wales	www.volunteering-wales.net	Portal site for all volunteer agencies in Wales. Many opportunities advertised
Wales Council for Voluntary Action	www.wcva.org.uk	The official website of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, the voice of the voluntary sector in Wales. They represent and campaign for voluntary organisations, volunteers and communities across Wales, contains a jobs page.

Voluntary Opportunities UK wide

British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	www.btcv.com	Opportunities Worldwide.
Do It	www.do-it.org.uk	Advertises voluntary opportunities.
EIL	www.eiluk.org	The main provider of volunteers for work camps.
Idealist	www.idealists.org	A world database of volunteer organisations and vacancies.
Millennium Volunteers	www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk	Millennium Volunteers arranges voluntary work for 16-24 year olds in the local community.
National Centre for Volunteering	www.volunteering.org.uk	Volunteering development agency for England.
The National Trust	www.nationaltrust.org.uk	A large number of volunteering opportunities available across the UK.
Prince's Trust	www.princes-trust.org.uk	UK charity helping disadvantaged young people.

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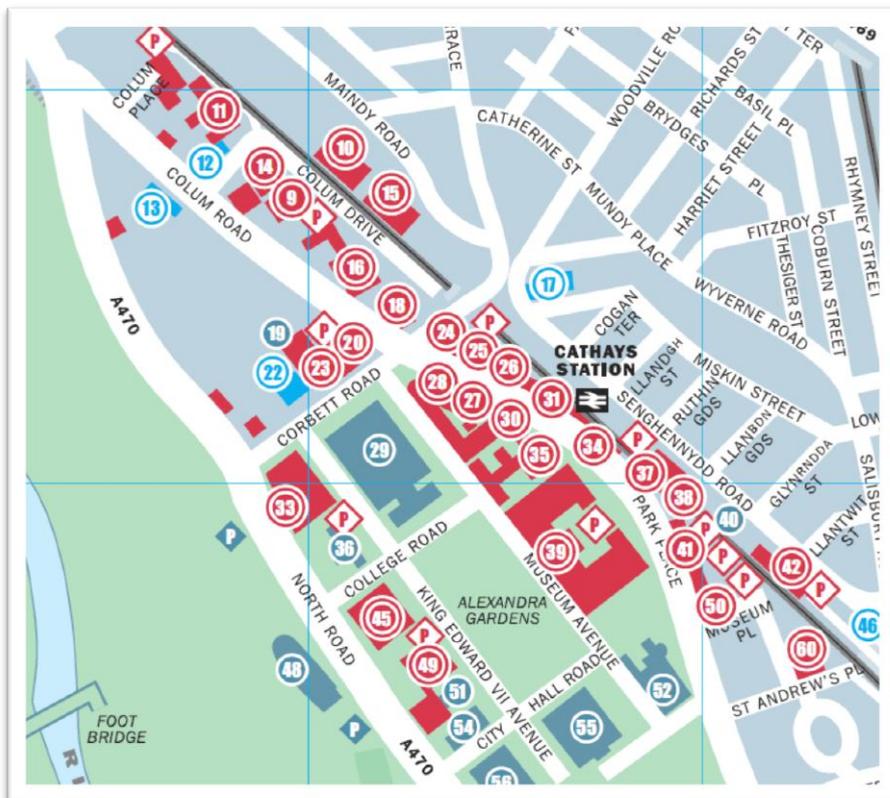
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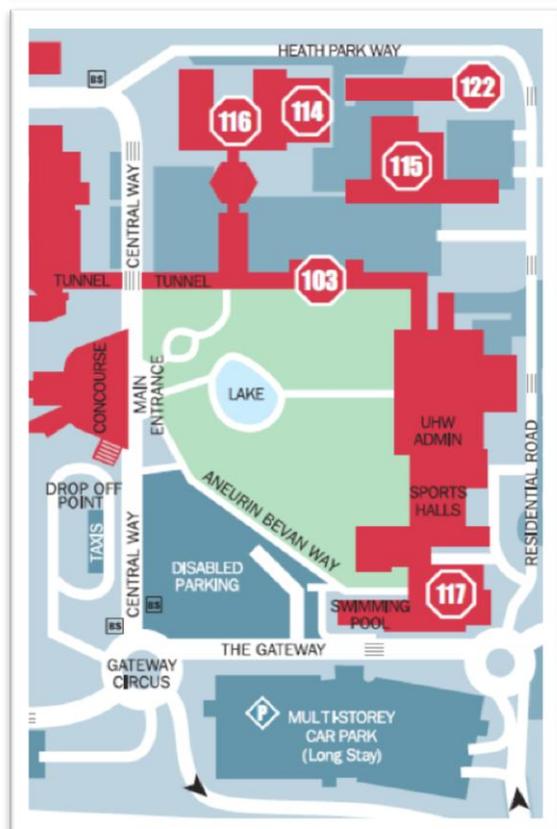
Student Support Centre
50 Park Place
Student High Street
Cathays Park Campus



Student Opportunities & Skills Hub
37-38 Park Place
Student High Street
Cathays Park Campus



Student Support Centre
Cardigan House
Heath Park Campus



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