

# How to host a **Psychology Student Placement**



**CARDIFF**  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
**CAERDYDD**

**Reference guide**



# A pool of talent, raring to go

If your organisation is looking to welcome fresh talent, we've got the perfect solution – become a psychology placement provider.

**The premise is simple.**

You open your doors to a high calibre and well-rounded psychology student for an agreed period of time. They'll come armed with sought-after skills, the latest academic knowledge and a desire to support your organisation in a range of ways.

In return, they'll gain invaluable on-the-job experience to enhance their career prospects as they stride towards their future. It's a wonderfully reciprocal set up.

Whilst many of our students are at the start of their professional journey, others bring a wealth of experience.

And they've all received extensive training having successfully secured their place on our highly competitive BSc or MSc Psychology programmes.

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# 10

**We're proud to be ranked in the top 10 universities for Psychology across the UK\* and our students are eager to showcase their flair, commitment and ingenuity when you offer them a place at your table.**

\*Complete University Guide, 2024

# Over **200** organisations have benefited from hosting a Cardiff University student on placement. **You can join them.**

To find out more about becoming a psychology placement provider, take a look through this short guide. It covers the benefits to your organisation, important points to consider and the easy steps you need to take.

To become a psychology student placement provider or to find out more, please get in touch with our dedicated Placement Team by emailing:

**psych-placement@  
cardiff.ac.uk**

We'll always be happy to hear from you.

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# The rewards you'll reap

We join forces with organisations just like yours from across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

**When you provide a placement, you'll get so much in return. You'll have access to:**

## **Top-tier talent**

We attract some of the brightest minds to our psychology programmes and these talented, knowledgeable and motivated individuals will be accessible to you when you provide them with a work-based placement.

## **Committed team members**

Our students are looking to apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical setting, making them a real asset. From conducting robust research using the latest methods, to designing innovative interventions and supporting the operational side of your work, they're ready to roll up their sleeves and contribute meaningfully to your goals.

## **Innovative problem-solvers**

Hosting a student can inject a surge of energy into your team, helping to advance important projects and initiatives that may have stalled. Being trained to think critically and analytically, our students are adept solution finders who'll bring a different perspective to your work.

## **Creative collaborators**

Our students are fully equipped to work both independently and collaboratively when they dive in with their insight, fresh ideas and creative approach.

## **Statistically-minded contributors**

Being skilled at statistical analysis, and with great numeracy skills, our students can offer support to various parts of your organisation that would benefit from this expertise.

**And that's not all...**



**Our placement students were professional and willing to assist in a variety of tasks. They offered an alternative breadth of experience that we have used to enhance the wellbeing and learning of our pupils.**

**Cris Evans**  
Whitchurch High  
School



**Providing a placement also means you'll be able to:**

**Expand your team by hosting talented students.**

**Offer line management, staff development and mentoring opportunities to your existing staff.**

**Access the latest research and academic findings through your relationship with our students and Cardiff University's School of Psychology.**

**Build strong relationships with the future workforce (many students have been offered employment as a direct result of their placement).**

# The contribution our students will make

Whilst the benefits to your organisation are plentiful, providing a placement is your chance to give students real-world experience in psychology-related professions or settings.

It's their time to shine – they want to show you everything they're capable of in return for the valuable opportunity you're giving them.

With that in mind, you should consider the role you'll offer a student on placement so that their time with you is beneficial all round.

Here are the kinds of worthwhile and useful tasks our students could do whilst they're under your wing:



**I was on placement within the media, communications and brand advertising sector of Ipsos MORI – a leading market research agency.** I contributed to a variety of projects for several renowned clients and my role spanned the entire research process. From scoping timetables, writing questionnaires, overseeing fieldwork, analysing data (qual/quant) and writing reports, I loved being able to add genuine value to the company.



Student name:  
**Jess Davies**  
Placement provider:  
**Ipsos MORI, London**



**Undertake quantitative and qualitative research**



**Write professional reports**



**Attend team meetings, take minutes and deliver presentations**



**Shadow clinicians, specialists and other members of your team**



**Manage projects and review project outcomes**



**Conduct literature reviews**



**Facilitate and run workshops**



**Interpret, analyse and compile data**





# The impact you'll have

By hosting a placement and offering students a meaningful role, you'll have a lasting impact on the next generation of psychology professionals.

That's because you'll enable Psychology students to:

- enhance their job application and interview skills, including CV writing.
- gain practical experience applying their learning and knowledge that's relevant to your organisational activities.
- get new insights into the way the theory they've learned can be applied in practice.
- improve various transferable skills such as written and oral communication, observation, data collection, time management, and personal organisation.
- develop initiative, independence, and the ability to take responsibility in a professional context.
- gain insight into potential future career paths.



**I can't recommend the placement with Lenovo enough. I enjoyed the fast-paced environment but also the strong relationships that I built within the company.** In my daily role, I had to communicate with a huge variety of people internally, at different levels of seniority, as well as external customers to help with all aspects of the sales process. It was an excellent first step in to a work environment and it was a great opportunity to contribute to the success of the company.

Student name: **Sally Wright**  
Placement provider: **Lenovo**





**I completed my MSc placement  
in a psychology-led service  
supporting young people who  
have been living in residential care.**

I attended consultations with Psychologists in the team, multi-disciplinary team meetings and reflective practice sessions, as well as engaging with young people and their families. I greatly benefited from the opportunities for reflective practice and clinical supervision that were available in my placement setting. The MSc placement was crucial in being able to secure my current role.



**Jess Davies**

Specialist Practitioner  
and Senior Social  
Worker for Children  
and Young People,  
Gwent MyST





# In the words of our placement providers



**We've been working with the School of Psychology at Cardiff University for a few years now and we've found this to be an invaluable partnership.**

We teach the students how to interact with the people we support, as well as how psychology works in 'real life' situations. In return we get enthusiastic team members who support our service, help with our workload and give a fresh outlook on things we can add or change to improve the service we provide.

So much so, that many of our placement students go on to do sessional work with us in custody suites or in the community.

**We have gained some great, permanent staff who we wouldn't have otherwise found.**

**Vicki Hillier**

Dyfodol Service Manager  
G4S Care & Rehabilitation Services



**We have been hosting placement students in the Cardiff and Vale Perinatal Mental Health Team since 2015. In that time the role has become embedded within the team so that when students come on placement with us, they make a real contribution to the service.**

Our placement students support us in facilitating groups, scoring, and inputting outcome measure data, writing up assessments, preparing for team formulation sessions and multi-disciplinary team meeting admin. They have also contributed to research projects and write ups for publication.

As a specialist service we value sharing our knowledge with aspiring future clinical psychologists so that they can take this with them into their careers. We also find it really beneficial to the dynamics of the team to have people joining us on placements as it motivates us to keep teaching and learning and to stay up to date with research and innovation.

**Dr Jessica Williams**

Clinical Psychologist  
Cardiff and Vale Perinatal Mental Health Service

# The practicalities of providing a placement

Take a look at this quick reference guide to find out what's involved when you host a student on placement.

## Purpose

Psychology placements provide a vital opportunity for students to experience working in a role that would be suitable for them once they graduate. It gives them the chance to put their theoretical knowledge to the test in a real-world setting and this can be of huge benefit to organisations, like yours.

## Role

During their placement, students engage in various stimulating activities that are useful to the organisation that's hosting them. These activities should stretch our students and provide valuable learning experiences.

While some tasks may be routine administrative duties that a regular employee might carry out, they shouldn't dominate the student's time, and will ideally be limited to no more than one day per week.

Students often shadow professionals within your organisation to learn job-related skills. As they gain confidence, they gradually take on more responsibilities unaided, sometimes participating in long-term projects from start to finish. Being given the opportunity to reflect or analyse the outcomes of their work is valuable too. We really encourage this kind of hands-on involvement as it's highly rewarding for our students and can yield very useful results for you too.

## Location

Some students like to stay close to home, others are keen to explore the world so placements can take place anywhere in the UK or abroad.



**I completed my placement at The Caswell Clinic which is a Medium Secure Unit in Bridgend.**

I supported my supervising Clinical Psychologist with patient assessments, psychological formulations, administering and scoring psychometric tests, audit projects, and group work. I had the opportunity to shadow other members of the multidisciplinary team and gained invaluable insight into the role of a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS.

I also gained knowledge, confidence, awareness of the profession, and lasting relationships – in fact, the same supervisor has continued to be a mentor to me for over 10 years! The placement confirmed my decision to pursue a career in Clinical Psychology.



Name: **Dr Sophia Chambers**

Placement provider: **The Caswell Clinic**

Current role: **Clinical Psychologist**





## **Duration and hours**

For our third year BSc students, placements must last for at least 30 weeks starting around late September (usually they last 36 weeks to include a break over the Christmas and Easter period).

MSc placements run for 12 weeks between May and September. If your organisation is very quiet during August, you can offer a placement from May to July and all MSc students must complete their placement by early September.

Generally, students will expect to work Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, but there's room for flexibility.

It's also possible that some students will have specific circumstances that they'd like you to consider, for example they may have caretaking responsibilities. It's best to discuss their requirements before their placement is finalised.

If you have a particular period of time when you'd like to host a student, or specific hours you'd like them to work, you can state this in your placement ad or in your invitation letter.

## **Supervision**

Normally, students are supervised by professional psychologists who are chartered with the British Psychological Society. However, we understand placements happen in diverse settings, so any appropriately qualified senior person can serve as a supervisor.

Regular check-ins are essential and students must be able to access their supervisor if they need to. Some students work with their supervisor on a daily basis, others less frequently, but they should always have at least half an hour together every week.

Our university supervisors will also engage with you and our students early on to ensure a smooth experience for everyone. These meetings can be in-person or online, depending on everyone's availability, preferences and logistics.

## **Training**

If you can offer any training to a student while you host them, this can be very beneficial, but it isn't mandatory.

## Reporting

As a placement provider, you won't be required to submit reports but we'll ask you to participate in surveys. Your periodic meetings with our university supervisors will also give you an opportunity to verbally report on the placement.

Our students are expected to write a reflective report at the end of their placement, which will contribute to their degree assessment. Additionally, BSc students may deliver oral presentations, providing insights for future students and academic staff.

## Holidays and sickness

For BSc placements, the 30-week period doesn't include holidays or prolonged sickness. To align with university term dates, the placement should last for 36 weeks, allowing students to take breaks during Christmas and Easter. But students aren't required to follow university holidays, and you can ask students to follow your organisation's annual leave entitlement policy.

MSc placements involve 30 hours per week, with 7.5 hours dedicated to independent study. Annual leave isn't typically taken during MSc placements, but arrangements can be made between you and the student you host.

For illness or injury during a placement, you just need to follow your standard procedures and notify us if there's a prolonged student absence.

## Health and Safety Guidelines

To ensure the safety of all students on placement, we have standard health and safety requirements so, before a student begins their placement, we'll ask you to complete a health and safety checklist. If you have any questions about these requirements, please contact **psych-placement@cardiff.ac.uk**

## Insurance

We strongly advise that all placements offer honorary contracts to students. This ensures that they're covered by your liability insurance. Additionally, students involved in assessments or working with clients should be covered by indemnity insurance from the British Psychological Society.

For students working with children, vulnerable adults, or clients who pose a risk to themselves or others, we have specific safety guidelines which we can provide.

## Payment

Our students don't receive additional funding during their placement so we hope that you'll provide some level of financial support. That might include travel expenses, a contribution towards food and drink, a clothing allowance or a relocation reimbursement.

Some placement providers choose to pay our students for the skills, talent and creativity they bring to their organisation and this is very much appreciated by the students they host.

Providing financial recognition can really go a long way to attract students and boost their self-worth whilst they positively contribute to your team.



**I worked as an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate at Cardiff Women's Aid where**

**I provided one to one emotional and practical support for survivors of**

**domestic abuse.** I had a case load of up to ten clients and I was on duty one day a week to deal with advice, professional calls and women dropping in whilst experiencing a crisis. I particularly enjoyed witnessing how cognitive behavioural therapy helped clients to progress over a twelve week programme. Through my placement, I learnt how to work under extreme pressure and, although it was extremely challenging at times, it was also very rewarding. I enjoyed making a difference and my placement will definitely help me in my future career.

Student name:

**Sian Anderson**

Placement provider:

**Cardiff Women's Aid**





# The application and selection process

We want it to be as easy as possible for you to arrange hosting a student on placement. Here's how it works.

## How students apply for your placement

If you've received this document from a student you'd like to host on placement, feel free to skip this part. But if you'd like to invite students to apply to do a placement with you, here's how it works:

You'll provide an advert to let our students know that you're looking to host a placement. Don't worry, we can provide guidance or help to create this with you.

**For BSc Students:** There are typically two or three application rounds when students apply for a placement. The first application round is in December and the second is in February and all placements start in September.

At each round, we'll send you a batch of student applications which will contain a cover Letter and CV for each applicant. If you prefer students to fill out a specific form, just share it with us, or provide a link to your online form with your placement advertisement. Of course, if you have your own recruitment process, students can apply directly to you instead.

**For MSc Students:** The first round of applications is in December, followed by a second round in February, for a summer start. The process is the same as for BSc students, making it easy for you to host both BSc and MSc students in the same year.

## How you'll select your students

As mentioned above, we'll send you a batch of student applications for you to consider after each application round.

It's important to note that when we send these to you, we're not making recommendations or endorsing their suitability for your placement. You're far better placed to determine if they're the right fit for you.

As part of your assessment, you should conduct appropriate checks for anyone working at your institution, such as criminal records and any appropriate physical and mental health checks. This is especially crucial for placements involving psychologically demanding tasks or work with vulnerable people. We trust your professional judgment, supplemented by your standard screening measures, to assess the suitability of applicants for such roles.

**Once you have selected your student, you will send them an invitation letter or email outlining the terms of the placement you'd like to provide.**



**Selecting the right applicant is an important part of the placement process**

so please complete any necessary checks or screenings before accepting a student for placement. This will ensure you find a compatible student for your organisation.

**We're here to make the process as straightforward as possible so feel free to get in touch at any time.**



# How to become a student placement provider

1

## Get in touch

and let us know you're keen to host a student placement.

2

## Provide an advert

with details about the placement you'd like to offer.

3

## Receive

a batch of student **applications** in response to your advert.

4

## Select a

**student.** Send them a placement offer letter (after carrying out any necessary checks).

# The next steps

If you're keen to become a psychology student placement provider, we'd love to hear from you.

We can let our students know about the opportunity you're offering so that they can apply to join you on placement.

All you need to do is email our Psychology Placement Team and we'll work with you to set everything up.

**psych-placement@cardiff.ac.uk**



**During my placement, I worked with clinical psychologists to build my skills in research, counselling, service design and workshop facilitation.** I learnt how to be part of a psychology team. I now work for a behaviour change charity in sustainability, and I only secured this role because of the experiences and skills I gained through my placement year.



Student name:  
**Jack Hodgkiss**  
Placement provider:  
**Velindre Cancer Centre**

## Some of the organisations who have benefited from hosting a Cardiff University student on placement include:

Action for Children

Airbus

Bernardo's

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Deloitte

G4S

HM Prison Service

Hewlett-Packard Inc.

L'Oreal

Mind

National Centre for Mental Health (NCMH)

Office for National Statistics

Rhondda Cynon Taf Educational Psychology Service

Tata Steel

Unilever

University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre

Yale University

Ysgol Y Deri

CARDIFF  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
CAERDYDD



### **School of Psychology**

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**[psych-placement@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:psych-placement@cardiff.ac.uk)**

#### **Image caption:**

Placement students Benny Wu, Frankie Rogers, Elspeth McNicol and Ellie Varney at Headlands School where they worked directly with children facing social, behavioural and emotional challenges.