

1D Facilitating student engagement with external organisations through credit-bearing placements. Staff, student and external organisation perspectives

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The challenge of providing work related learning within the confines of an undergraduate curriculum has always generated considerable discussion. The University of Glasgow's BSc Environmental Science and Sustainability is unusual in that it offers students the opportunity to undertake a 60 credit placement in lieu of a dissertation at level 3. Based upon 10 years of organising and assessing these environmental placements, this presentation aims to present the benefits and challenges of having this option on an undergraduate programme - both from the staff, student and an external placement provider's perspective. How placements are set up and assessed will be briefly presented; the student and placement provider will then share their perspective on the opportunities and difficulties a placement represents. Our experience of engaging employers and students in these short-term placements has proved not only to enhance dialogue between the two organisations, but has also been found to benefit:

- the student: through enhanced employability, experiencing the real world and learning new skills, the opportunity to link graduate attributes with work, the offer of work or a position on completion, putting theory into practice, networking;
- the external organisation: through recognition of the transferable skills/knowledge of our students, the potential recruitment of future employees, the opportunity to utilise the student's up-to-date knowledge and skills in their placement work e.g. social media, publishing, academic writing, computing;
- and the University of Glasgow: enhanced engagement with organisations through: proposals to be specialist guest speakers, offers of voluntary/paid work for students, requests to have another student the following year, field class and visit opportunities; internationalisation of the curriculum, and enhanced reputation and employability of our students.