



Professional Skills Module

Example Placements

We partner with organisations from a range of sectors to create a bank of Professional Skills Module placements; exclusive opportunities that benefit both our students and their employers.

Placements give students of Arts and Humanities at the University of Birmingham the opportunity to develop their professional skills and confidence, enhance their employability and explore a potential career as part of their degree.

Organisations gain additional support to fulfil a specific project or focus, often making a significant impact that you wouldn't otherwise have the capacity to achieve. Students offer a fresh perspective and can help with strategies for engaging young people.

Students are required to undertake a minimum 70 hours of work between June and December. They are assigned an essay and a presentation reflecting on their experience, which gives them drive and motivation to work hard at the project they are assigned.

We ask organisations to provide students with a structured piece of work/project and support throughout the placement where required. We think it is important you take the lead on recruiting your student, but we will support you if you would like help with selection.

The following pages offer examples of the many ways in which our students have supported organisations previously.

To explore how placement students could benefit you and your organisation, please email Lesley Griffiths, Placements Officer, at calplacements@contacts.bham.ac.uk to arrange a visit or zoom chat.

“This has been a brilliant opportunity for our organisation, and we encourage other values-driven organisations to provide quality, co-designed opportunities to talented students.”

Social Ark CIC

“A fantastic way to gain a little extra capacity whilst helping the next generation of employees or entrepreneurs gain the experience they need in industry. The students brought us different perspectives: they might not have had prior experience in what we were asking them to do, but we found this to be a healthy and fresh way to look at what we do.”

Bearwood Community Hub

PSM Placements in Charities and Social Enterprises

socialARK

Social Ark is a London-based, values-driven organisation supporting talented, under-resourced young people to develop social enterprises. They co-designed the placement role with their student to design and develop a much-needed Mentoring Programme Pack. The task involved researching peer programmes, surveys, interviews, and evaluation, all contributing to the creation of a new mentoring programme.

“This work is, in my opinion, an extremely impressive mentoring programme with advice and research on active listening, tools for further support and procedures for each stage. It far outweighs any similar mentoring packs I’ve seen from other organisations.”



True Cadence is a London-based music business social enterprise providing structured learning, mentoring and artistic development to disadvantaged young people. Their PSM student was tasked with developing a lively and engaging blog to showcase their work, interview, and profile young creatives, share stories of their young programme participants and enhance the organisation’s mentor and corporate engagement.

“As a non-profit, sharing the work we do is a vital part of our work. Our student bloggers made some significant contributions to the organisation through their creative writing.”



Ovacome is the UK’s ovarian cancer charity providing expert support, information, and a supportive and knowledgeable community for anyone affected by the disease. Our PSM student was tasked with scoping, designing, and populating a regional contact database for local business and community organisations.

“[Our student] was very thorough and hard-working and has created an invaluable resource for our West Midlands Hub. They also went on to contact 120 organisations to offer our workplace talks.”



52 Lives aims to help one person every week by mobilising the support of its online community. In addition, their School of Kindness provides free Kindness Workshops to primary schools. They recruited to a digital marketing role which involved writing articles, news stories and social media posts – some were based on interviews they conducted, and others were written from research.

“[our student] quickly picked up the tone and messaging of our charity and wrote high quality content at incredible speed. She accomplished far more in her time with us than I ever imagined.”



GINA Project is a social enterprise providing tailored counselling services for people subjected to sexual violence and abuse. One of their PSM students was recruited to research and compile a Fundraising Pack with ideas and activities for raising funds and develop a fundraising strategy and webpage.

“[our student] has simultaneously demonstrated a thorough understanding of fundraising concepts, whilst showing sensitivity and compassion in approaching the delicate nature of the work we do at GINA in supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse.”

PSM Placements in Culture, Heritage and Creative Arts



K'antu Ensemble is an award-winning early music group exploring new approaches to early folk and world music. The placement encompassed a broad range of tasks including marketing, admin and education resources and involved producing arts and music activity sheets; compiling costings; and creating multi-platform content.

"[our student] was keen to take on a variety of different tasks so we were able to give him an unusually wide range of experiences across our organisation's work and he has been a great addition to the team."



WINTERBOURNE
HOUSE AND GARDEN

Winterbourne House and Gardens is an Edwardian heritage property and the former home of industrialist and social housing pioneer John Nettlefold. They recruited a student Collections Assistant role to take a leading role in a newly donated collection of historic printing blocks.

"[our student] cleaned and sorted hundreds of blocks, researched the company, consulted the donor, and continued volunteering with us in order to complete the project."



Selly Manor Museum features two of the city's oldest buildings, rescued from demolition and relocated to Bournville by the Cadbury family and opened as museum in the early 1900s. They recruited two students as Museum Assistant and Engagement Assistant, both supporting a broad range of tasks and responsibilities.

"The students enhance the event and visitor offer each year by supporting the team in preparation and delivery. They also support the museum collection and archive."



The Coffin Works is an historic Jewellery Quarter factory, rescued and brought back to life as a heritage site and a slice of social history. Their PSM recruit took on an important project focused on capturing feedback, analysing data and generating insights, and reporting on a new visitor experience model.

"[our student] has produced an extremely useful report on visitor experience along with personal interpretation and ideas that will be vital for the future development of the museum's model."



Black Country Living Museum is a 26-acre representation of the industrial and social history of the Black Country with costumed staff depicting the inspiring stories of 300 years of the region's history. The Interpretation and Research department recruited a placement student to support a range of projects.

"[our student] completed all of her tasks to a very high standard. Her work has been some of the strongest we have had from a volunteer or placement in a long time."

PSM Placements in the Commercial sector



West Midlands Trains operates trains from London to Liverpool and across the West Midlands. The franchise is investing £1 billion to improve services, including a significant project at the University Station. WMT recruited two Project Assistants who would be both supporting projects and working autonomously and engage with a range of stakeholders.

“[our student] has been exposed to environments where she has had to present or discuss the projects in a formal setting. She was able to confidently talk about the project issues and mitigations and come up with solutions to allow the project to progress.”



WellEasy is an online membership-based marketplace, working directly with brands to reduce retail mark-up and increase affordability of healthy and natural food, beauty, and homeware products. They recruited a Content Creator to develop their marketing presence and produce content across their social media platforms. Their student demonstrated a remarkable grasp of the brand and concept and developed a wide variety of 100+ pieces of high-quality social media content, including both video and infographics.

“The whole team were amazed at the level, creative flair, and quantity [our student] was able to produce with the briefs she was given. Her ability to work within a group and communicate the concept was exceptional.”



Lux Gallery & Photography is an independent fine art gallery with a keen focus on supporting local and international art and artists, alongside a high-end photographic studio. Lux recruited a Gallery Assistant placement student to provide wide-ranging insight into the management and development of the business, gaining experience of arts sales, photography, and events.

“[our student’s] interest, knowledge, and willingness to understand every aspect of the art, photograph, events, and business side of the Lux Gallery made each day different, engaging, and interesting.”



Y.O.U Underwear is an ethical, sustainable clothing brand with a mission to improve access to education for women and girls by donating underwear to vulnerable women and children in Africa. They recruited students for Written and Visual Content Creation and TikTok Creation, with both students working to creative briefs, reflecting the company brand whilst engaging with social media trends and incorporating trend research and SEO.

“[our students’] work has been a great help to develop our upcoming content hub, expand our web rankings and presence and access a new audience on TikTok.”

PSM Placements in Editorial and Publishing



The Reading Corner is a charity committed to bridging the gap between literature and underprivileged communities, viewing literature as a catalyst for personal and societal transformation. They recruited a student blogger to research and write by-lined Q&A-style features, based on interviews with authors or editors, championing underrepresented writers.

“In addition to her original brief as a Blog Content Writer, [our student] has turned around our presence on LinkedIn which has opened up many avenues of funding and partnership opportunities for the organisation.”



Midlands Arts Papers is an online journal, led by the University of Birmingham in partnership with 13 public museums and galleries from West and East Midlands. MAP publishes new research on the outstanding works of art and design held in public collections across the region. They recruited an Editorial Assistant to support the 4th annual issue, scoping objects to reflect the theme, clearing image permissions, writing blog content and social media promotion; and a Researcher (Art and the Commonwealth Games), curating art trails at museums in the region by identifying and researching 10 relevant objects in each collection, then writing the art trails for publication in 2022.

“The student did a great job, and really made a contribution to our work. It was also a useful opportunity to reflect on and revise our training.”



The Book Shelf specialises in non-fiction publishing and provides a range of services - including: coaching, critique, editing, design, and marketing - to empower and upskill authors to prepare for self-publishing. They took on two students as Publishing Assistant, supporting aspiring authors in preparing for publication, research, and product development; and social media and Marketing Assistant, creating and scheduling multi-platform content and campaigns, growing the company's social media presence and engagement.

“The placements were fantastic and definitely exceeded my expectations. For small employers like us, having students on placement offers the opportunity to gain new and fresh ideas in the business and to gain support in so many different areas from young people who are driven, enthusiastic, and full of initiative to help your business succeed.”



HarperCollins Publishers is the second largest consumer book publisher in the world with publishing operations in 17 countries. Their Reference and Education division is based in Glasgow and they recruited two remote Publishing Assistants to work within the Languages team, supporting the development of their online dictionaries.

“[our student] integrated into the Languages Team very quickly and contributed effectively in team meetings. She produced a professional and well-researched presentation to the team, showing initiative in her interpretation of the brief she was given.”

PSM Placements in the Non-Profit sector



Birmingham Race Impact Group is a consortium of activists, academics and amateurs, campaigning and lobbying to promote racial justice and equality in Birmingham. One of their two PSM students was tasked with researching primary sources of the City's history surrounding race across several decades. The research culminated in a detailed report and comprehensive timeline of events.

"This is a fantastic document that will certainly be of real use to researchers in the coming years. [Our student] became a valued part of the BRIG team and did a fantastic job responding to briefs as her placement progressed."



Centre for the New Midlands

Centre for the New Midlands is an independent, apolitical think tank focused on the development and dissemination of new ideas to enrich the lives of the region's citizens. The Centre recruited five students, working in teams across two roles: Marketing Consultant, researching current best practice in the think tank community and compiling a report with their recommendations; and Audience Consultant, researching approaches to enhancing engagement with the under-30 demographic and reporting on their strategic recommendations.

"I have really enjoyed working with all 5 of the students. [The Audience team] consistently demonstrated enthusiasm to enhance their knowledge and deliver an outstanding end presentation to our panel. [The Marketing team] presented some fairly quick wins as well as some broader long-term enhancements."

Bearwood Community Hub

Bearwood Community Hub is a non-profit community-led organisation fostering collaboration and social action to improve lives, livelihoods, and the local urban environment. PSM students supported the work of the Hub by creating a social media strategy; developing web content; report writing; practical and marketing support for setting up and promoting the co-working space, creating an online booking system, and hosting visitors.

"The students brought us different perspectives: they might not have had prior experience in what we were asking them to do, but we found this to be a healthy and fresh way to look at what we do."

UK Vision 2030

UK Vision 2030 is a faith-based community project which began in August 2020 with the aim of understanding the drivers of racial inequality across eight 'spheres' and creating a vision for reversing these trends. They recruited two Project Officers whose roles involved analysing the outcomes of focus groups and interviews with leaders from across the Black community; supporting recruitment to the organisation and developing a campaign for the launch of the report, 'UK Vision 2030: A Call to Action'.

"[our students] showed excellent research skills and creativity in thinking about the launch for the UK Vision report, presenting recommendations to the leadership team with confidence."