

Career Development Opportunities

What is a placement and what does it involve?

Placements are becoming an increasingly necessary feature on any CV. Employers are able to see that you have previous experience within a creative agency and you're able to 'practice' your skills within a work environment before taking on the real thing. Placements give you the chance to explore and develop your interests and skills across a range of disciplines and media.

Placements are a great way of getting stuck into all aspects of working at a creative agency. Tasks can include anything from making tea to bringing in new business, stuffing envelopes to managing small design projects.

Most organisations will supply an intern with a range of admin tasks, as well as minimal design roles. You should be prepared to tackle the more mundane, day-to-day duties with as much effort and enthusiasm as any design work you are given, as this will show you as the kind of team player every company wants to work with.

Be proactive! Always ask if you can help with anything if you find yourself with nothing to do, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

An agency can't always guarantee a job at the end of the placement but be sure to make the most of the opportunity to meet useful contacts for the future.

What about pay?

Most agencies won't pay you formally but they will offer to cover travel and other expenses.

How and where do I find placement opportunities?

The following websites present a broad range of creative opportunities including placements and internships:

University of Arts

www.arts.ac.uk/student/careers/creative-opportunities.htm

YCN

www.ycnonline.com/opportunities

Thoughts on placements

When approaching an agency to enquire about placement opportunities, it's a good idea to first send an email or letter (although never a generic one as this is too impersonal) and then to follow up with a friendly phone call. Find out a contact's name and approach them directly. Don't bombard an agency with calls and e-mails if you don't hear anything. Just wait patiently and then try again. Read up on the agency and their recent work on their website so you appear informed and interested if you do get an interview or placement. Most agencies prefer to see an interestingly presented pdf of recent work (or a website), rather than just a CV.