

CS MEng Industrial Placement

(See syllabus <http://www.strath.ac.uk/cis/localteaching/localug/cs406/> for more details)

Background

You need to spend *approximately* 3 months on placement this (or next¹, or both) summer.

The nature of the placement not specifically defined but should be closely related to your degree and be involved in software development in some way – ask me if you're unsure.

It's a highly beneficial opportunity (gain experience, perspective on discipline, context, payment, employment prospects etc.)

What it involves will depend on the organisation – they won't make you do anything you can't! All employees tend to look after placement students carefully and mentor them closely.

Assessed by short presentation to staff and other students (syllabus contains details about content, marking scheme etc.).

While on placement, keep in touch with department (me) – we may visit, but contact is more likely to take the form of a few emails (but let us know immediately if anything goes wrong!).

How to get a placement

You need to find your own placement. The Department will help in whatever way it can and keep you informed of any opportunities, but ultimately it is up to you to find a placement.

As a starting point you can take a look at the list of companies that have offered placements in the past (linked from my homepage)

Form of application depends on the company. Some have online application forms, others use the standard application form (available from www.prospects.ac.uk under the section: Jobs and Work -> Applications and Interviews), some require a CV and a covering letter.

Application time is any time from now until Easter. Again this is highly dependent upon organisations. Some look for students very early, others may not start looking until spring. Do not leave it late. You need to actively, and enthusiastically, start looking.

Tips:-

- **Apply early and apply often.**
 - Don't hedge your bets on getting a placement with one company or get disheartened by your first rejection and put it off until the Spring. Be persistent. The more applications you put in, the better your chances. The more interviews you attend the better you get at them.
- **Don't be too picky!**
 - There are a huge number of companies out there in different domains doing all kinds of software development using a vast range of technologies. You don't need to be developing Java in a software house. Any relevant experience is valuable and also gives you the chance to broaden your skills base.
- **Be prepared to move.**
 - You'll stand more chance of finding something if you are prepared to look outwith the local area. And there are no geographical restrictions on where you can do your placement.
- **Use the careers office.**
 - They provide a very good service and are in the same building. There's no excuse!

What to do now

¹ Preferably this. Better sooner than later, and takes the pressure off finding one next year when life gets tougher.

- If you've not already, **start looking!** Watch out for emails and talk to the careers office.
- Again, if you have not done so already, **write your CV** and fill in a standard application form. **These take time!** The careers office provides support for this (checking service).
- Make sure you are committed to the placement before applying to any organisations. And if you are invited for an interview then turn up (or at least inform the employer that you will not be coming).
- Finally, **please keep me informed of how you are doing** – if you accept the offer of a placement – please let me know (along with the details of who it is with etc.).

Marc Roper

October 2009