

**SEPnet Summer Placements  
Handbook for Employers/Placement Hosts  
and Students**

**March 2019**

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## General Information

### Background

SEPnet (South East Physics Network) is a consortium of university physics departments including Hertfordshire, Kent, London (Queen Mary, Royal Holloway), Portsmouth, Reading, Southampton, Surrey, Sussex and Open University. SEPnet was set up to raise the profile of physics in the South East of England and is part-funded by HEFCE.

The SEPnet Summer Placement Scheme was launched in 2009 to provide physics students with the opportunity to spend 8 weeks in industry or research in order to:

- raise awareness of career opportunities
- develop students' employability skills
- demonstrate to employers the benefits of recruiting physics graduates.

### Which students are eligible?

SEPnet placements are open to physics undergraduates in Yr 2 and to Yr 3 MPhys/MSci students studying physics within the SEPnet consortium. Year 1 students may be eligible with permission of the Head of Physics at their university. Students in their final undergraduate year are not eligible. **NB: YOU CAN ONLY CARRY OUT ONE SEPNET SUMMER PLACEMENT PER YEAR.**

SEPnet physics PhD students who have submitted their thesis and those commencing a PhD in 2019 at a SEPnet partner university are also eligible to apply for employer-funded placements.

### Which organisations is the scheme aimed at?

The scheme is open to any organisations interested in recruiting physics graduates, or able to offer valuable business experience, including large companies, research institutions, charities, government organisations, NGOs, SMEs and start-ups.

### Benefits to employers/Placement hosts

These include:

- early access to bright, numerate students with excellent problem-solving and IT skills who may be potential future employees
- help with projects you may not normally have time for
- an additional resource, adding value to the business and offering a fresh perspective on business challenges
- all advertising, administration and placement support is handled by SEPnet to create a smooth, straightforward process
- a dedicated team of SEPnet Employer Engagement Officers (EEOs) helps source and promote opportunities and support students and employers through the application process.

Examples of the types of projects students have delivered can be viewed [here](#).

### How are projects selected?

Organisations are invited to submit projects suitable for a research or industrial placement. Typical projects might include data analysis, mathematic modelling, programming, website development, product design and testing or science communication.

Projects are selected based on academic merit and the potential for students to gain commercial awareness and employability skills such as communication and teamwork. Projects which meet our criteria and are fully- or match-funded by employers/placement hosts will have priority.

### **When and where do placements take place?**

The SEPnet placement should take place from June to September in the summer holidays (dates vary by institution) for a total of eight weeks which may be non-consecutive if required. Students should work no more than a 35-hour week - start and finish dates to be mutually agreed by host and student.

Placements must be conducted at a partner university OR at the workplace of an approved industrial host.

### **Can placements be extended beyond 8 weeks?**

Organisations can extend placements by agreement between employer/host and student provided that the employer/host is able to fund the extended period at the same rate.

### **How are placements funded?**

Successful students are paid a minimum of £2,250 gross for a 35-hour 8-week period to help with travel and accommodation costs. Some match-funding is provided by SEPnet university partners, in particular for SMEs. However, organisations are encouraged to fund placements where possible to help maintain the scheme and increase the number of placements offered.

Projects funded by organisations will be advertised to eligible physics students including (by request) physics PhD students who have submitted their thesis and those commencing a PhD in 2019. If an organisation submits two approved projects, SEPnet will fund the 2<sup>nd</sup> placement. Placements which are match-funded will only be advertised to students at universities which are able to provide match-funding.

### **How are students paid?**

Organisations are normally expected to employ the student for the placement period so they are protected under the employer's insurance and health and safety policies. Students should note that income tax and national insurance contributions may be deducted from their payment. Tax and NI contributions will vary based on the student's circumstances (student loan, other part-time work etc). If it is not possible to employ a student other working arrangements may be possible on a case by case basis.

### **University research placements**

Each SEPnet partner who contributes funding to the scheme can submit a research project to be carried out by a student of another SEPnet partner. The student's university will fund the placement.

### **Accommodation for students on placement**

Students are advised to consider placements near to their university or home where possible. However, many students also find rented accommodation for the placement period. Students who need to rent accommodation should ask their placement host for advice on where to find accommodation or try websites such as [www.unihomeswap.co.uk](http://www.unihomeswap.co.uk) or [www.spareroom.co.uk](http://www.spareroom.co.uk)

### **SEPnet Student Project Posters**

Students are required to produce a poster during their placement about their project to display in their department and at their host organisation and present at the annual Students' Expo. The poster should be completed by the student during the placement and financially supported by the host eg provision of materials, printing or related costs. There is a contingency plan for commercially sensitive or classified work.

### **Annual Students' Expo**

The Students' Expo, is a valuable networking event held annually in November in London. It provides an opportunity to celebrate the students' achievements and enables them to showcase their work through 1-minute presentations and a poster session.

Students are required to attend the event and employers/placement hosts are also expected to attend to support their student.

## **For Employers/Placement Hosts**

### **Registering a project**

- Projects should be submitted online by the deadline via a link on the relevant webpage [here](#) or
- via email by completing a Word registration form.
- Projects are selected by the SEPnet panel to ensure they meet the stipulated criteria and based on funding available.
- The projects are advertised regularly to students by SEPnet EEOs, via email and departmental communications.

### **Dealing with applications and selecting a student**

- Students have a month to apply for placements and are asked to apply direct to organisations by sending a CV and covering letter to the named contact. **(Please note that some applications may be sent in batches by the SEPnet EEO.)**
- Employers/hosts can start shortlisting at any time during the application timeframe but **should not make offers until the application timeframe has closed** as many students apply near to the application deadline.
- The selection process is at the discretion of the employer/host. However, a face to face or telephone interview is strongly recommended.
- If the student is required to travel to interview, employers/hosts are requested to reimburse the student's travel.

### **If a suitable match is not found**

- Placements that are not filled within the application timeframe will be re-advertised in April and May until all placements are filled.

### **Employer/Placement host feedback on applications**

- Employers/hosts will be asked for feedback on the number of applications received and to **complete a tracking form** so that we can gather feedback on students' applications and performance at interview.
- Information will be collated to share with students applying for future placements and jobs. However, details about individual students will be held confidentially.

### **Confirmation of the placement and payment to the student**

- Once a student is selected, **the employer/host must notify SEPnet, the successful and the unsuccessful candidates.**
- The SEPnet EEO will send the student and employer/host confirmation of the placement terms and payment details.
- If the student is employed by the organisation, it is understood that payment is likely to be made direct to the student monthly in arrears via payroll. Students may therefore request an advance payment by agreement to help with eg accommodation costs.
- If the student is paid by the university, they should receive payment in full in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of their placement or in two stages. If the placement is match-funded, the employer/host may pay the student direct or request that the university pay the student and invoice the organisation.

### **Preparing for the placement**

Employers/hosts will be requested to provide the student with:

- an employment contract (if the student is to be employed by the organisation)
- suitable levels of supervision and management during the placement

- any necessary training eg Health and Safety
- completion of a Health & Safety checklist
- assessment of any risks to which students are exposed to at work and introduce and maintain appropriate measures to eliminate or control the risks
- any relevant reading materials in advance of the placement
- details of whom to report to on their first day and at what time.

### **During the placement**

- A SEPnet EEO will provide on-going support for the supervisor and student, including a placement visit.
- The aim of the visit is to find out how the placement is going, to address any problems and provide support and guidance for the production of the student's project poster to be presented at the SEPnet Students' Expo.

## **For Students**

### **Applying for a placement**

- SEPnet EEOs will send a PDF list of projects and details for how to apply at the beginning of March.
- You need to **register online** via the link on this page [here](#) **and send a copy of your CV to your EEO.**
- **CVs and covering letters should be checked** by a Careers Adviser or EEO and tailored to each project applied for.
- You should email CVs and covering emails direct to the organisation contact (unless advised otherwise by your EEO).
- You are advised to **apply early** rather than wait for the deadline as this will demonstrate enthusiasm and good organisational skills.
- You should **apply for more than one placement** to increase the chance of being successful and apply for the other placement schemes as well.

### **Securing a placement**

- Organisations should let students know if applications or interviews have been successful. If you do not hear back, it is reasonable to follow up after a couple of weeks to find out if you have been successful.
- If you are offered a placement but have further interviews lined up, you should let the placement host know this and agree a date when you will get back to them.
- **If you are offered more than one placement**, you should make a decision quickly and keep all parties informed.
- If you are not offered any interviews ask the employer/host or your EEO for advice and feedback on your applications/CV and keep applying. Some placements are advertised at a later date.

### **During the placement**

- Be punctual and dress appropriately (ask if you're not sure of the dress code).
- Be professional at all times.
- Your EEO will visit you during your placement to speak to you and your supervisor to find out how the placement is going.
- Let your EEO or a member of staff know **if you have any problems** (don't wait until the visit to raise any concerns).

### **Producing a project poster**

- As part of the placement process, **students are required to produce a poster** detailing your work over the summer.
- Posters can contain scientific content or be a reflective piece of work about what you have learned on your placement.
- Producing a placement poster:

- helps to consolidate the work you have done during the placement
- enables you to reflect on the skills/knowledge you have gained
- develops your science communication skills
- can be used as evidence of your achievement for future employers.
- We will send you an example and you can view posters in your department
- Posters should be:
  - portrait A1, 60 x 80cm
  - contain the logos of your host, your home university and SEPnet. SEPnet logo is available [here](#)
- **Start preparing your poster early** in the placement and aim to complete it during the placement.
- You should **produce 2 hard copies** – one for your employer/host and one to bring to the Expo for your own use or to be displayed later in your department.
- **Ask your employer/host to pay** for 2 copies to be made.

### Preparing for the Expo

- You will be asked to present your poster at the Annual Students' Expo in London and to register for this nearer the time.
- You will also be asked to prepare a 1-minute presentation to encourage delegates to visit your poster in the exhibition. This will help develop your presentation skills and confidence.
- Your presentation should:
  - describe the aim of your project and how it fits within the wider objectives of the organisation/department
  - describe what you have learnt from the placement experience
  - should **NOT** be a PowerPoint presentation.
- You should prepare and practise your presentation beforehand
- If we have too many presentations during the day, students may be offered the opportunity to produce a video blog (vlog).

See Appendix F – Guidelines for Posters and Presentations for more details.

## SEPnet Summer Placement Timeline 2019

**Friday 8 February** Placement projects to be submitted.

**Friday 22 February** Employers are informed as to whether projects have been accepted by the SEPnet board and will need to confirm that appropriate liability insurance and H&S policies and procedure are in place.

**Wednesday 27 February** Projects are advertised by SEPnet EEOs to students via email. Students apply direct to employers/placement hosts.

**Mid-March** Employers provide feedback on applications and start shortlisting.

**Friday 29 March (midnight)** Closing date for applications.

### 1 – 26 April

Employers/hosts select and interview candidates. Unfilled placements are re-advertised.

### Friday 26 April

Deadline for positions to be filled. Employers inform SEPnet and the successful candidate and let other candidates know they have been unsuccessful.

### Friday 10 May

All placements are filled.

## **June - September**

Students carry out placements. Students prepare posters for Students' Expo. Placement visits with students and supervisors take place.

## **Wednesday 27 November**

Students and supervisors attend SEPnet Students' Expo in London.

## **Placement process and responsibilities of each party – a checklist**

### **SEPnet responsibilities:**

1. Administration services and support with the application/selection procedure.
2. Internal advertisement of placements.
3. Match-funding for placements where employers have agreed to offer a 2nd placement or are unable to fully-fund a placement.
4. A visit to the host site by a SEPnet representative during the placement to discuss the student's performance and welfare.
5. Support for the employer and student during the placement.
6. Organisation of the SEPnet Students' Expo.
7. Feedback forms.
8. Analysis of feedback.

### **Host employer responsibilities:**

1. A placement that meets the SEPnet criteria.
2. Completion of relevant forms.
3. A selection/interview process for applicants.
4. Feedback on applications and applicants.
5. Confirmation of the selected student
6. Feedback on, and to, unsuccessful applicants.
7. Employment of student, payment of the minimum wage, provision of employment contract, employer liability insurance and H&S compliance.
8. Adequate supervision/training.
9. Suitable support to conduct a placement (desk space, computer, lab facilities, materials, reasonable adjustments where necessary).
10. Informal review of the student upon completion.
11. CV references for the student.
12. Support for the student and production of the final project poster to be completed during the placement.
13. Participation and attendance at the SEPnet Students' Expo in November in London.
14. Completion of the feedback form.

### **Student responsibilities:**

1. Attendance and transport to/from the interview with the host as required.
2. Completed application forms.
3. Completion of IPR, security clearance and health & safety documentation as required by the host.
4. Payment of tax and national insurance contributions if employed by the placement organisation.
5. In case of sickness, or if requesting absence for other reasons, students should check their employer's policy and contact their SEPnet Employer Engagement Officer.
6. To dress in appropriate clothing for the office environment (if unsure please ask the placement supervisor).
7. A commitment to share any issues or concerns with the host supervisor or SEPnet contact.
8. Completion of the final project poster.
9. Participation in a placement site visit by the host and SEPnet contact.
10. Participation and attendance at the SEPnet Students' Expo on 27 November in London.
11. Completion of a feedback form.



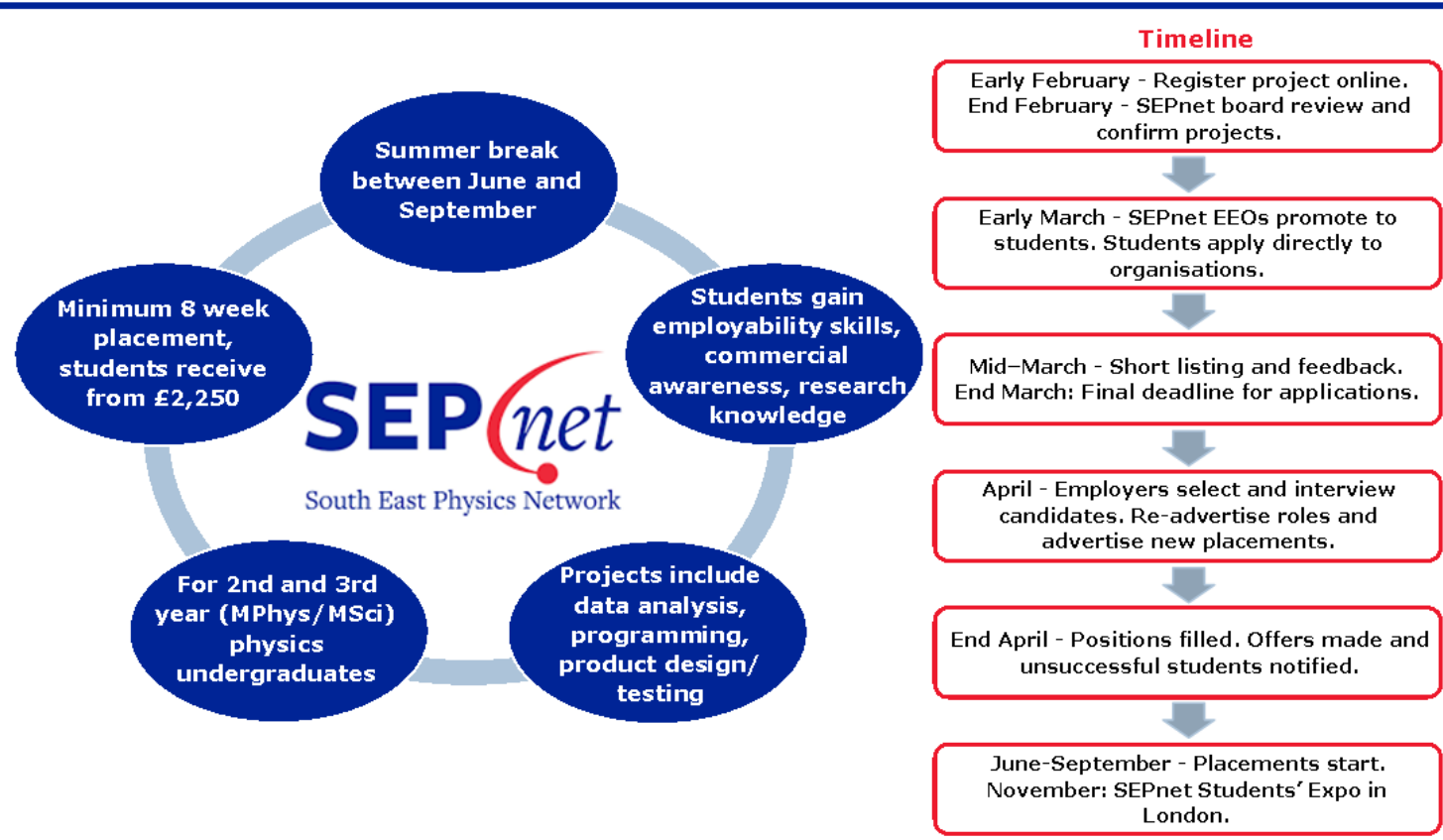
## Appendix A – SEPnet Summer Placement Timeline 2019 Quick Guide

### SEPnet Summer Placement Scheme

WANT TO KNOW MORE? GO TO: [WWW.SEPNET.AC.UK](http://WWW.SEPNET.AC.UK)

EMAIL: [SUMMERPLACEMENTS@SEPNET.AC.UK](mailto:SUMMERPLACEMENTS@SEPNET.AC.UK)

Access some of the brightest young minds in the physics sector through the SEPnet Summer Placement Scheme. Add value to your organisation with the support of the SEPnet team and dedicated Employer Engagement Officers.



## Appendix B – Health and Safety Checklist

### SEPnet Summer Placement Host Organisation Health & Safety Checklist

Name of host organisation:	
What insurance does your organisation have which covers interns/employees? (e.g. Employers/Public Liability) Please Note- You do not need to email this to us.	
Does your organisation have an Intern Policy/ Agreement?	Yes/No
Does your organisation have an Equal Opportunities/Diversity Policy?	Yes/No
Does your organisation have a Health & Safety Policy?	Yes/No
Is your organisation registered with the H&S Executive?	Yes/No
Do you have a formal procedure for reporting accidents and incidents in accordance with RIDDOR?	Yes/No
Will the placement student be expected to work in high risk environments/circumstances?	Yes/No (if yes, please clarify what procedures and documents such as risk assessments, safety certificates, policies are in place)
Will your organisation provide the student with safety training relevant to their line of work?	Yes/No/Not applicable (if yes, please describe the nature of training that the student will be undertaking)
Do you require students to be CRB checked?	Yes*/No *If yes, this will be the organisation's responsibility to carry out these checks. If this is not possible, please contact the SEPnet Employer Engagement Officer.
Mentor/Supervisor Name and contact details (if different from main contact)	

Name of person completing this checklist on behalf of the host organisation:

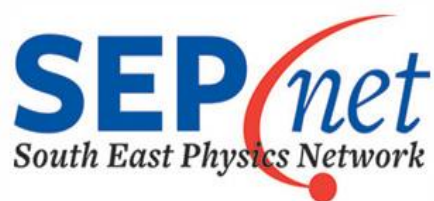
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please scan and send the completed checklist to your SEPnet Employer Engagement Officer**

## Appendix C – SEPnet Placement Agreement



Working together to promote excellence in Physics

Date

Dear SEPnet Supervisor and SEPnet Student

Please find below details of your SEPnet placement and important information about the terms of the placement, the project requirements and the Students' Expo. Please check this information on both sides of this document carefully and let me know of any amendments by (date tbc).

**Host Organisation:**

**Supervisor:**

**Student:**

**University:**

**Placement start date:**

Payment of at least £2,250 (or minimum wage if this is greater) to be made as follows  
(Employer Engagement Officer to delete those which do not apply):

- directly to the student by their employer in stages by agreement with their employer
- directly to the student by their host university in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of their placement
- half to be paid directly by the employer in stages and half to be paid directly to the student in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of their placement
- Other arrangement (please specify)

**Please read the terms and conditions overleaf.**

Name of EEO  
Contact details

## Terms and Conditions

### Health, Safety and Insurance

Students on work experience placements should be treated as employees of the host company for insurance purposes.

*Health and Safety Executive:* <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/liability.htm>.

Students on work experience should be treated as employees of the host company for Health and Safety purposes. This requires employers to undertake a risk assessment and comply with the Working Time Directive.

*Health and Safety Executive:*

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm>

### Equality and Diversity

Placement conditions must be compliant with the Equality Act (2010), ensuring equality of opportunity to all.

*The Home Office:* <http://homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/>

### Final project

All students must complete a final project with the help and guidance of their host company. The final project will consist of:

- **A poster** (dimensions 60 x 80 cm portrait orientation) with student's university logo, host logo, and SEPnet logo. Two copies are required – one for the host, one for the university/student. Hosts are requested to arrange and cover costs of poster printing.

No confidential information need be displayed.

### PLUS

- **A one-minute presentation** inviting attendees to view the poster (no PowerPoint slides).
  - o The poster should demonstrate what the student has learned on the placement. This could be:
    - scientific results or method
    - descriptive reflection on their placement and what they have learned

### OR

- **A two-minute video blog (vlog)** if student numbers are too high for everyone to deliver a presentation.

Posters will be displayed and presentations delivered at the SEPnet Students' Expo will take place **in November in London**.

The purpose of this event is to ensure that the student has an opportunity to reflect on their learning from their work placement by presenting to an audience. The audience will include other placement students and employer hosts, academics and other visitors.

**All placement students and host supervisors are requested to attend this event.**

**Appendix D – Tracking Form**

**SEPnet Student Tracking - Confidential between host and SEPnet**

<b>Name</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Comment on strengths/weaknesses of CV/Cover letter</b>	<b>Invited to Interview? (Y/N)</b>	<b>Comment on interview technique/performance</b>	<b>Notes</b> (General strengths or areas for improvement)

## Appendix E – Employer Questionnaire

### SEPnet Summer Placements – Employer Questionnaire

Name of organisation

Supervisor name

Student name

Working relationship to student

General nature of placement (ie, IT, experimental)

Number of applicants (checking tracking document/spread sheet)

#### Brief

The aim of this meeting is to:

- find out how your student has settled in and is getting on in with the project and preparation of their poster
- find out how you are getting on with the student and gather your feedback on the scheme
- explore opportunities for future placements for undergraduate and postgraduate students
- explore opportunities for knowledge exchange or other joint university collaborations

The meeting should take approximately 45 minutes

Your comments will be treated confidentially. Anonymous feedback will be collated and used to produce our annual placement survey.

#### Recruiting a Student

1. Generally, how satisfied were you with the process? (5 is very satisfied, 1 is not satisfied at all)

1      2      3      4      5

2. Any comments or suggestions for improvements to the recruitment process? (We are keen to identify ways to improve employability of our undergraduates)

3. Does the student have a good knowledge of physics? (5 is very good, 1 is poor)

1      2      3      4      5

4. Comments on areas of improvement

#### Student Skills

5. How would you rate the student's following skills? Please highlight. (5 is very good, 1 is poor)

Software

1      2      3      4      5

Communication

1      2      3      4      5

Teamwork

1      2      3      4      5

Practical/lab

1      2      3      4      5

6. Ability to improve – are you seeing/have you seen improvements in the student's performance and/or skills during the placement?

7. What do you think the student has learned while on the placement?

#### Your time

8. How much time do you spend supervising the student each week?

9. What are the main reasons you host a student? (Highlight as many answers as appropriate)

- It helps with graduate recruitment
- Students carry out less business-critical projects that permanent staff have not got time for
- Students can carry out business-critical work at a busy time
- It allows more junior staff to develop managerial skills
- We (the organisation) like to have links with universities for other reasons
- I enjoy working with young people and mentoring
- Other (please specify)

10. Would you be interested in hosting a student next year?

**SEPnet**

13. What do you think the strengths of the SEPnet Summer Scheme are?

14. What do you think the weaknesses of the SEPnet Summer scheme are?

15. Would you/your organisation host a SEPnet student if you had to pay their wage?

16. If you answered no to question 15, would a small grant or contribution from the University (eg £500) change this?

17. Would you host PhD students?

18. Are you interested in Knowledge Exchange or other Employer Engagement opportunities?

19. Can you take a photo of the student at work for use in a case study?

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!**

## Appendix F – Student Questionnaire

### SEPnet Summer Placements - Student Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ University: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Host organisation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
What's the general nature of the work? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Brief

The aim of this meeting is to:

- find out how you have settled in and is getting on in with the project and preparation of their poster
- find out how you are getting on with the student and gather your feedback on the scheme
- explore opportunities for future placements for undergraduate and postgraduate students
- explore opportunities for knowledge exchange or other joint university collaborations

The meeting should take approximately 45 minutes. Your comments will be treated confidentially. Anonymous feedback will be collated and used to produce our annual placement survey.

#### Questions

1. How many placements did you apply for?
2. What attracted you to this placement?
3. What criteria did you use when selecting placements
4. Roughly how long does your supervisor spend with you per week?
5. Is that enough time?
6. Have you been assigned a buddy or a mentor?
7. What elements of what you have learned in your Physics degree have you used in your placement?
8. What have you needed to learn 'on the job'?
9. What software have you used in your placement?
10. Have you used it before? If not, has it been easy to learn?
11. What other skills have you developed? For example:
  - Communication
  - Teamwork
  - Practical/lab
  - Problem Solving
  - Self-management
12. Can you rate your experience so far in general (1 is v bad, 5 is v good)
13. Where are you living?
14. Was accommodation a problem? How did you arrange this?
15. How long do you spend commuting?
16. Which of these statements most apply to the bursary?
  - After travel and accommodation there will be a bit of money left over
  - After travel and accommodation there will be no money left over
17. Can we contact you for a case study and future projects and possibly for promoting the 2013 scheme?
18. How has this placement influenced your career plans?
19. Have you visited your careers service? If not, why not?

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!**



## Appendix G – Guidelines for Posters and Presentations

### GUIDELINES FOR POSTERS AND PRESENTATIONS

#### PROGRAMME

The purpose of the SEPnet Students' Expo is to celebrate the success you have enjoyed in your summer placement and for you to present the results of your work to your peers, academic leaders, employers and other members of the physics community. You can also re-connect with your supervisor and meet students from other SEPnet universities who have also been on a summer placement. You will have the opportunity to hear some high-profile speakers in one of the illustrious venues in London.

All participants will have to register attendance in advance through the Eventbrite website. You will be emailed details in due course. There will be a programme of talks and poster sessions for students, employer supervisors and academics as well as employer stands.

#### POSTERS

- As part of the SEPnet placement agreement, students are required to produce a poster detailing your work over the summer
- You should work on this poster during your placement and **produce 2 copies**, one for your employer and one to bring to the Expo and give to your department for display
- Your employer has been asked to help pay for the cost of printing the posters
- Posters should be:
  - portrait A1, 60 x 80cm
  - contain the logos of your host, your home university and SEPnet
- Posters will be displayed in the poster exhibition area at the venue
- They can contain scientific content or be a reflective piece of work about what you have learned on your placement
- This should be your own work and you should check it with your host prior to printing
- We will provide an example and you should also be able to find examples from previous students in your academic departments
- There will be prizes for the best posters
- You should email an electronic copy of your poster to your SEPnet Employer Engagement Officer **one month before the Expo** or as indicated by your EEO and **bring a hard copy** of your poster to the Expo.

#### PRESENTATIONS

- You will also be required to prepare a one-minute presentation to encourage delegates to visit your poster in the exhibition.
- You should, ideally:
  - describe the aim of your project and how it fits within the wider objectives of the organisation/department
  - describe what you have learnt from the experience
  - This should **NOT** be a PowerPoint presentation.

#### GETTING THERE

Coaches may be provided depending on student numbers. Alternatively students will be required to make their own way to the venue but can claim the rail fare/mileage from their university. Full details will be provided nearer the time.