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Work Based Learning in the Biosciences

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Work based learning and placements in the Biosciences at UWS

During the 2007-8 session the Biosciences at UWS revised all the degree programmes to accommodate a move from 15 to 20 point modules and an integration between Hamilton and Paisley campuses.

Of the 4 Biosciences programmes, 3 (Applied Biomedical Science, Health & Lifestyle, & Applied Bioscience) were designed to include an academically validated work based learning component to help students focus on employability issues.

The Applied Biomedical Science work based learning modules were developed in conjunction with NHS Scotland and through collaboration with Glasgow Caledonian University and managers of hospital laboratories. This 15 week placement level 3 was designed so that the student could complete an IMS portfolio and thus register with the HPC as a Biomedical Scientist upon successful graduation.

For the Applied Biomedical Science and Health & Lifestyle programmes, 2 work based learning modules were developed to support and further enhance practical experience: a 4 day per week placement (40 point module) and a 1 day per week placement (20-point module).

21st CENTURY STUDENT
APPLIED BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

Hi there, my name is Magdalena.

I spent 15 weeks on a placement in the haematology lab at Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow. Work based learning gave me the chance to sample what life would be like working on an NHS laboratory. I learnt a variety of practical skills and completed an IMS portfolio.

Work based learning allowed me to gain a competitive advantage over other job applicants, as I had proof of my work experience and competency.

I also used it network with professional work experience (for my CV).

My placement was great as it allowed me to gain work references, build confidence in practical skills and have fun.

I am now working in the SNBTS in Edinburgh. The work based learning helped me get the first job for which I attended an interview.

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APPLIED BIOSCIENCE (ENVIRONMENTAL/BIOTECHNOLOGY)

I think that creativity and computing skills are two important things sought after nowadays and my placement really allowed me to improve them.

Although, for me, a working experience in United Kingdom is a real asset on a CV. It opens many doors in the world of work in France”

Constance.

Graduates of the 21st Century Project

Production of a work based learning guide by students: the team leaders who worked on the various placement modules obtained funding to support 4 students to produce a guide that would:

- Encourage fellow students to take a work based learning module
- Promote UWS Bioscience degrees as opportunities for work experience

Four students who had recently been on placement were recruited to produce the guide. They were given a remit and supported through 3 workshop sessions to generate the ideas and messages that they wanted to convey. The last workshop was used to consider how these messages may be best conveyed. Students submitted PowerPoint presentations and had access to an online learning facility (Blackboard) to exchange and develop ideas.

The 4 separate contributions were then integrated and rationalised by the academic team and the final booklet generated through the University graphics department.

Some examples of key pages in the booklet are shown below.

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Applied Biosciences

My experience of work based learning was great.

I worked in a hospital lab but there are many other options for work in the Biosciences field.

Many of my fellow students went to other hospital labs, distillers, analytical testing labs, food safety testing, etc.

I did microbiology but there were people who did analytical chemistry (if you like that sort of thing), haematology, microbiology, virology, environmental testing and worked in the life science/biotechnology industry. One even had a placement in a forensic lab.

Sorry, folks the law will not allow you to.

Helena Dunsmore