# Placement FAQs 2021-22

**These FAQs are relevant to students on a sandwich year placement, or a short placement only. It does not apply to students whose course incorporates work-based learning throughout e.g. allied health professions or education.**

As the impact of Covid-19 across the UK and globally continues to evolve, we recognise that placement opportunities for students in 2021-22 will continue to present challenges, particularly as cases are likely to increase into the autumn and travel restrictions remain unpredictable.

This guidance has been produced with reference to the [QAA’s eight contingency planning principles for placement provision](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/contingency-planning-for-placement-provision.pdf?sfvrsn=8044cc81_12).

## I’m thinking about a placement, what are my options in 2021-22?

Not all options are open to everyone, and you should check with the placement team in your School. However, some or all of the following models are available:

1. Start the placement in autumn 2021 and complete the requisite hours/weeks as normal. If government guidance changes and your placement is curtailed, you may need to interrupt and return next year.
2. Progress to the final year to complete your degree without a sandwich year.
3. Interrupt your studies for 2021-22, return to take up a placement in autumn 2022 and progress to the final year in September 2023.

## When is the deadline to confirm my placement choice?

30 September 2021, unless your School advises it will accept a later confirmation (in limited circumstances only).

## What is the minimum duration for my placement?

For a placement starting autumn 2021, we expect in most cases that this will be completed in full. However, in emergencies we can apply a degree of flexibility. Your placement would need to be at least 60% of the usual duration in order to award credit, but your School team can tell you exactly how much this will be for your course, as this can vary. All placements must give sufficient opportunity for you to fulfil the learning outcomes. If you are undertaking a shorter placement, you are expected to engage in independent study or casual employment whilst you are not in the placement setting.

Where hours are used rather than weeks to calculate the commitment, a 35-hour working week is assumed.

## Does remote working count?

The University expects you to work in a supervised environment. However, remote working is a legitimate part of the professional experience across a wide range of employment sectors, and it is quite possible to supervise work remotely. If you are required to work partially or fully ‘off-site’, your School will check with you that you have received sufficient information from your employer to enable you to do this safely and individual arrangements will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If you’re working from home, your placement provider will be required to carry out the same risk assessments as they would for all their staff who are working remotely and you will be required to follow your employer’s protocols.

## How late can my placement start?

We want to be flexible and we recognise that it is still an uncertain time for a lot of companies, so there is some leeway. Your placement must be complete, graded and moderated by the relevant Course Assessment Board. In most cases, this means we expect your placement will begin before 01 November 2021. It may be possible to make an exception for a slightly later start, with 03 January 2022 being the last possible date under any circumstances. Please speak to the placements team in your School if you have been offered a start date after 01 November 2021.

## What is my student status during this year?

You will enrol on your placement year as normal, even if it starts late, and be charged placement year fees. See the [Student Finance information](https://www.hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees-and-finance/) on the website for further details.

## What would happen if I take up the offer of a later placement that is subsequently cancelled?

If you agree to take a later starting placement, you must accept the risk that if the placement cannot go ahead, you will have to change your plans. If possible, your School might be able to give you a ‘virtual placement’ e.g. a company report or piece of consultancy with modified assessment to ensure you can continue the sandwich year as planned. If not, we will allow you to interrupt your studies and return the following year. This might be to a new placement and continue with the sandwich route, or you might choose to complete your final year without a placement. This will be subject to availability and your personal circumstances. If you have an agreed start date but then need to interrupt due to circumstances beyond your control, we will refund your placement year tuition fee. We advise you to check the implications of interruption with Student Finance England. Our student finance team can also provide support and advice if you need it.

## If my placement starts later than the start of term, what do I do in the meantime?

We expect you to engage in independent study in the meantime or seek casual employment. Your School may ask you to do some preparatory work before your placement starts, for example a personal development plan and/or skills assessment with reflective commentary. If you are required to submit this work as part of your summative assessment (Placement report/Portfolio), your School will advise you of this.

If my placement finishes early, what do I do for the rest of the year?

As long as your placement meets the minimum requirements outlined above and your tutors are satisfied that you have met the learning outcomes, we expect you to engage in independent study in the meantime or seek casual employment.

If you haven’t had the opportunity to meet all the learning outcomes, you will either need to interrupt your studies (see FAQ above) or it may be possible for you to demonstrate the learning outcomes through an additional activity and assessment set by your school. The exact circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and it is not possible to guarantee in advance that you will be able to finish the sandwich year.

## What support is available for me?

Placement units in schools and the Careers and Employability Service (CES) are available to help students in the search for a placement. It’s difficult to anticipate the volume of opportunities that will become available, but the new levels of flexibility will appeal to existing and new placement partners.

Specific placement preparation advice and guidance should be provided by your school’s placement unit. In the first instance you should contact them for subject specific advice.

Additional and more general advice can be accessed from CES to support your preparation for placement. CES can help with:

* placement search and application
* CV and interview
* placement retractions
* understanding placement offers and placement conditions

## Where will I live whilst waiting for the placement to start?

You need to be aware that the student loan is significantly lower during placement year and you must budget for relocation / accommodation costs for the whole year. We hope that most students will be able to stay at their home address when not actively employed on placement and study/prepare from that base.

If you are concerned about your financial situation before or during the placement, you should contact the Student Finance Office. International students may also seek advice from the International Office.

## Is it possible to flip the final year and the placement year?

Unfortunately, this is not usually possible. However, it may be available to students who have already secured a placement and whose employers have specifically requested that they defer their placement for a year. It is only available where the placement provider has made a specific request to the University, and it cannot be requested by a student. If you are in any doubt, you should speak to your placements team.

## Can I still do a placement overseas?

The University has placed restrictions on international travel in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the advice of the UK government and the terms of the university’s insurance policy. At this time, if you are a UK student, you will not be able to [travel overseas](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) to take up a placement, including to any country on the government’s green list, as the situation is too uncertain at present and even the green list countries may become amber at any time. Any travel during this period will not be covered by the University’s emergency assistance travel insurance policy. Given the current risk levels and the fluctuating situation globally, we would also not normally permit you to travel under an alternative insurer’s policy at present.

If you are overseas, you should always follow all local laws and regulations but also take heed of FCO advice which may change during your placement.

## If I’m an international student currently in my home country, can I undertake a placement there next year?

Yes, you can, subject to your employer being able to assure us of an adequately Covid-secure working environment. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Your School will arrange a remote placement visit if travel restrictions on staff continue to prevent an onsite visit.

## What if companies offer part time placementsdue to social distancing and capacity issues in their premises?

Your placement should ideally be full time, but part time may be acceptable as long as the overall placement time is sufficiently long. So, a longer part time placement could be equal to a shorter full time one. If a proportion of your role involves remote working, this commitment is included in the overall hours. You should contact your placement team in School if you have any questions about part time opportunities.