

**Making the Most**

**of Your Internship**

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Congratulations on securing your new internship. This guide is to provide you with tips on how to prepare for your internship; how to succeed and make the most of your experience whilst on your internship; how to have a positive ending to your internship.

# Before your first day

In this section, we will look at all the standard preparatory activities that we would recommend when starting a conventional internship (i.e. one taking place in the workplace) and also some tips for preparing to work at home. This style of working is becoming increasingly popular and since the outbreak of COVID-19, many employees who have always undertaken their role in the workplace are now adapting to this new way of working. Even if your employer is planning on your internship being on site, it would be worth noting the points on working from home included in this guide, in case you ever need to work from home during your internship, or indeed in future roles! Where you see (WFH)in this document, this point is more relevant to working from home.

Get in touch**:**

Make contact with your supervisor at least two weeks ahead of starting the internship to confirm your start date and time and request any joining instructions, such as:

* Is there anything you should read before you start the internship?
* Is there any documentation or ID they require you to bring?

Right to Work:

You must provide evidence of Right to Work in the UK (e.g. passport or birth certificate) to the employer for whom you will be working. This is a requirement in law. You must do this by midday on your first day of work at the latest.

**Internship Agreement/Contract of Employment:**

You should have been issued with an Internship Agreement and/or a contract of employment signed by your employer detailing the terms and conditions of your internship as well as your job title, job description and working hours. It is important that you check your contract when you receive it to ensure that your personal details are correct and that you understand the contractual obligations between yourself and the employer before signing. If you have not received a contract before your start date, please ensure you ask about it on your first day.

Commercial awareness:

Check your job description (if one has been provided) so that you are clear on what you will be doing. It is also advisable to research the company and sector again to make sure you are up to date with industry news e.g. in [My Career Zone Digital Industry reports](https://mycareerzone.careercentre.me/resources/industryreports/) and can evidence your commercial awareness.

**Agree expectations:**

Whether you are in the workplace or working from home, agreeing clear expectations is vital in order to avoid misunderstandings and build trusted working relationships. Bearing this in mind, it may be useful to agree the following with your employer:

* Your availability.
* How you will stay in touch and who will organise this. (WFH)
* When work will be set and reviewed.
* How your performance will be measured and managed.
* Where your work will be stored and who has access to it.
* When you will be taking breaks and how you will communicate this with others. Maybe you could enter your working hours in your signature; add an ‘out of office’ message on your email; enter your working hours on a shared team calendar. (WFH)
* Who you should contact if you have any problems or circumstances have changed.

**Dressing appropriately:**

Find out the accepted dress code for the organisation. Do you have suitable clothing? As a basic guideline use the [information given for interviews.](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/pdfs/resources/whattowearatint.pdf)  Dress appropriately so you fit in with the office and give the required outward appearance. If you are unsure, you could always check with your company and double check before your first day.

**Create a Work Space (WFH):**

A dedicated workspace helps you to approach working from home in an organised and efficient manner. If your home does not have a separate home office, use a well-lit and ordinarily little-used space in your home that provides you with enough room for your equipment and resources, ideally away from your rest areas. As we sit down for so long during the day, you might like to consider creating a space to stand and work for part of the day, as long as it also follows [working safely with display screen equipment guidance.](https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/) [Reasonable adjustments](https://www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments) can be made for an employee who has a disability.

You may be sharing your home with your family or flatmates so a protected work space may not be easy to create. Some ideas you could use to aid your productivity include: using headphones; having a sign on your room door or laptop ‘please do not disturb until …’; building in regular breaks, perhaps to play with the children in the household or agreeing with others not to use domestic appliances during a certain time period

**Equipment and Technology (WFH):**

You will need to discuss what equipment and technology you need to work remotely with your employer before you begin your role. Employers usually provide you with this and the support you need to access the right systems e.g. shared inboxes and cloud file storage such as [MS One Drive](https://products.office.com/en-gb/onedrive/online-cloud-storage) or [Trello.](https://trello.com/) You will also need to ensure you can access the right communication platforms such as [Skype for Business](https://www.skype.com/en/business/); [Cisco Webex Meetings](https://www.cisco.com/c/en_uk/products/conferencing/webex-meetings/index.html); [Meeting Owl](https://www.owllabs.com/meeting-owl?utm_campaign=brand-uk&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=ppc&msclkid=1b5c07f8a3db1418ba905965dc492dca); [Google Hangouts Meet](https://gsuite.google.com/intl/en_uk/products/meet/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=emea-gb-all-en-dr-bkws-all-all-trial-e-t1-1008069&utm_content=text-ad-crnurturectrl-none-DEV_c-CRE_430903515059-ADGP_Hybrid%20%7C%20AW%20SEM%20%7C%20BKWS%20~%20EXA_M:1_GB_EN_Hangouts_Meet-KWID_43700052494145989-kwd-293231125089-userloc_9045340&utm_term=KW_google%20hangouts%20meet-g&ds_rl=1259922&gclid=CjwKCAjwkPX0BRBKEiwA7THxiEOLJ-sDw_IrCNH8S7pnuw9drqNbWVd9fAe2Dmxxd2fDmaev5QqXSRoC2yUQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds); [Zoom;](https://zoom.us/) [MS Teams](https://products.office.com/en-US/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software) and [GoToWebinar](https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-gb/webinar/lp/easy-webinars?cid=g2w_emea_ggs_cpc_brand_gotowebinar_e&gclid=CPHW-8jS8egCFY2BhQodfFQBNw).

Be prepared for technology not working. Does your broadband have sufficient bandwidth and does where you sit have good enough Wi-Fi strength? If you lose connection have a [What’s App Team group](https://www.whatsapp.com/) set up so you can still communicate and at least let your team know what is happening.

Some of this technology might be new to your employer and colleagues. If you are already familiar with it, perhaps you could support them with using it?

Health & Safety**:**

Employers and employees have a joint responsibility for their Health and Safety to ensure the risk of harm or damage is identified and reduced to an acceptable level or eliminated.

**Intern obligations:**

* Abide by all rules regarding Health and Safety requirements, and other policies and procedures of the Company.
* Complete a Risk Assessment of the Internship, if requested by the University.
* Notify the University and the Company in advance of any matter which is likely to affect them and the undertaking of the Internship including any special health or medical requirements.
* Take care of their own Health and Safety and that of their colleagues during the Internship.

**Employer obligations:**

* Accept responsibility for your health, safety and welfare and provide you with a Health and Safety briefing and any necessary training, a copy of any Health and Safety policy or guidance and any necessary protective clothing or equipment at the commencement of the Internship.
* Complete, with your assistance, where necessary and requested by the University, a Risk Assessment detailing any potential hazards to you and make all efforts to minimise and/or eliminate such hazards.
* Undertake, with you, [an Internship Induction Checklist](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/internshipsandmentoring/scp/Internship_Induction_Checklist.docx) detailing basic Health and Safety procedures.
* Notify University of any issues of a disciplinary, Health and Safety or other nature arising in respect to you and/or the Internship.

**University obligations:**

* Provide information on general Health and Safety issues prior to the Internship.
* Request, if deemed necessary, a Risk Assessment for the Internship; and assess the nature of the Internship in accordance with the outcome, detailing any improvements to minimise or eliminate potential risks during the Internship.
* Provide the Company with the [Internship Induction Checklist](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/internshipsandmentoring/scp/Internship_Induction_Checklist.docx), detailing basic Health and Safety requirements.

Your employer should go through Health and Safety issues which could include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Hazard awareness |  |
| Safety rules |  |
| Emergency procedures |  |
| Location of exits |  |
| Fire wardens’ names |  |
| Reporting of accidents, incidents and disease (RIDDOR) |  |
| Reporting of hazards |  |
| Manual handling procedures |  |
| Personal and workplace hygiene |  |
| Location of first aid box |  |
| Instruction on equipment you will be using |  |
| Break times |  |
| First Aid box and name and contact details of first aider |  |
| Personal protective equipment e.g. hi-visibility clothing |  |
| Training to do your job safely |  |
| Health checks if there is a danger of ill health because of your work |  |
| Reporting illness procedures |  |

Travel arrangements**:**

Do you know where you are going, how long it takes and the parking arrangements? If you are delayed, who should you contact? If possible, conduct a trial run of the route so that on your first day you will be confident in getting to work on time.

Working environment**:**

We recommend that you take the following on your first few days:

* Cash - make sure you have some on you in case you are invited for lunch or a coffee by your colleagues.
* Food - check and see if you can buy lunch locally or if you need to take lunch with you.

# On your first day

Points of contact**:**

You should know who to report to on the first day and who your main point of contact is. This is usually your line manager but it is also a good idea to find out who to contact if your line manager is unavailable. Some companies will offer a “mentor”.

On your first day there are a few tricks that should ensure a smooth transition into the team:

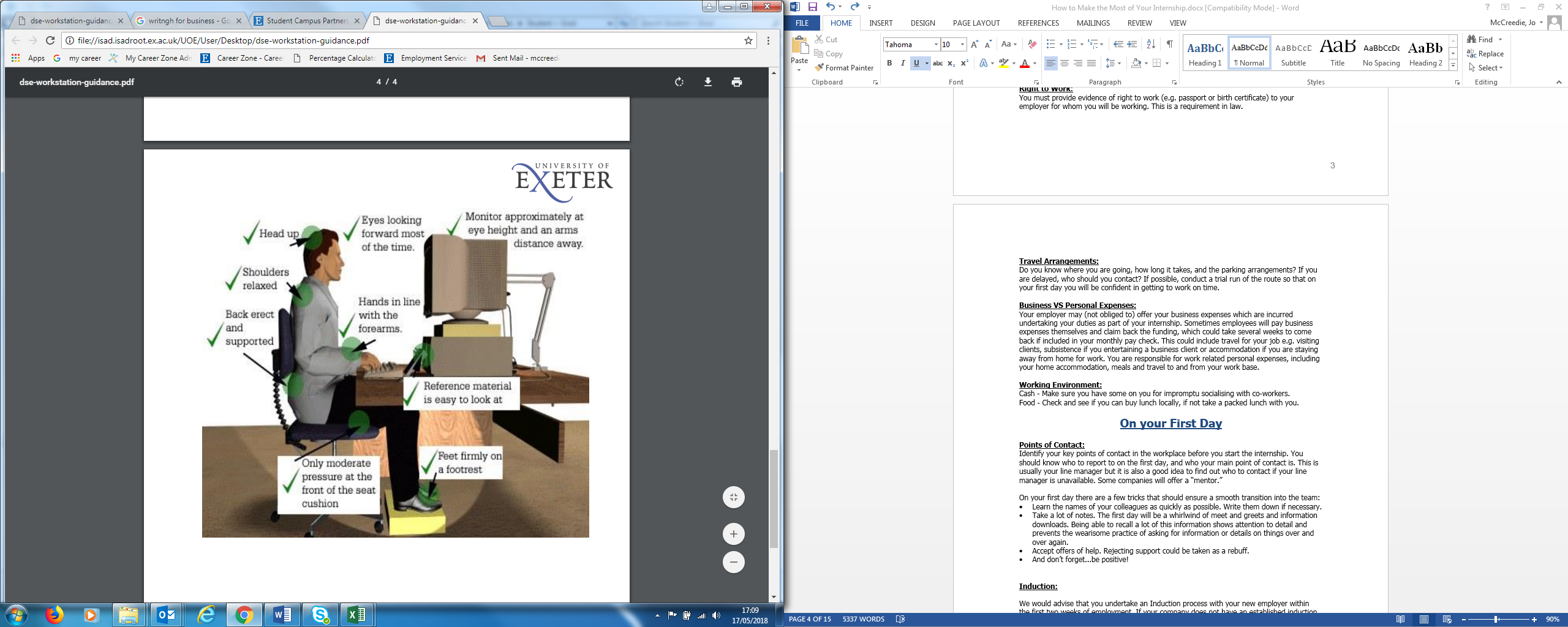
* Learn the names of your colleagues as quickly as possible. Write them down if necessary.
* Think about polite and intelligent questions to ask as you are being introduced to your new colleagues e.g. how long have you worked for the company? What are your main responsibilities? Will you and I be working together?
* Take a lot of notes. The first day will be a whirlwind of meet and greets and new information.
* Think in advance how you want to introduce yourself. Have you got an elevator pitch?
* Accept offers of help.
* Be positive!

Induction**:**

We would advise that you undertake an induction process with your new employer within the first two weeks of employment. If your company does not have an established induction, please complete the [Internship Induction Checklist](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/internshipsandmentoring/scp/Internship_Induction_Checklist.docx).

## Guidance for setting up your workstation in the workplace:

If you are working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) you will need to make sure that your workstation is set up correctly to ensure that you reduce the risk of pain and ill-health associated with DSE use. The following image may help you correctly set up your station, for further information please see the [University’s workstation set-up guidance.](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/safety/safetyguidance/dse/)



For your health and wellbeing it is important to take regular breaks; this includes physically moving and taking a break from looking at your screen. Stepping away from your desk at lunchtime will help you feel re-energised for the afternoon ahead. You could even set up reminders to take a break, using apps such as Alexa Flash Meeting can be helpful for this.

# During your internship

Professionalism and professional relationships**:**

[Professionalism](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/professionalism.htm) means a lot of different things to different people. Generally though, it can be defined as working with commitment, honesty and integrity to produce the best results you can whilst treating your colleagues, customers and key stakeholders with courtesy and respect.

It is normal to expect an adjustment time when arriving in a new working environment; there are plenty of unwritten rules and previous history between colleagues that you haven’t covered. Begin by starting to get attuned to the hierarchies and find out who is responsible for what function. You will find that different levels of formality and informality are expected or required when speaking to certain colleagues and personality differences will also be a factor. Try to observe the office dynamic and emulate this when interacting with different people.

It is fine to be friends with people at work but be mindful that they are your colleagues too. Ensure you relate to them in a professional manner whilst in the workplace, especially when other colleagues are in the vicinity. If you are planning a social engagement outside of work that you do not wish to invite all of your colleagues to, be discreet. This type of exclusion can cause divisions within a team. Some organisations have rules against romantic relationships at work so be mindful of this.

The information that people choose to share about their private life varies from person to person. Gauge your audience. Not everybody wishes to know about your weekend but on the whole this seems to be an accepted exchange for five minutes first thing on a Monday morning. Going in to detail about your personal life is generally considered inappropriate. Always consider the personal nature and the amount of time spent on these conversations.

**Communication Adjustments (WFH):**

Developing and maintaining good working relationships with your manager and colleagues requires a change in communication styles when working remotely. Being accountable for when you are working is also important.

Be conscious of the fact that your colleagues will have conflicting demands on their time when working at home, so check when they are available to communicate. It’s good to respect the boundaries people set.

People may be under pressure and therefore helping others, including by being kind and generous with your words, will be appreciated. Perhaps you could instigate a virtual ‘water cooler’ chat to connect with colleagues in a non-work way.

**Virtual Meetings (WFH, although this may also apply in the workplace if you have colleagues in various settings):**

We recommend that you:

* Get ready in advance with your technology and agenda items.
* Consider colleagues in other time zones when you set meetings.
* Remember to switch on your camera, blur your background (or choose a suitable location) and consider your non-verbal communication. You will also need to think about how you are dressed and whether it is appropriate for this meeting.
* Invite others in to give their thoughts and ideas. Be specific and ask people by name, otherwise everyone could start talking at once.
* Speak slowly and clearly and pause before responding to others as sometimes there is a time lapse between transmissions.
* Perhaps appoint a meeting facilitator to monitor chat comments during the meeting?
* Avoid distractions like checking email or having side conversations with people in the group.
* Keep a summary of key points and actions after a virtual individual or team meeting. This may be useful for reference later on.

**Getting Motivated and Being Productive:**

Life has many demands and there are many things you want to do and achieve. Doing a good job and carving out a successful career is one of those. To stay productive at work you need to balance your work and home life. These 3 steps can help you stay on track:

1. **Strategize** - What do you want to achieve and why? What is the driver or motivation behind this? Set a goal and make a plan listing your objectives, then break it down into a list of manageable tasks.
2. **Focus** - Quantify how long each task takes and book it into your schedule. To prioritise, we must work on the tasks that have the nearest deadline and are deemed to have the highest importance. To establish what your highest-importance activity in the workplace is consider:

* What are your own responsibilities and duties?
* What are your contributions to team duties?
* What is the impact of the work?
* Who requested the work to be undertaken? How important are they to the business and your career e.g. senior position; new customer; loyal customer.
* When was it requested?
* Who is the work being produced for?
* Who is leading on the work?
* Who do you need to collaborate with and what is their availability?
* How long does the work take to complete?
* How can the work be undertaken? Do you know how to undertake the work or does it require additional learning? Have you got access to the right information and systems?

Most people create a long ‘To Do’ list, but once you have decided your priorities you can create a ‘Must Do Today’ list. If you receive a lot of new emails that distract you from your list, perhaps you could consider checking your emails twice a day to see if you need to re-prioritise your day. Try and keep the structure of your day simple.

1. **Commit** - Have you completed everything on the ‘Must Do Today’ list? If not, reflect upon why this hasn’t worked. Is your strategy still correct? Did you prioritise correctly? Did you allocate enough time to each task you booked in? Perhaps you are procrastinating and working on the easy hits rather than the priorities? If so, maybe you should ‘[eat the frog’](https://doist.com/blog/eat-the-frog-todoist/) or deal with the most challenging task of your day first?

Maybe you need to work on a new daily routine? Did you feel ready for a day of work by waking up on time, getting washed and dressed; exercising; having breakfast and perhaps ticking off one or more home-life priorities before you started work? If you are working from home, creating a new morning routine can be your ‘fake commute’ and can help to set you up for the day ahead.

Do you need to build in energisers during the day? A quick stretch, breath of fresh air and a healthy snack can help you press the reset button.

A good way to stay motivated is to spend a moment at the end of the day looking at everything you have achieved that day and seeing how completing some urgent tasks has helped you get one step closer to achieving your goals.

If you are working from home, remember it is not all about challenge. Reflect upon the positives it brings. For example you have a flexible job, you can make a cooked lunch and are being more sustainable by avoiding the daily commute. Appreciating the good things in life will help you feel more motivated.

University of Exeter student and vlogger Ruby Granger has some great [top tips on being productive](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0-trTFGfR4), especially when managing work and study commitments.

**Setting objectives, review and evaluation:**

We encourage you, together with your employer, to set objectives as soon as you can. Objectives are what you need to achieve overall projects by a certain date. Objectives are different to a list of tasks as tasks are the actions you must undertake in order to achieve your objectives. Responsibilities specifically highlight your obligations within the role you have been employed to do.

When agreeing objectives, make them **SMART**:

* **Specific** – What exactly are you being asked to achieve? Is there a possibility that you and your employer could be talking at crossed purposes? Consider explaining the project and your assigned tasks to your employer as you have understood them, to make sure you are “on the same page”.
* **Measurable** - What criteria will be used to measure the success of the project/your role in this? Time saved? Hits on the company website? Revenue generated?
* **Achievable** – Your objectives should be achievable in terms of resources, knowledge, experience and time. Taking into account possible constraints, how can your objectives for the project be accomplished?
* **Relevant** - How does each objective tie into your key responsibilities? How is it aligned to the company’s strategy?
* **Time-based** - Set a date of completion and interim deadlines for your given piece of work, along with key dates and frequency of tasks.

Ideally your internship organisation should review and evaluate your performance at regular intervals throughout your internship, providing feedback where necessary so that you can identify where you are excelling and which areas need more attention. Employers are welcome to use their own performance evaluators, or you can work through the University's [Internship Performance Development (PDR) Review](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/internshipsandmentoring/Internship_PDR.pdf) together.

**Learning and development (training) needs:**

It is important to seem enthusiastic about your new role and show that you are keen to learn. However, some employers have stated that they prefer not to be asked about training opportunities right at the beginning of your internship. It is important to weigh up if you already have the skills and knowledge to undertake the role before you ask for training. From an employer’s perspective it is important to see what you can bring to the company before asking what they can give you.

That said, once you find out exactly what is expected of you, if you have a skills gap it is important to raise this with your employer in order to identify training opportunities. Where possible, try and teach yourself as there is so much help available on the internet e.g. how to use spreadsheets or how to mail merge.

If you wish to develop certain skills for your career development that you are not currently utilising in your internship role, perhaps there is a related project that you could suggest you undertake. For example if you wish to hone your presentation skills, ask to present your project summary to relevant colleagues and ask if they would be willing to provide feedback.

**Professional dos and don’ts:**

* **DON’T do your personal admin at work.** Make personal phone calls, check texts, emails or social media outside of work hours; this could be done at lunchtime but be mindful about where you do it.
* **DO be punctual and reliable**. Arrive in good time to start work and if you are going to be late, call your line manager or another senior member of staff. Don’t leave early or take extended lunch breaks, unless authorised. Also, don’t always be the one asking to leave early as this is unfair on your colleagues – it is important to be flexible.
* **DO make sure you know your company’s procedures**:
  + **Sickness.** If you are ill, make sure you follow the company’s sickness reporting procedures. Ensure you know who to report to in case of illness so that you are prepared.
  + **Flexible Working Arrangements.** In terms of working from home, for most companies this has previously been the exception rather than the rule though since the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has become significantly more common. This arrangement is still considered a position of trust in many companies. If you wish to change your normal working hours you will need to get permission from your line manager to work ‘flexible working hours’. The key is to come to an agreement. For example if you have parenting responsibilities and need to work around childcare arrangements, how can this be done so that you can fulfil both your caring responsibilities and the responsibilities of your role? It is good to be flexible but remember you are usually contracted to work a set number of hours and unless you have agreed paid overtime, you will need to keep a note of any extra hours you are accruing and share this with your manager. Between you, you can then agree when you can take these hours off work as ‘flexi’.If you do work from home, be conscious of the fact that when there aren’t the normal prompts to remind us that it is the end of the day, sometimes we will let the working day drift on. Don’t forget the importance of a work-life balance to remain a happy, motivated and productive member of staff.
* **DO work hard and be proactive.** All employers want high productivity, so work quickly, accurately and aim to achieve as much as you can. If you feel under-utilised don’t stay quiet, ask for more work and even better, suggest areas where you might be able to make a contribution and add value to the company. It may be that if you undertake work shadowing, you will have an opportunity to learn new skills and possibly even take on further responsibilities as a result of your learning.
* **DO team work.** It is important to make sure you do all of your work but remember, teamwork can produce results that we cannot achieve alone. Consider the bigger picture.
* **DO ask relevant questions.** It is important to learn from your colleagues but be mindful that your questions are directed to the right people, at the right time. Try to avoid asking the same questions twice, if possible. Take notes if you think you are likely to forget someone’s explanation.
* **DO assertive yuorself.** Do not be afraid to assert your opinion, as long as it is informed. Be respectful in doing this and remember that employers seek out undergraduates and graduates for their brains as you are a fresh pair of eyes and your ideas can be extremely valuable. They want to hear your thoughts but will appreciate you considering their experience when you share them.

Business .vs. personal expenses**:**

Your employer may (though they are not obliged to) offer you business expenses which are incurred through undertaking your duties as part of your internship. Sometimes employees will be expected to pay business expenses themselves and claim back the funding, which could take several weeks to come back if included in your monthly pay cheque. This could include travel for your job e.g. visiting clients, subsistence if you entertain a business client or accommodation if you are staying away from home for work. You are responsible for work-related personal expenses, including your home accommodation, your own meals at work and travel to and from your place of work.

## Skills and qualities:

Your employer and graduate recruiters in general are all looking for employees who ‘fit’ with their organisation, are confident and have enthusiasm for the role. Depending on the duties and responsibilities of the role, employers are also looking for a range of more general employability skills:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Interpersonal | Problem Solving | Teamwork + Collaboration | Assertiveness | Ability to work Under Pressure |
| Communication | Organisational + Focused | Research | Negotiation | Goals + Outcomes |
| Presentation | Strategic Planning | Enterprise  + Creativity | Conflict Management | Time + Workload Management |
| Analysing | Reasoning | Adaptability | Risk Management | Networking |
| Critical Interpretation | Decision Making | Persuasion | Leadership | IT Skills |

**Assertiveness:**

Assertiveness is the ability to deal with situations effectively and efficiently, in a way that ensures both your rights and the rights of others are respected.

Assertiveness is largely learned behaviour. We can be more assertive when we:

* Challenge basic assumptions about ourselves.
* Question our responsibilities towards others.
* Develop our communication techniques.

**Assertiveness techniques:**

1. Mental Dialoguing

Tell yourself how good you are and why by:

• Reflecting on achievements and future improvements.

• Letting go of the negative thoughts and feelings and focusing on the positive only.

2. Professional Detachment

• Don’t fall into the ‘compassion trap’ of always prioritising other’s needs above your own.

• If you take a parental role, others may respond with a childish irresponsibility.

• Think before agreeing to requests. If necessary say you need time to think and come back to them.

3. Empathy

• Dealing with a situation taking in to account other people’s feelings and drivers, not just your own. Consider any potential consequences and the impact they may have on your wider team, not just you as an individual.

4. Broken Record

• Repeating your message until it can no longer be ignored or dismissed. It is not just repeating the same words over and over again, but using key words in different sentences in order to drive a point home.

5. Say ‘no’

• Try just saying ‘no’ when you need to refuse a request.

• Try to say ‘no’ without feeling guilty or expressing an apology.

6. Discrepancy Assertion

* Politely point out an inconsistency in the other person’s behaviour or argument.

7. Fogging

Agreeing with a fair point even when someone is criticising you or being aggressive.

Some tips:

• Do not deny the criticism (provides more ammunition).

• Do not become defensive (admitting the criticism may be justified).

• Do not counter-criticise (starts an argument).

• Respond only to what is said - not to what is being implied.

• Listen to exactly what the critic is saying – respond using the same words, this proves you have heard them.

8. Consequence Assertion

* Using a statement that tells the other person of the consequences of not changing their behaviour.

9. Negative Feelings Assertion

Responding with a statement that tells someone the effect this has on you. It can contain these three elements:

1. Trigger (“When you”) (a description of their behaviour).

2. Emotion (“I feel”) (a description of your feelings).

3. New behaviour (“I would like”) (a statement of what you would like to happen).

**Negotiation:**

There are six stages of negotiation:

* Establish your objectives.
* Establish the other party’s objectives.
* Frame negotiation as a joint search for a solution.
* Identify areas of agreement.
* Trouble shoot disagreements: bargain & seek alternative solutions, introduce trade-offs.
* Agreement and close: summaries and ensure acceptance.

Detailed online resources about negotiation can be found [here](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/careersandemployability/pdfs/resources/Negotiation_Skills.pptx).

**Networking:**

Networking is the exchange of information between individuals or groups with the purpose of developing new opportunities. For you this could be a chance to develop new opportunities for your employer but also your career.

The key to networking is giving rather than receiving. Be as helpful as you can e.g. giving an alumnus an update on the University. People are human and they are more likely to help those they like.

Most job vacancies aren’t advertised in national or local newspapers. Jobs are often filled either through personal contacts or through specialist publications. You’ll need contacts who work either in the organisation or in the industry to hear about these jobs.

Most people are flattered to be approached for advice and if you don't use contacts, you'll lose out to those who do! Many people establish successful careers through networking.

As long as you approach someone tactfully, the worst they can say is ‘no’.

Your contacts could:

* Enable you to see what a job is really like, through answering your questions or potentially arranging work shadowing.
* Outline the range of jobs within their field and the level of competition for them.
* Look through your CV, suggesting improvements.
* Advise you on other skills or experience that you might need.
* Recommend other sources of information and advice, including their own contacts, and papers and agencies that advertise vacancies.
* Give you an insight into the activities, culture and history of their company.
* Potentially offer you a job. When you first make contact however, ask for information or advice only, NOT for a job.

Creating a list of contacts:

You may not realise it, but it is likely that you already belong to many useful networks. Obvious examples are:

* Your extended family.
* Your friends and acquaintances at University.
* The other educational establishments you have attended.
* Clubs and societies that you belong to/have belonged to.
* Places that you have worked.
* Your parents’ and/or partner’s networks of friends.
* Contacts made at events or social occasions.

The contacts you have some link to, however slight, are likely to be the easiest to make positive networking relationships with and the most helpful. Also try to think what other networks might be attached to the people you list, for example:

* School associations.
* University alumni associations.

Even if you can’t think of individuals who could help you directly, someone from within these groups is likely to know somebody who could give you some advice. One of your contacts may belong to a well-established network, such as a Rotary club or sports club. As you think of new individuals and groups, add them to your list - this will continue to grow as you network.

Developing new contacts:

* Networking events - ask people in your growing network which events would be beneficial to attend.
* Online networking – LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook etc.
* Professional bodies are a good starting point - they often employ information officers and training advisers who can talk to you over the phone. They may publish careers information and a directory of members. They may have a local branch that you can join or a network of regional advisers.
* Courses and events are a good way of meeting people who could give you advice e.g. conferences, trade fairs and recruitment fairs. When attending any of these events take copies of your CV with you.
* Identify experts on your chosen career through articles they have written or talks they have given - contact them for advice.

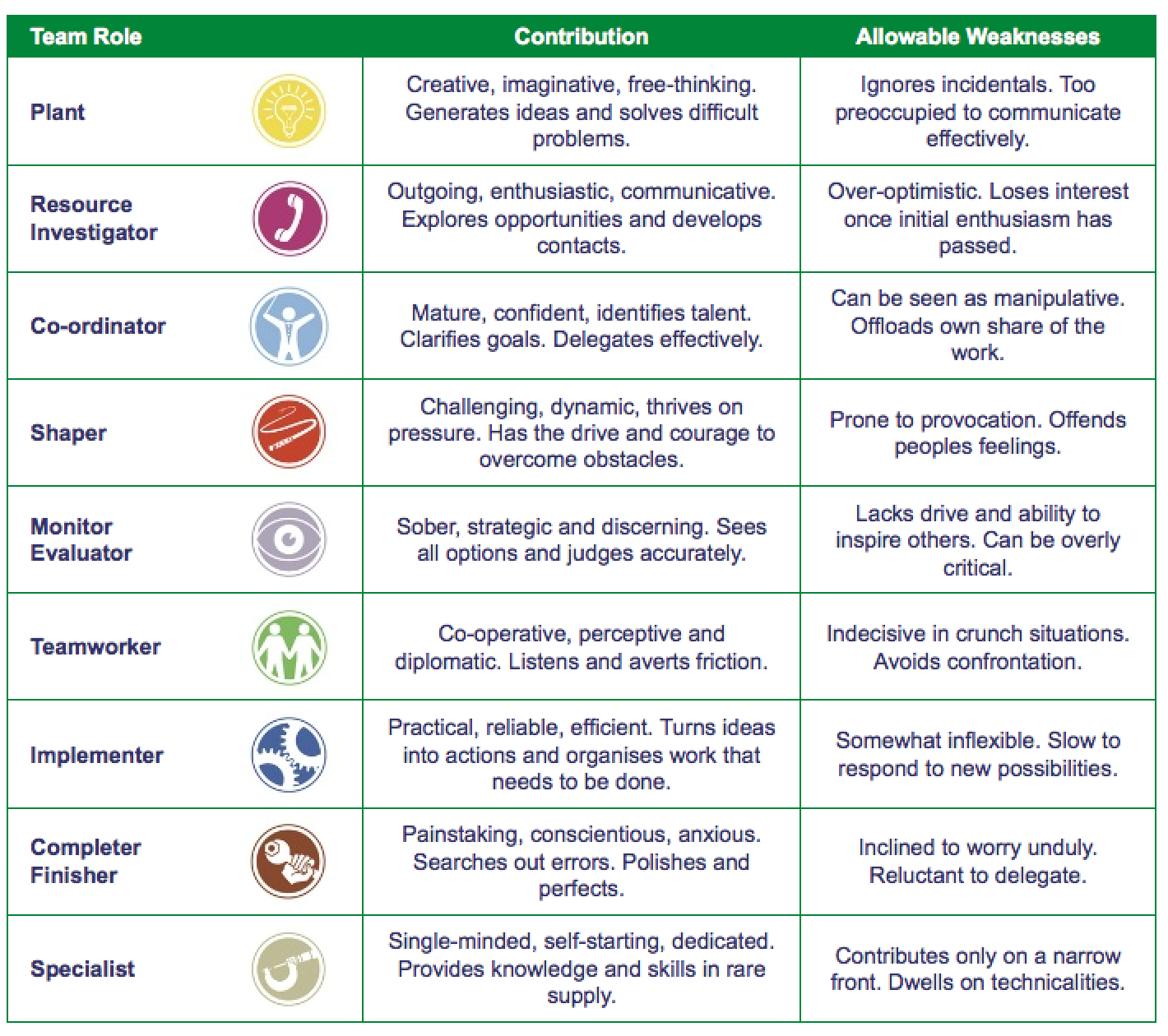
Making effective use of contacts:

* To be successful, you will need to plan your networking campaign at every stage of the process and keep good records of all that you’ve done.
* Set networking goals. You started off at your internship in an environment with total strangers. Draw up a list of people you know now and list their departments. Who/what type of person do you need to network with? Try to add to that list every day.
* Start with contacts with whom you have a fairly direct link as they are more likely to want to help. Only approach people for whom you have a definite name and do try to obtain their job title.
* Research each contact, their role and their organisation before making an approach and prepare a list of questions for each discussion. Clarify how you got their details and outline the help you need.
* Safety first! Because most networking involves meeting with people that you know something about, personal safety is not normally an issue. However, you should try to get a personal introduction to each new contact you make and try to meet in a public place.
* Keep a note of the discussion and make an action plan. Be sure to follow up all action points.

**Teamwork:**

Working together a team can bring together people with individual perspectives, knowledge, experience and skills to that may be beyond the scope of any one individual. As well as enhancing organisations' performance good teamwork benefits individuals too.

Research shows that the most successful teams are made up of a diverse mix of behaviours. Dr Meredith Belbin and [his team discovered](https://www.belbin.com/about/history/) that there are nine clusters of behaviour - these were called ' Belbin Team Roles:



## Business writing:

Written communication in the workplace can be different to writing for your degree. To learn more about planning your writing, effective writing and writing with style, please see detailed online short courses on [My Career Zone Digital](https://mycareerzone.careercentre.me/resources/elearning/Hub.aspx?redirect=/e-learning/category/gallery/3), which can be accessed using your My Career Zone log in. If you are having problems accessing My Career Zone please email [careers@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:careers@exeter.ac.uk)

## Presenting project results and recommendations:

During a project you will be expected to update the key stakeholders on a regular basis. When it comes to presenting your project results and recommendations, there are 4 key considerations:

1. Audience

Who are they? Are they technical? Are they decision makers? Are they pivotal to your success?

2. Frequency

How often do you need to communicate with them? What are you communicating to them? Are you updating or informing them?

3. Message

What do you want them to do? How, where and when? How can you get them on board? What do you want them to take away?

4. Medium

What’s the best medium to communicate? 1-1 meetings? Group email? Posters?

## Career advice:

You now have access to experienced professionals: your employer, colleagues or other people in your new network. Now is your chance to seek their career guidance by doing some (or all!) of the following:

Ask about their career path, where they have worked and where they would like to have worked.

Get your CV appraised.

Consult with HR about what they like/dislike in applications.

Job seeking - ask where to look for work.

Do they know of any current or future employment opportunities?

Obtain a recommendation on LinkedIn.

Ask if your current employer can keep you on.

It is estimated that 25% of job vacancies are unadvertised and are recruited instead through personal recommendations.

Remember all Exeter students and graduates (up to three years post-graduation) can access the [Career Zone’s](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/careers/) resources, including meetings with a careers consultant.

## If there is a problem during your internship:

If you feel things aren’t working out as you had hoped with your internship, the University is here to offer you support. This could include discussing issues around your responsibilities or more serious issues such as struggling with your workload or relationship difficulties in the workplace.

**Struggling with your workload:**

If you find yourself in this position first all of reflect upon how you are prioritising your workload. If you believe you are prioritising the most important tasks but your timings are still slipping, don’t procrastinate, let people know. This does not mean you email someone to tell them your project is delayed. Instead, when there are problems, we recommend you call someone or ask to meet them face-to-face.

Once you make contact with the people significant to your work (i.e. project sponsor, line manager, senior consultant supporting you and your work, client) do not present one option e.g. the project will be not be completed by the agreed deadline. Instead communicate your progress, the challenges, the implications as you see it, your ideas for a solution and then ask for their thoughts and ideas. All projects have scope, time, cost and quality implications all of which need to be reviewed when seeking a solution. Informing important stakeholders that you cannot deliver a project on time without any wider discussion around the issues at play is not behaving in a professional manner and could damage future work with these people.

**Managing difficult conversations:**

Most interns report very happy working environments but if not now, it is likely that in the future you will have to have a difficult conversation with someone in your workplace. Here are a few tips to manage these:

* Practice emotional detachment. If you cannot do this, it is not the right time to have a difficult conversation.
* Remember you are an equal human being no matter how senior that person may be.
* Practice [active listening](http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html).
* Think before responding - ask for reflection time if needed.
* Compose your voice.
* Clarify the issue if you are not sure of the point.
* Take responsibility for the parts you are responsible for (see ‘fogging’ in assertiveness below).
* Depersonalise the issue by viewing it as a shared problem, even if it is not presented that way. You might even want to express that view.
* Negotiate a compromise.
* Agree action and agree when and how to review progress.
* Be responsible for your own feelings - don’t blame others for how you feel.
* Try taking an empathic approach. Understanding where someone is coming from or indeed what might be happening in their life can help how you look at the situation.
* Seek balance. By focussing on the person’s strengths and positive qualities it can help you not view the person in a totally negative light.
* Limit your time complaining. Obsessing will negatively affect your mood and team morale.
* Pick your battles. Some issues are just not worth it!
* Seek independent feedback on the situation.
* If the situation turns verbally abusive, put a stop to it and involve a more senior person or a mediator.

**Dealing with difficulties between you and your manager:**

Despite the best endeavours of both you and your manager, there are occasions where for some reason this professional relationship does not work as well as has been anticipated.

If the case arises that you feel unhappy with your manager, we advise that you take the following steps:

* Spend some time summarising the issues you are struggling with and make an “agenda”. This will help you to stay focussed during what may feel like a stressful or difficult conversation. Try to state the points as factually as possible, avoiding using “emotional” language.
* Ask to speak to your manager in private to discuss the situation and to identify the issue. It may be that your manager is completely unaware that there is a problem and an agreement can be reached easily.
* If this does not resolve the situation, contact the University immediately. A member of staff will then discuss the problem with you in confidence to try to find a solution, acting as a mediator between you and your manager. If in the unlikely event that the issue cannot be resolved, the University will support you in taking action.

## Bullying and Harassment:

We very much hope that during your internship you will have no need to refer to this section of the guide, however if you do feel that you are being bullied or harassed during your internship, the following links may help you clarify your situation. We want to hear from you if this is the case.

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/dignity/examples/>

<https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

**Feeling stressed:**

Everyone is different and people’s tolerance of stress varies. What is important is that we have support mechanisms in place to ensure you know where to go and what to do if you are having a stress reaction. For more information about what stress is and stress symptoms please see the [University staff pages](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/stress/). Please also contact the Internships Team so we can help signpost you to other services.

**Signpost to support:**

If you are experiencing difficulties whilst undertaking your internship, [Jo McCreedie](mailto:j.mccreedie@exeter.ac.uk) from the Internships Team could offer you some initial support. For more specialist support you may be eligible to access the University’s [Student Wellbeing Services](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/) or the University’s [Staff Wellbeing Services.](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/)

Do you think your employer could support you through these difficulties? There may be HR policies and services available to you through your company. If not, would you feel able to discuss how your employer could support you? Ask to schedule a convenient and confidential 1:1 meeting with your line manager to discuss.

If you are having to practice social isolating or distancing due to COVID-19, this can have an impact on your mental health. For information on self-care and other treatments for mental health issues please see: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>.

**Confidentiality Policy:**

We ask that you inform us of any serious issues as we want to ensure your safety, health and well-being. This will be treated as confidential unless we have very serious concerns. In circumstances such as these you will always be informed if the University needs to take action.

# Ending your internship

Saying thank you**:**

Make sure you thank the people you have worked with. It may be polite to ask if they would like you to complete an exit interview.

References and recommendations**:**

Ask permission from your line manager to use them as a referee. Don’t forget this is polite to ask as anyone writing a reference will be required to spend a significant amount of time doing this. It may also be worth asking them if they would be happy to give you a recommendation on LinkedIn.

Feedback**:**

* We recommend that you request feedback on your performance.
* We ask that you please complete an [intern feedback form](https://mycareerzone.exeter.ac.uk/Form.aspx?id=582266) and also encourage your line manager to complete their own [employer feedback form](https://mycareerzone.exeter.ac.uk/Form.aspx?id=582349). The feedback form will ask you to evaluate your updated skills set for the workplace, your achievements and your overall learning, including anything you would do differently in the future.

Further employment**:**

Can you see any further opportunities for employment with this employer? If so, do you know how they advertise jobs?

With your new list of skills, make sure you can produce the best S.T.A.R. evidence for your future applications. To find out more about S.T.A.R. please see [here](https://mycareerzone.exeter.ac.uk/docs/27/The-STAR-appraoch.pdf).

Next steps**:**

If you would like support in securing your next job opportunity please contact Jo McCreedie, Employment Schemes Manager, at [j.mccreedie@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:j.mccreedie@exeter.ac.uk) or 01392 722617.

If you would like career guidance please contact Kate Foster, Careers Consultant (Widening Participation), at [K.L.Foster@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:K.L.Foster@exeter.ac.uk) or 01392 725326.