

Employability Academic Lead Information Pack



University
of Exeter

Career
Zone

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Introduction to Student Employability Academic Success (SEAS) Career Zone and the role of Faculty Leads

SEAS is part of Education and Academic Services within Professional Services, which works collaboratively with faculties and other Professional Service teams to create the conditions for UG and PGT students and academic success.

SEAS mission is to: “educate students to identify and achieve their ambitions, understanding the skills/experiences that contribute to the achievement of their goals through the provision of SEAS activities, enabling them to make the most of their education experience at Exeter.”

SEAS support academic staff aligned to departments and faculties. Students can access the services and support of SEAS directly through our ‘[Career Zone](#)’ branded front-line services and web-based portal, [Handshake](#). This includes a comprehensive range of digital learning resources and job vacancies and opportunities available locally, nationally and globally.

Some of the key services that the [Career Zone](#) offers are:

- Careers Guidance.
- CV and application form advice.
- Employer events.
- Advice on finding work experience, graduate jobs, or postgraduate study.
- Guidance for interviews and assessment centres.
- Employability and personal skills development.
- Managed student and graduate internship schemes.
- Professional work placement programmes.
- In-curriculum lectures, seminars and workshops.
- Global opportunities.



Our Approach

Our careers support is designed to meet students and graduates where they are in their career thinking, whether they're just beginning to reflect or ready to take action. We aim to empower students and graduates with the skills and social capital they need to thrive in the labour market.

We break the career planning journey into four clear stages:

Reflect: Understanding oneself and initial career thoughts.

Explore: Researching sectors, roles, and options.

Focus: Narrowing down choices, making decisions and setting goals.

Act: Applying for work and further study opportunities and connecting with industry professionals.



At registration, students self-assess through ten statements as part of the Careers Registration survey, which places them into one of these four stages. This helps us tailor support and signpost relevant activities. All our activities are clearly categorised into one of these four stages, making our services more accessible and relevant.

This approach ensures students receive timely, meaningful guidance, whether they're unsure of the path they want to take or ready to polish applications.

How do I access support as an academic?

The Faculty Leads act as the link between SEAS and the academic departments within the faculty. They serve as the primary contact for academic staff on all matters relating to careers, employability and placements, offering specialist advice and directing enquiries to the appropriate teams in SEAS.

Working closely with Directors of Student Experience and Education (DESEs), designated Employability Academics and Placement Module Conveners, the Faculty Leads plan departmental activities and events throughout the academic year, supported by other Professional Services teams. They foster strong relationships with both internal and external stakeholders to deliver a diverse and inclusive service for students, supporting the Success for All initiative under the Education Strategy, with the goal of developing 'Graduates of Distinction' and enhancing Graduate Outcomes.

Academic Staff with responsibility for employability within their departments are encouraged to work closely with their respective Faculty Lead.



Role of an Employability Academic Lead

The Employability Lead plays a pivotal role within the departments, focusing on enhancing the career prospects of our students. This role involves supporting students in finding relevant employment opportunities, exploring further education options, and engaging with industry professionals. The Employability Lead will work collaboratively across the university to drive employability initiatives, foster alumni engagement, and encourage active student participation in career development activities.

General duties include:

- Champion for SEAS.
- Work with Faculty Lead's to plan calendar of careers activities and alumni employer events for the department.
- Communicate and disseminate careers and employability information/events in the department.
- Support alumni and employer events / employer visits.
- Careers and employability ambassador for academic department.
- Attend Faculty Employability Strategy boards.

More specific duties might include:

- Module Convener of placement modules.
- Support Create Your Future sessions to meet 1st year students as a point of contact for employability queries.
- Oversight of module descriptors and ELE2 supporting pages.
- Setting ILO's for modules, setting assessments, moderation of assignments and marks, mitigation etc.
- Advocate for additional SEAS staffing for new placement modules or increases in existing delivery.
- Line management with Faculty Leads of SCP Placement Ambassadors.
- Attendance at OHVD for placement modules and employability in department.

Main SEAS links – Faculty Leads, Employability Career Consultants, Employability and Placement Advisors.



Handshake

The Career Zone uses the Handshake platform which allows all students and graduates to discover employers and opportunities such as internships, part-time jobs, work placements and graduate job vacancies, submit applications and attend career fairs and other events.

Staff who are working with students can access Handshake to help them assist students, e.g. view events and jobs they might recommend to students. If you are a member of staff who wants access to a 'student view' to help students, then you can create an account as follows:

NB: content on the Handshake portal, such as events, are for students and graduates only.

- Visit <https://exeter.joinhandshake.co.uk/>
- Click on Sign up here (accounts are only pre-created for students, so you will get a message saying 'there is no account on file' don't worry that's normal!)
- Enter your staff@exeter.ac.uk email so we can verify you are a member of staff
- Follow through the screens
- Where it asks for your date of birth/previous educational establishment - enter the word 'Staff'.

The logo for Handshake, featuring the word "Handshake" in a bold, italicized, black sans-serif font, centered within a solid yellow rectangular background.

Key Employability Data

Graduate Outcomes (institution KPI)

The Graduate Outcomes survey is administered externally by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and is mandatory for all UK higher education providers. The GO survey collects information on what all leavers (UK, EU and international) from higher education (HE) programmes are doing fifteen months after qualifying from their HE course. It aims to establish what type of employment or further study graduates are engaged in, their income, their "graduate voice" and their subjective wellbeing, during a specific week in the survey period. The MI Hub contains the latest data set which also has subject discipline specific data and Widening Participation (WP) data.

As a result of the Graduate Outcomes survey having a census week 15 months after graduation, and the response rate particularly by international students being extremely low, although the results are still useful, and continue to impact on our domestic league table rankings, they now hold less significance as a dataset which informs student intervention, strategy and annual planning.

The National Student Survey, Career Registration, credit-bearing placement data and an internal Career Destination Survey (CDS) are now the leading employability Key Performance Indicators used by SEAS and faculties within the University of Exeter.

National Student Survey (Q9 is institutional KPI)

This annual survey completed by finalists takes place between January and end of April. Faculties are using the careers-related questions as a more current dataset for finalists/graduands since the data is published in July and so is much more current than GO data.

Within the core questions, Question 9 relates to employability:

How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future? Very well; Well; Not very well; Not at all well; This does not apply to me.

There are also optional questions within the B3 section which are being used by UoE as follows:

B3. Careers 1. As a result of my course, I believe that I have improved my career prospects. 2. Good advice is available for making career choices. 3. Good advice is available on further study opportunities.

Career Registration

As part of the annual enrolment process, each student is asked to complete the Career Registration survey. During this survey students are asked to self-select their career planning stage based on 10 statements; these can then be grouped by 'Reflect', 'Explore', 'Focus' and 'Act'. This data can be used to help provide targeted support to students who haven't progressed their career planning phase of career decision-making by their 2nd or final year of studies. Targeted support is also offered to penultimate year and finalists as part of the annual Get Ready to Graduate campaign.

For PPBI's internal analysis of the latest Careers Registration results, please click [here](#).



Placement data

The SEAS Placements Manager, is working with 10 other university partners to create data sets on Academic outcomes for placement student's vs non-placement students. This will include WP student performance. These data will include academic progression, i.e. final degree grade and academic progression between 2nd year and 4th year, to see how the placement year has impacted grade achievement.

During Phase One of the data collection, the focus will be on placements which are paid, partially funded and unpaid, and the institutional location of placements at programme level and department level.

Discussions are also underway with the Admissions team to remove the higher tariffs for entry on to 4-year placement programmes so that entry on to 4-year variants are the same as 3-year. This will remove barriers to progression and have more consistency across programmes.

Career Destination Survey

The Career Destination survey was introduced in January 2019 (2017/18 graduates) in response to the cessation of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, and the introduction of the more longitudinal Graduate Outcomes survey.

The Career Destination survey has the primary objective of identifying and supporting recent graduates that are struggling to navigate towards their desired career destination. Since this survey is for internal purposes only, this allows for a greater amount of flexibility, which has resulted in a more extensive list of subsidiary goals. For more information, please see the '2020/21 Career Destination survey report' listed at the bottom of the [Graduate Outcomes](#) pages on the MI Hub.



Employment Schemes

Research Support Internship Scheme

This internship scheme distributes faculty or departmental funding to academics who can then hire student interns to support current research activity at Exeter. These are short-term, paid internships that both advance research and scholarship and enhance students' employability, skills and awareness of academia as a career path. The scheme gives students meaningful research experience while providing academics with dedicated research support.

Research Support

Internships

Key points for colleagues:

- Open to all academic staff within the relevant department or faculty. Each faculty runs the scheme at some point during the academic year.
- Projects should offer students clear, engaging work that develops research-relevant skills while contributing to faculty research and impact goals.
- Internships typically last 35–140 hours, depending on funding.
- All internships must take place between Term 2 and the summer vacation, and finish by 31 July 2025 (financial year end).

Selection process:

1. Academics submit bids or proposals once applications open.
2. Following an internal selection process (usually facilitated by the Faculty Lead), successful projects are advertised to students on [Handshake](#).
3. Academic project leads, supported by the Internships Team, oversee student recruitment.
4. Project leads also approve intern salary payments through the PaidTime system.

For more details, please contact your [Faculty Lead](#).

Professional Pathways

The Professional Pathways programme offers students the chance to gain sector-specific training from current industry experts followed by a paid 35-hour internship in June where students can put their learning into practice.

Pathways are available in:

- [Arts, Culture and Heritage](#)
- [Charity and Development](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Scientific Laboratories \(to be confirmed for 2026\)](#)



Applications open late in term 1. Students can also [register their interest](#) in advance. Eligibility varies slightly by pathway, but most are open to all undergraduates and postgraduates across disciplines and campuses.

Students go through a two-stage recruitment process to get onto this scheme: first a written application, and then, for those shortlisted, a group interview at an assessment centre in the second half of Term 2.

For more details, visit the individual pathway pages or contact the team directly at professionalpathways@exeter.ac.uk.



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Work Placements (Placement Team)

The university offers many students the opportunity to choose a work placement option as part of their degree.

Placement options

Options for UG students consist of modules which are part of a 3-year programme (modules may be in 1st, 2nd or 3rd year) or a yearlong placement as part of a 4-year programme. PG students have similar options, modules as part of a standard 1-year programme or a yearlong placement option as part of a 2-year programme.

More information on work placements, the benefits of a placement, support available etc. can be found on our [Placements Hub](#). A list of the yearlong work placement options for UG students can be found on [Work Placements @Exeter](#). In the majority of cases, students are required to secure their own placements, module descriptors will state whether this is the case or not for the module/programme a student is interested in.

Support for placement students

Information and advice for students on a work placement module/programme can be found on our [Placements Hub](#). The Placement Team supports the vast majority of placement options, offering a wide variety of support. This could include activities such as workshops, 1to1's, online resources, events, employability platforms, social media, newsletters, placement paperwork. Support will be module/programme specific.

Developing a work placement module/yearlong programme

Information for academic colleagues who are thinking of developing a work placement module or yearlong placement option, can be found on [Place Based Learning](#).

Contact: Please email placements@exeter.ac.uk with any questions/queries.



Create Your Future

Create Your Future is a personal and professional development programme which is compulsory for most first year students.

During the programme, students will hear from graduates from their discipline, explore different career options, learn about how to articulate their skills in applications and interviews and explore the range of Career Zone opportunities that will help them to develop their employability throughout their degree.

The programme runs during a three-week period during the first year. The programme is made up of three components: two face to face workshops, and a section of online independent learning to work through between the workshops. There is also a guided independent learning session on Microsoft Teams, where students can get support from Student Programme Assistants whilst working through the online activities.



Career Conversations with Students

How to support students with career conversations

As part of the annual enrolment process, each student is asked to complete the Career Registration survey which groups them into a career planning stage of 'Reflect', 'Explore', 'Focus' and 'Act' More details on the stages can be found here: [Career Planning](#) | [Career Zone](#) | [University of Exeter](#).

Career Zone also has a whole range of events, expert 1-1 guidance, schemes and programmes, webinars and resources to help with researching career options, self-awareness, gaining work experience, job hunting, developing skills, finding a graduate job and undertaking interviews and assessment centres. For more information, please click on [Career Research and Planning](#).

There is also an array of employability schemes which are run over the course of the academic year. These include; The Exeter Award, Professional Pathways, Career Mentor Scheme, Aspiring Teachers, and Green Consultants. Please click on [Employability Schemes](#).

The employment sectors listed on our website will help students; research different careers, keep up to date with industry news, learn about possible postgraduate routes, and find opportunities: [Employment Sector Pages](#).

Graduate jobs

Our online database [Handshake](#) contains vacancies from graduate employers in a wide range of sectors who are specifically targeting Exeter students and graduates.

Graduates may also be interested in our [Graduate Business Partnership](#), a paid scheme run by the University in partnership with local employers.

Internships

The internships advertised through the University's schemes offer paid, flexible employment during term-time and over the summer. These are open to all UK and international students studying at Exeter.

Learn more about each scheme below:

[Student Campus Partnerships \(SCP\)](#)

Internships working for the University at Exeter and Penryn campuses.

[Student Business Partnerships \(SBP\)](#)

Internships working for recommended employers in the area.

[Access to Internships \(A2I\)](#)

A2I is a pioneering scheme reserved for undergraduates and a limited number of postgraduates who meet Widening Participation (WP) criteria. Eligible students are supported to secure a paid internship which is funded by the University.



We also encourage students to explore the national internship programmes available using the links below:

- [Handshake](#)
- [Target Jobs](#)
- [Prospects](#)
- [Times Top 100 employers](#)
- [Rate My Placement](#)

Students can also engage with virtual internship opportunities for free through our license to the platform, [Forage](#).

Volunteering

Students can get involved in many volunteering projects throughout the city with help from [Exeter Student Volunteers](#) - the student volunteering organisation within the University of Exeter Students' Guild, and [Legends](#) within the Student Union (Penryn) [Volunteering & Fundraising](#). Becoming a volunteer within the local community can be a very rewarding and fulfilling experience. Volunteering also provides an important way to add valuable work experience to a students' CV and increase their employability.

International Student Specialist Careers Support

The India and China Career Ready Programmes combine bespoke online learning programmes and live workshops to give Indian and Chinese students at Exeter tailored guidance with their career planning, whether they want to work in the UK or back in India and China after graduation. These programmes, led by our Employability and Careers Consultants, focus on helping students understand the differences between the graduate recruitment markets in both India, China, and the UK as well as what students need to do to succeed in these environments.

You can learn more about these programmes here:

- [India Career Ready programme](#)
- [China Career Ready programme](#)

Assessments Centres and Psychometric Testing

Organisations sometimes use an assessment centre during their hiring processes to determine whether candidates are suitable for a position. Assessment centres can help to rate an applicant's personality, knowledge or skills. They often comprise social or networking events, presentation or teamwork exercises, group or individual interviews, and psychometric testing.

If students need help or advice with Assessment Centres or Psychometric Testing this page outlines the various ways we can help including appointments, events and resources: [Act](#) | [Career Zone](#).

Applying for Jobs and Further Study

Many students will need a part-time or casual job alongside studies to help with the cost of living. These types of roles are also great to have on your CV as they show a wide range of skills. This page outlines the various ways we can help you find and apply for jobs, including resources, events and appointments: [Student & Graduate Employment on Campus](#).

Our Employability and Careers Consultants can also provide dedicated 1:1 guidance appointments to help students looking for and applying to graduate jobs or further study. [Careers Guidance](#) | [Career Zone](#).

Students can book an appointment for support with considering and applying for graduate jobs and further study by contacting the Career Zone.



Get in Touch

For any academic queries:

Faculty Leads

Students can be signposted to various teams:

- Career Zone: careers@exeter.ac.uk
- Placements Team: placements@exeter.ac.uk
- Mentoring: careermentorscheme@exeter.ac.uk ; AskAnAlum@exeter.ac.uk
- Internships: internships@exeter.ac.uk ;
- Access to internships: A2i@exeter.ac.uk
- Create Your Future: createyourfuture@exeter.co.uk
- Aspiring Teachers: aspiringteachers@exeter.ac.uk
- Green Consultants: greenconsultants@exeter.ac.uk

For more information on career development opportunities provided by SEAS, you may find some of these web pages useful:

- [Career Development for Sustainability](#)
- [Exeter Award](#)
- [Exeter Leaders Award](#)
- [Professional Pathways](#)
- [Global Leaders Experience](#)
- [Support for international students](#)
- [Supporting Equality and Diversity](#)

