



Are you a Bioscience student?

Although we can't provide you with much support, professional placements undertaken in sandwich years are still very useful opportunities to build real-world skills as well as gain some workplace experience that heavily boosts your CV for future job prospects.

Are you unsure about your career path after your degree?

Are you looking to add extensive professional experience to your CV before you graduate?

Placement years are not for you. It is quite common for students to pursue a varied range of careers not necessarily related to their degrees. In this case, it is not advisable for you to take on a placement year as it is quite a serious undertaking and is not worth it if it does not help your career in any way.

Do you know whether you prefer to be in the lab or in the office?

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Even with no preference of lab or office, industry or academia, placement years of all types serve as taster for your professional prospects ahead. Applying to some placements from each category will help you first gauge your capabilities in securing such positions, then learn and understand whether one of them is a real dealbreaker for you. For example, some students spend a year at a laboratory placement and realise that they never want to return, whereas some end up realising that the lab is where they belong. This confirms to them what kind of workplace they prefer within the STEM field. You can also talk to students who have taken up many different kinds of placements at our student panel events to find out more!

Do you know if you prefer an academic lab or one in industry?

Research and lab atmosphere at a pharmaceutical/bioscience firm is very different from what you experience at university during your undergraduate degree. Completing a laboratory placement in industry will help you familiarise yourself with corporate hierarchy, lab culture, and complex research protocols that you would otherwise not experience at university. Industrial placements also allow you to judge the management style and structure of a particular firm you may be interested in for future prospects. Placements in industry generally provide monetary compensation for the year.

Research in academia is less commercial, and hence quite varied in topic. Academic lab placements can help you explore a particular section of your subject (for example neuropharmacology, chromatography) in depth, in addition to sometimes getting conference and symposium exposure. Often, research you conduct at an academic placement will be added to scientific papers published by your lab, as well as posters and presentations. Some academic placements are advertised, however many academic labs are open to students approaching them individually.

