

Tonmeister Professional Training Year (PTY) Placements

The University's professional training year (PTY) scheme requires each student on the Tonmeister course to work for an audio company, or one that has a strong element of audio in its work, for 12 months between the second and final years of their studies. This is normally a minimum of 32 weeks of full-time employment. The student must work as a full-time employee (not freelance) and will do useful work for the company, bringing with them knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm, and learning more about practical methods and applications. The student is visited normally twice during the year by an academic who will talk with them and with their employer. Later, a third 'visit' to the student is normally made by Teams or similar. The Senior Placement Tutor can help to find suitable students for the employer, but the final choice of student is for the employer to make. The contract of employment is between employer and student only.

What would a placement student do?

All of our students have a good grounding in the theory of music, acoustics, electronics and analogue and digital audio, and experience of musical performance, acoustic analysis, electronic testing and construction, programming, recording, mixing and editing. Their role in the company might involve fetching and carrying, filing, documentation, logging, archiving, customer support, testing, cabling, maintenance, prototyping, programming, rigging, de-rigging, recording, mixing, editing, etc. The only fixed requirements are that the placement should be safe and legal, and should allow the student to:

- apply theory and develop technical skills in practical and operational contexts;
- develop transferable skills, including team-working, inter-personal skills, prioritization, planning and time-management;
- develop their understanding of the industry, including commercial aspects;
- develop and demonstrate their ability to work independently; and
- demonstrate inventiveness, creativity and/or initiative.

Who employs placement students?

We have regular placements in recording (e.g. Abbey Road, Floating Earth), broadcast (e.g. Sky and Vivid), film/TV sound (e.g. Ben Holland Sound Limited), installation and maintenance (e.g. Kinly AV, Ideaworks), research and development (e.g. Focusrite), acoustic consultancy (e.g. Hoare Lea), education (e.g. Guildhall School of Music & Drama) and product management and support (e.g. Ableton). New employers join the scheme every year.

Why do employers like Tonmeister placement students?

Employers tell us that:

- it's cheaper than employing a graduate;
- students can be more 'malleable' than graduates;
- Tonmeister students are enthusiastic, hard-working, intelligent, creative & able;
- Tonmeister students learn extremely quickly and can soon take on important roles;
- students bring fresh ideas into a company;
- the placement scheme provides a stream of suitable graduates for future employment;

- placement students can return to do useful freelance work in their final year;
- employers want to contribute to the UK education system; and
- the link created with the University can lead to future research collaboration.

What does an employer need to provide?

There is a very small amount of paperwork involved in employing a placement student:

- **Placement Agreement:** this 2-page document outlines the responsibilities of the University, the placement organisation and the student, and is attached to a 1-page Health & Safety Checklist. The Agreement and Checklist would need to be completed satisfactorily before the start of a placement.
- **Student Induction Checklist:** this is for the student to complete during their first week with you. It tells them what they should find out from you as soon as possible after starting work.
- **Employer Assessment:** this involves your input at three points in the year during the tutor visits, to discuss how the student is doing and, at the final 'visit' to complete a very short form giving us your view of how well the placement student has performed and giving him/her a score in each of five categories.

To take on a placement student an employer should be able to answer 'yes' to all the questions on the Health & Safety Checklist and should be able to provide a suitable supervisor for placement student. Placements are normally paid and salaries in 2023/24 range from £14,000 to £23,000 (the mean was £18,996).

What happens when?

Typical timescales (for placements commencing in 2024) are:

- Oct '23 - Nov '23: returning students make presentations to 2nd years
- Dec '23 - Jan '24: 2nd-year students prepare CVs and decide on preferred jobs
- Jan '24 - Feb '24: senior PTP tutor contacts employers re job availability & detail
- Mar '24: student CVs available to employers
- Mar '24 - May '24: student interviews held at host organisations (or at University)
- Mar '24 - May '24: placement agreements completed
- Jun '24 - Sep '24: placements start
- Aug '24 - Aug '24: visits to each student/employer from a placement tutor
- Jun '24 - Sep '24: placements finish

Further information

For more information about the Music & Sound Recording (Tonmeister) BMus degree programme and the PTY scheme please contact the Senior Placement Tutor at pty@iosr.uk / iosr.surrey.ac.uk

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September 2023

