BSc in Psychology
External Work Placement (PS293)

Student Handbook
2024-2025

Department of Psychology

Placement Coordinator:

Prof. Richard Roche

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the BSc in Psychology Work Placement! As this module is quite different to any that you have studied to date, it is very important that you carefully read through the information contained in this handbook. Although the placement itself will take place in Semester 2 of 2024/2025, the process of preparing for, applying for, and securing your placement will take place in Semester 1. As such, you should view this as a year-long module which you will prepare for alongside your research internship (PS291) in Semester 1.

The below sections provide more detail on what the module will involve. Section 2 firstly presents some background to the module, including an overview of its aims and learning outcomes. Section 3 then details the structure of the module, including important dates for the placement and assessment deadlines. The subsequent sections provide further details on what is required for the module, including the procedures involved in selecting work placements (Section 4), policies to adhere to during the placement (Section 5), and the assessment components for the module (Section 6).

2. Background

As you enter the third year of your BSc in Psychology, you will know that psychology is both an academic field of study and a professional career path. When you graduate at the end of next year, you may be eligible to apply for further postgraduate training in a range of specialisms, including Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Neuropsychology, Organisational Psychology, Health Psychology and others. However, even outside the domain of professional psychology, there are numerous organisational and community contexts in which psychological principles can be applied, including, but not limited to, healthcare, social work, disability, policy, marketing, human resources, and industry.

You will be familiar with some of the more common psychological applications from your previous studies, including from the Critical Skills in Psychology module (PS261) which specifically focused on potential career options available for psychology graduates. However, you may not yet have had direct experience with the application of such principles. Having direct experience, or *Experiential Learning*, should not only enrich your understanding of the discipline as a whole, but should also enhance your future career prospects and foster your personal and professional development.

2.1 Module Aims

In this module, you will take part in a 3-month placement. Following the *Internal Research Internship* programme in Semester 1 (PS291), this placement will take place in Semester 2 and is designed to further enhance the development of your skills and their application in real-world

settings. This experiential learning should enable you to better understand how the principles of psychology can be applied in a diverse range of contexts. As such, this module is intended to complement the range of knowledge, skills and competencies that you have accrued in the taught modules on the psychology programme.

The primary aim of the work placement module is to expose you to real-world applications of psychological principles in an external setting so that you can better appreciate the link between psychological theory and practice in a range of organisational and community contexts.

2.3 Module Content

Content will vary depending on the specific placement in which you are engaged. However, it is expected that your placement will include the following core components:

- Experiencing real-world applications of psychology and psychological principles in a professional setting
- Making the connection between the academic study of psychology and its applications
- Developing a range of professional and inter-personal skills required for working in an organisation
- Reflecting on personal and professional development

2.4 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Critically evaluate the role of psychological principles in real-world applications.
- Appreciate the connection between fundamental knowledge in psychology and its application in the community.
- Reflect on the roles of individuals and teams in applying psychology.
- Document and reflect on the professional and inter-personal skills developed throughout the placement.
- Produce both written and oral evaluations of the placement experience.

3. Teaching Methods and Effort Hours

This module will involve a small number of preparatory lectures and tutorials prior to the commencement of the placement. Table 1 displays an indication of the amount of effort hours expected as part of this module.

Table 1: Effort hours required for module completion

Learning unit	Hours
Lectures	4
Tutorials	6
Placement (<u>minimum</u> hours)	260
Independent learning	480
Total	**750**

As can be seen above, it is expected that you engage in a **<u>minimum</u>** of **260 hours** placement across the semester (equivalent to 20 hours per week for the 13-week period), although this could be higher depending on the placement requirements. The total hours spent on placement should not exceed 520 hours (equivalent to 40 hours per week over the placement period).

Beyond the placement, it is expected that you engage in a considerable amount of independent learning through personal reflection and development. This should be clearly documented in your written assignments and end of semester presentation (see section 6 for more details on the requirements for this).

3.1 Timetable/scheduling

An indicative schedule of required work placement activities is provided in Table 2. As can be seen here, while the work placement itself takes place in Semester 2, it is expected you engage in preparatory work (e.g. CV development and securing work placements) in Semester 1.

Please note that this schedule may be subject to minor change. For example, placements may be secured earlier or slightly later than indicated here. You will be updated regarding any changes to the proposed timetable.

Table 2: Approximate schedule of events (2024/2025)

Semester 1	Date	Activity
Week 2	30th September	Class outlining placement requirements and process
Week 4	14th October	CV uploaded for placement applications
Weeks 5,6	**21st Oct – 8th Nov**	Job Ads posted; **selection deadline November 8th**
Week 7-9	**11th – 29th Nov**	Placement interviews on rolling basis
Week 11	13th December	Deadline for securing Semester 2 work placement
Week 12	TBA*	Class on final preparations for placement
Semester 2	Date	**Activity**
Week 1	**04th February**	Students commence work placement
Week 5	**06th March**	**Interim progress report due**
Week 11	**02nd May**	Work placement completed**
Week 12	**06th or 07th May**	**Oral presentation on work experience**
Week 12	9th May	Host organisation's evaluation of student due
-	**23rd May**	**Final report and work diary due**

*Dates are provisional and subject to change but will take place within the indicated week.

Note: Although this is specified as Week 11 here, this fits with the academic calendar which <u>includes</u> two study weeks in semester 2. It is expected that you continue placement during these weeks, thus leading to a total of **13 weeks placement (i.e. from 04th February – 02nd May 2025, inclusive) however dates may vary slightly depending on the specific placement.

4.   Selection of Work Placement

As outlined in Table 1, you will be expected to secure a work placement in semester 1. This placement may be identified by you (e.g. through student volunteering or personal contacts), however the university may also be able to facilitate links with organisations should you be unable to identify and secure a relevant placement yourself. This will be carried out in conjunction with the Department of Psychology. Placements may take place in a number of different organisations, although these organisations <u>must</u> provide a context for the application of psychological principles and concepts. The appropriateness of the placement in this regard will be determined and approved by the Department of Psychology workplace coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

It is important to note though that, while the Department will be able to highlight placement opportunities to students, it is ultimately <u>your</u> responsibility to secure the placement. Further details on the process are given below.

4.1 Garda Vetting and Child Protection Policy

All students must undergo Garda Vetting prior to the placement in line with university procedures (see link here). You should complete this in Semester 2 of second year via the Maynooth University student vetting office. If requested by a given placement organisation, you should be in a position to provide this documentation to them. Be aware that some placements may require you to undergo further vetting in line with their own policies and procedures.

In addition, any students working in organisations that provide services to children will be required to familiarise themselves with the University's Child Protection Policy and Procedures (see here for an overview of the 2017 Child Protection Policy and here for the Child Protection Procedures).

4.2 Declaration of Health Status

If you experience any kind of disability or chronic physical illness and/or any mental health problem that you wish to disclose (e.g. which may negatively affect your placement experience or their ability to fully commit to it), you should do so prior to initiating the application process.

4.3 Applying for Placements

Prospective host organisations may advertise their placement in line with Maynooth University's *Placement Protocol for Placement Providers* (see Appendix 1)*. Prior to this, they will be invited to develop a brief and suitable job description that clearly involves some application of psychological principles. In cases where a student identifies their own placement, the organisation must submit a *Placement Proposal Form* (see Appendix 2).

Once a given placement is approved by the Department of Psychology, details will be placed on Moodle for you to view. Placements will be advertised on a rolling basis throughout Semester 1 of the 2024/2025 term.
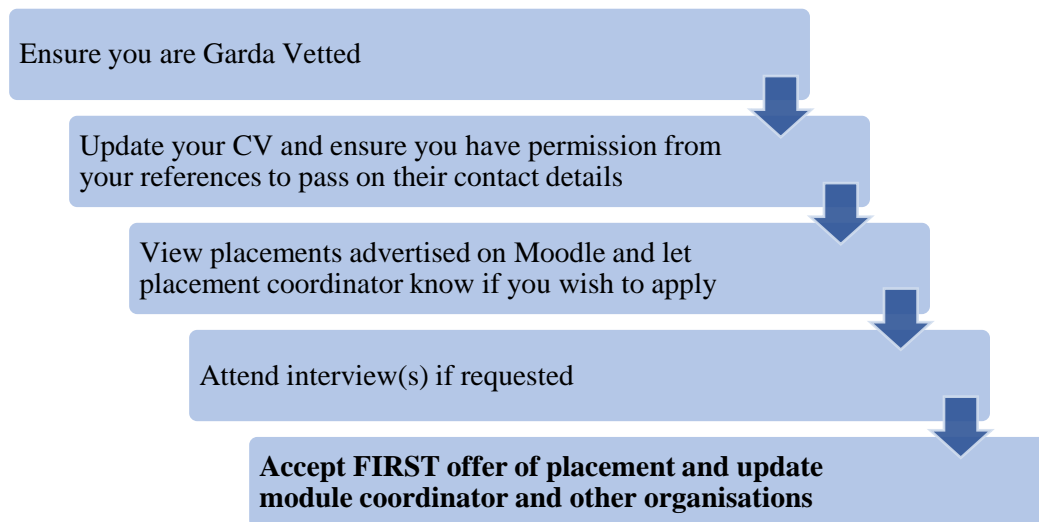
Requirements for placement applications

Prior to any placement applications, you must ensure that your CV is uploaded onto Moodle at the beginning of Week 3 in Semester 1 (see Table 2). CVs should have been previously developed by all students in the second year *Critical Skills in Psychology* module, but should be further refined and updated in order to take into account any additional experience you may have accrued since initial submission. Most organisations will request **references**, so you should ensure that you are able to obtain these, also making sure that your nominated referees consent for their details to be passed on, and that they are happy to be contacted by prospective employers.

Once placements are advertised on Moodle you should carefully read the job description. If you wish to apply for a placement you should inform the Psychology Placement Coordinator, Prof. Richard Roche (Richard.Roche@mu.ie) **before the closing date indicated**. Once you do this, you are consenting to have your CV and reference details passed onto the organisation in question. The placement coordinator will then send CVs onto the organisation in bulk.

The organisations will screen candidates and conduct interviews if deemed necessary. Remember that you must be available to attend for interview at **any time** in semester 1. The Department of Psychology will have no role in the selection process, so it is your responsibility to present yourself for interview at the time indicated.

Remember that, while you are permitted to apply for as many placements as you wish, you should ensure that you are suitably qualified for these, and you **MUST accept the first placement that you are offered**. It is important that, once offered a placement, you also let the module coordinator know.

Ensure you are Garda Vetted

Update your CV and ensure you have permission from your references to pass on their contact details

View placements advertised on Moodle and let placement coordinator know if you wish to apply

Attend interview(s) if requested

Accept FIRST offer of placement and update module coordinator and other organisations

Figure 1: Process for Placement Applications in Semester 1

Should I apply for a placement?

Once a given placement is advertised, you should pay careful attention to whether or not you would be a suitable candidate (as per the job description). When considering whether to apply for a given placement you might also like to consider practicalities, such as hours of work and location (e.g. will you easily be able to commute there every day?), as well as the type of work (e.g. would you enjoy working with children?). While you may not be in a position to be highly selective regarding your placement, it should be a valuable learning experience and, although you may not enjoy every aspect of the job, you should be able to derive at least some benefits.

5.   During the Placement

5.1 Placement Evaluation

Staff within the Department of Psychology may conduct one or more site visits or phone calls with you and your host organisation as part of the placement. These will typically occur near the commencement of the placement period and may also occur towards the end of the placemen if necessary. Here, both you and your supervisor in the organisation will be consulted on your performance and your views on the overall success of the placement. The purpose of such consultations is to ensure that the placement is appropriate and that both parties are satisfied with the arrangement.

Important: If you have <u>any</u> concerns at all during the placement you should raise these with the work placement coordinator or another member of staff in the psychology department as soon as possible.

5.2 Your Responsibilities

You are expected to comply with Maynooth University's *Work Placement Guidelines* at all times during the placement (see Appendix 3). You should ensure that you familiarise yourself with, and adhere to, the principles of best practice, professional conduct and current legislation with the specific sector in which you are engaged. This includes ensuring that you maintain professional standards with regard to data confidentiality, as well as complying with health and safety standards and protocols.

You should also be available for consultation/ feedback on the placement as outlined above, for example via phone calls or during site visits. Outside of the placement, you are expected to attend the preparatory classes in Semester 1 and be available to deliver an oral presentation at the end of Semester 2.

Importantly, you should <u>not expect to be paid during the work placement</u>. You are reminded that the key goal of the placement is for "*Learning, not Earning.*" Where payment is offered this will be purely at the discretion of the host organisation. Given the nature of the settings in which psychology students will be engaged, it is expected that the vast majority of the roles will be conducted in a voluntary capacity.

5.3 Responsibilities of Placement Providers

It is expected that placement providers comply with Maynooth University's *Placement Protocol for Placement Providers*. Placement providers should also be able to be available for consultation regarding the students' performance throughout the placement.

Host organisations will be invited to complete a formal evaluation of the students' performance at the end of the placement (see Appendix 5).

6. Assessment and Deadlines

This module is worth 30 credits, accounting for half of those available for the year. It will comprise three separate pieces of written work and an oral presentation. While each assessment piece will be graded, this is a competency-based module so you will simply receive either a pass or fail grade on completion. Further details are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Assessment Breakdown for Module

Assessment Type	Assessment Description
Work Diary (due with final report on 23rd May 2025)	You must complete a **weekly work diary** which clearly documents your activities, experience and skill development over the course of the placement. It is expected that this will be completed on an ongoing basis from the commencement of the placement. The complete diary will be submitted as an **appendix** to the final report at the end of the placement.
Interim progress report (due 06th March 2025)	After four weeks of the placement, you must submit a brief progress report (approx. **one page**), which details your initial reflections on the placement experience (see Appendix 4.1). This can be submitted on Moodle with no hard copy required.
Final report (due 23rd May 2025)	At the end of the placement you must submit a final report in which you clearly articulate an understanding of how psychological principles have been applied within your work placement (approx. **5,000 words**). This report should also document your key achievements and skill development. An outline of what is expected from this report is included in Appendix 4.2. The report should be typed, printed and **soft-bound** and submitted to the departmental office or the assignment box.
Presentation (provisional dates: 06th or 07th May 2025)	Following the placement, you will be required to deliver a **10 minute presentation** on your placement experience. This will take place in week 12 of semester after the placement is completed. The presentation should include an overview of the organisation in which you worked, your role in the organisation, the challenges encountered, and the key skills and knowledge which were developed (see Appendix 4.3 for marking scheme).

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Placement Protocol for Placement Providers in Psychology

The following is the protocol employed for the purposes of placing students in appropriate positions for the period of the placement programme.

The Department of Psychology will sanction all placement positions as being academically relevant prior to them being advertised to the students.

1. Positions will be advertised to students via Moodle as soon as they are received.
2. Students may apply for any/all relevant positions.
3. Some organisations may choose to offer placement positions via an online application process. In this case the placement coordinator will notify students of the opportunity and pass on the online application details.
4. The placement coordinator will email on applicants' CVs to the prospective host organisation in bulk, prior to the closing date indicated.
5. The organisation will screen and select those for interview. Additional information on any candidate may be requested and in this case the request will be passed onto the appropriate academic staff member.
6. The Department of Psychology will have no part in the selection procedure.
7. All students who are called for interview must attend.
8. The Placement Coordinator may seek feedback on interviews from the organisation to pass onto the student if it is available.
9. Interviews may be accommodated on campus or on site, at the convenience of the host organisation.
10. Organisations will be notified of any class/lab exam times and dates from which students cannot be excused.
11. The student is expected to accept their first placement offer and will be excluded from any further placement opportunities.
12. Should a placement host organisation wish to extend the placement contract this may be possible but for not longer than the commencement of the next academic year.

Organisation name:	Click or tap here to enter text.	URL of organisation:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Name of contact in organisation:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Email address:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Phone number:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Location of placement:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Position title:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Start date:	04th February 2025
Reporting to:	Click or tap here to enter text.	End date:	02nd May 2025
Number of students:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Hours of work per week:	Click or tap here to enter text.

Organisation Details and Background:

Job Description

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PLACEMENT STUDENT

List bullet

List bullet

PREFERRED SKILLS

The person who will succeed in this role will possess the following skills:

List bullet

List bullet

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Any other information relevant to placement

Please complete all of the following:			
Does your organisation have a current health and safety policy?		Yes ☐	No☐
Will health and safety training be provided?		Yes ☐	No☐
Will a confidentiality agreement be a requirement?		Yes ☐	No☐
Will there be an induction programme or training provided?		Yes ☐	No☐
Will references be required?		Yes ☐	No☐
Will placement offer be contingent on passing a medical examination?		Yes ☐	No☐
Will the student be paid for their work during the placement?		Yes ☐	No☐
If yes to the above, please indicate remuneration		€	
Signature of placement host representative		Date:	
Approved By:		Date:	

Thank you for your time and interest in Maynooth University placement students.

Appendix 3 - Work Placement Guidelines

1. **Behaviour**

Courtesy: You are still a student of Maynooth University and therefore your behaviour reflects on the University and the Department of Psychology. Be mindful of the fact that once you are finished in the organisation, Maynooth University will wish to continue its relationship with the organisation for future students where possible. If you have the opportunity to attend a seminar/conference etc. do so where possible and show interest in the topic.

Punctuality: Always arrive at your workplace on time. Do NOT leave without permission. Should you have to leave work early for personal reasons, get permission from your manager yourself.

Dress Code: As per Organisation dress code.

Telephone Calls: NEVER make personal phone calls from work and NEVER take personal phone calls at work. Do not allow friends/family to call in person to your work place.

Email: Do NOT abuse the Organisation email for your own personal use, likewise with Internet surfing.

2. **Record Keeping**

You should keep a record of tasks/projects worked on and completed. Team work should be noted and all relevant material sought for your own end of work placement report. Do NOT copy, keep or remove from the Organisation premises any material which is of a confidential nature. Such material should not be used in your report. A daily work diary of work completed and any in-house training or seminars/conferences attended, noteworthy speakers etc. should be kept and this must be handed in with the formal report.

3. **Health and Safety**

Familiarise yourself with any hazards that may be present in the workplace, chemical, biological, physical, or psychological. In the event of an accident at work you will be required to fill in an accident report. One copy of this report should also be sent to the Industrial Placement Office.

4. **Troubleshooting**

While you are on work placement you are still a registered student of Maynooth University and as such you should not feel alone in your new workplace. Should you encounter any problems *that you cannot resolve* you should contact the Placement Coordinator.

Appendix 4 – Assessment Material

4.1 Interim Report

4.2 Final Report

4.3 Presentation making scheme

External Work Placement (PS293)

Work Placement Interim Report

Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Title of organisation in which work placement is taking place : _____

_____

Briefly reflect on your placement experience to date. This reflection may include an analysis of your current roles and responsibilities, skill development, and/or a description of challenges which you have experienced.

External Work Placement (PS293)

Work Placement Final Report

<Insert name here>
Third Year BSc (Hons) Psychology

<Insert name of placement here>

May 2025

Department of Psychology
Maynooth University
Maynooth, Co. Kildare
Ireland

Abstract

All reports <u>must</u> contain an abstract. This is a short paragraph (200 words), which summarises **the whole report.**

For a report to be considered satisfactory it <u>must</u> contain at least the following:
- An adequate title page (see this template)
- An abstract
- A table of contents
- A description of the organisation
- A description of what your role was in the organisation
- An evaluation of the knowledge gained on placement
- An evaluation of how your placement (or aspects thereof) related to, or incorporated, psychological theory and research
- Conclusions recommending any changes you think could be made to the placement, or to the module, to improve the experience for future students.

The formatting should be to the standard of this template with chapter, section and page numbering. The report should be bound in a suitable cover. All references should adhere to APA style.

Sample Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Organisation Background

Provide an overview of the history, function and objectives of the organisation. Describe the structure of the organisation. If appropriate, mention how the different branches or departments relate to one another.

Chapter 2: Job Description

Give a brief summary of what you did within the Organisation – duties, responsibilities, to whom you reported etc.

You should adhere to the following styles template including:

- Heading 1 (for chapter titles),
- Heading 2 (for section titles),
- Heading 3(for sub-section titles),
- Normal (for main text),
- Caption (to label illustrations),
- Header,
- Footer, and
- Page Number.

Note that each chapter should start on a new page.

Chapter 3: Achievements

You can break down the chapters according to appropriate subsections. For example:

3.1 Introduction

- The purposes of your work-experience.

3.2 Activities

- Departments worked in; functions and activities; contributions to projects.

3.3 Knowledge and Skills Gained

- Identify how psychological principles were applied to issues within the placement
- Detail knowledge gained from routine work; project work; specialised work; work of a repetitive nature, in-house training undertaken, seminars/talks attended which were organised by your host organisation etc.

- Describe the skills that you gained or further developed based on work within the placement.
-

Chapter 4: Conclusions

This should include a short summary of the report, emphasizing the recommendations you would make, the problems encountered and the benefits gained. This section should involve an overall reflection of the placement experience. You may answer questions such as the following:

- How did your work relate to psychological theories and concepts studied in your previous modules?
- Did your experience help you appreciate the how psychological principles are applied in the workplace?
- What were the learning outcomes of your placement?
- How will this experience affect your career choice / career options?

References

Make sure to include a list of references adhering to APA style, starting on a separate page.

Appendix – Work Diary

At the end of the work placement report you should include all entries from your work diary in a separate appendix.

PS293: Presentation feedback sheet

Student Name: _____

Work placement title: _____

Style of Presentation

Verbal presentation style   _____

Use of visual aids (Pictures, diagrams etc.)   _____

Textual information (too much text, font size etc.)   _____

Appropriate timing   _____

Content of Presentation

Background description   _____

Role in organisation articulated   _____

Experience/skills gained articulated   _____

Awareness of psychological applications _____

Critical self-reflection   _____

Ability to answer questions   _____

Overall comments:

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│   │
│   │
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Signed: _____   **Date:** _____

Appendix 5
Placement Evaluation by Supervisor

Name of student: _____

Name of organisation: _____

Please enter a number between 1 and 5 after each section, where 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent. All comments welcome

1. Interest in Work: _____

2. Initiative: _____

3. Quality of Work: _____

4. Volume of Work: _____

5. Reliability: _____

6. Relations with others: _____

7. Communication Skills
            Written: _____

        Oral: _____

8. Acceptance of criticism and suggestions: _____

9. Attendance: _____

10. Punctuality: _____

11. Overall Performance: _____

12. Additional Information/Comments and/or Suggestions: _____

_____

_____

_____