

Learning to be professional: the story of my placement experience

Competition October 2008

5 prizes of £200 will be awarded for the best stories of around 2000 words that provide descriptions and insights into your experiences of learning and how you have developed personally and professionally through your work placement experience.

10 runner-up prizes of £50 Tesco Vouchers

The year long professional training experience is often cited as one of the most significant experiences in Surrey students' time at university. The Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education wants to find out more about the nature of the experience – both good and not so good – and how it changes and develops the people who are involved.

We want you to tell us your personal story in about 2000 words. The questions below are intended to help you think about your experience and create a good story. They are not intended to be a template that has to be followed rigidly. In fact, it might be more interesting and more effective to focus on a question, theme or a significant incident than to attempt to address all the questions. The choice is yours. Please include photographic images, video clips or podcasts or any other communication media if it helps you tell your story.

Overarching question

- **What does learning to be professional through the work placement experience mean?**

About your experience

- What was the context for your work placement?
- How did you find your placement?
- What sort of work were you doing?
- What was the work environment like?
- What sort of people did you work with?
- How did you learn to interact and work effectively with the people you worked with?
- Who helped you learn the job and how did they help you?
- What challenges or problems did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- What did you learn about working in this professional field?
- What did you learn about working in an organization?
- Were there other dimensions to your experience outside work? How did these contribute to your development?
- How did you change as a person?
- What were the most important things you learnt at university that helped you in the work place?
- What other aspects of your life helped you prepare for your placement experience?
- What did the experience feel like? What was the emotional journey like?
- Knowing what you know now what would you have done differently?
- What advice would you give to Surrey students who are just about to embark on their professional training experience?

If you want to keep your account anonymous please signal this when you submit it. Only the SCEPTR Director and administrator will know who the account has come from and this will remain so through the process.

Submission process

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION 2pm Friday October 10th 2008

Essays must be emailed to Susan Wood S.Wood@surrey.ac.uk

PANEL REVIEW

Essays will be reviewed by a small panel comprising representatives from SCEPTRe and the Professional Training and Careers Committee

Judging criteria

Prizes will be awarded for the stories that provide the richest descriptions and insights into what *learning to be* through your work placement experience meant. We want to understand how you developed as you engaged physically, intellectually and emotionally with the challenges of your experience.

NOTIFICATION

All participants will be notified of the outcome of the competition by December 1st 2008.

How the stories will be used

1 The winning stories will be compiled in a booklet produced by the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education and published on SCEPTRe's web site. Extracts from other stories may also be included in this booklet together with a synthesis paper. If the writer wishes, accounts can remain anonymous.

2 Winning and runner-up stories will also be made accessible to other students through a wiki. This will be a resource for University of Surrey students who are preparing for their work placement. If the writer wishes, accounts can be anonymised.

3 SCEPTRe will produce a synthesis account of the learning gained through the placement experience for all students and professional training tutors. Extracts from stories will be anonymous.

4 The synthesis account may be incorporated into a paper for publication or a book chapter. Extracts from stories will be anonymous.

5 Winning entries are also eligible for entry into national competitions. *Last year a University of Surrey placement student won £500 in a national story competition.*

*Professor Norman Jackson
Director SCEPTRe*

This information is considered to be transparent and fair by Professor Terry Desombre, Chair of the University of Surrey Ethics Committee