

SEPnet – Employer Engagement Programme for Physics Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs)

Guidance for Employers

Background

SEPnet is a consortium of 9 university physics departments in the South East of England (Hertfordshire, Kent, Open, Portsmouth, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, Southampton, Surrey, Sussex). We promote physics in industry through engagement with employers, address skills needs and create opportunities for industry and SEPnet partner Physics Departments to work more closely together.

SEPnet, through its graduate network (GRADnet), aims to create a pipeline of postdoctoral physics graduates with the employability skills and understanding of the business environment and business needs to play a significant role in driving innovation in industry.

What we offer employers

GRADnet's Employer Engagement Programme offers industry access to some of the brightest minds and skilled problem solvers through the creation of placements and other employer engagement opportunities for physics postgraduate research students (PGRs). We provide:

- Access to physics PGRs across nine universities
- Opportunities for researchers to carry out feasibility studies, analyse data and bring new ideas
- Access to knowledge exchange opportunities, consultancy and collaborative research
- Invitations to SEPnet sponsored networking events
- A personalised approach to meet your needs

What you can offer

- Short consultancy projects/placements 1 to 3 weeks
- Short block placements 1 to 3 months
- Site visits, tours and work shadowing
- Mentoring for help and advice – one-off or ongoing
- Technical and employability skills training and participation in residential schools

How does each offer work?

- **Short consultancy projects/placements - 1 to 3 weeks**
 - Projects can include a piece of data analysis or feasibility study, software programming, product testing, upgrading a piece of kit, calibrating a new detector, modelling, website development or science communication.
 - Projects can be carried out on site or remotely by individuals or in groups. We would not expect you to pay students for short pieces of work. However we would expect you to cover travel and other expenses.
 - Your project will be advertised to all SEPnet Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs) who will be asked to register with SEPnet and apply direct to you. You can interview applicants face to face, by phone or Skype and select a suitable candidate at any time.

- Students will be asked to complete a blog about their experience to share with other SEPnet students and to check this with you prior to publishing.
- **Short block placements - 1 to 3 months**
 - Projects can include a piece of data analysis or feasibility study, software programming, product testing, upgrading a piece of kit, calibrating a new detector, modelling, website development or science communication.
 - You will be expected to fund the student at a rate of £1,000 per month as students will need to suspend their research studies for the duration of the placement and will not be funded for this period. If you are an SME, part-funding may be available at some SEPnet universities through the Santander Scheme for 3-month placements at £500 per month. Visit <http://www.santander-grants.com/> for more information and let us know if you are interested in applying so we can help with the process.
 - Your project will be advertised to all SEPnet Postgraduate Researchers (primarily PhD students) who will be asked to register with SEPnet and apply direct to you. You can interview applicants face to face, by phone or Skype and select a suitable candidate at any time.
 - Students will be asked to complete a blog about their experience to share with other SEPnet students and to check this with you prior to publishing.
- **Site visits, tours and work shadowing**
 - A site visit or work shadowing is a great way to enable students to learn about different career options, develop an understanding of your organisation and its role and build contacts. It is also a valuable way for you to showcase what your organisation does and raise awareness of collaborative and job opportunities.
 - If you are able to offer a one-day site visit and tour of your organisation, please let us know and we will contact you to discuss dates, numbers and format.
 - We will advertise this information to PGR (primarily PhD) students across the 9 SEPnet partners and co-ordinate the details of the visit with you.
 - We will arrange transport or students will be expected to make their own travel arrangements. In most cases travel expenses will be covered by SEPnet.
 - If you are able to offer a work shadowing opportunity for a student with, for example, a newly appointed member of staff, of 3-5 days, please advise on dates and numbers. We will advertise the opportunity to SEPnet students who will be invited to contact you direct. In most cases SEPnet would expect to cover student travel costs.
- **Mentoring for help and advice – one-off or ongoing**
 - Mentoring by employers is very valuable for students. The mentoring relationship can be short or long term and may focus on a particular issue or a range of issues. One-off mentoring may include providing advice and guidance on a CV or offer interview practice, or the relationship might be ongoing and focus on the student's career plans and development.
 - Mentoring can be valuable for mentors for their personal development and understanding of postgraduates' needs and areas of interest and research.
 - Mentoring relationships can take place by email (e-mentoring), by telephone, Skype or face to face. Mentoring guidelines are provided.

What to do next

Email employerengagement@sepnet.ac.uk for more information.