



International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience

The IAESTE Programme

The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience arranges paid course-related training abroad for undergraduates studying for degrees in science and technology. Since its foundation at Imperial College in 1948, IAESTE, which now has over 80 member countries, has exchanged in excess of 300,000 students worldwide, playing a key role in the development of engineers, scientists and architects.

IAESTE meets the needs of British industry, universities and students in providing quality foreign placements for high calibre, hand-picked trainees. UK employers currently offer placements through the programme to students from over 50 countries covering a wide range of fields in science and technology. On the basis of these placements IAESTE UK is able to send British undergraduates abroad to work in countries spanning the world's continents. The IAESTE programme creates the opportunity for these students to add an international dimension to their coursework and CVs, heightening their career and employability prospects and giving them the energy and drive to contribute more when they enter the workplace.

IAESTE UK is one of several mobility programmes managed by the Education and Training Group of the British Council.

The Training Available to Your Students

This placement has been beneficial in so many ways, I have gained confidence in my own practical skills as well as its adding to my relevant knowledge. It has opened so many doors for me, especially if I want to carry on and do graduate studies. I would encourage anyone thinking of doing a placement, to go for it.

Alison Jack, Mechanical & Offshore Engineering, Robert Gordon University, on her placement in Canada.

It is very difficult to summarise the Icelandic experience in such a small space! I met many people from all over the world and have made many good friends. I am sure my placement will be held in high regard by potential employers and will be a key factor as I apply for graduate jobs.

Gordon MacLeod, Computer Science, Strathclyde University, on his placement in Iceland.

Through the IAESTE exchange programme your students may secure short term vacation training abroad, usually for periods up to 12 weeks in the summer time. Candidates must be full-time undergraduate students, over the age of 19, and preferably in their penultimate year of study.

All fields of study where practical experience is an essential or recommended adjunct to the study course are potentially included in the IAESTE exchange. The majority of training offers are suitable for students of engineering and technology, who also represent the majority of programme applicants. Computing, applied sciences and the life sciences constitute a significant proportion of the traineeships, and there are opportunities in some countries for students of agriculture, forestry, architecture, industrial design and related fields.

IAESTE training placements are available in industrial and commercial organisations, research institutes, local government bodies, state enterprises, consultancies, laboratories and academic institutions, covering a wide range of disciplines. There are four broad categories of work available through IAESTE:

Research & Development offers: Offers in this category are often laboratory based and deal with specialised work. They entail some element of diagnostic analysis, testing and evaluation and have some theoretical content. Advanced level students will normally fill such offers. These offers could also be useful for diploma, project or thesis work.

Professional Offers: These offers entail specialised professional work and the level of skill normally found in more advanced students. They often deal with special project work, possibly in a design office, in technical management or in testing services.

Working Environment Offers: These offers cover operational activity and usually involve on-site or assembly work related to the production process. Through these placements students gain experience in a hands-on working environment. Such offers are suitable to students at the beginning or middle of their studies.

Non specific offers: These offers are not confined to students from a particular subject field. They cover activities such as general administrative and office work experience, outdoor work, or language offers.

Opportunities for Sandwich Course Students

IAESTE was originally set up to exchange students during their long vacation breaks. Although in recent years some longer term placements have been arranged (primarily in North America, the Netherlands, and Scandinavian member countries), departments offering sandwich course degrees should be aware that IAESTE UK cannot guarantee that the appropriate long term offers will be available in a given year. Sandwich course students committed to the idea of overseas training may elect to take up shorter term IAESTE offers as part of their industrial placement requirements, completing the remainder of their training in the UK.

The Places to Go

I would really recommend any placement in Slovenia. It is a beautiful country and the reception team made it easy to explore. The concentration of exchange students in the picturesque capital Ljubljana made the experience truly international. I never expected to have friends from Macedonia, Norway and Egypt! I was also surprised by how much I enjoyed the physics research. I am inspired to continue my studies with a PhD, and will hopefully have the opportunity to work abroad again.

Jenny Hogan, Natural Sciences, Cambridge University, on her placement in Slovenia

There are currently over 80 full, associate or co-operating member countries in IAESTE. The UK exchanges offers with approximately 50 of these depending on demand from UK students. In recommending that a student take part in the programme, you can be assured that in each of the member countries there is an IAESTE representative to whom students may turn for advice and assistance. In many cases local students run IAESTE committee and arrange a social programme of visits to historical and cultural places of interest, as well as parties and other social events:

Promoting the Programme

Thank you for this amazing opportunity. It was my best summer ever! I learnt so much, not just about my subject but about the lives of people all over the world and particularly about the history of Berlin.

Sophie Flood, Biochemistry, Cardiff University

Students apply directly to IAESTE UK through the IAESTE UK website www.iaeste.org.uk and we communicate with all applicants directly from initial registration through to departure. **We do ask academic staff to make every effort to publicise IAESTE to the appropriate students; please contact IAESTE UK if you require leaflets or posters for distribution in your department.** If you have any students who wish to apply to the programme they should do so by the second week of December.

Placing Your Students: You Can Help

The IAESTE exchange works on a reciprocal basis and one of the main tasks for IAESTE UK staff is to arrange training places in the UK for foreign students. The number of students IAESTE UK can send abroad is directly dependent on the number of foreign IAESTE trainees brought in. Placements in industry are arranged through direct targeted mailings and in recent years with the assistance and support of professional institutions in the UK.

Academic staff have proved to be of invaluable assistance in expanding the pool of IAESTE UK training offers and by doing so have at the same time ensured that their own students are treated as priority applicants to IAESTE. **University departments may increase the number of their students sent abroad by making reciprocal offers for foreign trainees.** Alternatively academic staff have volunteered to contact employers on the programme's behalf whether individually or through larger mailings. IAESTE UK will contact any employers you feel would be interested in employing a foreign student on a short term basis.

If your department itself makes a training offer the mutual benefit derived by all concerned (the UK students sent abroad, your colleagues and research students who will work alongside the foreign trainees, the foreign students themselves) will fully warrant the expenditure on a weekly salary for the foreign trainee which is sufficient to cover the cost of living in your area.

By making an offer of training to a foreign IAESTE student, you will not be depriving a UK student of that place but ensuring that another placement for a UK student is secured abroad. Bear in mind that IAESTE traineeships at universities can also lead to useful contacts between institutions and to the recruitment of postgraduate students from abroad.

As always, I was impressed by the quality of students which the IAESTE programme provides – knowledgeable, competent and highly motivated.

School of Biosciences, Cardiff University

Student summer projects are a good way to attract potential research students and start new research programmes. IAESTE trainee's do this well.

Department of Materials Science, University of Newcastle

Ismael is an excellent student, one of the best I have ever encountered. No task was too difficult and he undertook research suitable for postgraduates. He intends to return as a postgraduate researcher and I will be very eager to have him in our team full-time.

Mechanical Engineering Department, Queen's University Belfast

If you are able to assist IAESTE either by directing us to potential new employers or becoming one yourself, please contact IAESTE UK to request an Information for *Employers* pack and an Offer of Training Form. All forms and information are also available on www.iaeste.org.uk

The IAESTE UK Trainee of the Year Award

First inaugurated in 1998 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the association, the IAESTE UK Trainee of the Year Award is designed to test in two stages students' key skills in oral and written communications. The competition is open to all UK students placed abroad by IAESTE. All entrants are initially required to submit a written report on their experiences abroad as trainees on the IAESTE programme. From these ten finalists are chosen to give a timed five minute presentation on their IAESTE training abroad before a panel of judges. These placements constitute a first step towards employment in the global economy and the feedback at the award final focuses on the students' impressions, their accounts of what they learnt and what they achieved, and how their experiences abroad have affected their chosen career paths. The first prize winner receives a cheque for £1000, second prize £500, and third £250.

The prospect of participating in the Trainee of the Year Award encourages students to take a proactive role in managing their placements overseas in order to gain the maximum benefit. We hope academic staff will both encourage students to enter and support the finalists in their preparations. The 2005 Trainee of the Year Award will take place on 21 November in London. If you require any further information or would like to receive an invitation please contact IAESTE UK.

The IAESTE Exchange Calendar: A Summary

October-December

- Students have until the second week in December to register with IAESTE UK.
- IAESTE UK canvases industry and **academic institutions**, collecting Offer forms which detail training placements available to foreign students.

January

- The IAESTE Exchange Conference takes place in a member country. Training offers are exchanged between member countries in a series of bilateral meetings.

February - March

- Students are selected for placement abroad according to their qualifications, previous practical experience, keenness, and in some cases, language abilities. One candidate is selected for each placement and the nominations are sent out to the "receiving" IAESTE countries abroad who will liaise with their local employers and ascertain whether students are accepted.

April/May/June:

- Depending on when placements are due to start, acceptance documents will arrive from abroad. Once a student has been formally accepted by a foreign employer, IAESTE will endorse applications for work permits and visas and arrange accommodation for trainees.
- IAESTE UK will liaise with UK employers to ensure that foreign nominees are also accepted for training.

Get involved with IAESTE

If you would like to become more directly involved with IAESTE on behalf of your university then please contact us. There are often one or two academic 'activists' within a university (sometimes ex-IAESTE trainees themselves!) who work more closely with us to raise awareness of the programme and to promote our interests to other members of staff. University departments are in a unique position of seeing not only the benefits derived by having foreign trainees in their department but also the knowledge and experience gained by their own students from undertaking a placement abroad. It is vital that we have strong and lasting links with Universities in order to achieve our aims.