

EMBEDDING INDUSTRIAL EXPERIENCE INTO A PHYSICS DEGREE: THE IMPACT ON STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Samantha Louise Pugh

Samantha L Pugh, (S.L.Pugh@leeds.ac.uk)

School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

Industrial experience is valuable for students in terms of developing their soft skills and improving their graduate employment prospects. Some students choose to take an internship, but this is not an option for everyone, so it is important to provide opportunities for industrial experience within the taught degree programme.

The Group Industrial Project module is an optional 15-credit module for third year undergraduate Physics students. They are provided with a project brief that requires physics skills and knowledge. An industrial contact and an academic advisor supervise each group of students jointly. The students work with their supervisors to develop the project deliverables and to plan the execution of the project. Students are also trained in useful commercial skills such as project management, risk management, information searching, and intellectual property.

At the end of the module, students are asked to write a reflection on their experiences. They are asked to comment on their personal development, team work, changes to their understanding of the world of work and the impact on their future career plans. This paper provides a qualitative analysis of the students' responses to these questions, and the key benefits derived by the students through taking the module.

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