

Research Placements & Experiences 2022/23

For over 25 years, Research Placements & Experiences (formerly Nuffield Research Placements) have supported students from across the UK to develop a wide range of skills through engaging, real-world placements. Today, the programme continues to provide opportunities for year 12 (or equivalent) students from disadvantaged backgrounds to take part in authentic and meaningful STEM and STEM-related projects, gaining a unique experience through their participation. STEM Learning has delivered the programme since October 2020, recently building on its success to now offer two fantastic options – a 2-week Research Placement or 5-day Experience Placement.

Throughout the 2022/23 Research Placements & Experiences cycle, STEM Learning's Impact and Evidence team surveyed the key stakeholders to gain insights into their experiences and perceived impacts of the programme. This includes students, teachers, and placement providers. Students who undertook a placement or engaged with the *BeFutureReady* content were surveyed three times: immediately after they completed their application, after they had engaged with the *BeFutureReady* modules, and again after completing their placement. In addition to this, placement providers were surveyed after placements were completed, and teachers who provided students with a reference were surveyed at the start of the academic year.

Contents

1. Quality of Research and Placements Experiences	2
1a. BeFutureReady Content.....	2
1c. Communication with providers.....	2
2. Impact of Research and Placements Experiences.....	3
2a. Impact on students	3
2b. Impact on providers.....	4
3. Teacher feedback on Research and Placements Experiences	5
4. Placement provider feedback	5
5. Student's future destinations	6

1. Quality of Research and Placements Experiences

1a. BeFutureReady Content

The *BeFutureReady* pre-placement modules were overall received positively. All students had the opportunity to attend or engage with a variety of *BeFutureReady* content.

Research placement students had access to six *BeFutureReady* modules before their placement: '*Preliminary research*', '*Evaluate the reliability of sources*', '*Data collection: key considerations*', '*Data manipulation: using spreadsheets*', '*Presenting your research*', and '*Building your skills further*'. These modules were provided to prepare the students for the different aspects of their placement. The '*Presenting research*' module was particularly well-received, with 80% of students saying they had enjoyed the module. Experience placement students had access to three *BeFutureReady* modules before their placement: '*Preparing for the placement*', '*Understanding the world of work*' and '*Applying your learning*'. Various students gave feedback on these three modules, and said they found '*Applying your learning*' module to be the most useful part of the course. All modules received positive feedback.

Additionally, all students had the opportunity to attend optional webinars. There were two standalone webinars and a series, which included various resources for the students. The *BeFutureReady* content was designed to improve student awareness of the labour market and pathways to higher education, training, and employment. The feedback on the webinars was positive. The majority of students who attended the webinars said the content was relevant and useful, and that it increased their understanding of what employers are looking for from applicants.

1b. Induction process

Students had a positive induction process with Research and Placement Experiences. 93% of students agreed that they had the technology they needed to access the *BeFutureReady* modules, and 85% agreed that they had a suitable space to work at home. 90% of students agreed they understood what was expected of them after the induction. 76% of students agreed the information they received about Research Placements and Experiences before starting their placement told them everything they needed to know. Over 90% of students reflected that the webinars were well organised, contained relevant and useful information, and had increased their understanding of what employers are looking for.

1c. Communication with providers

The majority of students stated that they had a positive experience communicating with their provider during their placement. 95% of students agreed that their placement provider was able to answer their questions and 96% of students reported that their provider was both knowledgeable about the subject they were working on and supportive throughout the placement. 91% of providers who supported a placement said the administration of the placement ran smoothly. Additionally, 97% of providers felt that they were able to effectively support their student.

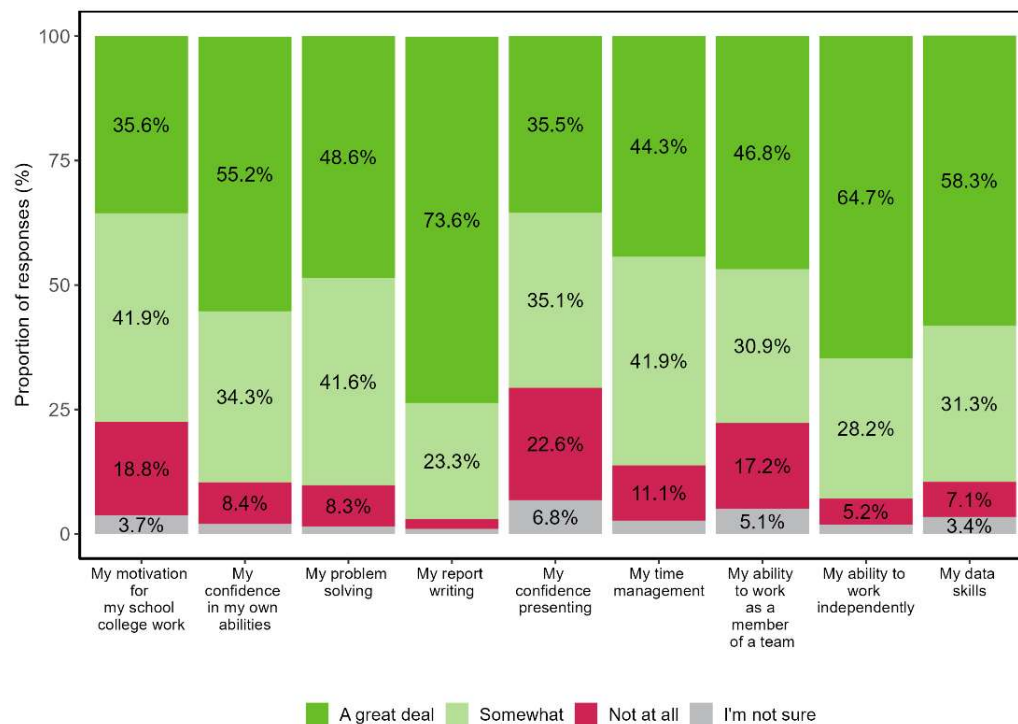
2. Impact of Research and Placements Experiences

Research Placements and Experiences received positive feedback from students. Students showed that they have gained many benefits, such as an improved range of skills, confidence, and time management since completing their placement. Analysis from data gathered shows that the Research Placements and Experiences have great impact on students and placement providers alike.

2a. Impact on students

After completing a Research Placement and Experience, students agreed their placement experience positively influenced their skills and attributes. 93% of students agreed that their confidence in their own abilities had been positively influenced, 90% of students agreed their placement experience positively influenced their ability to work independently, 92% of students agreed that their problem-solving skills had been positively influenced, and 87% of students agreed that their time management had been positively influenced (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Influence Research Placements and Experiences on students' wider skills and attributes.



Furthermore, 98% of students agreed their confidence in collecting their own data and 96% of students agreed their confidence in analysing existing data was positively influenced due to their placement experience.

Overall satisfaction with the scheme was high with 95% of students said they were satisfied with their experience. 97% of students said they would recommend Research and Placements to others and 95% of students said they were satisfied with their experience.

Students praised the experience they have gained from their placement:

"The whole week was the most fantastic experience I have ever participated in my life, and the opportunities provided were astronomical."

"The people I met were amazing and intelligent people who were willing to share their knowledge and expertise with me[,] I was able to develop coding skills I wouldn't have considered gaining otherwise[,] I produced something that will be of use to my supervisors, something that will be of significance and importance."

"The best thing about the experience was getting to work with a small group of people which meant that I could have better interactions... It was an opportunity for me to learn more things about getting a career in the field."

"I loved getting a glimpse of the research world, having only read about it prior to this. It was a fantastic opportunity that made me certain that research is what I wanted to pursue in the future."

"This experience allowed me to open my eyes to the many opportunities present around me, all in which changed my chosen subject for university."

"I really enjoyed how varied the different placements were. It made it much easier to understand how different companies work. It also helped with researching, team building and ICT skills."

2b. Impact on providers

Many providers said they have gained personal benefits from supervising a placement. 76% of providers said they have gained a sense of achievement, reward, and satisfaction and 72% of providers said they gained development of coaching, mentoring and management skills. 47% of providers gained a better understanding of young people in the workforce. Lastly, 54% of providers said they were able to communicate their subject area to the wider public.

Providers also stated what the main benefits of being involved in the scheme have had for their institution/organisation. 83% of providers said a benefit is fulfilling public engagement, widening participation or corporate responsibility goals. 55% of providers said a benefit is potential future recruitment, 60% of providers said a benefit was forging strong links with schools and colleges in your area, and 37% of providers felt that a benefit was diversifying their future workforce.

3. Teacher feedback on Research and Placements Experiences

100% of all teachers said they would recommend Research and Placements Experiences to future students. Additionally, 100% of all teachers said they would recommend other teachers and parents/carers to encourage their student/child to undertake a Research and Placements Experiences

Teachers agreed that students who did a placement improved in various areas. 92% of teachers agreed student's motivation towards their work improved, 94% agreed their confidence in their own abilities improved, 90% agreed their communication skills improved, 92% agreed their confidence in presenting improved, 90% agreed their ability to work independently improved, 94% agreed their ability to work as part of a team improved, and the same percentage agreed problem-solving skills and time management skills improved.

Teachers shared that students will have the opportunity to share their placement experience with other students when they return to school and will have the opportunity to do some presenting.

"It gave [student] the opportunity to see science in real life. It has inspired her to complete a science degree/apprenticeship."

"[Student] has grown in confidence, particularly relating to academic writing and working with statistics and referencing."

"It was an amazing experience for [student] and led to the offer of an apprenticeship in the future".

"The scheme has provided our students with fantastic opportunities that they would not have been able to access otherwise. They have gained skills, knowledge, and confidence as a result of their engagement in the scheme."

4. Placement provider feedback

The majority of providers felt that the administration of the scheme ran smoothly, with 90% agreeing. 71% of providers agreed they understood what was expected of them after the virtual induction, 78% of providers also agreed the guidance documents provided the information they needed, and 84% agreed contact with the Regional Coordinating Team was effective.

Furthermore, 97% of providers felt that they were able to effectively support their student. 91% of providers felt that the amount of contact they had with their student(s) was manageable. Additionally, 100% agreed the placement format they were able to offer worked well, and the same percentage agreed they were able to organise and manage the placement effectively via their organisation's own work systems.

Providers saw students develop personal skills during their placement. 93% of providers felt that their student was able to develop confidence in their own abilities. 92% of providers felt that their student developed the ability to manage their own time well and 85% of providers felt that their student had developed the ability to work independently. Providers also saw

students develop in the following skills: ability to work well in a team, motivation and problem solving.

100% of providers said they would recommend the Research and Placements Experiences to others.

"We enjoyed this project and would be happy to continue next year."

"The students were well organised and enthusiastic about the placements and were keen to learn. It was a real pleasure working with them."

"[Student] was incredibly well prepared coming to work here. His knowledge ahead of starting the programme was exceptional. ... This programme was an absolute delight to run and the [regional coordinating] staff were fantastic at communication and organising this!"

"[Student] was clearly a very intelligent student and had ambitious study and career plans. Having seen how well she tackled the task, I have no doubt she will go far."

"They were excellent: fully engaged and eager to learn. I was beyond impressed by their dedication and work ethics."

5. Student's future destinations

The majority of students (75%) said they want to go on to study a STEM or STEM-related degree after completing their placement. Students found that undertaking a Research Placement and Experience helped to confirm they were happy with their plans (48%). Students also reported their placement experience helped them to decide which option was right for them (24%).



If you're interested in encouraging students to receive life-changing experiences, learn more by visiting the [STEM Learning website](#).

