



Space Placements in Industry

2024

Information for hosts



Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Funding of placements and Subsidy Control	3
3. Projects	4
4. Duration	4
5. Pay	4
6. Employer application guidance	4
I. The project	
II. Describing the skills	
III. Intern specification	
7. Evaluation Panel	5
8. Advertising and Recruitment	5
9. Selection/interviewing	5
10. Start date	6
11. Grant agreement process	6
12. Onboarding	6
13. Induction Event	7
14. Academic poster requirements	7
15. Payment of milestones	8
16. Payment of final invoices	8
17. Showcase Event	8
18. Key dates	9

1. Introduction

The Space Placements in industry (SPIN) scheme brokers placement opportunities for university students considering employment in the space sector and connects them to space sector organisations who not only want to find the most talented and enthusiastic people to ensure the future success of their businesses, but also to ensure a pipeline of space savvy candidates coming out of education. Students are enthusiastic to work in the space sector and are keen to develop new skills.

The scheme is managed by the Satellite Applications Catapult (SAC) and funded by the UK Space Agency (UKSA). It has been running since 2013 and continues to grow in popularity, with demand always outstripping supply.

Through the SAC, the UKSA will make available grants of £3,850 per SPINtern for the programme in 2024 to ensure that all SPINterns are paid at least the National Living Wage with an additional £100 to cover travel to the Showcase Event.

In 2023, 80 placements were offered. In 2024, more than 120 places will be offered. Kathie Bowden (SAC Skills Manager) oversees the management of the scheme and will be supported by the SAC Skills Lead.

Organisations who would like to offer university students the opportunity of a work placement, to develop new skills and an insight into their business can apply for the grant by providing the SAC with details of a possible short-term project (typically of eight weeks duration). These projects are evaluated jointly by the UKSA and SAC and funding is awarded to projects which pass a threshold for quality, feasibility and the skills to be developed. Applications are welcomed for projects covering any **space related business area** and are **not restricted to STEM disciplines**.

In 2023, the SAC carried out all its SPIN recruitment through an applicant tracking platform called Applied. Our experience has been wholly positive, improving experience (on both sides), saving time and improving the diversity of applicants. All SPIN placements in 2024 will be recruited through this platform, with a full suite of support for employers new to the technology. We hope that you will find this a valuable experience.

2. Funding of placements and Subsidy Control

The UKSA will make available £481,000 to support 120 SPIN placements within space sector organisations. A proportion of this funding will be directed towards projects which specifically support the educational objectives of the UKSA Spaceflight team.

Several organisations including the SAC and the Open University, fund their own SPIN opportunities to support their business objectives. Other organisations have also done this, and more are always welcome to use the SPIN umbrella so that their interns have access to the support from UKSA/SAC and can attend the Induction and Showcase Event. Whilst

company funded projects like this will not be subject to evaluation by the panel for quality, feasibility and skills, they will be subject to the same student application process through the Applied platform.

A maximum of **two** high scoring applications per host will be accepted initially to ensure access to grants is fair across all potential hosts and regions. Should funding still be available when the Call closes, additional, high scoring proposals will be accepted.

Subsidy Control

If your organisation has received a subsidy, you will have received a formal confirmation of subsidy from the funder so this would be a clear indication of the type of subsidy you have received. To provide sufficient comfort around the application of subsidy control by host organisations, the Catapult points you to the government guidance contained in the Grant Agreement at 7.6 and below. This sets out that Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) applies cumulatively to subsidies awarded directly or indirectly under a subsidy framework. Subsidies which have not been declared as MFA, SPEI assistance, de minimis EU State Aid or subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement at award will not need to be declared at Annex 4 of the Grant Agreement. You will be able to tell if a subsidy has been awarded under an MFA framework where a notification of MFA has been sent to you by the awarding authority. On the application form you are required to provide the total value of all such subsidies in the relevant period. Then on the grant award agreement you will be asked to provide a list of all such subsidies received and sign a declaration to that effect.

Further information on the Subsidy Control Act is available here (please copy and paste into your browser): <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ca7d322322ce000dcd2384/subsidy-control-statutory-guidance.pdf>

3. Projects

Projects can vary from organisation to organisation, the only proviso is that they must be space related. They may be a piece of research or a small project that would otherwise not be done. It may be working as part of a team, or something more independent. Student applications are welcomed for awarded projects from any discipline and are **not** restricted to technical degrees.

4. Duration

Projects should be for at least 8 weeks. Projects can be longer than this but please note that the grant amount will remain at £3,850 and there is an expectation that SPINterns will be paid at least the National Living Wage for the additional period. This additional cost must be met by the host organisation.

We get a number of enquiries each year from students looking for placements of up to a year, so you are welcome to identify such an option in your application.

5. Pay

It is expected that SPINterns will be paid the National Living Wage as a minimum. Any project applications that do not offer the National Living Wage as a minimum will be rejected. Paid placements enable SPINterns to travel to their place of work, or potentially live away from home or university.

It is always appreciated if hosts are able to help their SPINterns secure affordable accommodation as they are likely to be more knowledgeable about the local area than the SPINtern.

6. Employer project application guidance

Applications from Employers will open in December 2023. All applications for projects must be made by Friday 16th February, 2024. It is **not** possible to extend this deadline due to the requirement for projects to be assessed by the Evaluation Panel. Projects will be evaluated on a **first come first served and rolling basis at two weekly intervals (excepting the Xmas period)**. Funding may be exhausted before the final deadline so earlier applications may be more likely to be awarded funding.

All applicants will be invited to nominate a 'Job Admin' who will be invited to Applied Training, and should they be successful will be added to the Applied Platform in that role.

i. The project

Please carefully consider the title of your project and ensure it reflects the work you expect the SPINtern to carry out.

Please ensure you fully describe the project you wish your SPINtern to undertake to ensure the Evaluation Panel is able to determine the **quality, feasibility and skills development** of the project. Minimal information does not allow the Panel to fully evaluate the project and there is a risk it could be therefore rejected.

ii. Describing the skills

Please ensure you fully describe the skills that you expect your SPINtern to develop whilst carrying out the project. Technical **and** non-technical skills (e.g., communication, critical thinking, time management, decision-making, writing, commercial awareness, teamwork, negotiation, problem-solving, organisation, perseverance, working under pressure, resilience etc) should be noted.

iii. Intern specification

Consider closely your intern specification. What academic background do you expect them to have? What are your minimum requirements and preferred additional requirements? We recommend that this list is not too long.

PhD students after their first year or Masters students are unlikely to be available due to their course requirements.

Additionally, please note that the SPIN Programme aims to give students work experience so hosts should **not require** applicants to already have work experience when they apply.

7. Evaluation Panel

On receipt of the application, the Evaluation Panel will assess it for **quality, feasibility, and skills to be developed**. The Evaluation Panel consists of three experts from the UKSA and SAC. Projects achieving a threshold score will be considered suitable for inclusion in the SPIN programme 2024.

Hosts will be advised whether or not their project has been successful via email from SAC within one week of the panel evaluation. Their Job Administrator will be added to the platform so their project information can be added to the Applied Platform.

Please note that applications will be evaluated by the panel in order of **date of receipt**. There is therefore a danger, due to the popularity of the programme, that later applications will not be successful due to funding being exhausted. Earlier submissions are therefore encouraged.

8. Advertising and Recruitment

All projects will be advertised to students through the SAC SPIN pages for four weeks, from early January until approximately mid-March.

Individual links from the projects will take the applicants directly to the Applied Platform to begin their application and all eligibility, sifting and assessment tracking will be carried out through the Platform. The SAC has been using this unbiased Applicant Tracking System for all of their recruitment for the past year, and for all of their SPINtern recruitment in 2023. The results demonstrated that recruitment through this mechanism drew in a significantly more diverse group of applicants and recruits without compromising on quality and streamlined the process for both applicant and recruiter.

9. Selection/Interviewing

Applied is a purpose-built Applicant Tracking System (ATS) for unbiased recruitment. All applications will be submitted through the Applied platform which will have a dedicated SPIN website.

Within two weeks of acceptance of their project, host organisations should submit their advertisement for promotion to students on the SAC website. These will then be open for applications for 4 weeks, ensuring that there are a range of opportunities open during the recruitment period. Interviews must take place no more than 2 weeks after the end of the 4 week period, with anonymous sift questions being reviewed during the advertising period.

All stages of recruitment, from candidate answers to sift questions and CV collation, through to interview booking and note taking, takes place within the system.

From early December 2023, SAC, in partnership with Applied technical trainers and behavioural scientists, will train a job admin user from each organisation on the different features. The job admin users will then work with the individual SPIN hiring managers on the end-to-end recruitment process, from advertising SPIN positions through to interviews. Applied has an extensive self-service help webpage with more information on all aspects of the system, from how to create good sift questions to what to expect as an interviewer when using Applied, and access to case studies on unbiased recruitment practices.

All applicants shall be notified on the outcome of their application, within **4 weeks of the closing date** of the project concerned. This can be facilitated automatically through the platform by the Job Admin with either a standard or personalised response.

All SPINterns should be appointed by Tuesday 30 April 2024.

On appointment, hosts should advise the SAC of their chosen candidate by providing the **SPINtern's name, email address and agreed start date**. This will instigate the grant agreement process.

The employer will agree terms directly with the chosen candidate and provide any employment terms and contract. They should also make the candidate aware that their attendance at the Induction Day and Showcase Event, and the production of an academic poster are **requirements of the programme**.

Where a university project is offered, it should be noted that the project should not be restricted to students at that university. Please ensure students currently working at the University are not offered the placement as the programme's aim is to offer students work experience.

10. Start date

The employer and SPINtern should mutually agree a start date. This can be before or after the Induction Day (24 June 2024).

11. Grant agreement process

Upon **receipt of the host's chosen SPINtern's name, email address and start date**, the Grant Funding Agreement and New Supplier form (which can also be downloaded from the Call page on the SAC website) will be sent to the host company for signing and completion.

The grant agreement will then be signed on behalf of the Satellite Applications Catapult and a copy returned to the host company for their records.

A Purchase Order will be raised by the SAC Finance Department to ensure prompt payment of invoices.

12. Onboarding

Students can be very nervous of expectations as this is often their first experience of real-world employment. Please give them as much information as you can regarding start date, expectations, dress codes and onboarding, as early as you can.

13. Induction event

The Induction Day will be held on 24th June 2024, at the Satellite Applications Catapult, Fermi Ave, Harwell and available as a hybrid event. The event gives an exciting overview of all the activities and opportunities in the UK Space Sector. It is also an opportunity to connect with SPINterns and organisations in the sector. There are also plans to work across the Space Clusters and host regional events for local employers and SPINterns. It is a **requirement of the programme that SPINterns attend**.

Whilst we would very much like to welcome host supervisors to the Induction Day, there is no requirement for them to attend.

14. Academic poster requirement

It is a **requirement of the programme that every SPINtern produces an academic poster describing their project** during the placement. The employer should ensure this is completed during their time in their organisation.

The poster should be understandable by someone who is not familiar with the project/company/technical area. Therefore, SPINterns should limit very technical terms as much as possible. Often diagrams and charts are better as explanations than lots of detailed technical text. Examples from previous years can be found on the SPIN website (<https://sa.catapult.org.uk/spin/#8>)

The poster should include:

- background to the host company
- details of the project

- what the SPINtern has learnt from the project (we would especially like them to note any skills gained, including technical **and** non-technical skills)
- any acknowledgements they would like to make

The completed poster should be sent electronically to the employer by the SPINtern at the end of the placement, as a **pdf**. This evidence attached to the Final Report will be required to trigger final grant payment. It should **also be printed at A1** size for the Showcase Event.

The poster will be displayed at the Showcase Event (date and venue under discussion). During the Showcase Event SPINterns are also required to give a **2-minute pitch** about their project (poster). This supports the needs of employers that their workforce should be able to communicate professionally. It is a fantastic opportunity to really demonstrate what the SPINtern has achieved during their placement and practice the skills they've learnt which are in demand from future employers.

Please note that there is **no requirement** for SPINterns to write the Final Report of their project, however many employers do involve them in this final piece of work. Other report writing may be a necessary part of the project for use by the host organisation. Submission of the academic poster is however critical to the Final Report Submission, for the SAC to judge the success of the placement and pay the final invoice. It also forms part of the SAC's KPIs for the UKSA

15. Payment of milestones

Milestone payments can be requested by the host on the application form. These are normally made halfway through the project, after the first month.

When requesting payment of a milestone amount, the host should provide an interim report which should be a **short paragraph** (no more than 250 words) about what the SPINtern has been doing etc and a **brief statement of spend** so far. Please **do not send SPINtern payslips** as these often contain personal information and data. An invoice for the milestone payment is also required.

16. Payment of final invoice

On completion of the project, hosts should complete the **Final Report MS Form**. This **Final Report form, should be submitted with the following attachments:**

- **the poster in pdf format,**
- **a financial breakdown of how the award was spent,**
- **your invoice and**
- **any evaluations undertaken** as part of the project

17. Showcase Event

The SPINtern Showcase is a fantastic way to end the annual SPIN programme, enabling SPINterns and supervisors to meet again after their placement, with SPINterns also able to network with each other. Importantly, the space community learn about the amazing range of projects that SPINterns undertake each year. It may also enable them to meet a future member of their workforce.

On the day, the SPINterns give a 2-minute talk on their placement and there is a display of the posters produced by the SPINterns. There will also be talks from the organisers of the SPIN programme and organisations that hosted SPINterns. The Showcase Event is also open to other space employers to come and see what can be achieved by an intern and possibly find their next recruit!

It is a requirement of the programme that every SPINtern attends the SPIN Showcase Event in person. The date and venue of the Showcase for 2024 will be determined shortly. **T&S of up to £100 for attendance has been included in each Grant.** Should attendance incur costs significantly above this, please discuss with the SAC team.

If any extenuating circumstances mean that SPINterns are not able to attend, the SAC will require **written confirmation**, such as from University Tutors, as to the nature of the circumstances.

During the Showcase event SPINterns are required to provide their **A1 printed poster** and give a **2-minute pitch** about their project (poster).

18. Key dates

