



Graduates can help your business grow. Step is the UK's leading provider of paid student and graduate internships, placements, and permanent opportunities. We connect enterprising students and graduates with smaller, innovative businesses.

It was in 1986 that the Shell Step programme began as an enterprise initiative from Shell UK, designed to provide short-term internships for students with smaller businesses. Things have moved on since then, and Step now operates independently as a sustainable business model.

We can help find students and graduates for permanent roles across all job types; sandwich [placements](#); and internships that can be very useful for helping with projects, you can see some examples [here](#) and below.

Most of Step's partnerships have been with smaller growing businesses so we understand the difficulties that you can have in attracting the right graduate talent to complete important business projects. Graduates don't always expect or need a graduate scheme, they are ready to add value immediately in a substantive role.

Undergraduates and recent graduates can provide an excellent short-term solution to get a crucial piece of work done when your permanent staff may not have the time or skills to execute a project or task.

Over the last 30+ years Step has sourced students and graduates to complete a wide and varied range of projects. Some detailed examples from key business areas are below.

Research into new international markets:

A manufacturer of technical teaching equipment for engineering took on a Masters' graduate to complete a project to analyse and research potential new overseas markets; this included carrying out a review of the economic status of potential target countries, and analysing countries' activities in the engineering market. An assessment was then made of their investment in educating engineers. Once potential countries were identified, market research was undertaken to identify routes to market via sales channels and local agents. Then recommendations were made to senior management. The internship was a success, and the intern joined the company on a permanent basis (later rising to become their Marketing Communications Manager). The following year the business won an International Trade award at the regional business awards.

Documenting business processes and procedures:

A specialist design company required a full policy and procedural manual to be developed for use by both internal staff and for external audit requirements. This was a highly in-depth piece of work, as the manual needed to document processes for every possible event that could happen; anything from individual work-related duties, to what to do when receiving a visitor. Step found a History graduate to complete the task. Initially, he met with all internal departments and individual employees to discuss what they did on a daily basis, and collated information on workflows and policies. He then reviewed the information to identify areas of improvement and a company policy and procedural manual was successfully produced- and slightly ahead of schedule.

Setting up a Marketing department to aid growth:

A group of five businesses based around the Midlands, with £40M turnover and 400 staff, approached Step as they were setting up an internal marketing team. The plan was to take on two graduates, who would work with a marketing consultant for two months, then take over. The graduates were responsible for the full marketing remit, from Social media, to updating websites, preparing case studies, and helping the sales team to prepare briefs. They were also responsible for developing the marketing strategy for the group. Both are now marketing co-managers for the group.

Setting up social media strategies:

Commercial recruitment is an area where social media has become increasingly important over the last few years. We were approached by a recruitment agency who had virtually no presence on social media. They took on a graduate through an internship, with the brief being to investigate social media methods, assessing which would be best for their purposes, setting up accounts, developing a strategy, posting content, measuring and analysing success, and training internal staff in how to use the social media. We found a graduate who had gained significant social media experience from her own extra-curricular activities which included a travel blog, voluntary work with events, and her own micro-business.

New product development and design / succession planning:

An business that designs and manufactures a range of sheet metal products traditionally supplied primarily to the education sector, where the items need to be robust enough to handle everyday use by students. They are now beginning to open up significant opportunities in other areas, and their product range needed to be enhanced to provide the look, feel, functionality and user experience more appropriate for the commercial sector.

The current Product Development Manager is skilled in actioning designs, but creating the designs is not his main skill. In addition, he is due to retire in the next two years. Our brief was to find someone who was able to design the products using CAD packages- and who would ideally be able step into the managerial position in time. An added complication was the rural location of the business, meaning that suitable candidates were in short-supply.

Step found a Product Design graduate who had finished his studies a year before, and was commuting 20 miles to his first graduate role. He is particularly skilled in the creative design aspect of the role, and is keen to progress into a managerial role in the long-term.

To find out more call us on 0115 8718740 or email info@step.org.uk