

Article for TPS column in LTT

TPS Undergraduate Summer 2008 Placement Scheme in Transport Planning: Calling all employers

The Transport Planning Society will be shortly publishing details of next year's Summer Placement Scheme for undergraduates interested in going into a career in transport planning and is calling upon employers who would be willing to take on an undergraduate for a period of 6-10 weeks over the summer vacation. The scheme is an important way of providing careers information and experience to would-be transport professionals and improving the skills pool. Those employers and students who took part in the scheme last year consider it to be very worthwhile. Many students go on to do a Masters degree and some have joined the employer following graduation.

In 2007, the fifth year of the scheme, 270 students registered on the TPS work experience website, compared with 201 in 2006. From these about 70 excellent candidates with a relevant academic background and an interest in finding out more about a career in transport planning were shortlisted. 22 employers signed up to the scheme and 15 students were placed. Andy Costain the Manager of the scheme says that "TPS set up the scheme to help address the skills shortage but there is clearly a shortfall in attracting enough employers to take part - we hope that this number can be expanded in 2008"

Joanna Gibbons, Principal Transport Planner at Transport for London, which took on 3 student placements, said "it is a very beneficial scheme enabling those taking part to get valuable management experience whilst also gaining a very capable additional pair of hands"

Hannah Simmons, now a final year student at Plymouth University in Geography was placed with PFA Consulting and reported "that she has learnt a great deal and that it opened her eyes to the possibilities in transport planning" Paul Tregrear, her manager at PFA said "I was very impressed with her. She was confident and intelligent. During her time with us Hannah completed a research project and assisted qualified planners on a wide range of tasks, including site visits and surveys. I would have no hesitation in offering her a permanent position."

Steer Davies Gleave said "We find the scheme useful because we can make good use of the skills of enthusiastic students with a real interest in transport working on real projects. The students gain valuable work experience and insight into the work of a market leading transport consultancy and offer us the opportunity of identifying candidates with the potential of joining the company in the future."

A recent student at SDG responded: "People on the scheme might not have very much office experience (like me) and so it is very valuable for learning how the professional office environment works, as well as providing an insight into working life in a Transport Consultancy. My knowledge of excel and other commonly used programs increased dramatically."

The deadline for employers to register is 31 January and the deadline for candidates to register is 12 March. After a shortlisting process to weed out inappropriate candidates, registered employers will then be able to take first pick of this year's crop of talent by the end of March so that interviews can take place in the Easter Vacation. Priority will be given to TPS Stakeholder members and TPS Corporate members. The scheme is web based and can viewed at

www.transportationopportunities.org.uk

Employers are invited to contact Andy Costain, TPS Development Officer for further information on 0207 348 1975 or by email acostain@compuserve.com

Dates for Your Diary

4th December

Transport Question Time

Chaired by Austin Williams (Future Cities Project and Daily Telegraph)

Panel includes: David Anderson (Engineering Director, Crossrail)

David Begg (Transport Times)

Kris Beuret (Director, Social Research Associates)

Michèle Dix (Director of Planning, Transport for London)

Followed by drinks reception.

Location: ICE, One Great George Street, London SW1 6.30 pm.

Register by emailing tps@ice.org.uk

5th December

The Travel Planning Process from a Highways Agency and Retail Perspective

Speakers: Graham Riley, Regional Programme Manager, Highways Agency and Alice Sheldon, Transport & Travel Plan Manager, Meadowhall Centre Limited

Joint meeting with CILT

Location: Holiday Inn, Royal Victoria, Sheffield. 6.00 for 6.30pm.

6th December

TPS (NW) Christmas Event – The Future of the Rail in the North West

Annual TPS (NW) Christmas event featuring presentations from industry experts exploring the future of rail in the North West.

Location: The Merchant Room (above Albert's Shed restaurant), Castlefield Rooms, Castlefield, Manchester. 6.00 for 6.30pm.

Contact: giles.perkins@mouchelparkman.com

18th December

Joint TPS/TPN Christmas Drinks

Christmas Drinks and Reception with Guest Speakers.

Location: ICE, One Great George Street, London. 6.00pm

More details on all TPS Events can be found on www.tps.org.uk/events