



Student Case Study, Murrnrose Dunn – Edinburgh Open Workshop

“I would highly recommend a placement to anyone. It's such a unique opportunity to gain work experience under the safety of your studies.”

Murrnrose Dunn - BA (Hons) Photography

Tell us a bit about yourself

I have currently finished my third year of study in BA (Hons) Photography at Edinburgh Napier University. Photography has been my life's passion, and being able to live and breathe it at Edinburgh Napier University has been incredible. I've used my third year as an opportunity to challenge myself with new skills, refining my skills and collaborating creatively with clients and teams to achieve a shared goal.

Can you tell us about the placement opportunity you were involved in?

My placement was with the Edinburgh Open Workshop, who host in-house workers, but they also offer bookable spaces for creatives to work on their projects. I was asked to document the workshop activities with a list of main requirements from the owner, such as wide shots of the venue. Beyond this, I was also given the opportunity to be booked by workers if they wanted a one-to-one session to focus on their business. This would happen every two weeks; in between, I would be editing and dedicating time to sending images before the agreed deadline. This timeline was agreed on between me and the owner as the creative projects have intense points and slow points.

Can you tell us more about what your role entailed?

As a photographer, my role was to follow the client's brief, which was a set list of images to capture of the space within the specified period of the placement. As the venue had peak times, I had to conduct risk assessments on how I would approach photographing. I would organise my photography sessions to capture photographs of workers during peak times and wider shots when it was quiet. Alongside this, I was also tasked with photographing an open day, which involved capturing three different children's classes to ensure funding for similar events in the future. I had one client throughout my placement and had the responsibility to create advertising images for their brand, including sketches, which involved having clear communication in-person and via email.

What key skills did your placement teach you?

My placement taught me several new skills, possibly the most vital was learning to communicate with clients clearly and effectively. I am a socially anxious person, so having the opportunity to work with passionate clients and being able to bring their ideas to life with photography was incredibly rewarding and will see me well into my future projects with clients.

What are the highlights of your time on placement?

A highlight of my placement was seeing my work posted on social media by the Edinburgh Open Workshop; seeing that my work was truly appreciated and of good enough quality for professional use was a major confidence boost.

CONTACT US: saciplacements@napier.ac.uk



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“My placement has shown me that I have an excitement for photographing people and their creations, something which I never knew I had in me.”

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Do you have any tips (if applicable) on how you have addressed any barriers you have faced from a disability or health condition during your time on placement, during a career appointment or finding work?

My biggest tip if you have disability and are planning on going out on placement is to ensure you have clear and continuous communication with the Placement Team and the academics who are overseeing the module. The Placement team will help find a placement suited to your needs so that you are not disadvantaged, and in my experience, your placement host will go above and beyond to ensure that you are comfortable during your time with them.

Did you face any challenges during your time on placement?

I faced some challenges, especially with my photosensitivity, while taking photos of welding sessions. To handle this, I scheduled my shoots for quieter times, so I did not risk safety or image quality. I also learned to use natural light effectively in tricky situations and improved my workflow by batch editing and managing digital files with others. These experiences taught me the importance of being resilient and adaptable in photography, especially when working in difficult conditions.

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How do you feel that your studies at Edinburgh Napier University prepare you for this placement?

The technical tools that my studies equipped me with were vital for this placement and prepared me for making assessments of lighting and equipment. I have been able to make leaps and bounds and improve my communication skills while studying. Three years ago, I would have never coped with a placement, but the university has been able to provide all the skills I would need to tackle such a challenge.

Do you think your experiences from the placement affected your future career plans or last year of university?

It has given me a lot to think about. My dream career would be a college lecturer. However, I would require some experience in the field under my belt. Working freelance as a business photographer is a possible path to my end goal, but realistically, I will have to be a master of all trades.

Would you recommend doing a placement to others, and what advice would you give to someone considering doing a placement at university?

Yes, the Placement Team give you a wide scope of experiences to choose from, some of which you might not get the opportunity to try again. The learning is invaluable as it's an experience of the working world in the field you're studying, but also the skills gained will be vital for your studies and future career. My advice would be to just go for it and give it your all. It will be challenging, but it is also highly rewarding. Placements are at their best when you put in what you want out of them. Your studies may seem like forever on paper, but the years go by in a flash, so getting real-world experience is vital, as you never know what you will learn next.