

# Graduate Placements in Business

## Long Term Work Placement for Andy Bevan at Big Squid

### Overview

Andy Bevan, a BA Graphic Communications student at Bath Spa University, volunteered for a twelve week work placement with Big Squid, which has led to a permanent job with the company as well as teaching opportunities at the University.

### About the Project

Big Squid is a small Bristol-based company, which combines creativity and technology to provide titles, content graphics and special effects for TV and corporate projects.

Andy Bevan first heard about Big Squid when the company's founder, Emmy Award-winner - Richard Higgs, was a part-time lecturer on his BA Graphic Communications course at Bath Spa University. Andy was keen to have some work experience at Big Squid and this was eventually made possible when the University's Business Support Office agreed to fund a 12-week summer placement. This meant that Andy received a weekly allowance for a substantial amount of 'real-world' work experience without cost to Big Squid beyond Richard Higgs' mentoring and supervision support.



Andy Bevan at Big Squid studio

### Benefits

For Andy, the long term placement brought the following benefits:

- The opportunity to develop commercial awareness and bridge the gap between the academic and business world
- A developing network of contacts
- Increased confidence to deliver projects to clients

For Big Squid, the placement represented flexible, cost-effective resource, as well as the input of fresh, creative thinking and genuine talent.

The success of the placement scheme shows that good students need only a short amount of time to adjust from their educational environment to working in the real world. This twelve-week funded period gives the breathing space to train and bring the graduate up to professional standards.

### Fast Facts

- The placement offered a weekly allowance to the graduate for a 12 week period
- There was the offer of a permanent job after the placement
- In a very tough economic climate, the placement scheme has helped Big Squid to keep its staffing costs down but retain a high level of talent and enthusiasm

## Outcomes

Richard Higgs endorses the belief that it is good for his company that new ideas and different approaches are brought in with graduate placements. For example, Andy contributed fresh thinking to the team when he used his previous degree experience in physics, coupled with his recently acquired graphics skills, to fuel his creative input into an ongoing educational video with a scientific theme. Later on in the placement, when further training helped to bring him up to professional speed, Andy's design skills helped to fashion content graphics and special effects for a TV promotion for the rock group Jethro Tull.

After only a short transitional period, Andy was instrumental in pitching for new business, no doubt one of the factors leading to him being offered a permanent job with Big Squid. Additionally, Andy has been invited to teach at Bath Spa University and pass on the benefit of his own experiences of moving into commercial practice.

“We have had the privilege for the second year running of placing a young, talented and hard-working Bath Spa University student, who we have been able to continue to employ.”

**Richard Higgs**  
Managing Director, Big Squid

## Perspective

“The graduate placement scheme has been an enormous aid in my career and I would recommend it to any student looking for employment in the design area after education. It has provided the perfect stepping stone between education and employment, allowing me the breathing space to adjust to a working environment whilst not placing my employer at a disadvantage.

I learned the great difference between educational design and commercial design, and how to understand the expectations of clients in terms of deadlines, attitude and the finished product. My job prospects were dramatically improved with the benefit of commercial experience, as well as knowledge of how to approach and converse with clients.”

**Andy Bevan**  
BA Graphic Communications

