

WORK-BASED LEARNING AND PLACEMENTS – APPROVED PROCEDURES



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Summary: <p>This document sets out the approved procedures and draws on good practice relating to work-based or placement learning/volunteering where such activity contributes to the Learning Outcomes of a student's programme. Formerly titled 'Work Based and Placement Learning Policy' the content is largely the same.</p> <p>Minor editorial and procedural changes were made in April 2015 following approval of the procedures in May 2014.</p>	

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1 INTRODUCTION

The University of Winchester recognises the importance of work-based and placement learning (including volunteering) and its contribution to students' employability. An example of working with others in the provision of higher education, work based and placement learning is integral to the University's strategic direction.

Where work-based or placement learning/volunteering is part of a module, its learning outcomes must be clearly identified, contribute to the overall and coherent aims of the programme and be assessed appropriately. These outcomes will be tested through the University's standard processes at validation.

The responsibility for ensuring that the placement provides adequate opportunities for the intended learning outcomes to be achieved and assessed rests with the relevant Academic Department.

The ways in which departments carry out their responsibilities in respect of this document will vary according to the nature of the work-based learning/placement they offer. This document sets out the baseline requirements in relation to work-based and placement learning. This document has been informed by the UK Quality Code, in particular Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others. The QAA Glossary offers the following definitions of the inter-linked terms, 'work-based learning' and 'placements'

Work-based learning

'Learning that takes place, in part or as a whole, in the context of employment.'

Placement

'A planned period of experience outside the institution (for example, in a workplace) to help students to develop particular skills, knowledge or understanding as part of their programme.'

A placement could be a block of work undertaken on PGCE programme, a year in industry on a sandwich programme, or through the Volunteering module. The student may have organised this themselves, but it would need to be approved – or the University of Winchester would organise it.

Please note

- a) that where reference is made in this document to the University of Winchester or its Academic Departments, this also applies to any of its collaborative partners.
- b) that the word 'placement' is used to refer to any work-based learning or volunteering situation which falls within the scope of these approved procedures.

2 SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The procedures in this document relate to any situation where a student works, studies or volunteers in an approved non-University of Winchester location (or equivalent for collaborative partners), whether in the UK or overseas, and where this work or placement situation contributes towards learning outcomes of their programme. It also recognises that from time to time a student may undertake work based learning within a University of Winchester location and where this contributes to the learning outcomes of their programme of study; such learning will fall within the scope of this policy. Where the placement is overseas, as part of Erasmus or as an exchange, detailed information about the Erasmus scheme or the exchange programme will be provided by the Department. Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code and,

therefore, this document, does not apply to any employment or volunteering which does not contribute towards the meeting of a programme's learning outcomes.¹

In this document the 'placement co-ordinator' refers to the named contact between the Department and the support provider, although some Departments may prefer to have a number of named contacts dealing with different elements of the work-based learning or placement experience.

3 APPROVAL OF PLACEMENT PROVIDERS AND MANAGING RISK

As part of their due diligence checks the placement co-ordinator should satisfy themselves that each placement provider, whether allocated by the University of Winchester or independently found by the student, is suitable. Procedures for securing, approving and allocating placements should be transparent to all, and take into account:

- a) the ability of the placement provider to allow students to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the placement;
- b) health and safety requirements including any requirement for DBS checks;
- c) any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements governing the suitability of placements;
- d) student support on placements, including the mechanisms for dealing with any problems or complaints;
- e) any reasonable and anticipatory adjustments for students with a disability or learning difficulty.

Information in programme/module/placement handbooks should be given to students on the consequences of failure to either secure or complete a placement where this is a programme requirement.

Procedures should be established to allow students to complete any work-based learning or placement requirements in cases where the placement needs to be terminated early by one of the parties involved.

A health and safety risk assessment should be carried out following the University's policies and procedures in place at the time, following the advice of the University's Health and Safety Manager. The placement co-ordinator should consider if it is appropriate to visit the placement provider in location, in order to assess their suitability. A written agreement, in the form of an email, a letter or a contract, confirming that the necessary requirements are in place at the provider is needed for each placement. Such agreements are proportionate to the scale of the activity and should be maintained by the Department.

4 PLACEMENT PROVIDERS AND DEPARTMENTS

The placement co-ordinator should make placement providers aware of their responsibilities in relation to:

- a) the provision of learning opportunities and their relationship to the programme/module learning outcomes;
- b) the mentoring of students, and, if applicable, the assessment of students;
- c) the health and safety of students, including provision of any specialist materials or clothing needed, or induction to the workplace;
- d) the need for employers to comply with relevant employment legislation;
- e) insurance cover in the event of accident;
- f) making reasonable adjustments for students with a disability;
- g) any obligation to attend any meetings concerning the placement, or provide a report on the placement;
- h) any changes in a student's circumstances either before commencement of or during the placement.

¹ UK Quality Code B10: 'The critical factor is whether the achievement of the learning outcomes for the module or programme are dependent on the arrangement made with the delivery or support organisation.' (p.3)

5 STUDENT SUPPORT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The placement co-ordinator should ensure that students are made aware of (usually in the form of the module/programme/placement handbooks):

- a) their responsibilities in relation to the programme of which the placement is a part;
- b) their responsibilities for managing their behaviour as representatives of the University;
- c) their responsibilities in relation to health and safety issues including the requirement for a DBS check, where necessary;
- d) their responsibility to arrange travel and complete appropriate insurance/visa requirements if their placement is overseas;
- e) their need to remain in contact with the placement coordinator in order to provide feedback on progress;
- f) the relationship between the placement and relevant learning outcomes, modes of assessment, and its relationship (if relevant) to other aspects of the student's programme;
- g) their entitlement in relation to tutoring, support and guidance prior to, throughout and following their placement;
- h) the need to alert the placement provider and placement co-ordinator to any problems with the placement that may impede their satisfactory progress and completion of the placement;
- i) the ability of the placement provider to raise any issues with the placement coordinator regarding the student's suitability to practice;
- j) their need to comply with PSRB requirements, if appropriate;
- k) any information relating to intellectual property rights, data protection, client/patient confidentiality, as relevant.

6 STAFFING

Departments and Professional Services, where appropriate, should ensure that all University of Winchester staff involved in supporting placements are appropriately qualified, resourced and competent to fulfil their roles and are given appropriate training to undertake these effectively. Such training should include updating staff knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation, University policies and procedures.

Departments and Professional Services, where appropriate, should also ensure that staff at placement providers receive any additional training required, including any orientation to University of Winchester procedures or policies..

7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PLACEMENTS

All placements should be subject to effective monitoring procedures. These should include:

- a) for longer placements it is good practice for the placement co-ordinator to visit the student in placement;
- b) placement co-ordinators ensuring that feedback from students is collected both during the placement and on completion of the placement;
- c) analysis of the experience of students on placements as part of the annual monitoring for programmes, and including any feedback from staff involved in supporting the placement;
- d) external examiners reporting, in their annual report form, on work-based learning and placements.