

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON PLACEMENT AND WORK-BASED LEARNING

Introduction

Placement and Work Based Learning form a vital tool by which students can gain invaluable skills and knowledge to support their academic and vocational objectives. The importance of this learning is recognised in the QAA Quality Code (Chapter B10) Managing higher education provision with others which states that:

'In determining which provision falls within the scope of this Chapter, the critical factor is whether the achievement of the learning outcomes for the module or programme are dependent on the arrangement made with the other delivery or support organisation(s).

B10 cites a number of critical aspects of the management of placement activity for consideration, placing particular importance on the need for awarding bodies, when utilizing Placement as a learning device within a programme, to:

- i. be clear where management responsibility lies within the organisation (Indicator 2);
- ii. undertake due diligence before a student undertakes placement, to inform risk assessment (Indicator 6);
- iii. have in place written agreements that clarify the responsibilities of each party are in place (indicator 7);
- iv. maintain proper academic control of the activity (Indicator 8);
- v. ensure appropriate staffing (Indicator 13);
- vi. make students aware of any conditions that will apply and the division of authority between the University and the placement provider (Indicator 18).

The Quality Code (Chapter B3) *Learning and teaching* sets out requirements around the expectation that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner. The chapter highlights, through indicators, nine considerations when constructing and maintaining *placement* and work-based learning opportunities.

A 'Placement and/or Work Based Learning' here is defined as a learning experience located in a work-place. The activity may range from shadowing to full-time employment and it may last for a considerable period as set out in the validation document. In this document the phrase 'placement and work based learning' is routinely abbreviated to 'placement'.

Through its programmes, the College may offer many different types of placements, and works with different types of organisations. Students may undertake placements and work-based learning inside or outside the UK.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2 POLICY FUNDAMENTALS

2.1 Before a student is allowed to participate, each placement must be adequately assessed by the College for both its capacity to deliver the educational objective and the broader risk(s) to either the student or the University. This assessment should be proportionate to the scale of risk, and undertaken with all due diligence.

2.2 Each placement must be supported by a written Placement Agreement that sets out the terms of the placement and all necessary organisational details for the College, Placement Provider and Student. (See Section 15)

2.3 The purpose and the learning outcomes for the placement and any assessment task(s) and the criteria for assessment will be set out in the Programme Handbook and must be made available to the Student and the Placement Provider.

2.4 Placements will be monitored by the College within its Annual Programme Review procedures to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

3 THE OBJECTIVE OF A PLACEMENT

3.1 The objective of any placement learning experience is to consolidate and complement the academic learning, knowledge and skills, while integrating aspects of personal career awareness and development, and where there is a professional aspect, to achieve competencies essential for entrance to the chosen profession. The overall aim is to benefit all 3 parties: the college, the student, and the placement provider.

3.2 The aims for the College and student are likely to include:

- i. The development of the student's personal and enterprise skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, decision making, initiative, and creativity.
- ii. Implementing some academic aspects of the programme, and laying experiential foundations for further study.
- iii. Enhancing the student's awareness of the work environment in professional, social and behavioural contexts, thus improving students' employability.
- iv. Assisting students in self-awareness and development of their individual career planning.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

- v. Developing and maintaining links with the community.
 - vi. In the case of professional programmes, the aims will also include the development of specific skills, professional behaviours and also the assessment of competence.
- 3.3 The placement provider is likely to have aims such as:
- i. Benefitting from students' enthusiasm and creativity as well as knowledge/skills.
 - ii. Introducing other staff to new skills, e.g. I.T.
 - iii. Informing selection procedures for new employees.
 - iv. Deriving value within the placement learning period.
 - v. In the case of professional programmes, contributing to the development of the future workforce / individual professional skills and qualifications.

GUIDANCE FOR THE COLLEGE

4. Before the Placement

4.1 The College's role in placement commences at the programme or module planning stage, when the reasons for including a placement need to be made clear, in order to result in well-defined objectives and procedures.

4.2 The College should manage a student's expectations in relation to the placement. This includes detail of how they will be supported during the placement and by whom. In addition, there should be a briefing on matters such as their expected behaviour and clothing, and to ensure there is an understanding of responsibility for the living/travel expenses incurred. The induction arrangements need to form part of the planning arrangements.

4.3 The College must have in place a means of identifying suitable placements. This means that the College must undertake checks with due diligence to ensure that the placements provide the suitable and secure learning opportunities for the student, so that any risk, identified by the enquiries, can be managed. Where appropriate, there may be a visit to the Placement Provider. Although the check may be undertaken as a desk-based exercise, aspects of enquiry such as the Risk Assessment will usually require face-to-face contact through a site visit. The approach adopted should reflect the context of the environment and length of placement – thus, proportionate to the level of risk..

4.4 Once selected, the continuing suitability of a Placement Provider should be reconsidered on an annual basis.

4.5 Before the placement, the key College contacts need to be made known to both the students and the Placement Provider.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

4.6 For students with a special need, it is essential to identify the reasonable adjustment(s) that are required and communicate these to the Placement Provider.

5 During the Placement

5.1 During placement learning, the student remains a registered student with the rights and expectations associated with that status. Even where the Placement Provider has responsibility for the student as an employee, the College retains a continuing share in the responsibility for the student's learning. To this end, there needs to be a means of monitoring the student's progress and experience during placement, through visits or through contact with the Placement Provider. The College should make provision for student support to enable the student to optimise the learning experience. This involves giving the student a contact who may be designated Placement Tutor, and in the case of longer periods visit the student in the workplace to support autonomous learning and ensure satisfactory progress. The College should develop and implement procedures to define what will take place, and how such visits will be arranged and conducted.

5.2 The College should ensure procedures are in place to enable problematic situations to be dealt with appropriately. The procedures should make clear the arrangement for reporting problems both by the student and the Placement Provider. A speedy resolution of issues might ensure that the problem is addressed without the disruption of the placement. There should be a clear statement on what should happen should a problem emerge. Where possible, this should be resolved within the placement, and an appropriate report made to the College of the resolution. The role of the College in addressing problems should be identified, so that the placement and the student are aware of the means of bringing the problem to the attention of the relevant member of staff.

5.3 On rare occasions, there may be a need to terminate a placement early. The procedures for terminating a placement should be made clear, especially in relation to the Placement Provider. Where a student has to be prematurely withdrawn from a placement or elects to withdraw from a Placement, the mechanism to review the student's performance and/or behaviour will be with the Principal of the College. The College may also make some arrangement for the students to return during the placement for students to share experience with each other and the programme team, and to enable briefing for post-placement studies.

5.4 The College is to oversee the assessment regime defined for the programme, and is to ensure that practice assessors are appropriately skilful, experienced and clear about their role in assessment. This requires that appropriate training and briefing arrangements are in place.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

6 After Placement

- 6.1 When the student returns following placement, the College should make provision for reflection, consolidation and dissemination of learning experiences, both individual and collective.
- 6.2 The College should take the opportunity to capture student experience and learning, in order to review the programme and develop partnerships with placements, as well as for other placement learning opportunities. Students should be informed how the placement will be evaluated and how this will be fed back to the Placement Provider. The College should use the information as a means of assisting in determining the continued use of a Placement Provider.

GUIDANCE FOR THE STUDENT

7 The Principal Responsibilities of the Student

- 7.1 The student accepts responsibility for cooperating as necessary in the process of undertaking a suitable period of placement, meeting the programme requirements including assessment, and operating with integrity as an effective ambassador in all dealings with the Placement Provider.
- 7.2 The student takes every action necessary to get the most out of the learning experience, such as relating learning to the programme/module, building transferable skills, and using the opportunity to consolidate career planning.

8 Before Placement

- 8.1 Since the implications of a placement experience will vary according to the particular programme and length of that experience, the student should become familiar with programme requirements, as set out in the programme handbook, and any other published documentation.
- 8.2 The achievement of placement learning objectives is a co-operative activity, and the student has an individual responsibility towards ensuring a satisfactory placement learning experience. The College should brief and prepare students and ensure the placements meet the requirements of the programme.
- 8.3 Students about to commence placement should attend appropriate briefing sessions from the College, including those on Health and Safety.
- 8.4 Although many placements are allocated by the College (as determined by programme requirements), in some circumstances it will be appropriate that a student takes a proactive approach to securing his/her own placement:

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

- i. The *College* retains final responsibility for ensuring that the placement is sufficient and suitable for purposes of the award or credit even though the student may have a role in selecting the placement and agreeing the arrangements with the provider.
- ii. The student may assist by researching the company to which they are applying and creating a file of materials for the *College*. The student may provide the *College* with details of the placement provider, start date, work and residential addresses, telephones, email contact details, and name of workplace mentor and supervisor, to facilitate contact and where applicable to enable visiting arrangements to be set in place.
- iii. The placement will not be formally recognised until the *College* has approved both the activity content and compliance.

9 During Placement

- 9.1 The student should take every opportunity on placement to optimise the learning experience, relating to academic programme content, developing personal and interpersonal skills, and learning professional expectations and behaviour.
- 9.2 The student may also undergo a cultural change, perhaps experiencing the workplace for the first time or in a new context, discovering that a placement provider has its own priorities; adjusting to this new perspective may take time.
- 9.3 Students must ensure that they are fully aware of all programme requirements while on placement, including attendance and assessment.
- 9.4 Depending on the time period, students may be visited by appointment while on placement learning by academic staff. Visits provide an opportunity to discuss and optimise the learning process offered by the placement. Students should co-operate with the Placement Tutor and help make appropriate visit arrangements when requested.

10 After Placement

- 10.1 Students should be pro-active in optimising learning from placement learning even after the experience itself has ended. Learning from experience can take the forms of:
 - i. Further reflection on the placement learning for example as recorded in a journal, reflective learning logs or similar.
 - ii. Integration of the placement learning with academic modules, where experience can intensify and deepen the understanding to be gained.
 - iii. Sharing of experience with other students in the same cohort, since there is likely to have been a wide variety and spread of experience.
 - iv. Sharing of experience with following student cohorts, to help them in preparation and experience optimisation.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

- v. Sharing experience with staff involved with the preparation and overseeing of placement, to optimise this provision.
- vi. Using the experience as a basis for directing and focusing career plans.

GUIDANCE FOR THE PLACEMENT PROVIDER

11 The Principal Responsibilities of the Placement Provider

- 11.1 The Placement Provider needs to be clear about the reasons for taking a student on placement and how the student will be supported.
- 11.2 The Placement Provider should appreciate how students on placement may add value to the organization rather than serve as unpaid labour, and in all respects other than the shortest periods of engagement treat them in the same way as other employees. However, the Placement Provider should also appreciate their status as students and provide an environment where they have the ability to work at a suitable pace to enable them to learn from their experience.
- 11.3 The Placement Provider should work with the student and College to maximise the learning experience.

12 Before Placement

- 12.1 The Placement Provider can best contribute to the placement by:
 - i. being clear about the motives in offering placement to students
 - ii. noting that the placement may in some cases be the first time that the student has been in a work place environment.
 - iii. having realistic expectations of what students can contribute and what induction/training will be needed.
 - iv. being aware of the requirements and expectations of the student and *College*.
 - v. recognising that placements will follow a cycle related to the academic or programme year.
 - vi. recognising that in some instances the student may be living away from home or University accommodation, and may have travelled from abroad.
 - vii. co-operating with the *College* and /or student in all procedural matters including risk assessment and any subsequent due diligence enquiries, and confirmation of appropriate compliance information.

13 During Placement

- 13.1 The Placement Provider should:

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- i. be aware of their liability to the student.
- ii. provide induction and training including Health and Safety issues.
- iii. appoint a mentor for each student to oversee the training, development and general learning processes of the student.
- iv. ensure the mentor has access to the College contacts.
- v. Facilitate a student to be visited, providing a meeting room and ensuring availability of the student's mentor.
- vi. co-operate with the College in all programme requirements such as the need for the student to undertake assessed work while on placement, dealing with sensitive or confidential data, and attend any appropriate event during the placement if requested.
- vii. if anything goes seriously amiss with the placement or the student, involve the College immediately and jointly seek ways to resolve the situation, and if necessary include the College in any disciplinary action.
- viii. provide the required statements and reports on the student's conduct and performance.
- ix. provide the student with a debrief session and invite suggestions as to how to make the placement experience even more rewarding for all parties.
- x. recognise that after a period of placement the student's priority is to complete an academic programme, and to encourage that process by means such as keeping in contact throughout the student's subsequent studies; where appropriate a bursary or opportunity of subsequent employment may be offered.

14 After Placement

- 14.1 The Placement Provider should provide the College with the required de-brief report within two weeks of the placement ending.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

15 Template Placement Agreement

This AGREEMENT is between Commonwealth College(hereinafter referred to as the *College*), and **(insert name)** (hereinafter referred to as the Placement Provider), and relates to the provision of placement, for programmes in which there is such a validated requirement.

(a) Confirmation of the placement arrangement between the *College* and the Placement Provider

This section of the agreement sets out the overarching responsibilities of the *College* and the Placement Provider.

1. This Agreement will take effect from **xxxx** and will run until **yyyy**.
2. The programme of study which this agreement refers to is the _____ . Full details of the requirements for the placement and any assessment tasks can be found in the Programme Handbook.
3. **Insert brief description of the purpose of the placement.**
4. The *College* and the Placement Provider will work together to provide placement/s as agreed here.
5. The *College* and the Placement Provider will act under the principles set out in the 'Policy and Guidance on Placement and Work-Based Learning.
6. Each student allocated to the placement will receive a finalized copy of this agreement prior to commencing the placement.
7. Where a student allocated to the placement has special needs, these will be discussed between the parties and any required adjustment will be agreed and recorded prior to the commencement of the placement.
8. The Placement Provider will nominate an appropriately qualified member of staff to act as the Student's Mentor.

UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

9. Any financial terms governing a placement will be set out in an Annex to this agreement.

10. All placements will be monitored by the *College* within its Annual Programme Review procedures.

11. The College requires evidence of the Placement Provider's liability insurance, which must be confirmed annually. The student will be regarded as an employee of the Placement Provider where insurance is concerned.

12. The *College* has the right to withdraw a student from a placement where it asserts that the student is not fit for practice.

13. A Placement Provider may suspend a student from attending placement if it asserts that the student is not fit for practice.

14. The *College* and the Placement Provider are committed to implementation of their respective institutional equal opportunities and race equality policies. Both organisations are committed to providing students on placement with information about these policies as part of induction, and to providing guidance about how to address, and refer, if necessary, any issues of concern they may have regarding the implementation of these policies.

15. The *College* and the Placement Provider agree a reciprocal arrangement to use each other's logo and publicise the placement activities, according to each organisation's policies and procedures.

16. The Lead Officers for managing all aspects of placement activities between the *College* and the Placement Provider are:

- i. for the Placement Provider: _____,
position and contact details _____.
- ii. for the *COLLEGE* _____,
position and contact details _____.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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Print Name: _____ Position: _____

on behalf of **INSERT NAME**

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Position: _____

on behalf of UK COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

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[NEXT REVIEW DATE: JANUARY 2022](#)