



## **Generic Placement Code of Practice**

### **Introduction**

As part of their academic syllabus, students are required to undertake a period of placement or work based learning in industry, business, health, social care and other educational institutions or community organisations.

The aim of this Code of Practice is to provide advice and guidance to University Placement Managers/Co-ordinators, who are responsible for the placement/work experience of students under their responsibility.

Well planned and organised work experience has an important role in the development of the student's education. It will help to develop the students' personal and social skills and will provide them with the attributes and skills required for future employment.

### **Scope and Definition**

We define 'placement' as a planned period of learning normally undertaken outside the University which is an integral part of a student's course. It may be paid or unpaid.

We define 'work based learning' as learning which generally takes place in the workplace, which may have a specific focus (or project), and is often an optional part of a student's course. The student may be paid or unpaid.

The term 'placement' is used here as a generic term to encompass both placement and work based learning, which are characterised by the following conditions:

- there is a transfer of direct supervision of a student to a third party
- the placement is integral to the individual student's course
- the student is enrolled at the institution during the period of the placement

The term, 'Placement Provider' refers to the host organisation offering the placement opportunity, or their nominee.

The term 'Placement Organiser' refers to the person within the Faculty, School or Department who is responsible for organising the placement opportunity, this may be a Placement Officer, or an academic tutor.

The term 'Visiting Tutor', refers, where applicable, to the person who visits the placement to monitor a student's progress.

## **Legislation**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 identifies key responsibilities for complying with safety legislation, including those students who find their own work experience placements. In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires that the Employer undertakes to assess any risks to the student whilst under their 'Duty of Care'.

Under the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990, students participating in work experience are regarded as the placement provider's employees for the purpose of health and safety.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Duty of the University**

- the University of Plymouth has a duty under health and safety law both to their employees and to others, affected by their work activity, to ensure that non-employees such as students, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety
- the University of Plymouth will take responsible steps to ensure the suitability of work experience placements taken up by their students, whether identified and arranged by organisers or students themselves

### **Duties of the Faculty/School**

- will ensure that any organiser of a placement has the necessary experience and competence to make the necessary arrangements for assessing the suitability of placements
- the Faculty/School/Department will be responsible for ensuring:
  - the suitability of work experience placements taken up by students, whether identified and arranged by organisers or by the students themselves
  - that the industry, business or educational organisation provide the University with information regarding the student's placement programme
  - Placement Organiser is made aware of any information which might affect the way the student understands and responds to issues relating to health and safety at work. For example, learning disabilities or language problems

The Faculty/School/Department must be satisfied with the host employer's health and safety arrangements for the placement student.

The host employer must provide the Placement Organiser with the following information:

- any relevant information about site safety conditions prior to visit
- ensure that whilst visiting they receive adequate health and safety training and advice
- provide appropriate personal protective equipment and advice on how to use it

### **Duties of the Placement Organiser (a person responsible for organising the placement within the Faculty or Department)**

The Placement Organiser is:

- to be informed of any risks to which the student may be exposed prior to commencing the placement by the host employer
- to be informed of any measures taken by the host employer to eliminate and control risk
- to ensure that the host employer has procedures in place to provide training and supervision
- to ensure that any Risk Assessment managed by the host employer take into account specific factors such as the potential immaturity, inexperience and student lack of awareness in the working environment
- to ensure that the host employer has measures in place to control risk through the process of elimination and other reduction methods
- to ensure that the outcome of any risk assessment conducted by the host employer is explained to the student

To address these requirements, Placement Organisers are advised to send providers a copy of the University's letter, 'Student Placement, Work Experience or Work Base Learning Activity' (WBL 2) and accompanying health and safety checklist for completion. Additional checks can be conducted, as needed by telephone and personal visit.

## **Duties of the Student**

It is important to note that students have the same responsibilities as other employees in the workplace. These include the following:

- to take responsible care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their actions
- to co-operate with the employer in complying with their health and safety responsibilities

Placement Organisers are advised to send students a copy of the University's letter, 'Work Experience, Work Based Learning and Placements: Rights and Responsibilities' (WBL 1) refined to reflect their specific scheme, which also includes a student induction checklist.

## **Duties of the Visiting Tutor (a person who visits the placement organisation to monitor progress of the student)**

It is important that visiting tutors are able to make informed decisions about health and safety in the workplace.

The visiting tutor has to have some competence through experience of making informative judgements on health and safety issues, either through theory or experience. They need not be health and safety experts.

During any visit by the visiting tutor, the following factors must be taken into consideration:

- the outcome of your preliminary enquiries into any concerns or issues that the student has raised during the placement
- the nature of the work being undertaken by the student and the level of risks attached
- whether the student has any specific needs relating to health, disability or learning difficulties and to confirm that those are being met by the host employer
- your confidence in the host employers ability to manage health and safety of the student
- any changes or variation in the performance of the student during their placement
- feedback from the student

## Risk Management

A full risk assessment has been undertaken across the institution in relation to placements and work based learning, which is reflected in the corporate risk register. In managing these risks, a number of key controls should be in place:

- staff responsible for managing placements will have undergone appropriate induction and training
- each placement opportunity will have been assessed against a health and safety checklist, see attached proforma to the provider letter 'Student Placement, Work Experience or Work Base Learning Activity' (WBL 2). Additional checks will be undertaken where provider responses are inadequate, or where additional levels or risk are evident
- each student will have received information about the aims of their placements, respective responsibilities and the practical arrangements. This is encapsulated in the University letter to students, 'Work Experience, Work Based Learning and Placements: Rights and Responsibilities' (WBL 1). The letter includes a student induction checklist to be completed at the workplace
- each provider will have received information about the aims of the student placement, respective responsibilities and the practical arrangements. This is encapsulated in the University letter to providers 'Student Placement, Work Experience or Work Base Learning Activity' (WBL 2)
- In many cases specific arrangements for the placements will also have been through a Learning Agreement (WBL 3)

The following areas need to be discussed with the host employer prior to the placement commencing:

- health and safety policy and procedures
- risk management/assessment
- measures to control risk identified in risk assessment
- provision or information to student and placement-organiser
- health and safety management at the placement
- training programme for the placement
- employer and liability insurance certificate (in-date)
- accident reporting system

- first aid fire and emergency procedures

## **Working Abroad**

In planning student placements abroad, the following key priorities must be taken into account:

- the individual responsible for placements must have approved the placement
- an adequate assessment of the risk
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Placement Organiser and visiting tutor as required
- all persons involved in organising placements abroad must be authorised, competent and qualified for such a role
- local conditions in the placement area must be assessed and commensurate with likely risk factor
- occupational health advice should co-ordinate and determine necessary vaccinations, immunisation and health requirements for the area
- Placement Organiser should confirm adequate insurance is in place

## **General Safety**

### **Accident Reporting**

In the event that a student on placement has an accident, an untoward incident record is completed by Personal Tutor with a copy of the accident report should be forwarded to [HHScompliance@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:HHScompliance@plymouth.ac.uk)

### **Fire Prevention**

The placement organisation is to ensure that the student is made aware of the following instructions:

- assembly point location
- fire and emergency drill procedures
- fire risk assessment for building
- attend fire induction

## **First Aid**

The host organisation must ensure that there is adequate first aid facilities within the organisation.

### **Training**

The host employer will provide the student with such information, instruction, training and supervision as necessary.

### **Work Equipment**

The host organisation shall ensure that before a student uses work equipment, the following preventative measures are taken:

- servicing and maintenance of equipment is 'in' date
- student is briefed on the equipment risks and controls
- training is given as appropriate
- effective guards are in place as required

### **Lone Working**

All students on placement are to follow the policy and procedures of the host employer, if they are required to work outside normal working hours.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

All students on placement will be provided with the appropriate personal protection equipment as indicated on the risk assessment by the host employer.