



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education

Policy Owner: Head of Higher Education

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The College's Work Based Learning Policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Expectations for Quality. For further information visit <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>.
- 1.2 Work Based Learning within the confines of this policy relates to any planned period of learning experience normally outside the College (where the student is enrolled) and where the learning outcomes are an intended part of a programme of study.
- 1.3 A range of terms may be used by staff across the College to describe placement learning such as 'work-based learning' or 'workplace practice'.
- 1.4 Placement learning is integral to a programme of study and is undertaken as part, and very occasionally as a whole, of the programme.
- 1.5 An effective placement learning opportunity is one in which the aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and understood by all parties and where the responsibilities of the College, placement provider and student are made explicit.
- 1.6 It is the responsibility of the College to ensure that placements provide adequate opportunities for general or specific intended learning outcomes to be achieved, the latter approved by the partner university.
- 1.7 The types of placements available to students can take many forms (for example short, extended, full-time, part-time, paid, unpaid, assessed, non-assessed, formal learning, experiential learning, studying, or working abroad).
- 1.8 The College's relationship with the placement provider may vary with the nature of the placement. This may be, for example, a large-scale placement with a single employer, enrolment of students on a programme of study at an overseas university, or a student-negotiated work placement. The College has significantly engaged with the Higher Level Apprenticeship framework where part-time students have full-time employment

status.

- 1.9 Because of the varied nature of placement learning experiences, the College must be responsible for providing clear and well documented evidence to both students and placement providers setting out respective responsibilities of all parties concerned. In all instances, the emphasis will rest upon the importance of partnership working.
- 1.10 Placement learning, wherever and however organised and delivered, should widen learning opportunities without prejudice to the academic standards of the award being sought, or the quality of the student experience.

2. Key Terms

- 2.1 The Placement Provider includes persons, partnerships, companies, institutions, and organisations providing opportunities for placement learning. Placement Providers must be made aware of their responsibilities for:
- The provision of learning opportunities.
 - Providing adequate opportunities for the student so that the student can achieve the learning outcomes and assessment criteria (as agreed with the placement supervisor, prior to the student commencing the placement).
 - Their role, where appropriate, in the assessment of students.
 - The health and safety of students.
- 2.2 The Work Based Learning Supervisor/Mentor is a suitably qualified and experienced person, designated by the placement provider and responsible for supervising the student while on placement. The role of the Placement Supervisor/Mentor must be reviewed annually and in consultation with the placement provider. The role of the Placement Supervisor/Mentor must include the following:
- The provision of an effective placement learning opportunity.
 - The provision of adequate opportunities for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their placement assessments.
 - The provision of supervision on a regular basis.
 - Student appraisal of organisational policies and procedures such as health and

safety.

- Liaison with the Placement Coordinator in the instances of any complaints or emerging issues.
- Completion of relevant student report(s).
- Verification of the student hours placement log (the Placement Supervisor/Mentor may nominate a deputy in this instance).
- Supporting students (where necessary) in finding opportunities to provide supplementary evidence for assessments such as placement portfolios.
- Where possible, the inclusion of students in learning opportunities that will broaden their experience.
- Assisting students to develop the necessary personal and professional skills.
- Attendance at relevant review/advice meetings where applicable and appropriate.
- Ensuring that students are responsible for adhering to the norms and expectations of the workplace and/or any professional conduct requirements.
- Ensuring that where required, students are managing their own learning and professional relationships, and for tracking and recording their own progress and achievements.

2.3 Placement Supervisors may also be a programme leader or module tutor and must be given the necessary hours to plan, organise and effectively administer placements and learning opportunities as defined by this policy.

2.4 Placement Mentors (nominated within the workplace) must be appropriately qualified and competent to fulfil their role.

2.5 The Placement Coordinator is the nominated person for a programme of study within the College who is responsible for organising and ensuring the implementation of the Policy for the Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education. The Placement Coordinator may also be a tutor or programme leader.

2.6 Placement Coordinators must be appropriately qualified, resourced, and competent to fulfil their role. The Head of Department is responsible for approving the appointment of a Placement Coordinator.

3. General Principles of the Policy

3.1 Where Work Based Learning is an intended part of a programme of study, the Placement Coordinator must ensure:

- The maintenance of placement administration.
- Procedures for securing, approving, and allocating placements are rigorous.
- The responsibilities for placement learning are clearly defined to prospective and current students and placement providers.
- Any assessment of placement learning is part of a coherent assessment strategy
- Any formal assessments of placement learning are covered by second marking as defined in the College's HE Assessment Policy and external examining processes.
- The learning opportunities for students during placements are appropriate.
- In the case of professional, funding, or regulatory body requirements, the student placement experience can meet standards as defined in professional standards or codes.
- That all students are covered by the College indemnity and all documentation relating to this must be completed prior to the placement commencing.

3.2 The College expects that with regard to securing, approving and allocating placements, Placement Coordinators must ensure:

- In cases where organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors specify safer recruitment decisions through the identification of candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work including placement learning, and work that involves children or vulnerable adults, that the student completes and receives a clean Access NI check (standard or enhanced as specified by the placement provider and identified as a requirement in the student's chosen programme of study), before the student is permitted to attend the placement.
- The student understands that an Access NI check that is in existence at the student's current place of work and is to be used for a placement learning experience is valid.
- Access NI checks are no longer than 3 years old - the period deemed valid and before a repeat check is necessary.
- Compliance with the policy for fair use of disclosure information ensuring actual

or copies of the Access NI check are not held at the College and that information revealed must be considered only for the purpose for which it was obtained.

- Verification of the appropriateness of the Access NI check and have signed and retained an 'Access NI student check list' as evidence that the check has been witnessed and the student deemed fit to attend placement. This student check list will be retained in the programme file or relevant module box. In cases where an Access NI check is not returned clear, the Placement Coordinator will liaise with the Course Co-coordinator for further advice.
- Occupational health checks are completed appropriately if a mandatory requirement of the programme of study (please refer to the Fitness to Practice policy).
- Students and Placement Providers know their rights and responsibilities through the provision of appropriate administrative procedures and documentation before a placement is commenced.
- It is inappropriate to accept verbal information as the sole means of confirming the student's placement arrangements. Placement Providers must be provided with relevant information. For example, a written agreement (a partnership agreement) setting out the respective responsibilities of all parties is considered a suitable means of ensuring placement providers are informed of the relevant information. Examples of appropriate documentation may include a letter of placement confirmation, a standard document that the placement provider can use to confirm that appropriate opportunities are available and that learning outcomes can be met for the student, a signed agreement outlining that each party has understood their rights and responsibilities, and documentation relating to health and safety.
- Copies of documentation provided and signed by the student and Placement Provider are filed accordingly and are 'evidence able' for internal or external review or in other circumstances such as complaints or appeals.
- Placement Mentors are encouraged to attend programme planning or review meetings and offer guidance and support to placement supervisors i.e. through information, advice, and training days as appropriate.
- The use of attendance logs are kept up to date and reviewed, and upon completion of the programme are signed to acknowledge that the student has met the programme attendance requirements and has been deemed fit to attend

placement. This student check list will be retained in the programme file or relevant module box.

- 3.3 Placement Coordinators must act as the first line of contact for matters relating to concerns and complaints reporting all serious issues to the Head of Quality and Student Engagement and the Head of Department.
- 3.4 Placement Coordinators must ensure that all documentation is checked for suitability and the placement provider's commitment to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities under health and safety legislation in the workplace is verified (having regard to the skill and experience of placement students), before a student formally commences their placement learning experience.
- 3.5 Placement Coordinators must ensure that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities prior to placements through appropriate preparation and guidance.
- 3.6 Students must be made aware of their responsibilities:
 - To act appropriately at all times in their role as a student representative of the College, with the placement provider and its customers, clients, patients, and/or employees.
 - To adhere to the requirements of work place or professional expectations.
 - To manage their learning and professional relationships.
 - To record their progress and achievements.
 - To alert the placement provider and placement coordinator of problems with the placement that might prevent the progress or satisfactory completion of the placement.
 - To complete the specified number of work based/placement hours, days or weeks, in order for their qualification to be awarded, for example, where a foundation degree states that 60 days of placement are required as an integral component of the programme, the student must be made aware that the failure to complete the required placement may jeopardise the award of the final qualification.

3.7 Students must be aware of their rights:

- To a safe placement environment.
- To be treated in accordance with applicable legislation.

3.8 In the case of European or International placements, students must also:

- Gain approval from the Head of Department
- Apply and go for an interview with the relevant embassy where appropriate.
- Complete a relevant health screening form prior to travel as provided by the College and to be submitted to the relevant insurance company.
- Ensure travel insurance is in place prior to travel to European or International placement.
- Whilst on placement, not knowingly undertake any hazardous activities or hire vehicles.

4. **Student Support and Information**

4.1 Placement Coordinators must ensure the provision of students with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during, and after their placements. This must include the provision of:

- Support to students where the responsibility for securing a placement rests with the student.
- An appropriate induction to the placement environment, including health and safety information.
- Any occupational health considerations or requirements, including immunisation (for example for health service or some international placements).
- Any legal, professional, or ethical considerations (for example client or patient confidentiality).
- The means of recording the achievement of specific learning outcomes and progress, for example within a portfolio, placement log or other materials deemed appropriate for the programme.
- Availability of additional language or skills preparation.
- Information on the need for personal insurance cover (where relevant).
- Cultural orientation and work expectations.

- The College support services that will remain available to students during placements.
- Appropriate re-orientation on a student's return to study (where relevant).

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Placement Learning Opportunities

5.1 South West College places significant emphasis upon the review and evaluation of the student experience. Placement Coordinators must:

- Encourage Placement Supervisors and students to provide feedback on progress and communicate any concerns in a timely way to the placement coordinator.
- Periodically review the progress of students.
- Using feedback from Placement Supervisors/Mentors, external examiners, and students, establish procedures within which feedback on the quality and standards of the placement can be received and appropriate action taken where necessary; and ensure formal and informal means of gathering feedback from Placement Providers about the placement arrangement are in place.

5.2 To ensure the quality and standards of the placement learning experience is safeguarded, programme teams must annually review the student experience, ensure immediate concerns are addressed and that suitable planning for enhancement occurs.

5.3 The Quality Unit may at the discretion of the Education Committee, carry out thematic reviews on placement learning to monitor and review compliance to the precepts within this Policy.

5.4 Periodic review activities must also take into account compliance to the policy, where faculties have foundation degree provision or any other provision, where work based learning is an integral component of the programme of study.

6. The Management of Assessment of Work Based Learning:

- 6.1 The management of the Work Based Learning assessment process is important to ensure the diverse range of learning outcomes are met within a 40-credit module at level 5. This policy contains a range of sample documents which may help Work Based Learning module tutors devise assessments and how employers and students may be involved in the formative and summative stages of assessment.
- 6.2 For work placement documentation, please refer to the appropriate tile on Gateway.

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.
- 7.2 The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy every three years, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: 

Date: 15.04.24

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: 

Date: 11/04/2024

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Equal Opportunities, Good Relations & Cultural Diversity Policy	Gateway	Head of People and Culture
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Gateway	Head of People and Culture

Change Log

Location	Change deletion/addition	from	Change to
2.5	'Management of Placement Learning in Higher Education'		Management of Work Based Learning in Higher Education.
2.6, 3.3, 3.6	Head of Faculty		Head of Department
3.1	Policy for Assessment of Students		HE Assessment Policy
3.2	It is inappropriate that verbal information is considered the sole means of ensuring students' Placement Providers are provided with relevant information.		It is inappropriate to accept verbal information as the sole means of confirming the student's placement arrangements. Placement Providers must be provided with relevant information.
Throughout Document	"Placement Supervisor/Mentor"		"Placement Supervisor" Or "Placement Mentor" as appropriate
Appendices	Appendices 1-12 removed		Replaced with: Appendices Moved to Gateway Tile

Communication

Who needs to know (for action)	Senior Management Team Heads and Deputy Heads of Department Course Coordinators Quality Manager HLA Manager
Who needs to be aware	All HE staff and students

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway and Website	J Lucas	On approval
Dissemination to key staff	L Curran / J Kelly	On approval

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
L Curran	Head of Higher Education
Julie Kelly	Higher Education Development Coordinator

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
N/A		

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	10 April 2024

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review? Yes/No If Yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
01 2019	01/11/2021	Liam Curran Joanne Lucas	Yes	V2.0	No	No
V3.0	February 2024	Liam Curran Julie Kelly Padraig McNamee	Yes	V3.0	No	Yes