**Annex Q: Work-Based and Placement Learning**

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# Introduction

This section of the Code of Practice provides guidance on the operation of student work-based and placement learning including study abroad, year abroad, work placements and short-term work experience, both as a required and optional part of a course of study[[1]](#footnote-2). In this Annex, ‘placement provider’ should be taken to include both employers and other Higher Education Institutions, both in the UK and international.

# Courses and Modules

## **Indicating How Placements Relate to Course Criteria**

Where work-based or placement learning is a compulsory part of a course of study the course specification should identify this and show how it contributes to the overall and coherent aims of the course. The learning outcomes associated with the work-based or placement learning and how it will be assessed and weighted with the overall course should be clearly identified. Such learning outcomes should lead to authentic work-based activity, intended to contribute to meeting genuine workplace needs. The course specification must also set out the options available to students if the work-based/ placement learning cannot take place or in the event of failure or non-completion of this portion of the course.

## **Setting Learning Outcomes**

Where work-based or placement learning forms all or part of a module, the module specification should set out the learning outcomes associated with the work-based or placement learning, how it will be assessed and the recovery mechanisms and arrangements (if any) available if the work-based/placement learning cannot take place or in the event of failure or non-completion. The module specification should outline what types of activity will be acceptable in the context of the work-based/placement learning and should set out the process for approving the placement (or make reference to the appropriate document, if the relevant Division has set out that process elsewhere). Where appropriate, work-based/placement modules should be designed and developed in partnership with employers or other stakeholders.

## **Potential Inability to Resit Work-Based Modules**

A Division may deem it appropriate that, for specific work-based learning/ placement learning modules, the module cannot be re-sat in the event that a student does not pass the minimum threshold required. In such cases the module specification must state this explicitly and students must be made aware of it prior to commencing on the module.

## **Module Handbook Guidelines**

As appropriate, the module handbook should outline the key deadlines for the work-based/placement learning and should set out the processes for the student’s effective management of the learning. The module handbook may need to provide further detail on acceptable types of work-based or placement activity, as per section 1.2 above. If the module cannot be re-sat in the event of failure, as per section 1.3 above, the module handbook must make this clear.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

The University’s procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), as set out in at Annex R of this Code of Practice, should also be considered in regards to possible exemptions for work-based and placement learning elements of a course of study. The course specification should clearly identify any course learning outcomes where use of RPL as a means of awarding credit will not be permissible.

1. **Recording Activities on the Placement Management System**

All activities related to placement management must be recorded on the Placement Management System for monitoring purposes. These activities include risk assessment, due diligence and visits (the list is not exhaustive). Guidance on use of the Placement Management System will be provided by the [Careers and Employability Service](https://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/).

# Marking

Student placements in the workplace will be specified in module format. Where students undertake study with a placement provider and their performance on such placement modules is not assessed by an academic member of Kent staff, the relevant modules will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will be zero-weighted with respect to classification. Numerical marks may not be returned for any assessments conducted in this way. Refer to Credit Framework section 12.4.1.2 for details.

# Requirements in Relation to Work-Based and Placement Learning Providers

## **Divisional Responsibilities in Checking the Placement Provider**

Before the start of each placement the relevant Division in consultation with CES must ensure:

1. That the learning opportunities provided by the placement provider are appropriate.
2. That the appropriate risk assessment has been completed by the Division and recorded on the Placement Management System. The template is available from CES.
3. That there is agreement between the provider and the University of the responsibilities of each side in relation to the work-based or placement learning. This should be via the University of Kent’s standard placement agreement (provided by CES[[2]](#footnote-3)) and should be received within three months of the commencement of the placement.
4. The agreement should cover the following:

* details of any assessment undertaken whilst on placement/in the workplace.
* course/module/student regulations as appropriate.
* procedures for complaints or concerns.
* details of University point(s) of contact.
* information for and expectations of placement mentors.
* details of the expectation that placement providers will monitor and assure the proficiency of staff involved in support of students in-situ.
* information surrounding Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and confidentiality issues (including how these relate to the submission of coursework by the student).
* confirmation that the Division is in receipt of written evidence that the placement provider has a fit and proper Equality and Diversity Policy, Health and Safety Policy and a Race Equality Policy, which includes a complaints procedure and provides assurance that selection and allocation processes are free from bias and open to all students regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or disability.
* insurance arrangements (Nb. With regard to international placements, before travelling students must have secured appropriate insurance and informed the University’s Insurance office of their intent to travel.
* Tier 4 monitoring arrangements.
* requirements regarding site visits to be undertaken by Kent staff.

## **Divisions and Due Diligence in Regards to Placement Providers**

Divisions must ensure they have completed appropriate due diligence on any placement provider before entering into agreement with them. Divisions should seek advice from the Careers and Employability Service if required.

1. Where the work-based/placement learning will take place abroad the Division should seek advice from the International Partnerships Office with regards to the requirements of the due diligence exercise in such instances.
2. The completed due diligence must be recorded on the Placement Management System.
3. The Division must confirm that the placement provider has an appropriate support system for the student while they are participating in the placement.

# Information and Support for Students

1. The Division should provide the student with guidance and support in relation to identifying work-based or placement opportunities, applying for opportunities, preparing for interviews and assessment centres and effective behaviours on placements. Divisional staff providing this advice and guidance must be appropriately experienced / qualified to do so.
2. Divisions are expected to set in advance a programme of support available to students in obtaining placements.
3. Where the placement offers low pay or is unpaid, the Division should work with the student before the start of the placement to ensure that the student understands the full financial implications of undertaking the placement, including that the student will be able to complete the placement and not be placed at a significant financial disadvantage by so doing.
4. Before the start of the placement the relevant Division and CES must ensure that students are in possession of clear information on the following:

* the placement provider, including location, type of business/HEI, key contact, and any pertinent information on the relevant country if located abroad;
* any requirements that the student must meet before the placement starts, such as a Disclosure and Disbarring Service (DBS) check, health checks, visas etc.
* the academic and professional requirements the student has to achieve.
* that the student must have access to a contract of employment that details all relevant terms and conditions relating to the placement.
* the student’s responsibilities and rights in regards to all aspects of the placement, including complaints procedure. The student should also be made aware of their role as a representative of the University when in the work or placement environment.
* that the Careers and Employability Service is a source of help and support for students involved in work-based and placement learning.
* if the student is going abroad for the placement the Division should provide a pre-departure briefing.

1. Divisions do not offer guidance to students on areas such as securing accommodation, any visa requirements, or finding a doctor/dentist, however, individual Divisions may wish to provide an appropriate briefing.
2. Divisions must ensure that students are aware that while they are on placement they remain students of the University of Kent and will continue to have access to the full range of support mechanisms provided by the University including counselling, Student Health and Wellbeing, chaplains etc.

# University Point of Contact

Students and placement providers should be made aware of the Divisions and/or University point(s) of contact with responsibility for the work-based or placement learning arrangement, and any key contact in the International Partnerships Office as applicable (as detailed in the standard placement agreement).

# Contact During Placement

## **Training Requirements for Contact With Students on Placement**

Contact with students on placement will cover matters of both academic progress and student welfare and staff in Divisions and other University contacts who undertake this role should have received all necessary staff development training and be briefed sufficiently to fulfil these dual aspects of their role

## **Necessity of Early Student Contact to Identify Potential Issues**

Contact between the student in-situ and the home Division or International Partnerships Office should be made at the beginning of the placement arrangement in order to clarify any queries or issues as soon as possible. A visit to the student in-situ is beneficial also (if geographically viable) to help clarify issues and gauge progress before the student has progressed too far in the placement arrangement.

## **Further Student Contact Expectations**

During the placement, the Division or International Partnerships Office should continue to make contact with the student on a regular basis[[3]](#footnote-4). The method of contact can vary according to local arrangements and the needs of the student (such as a face to face meeting at the placement location, Microsoft Teams, email or telephone). A written record of each contact should be kept by the student and the Division /International Partnerships Office. Where the student does not respond to repeated contact, the Division or International Partnerships Office should contact the placement provider to make enquiries and follow up as appropriate.

## **Tier 4 Visa Statutory Requirements**

Divisions should ensure that they meet statutory requirements in relation to students on a Tier 4 visa. Advice can be sought from Visa Compliance.

## **Student Disciplinary Procedures Whilst on Placement**

The Division should ensure that the student is aware that they will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the employer/HEI in question. Where a student is found to be not acting with honesty or integrity during the placement the Division or International Partnerships Office should keep in close contact with the student while the placement provider resolves the issue. Where appropriate, [Annex 10: Academic Misconduct](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/credit-framework#annex-10) or the [Regulations on Student Discipline in relation to non-academic matters](https://www.kent.ac.uk/student-services/student-services-policies#discipline-regulations) will apply.

# Review

## **Placement De-brief**

An end of placement de-brief and review with students, where appropriate, either individually or collectively, will facilitate immediate feedback and clarification of any issues.

## **Formal Student Feedback Around Work Placement**

Returning students are the most pertinent form of information on the work-based/placement learning experience and the placement providers. Thus, Divisions and the central support services that have involvement in student placements should routinely and as a matter of course gain feedback from students who have undergone placement and keep formal records of such feedback. Any review or enhancement undertaken as a result of student feedback should be formally recorded through Boards of Studies and the annual monitoring process[[4]](#footnote-5).

## **Processing Student Feedback**

Some Divisions and central support services may find it useful to compile an ‘information bank’ on feedback including useful information on placement providers for future cohorts of students to draw on, and to help facilitate section 4.4 above.

## **Feedback from Placement Providers**

Feedback should also be routinely obtained from the placement providers, in order to enhance the student learning experience. As appropriate, Divisions may wish to discuss feedback obtained from individual providers and students with the full set of providers more generally as part of the module evaluation process. (Divisions must ensure that the anonymity of Kent staff, students and provider employees is maintained).

# Complaints and Grievances

All complaints with regard to student placements will be dealt with according to the [University Complaints procedure](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/student-complaints).

# Assessment and Progression

In respect of work-based learning or placement, the arrangements for assessment, completion and progression will be as set out in the relevant module/course specification. These arrangements most conform to the requirements of the Credit Framework.

# Institutional Review of Work-Based and Placement Learning

10.1 As with other areas of teaching and learning provision, the University will review the operation of work-based and placement learning through the normal quality assurance routes such as Periodic Review (see Annex F of the Code of Practice).

10.2 The University has assessed this Code of Practice to be of high relevance to its duties under the Equality Act and will, therefore, include in any review analysis of its impact on race and disability equality.

1. The University utilises a Placement Management System, which is managed by the Careers and Employability Service and is used to manage and monitor all placement and work-based learning activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The agreement is administered through the Placement Management System. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Where the student is on a short-term or part-time placement the Division should make appropriate adjustments to the standard contact timeframe. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Refer to [Annex E of the Code of Practice for Quality Assurance of Taught Courses of Study](https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/codes-of-practice-for-taught-courses#annex-e) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)