Annex Q: Work-Based and Placement Learning

Introduction

This section of the Code of Practice provides guidance to Schools and central support services 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 programme of study1. In this Annex, ‘placement provider’ should be taken to include both employers and other Higher Education Institutions, both in the UK and international.

1. Programmes and Modules

1.1 Where work-based or placement learning is a compulsory part of a programme of study the programme specification should identify this and show how it contributes to the overall and coherent aims of the programme. The learning outcomes associated with the work-based or placement learning and how it will be assessed and weighted with the overall programme should be clearly identified. The programme 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 programme.

1.2 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 School has set out that process elsewhere).

1.3 A School may deem it appropriate that, for specific work-based learning/placement learning modules, the module cannot be resat 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.

1.4 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 1.2 above. If the module cannot be resat in the event of failure, as per 1.3 above, the module handbook must make this clear.

1.5 The accreditation of any prior certificated or experiential learning should also be considered in regards to possible exemptions for work-based and placement learning elements of a programme of study. The programme specification should clearly identify any elements where APE/CL will not be considered and are thus compulsory for the programme of study.

2. Marking

Where a student undertakes study with a placement provider and the student’s mark or marks are not awarded by Kent staff the stage will be graded on a pass/fail basis and

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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.
will be zero-weighted with respect to classification. Refer to Credit Framework section 12.4.2.1.4 for details.

3. Requirements in Relation to Work-Based and Placement Learning Providers

3.1 Before the start of each placement the relevant School/central services must ensure:

3.1.1 That the learning opportunities provided by the placement provider are appropriate;

3.1.2 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 Kent Innovation and Enterprise²).

3.1.3 The agreement should cover the following, as necessary:

- details of any assessment undertaken whilst on placement/in the work place;
- programme/module/student regulations as appropriate;
- procedures for complaints or concerns;
- Details of University point 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);
- insurance arrangements;
- Tier 4 monitoring arrangements;
- requirements regarding site visits to be undertaken by Kent.

3.2 The School must seek written assurance and evidence that the placement provider has a proper Equality and Diversity Policy, Health and Safety Policy and a Race Equality Policy which includes a complaints procedure, and that selection and allocation processes are free from bias and open to all students regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or disability (undertaken as part of the standard placement agreement referred to above).

3.3 Due diligence must be carried out on all placement providers. Where the work-based/placement learning is abroad the School should seek advice from the International Partnerships Office in regards to appropriate due diligence.

3.4 The School must confirm that the placement provider has an appropriate support system for the student while they are participating in the placement.

4. Information and Support for Students

4.1 The School should provide the student with guidance and support in relation to identifying work-based or placement opportunities, applying for appropriate opportunities and preparing for interviews and assessment centres.

4.2 Where the placement offers low pay or is unpaid, the School should work with the student before the start of the placement to ensure that the student understands the full financial

² The agreement is administered through the Placement Management System.
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.

4.3 Before the start of the placement the relevant School/central services must ensure that students have received 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\(^3\) 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 School should provide a pre-departure briefing.

4.4 Schools do not offer guidance to students on areas such as securing accommodation, any visa requirements, or finding a doctor/dentist, however, individual Schools may wish to provide an appropriate briefing.

4.5 Schools 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.

5. University Point of Contact

Students and placement providers should be made aware of the School and/or University point 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).

6. Contact during Placement

6.1 School/University contacts should have received the necessary staff development and be briefed sufficiently to fulfil the role.

6.2 Contact between the student in-situ and the home School 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.

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\(^3\) See https://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/
6.3 During the placement, the School or International Partnerships Office should make contact with the student on a (calendar) monthly basis. 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, skype, email or telephone). A written record of each contact should be kept by the student and the School/International Partnerships Office. Where the student does not respond to repeated contact, the School or International Partnerships Office should contact the placement provider to make enquiries and follow up as appropriate.

6.4 The School 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 School or International Partnerships Office should keep in close contact with the student while the placement provider resolves the issue. Where appropriate, Annex 10 (Academic Discipline: Procedures) of the Credit Framework will apply.

7. Review

7.1 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.

7.2 Returning students are the most pertinent form of information on the work-based/placement learning experience and the placement providers. Thus Schools 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.

7.3 Some Schools 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 4.3 above.

7.4 Feedback should also be routinely obtained from the placement providers, in so much as they are an integral part of the learning experience.

8. Complaints and Grievances

All complaints with regard to student placements will be dealt with according to existing University procedure. See Student Charter Section 6 (iii).

9. Institutional Review of Work-Based and Placement Learning

9.1 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 Programme Review (see Annex F of the Code of Practice).

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

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4 Where the student is on a short-term or part-time placement the School should make appropriate adjustments to the standard contact timeframe.