







Policy and Guidance on Placement and Work-Based Learning

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Policy Owner: Director of Careers & Student Enterprise

Department: Careers and Student Enterprise

Version	Effective From	Amendments	Equality Analysis	Stakeholders Consulted	Approval Date	Author	Date for Review
V1.0	01/09/2023	<p>Transferred the UEL standard template.</p> <p>Updated to include reference to the UUK checklist, providing guidance for staff supporting students before, during and after placements.</p> <p>Updated to include the additional due diligence checks required for international students on Tier 4 visas undertaking placements.</p> <p>Updated to reflect that CaSE as a central service has overall responsibility to report institutionally the number of students completing work-based learning at the university.</p>	22/07/2022	Placements Forum which includes School staff DBS, Office for Institutional Equity.	20/09/2023	Cherise Basslian & Raksha Mehta	16/01/2024

This Policy will be reviewed by Education & Experience Committee and progress for approval by Academic Board

1 Purpose and Scope of the Policy

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This policy is intended to be a general policy which gives guidance on the minimum requirements prior to the commencement of work-based or placement learning, but the method by which this is achieved can be adapted to suit the needs of an individual UEL School or collaborative partner. Please note that any programme specific professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) rules and regulations take precedence and should be incorporated into the policy. This policy is designed as a basis for development of more specific procedures by individual programmes taking part in work-based learning.

1.1.2 The policy has been informed by the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance, Work-Based Learning](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/work-based-learning).

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/work-based-learning>

‘Work-based learning for higher education courses describes courses that bring together higher education providers and work organisations to create learning opportunities. This needs to be considered in conjunction with other regulatory requirements including providers’ academic regulations, funding body requirements and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies’ (PSRB) rules and regulations.’

1.1.3 QAA Guiding principles to consider for work-based learning:

- Work-based learning courses and opportunities are designed and developed in partnership with employers, students and other stakeholders (where appropriate) and contain learning outcomes that are relevant to work objectives.
- Work-based learning consists of structured opportunities for learning and is achieved through authentic activity and is supervised in the workplace.
- Work-based learning opportunities are underpinned by formal agreements between education organisations, employers and students.

- Education organisations and employers consider any specific issues in relation to the workplace environment and deal with them appropriately, including informal agreements where appropriate.
- Work-based learning is delivered through a meaningful partnership between students, employers and the education organisation.
- Work-based learning opportunities enable students to apply and integrate areas of subject and professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to meet course learning outcomes.
- Parties understand and respect the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of the education organisation, employer and student, and appropriate training and support is provided where required.
- Education organisations and employers acknowledge individuals have unique needs within the education organisation and in the workplace, and collaborate to ensure opportunities are inclusive, safe and supported.
- Work-based learning opportunities are designed, monitored, evaluated and reviewed in partnership with employers.
- The University has a duty of care to all its students in respect of the health and safety standards of a student's learning environment. Departments should therefore ensure that they have the expertise to organise and maintain appropriate and safe placement learning opportunities.

1.1.4 This document will provide clear guidance for Students, Placement Providers and Staff who manage placements across the university. It details the entitlements and responsibilities of all parties. A template agreement form is annexed to support this guidance.

1.1.5 The Department, Student, and Placement Provider must work together before, during and after the placement. This three-way partnership will be most effective when roles, entitlements and responsibilities are clearly apportioned.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy relates to any situation where a student works or studies on-campus or in an approved non-UEL location, whether in the UK or overseas, and where their work or placement situation contributes towards learning outcomes of their programme of study.
- 1.2.2 We define work-based learning to mean any learning which takes place in a workplace which is directly relevant and contributes to students meeting relevant learning outcomes. Work-based learning may be paid or unpaid. It does not apply to any employment undertaken outside of a programme of study which does not contribute towards the meeting of learning outcomes.
- 1.2.3 We define a placement to mean a period of study undertaken, which could be either in a work or educational context. A placement could be a block of work undertaken for a placement module, a year in industry on a sandwich programme, or part of a 2-year PG placement programme. This could be a period of study organised by the University or that the student may have organised themselves but is approved by the University.
- 1.2.4 A Department should have at least one named contact for placements (referred to as the Placement Coordinator in this policy), although some schools may prefer to have a number of named contacts dealing with different elements of the work-based learning or placement experience. This named person(s) should be made known to the Careers and Student Enterprise Team (CaSE), who as a central service have overall oversight of work-based learning across the institution and that person(s) must share details of the work-based learning activity, data and other relevant information as is necessary and which is requested by CaSE.
- 1.2.5 In this policy 'placement' means any work-based learning whether the student participates in person or remotely.

2 Policy

2.1 Minimum wage rules and longer-term placements

2.1.1 Unpaid placements may not continue for more than twelve months and the work performed by the student must relate directly to their Course. Longer placements and other types of work fall outside the work placement minimum wage exemption. For more information visit the [government guidance on the minimum wage](#).

2.1.2 Where a student is offered a role for longer than a year, they must have an employment contract. For advice contact your HR adviser or the Legal Team at legal@uel.ac.uk. Do not use the template placement agreement in appendix 2.

2.2 Further information and guidance

2.2.1 This can be found, for departments, students and providers, in [Appendix 1](#). UEL employees involved in arranging and managing work placements should familiarise themselves with this guidance.

2.2.2 The placement coordinator, or member of academic staff, should satisfy themselves that each placement provider, whether allocated by UEL or independently found by the student, is suitable. Procedures for securing, approving and allocating placements should be transparent to all, and take into account, as a minimum:

- The suitability of the placement to allow students to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the placement.
- That the placement provider meets with Health and Safety requirements.
- Any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements governing the suitability of placements.
- Student support on placements, including the mechanisms for dealing with any problems or complaints.
- Information should be given to students on the consequences of failure to either secure or complete a placement.

- 2.2.3 A risk-based approach should be used when checking the validity of placement hosts, particularly if independently sourced. This allows a lighter touch on companies with relatively low risk (well-known reputable organisations) and more rigorous control measures where the risk is higher (SME's or small unknown organisations).
- 2.2.4 These checks are especially important for international students with Tier 4 visas as the Home Office expects rigorous checks on placement providers.

Organisation Checklist
Company registration number/Charity registration number
Legitimate company website.
Line manager email confirming placement from business email account and contact number.
Registered on UK Companies House (Tier 4 visa requirement) and accounts filed within the last year, if a business. Search UK Companies House
Registered on the Charities Commission, if it is a UK charity. Search Charities Commission .
Registered on the Gov.uk website, if it is a placement within a school. Search Gov.uk website
Commercial address provided where student will be located.
Online search on company does not reveal negative coverage that could affect student safety and wellbeing and UEL's reputation.
Request copies of the placement provider's Health and Safety Policy.



Additional Checks for SMEs
Copy of Employers Liability Insurance (preferably in a company name – if in an individual sole trader’s name check with CaSE or consult our insurance team).
Telephone number and address on website checked for legitimacy.
Additional Checks for students aged under 18.
Request a copy of the placement provider’s safeguarding policy (if they do not have one check with the Legal team).
Additional procedure for high-risk organisations
Designated representative from the departments/school’s Placements Team conducts a visit.
Additional checks for international students on Tier 4 visas undertaking placements
Conduct a pre-placement visit to check validity of the placement (i.e., location, suitability, supervisor identified, hours of mandatory in-person attendance of 21 hours minimum confirmed).
Additional in-placement visit to take place part way through the placement to establish if there is any additional support needed from the student/employer’s perspective and to signpost accordingly.

2.3 Health & Safety

2.3.1 The University is legally responsible for the safety and wellbeing of students while on placements. Therefore, health and safety and safeguarding must be covered in written placement agreements and highlighted during induction sessions. Where possible providers should have well-constructed arrangements around health and safety risk assessments.



- 2.3.2 Where a provider is too small to have formal policy and procedures it is still our responsibility to check that they have safe working practices to protect students. Students must also be made aware of relevant policies and systems, and of their own responsibility to follow placement provider health and safety policies and directions, to engage in safe working practices, and be given information about who to contact if they have health and safety or safeguarding concerns [about the work they are asked to do or the provider].
- 2.3.3 Please refer to the University's [Safety & Health Association Guidance on Health & Safety on Placements](#) for more details of the six factors to consider regarding the risk associated with a placement, i.e. work, travel and transportation, location and region, health and environment, individual student and insurance limitations.
- 2.3.4 Health & safety questions must be included in the Placement Agreement Form. This should be signed by the placement provider to confirm that they meet and follow current Health & Safety legislation and that they hold valid Employers Liability Insurance. A copy of the Employer Liability Insurance and a completed risk assessment (where the student is neither office nor home based but will be visiting third party premises) form should be requested.
- 2.3.5 Other areas for consideration are the sharing of expectations regarding ethical and commercial confidentiality, and data protection issues, which should occur at all stages of the partnership. Placement providers may request for students to sign additional documents with regards to data protection and confidentiality.
- 2.3.6 Please refer to the [Universities UK Checklist](#) for universities to help them support students in the transition to, during, and upon returning from a placement, so they are prepared for success in both this part of their course and beyond. The checklist explores what universities can do, in partnership with placement providers, to better support students going on placements to reduce mental health and well-being risks. Further guidance and support for staff has been created and can be accessed in the [Placements Guidance UUK Checklist](#) document.

2.4 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

- 2.4.1 If the placement involves working with children or vulnerable adults, there is a mandatory requirement for a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure certificate.
- 2.4.2 A DBS check provides details of any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, or whether local police hold any information that can reasonably be considered relevant to working with vulnerable groups.
- 2.4.3 See the link here [DBS and Occupational Health Checks | University of East London \(uel.ac.uk\)](https://www.uel.ac.uk/dbshandbook) for information about UEL policies and procedures relating to DBS Disclosure.

2.5 Data Protection

- 2.5.1 The University and placement provider will be sharing personal data about the student, and it is very important that the parties make sure that this sharing meets mandatory legal standards. UEL [University] policies and guidance about these standards can be found at on the [Data Protection](#) webpages
- 2.5.2 For multiple placements a data sharing agreement is recommended. Contact the Information Governance Office on dpo@uel.ac.uk for advice and the Legal team on legal@uel.ac.uk for a template agreement which can be tailored for your placements.

2.6 Placement Administration

- 2.6.1 The department should ensure accurate and up-to-date records and documentation are kept for all placement students. This includes:
- Details of all students on placement at any time
 - Details of the placement including start and end dates
 - Placement host details (supervisor, address, telephone number, business email address)
 - Signed tripartite Placement Agreement Form (or the Extended Work Project Agreement Form (PART 2 Appendix 2)

- Copy of Employers Liability Insurance (where required)
- Student and employer evaluation forms
- Record of attendance (for Tier 4 students)

2.7 Tier 4 Student Placements – Mandatory Reporting and Monitoring

2.7.1 As rules for overseas students studying in the UK change constantly, the department must seek up-to- date advice from the International Students Compliance team (points.based.system@uel.ac.uk).

2.7.2 These requirements are necessary so that the University [UEL] meets Home Office requirements. If we do not do this, the University [UEL] could lose its Tier 4 licence and international students will be unable to study on UEL campuses. Universities which have lost their licences usually do not get them back for several years.

2.7.3 The department must inform the Compliance team in advance of all Tier 4 placements.

2.7.4 The department must also:

- Carry out due diligence (outlined in 3.3) on all placement providers to ensure that they meet UKVI requirements.
- Share address and details for each placement with the International Students Compliance team.
- Communicate the significance of compliance with Home Office regulations to the placement provider.
- Ensure that the Placement Agreement includes robust mechanisms to monitor Tier 4 student attendance.
- Make sure that attendance for Tier 4 students on placement is strictly monitored by the department/placement coordinator/compliance team. A process should be agreed with the compliance team.
- Report changes to the placement circumstances promptly to the Compliance team so they can notify UKVI.



2.7.5 Further information can be found in the [Home Office Guidance for Tier 4 Applications](#).

2.8 Placement Agreement

2.8.1 A tripartite agreement should be completed between the student, University and placement provider before the placement commences. This agreement should cover UEL [University] requirements listed in this Policy, placement learning activity and the support to be offered to the student in order to promote a successful outcome, minimise misunderstandings and avoid complaints.

2.8.2 This agreement could include the following information:

- The purpose of the placement learning activity and its intended learning outcomes.
- Contact details for the student, the department and the placement provider.
- Duration and hours of attendance.
- The name of a mentor and/or supervisor who would be responsible for assisting the student in fulfilling the learning outcomes for the placement.
- A named supervisor.
- Details of remuneration.
- Any assessment requirements arising out of the placement.
- The responsibilities of the student, university and placement provider.

2.8.3 For a template agreement form see [Appendix 2](#).

2.8.4 For advice on placement agreements please contact the Legal team at Legal@uel.ac.uk.

2.9 Placement Learning Assessment

2.9.1 Departments should provide detailed information about the assessment as part of the programme specification and placement handbook. This should include how credit is awarded for placement learning activities, or details of the requirements as part of the programme where no credit is awarded.

2.9.2 Departments can use a variety of assessment methods to encourage students to reflect on their placement learning, including reports, projects, case studies, peer assessment, group seminars, diaries and reflective logbooks.

2.10 Placement Monitoring and Evaluation

2.10.1 Departments should collect feedback from placement students in order to ensure that they are benefiting from the experience and that they are treated fairly and equally. Departments are also strongly encouraged to obtain feedback from the placement providers.

2.10.2 Where a number of placements are taking place within a department, the results of student evaluations of these activities should inform departmental programme review processes. The information should be used to measure the impact of work-based learning experiences and to inform good practice.

2.10.3 A number of evaluation forms for students and placement hosts are built into the career's management platform, Career Zone, which has a module to support placement administration. For the student this includes a pre and post work-based learning skills audit, mid-point review, self-evaluation and placement evaluation. The employer completes an evaluation of the student's work on the placement.

2.10.4 Students should be given the opportunity to reflect on their placement learning experiences. This could be incorporated into assessment tasks, or as part of a group exercise. The reflection exercise should require the student to articulate the experience gained, providing examples to demonstrate where skills have been developed. They should also be asked to translate this experience into their CV/covering letter and think about how they will leverage the opportunity in their job search.

2.10.5 Departments should consider a periodic review of placements, to ensure that these remain appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes of the programme.

2.11 Management of issues during placement

2.11.1 Common issues or causes for concern that might lead to a placement being terminated may fall into one of the following categories:

- there is a risk to the health or personal safety of the student.
- the placement might not be providing the appropriate experience to allow the relevant learning outcomes to be fulfilled.
- the student does not feel that they are being supported effectively during the placement.
- the conduct or practice of the student might be inappropriate or pose a risk to the health and safety of others.
- the student cannot complete the placement for reasons of health or well-being.
- difficulties arise as a result of the relationship between the student and the placement supervisor.

2.11.2 This guidance outlines procedures to be followed to determine if termination of the placement is appropriate. The procedures aim to ensure that the relevant parties are advised of the situation in a timely manner and that actions are progressed appropriately.

2.11.3 In the first instance, informal process, the student should be encouraged to speak to their placement supervisor to try to resolve any issues between them. If the information action does not result in the resolution of the issue for either party, or if the relationship is such that the informal stage is not possible, then for more serious cases it is advised that a process such as the one below is followed by the department:

- Stage 1 - Information is received: Information may be received by the University from the student or the placement provider.

- Stage 2 - A consultation meeting to take place (normally within an agreed timeframe of 5 working days). This will consider:
 - The nature of the information and its seriousness.
 - The steps to be undertaken and by whom to determine the validity of the information.
 - Whether suspension of the placement should occur or continue while the enquiry is ongoing. The University should also consider whether it wishes to place the student on suspension.
 - A timetable for the enquiry should be agreed to include the setting up of a meeting to consider the findings.
 - Other areas for consideration will be determined dependent on the particular case in question. Those invited to this meeting should include representatives from each of the organisations involved (This meeting would not normally include the placement student). A report is written and considered at Stage 3.
- Stage 3 - Following the enquiry and completion of a report:
 - A meeting will be held to consider the report, which will have been shared in advance with the student. This meeting will then determine whether the placement should continue or be terminated.
 - This meeting will normally occur within the agreed timeframe of 5 working days of the meeting at stage 2.
 - As a result of this determination there may be further actions taken by the University and the placement provider. Equally there may be no action to be taken by any party.
 - Stage 4 - Where the meeting at Stage 3 confirms concerns, the formal report of the decision will be communicated to all parties within the agreed timeframe.
 - Where it is decided under Part 1 or Part 2 that the student's placement should be terminated, then at that point information with regard to the premature ending will be communicated to the student and next actions agreed.



2.12 Institutional oversight, governance and data capture

- 2.12.1 The Careers and Student Enterprise team, (CaSE), as a central service has overall responsibility to report institutionally the number of students completing work-based learning activity at the university.
- 2.12.2 To enable CaSE to accurately report on this, work-based learning data must be accessible and made available to it by all departments whose students are undertaking work-based learning.
- 2.12.3 Departments must, where reasonably possible, record work-based learning data on the UEL Career Zone platform (careers management platform). This facilitates data capture centrally, allows for university-wide reporting and encourages consistency and best practice.
- 2.12.4 Departments must ask students to add details of their work-based learning to the Work Based Learning Scheme on the Career Zone platform where reasonably possible.
- 2.12.5 Departments can, in addition, then use the use 'Pathways' on the Career Zone to provide a step-by-step process for students to obtain, record and evaluate placements as part of their work-based-learning courses. Departments can be supported by CaSE to create these pathways on request to link to specific programmes.
- 2.12.6 If the 'Pathways' is not required then students should strongly be encouraged to record evidence of the skills gained through the work-based learning activity using the "Competency Statements" on the Career Zone, which will be linked to the student's Careers Passport as evidence of the knowledge and skills gained during the work-based learning.
- 2.12.7 For Professional Placements Programmes, where data is captured and stored by departments to meet the requirements of the professional bodies, and where it is not possible to use the Career Zone platform to record data, then departments must provide the data of all work-based learning activity and provide access to this data to CaSE as and when requested.

2.13 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

2.13.1 UEL is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which means that we have an overall responsibility to take steps wherever possible to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in the discharge of our functions.

2.13.2 Placements play a critical role in equalising employment opportunities, given a graduate job market where persistent disparities remain. We will engage with a wide range of employers – some of whom will have well-developed EDI procedures and practices, whilst others will have a basic awareness of the law but little else in practice.

2.13.3 It is important that employers are aware of our responsibility and commitment to EDI; we also need to adopt some flexibility in working with them to safeguard our students whilst also promoting the benefit to them of a positive stance on EDI.

2.13.4 When working with placement hosts/employer partners it is important to ensure they work towards and are compliant with equality, diversity and inclusion policies and processes which align with UEL's EDI statement which states that:

UEL is one of the most diverse and inclusive universities in the UK. Equality of opportunity, inclusion and courage are fundamental values at UEL. This isn't just an aspiration. It is who we are and what we do...We aim to deliver sector-leading outcomes by advancing an inclusive, respectful and anti-racist environment for staff, students, and stakeholders.

2.13.5 When working with placement hosts/employer partners it would be useful to:

- Check the organisation's website to review their EDI statements/policies
- Check if they have an EDI team/department
- Share the UEL EDI statement (highlighted in italics above) to ensure they understand what UEL stand for and that they are fully aligned with our EDI processes.



2.13.6 UEL supports positive action measures, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, in pre-recruitment processes where it is reasonable to think that disadvantage or low participation of a “protected group” as identified in the Equality Act 2010, which include gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality, is a factor contributing to unequal opportunities. The intention of this is to broaden the pool of suitable applicants for roles in an industry or with an employer.

2.13.7 For further guidance, advice or support please contact the Office for Institutional Equity at oiie@uel.ac.uk.

2.13.8 An Equality Impact Assessment accompanying this policy has been completed and submitted to the Office for Institutional Equity at oiie@uel.ac.uk.

3 Links to other Institutional Policies and Procedures

3.1 Internal Policies

3.1.1 This Policy relates to the following institutional regulations, policies or procedures

- [UEL University Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#)
- [UEL University Data Protection Policies](#)
- [UEL University Disclosure and Barring Services and Occupational Health Checks Policies](#)
- [University’s Safety & Health Association Guidance on Health & Safety on Placements](#)

3.2 Exemptions and Professional Bodies

3.3 Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

3.3.1 For Professional Placements Programmes, where data is captured and stored by departments to meet the requirements of the professional bodies, and where it is not possible to use the Career Zone platform to record data, then departments must provide the data of all work-based learning activity and provide access to this data to CaSE as and when requested.

4 Definitions

4.1 Definitions of acronyms or phrases used within the policy

Careers and Student Enterprise (CaSE)

The Careers and Student Enterprise Team are a central service whose role is to support and equip students and graduates with the knowledge, skills, experiences and confidence that recruiters look for and to make them job ready from day one through to beyond graduation.

The Career Zone platform

This is a careers management platform for students and graduates containing vacancy details, careers resources, learning pathways, access to events and 1 to 1 appointments with the CaSE team.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions each year by processing and issuing DBS checks for England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. DBS also maintains the Adults' and Children's Barred Lists, and makes considered decisions as to whether an individual should be included on one or both of these lists and barred from engaging in regulated activity.

Extended Work Project (EWP)

An Extended Work Project (EWP) involves students working in teams of 4 – 5 on a live business challenge. Organisations provide the project brief and are on hand for light touch support at agreed checkpoints for the duration of the project. Students are supervised and supported by academics. Upon completion, students present their findings and recommendations.

Placement

A period of time in employment, which usually is undertaken as part of the degree.

Placement Agreement Form (PAF)

The form that is completed by the student, placement host and university recording the terms and conditions of the placement.

Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are a very diverse group of professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals. PSRBs engage with higher education as regulators. They provide membership services and promote the interests of people working in professions; accredit or endorse courses that meet professional standards, provide a route through to the professions or are recognised by employers.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is an independent charity working to benefit students and higher education, and one of the world's experts in quality assurance. They are trusted by higher education providers and regulatory bodies to maintain and enhance quality and standards. They work with governments, agencies and institutions globally to benefit UK higher education and its international reputation.

Small, medium enterprises (SMEs)

The UK definition of SME is generally a small or medium-sized enterprise with fewer than 250 employees.

Tier 4 visas

Tier 4 Student Visas allow students from outside the European Economic Area to **study in the UK**, generally at a school, college, or university.

Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning involves learning through work, learning for work and/or learning at work. It consists of authentic structured opportunities for learning which are achieved in a workplace setting or are designed to meet an identified workplace need. This type of learning typically has a dual function of being designed to meet the learning needs of the employees, developing their knowledge, skills and professional behaviours, and also meeting the workforce development needs of the organisation.

5 Appendices

5.1  [Appendix 1 - Placement Guidance.pdf](#)

5.2  [Appendix 2 - Placement Agreement Form.pdf](#)

5.3  [Appendix 3 - Extended Work Consultancy Project Agreement Form.pdf](#)

5.4  [Appendix 4 - Data Protection Schedule.pdf](#)