



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



## PLACEMENT LEARNING

Incorporating Work-Based Learning, Work-Related Learning and Work Experience

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## Overview

- 1 Buckinghamshire New University aims to embed skills relevant to employability into its curriculum. Therefore all programmes will include elements of placement or work-based or work-related or work experience in its approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and offer students such opportunities. This can be delivered through collaboration with external partners and employers or through internal mechanisms such as simulation and live briefs.
- 2 The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery and monitoring of placement, work-based, work-related learning and work experience. It will ensure that the University is providing a high quality, consistent learning experience for all students.
- 3 This policy relates to three categories of activity that involve staff and students working with partners in a work environment which contributes to their studies. The categories are:
  - a placement learning
  - b work-based learning
  - c work-related learning and work experience

It does not include:

- graduate employment
- employment through BucksTemps
- Erasmus exchanges (covered separately)

## Scope

- 4 The University has revised this policy to reflect its range of work and to ensure it engages with ASET (2013) Good Practice Guide for Work Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education<sup>1</sup> and Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education<sup>2</sup>, *Managing higher education provision with others*, which is based on the key principles that:

“The delivery of learning opportunities with others, wherever and however organised, should widen learning opportunities without prejudice either to the academic standard of the award or the quality of what is offered to students”, (QAA 2015).

“The objective of any work based or placement learning experience, regardless of length, is to consolidate and complement the academic learning, knowledge and skills with experience” (ASET 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> ASET (Work-based & Placement Learning Association) Good Practice Guide for Work Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education ASET (2013)

<sup>2</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, (QAA 2015)

- 5 The University requires that placement and work-based learning, which falls within the applicable definition and constitutes a formally validated and assessed component of an award, will comply fully with the Expectation and Indicators in B10 (QAA 2015).
- 6 To facilitate the variety of types of placement, work-based, work-related learning and work experience arrangements, a risk based approach is proposed when any work-based learning and placement opportunity is set up and monitored. This approach considers; reputational risk, financial risk, risk to quality standards, risk to the individual (student or staff member) and is detailed in the procedure and process documents.
- 7 In some areas professional considerations and Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements may involve a set of requirements/procedures beyond those outlined in this policy. In such cases, the requirements of the PSRB should always be met. Any formal agreements to which the University is committed will be subject to standards at least equal to those contained in this policy and the related documents.
- 8 This policy should be read in conjunction with the University equality statement <http://bucks.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/> and, in conjunction with other policies within the University, as indicated in the procedure and process documents.

## Definitions

### Placement Learning

- 9 In **placement learning** the student is considered a student first and where appropriate an employee second, i.e. they came to the placement experience by virtue of their studies. Learning is achieved during a specified, negotiated and agreed period of learning that takes place outside the Buckinghamshire New University (or partner institution) campus.
- 10 A placement is a period of study, which:
  - is integral to the programme
  - linked to academic credit
  - assessed by specific learning outcomes
  - hosted by the employer/partner
  - involves the University in an active relationship/partnership with the employer/partner which may include mentoring
  - involves an agreed transfer of supervision of the students learning to a third party for this period of time and where the student remains subject to University policy during the relevant period
- 11 Placement learning includes:
  - The sandwich year of any programme that involves working with an employer/partner;
  - The 'year or semester abroad' whether this is studying at another education or training institution, working as a Language Assistant, working for a voluntary organisation or any combination of these, (that are not arranged through the Erasmus scheme);

- The time spent in an environment that enables professional competences to be developed and/or demonstrated, e.g. a hospital, school, social work department. Such placements will generally be arranged in accordance with the requirements of a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) and may involve week(s) blocks or parts of a week over a period of time;
  - Placements based across a very wide range of organisations and forming part of module or programme, designed to broaden experience and develop graduate skills.
- 12 The following are examples of learning which are integral to programmes of study, which should be considered as placements:
- Year-abroad schemes (not part of an Erasmus exchange)
  - Formal work-based placements with Industry (Industry placements)
  - Clinical/professional placements (e.g. in AHP, ODP, Nursing, Social Work)
  - Fieldwork assignments, where these projects are managed by individuals or organisations external to the University
- 13 Placement learning does **not** include the following:
- Field trips, educational visits and short periods of data collection outside the University for research purposes.
  - Where students take a 'year out' to work or volunteer in an area relevant to their studies but where there is no recognition within the programme structure of the learning derived from the experience nor is University support offered.
  - Time abroad under the Erasmus Scheme

## Work-based Learning

- 14 With **work-based learning** the student is an employee first and a student second, i.e. they come to a course through employment. Work-based learning is usually offered to those already in employment and who are therefore part-time in mode of delivery.
- 15 Work-based learning usually involves some element of reflection upon the learning environment and may or may not involve negotiated learning or project work.
- 16 Work-based learning includes:
- Learning that is focused around an occupation, either paid or unpaid and requires engagement with learning in the work environment as either an employee, volunteer or in a self-employed capacity
  - Learning that requires engagement in real work-based tasks. These may arise from negotiation and consultation with off-campus organisations without a formal placement arrangement. Alternatively, the tasks may derive from work activity offered on campus;
  - Research degree programmes where the student will be drawing upon the resources and/or support of a third party for work-based research intermittently or for a minor part of their studies. Professional Doctorate programmes are covered by this.

## Work-related learning and work experience

17 “**Work-related learning**” and “**work experience**” covers activities such as:

- projects,
- company visits,
- insight days
- learning that contributes to the experience in the world of work.

*Any work-based learning opportunity which is non-credit bearing should also follow the Code’s principles.*

## Core principles

- 18 In both placement and work-based learning, the intended learning outcomes are integral to the programme of study. The learning outcomes of any placement/work-based learning should be clearly identified and assessed appropriately.
- 19 Integral to work-based and placement learning is the requirement to enter into arrangements for partnerships that foster collaboration.
- 20 Considerations for placement, work-based, work-related learning or work experience should be clearly reflected in:
- the Business case
  - the Programme Specification
  - the information and guidance for applicants/students
  - the information and guidance for employers/partners

## Academic Quality

- 21 When work-based or placement learning is part of a course/programme it is required to be approved through the validation process. Where this learning is part of a credit-rated programme and/or module of study it should:
- have intended learning outcomes that contribute to the overall aims and outcomes of the programme and/or module that are clearly identified in the programme specification and in the module learning outcomes in the relevant module description(s);
  - have a level and volume of credit that recognises the complexity and amount of learning students are expected to demonstrate;
  - be assessed appropriately and in accordance with the Assessment of Students policy.
- 22 Through the use of the risk-assessment process, relevant and proportionate arrangements will be identified and outlined in the Programme Specification as part of

the validation process. It will then be monitored through the Programme Review & Enhancement<sup>3</sup> (PRE) and Strategic University Review & Evaluation<sup>4</sup> (SURE) cycles.

## Responsibilities

- 23 Faculty Deans, Heads of School and Heads of Academic Department are required to ensure compliance with the provisions of the policy. The course team must specify who is responsible for the following:
- confirming and managing the placement
  - procedures and criteria for the approval, resourcing and monitoring of individual placement opportunities
  - the risk-assessment
  - requirements of relevant statutory regulatory, professional or funding bodies, including financial arrangements and adherence to standards
  - the allocation of placements where these involve collaborative agreements between institutions, employers and placement providers or students from more than one HE institution, e.g. regional or transnational consortia.
- 24 It is the responsibility of the Faculty to ensure that placement providers are aware of, accept and are capable of fulfilling their responsibilities for facilitating the learning opportunities that a placement is intended to provide. For example, placement providers will need to be informed of their responsibilities for:
- the provision of specific learning opportunities
  - their role, if any, in the assessment of students
  - the provision of learning and other support through a placement supervisor or mentor

## Insurance

- 25 The Company/Organisations' liability insurances would operate to both protect the individual student, and also third parties suffering losses through any student's negligent acts, as far as current legislation and common law dictates. It is therefore the responsibility of the Faculty to ensure employees are aware of this via the agreement.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://bucks.ac.uk/content/documents/Formal\\_Documents/Academic\\_Quality/Programme\\_Review\\_and\\_Enhancement\\_Policy.pdf](http://bucks.ac.uk/content/documents/Formal_Documents/Academic_Quality/Programme_Review_and_Enhancement_Policy.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>[http://bucks.ac.uk/content/documents/Formal\\_Documents/Academic\\_Quality/Strategic\\_University\\_Review\\_and\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://bucks.ac.uk/content/documents/Formal_Documents/Academic_Quality/Strategic_University_Review_and_Evaluation.pdf)