

## Purpose and scope

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery and monitoring of work-based and placement learning.
2. The framework ensures that the University is providing a high quality, consistent learning experience for all students on work-based and placement learning activity.
3. This policy applies to the following, whether credit bearing or not:
  - a. Year and semester-long placements (including the Careers Service Placement Year);
  - b. Module length or short-term placements;
  - c. Postgraduate Research placements.
4. The policy does not explicitly apply to the following types of provision, although many of the principles in this policy may still be applied:
  - a. Study abroad and student exchanges;
  - b. In-coming placement activity;
  - c. Fieldwork or fieldtrips;
  - d. Time spent at another institution as a formal part of a dual/joint degree;
  - e. Students suspending their studies to undertake a year in employment.

## Definition of a Placement

5. For the purpose of this policy, a placement is defined as: any work-based, employment or practical experience that is part of a student's programme and fulfils intended learning outcomes. A placement may be required or optional, and it may or may not be credit-bearing. Although the student is registered at the University and remains subject to University regulations, direct supervision is transferred to a host supervisor for a set period of time.

## Principles

6. The following principles underpin the aims of the University's Work-based and Placement Learning Policy:
  - a. The University has ultimate responsibility for the quality, academic standards and student experience wherever the learning takes place and whoever provides it.
  - b. Any work-based, employment or practical experience that is part of a student's programme of study should contribute to the overall learning outcomes of his/her programme.
  - c. All work-based or placement activity must be appropriately approved, monitored and reviewed to ensure the quality of the student experience and the continued appropriateness of the work-based or placement activity.
  - d. Clear guidance must be available to all those involved in work-based and placement activity, including University staff, students and placement providers

## Placement Development

### Approval of work-based or placement activity in taught programmes

#### *New programmes*

7. All new programmes that include a compulsory or optional credit bearing or non-credit bearing placement must be considered through the University's Programme Approval process.
8. The Programme Approval Committee will consider:
  - a. Whether the design of the placement enables students to achieve specific intended learning outcomes, at the appropriate FHEQ level given the timing of the placement within the programme;
  - b. Where the placement is assessed:
    - I. that the proposed methods of assessment and feedback are appropriate to the intended learning outcomes and the structure of the placement;
    - II. that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure the security and consistency of assessment and marking procedures;
    - III. that resit opportunities are appropriate;
    - IV. that all staff involved, whether based at Newcastle or the placement provider, are suitably trained.
  - c. Whether there are appropriate management and communication structures in place with the placement provider and students;
  - d. Whether, where appropriate, any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements have been taken into consideration. Programme developers must explain any PSRB requirements in the Academic Approval stage of the programme approval process.  
To address this information a Work-Based and Placement Learning checklist should be completed and submitted for Academic Approval.
9. For programmes that offer two versions of a programme – one with full year placement year and one without – a separate programme code must be allocated for each.

Further information on programme approval can be accessed from the University Quality and Standards Handbook: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/governance/modules/approval/>

### Existing programme incorporating a new WBPL aspect

10. Any change to an existing programme must be considered through the University Policy on Changes to Programmes (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-progapp-majminchanges-policy.pdf>).
11. As explained above, if a programme is changed to include a year-long placement, then a new programme code must be assigned to distinguish the longer version of the programme from the version without a placement.

### Modules which incorporate WBPL

12. All new modules and amended modules are considered for approval via Boards of Studies and the relevant Faculty Dean.
13. The relevant section of the MAF should be completed to provide information on:

- a. Support for the placement;
- b. Assessment (if placement is assessed rather than Pass/Fail);
- c. Assessment criteria for individual pieces of assessment.

14. Any assessments must be linked to intended learning outcomes on Module Outline Forms.

### **Approval of work-based or placement activity in research programmes**

#### *Taught/Professional Doctorates*

15. Research degrees which include taught components are approved through the standard University Programme Approval process, in consultation with the relevant Postgraduate Dean.

#### **Research degree programmes**

16. To engage in a period of study for more than four weeks outside of the University, the Outside Study Form must be completed for approval by the relevant Postgraduate Dean. This should be completed as far in advance as possible to allow time for necessary arrangements to be made.

17. Periods of work-based or placement learning that take less than four weeks must be approved and vetted by the student's supervisor.

### **Identifying, approving and advertising placement opportunities**

#### *Sourcing Placement Opportunities*

18. Where it is the Academic Unit's responsibility to source placement opportunities for students, the following clear information should be provided in advance to all eligible students:

- a. Key benefits of the placement to the students involved;
- b. Skills/knowledge requirements (especially where these vary between placements);
- c. Required training/checks;
- d. All relevant deadlines;
- e. Details of the application process;
- f. The significance of the placement for the programme (credit value, assessment, etc.);
- g. Any available sources of funding (including for transportation and housing if relevant).

19. If students are responsible for securing placement opportunities, the following information should be provided:

- a. Clear guidelines on any support available from the Academic Unit and/or from Careers;
- b. Necessary steps to have the placement approved by the unit (see below);
- c. Alternatives to completion of a placement if it is not possible to source a placement opportunity.

### **Approving and vetting a Placement**

20. The Academic Unit must have a procedure in place to approve any placement opportunities that have been sourced by the student and to ensure that the placement activity is appropriate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme and at the appropriate FHEQ level.

21. It is the Academic Unit's responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students when on placement or work-based learning. A risk assessment must be undertaken by the Academic Unit prior to the student going on placement, including in cases where the placement opportunity has been sourced by the student. A visit to all new placement providers should be undertaken by a member of staff whenever possible.
22. All staff involved in undertaking risk assessments must have received the Health and Safety Risk Assessment training from the University Safety Office.

## **Quality Assurance and Monitoring**

### *External examining*

23. All external examiners for a programme that incorporates work-based or placement learning – whether long or short – should review the placement as an aspect of provision, including sample learning agreements, assessments and marking criteria.
24. Arrangements should be made, wherever possible, for external examiners to communicate with anyone involved in the teaching and assessment of placement activity, including students and placement providers where appropriate.

## **Learning and Teaching Review**

25. The Learning and Teaching Review (LTR) SWOT analysis should consider placements as an aspect of provision. The subject review panel should wherever possible meet with staff involved in organising placements and with students who have undertaken or are undertaking placement activity.
26. The Pre-LTR QA check should examine any placement handbooks, a small sample of completed student learning agreements, and sample assessments and feedback if the placement contributes to the final award.

## **Annual Monitoring and Review**

27. Academic Units should reflect on work-based and placement learning in their AMR reports, highlighting any particular concerns or issues that have arisen and/or examples of best practice that may be shared more widely across the Faculty or institution. Sources of evidence should include student, placement supervisor and external examiner feedback.

## **Student feedback and evaluation**

28. Academic Units must ensure that mechanisms are put in place to systematically receive feedback on placement activity from students. This may include module, placement and/or stage evaluations. Boards of Studies should review student feedback, with all discussion outcomes fed back to the student body.

## **Handbooks**

29. Academic Units must ensure that all students and placement supervisors are provided with placement handbooks, to include at minimum placement aims, roles and responsibilities, and key contacts. A sample Student Handbook and a sample Supervisor Handbook can be found on the Placements website.

## **Placement tracking**

30. All Academic Units are responsible for maintaining accurate records on the dates and locations of student work-based and placement learning activity. These must be readily accessible to the institution on request.

## **Student Records and Achievement**

31. The University is responsible for ensuring that placement activity undertaken by students is appropriately reflected in relevant documentation, including: transcripts, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) and, where appropriate, the parchment.

## **Safety and Legal Issues**

32. The Academic Unit must ensure that the following University policies are considered and addressed appropriately. Key points are noted here, with full guidance available on the University's Placement website.

## **Health and Safety**

33. The University has a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students undertaking a period of work-based or placement learning.
34. Academic Units must ensure that risk assessments have taken place prior to the placement activity, including those for which the student has sourced the opportunity.

## **Insurance**

35. All UK placements are covered by UK law; therefore the placement provider takes legal responsibility and liability for the students while in the workplace.
36. The only exception to this is in the case of sole traders, and if a placement opportunity is to take place in this setting, early discussions must take place with the Insurance Office.
37. Students are covered by the University's travel policy which covers for sudden, unforeseen and emergency healthcare.
38. Students should be made aware of any potential additional insurance costs, including:
  - a. Any routine, on-going health requirements, which will need to be covered by a separate health insurance policy taken out by the student at his/her expense;
  - b. Additional travel insurance at the end of the placement (UG/PGT only);
  - c. Any housing insurance as required locally.

## **Visas**

39. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes
  - a. For international students to acquire a Tier 4 visa, any year-long placement activity must be an integral part of the programme and must have assessed content that contributes to the degree (this can be on a pass/fail basis).
  - b. To meet Home Office requirements, placements for UG and PGT programmes should not consist of more than 50% of the entire course duration.

- c. International students cannot transfer to a longer programme (i.e. a four-year programme with a placement, as compared to a three-year programme without) because it violates the terms of their visas.

### **Postgraduate Research students**

40. If international PGR students are permitted to undertake a period of outside study, the University must inform the Home Office of the duration and location of the activity. The University retains responsibility for monitoring attendance.
41. Students on a period of outside study cannot be registered as students at another UK University.

### **Student Attendance Monitoring**

42. The academic unit must still implement regular attendance monitoring arrangements (weekly) and obtain monthly confirmation from the placement provider that the student is attending. The University's placement website will provide guidance on practical strategies for monitoring attendance.
43. For all international students, the name and address of the placement provider and the dates of the activity must be reported to the Student Data Officer.
44. The University must inform the Home Office if:
  - a. A student issued with a four-year visa does not proceed to the placement year (i.e., if he/she transfers to a three-year version of the programme without a placement);
  - b. A student is not attending his/her placement.

### **Legal agreements**

- All students must sign a student learning agreement, and this must be kept on file by the Academic Unit.
- In some cases, a wider legal agreement may be required covering any specific Intellectual Property Rights or Data Protection issues that may arise from the placement.

### **Student Support**

45. Academic units must provide clear information to students – prior to beginning the placement – on all of the following areas. Key points are noted here, with full guidance available on the [University's placement website](#).

### **Induction and Placement Supervision**

46. All students must receive an appropriate induction during the first week of their placement. This should include a health and safety briefing if appropriate.
47. All students must be provided with a named supervisor at the placement site. A meeting must take place between the student and the supervisor within the first five days, when the learning agreement should be finalised and signed by all parties.

### **Arrangements for Personal Tutoring**

48. Personal Tutors should contact their tutees at least once per semester. For placements shorter than a semester, Personal Tutors should make contact at least once.

49. Depending on the type of placement, it is good practice for the module leader/project supervisor and/or the Degree Programme Director to contact/visit the student at least once during the placement.

### **Arrangements for Postgraduate Research supervision**

50. PGR students should have monthly contact with their academic supervisor, with a minimum of ten virtual or in-person meetings per year, and should attend regular progress meetings with the supervisory team with a minimum frequency of three meetings per year.
51. Mechanisms should be agreed – before a student begins a period of outside study – as to how this contact will take place when the student is unable to be physically present.

### **Students with Disabilities**

52. The Academic Unit has responsibility for ensuring that any Student Support Recommendation (SSR) from Student Wellbeing has been reviewed and that any necessary adjustments are put in place to enable the student to succeed on placement. Although the Academic Unit is responsible for communicating with the placement supervisor about any student needs, they must have the consent of the student in order to do so. The student may also communicate directly with the placement supervisor about his/her needs, although this communication should be supported with evidence from his/her SSR.

### **Learning and Teaching**

#### *Student Learning Agreement*

53. A student learning agreement must be drawn up in collaboration with the placement supervisor, clearly stating the expectations of the work-based or placement learning activity and the learning outcomes that the student will achieve during the placement.
54. The student learning agreement must be signed, by the end of the first week of placement, by both the placement supervisor and student. The agreement must be kept on file by the Academic Unit.

### **Assessment and Feedback**

55. The Academic Unit must ensure that:
- Any summative assessments completed while on placement are secure and conform to all University policies on the submission of work and return of feedback;
  - Any placement provider or member of staff involved in the assessment marking process has been appropriately trained on Newcastle University assessment policies;
  - Any summative assessment is linked to the intended learning outcomes of the placement and the programme;
  - Where relevant, there is equity between students taking the same module, regardless of whether they are taking it on campus or while on placement.

### **Support and Guidance**

56. A range of support is available both within the University and externally to support the development of work-based and placement activity. Professional support advice should be sought at an early stage to help the development of any work-based or placement activity. Sources include:

- a. Careers
- b. Health and Safety
- c. Insurance Team
- d. Visa Team
- e. LTDS
- f. Research and Enterprise
- g. Faculty Quality Teams – who provide support and advice on the preparation for the Programme Approval Committee and on relevant Faculty policies.

57. All relevant resources to support this policy are available on the University's Placement Website:

<http://internal.ncl.ac.uk/placement>.

External sources of support include:

- a. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies - for those programmes subject to PSRB approval or accreditation, it is important to have discussions at an early stage. These should ensure that it is clear from the outset whether recognition of the programme will be possible and what, if any, requirements or approval levels are required.
- b. ASET, The Placement and Employability Professionals Body, <http://www.asetonline.org/>
- c. Quality Assurance Agency: UK Quality Code Chapter B10 Managing Higher Education with Others

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### *Academic Unit*

58. The Academic Units are responsible for:

- a. Developing placement activity that allows the student to meet the intended learning outcome of the module/programme and that takes into consideration any PSRB requirements (if relevant);
- b. Developing assessment activities for the placement that are linked to appropriate intended learning outcomes;
- c. Enabling the student to obtain an appropriate placement provider either through finding placement activities themselves or providing the students with appropriate guidance for them to source placements independently;
- d. Approving all work-based and placement providers and ensuring that a risk assessment is completed. Visits to all new providers should take place to ensure a safe and healthy experience for the student;
- e. Ensuring that appropriate induction and briefing sessions are provided to students prior to and during their work-based activity or placement;
- f. Ensuring that all placement providers are given sufficient training and guidance on their roles and responsibilities. Where placement providers are involved in the formal assessment of students, the Academic Unit should ensure that staff are fully briefed on the University policies and expectations;
- g. Making available and maintaining records of contact points for students and placement providers;
- h. Ensuring that all required adjustments have been put in place for any student who requires them;
- i. Ensuring alternative means of achieving the learning outcomes if for whatever reason the placement is unable to take place;
- j. Monitoring the attendance of students on placement;
- k. Monitoring the progress of students on placement and ensuring that students have regular contact with University staff, including with personal tutors and/or research supervisors;
- l. Keeping accurate records of duration and location of all students on placement;
- m. Informing the Student Data Officer of the relevant dates and placement contact information when an international student undertakes placement activity;



- n. Ensure that where work-based or placement learning may involve working with children or vulnerable adults reference is made to the University's Policy for the safeguarding of under 18s and vulnerable adults and ensure appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks have been undertaken.

## **Student**

59. Students are responsible for:

- a. Signing a placement learning agreement, in collaboration with their placement supervisor, within the first week of placement activity and signing an appropriate legal agreement if necessary;
- b. Meeting the norms and expectations for professional conduct while on placement as ambassadors for the University;
- c. Disclosing any information that may have a bearing upon their ability to undertake the work-based or placement learning;
- d. Familiarising themselves and complying with the placement providers' policies and procedures;
- e. Familiarising themselves with the aims and intended outcomes of the placement and engaging fully with the opportunities provided to them;
- f. Maintaining contact with University staff;
- g. Alerting the placement provider and the University to any issues which may prevent the progress or completion of the placement;
- h. Sourcing any additional insurance required over and above the standard University insurance;
- i. Contacting the relevant consulate/embassy about any necessary visas, in the case of overseas placements;
- j. Complying with the placement providers' legal duties, including Intellectual Property Rights and Confidentiality.

## **Placement Provider**

60. The work-based or placement providers are responsible for:

- a. Providing a safe environment for students, including a full induction at the start of the placement covering all aspects of health and safety;
- b. Signing a student learning agreement, in collaboration with the student, that establishes key objectives and learning outcomes for the placement;
- c. Providing learning opportunities that will allow the student to meet the intended learning outcomes of the placement and the programme;
- d. Identifying a named placement supervisor/mentor and ensuring that they are appropriately trained and fully aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- e. Arranging for the student to assign Intellectual Property Rights, if relevant, before the commencement of the placement;
- f. Ensuring any reasonable adjustments required for students are fully implemented.

Intended for use by:	Placement Co-ordinators Degree Programme Directors School Administrators Faculty Quality Teams Research and Enterprise Services
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