

# Heriot-Watt University

## Policy on Student Placements: Work and Academic

### Student Placements: Guidelines on the Management of Work Placements

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Student Placements (Work and Academic)**

Heriot-Watt University has a series of key documents related to student placements, both academic and work, which set out the institutional policy framework and operational procedures related to the planning, approval, delivery, management and assessment of academic and work placements. The core documents are as follows:

1. Student Placements (Work and Academic): Policy
2. Student Placements (Work and Academic): Briefing Paper
3. Student Placements: Guidelines on Academic Placements (Exchange)
4. Student Placements: Guidelines on Academic Placements (Individual Study Placements)
5. Student Placements: Guidelines on the management of Work Placements

All documents are available on the Academic Policy Bank at:  
<http://www.hw.ac.uk/committees/ltb/ltb-policies.htm#S>

This document defines the scope and minimum requirements for student work placements. (Item 5 above)

It should be read in conjunction with the overarching Policy on Student Placements (Work and Academic). (Item 1 above)

The university has a duty of care for students undertaking work-based placements in premises outwith the University. These guidelines do not aim to prescribe a preferred model for work-based placements, nor list in detail the many academic and supporting functions involved. They aim to provide a set of principles and minimum requirements, based on existing good practice, which may be of benefit to those involved in managing and organising periods of work-based placement learning within study programmes.

## **2. SCOPE**

These guidelines apply to:

- Placements within an approved programme structure with a credit-rated period of learning undertaken as part of a taught programme in an industrial, business or other work environment. The work placement may extend over an entire academic year or a shorter period within the academic year or the summer vacation. The work placement may be compulsory or optional, paid or unpaid.
- Placements for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who are studying at a Heriot-Watt UK campus, although the placement may be overseas

Work placements will only take place if students are insured, either by the placement employers or the students themselves. (See separate guidance in Appendix 1 as provided by the Head of Risk and Audit Management)

These guidelines do not cover:

- A period of work placement which is not credit-rated, even if it is related to the student's programme of study and has been arranged by a member of staff.
- Any extra-curricular work which is not credit-rated (such as part-time, term-time or vacation employment, volunteering, internships or shadow schemes), which students have arranged for themselves, even if related to the student's programme and/or even if the student was supported by the Careers Service in securing the position.
- Work placement components of research degrees – these are covered in the University's *Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students* (see <http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/cop-pgr.pdf>)
- Erasmus Work Placements which must follow the British Council agreement template. The British Council agreement highlights the commitments of the University, the host enterprise and the student, and includes a Training Plan which must be completed. Any revisions to a Training Plan must be agreed by all parties and must be formalised as soon as possible after the student's arrival on the placement.

Further information on the Erasmus Work Placements can be obtained from the Institutional Exchange Co-ordinator, Academic Registry. (see item 3 of introduction)

### 3. ROLES

**Heads of School** have responsibility for ensuring that these guidelines are implemented in their academic areas and that the relevant staff are aware of and comply with the guidelines

**Placement Co-ordinator** - Designated member of staff within the School who manages the placement documentation on behalf of the School (with support from/delegation to Tutors as required) and ensures that insurance arrangements are in place. Responsibilities and outcomes are to provide 'local' guidance to colleagues and to manage local records on placements. (The University will agree a process for collation of records by all Schools).

**Tutor** – The Academic within the school who ensures that the individual placement and its structure/content are appropriate to the degree programme. They are also responsible for liaison with the Work-based Supervisor and completion of an agreed Health and Safety process before the placement starts (see Appendix 2). In conjunction with the Work-based Supervisor, the Tutor is responsible for monitoring the progress of the student during the placement. After the placement, the Tutor should liaise with the Work-based Supervisor regarding the Student's performance and associated feedback.

**Work-Based Supervisor** – The designated person within the placement provider organisation who liaises with the 'Tutor' (see above) and is responsible for supervising the student while on placement.

## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Schools are responsible for:**

- Implementing these guidelines.
- Ensuring students are aware that placements must be approved by the School.
- Ensuring that the placement provider has appropriate insurance, health, safety and welfare arrangements in place.
- Providing a contact person ('Tutor') throughout the placement.
- Ensuring that learning opportunities and outcomes are appropriate to the degree programme.
- The form and conduct of assessments used and the corresponding award of credit.
- Maintaining appropriate collated records of all credit bearing placements.

### **The Placement Co-ordinator within the School is responsible (with support from / delegation to Tutors) for:**

- Approving all placements on behalf of the School.
- Ensuring that colleagues/tutors are aware of the University's minimum requirements for student placements.
- Guiding colleagues in the implementation of the student placements.
- Liaising with fellow tutors to identify/share best practice.
- Managing and maintaining the School placement records.
- Representing the School on University working groups on work placements.

### **Tutors within the School will:**

- Ensure that the individual placement and its structure/content are appropriate to the degree programme.
- Contact each student, whilst on work placement, preferably with a visit, to discuss progress, provide programme/course information, check log books/diaries and complete assessments. Ensure via the Work-based Supervisor that the Health and Safety process (Appendix 2 'Step 2'), and clarity on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and confidentiality issues are completed/established before the placement starts.
- In conjunction with the Work-based Supervisor, the Tutor is responsible for monitoring the progress of the student during the placement.
- After the placement, the Tutor should liaise with the Work-based Supervisor regarding the Student's performance and associated feedback.

### **A Work-Based Supervisor within the host placement will:**

- In collaboration with the Tutor, scope and agree the anticipated project and deliverables for the student placement.
- Provide guidance to the student in finding appropriate accommodation.
- Be responsible for the student while on placement.
- Facilitate a relevant induction into the workplace.
- Arrange meetings with the student to discuss progress.
- Liaise with the Tutor concerning the student's progress and performance

## **The Placement Student is responsible for:**

- Conducting themselves in a professional and responsible manner which upholds and enhances the reputation of the University.
- Ensuring that if they secure their own placement they seek approval from the School prior to commencement. Failure to do so may result in the placement not being recognised as part of the study programme.
- Ensuring that all documentation requiring their input specified by the Work-Based Supervisor and/or Tutor is submitted by the required date.
- Being fully aware of the health and safety aspects of the placement.
- Informing the Tutor of any health issues, including any disability which may affect their health and safety while on placement, prior to finalisation of arrangements for the placement.
- Complying with the Placement Provider's normal working practices/and induction.
- Contacting the Tutor if a problem arises relating to the work programme and any other issues affecting their work placement

## **5. ASSESSMENT**

- The assessment of the work undertaken during the placement may use a variety of methods appropriate to the programme of study.
- The placement's contribution to a programme's overall assessment must be transparent.
- Deadlines for the submission of assessed work must be made explicit and timely.
- The results of the assessed components of a placement should be recorded within a student's transcript. The Placement Provider should be involved in providing feedback on the student's performance while on work placement.

## **6. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

For each placement, Schools must assure themselves that students will receive a beneficial experience appropriate to their programme by participating in the work placement. Attention should be paid to the following areas:

- Examination of the academic content, standards and learning outcomes of the placement and its value in relation to the whole study programme.
- The need for regular contact between the Tutor and the Work-based Supervisor.
- The need for a mechanism for student feedback on the placement, both during and following completion.

## **7. RISK**

Issues related to risks and insurance, as provided by the Risk and Safety Office, are covered within the Appendices to this document. (<http://www1.hw.ac.uk/quality/work-placements.htm>)