

Chapter 10

Placement Learning; Work-Based Learning; Recognition of Prior Learning

10. PLACEMENT LEARNING; WORK-BASED LEARNING; RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

10.1 Introduction and Background

This chapter is concerned with three distinct areas of activity which form the basis of the University's engagement with learning and continuing professional development in the workplace. These are (i) Placement Learning, also known as Learning in the Workplace or Internship; (ii) Work-Based Learning, which is certificated by means of the University's Professional Practice Framework, an innovative mechanism for creating work-based HE awards within a regulatory framework which safeguards the academic standards and quality of those HE awards; and (iii) the Recognition of Prior Learning, a procedure covering the recognition of prior certificated and the recognition of experiential learning which encapsulates the range of activity and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place.

Placement and work-based learning may include international or domestic internships or placements and is defined as a planned period of learning, normally outside the University, on a full or part-time basis where the learning outcomes are an intended part of a Programme of Study. Placement, work-based learning and internship modules are an integral part of many of the University's programmes and when credit is earned, because the activity is part of a Programme of Study, the guidelines set out in this section shall normally inform the development and delivery of such module(s).

The University will ensure that the work that students undertake in such contexts reflects the precepts of the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning (2013); Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others (2012). This will be linked to the guidelines and benchmarks set by QAA and the Association of Sandwich Education and Training (ASET).

The scope of the placement, work-based and internship learning guidelines extends only to such learning that forms a credit-earning element of a Programme of Study. It does not extend, therefore, to general work experience arranged by a student. In addition, the scope of these guidelines does not extend to Programmes of Study where the placement learning leads to professional accreditation on successful completion of the award. Policies and procedures relating to such programmes are available from the relevant Faculty offices and in programme handbooks.

The Professional Practice Framework is a mechanism through which bespoke Programmes of Study can be developed for individuals and groups. It is a framework within which specific pieces of university level learning can be accredited, located and accumulated leading to defined higher education awards. It aims to provide student-centred learning opportunities that are accessible, flexible, inclusive, lifelong and of the highest quality. It will enable the University to be proactive in stimulating the demand amongst employers and their employees for this type of high level work-based learning. It will facilitate rapid programme and award development for employers and employees, meeting requirements for flexibility and responsiveness, including multiple start dates. Learning and teaching will be supported in a variety of ways including Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), infill into existing provision, twilight sessions, Saturdays and Summer Schools and sessions run in the community and on employers' premises.

The aims of such a model are to:

- widen participation by encouraging those who are not yet studying to use their existing work experience to study at HE level;
- develop a database of modules to facilitate both vertical and horizontal career progression routes, including 'bite-size' leadership and management programmes as identified by Sector Skills Councils and other employer groups;
- acknowledge existing skills by enabling learners to gain academic credit for reflection on their work experience by assessing against competencies including National Occupational Standards, professional requirements and through the Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure (see section 10.4);
- focus learning on the diverse professional and personal development needs of learners using the workplace as the context for the learning. This includes working with employers to accredit their staff development provision;
- respond to the language needs of learners who wish to undertake their personal and professional development through the medium of Welsh, English or bilingually;
- encourage students and programmes to utilise Internships to facilitate the development of employability skills, internationalisation and the development of entrepreneurial skills.

The Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure involves the explicit demonstration that prior learning can be legitimately used to establish alternative entry points onto an existing programme of study or the Professional Practice Framework. The procedure distinguishes between *certificated* and *experiential* prior learning; however, both may be used for entry to a programme, exemption from parts of that programme, or advanced standing with level appropriate credit. Experiential prior learning involves reflecting upon experience and, on the basis of this reflection, identifying learning outcomes which can be awarded credit at a specific level. Credit is awarded for evidence of demonstrated learning, not for experience; experience has value as a source of learning, but is not credit-worthy in itself. The range of learning and continuing professional development activities in the workplace detailed in this chapter often involves collaboration with other partners. Other Chapters of this handbook that are also relevant to the design and implementation of workplace learning opportunities are Chapter 4: Programme Approval, Validation, Monitoring and Review; Chapter 6: Taught Award Regulations, Chapter 7: Assessment: Taught Programmes and Chapter 8: Research Degree Regulations. The general principles of good practice in ensuring and enhancing quality and standards in Higher Education are equally applicable to the quality assurance of all aspects of provision, including placement and internship learning, the Professional Practice Framework, other generic work-based learning and the recognition of prior experiential learning.

10.2 Learning in the Workplace, Internship and Placement Learning

10.2.1 Placement Protocol

A student placement is a period of work experience or internship:

- undertaken as an integral part of a programme, where the achievement of the learning outcomes for the placement is dependent on the arrangements made with the Placement Provider;
- where the student is enrolled at the University during this period; and
- where there is a transfer of direct supervision of the student to the Placement Provider.

Non-assessed placements do not fall within the scope of this Protocol. Separate procedures and protocols govern placements that are conducted as part of teacher education programmes.

This Placement Protocol has been developed with reference to:

- the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others, 2012;
- Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE students, 2009;
- Association of Sandwich Education and Training (ASET), Good Practice Guide for Work Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education, 2013;
- ASET Good Practice Guide for Health and Safety for Student Placements, 2010.

Student placements are a partnership between the student, the University and the Placement Provider in which each has specific responsibilities.

(1) Student Responsibilities

With the exception of students following a professionally accredited programme, it is the responsibility of the student to identify a suitable placement for the work-based practice modules. Help and advice to support this can be sought from the relevant lecturers. The work undertaken must be relevant to the programme of study. It should also provide opportunities to gain new skills and to build upon current levels of experience and expertise.

Prior to placement

Students cannot commence a placement until they have completed all the necessary preparatory work detailed below, and received authorisation from the Placement Coordinator.

Prior to the commencement of the placement, students are required to:

- a) Identify a suitable placement (with the exception of students following a professionally accredited programme).
- b) Attend placement preparation briefings, including health and safety.
- c) Complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, if required. The student will retain the original and submit a copy to the University. The student must make the Placement Provider aware of any issues arising from the DBS check and discuss any convictions with the Placement Coordinator.
- d) Complete the ethics approval processes, where relevant.
- e) Have a dialogue with the Placement Organiser or Placement Tutor to clarify placement requirements, expected learning outcomes and assessment requirements.
- f) Inform the Placement Coordinator and Placement Provider of any personal factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or cultural) that may affect the level of risk or may require adjustments.
- g) Complete the defined placement registration and approval process in full. See Appendix PL1C Student Placement Agreement.
- h) Confirm acceptance of the arrangements and responsibilities set out in Appendix PL1C Student Placement Agreement.

During the placement

During the placement the student is required to:

- a) Comply with all rules regarding health and safety requirements, and other practices and procedures of the placement organisation.

- b) Report to the University any incidents in which s/he is involved and any health and safety concerns that are not addressed by the Placement Provider, e.g. in the event that appropriate induction and health and safety training is not provided.
- c) Carry out the work programme specified by the Placement Provider under the supervision of the Workplace Supervisor.
- d) Keep a log of hours worked.
- e) Monitor his/her progress in achieving the identified learning outcomes and discuss these regularly with the Workplace Supervisor and Placement Tutor, as appropriate.
- f) Conduct him/herself in an appropriate manner within the relevant ethical framework, ensuring confidentiality and treating others with respect and dignity.
- g) Act in a professional manner, including notifying the Placement Provider in a timely fashion in the event that he/she is unable to attend their placement due to illness etc.
- h) Respect any other requirements of the workplace such as dress codes.
- i) Notify their Placement Coordinator or Tutor should any issues of concern arise.
- j) Consult with the Placement Coordinator or Tutor prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement.
- k) Complete all relevant academic coursework relating to the placement experience

(2) Placement Provider Responsibilities

A Placement Provider is a third party (usually an employer), who, during the placement, has responsibility for the direct supervision of the student. Placement providers are required to:

- a) Confirm acceptance of the arrangements and responsibilities set out in Appendix PL1A Placement Provider Agreement.
- b) Provide a safe working environment. Comply with health and safety legislation and define the liability and other insurance cover that will be provided for the activities of the student, with regard to the student and to others who could be affected by the student's actions or inactions. See Appendix PL1B Placement Provider Health and Safety Questionnaire.
- c) Provide a designated Workplace Supervisor who will:
 - i. act as the first point of contact for any problems or queries during a student's placement and contact the University immediately in cases of serious accidents, incidents or breaches of discipline involving the student;
 - ii. conduct or make arrangements for the day-to-day supervision of the student including periodic progress checks and instruction regarding hazards and health and safety precautions;
 - iii. provide the University with student attendance data, where required.
- d) Provide the student with a full and clear induction to the organisation and its working practices, procedures and requirements, including health and safety arrangements, how to report accidents, incidents and unsafe conditions. See Appendix PL1F Induction Checklist.
- e) Ensure that the student is fully informed about responsibilities, including those contained in any statutory legislation and/or honorary contract.
- f) Provide the student with appropriate instruction and training in working practices to enable him/her to carry out his/her duties efficiently and safely.

- g) Work with the student to identify appropriate learning outcomes for the placement (these must be agreed by the student, the Workplace Supervisor and the University).
- h) Facilitate access to the student for visits by the Placement Tutor, where appropriate.
- i) Ensure that the student is treated with respect.
- j) During and on completion of the placement, provide feedback to the University on the student's performance and confirmation of the hours in practice, where required.

(3) University Responsibilities

The University has a responsibility to:

- a) Commit appropriate levels of staff and other resources to placement governance activity to ensure strategic oversight for the learning to be delivered and managed by the Placement Provider. This may include the identification of (i) a Placement Coordinator, whose duties would normally include the authorisation of placements and organising/managing the placement arrangements, in liaison with the Placement Provider and student, and (ii) a Placement Tutor, who will act as the first point of contact, visit the student on placement, where appropriate, and/or assess the student.
- b) Ensure that any placement learning that forms part of a programme of study has associated learning outcomes which:
 - are clearly defined;
 - contribute appropriately to the overall aims of the programme;
 - are appropriately assessed. In cases where it is considered appropriate for the assessment be jointly conducted by the University and the Placement Provider, the Placement Tutor will work with the Workplace Supervisor to establish and document the procedure by which this shall be achieved.
- c) Assess the suitability of a proposed placement through appropriate and proportionate placement due diligence procedures, using a risk-based assessment process. The approval process will require the Placement Coordinator to undertake a Risk Profile for each placement using the PL1D Placement Risk Profiling Guidance, and record the outcomes in Appendix PL1E Risk Assessment. This risk assessment activity will include consideration of the information supplied in Appendix PL1A Placement Provider Agreement, Appendix PL1B, Placement Provider Health and Safety Questionnaire and Appendix PL1C Student Placement Agreement.
- d) Negotiate reasonable adjustments with the Placement Provider in the case of a student assessed under the Equality Act, 2010.
- e) Provide specialist advice and guidance for students with additional support needs.
- f) Clearly define appropriate points of contact and lines of communication between the University, the Placement Provider and the student. These should include:
 - i. Mechanisms for the Placement Provider to raise concerns or complaints about any aspect of the placement, including an individual student's performance or conduct.
 - ii. University emergency contact details.
- g) Retain a full and detailed record of each placement.

- h) Provide students with appropriate briefing, including health and safety, prior to commencement of any placement.
- i) Monitor all placement activity, ensuring that milestones are established, maintained and records, and identifying and addressing issues of concern and sharing good practice.
- j) Ensure that all parties are clear about the arrangements that will be made in the event that a placement terminates prematurely.
- k) Arrange appropriate opportunities for gathering feedback from students, Placement Providers and Placement Tutors, including suggestions for improvement. See Appendix PL1G.

10.2.2 Complaints Procedure

In the event that a student has a complaint about a placement, he or she should seek to discuss the matter, in the first instance, with the Placement Tutor, Placement Coordinator or Head of School. In the event that the student is dissatisfied with the response, s/he shall follow the formal Procedure for Student Complaints set out in Chapter 13.

10.2.3 Considerations - Fitness to Practise

Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults is a privilege, not a right, and it requires a high level of professionalism. It involves the knowledge, skills and values that underpin the approach of professionals to their work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults need to show, through their actions and their attitudes, that they are fit to undertake this important work.

The University, in conjunction with local employers has a responsibility to ensure that the student exhibits principles, values and behaviours during the course of his/her studies that demonstrate that he/she is 'fit to practise' and is adequately prepared to function at a professional standard upon successful completion of the Programme of Study. The professional standards will vary for different Programmes of Study, for example, the *National Occupational Standards for Youth Work* or the *UK government's Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce*. A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is a mandatory requirement for all students working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

10.2.4 Personal Behaviour

All students are expected to behave in a way that is consistent with fitness to practise principles.

Respecting others is fundamental to these principles. It includes respecting the dignity of those with whom an individual works and/or studies regardless of race, age, disability, gender, religion/belief, colour, ethnicity, language, lifestyle and sexual orientation. It means behaving in a professional, honest, decent and courteous manner. Students should always use language that is appropriate and that does not offend others.

10.2.5 Duty of Care

A student's actions, on campus, during visits and on placement, must always be with others in mind and students must act in the best interests of those with whom they are working. This means conducting themselves in a professional manner and understanding that they recognise the limitations of their professional competence.

Students are required to familiarise themselves with all University and partnership/placement guidelines, including health and safety guidelines, codes of conduct and, where relevant, employment contracts, in advance of and during contact with those with whom they work, including colleagues/staff and other members of the University and placement settings. Students must apply these guidelines in all their dealings relating to the University and placement settings.

10.2.6 Conducting Research

Students will be expected to behave in accordance with the ethical guidance provided by their Schools together with the University's policy outlined in the *University Regulations – Student Guide*. In the event that a student is required to undertake a study relating to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, the student must always ensure that he/she has obtained written consent from the child or young person's parents/guardian, and/or the setting – and, where appropriate, from the child, young person or vulnerable adults themselves. When photographs/video clips are required as part of an assessment, specific consent for this must be obtained in writing. Indiscriminate use of photographs must be avoided at all costs.

Consent must be freely given and signing a consent form on behalf of any other person is strictly forbidden and may lead to disciplinary action. Dishonesty, including the withholding of information or the falsification of records, may lead to the student being required to leave the Programme of Study.

10.2.7 Some Areas of Misconduct

This section provides examples of a number of possible areas of misconduct relating to 'fitness to practise' whilst on placement. It should be noted that the list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

- Criminal conviction or caution: child pornography; theft; financial fraud; possession of illegal substances; child abuse or any other abuse; physical violence.
- Drug or alcohol misuse: drunk driving; alcohol consumption that affects work or environment; dealing, possessing or using drugs even if there are no legal proceedings.
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour: assault; physical violence; bullying; abuse.
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour: uncommitted to work; neglect of administrative tasks; poor time management; non-attendance.
- Cheating or plagiarising: cheating in examinations; passing off others' work as one's own; dishonesty or fraud, including dishonesty outside the professional role; falsifying research; fraudulent CVs or other documents.
- Unprofessional behaviour or attitudes: breach of confidentiality; misleading young people or community members; sexual harassment; inappropriate physical contact or failure to keep appropriate boundaries in behaviour; persistent rudeness to colleagues or others; unlawful discrimination.

10.2.8 Fitness to Practise Panel

A Fitness to Practise Panel will be convened if it becomes apparent that a student has exhibited principles, values and behaviours during the course of his/her studies that demonstrate that he/she may not be 'fit to practise' in his/her chosen area of study.

Terms of Reference

- (1) To establish whether the student has been engaged in any of the following:
 - making serious or repeated mistakes or errors of judgement during fieldwork practice;
 - responding inappropriately to staff, colleagues, children, young people, vulnerable adults or members of the community;
 - misusing information about children, young people or vulnerable adults;
 - working with children, young people or vulnerable adults without obtaining necessary consent;
 - behaving dishonestly in financial matters, in dealing with colleagues, staff, children, young people or vulnerable adults in the conduct of research;
 - making sexual advances towards children, young people, or vulnerable adults;
 - misusing alcohol or drugs.
- (2) To decide upon any possible penalty in the event that the fitness to practise concern is substantiated.
- (3) To provide full details of the outcome of all fitness to practise concerns that it is requested to investigate.
- (4) To regularly review the appropriateness of the University's Fitness to Practise policy.

Membership

A Dean of Faculty (Chair)
At least two Heads of School
Three members of academic staff
External Representative
Secretary: Central appointment

The External Representative could come from another HEI or from a workplace that deals with student placements but is not directly associated with any of the fitness to practise cases under consideration.

No individual should sit on a Fitness to Practise Panel that has any direct links to any of the fitness to practise cases under consideration.

10.3 Work-based Learning through the Professional Practice Framework

The Professional Practice Framework aims to enable learners to become reflective practitioners, able to define and achieve both personal and professional targets including responsibility for future learning and professional development. Learners will undertake an individually negotiated programme of study appropriate to their own professional area. There are three main methods of engagement with the Professional Practice Framework: (i) learners may make an individual application, (ii) learners may form part of a cohort negotiated with a particular employer, professional association or similar, using validated University modules, and (iii) employers may apply to have their own existing staff development programme accredited at a particular level and for a designated amount of credits, or work with the University to jointly write new modules for validation. Where staff development programmes are accredited then students will be enrolled as cohorts.

10.3.1 Entry Requirements and Selection Procedures for the Professional Practice Framework

Whether applying as an individual, or in a cohort, a specific requirement for the Professional Practice programme is that learners are expected to be engaged in a formal or informal

environment where they can learn, although this may be in a voluntary capacity. Learners from a wide range of differing backgrounds are likely to be attracted to this programme. It is recognised that many candidates for this programme could be returning to study after several years in the workplace. Mature applicants without formal qualifications will be required to demonstrate capacity to pursue successfully the Professional Practice programme.

Individual potential learners will apply directly to University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Learner applications will be considered on individual merit. The selection procedure takes into account a range of factors including formal academic qualifications, professional memberships, prior experience, suitability of employment and motivation for pursuing the programme. This will normally involve an interview and may involve a piece of written work in support of their application. Many learners may also wish to make a formal claim for Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) or for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL), and full details of these processes are given in section 10.4 of this chapter.