

ACADEMIC POLICY 5:

Placement Learning

2014-2015

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PLACEMENT LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

Kingston University has a rich tradition of placement learning and a large number of its courses incorporate one or more elements of placement learning or have a focus on work-based learning.

The importance of placement learning is reflected in Led By Learning:

'We will enable our students to leave with the best possible degree they can attain so that they have choices and the skills needed for fulfilling professional employment; therefore all students will have opportunities for placements, work in an international environment and activities outside the curriculum'¹

The Revised Academic Framework effective from session 2013/14 has also been devised to facilitate the incorporation of placement periods within students' courses of study.

This policy has been informed by the QAA Code of Practice on Work-based and Placement Learning (2007). The current version has been prepared while the QAA is developing Chapter B10 of its new Quality Code, and will be revised once again when this is finalised. Nevertheless it is designed to conform with the QAA's key principle that collaborative provision, 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.

This policy is intended to set out the parameters within which Placement Learning will be planned, delivered and assessed. It will set out the responsibilities on the University, the student and the placement provider. The specific methods by which placements are organised will be determined by each Faculty/School.

Scope

This policy applies to placements as defined in Section 9 of the QAA Code of Practice: Work-based and Placement Learning²:

'Placement learning is the learning achieved during an agreed and negotiated period of learning that takes place outside the institution, where the learning outcomes are intended as integral parts of a programme of study'.

This could take the form of a year spent studying in a different institution, work undertaken over an entire academic year as part of a sandwich course, short blocks of work undertaken during the year and usually balanced with periods in the University (i.e. teaching practice or placement practice in health courses). The placement may be in the UK or overseas and can be paid or unpaid. The placement can be organised by the University or by the student themselves, but would be subject to approval by the University.

¹ Led By Learning; Kingston University Strategic Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16

² [QAA Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning](#) (September 2007)

The policy is not intended to cover learning that is *not a planned part* of a programme of study, such as part-time, term-time, vacation work, internships and shadow schemes which students have arranged for themselves.

Principles

- 1. Placement learning may take a number of different forms but it will be considered as an integral part of course design.**
- 2. Faculties/schools will develop criteria to assess the suitability of potential placement learning activities and mechanisms should be in place to monitor learning opportunities.**
- 3. Staff involved in placement learning will be prepared and supported to undertake their duties**
- 4. Students undertaking placement learning must be prepared for, and supported in, both their placement learning activities, and if applicable, their return to the University. They should be provided with written information regarding their roles and responsibilities.**
- 5. Placement providers should be provided with written information that describes their roles and responsibilities.**
- 6. Mechanisms should be in place to secure feedback from students, University staff and placement providers.**
- 7. Mechanisms should be in place to deal with complaints from students, placement providers and/or University staff.**

Policy

- 1. Placement learning may take a number of different forms but it will be considered as an integral part of course design.**
 - 1.1 The contribution that the placement makes to the overall aims of a programme and the intended learning outcomes and assessment of the placement, will be fully articulated in the programme specification and accompanying module documentation and will be considered as part of University validation and review processes.
 - 1.2 The intended learning outcomes of the placement should:
 - Be clearly identified;
 - Contribute to the overall and coherent aims of the programme of study;
 - Be assessed appropriately;
 - Where appropriate, take account of subject benchmark statements and the requirements of any accrediting Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSRB).
 - 1.3 Consideration should be given to the implications for students not securing a placement, or for failing or not completing the placement. The assessment of placement learning will be subject to the normal University processes of assessment and moderation.

- 1.4 Prospectus entries and course information will make clear whether the placement experience is a compulsory component of the programme and will outline the opportunities for transfer to pathways that do not include such learning.
- 2. Faculties/schools will develop criteria to assess the suitability of potential placement learning activities and mechanisms should be in place to monitor learning opportunities.**
- 2.1 Faculties and schools should define procedures for how placements are secured and allocated and have in place mechanisms for ensuring that the placement provider is suitable. Procedures should take into account, as a minimum:
- The opportunity for students to successfully meet the learning outcomes;
 - Health and safety requirements;
 - Any PSRB requirements governing the suitability of placements;
 - Student support on placements;
 - Any reasonable and anticipatory adjustments for students with a disability or learning difficulty.
- 2.2 All programmes are reviewed as part of the Annual Review and Development process, which will encompass placement learning where it is an integral part of the programme of study. Issues relating to the placement will be highlighted via the relevant Board of Study.
- 2.3 The faculty/school should define the circumstances in which a placement provider would be de-selected.
- 3. Staff involved in placement learning will be prepared and supported to undertake their duties**
- 3.1 The University will put in place the means to identify the development needs of those University staff (both academic and administrative) involved in the support of placement learning. Where appropriate this will include short course provision and should include, amongst other issues, equality and diversity training. Consideration will be given to a mentoring system that could be used to support inexperienced placement tutors to develop in their role.
- 3.2 Issues related to placement learning will be explored in the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.
- 3.3 The University will enable placement tutors and placement coordinators to share best practice through a range of means including Learning and Teaching Conferences and publications by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice.
- 3.4 Where staff in the placement provider are involved in supporting or assessing students, the faculty/school will work with the provider to identify and provide relevant staff development to enable them to undertake their role.
- 4. Students undertaking placement learning must be prepared for, and supported in, both their placement learning activities, and if applicable, their return to the University. They should be provided with written information regarding their roles and responsibilities.**

4.1 The faculty/school will provide students with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during and after placement learning experiences. This information should be conveyed to students in written guidance and include (as applicable):

- Information on the nature and extent of the placement learning experience and its relationship to other aspects of the student's programme;
- The support that is provided to students when the responsibility for securing a placement rests with the student;
- Information, support and guidance on applying for the placement opportunity (including preparing a CV, writing supporting statements/letters, interview techniques);
- Financial arrangements, including tuition fees and access to financial support, where relevant;
- The requirement for Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks (or their equivalent);
- The arrangements for students with a disability or specific learning difficulty;
- Appropriate induction to the placement environment including cultural orientation and work expectations;
- Guidance regarding health and safety issues and requirements;
- Any legal or ethical considerations (for example, client or patient confidentiality);
- The assessment methods to be used;
- The means of recording the achievement of specific learning outcomes and progress;
- The assessment arrangements including any submission deadlines, formative assessment, grading criteria, opportunities for feedback and retrieval and the consequences of failure;
- The availability of additional language or skills preparation;
- Insurance arrangements – including the extent of insurance cover provided by the University and whether personal insurance cover is required;
- Student responsibilities for managing their behaviour as representatives of Kingston University;
- Details of the full range of University support services, both academic and other, that students can expect to receive whilst on placement;
- Information on the rights of students to any intellectual property they might develop as part of the placement experience;
- Information on the complaints procedure;
- The arrangements for staying in contact with the faculty/school and specifically the arrangements if there is a problem, that may impede satisfactory progress or completion of the placement;
- The need to comply with PSRB requirements, if appropriate;
- The methods for gathering student feedback on the placement;
- The arrangements for re-orientation on return from a placement.

4.2 The Faculty/School is expected to offer a preparatory meeting with students where the information that is provided in the written guidance can be discussed.

5. Placement providers should be provided with written information that describes their roles and responsibilities.

5.1 The Faculty/School will ensure that placement providers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to:

- The provision of learning opportunities and access to resources;

- Their role in relation to the mentoring of students, and if applicable, the assessment of students;
- University expectations relating to the application of legislation, specifically health and safety and equality and diversity;
- The induction of students to the workplace;
- The insurance of students whilst in the workplace;
- Information on the complaints procedure;
- Any reasonable adjustments for disabled students and those with learning difficulties;
- The arrangements for tutor visits to the workplace;
- The arrangements for gathering feedback on placement activity;
- The arrangements for staying in contact with the faculty/school and specifically the arrangements if there is a problem that may impede satisfactory progress or completion of the placement.

6. Mechanisms should be in place to secure feedback from students, University staff and placement providers.

6.1 The Faculty/School will ensure that mechanisms are in place to gather feedback from:

- Students (both during and at the end of the placement);
- Placement providers – with respect to their interaction with the University and its staff as well as the conduct of students;
- University staff – with respect to the learning opportunities provided to students.

6.2 The Faculty/School will establish appropriate timeliness dependent upon the length of the placement, in order to gather this feedback and operate internal checking procedures to ensure that the activity is taking place as planned.

7. Mechanisms should be in place to deal with complaints from students, placement providers and/or University staff.

7.1 The Faculty/School must ensure that all parties are informed of the procedures for making formal complaints.

7.2 Any complaint received by the University will be investigated using the University's Complaints procedure.

Other sources of information and advice

External

Association for Sandwich Education and Training - series of good practice guides on various aspects of placement learning <http://www.asetonline.org/index.htm>

Universities and Colleges Employers Association. *UCEA Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of Higher Education Students*. (August 2009). www.ucea.ac.uk

Universities Safety and Health Association - www.usha.org.uk

Department for Education and Skills (2002) *Providing Work Placements for Disabled Students, A good practice guide for further and higher education institutions*.
<http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/placements/>

PlaceNet - <http://www.placenet.org.uk/>

Kingston University

Kingston University Single Equality Scheme
<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/factsandfigures/diversityandequality/>

Kingston University Student Complaints Procedure
www.kingston.ac.uk/academicregulations

Kingston University Students' Union
www.kusu.co.uk

Acknowledgements

The development of this policy was informed by the following:

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| Bath Spa University | Work Based and Placement Learning Policy |
| Edge Hill University | Guidelines for Placement Learning |
| Manchester Metropolitan | Institutional Code of Practice for Placement & WBL |
| Swansea University | Guidelines on Placement Learning |
| University of East London | Work-Based and Placement Learning Policy |
| University of Portsmouth | Policy for Placement Learning |
| University of Wolverhampton | Work-based and Placement Learning Guidelines |