



Placement Learning Policy

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1.6	Addition of guidance on PGT placements. See Document Rollover 2017-18 Checklist Records for additional information on amendments made.	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2017	Quality Assurance Committee (June 2017)
1.7	Revised to reflect “with Placement” and “with Internship” awards; and updated guidance from the Professional Development Centre.	Head of Quality Assurance	July 2021	University Education Committee

Placement Learning Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy is informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education's Advice and Guidance for:
- **Work-based Learning** – specifically that “*Work-based learning opportunities enable students to apply and integrate areas of subject and professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to meet course learning outcomes*” and that “*Parties understand and respect the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of the education organisation, employer and student, and appropriate training and support is provided where required*”.
 - **Partnerships** – specifically that “*Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them*”.

2 Preliminary Considerations

Purpose, Scope and Structure of this Policy

- 2.1 Four broad but distinct types of placement learning undertaken as part of a programme offered by the University may be identified:

Type	Descriptor
1 Short placements	Placement learning embedded into and assessed through a modular or assessment block which forms part of the normal programme for the degree (such placement learning may be an optional or a compulsory element of a programme).
2 Professional placements	Placement learning integrated into and assessed through a modular or assessment block which forms part of the programme for a degree and is specifically associated with the assessment of professional competency within a statutory or regulated profession (e.g. placements in Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Education with QTS).
3 Placement	Placement learning associated with a period of placement study which is between 24 weeks and 52 weeks and is in addition to the normal programme for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree; assessed by its own assessment task or set of assessments; and recognised by its own programme learning outcome/s and degree title.
4 Internship	Placement learning associated with a period of placement study which is between six and 23 weeks and is in addition to the normal programme for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree; assessed by its own assessment task or set of assessments; and recognised by its own programme learning outcome/s and degree title.

- 2.2 The policy expands upon (but does not duplicate) the relevant parts of Senate Regulation 2 and Senate Regulation 3 concerning placements, which should also be consulted. The assessment associated with placement learning will be contained in one or more assessment/modular blocks and explained in the associated block outline document(s) and other relevant programme documentation.
- 2.3 The University expects all placement providers to meet all statutory legal requirements with regard to recruiting students from Brunel. In particular, the University reminds the placement provider of the need for compliance with health and safety law, provision of adequate insurance cover, and compliance with legislation against discrimination. The University requires all placement providers to sign the 'Placement Health & Safety Agreement with Placement Provider' prior to the commencement of all placements which covers this information.
- 2.4 Although the statutory duty of care towards the student rests with the placement provider, students on placement remain enrolled as Brunel students and the University will take necessary action to ensure that our students prove effective, safe and reliable employees. Albeit temporary employees, health and safety training is clearly important for students on placement, particularly in light of their relative youth and inexperience. Legislation places primary responsibility for training on the employer (placement provider) – however, the University itself has a duty of care. Brunel therefore provides health and safety information to placement students but this is of a general nature and does not include information specific to any particular job role. Specific guidance will be provided by the individual placement provider.
- 2.5 The range of placement learning offered by the University is considerable. The core principles established by this policy will need to be implemented through local policies, procedures and guidelines by the College/Department/Division (as appropriate) and the Professional Development Centre.
- 2.6 In addition to statements of policy, guidance on the implementation of the policy and on good practice in placement learning is also included in this document.

Duration and Award Titles for Placements and Internships

- 2.7 The award titles for degrees with placements are determined by the length of the placement period.
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes incorporating a placement period of between 24 and 52 weeks of placement learning in total have the addition of "with Placement" in the degree title.

- Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes with placement periods between 6 and 23 weeks of placement learning in total have the addition of “with Internship” to the degree title.
- 2.8 To be eligible to be considered for an undergraduate or postgraduate award 'with Placement ' or 'with Internship', a student must normally have completed the associated minimum length for that type of placement.
- 2.9 The precise lengths of a placement period shall be defined in the relevant block outline and/or the relevant programme specification. Associated contingency arrangements for ensuring the availability of placements together with the consequences for assessment of non-completion of the minimum length of placement period shall also be defined in appropriate block or programme documentation (e.g. Placement Handbook).
- 2.10 Placements are regarded as work and therefore subject to legislation and as far possible the University encourages all placements to be paid in recognition of students' time and efforts. However, in certain circumstances, the University recognises that there are some conditions where the student is not due the National Minimum Wage. In these situations, the Placement Provider will need to explain the reasons for the placement not being paid and the University reserves the right to either accept or refuse approval of these placements based on the information provided by the Placement Provider.
- 2.11 Where placements are undertaken on a part-time basis, for the purposes of calculating the duration of placement learning, a week of placement learning is equivalent to 5 full days of work.

General Purposes and Benefits of Placements

- 2.12 The benefits of a placements are numerous, will vary between academic discipline, and will depend in part on the type and nature of the placement opportunities available. Placements will, however, provide some or all of the following opportunities:
- to gain experience of employment;
 - to learn and reflect on academic study in a relevant working environment;
 - to develop and test professional competencies;
 - to further develop skills in 'life-long learning'; and
 - to develop relationships with organisations and professionals within a potential future profession.
- 2.13 It is common for the benefits of a placement to be wider than those associated with the formal assessment. Experience gained on placement will typically be of benefit to students throughout their later study at the University and on their path into and through employment.

3 Design of the Formal Summative Assessment for Placement Learning

Formal Assessment of Placement Learning Outcomes

- 3.1 As set out in Senate Regulations 2.43-45 and Senate Regulation 3.10, there will be formal summative assessment of placement learning which will contribute towards the outcome of the associated award. A clear statement of the learning outcomes associated with the formal assessment of the placement learning, together with the methods of assessment, will be set out in the relevant assessment/modular block outline(s), and also reflected in the programme's learning outcomes. The contribution of assessment of placement learning towards the award classification shall be defined in the programme specification.
- 3.2 Additional guidance on the development of learning outcomes for placements associated with "with Placement" and "with Internship" awards is set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Assessment of Placement Learning

- 3.3 The arrangements and requirements for the formal assessment of placement learning will be set out in the relevant programme specification, assessment/modular block outline/s and supporting documentation.
- 3.4 Assessment strategies for placement learning will be transparent about:
- any use of individually-negotiated learning outcomes and/or assessments, and how these are agreed with, and communicated to, the student (and where applicable agreed with, and communicated to, the placement provider) in a timely fashion;
 - any use of placement provider judgement in determining the successful academic outcome of placement learning (including any assessment criteria like 'complete x days in placement to satisfaction of placement provider');
 - The role of self-reflection by students in the formal assessment of their placement learning, (for example completion of a diary, portfolio etc, while on placement) and agreement of any individually-negotiated learning outcomes and/or assessments (see below).
- 3.5 The formal assessment of placement learning will be subject to external examiner moderation in the normal way.
- 3.6 In devising assessment schemes for placement learning, and to ensure the robust and equitable formal assessment of students on placement, Departments should consider how they might make the formal assessment of the achievement of placement learning outcomes as far as possible independent of other aspects of the placement. This equity, robustness and independence will be more readily achieved by the provision, for all students on a programme, of clearly defined placement learning assessment tasks and

assessment criteria which directly address the placement learning outcomes defined in the placement learning assessment/modular block outline(s).

- 3.7 The degree to which Departments involve placement providers in the formal assessment of placement learning will differ significantly depending on the type and nature of the placement learning (this involvement can range from no involvement to a major contribution). Where the judgement of the placement provider feeds directly into the assessment, this might require a greater commitment of time from the placement provider, additional training or support for the placement provider, commensurate with the higher level of confidence being placed in the judgement of the placement provider. Where the judgement of the placement provider is collected but feeds indirectly into the formal assessment of a placement, either through being used by the student for self-reflection, or by being used by academic staff in forming their judgement about the achievement of the placement learning outcomes, transparency would still be required in the role of the placement provider, but the expectations placed on the placement provider would be proportionately lower.

4 Before the placement

Finding and Approving Placements

- 4.1 All placements covered by this policy must be approved by Departments in accordance with their local procedures. A placement may not be formally commenced before formal discussion has taken place between the student and their Placement Advisor regarding potential issues and risks to consider.
- 4.2 For Type 2 and those Type 1 placements where the placement is concurrent with the associated module/block or the associated module/block is compulsory, the Department shall ensure the provision of appropriate placement opportunities.
- 4.3 For all “with Placement” or “with Internship” award associated placements, and for those Type 1 placements where the placement is completed before the commencement of the associated optional module/block, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain their own placement.
- 4.4 The Professional Development Centre (PDC – in collaboration with the student’s Department when appropriate - will provide the student with advice on identifying the right kind of placement for them and guidance on obtaining a placement (this might include advice on known vacancies, on making applications, on the preparation of CVs and preparation for the interview process).
- 4.5 With the exception of Type 2 placements, Departments may delegate responsibility for the approval of potential placements in whole or in part to

the PDC.

- 4.6 If a placement is not approved by the Department, the placement cannot commence. If a student engages in work experience that is not an approved placement, the student will be deemed not to have undertaken a placement and will be unable to satisfy the requirements for the associated placement-learning assessment. A student in this situation will normally be required to transfer to the variant of the degree without the placement element.
- 4.7 Where a student's ability to engage fully with the formal assessment of placement learning would be compromised by external constraints such as a non-disclosure or confidentiality policy of the placement provider, the Department should satisfy itself that robust assessment of the learning outcomes for the placement learning can take place.

Preparation of Students for Placement

- 4.8 The following types of preparation should be made available by the University to all students undertaking a placement activity which contributes to the formal assessment of a programme once the placement has been identified:
- general preparation for commencing a placement. This should include:
 - Appropriate briefing on health and safety considerations;
 - Appropriate briefing on equality and diversity in the workplace;
 - Briefing on the expectations of the University towards the students as its 'ambassadors';
 - Briefing on the resources and support available to students whilst on placement;
 - Identification of particular expectations of the University, and any relevant professional standards or codes of practice, which relate to student conduct on placement;
 - specific preparation for the assessment of the placement learning:
 - Familiarisation with any special requirements for self-directed learning;
 - Familiarisation with the role of the placement provider in the assessment process, if any.
- 4.9 Departments (in consultation with the PDC) may determine how this preparation is best delivered (for example through the use of lectures, the distribution of information on paper, or the availability of on-line resources). Departments will need to determine any particular 'checks' which should be built into the delivery of key parts of the preparation (for example, the recording of attendance at certain lectures, the designation of a pre-placement module as a pre-requisite to the placement module, signing to confirm receipt of documentation by the students).

5 Commencement of Placement

Responsibilities of the University and the placement provider on placement commencement

5.1 Responsibilities of the University:

- determining and communicating to the student (and placement provider) the constituent assessment elements, and schedule of, assessment (see below);
- ensuring students are aware of their responsibilities on placement (including those relating to the assessment of their placement, as well as health and safety, insurance, professional codes of practice, etc);
- ensuring that students are aware of the sources of academic support available to them while on placement (see section below);
- ensuring that students are aware of other necessary or useful sources of information available to them;
- ensuring that placement providers are aware of their responsibilities during the placement, including those relating to health and safety¹ and students with disabilities;
- ensuring that placement providers are aware of the basic requirements of the student on placement (educational and, where appropriate, practical, such as any need to attend activities on campus during the placement year).

5.2 Responsibilities of the placement provider:

- setting out and communicating to the student their expectations in respect of the duration of, and duties associated with, the placement;
- offering an induction programme and providing appropriate instruction and training in working practices and supervision;
- providing a named manager / supervisor throughout the placement;
- confirming that Comprehensive Public Liability Insurance is in place that will cover the student whilst on their premises and complying with all health and safety laws, rules and guidelines;
- providing an induction in the workplace health and safety arrangements.

6 During the placement

Responsibilities of the University, the Student and the Placement Provider during the Placement

6.1 Responsibilities of the University:

- providing appropriate information and ongoing support to students (see below) and placement providers;

¹ See [Health & Safety Work Placement Policy](#)

- the formal assessment of the placement learning;

6.2 Responsibilities of the student:

- engage with the requirements for the assessment of their placement learning and seek support or guidance from the University on this learning, or the placement provider, as appropriate;
- abide by the responsibilities of the placement as set out by the placement provider, in accordance with applicable laws;
- observe relevant professional codes of practice while on placement and, in accordance with applicable laws, to adhere to the expectations of the placement provider with regard to professional behaviour in the workplace.

6.3 Responsibilities of the placement provider:

- supporting, where reasonable and practicable, the educational purposes of the student while on placement;
- (where provided for by the agreed assessment scheme) contributing to the formal assessment of the placement learning of the student;
- facilitating any reasonable adjustments that may be required to help a disabled and / or dyslexic student to complete their placement successfully;
- notifying the university immediately regarding any unapproved absences
- facilitating any visits to the student undertaken by university staff during the placement.

Support for Students on Placement

6.4 The support offered to students on placement by the University should cover at least the following:

- Support for students when starting and settling into placements;
- A mechanism by which students may maintain regular routine contact, and get routine support (e.g. via online, telephone, email, or video conferencing platforms);
- Advice on dealing with urgent issues or concerns during a placement (including advice on dealing with urgent issues during periods when support from the University may not be immediately available, such as the Christmas closure period).

6.5 Departments will determine and communicate to students and placement providers the arrangements for the provision of this support, and whether, and in what circumstances, it would include workplace visits by members of University staff.

6.6 Departments need to ensure that necessary kinds of support are available to students who are on placement. The frequency, timing and purpose of any visits of University staff to the student in the workplace needs to reflect this

overall strategy for support. Appropriate alternative mechanisms should be put in place where visits do not form part of the support normally available to students.

7 Following the Placement

Monitoring of placements

- 7.1 Departments and/or the PDC, as appropriate, should have mechanisms in place for end-of-placement monitoring to determine any changes which might be required to the placement opportunity if a student were to be placed again with the same placement provider.
- 7.2 In addition, other kinds of monitoring and reporting may take place at the end of a placement which are not part of the formal assessment of the placement learning. This might include the provision of formative feedback by the placement provider to the student or to the University.

Process if Placement is Terminated Prematurely by a Student or by a Placement Provider

- 7.3 Where a placement is terminated prematurely by a student or placement provider (i.e. is ended prior to the previously agreed duration for the placement), the Department will:
- initiate a process to identify from the student and the placement provider the reasons for the premature termination of the placement;
 - identify and act on any issues arising from the termination relating to the student's studies. This might include: (1) instigating the transfer of the student to the variant of the programme without placement learning; (2) advising the student regarding further opportunities to undertake a placement in order to fulfil at least the minimum number of weeks of placement required under this policy;
 - consider whether there may be any student disciplinary matters arising from the premature termination of the placement (see below).
 - identify and act on any issues arising from the termination relating to the placement provider. This might include reviewing (in consultation with the placement provider) the profile of the student who might be sought to fill the same placement in the future.

Student Disciplinary Matters and Placements

- 7.4 The University expects students to observe relevant professional codes of practice while on placement and, in accordance with applicable laws, to adhere to the expectations of the placement provider with regard to professional behaviour in the workplace. Evidence of unprofessional behaviour might include early termination of a placement by a student where

this has not been agreed in advance with the placement provider.

- 7.5 the University may take action under Senate Regulation 6 to investigate and impose penalties on students who are suspected of acting in an unprofessional manner, or in a manner likely to bring the University into disrepute, while on an approved placement (SR6.16).

Records of Achievement on Placements

- 7.6 For Placements (Type 3) and Internships (Type 4), a student's full transcript of study will normally include a record of any placement module/block that is commenced, even if it is not successfully completed for any reason. Where there is good reason to do so, the relevant College Education Committee may determine to remove the record of an unsuccessful placement module/block at the point when a student is transferred to the non-placement variant of the degree.
- 7.7 For all other types of placement (Types 1 and 2), the transcript will always include a record of any placement module/block that is undertaken.

Appendix A: Guidance on defining Programme Learning Outcomes relating to “with Placement” and “with Internship” awards

- A1 Please note that this guidance is designed for “with Placement” and “with internship” awards but may be useful in considering short placements (Type 1). Learning outcomes for professional placement learning (Type 2) will normally be prescribed by appropriate professional and/or statutory bodies.
- A2 It is very important to recognise that the assessment is that of the placement learning, not of the placement itself. This ensures that the assessment of the placement is independent of variations in the placement context.
- A3 The assessment of the placement learning will be implemented by a set of Placement Learning Assessment Tasks, which should be well specified, as for all other summative assessed tasks. These might take the form of e.g., assignments, mini-projects, portfolios, reflective essays, presentations.
- A4 Learning outcomes associated with Placement Learning will be specified at (at least) two levels of abstraction:
- Programme Learning Outcomes;
 - Module/Block Learning Outcomes.
- A5 The programme learning outcomes are deliberately abstracted away from assessment/modular block learning outcomes, the latter potentially being directly assessed by the assessment tasks.
- A6 The programme learning outcomes associated with placement learning are exactly the outcomes which differentiate the award with placement from the standard award and thus identify outcomes which would not normally be demonstrated by students who have followed the non-placement programme.

Generic Programme Learning Outcomes

- A7 In order to assist programme designers, a set of generic programme learning outcomes have been developed. These are not intended to be used directly in a programme specification; rather, they should be used as prompts in defining an appropriate set of programme learning outcomes for a particular programme. It should also be noted that it may be appropriate in the case of some programmes to define a programme learning outcome(s) which requires a student to use their academic discipline knowledge in a placement context.
- Knowledge and understanding relating to:
 - the “world of work” and their place in it.
 - relevance of subject-specific knowledge to their placement work

- synergies and conflicts between academia and industry, commerce, etc (as appropriate)
 - a profession or professions in terms of the context, constraints, pressures, rewards and opportunities.
 - an organisation (in general or particular) in terms of its strategic and operational context, its nature, its drives, problems, challenges and structure.
- Cognitive skills such as:
 - the ability to analyse (at the appropriate level) issues encountered in an employment context from an academic perspective.
 - the ability to analyse (at the appropriate level) issues encountered in an academic context from an employment perspective.
 - Other skills such as the ability to:
 - engage in self-directed, informal learning.
 - adapt to professional/organisational environments/expectations.

A8 Above all, programme-level outcomes need to be valid for any and all placements in which you might place students registered for the programme in question. This would not preclude the possibility, if it seems appropriate, of employing, at the module/assessment block level, individually-negotiated learning outcomes, or selecting learning outcomes from an agreed range (provided these are consistent with the programme-level learning outcomes).

A9 As an example of how an individual programme specification might use the above generic learning outcomes, the following might be helpful:

- Knowledge & understanding of:
 - An employing organisation, its operational context and the issues it faces.
 - How issues encountered in an employment context relate to research/theories in [insert name of discipline]
- Cognitive skills such as:
 - Analyse issues encountered in an employment context from an academic perspective.
- Other skills and attributes (practical/professional/transferable) such as:
 - Successfully engage in informal, self-directed learning.
 - Adapt to different employment environments and organisational expectations.