Guidance for Providing Work Experience Placements
Policy… Code of Practice… Guidance ✓ Procedure…
Organisation-wide ✓ Local…
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee
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The purpose of presenting this document to the University Health & Safety Committee Standard three-year review ✓ Changes in practice and/or legislation … New guidance…

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1. Purpose

This guidance sets out the University-wide requirements for planning, authorising and managing work experience placements for young people. It supports compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, including the specific requirements relating to young persons, and the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990. It also supports the University's safeguarding arrangements.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all Colleges, Institutes, Directorates and departments arranging or hosting work experience placements for young people at Brunel University of London. It applies to staff who propose, authorise, organise, supervise or support placements, whether arranged through a school, college or third-party provider, or directly through personal or professional contacts.

It covers planning, authorisation, risk assessment, safeguarding, insurance confirmation, induction, supervision, emergency arrangements and completion of the placement. It does not replace

specialist arrangements for formal student placements, apprenticeships, internships, volunteering or employment.

3. Policy details

3.1 Principles and authorisation

Work experience can provide a valuable introduction to working life, assist career decisions, develop confidence and employability skills, and strengthen links between the University and the wider community. A placement must nevertheless be suitable, purposeful, properly planned and authorised before it begins.

The receiving department must identify a named placement organiser and a named day-to-day supervisor. A structured programme must be prepared, setting out the intended learning outcomes, activities, working hours, supervision and any activities the young person must not undertake. Placements arranged directly through family, friends or other contacts are subject to the same University requirements as placements arranged through a school, college or provider.

Placements must be confirmed sufficiently in advance to permit risk assessment, safeguarding consideration, insurance confirmation, consultation with professional services where necessary, and communication with the young person and their parent, carer, school, college or placement organiser as applicable.

3.2 Pre-placement information and records

Before the placement begins, the receiving department must obtain and retain only the information necessary to plan and manage the placement safely. This should include relevant contact details, the placement dates and hours, agreed activities, emergency contacts, and information about any particular needs that may affect safety or support arrangements. Personal information must be handled in accordance with University data-protection requirements.

The department must provide written confirmation of the placement and suitable information about the programme, supervision, expected conduct, confidentiality, emergency arrangements and any significant risks and controls. The department must confirm that applicable University insurance arrangements cover the placement and seek specialist advice where the position is unclear.

3.3 Risk assessment

The receiving department must ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is in place before the placement starts. Existing assessments may be used where they already address the work and environment, but they must be reviewed to consider any additional factors arising from the young person’s age, maturity, inexperience, understanding, physical or psychological capacity, or particular needs.

The assessment must consider, as relevant:

- the work environment, location and emergency arrangements;
- the proposed activities, equipment, substances and access to restricted areas;
- induction, information, instruction, training and the level of supervision required;

- the young person's age, maturity, experience and ability to understand and follow instructions;
- any relevant health, disability, accessibility or welfare needs notified through an appropriate route;
- safeguarding arrangements, including supervision during breaks, arrival, departure and movement around campus; and
- activities that are prohibited or require additional controls or specialist advice.

Significant risks and the measures in place to control them must be explained in a suitable way to the young person and, where the young person is a child, to the parent or carer, normally through the school, college or placement organiser. Approval must be reviewed if the activities, environment, individual needs or other relevant circumstances change before or during the placement.

3.4 Higher-risk and unsuitable activities

A young person must not undertake work where a significant risk remains after reasonable controls have been applied. Particular care is required where work may expose the young person to:

- work beyond their physical or psychological capacity, including potentially distressing situations;
- harmful exposure to toxic, carcinogenic or otherwise hazardous substances;
- harmful exposure to biological agents or radiation;
- risk to health from extreme heat or cold, noise or vibration;
- a risk of accident that they may not recognise or avoid because of insufficient experience, training or attention to safety;
- live electrical systems, dangerous machinery, work at height, significant manual handling, or other activities where safe participation cannot be demonstrated; or
- access to personal, confidential or sensitive information without appropriate controls.

Higher-risk activities must not be included unless the department can demonstrate that the activity is necessary, lawful, suitably controlled and supported by competent advice. Where this cannot be demonstrated, the activity must be excluded from the programme.

3.5 Safeguarding

All work experience placements must comply with the University's Safeguarding Policy and associated arrangements. The department must consider safeguarding as part of the planning and risk-assessment process, including the suitability of supervision, one-to-one working, communications, photography, access to changing or welfare facilities, travel within the campus and arrangements for arrival and departure.

The need for a Disclosure and Barring Service check depends on the nature and frequency of the activity and whether it constitutes regulated activity. Departments must not make assumptions.

Advice must be obtained through the University's safeguarding or Human Resources arrangements where there is uncertainty.

3.6 Induction and supervision

The young person must receive a proportionate induction at the start of the placement. The supervisor must check that the information has been understood and encourage the young person to ask questions or raise concerns.

The induction must cover, as relevant:

- the placement programme, expected conduct and any prohibited activities;
- the named supervisor and how to obtain help;
- local hazards, controls and safe working arrangements;
- fire, first aid, accident and near-miss reporting arrangements;
- welfare facilities, breaks, access arrangements and permitted areas;
- information security, confidentiality and acceptable use of University systems; and
- what to do if the young person feels unsafe, unwell or uncertain.

Supervision must be appropriate to the young person, the activities and the environment. The supervisor must remain available, monitor the placement, intervene where necessary and ensure that the young person does not undertake unplanned or unauthorised work.

3.7 Incidents, concerns and changes

Accidents, near misses, safeguarding concerns, welfare concerns and significant changes to the planned placement must be reported promptly through the relevant University arrangements. The department must stop or modify an activity where controls are not effective or circumstances have changed. Senior management may withdraw approval for a placement where safe and appropriate arrangements cannot be maintained.

4. Responsibilities

University Council / Vice-Chancellor & Leadership Team

The University's senior leadership provides strategic oversight of health, safety and safeguarding arrangements and ensures that suitable organisational frameworks and resources are available.

Senior Managers

Executive Deans, Directors, Heads of Department and equivalent senior managers must ensure that work experience placements within their areas are properly authorised, resourced and monitored, and that unsuitable placements do not proceed.

Line Managers and Academic Supervisors

Line managers and academic supervisors must ensure that placements are planned in accordance with this guidance, that suitable organisers and supervisors are appointed, that risk assessments and

safeguarding arrangements are reviewed, and that any required controls are implemented before the placement begins.

Placement Organiser and Day-to-Day Supervisor

The placement organiser and supervisor must plan the programme, obtain necessary information, complete or review the risk assessment, provide induction and supervision, communicate significant risks and controls, maintain appropriate records, and report or escalate concerns. They must not expose the young person to unnecessary or uncontrolled risk.

Young Person on Placement

The young person must follow the information, instruction and rules provided; use equipment only where authorised and trained; remain within permitted areas; report accidents, near misses and concerns promptly; and ask the supervisor for help where anything is unclear.

Parents, Carers, Schools, Colleges and Placement Providers

Where applicable, parents, carers, schools, colleges and placement providers should provide relevant information needed for safe planning, communicate agreed arrangements to the young person, and notify the University of material changes or concerns.

Human Resources, Safeguarding and Other Specialist Services

Relevant professional services provide advice within their remit, including safeguarding, DBS, insurance, equality, disability, information governance and employment matters. Operational responsibility remains with the receiving department.

Competent Health & Safety Support

The Health, Safety and Environment Team provides competent advice on health and safety risk management. HSET does not arrange or authorise placements and does not assume the responsibilities of the receiving department. Advice should be sought sufficiently early where the activities, environment or individual needs create unfamiliar or higher risks.

5. Legal and other requirements

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, including the provisions relating to young persons.
- Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Working Time Regulations 1998, including provisions relevant to young workers where applicable.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.
- University Safeguarding Policy and associated safeguarding arrangements.

- University risk assessment, accident and incident reporting, fire safety, information security and insurance arrangements.

6. Appendix - Definitions

Young person

A person who has not attained the age of 18.

Child

A person who has not attained the age of 16. Safeguarding definitions and requirements must be applied in accordance with the University Safeguarding Policy.

Work experience placement

A temporary placement in which a young person observes or undertakes agreed work-related activities primarily for learning and development, without becoming a substantive employee of the University.

Receiving department

The College, Institute, Directorate or department that agrees to host and manage the placement.

Placement organiser

The member of staff responsible for coordinating the placement arrangements and ensuring that the required planning and authorisation are completed.

Supervisor

The member of staff responsible for the young person's day-to-day induction, oversight, support and safety during the placement.