

Academic Policy and Procedures



UNIVERSITY
CENTRE
SOUTH DEVON

South Devon College

HIGHER EDUCATION

WORK-BASED AND PLACEMENT LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE v5.0



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APPROVAL

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Background and Context

University Centre South Devon (UCSD) recognises and values the importance of work-based and placement learning within higher education (HE) and its current and potential future benefits for the approach to students' learning.

In forming its policy, UCSD acknowledges that there are many different ways students can acquire work-based learning, depending on the nature and level of their programme of study.

*“Learning in the work place can take many forms and serves a variety of purposes.”
(Foundation degree Characteristic Statement 2020)*

This policy is intended to be a general policy which gives guidance on the minimum requirements regarding the delivery of work-based learning Programmes may wish to include additional information or procedures appropriate for their subject, or to meet the accreditation requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB).

“When designing foundation degrees consideration is given to the ways in which the work-based learning is appropriate to the particular needs of the relevant employment sector or type of employer, and how the programme helps to provide the knowledge and transferable skills needed for employment. This consideration takes into account the variety of contexts in which the world of work can be represented, including different types of employers such as small and medium-sized enterprises, and self-employment.” (Foundation degree Characteristic Statement 2020)

This document closely aligns with the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, with particular consideration of the following advice and guidance themes: Learning and Teaching, Enabling Student Achievement and Work-Based Learning. The policy is also informed by the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (2020).

1. Definition of work-based learning

Authentic and innovative work-based learning is an integral part of foundation degrees and their design. The aim of 'authentic' learning experiences are to integrate and replicate in the classroom the practices and standards expected in the workplace ([Villaroel et. Al. 2017](#)). Similarly, work-based learning recognises the learning potential of the workplace and prioritises reflection on work practices and standards (Raelin 2008).

As such, work-based learning enables learners to take on appropriate role(s) within the workplace, giving them the opportunity to learn and apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired as an integrated element of the programme. It involves the development of higher-level learning within both the higher education provider and the workplace. It is a two-way process, where the learning in one environment is applied in the other.

Work-based learning can be achieved through many forms. This can include full-time or part-time work, integrated work placements, and real work environments. However,

'working' in itself is not sufficient. Work-based learning requires the identification and achievement of defined and work-related learning outcomes.

Its focus is on learning acquired through activity within workplaces, critical reflection in and on this learning and its relevance to learners in terms of enhanced skills, knowledge and understanding and increased critical self-awareness and personal potential.

It also takes into account the relevance for employers in terms of enhanced employee and organisational performance, increased innovative capacity, employee contribution and output.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy concerns individuals undertaking workplace activities, in the UK or abroad, for the purpose of acquiring learning that will be assessed as part of the learning outcomes of their programme of study. The activity may be paid or unpaid and may take various forms, including traditional employment, part-time or self-employment, entrepreneurial activity, public performance or exhibition, voluntary engagements or external engagements with professional practitioners at their place of work as part of a College-organised field trip or residential visit.

Work-based learning may take place within a College location as long as the learning opportunities are not contrived for study purposes but occur in the workplace and arise through the activity of working.

Please note that the word 'placement' is used to refer to any work-based learning situation which falls within the scope of the policy.

3. Exclusions

The policy does not apply to employment, paid or unpaid, undertaken by a student outside of the programme of study, even if relevant to the student's programme of study.

4. Policy

Work-based learning activity within HE programmes at UCSD will display some or all of the following characteristics:

- Facilitate the development of a learner centred curriculum within the context of award programme requirements and encourage learner negotiated elements within programmes of study;
- Be flexible in terms of access, delivery and curriculum, feedback and assessment;
- Promote active partnerships with employers/external organisations;
- Promote innovative teaching, learning, support and assessment strategies

applicable to the workplace;

- Contribute to the future employability of the student;
- Promote the professional and personal development of the student;
- Allow the student to develop specialist knowledge, theory and skills by using the workplace as a context for project-based or practice evidenced learning.

In implementing the HE Work-Based Learning Policy programme/module leaders must pay due regard to the following minimum expectation, which are designed to underpin the quality of work-based learning provision within HE programmes delivered by UCSD.

5. Responsibilities

The academic member of staff responsible for work-based or placement learning activity within a programme should be satisfied that each provider, whether allocated by academic staff or independently found by the student, is suitable. Procedures for securing, approving and allocating placements should be transparent to all, and take in to account, as a minimum:

- the opportunity for students to successfully meet the learning outcomes¹ (which should be clearly identified; contribute to the overall aims of the student's programme; and should be assessed appropriately, including providing an opportunity for reflection) of the placement;
- that placement providers have been assessed and approved

¹ Consideration should be given to relevant external reference points, such as Sector Skills Councils; any requirements of PSRBs; and National Occupational Standards.

- health and safety requirements and responsibilities of relevant parties;
- any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements governing the suitability of placements;
- student support pre, post and during placement, including support provided for student learning.
- safe recruitment practices and confirmation of DBS procedures if required.

Information should be given to students on the consequences of failure to either secure or complete a placement.

The Higher Education Faculty Office will develop and maintain a repository of generic documentation and guidelines, in consultation with its University validating partners, to support work-based learning activity across HE programmes at UCSD, based on the minimum expectation. Programme teams may customise document templates as appropriate for the work-based learning activity for their subject area, as long as they retain the minimum expectation.

Where staff are developing programmes of study which include an element of work based or placement learning, the following should be considered:

- intended learning outcomes are clearly identified; that they contribute to the programme's aims; and are assessed appropriately;
- where appropriate, align intended learning outcomes with those determined by relevant PSRBs;
- assessment should include strategies to support student learning as well as measure achievement. Failure or non-completion of this element of the programme should be considered carefully, with thought given to strategies to allow students to be re-assessed in these instances.

6. Information, support and guidance

The Academic member of staff responsible for WBL should make placement providers aware of their responsibilities in relation to:

- their responsibility for the provision of learning opportunities and involvement in programme design, monitoring and review;
- their role in relation to the mentoring of students from the point of induction, and, if applicable, the evaluation of the student's engagement with the placement;
- the health and safety of students, including provision of any specialist materials or clothing needed;

- their responsibility in relation to insurance cover in the event of accident;
- the need to make placement providers aware of their responsibility for making reasonable adjustments for students with a disability

7. Student rights and responsibilities

The Academic Member of Staff should ensure that students are made aware of:

- their responsibilities in relation to the programme of study which the WBL makes up part of;
- their responsibilities for managing their behaviour as representatives of UCSD;
- their responsibilities in relation to health and safety issues;
- their need to remain in contact with the module leader or UCSD placement contact in order to provide feedback on progress;
- opportunities for personal development planning;
- their entitlement in relation to tutoring or mentoring, taking into account the nature, location and timing of the placement;
- the need to alert the placement provider and WBL contact or module leader to any problems with the activity that may impede their satisfactory progress and completion of the placement.
- the ability of the placement provider to raise any issues with the programme coordinator (or other relevant academic member of staff) regarding the student's suitability to practice.
- their need to comply with PSRB requirements, if appropriate.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

All placements should be subject to effective monitoring procedures. These should include as a minimum:

- The WBL contacts should ensure that feedback from students is collected both during and on completion of the placement.
- Analysis of the placement should take place as part of the annual monitoring process.
- The WBL contacts should ensure that feedback is collected from placement providers, perhaps by means of a focused employers group.

9. Useful references

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) and Advice and Guidance themes: Learning and Teaching, Work-Based Learning, Enabling Student Achievement
- Foundation Degree Characteristic Statement (QAA 2020)
- Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in HE (ASET 2013)
- “Guidance for the assessment of Work-based learning” (AdvanceHE, 2010)
- “Work Placement Toolkit for Students, Universities and Arts and Cultural Organisations”, Arts Council England and London Centre for Arts and Cultural Enterprise (LCACE)
- Good Practice Guide for Supporting Students with Disabilities on Placement (ASET 2016)
- Good Practice Guide for Health and Safety for Student Placements (ASET 2016)