

WORK-RELATED LEARNING POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR HE STUDENTS

Scope and Purpose

Many of the College's programmes are enriched and contextualised by learning which takes place in a setting or settings outside the institution. This Policy is intended to establish sound principles which will help students and tutors to understand and maximise the learning opportunities available through the contextualisation of academic studies. It has been designed to reflect the precepts and guidance of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code, specifically chapters *B3 – Learning and teaching*, *B4 – Enabling student development and achievement* and *B10 – Managing higher education provision with others*.

Definition

There are a wide range of settings in which students may be working which encompass a wide variety of duties and consequently different relationships which may exist between the student, the College and the provider of the setting. Two definitions have been developed to describe the relationships which occur:

- **work-related learning** is regarded as occurring when '*students employed or volunteering in vocational areas using their work setting to contextualize their learning*'. This definition would typically relate to students undertaking a foundation degree or HNC/D programme which includes learning in the workplace.
- **work experience placement learning** is seen as learning which takes place when '*students are undertaking work experience to enhance their subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, intellectual and transferable skills*'. This definition would typically be applied to students who are placed in a setting by the College as part of their course.

Principles

Work-related learning and work experience placement learning both involve a partnership with an organisation which provides a setting in which the student undertakes learning as part of their overall learning experience. The provider may be a business, school or other educational institution, charity, voluntary organisation, or public body.

The Agreement

All parties should be clear about the part which the work setting plays in the learning process. Partner organisation must be informed about the expectations and be willing and able to meet them in full.

The agreement should be in place before enrolment if the student is registering for a university affiliated course.

The agreement must be signed by the relevant Curriculum Manager from the College, a representative of the partner organisation and the student, and all parties will receive a copy of the signed agreement.

The responsibilities of each party must be set out in a formal written agreement which must include a summary of the programme of study that students will be undertaking and specify the associated responsibilities of the respective partners.

The agreement must make clear if the partner organisation will be carrying out any teaching or assessment and, if so, how this will be supported and monitored by staff of the University. The responsibility for the academic standards of its awards and for the quality of learning opportunities resides with the College.

The agreement should state the action to be taken if there is a concern about the conduct, progress or suitability of the student.

The agreement should also make clear where the responsibility for the health and safety of the student lies. If in doubt on this matter, the Curriculum Manager should consult the College's Health and Safety Officer.

If a student changes their work-related learning opportunity, it is the student's responsibility to inform the College. The College will then ensure that a new agreement is signed. This is to be retained by the Course Leader for audit purposes.

Depending upon the employment status of the student, the College may have a responsibility to ensure that the partner organisation has in place policies relating to equality and diversity, including harassment and discrimination, which are compatible with those of the College. If in doubt on this matter, the Curriculum Manager should consult the Assistant Principal: HE.

The contribution that work-based learning will make to the achievement of the learning outcomes at module and programme-level should be considered. All partners must be clear about whether the student is expected to demonstrate specific knowledge, understanding and skills through the performance of his or her normal work-based activities, through the performance of designated additional tasks in the context of the setting, or through evidence of reflection on the experience gained.

If a student is formally assessed in a setting, the programme documentation must state clearly who is responsible for the assessment and the extent of the responsibilities clearly defined. The appropriate Curriculum Manager must be satisfied that those conducting the assessment are equipped to do so and understand what is expected of them. The programme documentation must specify the arrangements for moderating the outcomes of the assessment to demonstrate how consistency between different settings is assured and arrangements are in place to allow the external examiner to reach an informed judgement on the standard and the quality of learning opportunities.

Quality of the learning experience

Although different partner organisations will not be able to offer an identical experience, the Curriculum Manager must ensure that all partner organisations can offer appropriate opportunities to enable students to meet the learning outcomes for the module and award.

For work-related learning the setting in which the applicant is working/volunteering will be considered. If deemed suitable a formal agreement outlining the roles, responsibilities and expectations of partners will be made. If access to work-related

learning is a condition of entry to the course the applicant must be notified of this at or before interview.

For a work experience setting a formal agreement will be established to cover roles, responsibilities and expectations of the partners and the support arrangements for students detailed. Training should be provided for work place mentors to enable them to monitor and support students effectively.

The Curriculum Manager must ensure that any concerns regarding the standard and quality of work-based learning opportunities are addressed promptly. Where it is necessary to terminate an agreement with a partner organisation arrangements must be put in place to ensure that support is offered to the student to enable them to meet the learning outcomes.

The work experience setting will ensure that the College is informed of any change in circumstances.

Information to students

Clear information, advice and guidance must be given to students before commencing work-based learning and before being placed in a setting as part of their study. This information should show:

- the contribution which the work-based learning will make to their programme
- how the experience will help them to meet the learning outcomes
- how these outcomes will be assessed

The responsibilities of the setting to the student with regard to the provision of a safe working environment and any rights they may have under employment legislation. Clear guidance should be included regarding the steps to be taken and points of contact in the event of difficulties arising or should they wish to make a complaint. In the case of a complaint students will follow the College's complaints procedure.

Curriculum Managers must ensure that students are briefed about the setting and made aware of the expectations regarding personal, professional and ethical conduct and standards required by professional bodies. Students should be given clear information and guidance with regard to professional or legal responsibilities which form an integral part of their work-based learning experience which may include issues of safeguarding, confidentiality, intellectual property rights, copyright, and data protection issues. The guidance to students must also include information about given to students how any breach of discipline in the work place will be treated by the College.

Students must be made aware that the evaluation of the contribution of work related or work placement learning opportunities is an integral part of the learning process and reflect on how it has contributed to the quality of their personal and professional development and academic achievement. Partner organisations should be invited to comment on the learning process and the support provided by the College to inform systematic development and enhancement across the College.

Quality Assurance – version control			
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