



BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY
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Bishop Grosseteste University

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Introduction

1. Many of the University's academic programmes are enriched by learning which takes place in a setting or settings outside the institution. However, the undoubted benefits which these experiences confer on students are not unattended by risks and these need to be mitigated by careful planning. This Code of Practice is intended to establish sound principles which will help programme teams to assure academic standards, the quality of learning opportunities and demonstrate a commitment to equity during those periods when students are pursuing their studies off campus. It has been designed to reflect the precepts and guidance of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018).

Definitions and scope

2. Where the term 'students' is used in this document, it should also refer to those students who are also 'apprentices' studying on a degree or higher apprenticeship.
3. Unless specifically stated this Code of Practice is applicable to Erasmus and International students studying at the University.
4. The wide range of settings in which students may be working, the varied nature of the activities in which they may engage, and the different relationships which may exist between the student, the University and the provider of the setting need to be recognised at the outset. This variety creates some difficulties in providing a comprehensive definition of all types of arrangement which might fall within the terms of this Code of Practice and it is important to emphasise that its provisions and the definitions that it offers are not intended to preclude innovative practice in this area. At the University, work-based learning embraces the following:
 - **work-related learning** can be defined as '*students employed or volunteering in vocational areas using their work setting to contextualize their learning*'. This definition would typically relate to students undertaking a programme which includes learning in the workplace.
 - **professional practice placement** learning can be defined as '*students gaining experience necessary to achieve qualifications and continued professional development*'. This would typically relate to initial teacher training programmes.
 - **work experience placement** learning can be defined as '*students undertaking work experience to enhance their subject specific skills, knowledge and understanding, intellectual and transferable skills*'.
5. Work-related learning and placement learning, in the sense in which the terms are used here, both involve a partnership with an organisation which provides a setting in which the student undertakes learning as part of their overall experience. This learning may be supplemented by additional activities, often with e-mail or VLE support, related to attendance at the University or distance-learning. In referring to these organisations, the term partner organisation refers to a place of employment or placement setting. The provider may be a business, school or other educational institution, charity, voluntary organisation, or public body. The list is not intended to be exhaustive.
6. For professional practice placement, learning takes place in a setting in which a full or part-time student of the University is placed for an agreed period of time. The placement will normally be credit-rated or contribute to a credit-rated element of the programme of study.



7. To clarify, there are types of off-campus learning which are not dealt with in this document; for example, educational visits and fieldwork, where a student is likely to be working off campus for a limited period and normally under the supervision of a Programme or Module Leader. Neither does it cover students who are studying whilst working part-time in a setting which whilst cogent, is not a formal requirement of the programme.

Responsibilities of partners

8. Work-related learning and placement learning involves collaboration between the University and a partner organisation. It is important that both parties should be clear about their respective contribution to the student's programme. The appropriate Programme Leader and/or Placement coordinator must ensure that the partner organisation is informed about the expectations of the University and is willing and able to meet them in full. It should be noted that normally the responsibility rests with the University for the academic standards of its awards and for the quality of learning opportunities normally.
9. The responsibilities of each party must be set out in a formal written agreement. The agreement should be signed by the relevant Head of the University School, or a member of the School to whom this task has been formally delegated, and a suitably senior representative of the partner organisation. It would normally include information about the programme of study 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 agreement should state the action to be taken if there is a concern about the conduct, progress or suitability of the student.
10. The agreement should also make clear where the responsibility for the health and safety of the student lies. It should be noted that the nature of the partner organisation may have a bearing on the applicable legislation (e.g. Moving and Handling) and whether the University as the awarding institution or the partner organisation is identified as the 'responsible authority'. If in doubt on this matter, the appropriate Programme Leader and/or Placement coordinator should consult the University's Health and Safety Officer. In the cases of placement, the appropriate Programme Leader or Placement coordinator must carry out an initial assessment of risk involved, and they should also consider the need to carry out an extended due diligence process and/or risk assessment before a student is placed in a setting. Particular diligence should be exercised in the case of overseas settings.
11. The agreement should set out the circumstances under which it might be altered or terminated and, crucially, explain how the interests of the student would be safeguarded in such an eventuality. This could include a change in personal circumstances or in the circumstances of the setting. Any agreement would need to align with the University's Student Protection Plan.
12. Depending upon the employment status of the student, the University 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 consonant with those of the University. The agreement requires the partner organisation to confirm these.

Programme development and design



13. In designing a programme which includes work-based learning the team responsible for its development should give careful consideration to this element and its place in the overall design of the programme. The team should give particular thought to the respective contribution of work-based learning and the University-based elements of the programme and to their interrelationship.
14. In particular, it is important that there is clarity about the contribution that work-based learning will make to the achievement of the learning outcomes at the level of the module and also the programme-level award. The learning outcomes for individual modules should be aligned to the relevant level descriptor and those for the award to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). It is also important to consider the contribution that the work-based learning will make in meeting the requirements of any relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), consideration of the QAA Characteristic Statements and the application of Subject Benchmark Statements.

Assessment

15. It should be clear from the programme specification and supporting documentation whether the student is expected to demonstrate any required knowledge, understanding and skills through the performance of their 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.
16. Where a student is formally assessed in a setting, the programme documentation must state clearly where responsibility for the conduct of assessment lies. If the partner organisation is involved in carrying out the assessment, the extent of the responsibilities must be clearly defined. The appropriate Programme Leader and/or Placement coordinator at the University must be satisfied that arrangements are in place to ensure that those conducting the assessment are equipped to do so and fully to understand what is expected of them. The programme documentation must specify the arrangements for moderating the outcomes of the assessment and demonstrate how consistency across different settings will be assured. The role of the external examiner in such cases must be clearly defined and the arrangements which are in place should be such as to allow them to reach an informed judgement on the standards and the quality of learning opportunities in these elements of the programme. For further information on the role of an External Examiner please see the University's Code of Practice for External Examining and the External Examiner Handbook.

Quality of the learning experience

17. Although it is acknowledged that different partner organisations will not necessarily offer an identical experience, the Programme Leader and/or Placement coordinator must take due diligence to ensure that all settings can offer appropriate opportunities which will enable students to meet the learning outcomes for the module and award.
18. In the case of work-related learning, the admissions process will include consideration of the setting in which the applicant is working or volunteering. A formal agreement will be established to cover roles, responsibilities and expectations. Where such arrangements are proposed as a condition of entry, they must be clearly communicated to the applicant in writing prior to admission.



19. For work experience placements and professional practice placements, again a formal agreement will be established to cover roles, responsibilities and expectations. Documentation must clearly set out the arrangements that will be in place to support students in the setting. This information should be communicated to students and settings. Suitable guidance and support should be provided for mentors and tutors to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively.
20. If the partner organisation is responsible for delivering any part of the programme, there must be a clear quality assurance and monitoring process. This will include measures to ensure that delivery meets the required standard and that required learning opportunities and relevant resources are in place. Training and induction will be provided as appropriate.
21. Particular care should be exercised in the case of overseas settings to ensure that the experience offered to students will be an appropriate one and that the University is able to exercise its duty of care. It is expected that an extended risk assessment would be carried out for all overseas settings.

Information for students and their responsibilities

22. Students must be provided with clear information and, as appropriate, advice or guidance before commencing a programme involving work-based learning and before any placement which they undertake as a formal part of their study. This should include the contribution which the work-based learning will make to their programme, how the experience will help them to meet the learning outcomes, and how these outcomes will be assessed. Students should be made aware of the responsibilities of the setting towards them with regard to the provision of a safe working environment and, where applicable, their rights in employment legislation. Students should have clear guidance regarding the steps that they should take and who the students themselves should contact if difficulties arise or if they wish to make a complaint. In such cases, students will follow the University's complaints procedure.
23. Programme Leaders and/or Placement co-ordinators should ensure that students are briefed about the setting and made fully aware of the expectations regarding personal, professional and ethical conduct and standards required by professional bodies. Ensuring that such relevant information has been conveyed to the student is likely to be especially important in the case of overseas settings. Students should be given clear information and guidance with regard to any professional or legal responsibilities that they may have as an integral part of their work-based learning experience. These might include matters relating to safeguarding, confidentiality, intellectual property rights, copyright, and data protection issues. Whilst specific matters will be looked at during the initial process whereby setting or placement related risk will be considered, in the specific case of work-related learning, many of these matters are also ultimately likely to fall under the terms and conditions of their appointment by the partner organisation.
24. There are particular regulations governing the intellectual property rights of material developed by the student in a placement or work setting and the attention of students should be drawn to the relevant section of the University's Intellectual Property Policy.
25. The guidance given to students should include a statement regarding how any breach of discipline in the work place will be treated by the University. The attention of affected students should be drawn to part 17.1 and appendix 5 of the Student Disciplinary

Procedure which deals with misconduct on placements.



Monitoring and review

26. University is keen that all modules forming its programmes receive systematic scrutiny and that students are able to evaluate and give feedback on the modules they have taken. The Programme Leader and/or Placement coordinator should take active steps to evaluate how work-based learning has contributed to the quality of the students' development and achievement. Students should be given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and provide feedback which is specific to their experience in the setting. The views of the partner organisation should also be sought. The information collected from evaluation processes should inform systematic development and enhancement across the whole University. Programme evaluations will include reference to the contribution of placement to students' learning.
27. The Head of the relevant School should ensure that any concerns regarding the standard and quality of work-based learning are addressed promptly. Where it is necessary to terminate an agreement with a partner organisation, the University's Student Protection Plan will be implemented to ensure that support is offered to the student to enable him or her to meet required learning expectations.

Collaborative Provision

28. Learning Providers (for example Franchised and Validated Institutions; Erasmus Partners) that have entered into a formal Memorandum of Co-operation with the University are expected to have a policy for work-based learning that aligns with University expectations as set out in this Code of Practice. Partners may adopt this Code; any adaptations will be scrutinised at the institutional approval event. The implementation of any such policy/code as it relates to the University's students will be monitored on a regular basis as part of the monitoring procedures relating to the University's collaborative provision.