

The University of Manchester

Principles and procedures for student placements on taught programmes

Definitions

- 1 The University defines placement learning as learning that is an integral part of a programme of study, which contributes to the programme's learning outcomes but which normally takes place outside the University. This document applies to all placement learning activity on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes; it does not apply to work experience undertaken outside of a programme of study.
- 2 Placements usually fall into one of the following four main categories:
 - Academic placement
 - A period of study at a university or comparable institution
 - Placements may be specific to the programme of study or University wide programmes open to all students e.g. the Worldwide Exchange Programme managed by the Study Abroad Unit
 - Work placement
 - To gain work experience relevant to the programme
 - Placements may include *inter alia* industrial experience, language assistantships
 - Teaching practice, as part of a teacher training programme
 - Placements may be paid or unpaid
 - Research placements
 - Research projects performed in a laboratory or equivalent
 - Clinical placement
 - A period of work-related learning in a clinical setting including optional (elective) placements

The type of placement is agreed as part of the approval of a programme.

- 3 Any of these placements may be with a Placement Provider, i.e. the organisation in which the placement takes place, based either within or outside the UK. There may also be occasions on which a placement takes place within the University of Manchester.
- 4 Placements may be a compulsory or optional part of a programme but must be planned and contribute to the learning outcomes. Placements are organised by the University or, with the agreement of the University, the student. They do not include part-time, term-time or vacation work arranged by students that is not a planned part of the programme or which does not contribute to the programme's learning outcomes.
- 5 Successful completion of a placement(s) may be a requirement of the programme and/or for professional recognition of the award including "a licence to practice". Marks may be assigned to placements and may contribute to progression and/or the final degree classification. Placements may also contribute towards credit.
- 6 Placements may vary in length and take place during the normal teaching period, the vacations or both. A placement may be a continuous period e.g. a week or a full year, or extended over a period of time e.g. one day per week for a semester.

Principles

- 7 The following principles apply to all placements undertaken by students registered on a University of Manchester undergraduate or postgraduate taught programme. This guidance is aimed primarily at Schools but other University offices may be involved in organising placements, for example, the Study Abroad Unit.
- 8 Aims and intended learning outcomes must be defined for placements. The mechanisms for demonstrating and assessing the outcomes of placement learning, and any contribution to the overall degree result, must be robust and agreed in advance.
- 9 New programmes with a student placement element must be approved as part of the New Programme Approval (NPP) procedure. Where placements are added to an existing programme, this must be approved using Programme Amendment procedures.
- 10 Placement Providers should be carefully selected and must be able to provide a placement that meets the agreed aims and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.
- 11 The responsibilities of the School or unit within the University that manages the placement (e.g. the home School of the student, the Study Abroad Unit) and the Placement Provider must be made explicit. A placement agreement must be used to set down these responsibilities and other details about the placement
- 12 Schools that send students on placement must have at least one member of staff who acts as a Placement Organiser. This role should normally include ensuring that students are adequately prepared before undertaking a placement, maintaining communication with and support for students throughout the placement, and ensuring that arrangements are in place to re-orientate students on their return to the University.
- 13 The Placement Provider must be able to provide a placement supervisor/mentor and ensure that the student is made aware of local health and safety and other requirements. A site visit to the Placement Provider may be undertaken by a member of University staff prior to the first student undertaking a placement with that Provider if it is deemed necessary. This visit should include a risk assessment (as referred to in the UCEA Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of Students 2009: <http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/HSplace>). If a pre-placement site visit is not carried out, a risk assessment should still be carried out to identify any possible health and safety considerations prior to a student commencing placement.
- 14 Reasonable alternative learning experiences which achieve broadly the same intended learning outcomes should be provided to students with disabilities and/or special educational needs in those cases where the nature of the disability/educational needs preclude such students from undertaking the standard placement, subject to any alternative direction provided by professional/statutory bodies. For programmes which are governed by the requirements of professional/statutory bodies, Schools should check the educational standards set down by the relevant body in relation to placement requirements). Schools should be aware of the Equality Act 2010. A briefing note on the Act is available at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=8209> or Schools can

contact the Disability Support Office (DSO) for further advice – dso@manchester.ac.uk

- 15 Schools should ensure that, if appropriate, any statutory checks are carried out prior to a placement being undertaken (for example, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) or vetting checks for students whose placements involves them interacting with children, young people or vulnerable adults). Students may be responsible for having the checks carried out but Schools should ensure that they are completed before the placement is undertaken.
- 16 Schools must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to deal with queries, concerns or complaints that may arise during the period of the placement (from both students and Placement Providers) and these should be communicated to both the Placement Provider and to students.
- 17 Schools should have plans in place for communication with students during their placement period, including a name and contact details for a member of staff within the School whom students may contact; staff visits to students on placement, if appropriate; and the use of My Manchester or other appropriate tools to aid communication between the School and the student and provide support for teaching and learning. A minimum level of communication should be agreed by the School (see paragraphs 28 and 29).
- 18 Schools should consider the ongoing appropriateness and effectiveness of placements as part of annual monitoring, periodic review and student feedback mechanisms. Mechanisms for inviting feedback from Placement Providers should also be put in place.
- 19 Where undertaking a placement involves additional costs to students over and above the normal fees for the programme this must be made clear to students and prospective students.
- 20 There must always be a contingency plan in place for the possible breakdown of a placement, either by the Placement Provider or the student, including what the potential consequences are and how this may affect students' progression.
- 21 The University has a responsibility towards its students and should be able to show that appropriate steps have been taken to mitigate risk (such as carrying out risk assessments or site visits and checking on insurance arrangements as appropriate). Please see paragraphs 13 and 36 for information about risk assessments and paragraph 34 for further information about insurance.

Procedures for student placements

Responsibilities of the School

- 22 Schools are required to ensure that the learning outcomes are clearly defined in relevant literature (e.g. programme handbooks), are relevant to the programme and achievable within the context of a placement.
- 23 Schools should ensure that students are made aware of the consequences of failure to complete a placement and how this may affect their progression, including details of the possibility of re-sits, re-assessment, compensation of marks, etc.

- 24 It is good practice for students to meet with other students who have previously been on placements. Schools may therefore wish to consider opportunities for students to meet with peers who have previously undertaken a placement.
- 25 Schools should ensure that the Placement Organiser (see paragraph 12, above) has adequate experience, time and support to fulfil his/her responsibilities.
- 26 Schools must ensure that placement providers are carefully chosen and able to provide both the intended learning outcomes and to fulfil their responsibilities as listed in paragraphs 39-43 below. Schools should provide Placement Providers with appropriate and timely information prior to, during and following the students' placement.
- 27 It is important that Schools ensure students are adequately prepared prior to undertaking a placement and that they are sufficiently supported during the period of placement.
- 28 Schools should ensure efficient and appropriate communication is maintained with students during their placement period (see paragraph 17). All students, whether full- or part-time, undertaking placements either in the UK or overseas, should be provided with information regarding the level and amount of guidance and support available to them, how they can access it, who will be providing it, the frequency with which such support may be available and who to contact in the case of an emergency.
- 29 The *minimum* number of formal contacts between the School and a student during the course of a long-term placement (e.g. a semester/year) should be two, with clear communication strategies in place for reporting issues and having general queries dealt with throughout the placement. The first formal contact should take place within the first weeks of the placement and should include a clear process for escalating concerns raised at this stage. The second formal contact should take place at a mid-way point to discuss any assessment that may be required as part of the process and to discuss academic issues pertaining to the students' return to the University. Schools should also ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to facilitate the re-orientation of students upon their return to the University of Manchester, if appropriate.
- 30 Where appropriate, Schools should ensure that assessment procedures (including how the placement fits into the credit rating of the programme) are clear, conform to the overall assessment strategy of the programme and can be quality assured. Details of the credit rating and assessment procedures of the placement should be decided upon during the approval of the programme and clearly set out in the approval documentation, programme specification and handbooks. Schools that have students participating in a credit-bearing academic placement abroad (see paragraph 2) should refer to the University's Framework for Credit Transfer at <http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/map/teachinglearningassessment/teaching/credittransfergradeconversionforstudyabroad>.
- 31 Schools should have appropriate mechanisms in place to check that placements are completed satisfactorily and methods of providing feedback (to and from the Placement Provider and the student) after placements should be made clear. Procedures should be in place for monitoring and reviewing placements to ensure that they remain effective.
- 32 Schools must ensure that any confidentiality requirements are complied with.

Responsibilities of the Placement Organiser (member of School staff)

- 33 Placement Organisers, nominated by the School, should ensure that students are aware of the following:-
- who is responsible for allocating the placement and the process through which placements are organised;
 - where students are responsible for seeking their own placement, their level of responsibility in seeking a placement appropriate to/required by the degree programme for which they are registered;
 - the requirements which must be fulfilled with respect to assessment, recording their learning experience, satisfactory completion of the placement, and how such requirements will contribute to their final degree classification;
 - the consequences of failure to obtain, to undertake or to satisfactorily complete a placement;
 - the appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of complaints being made by them, the provider or by interested third parties;
 - their right to be treated in accordance with applicable legislation;
 - the confidentiality issues of the placement and their obligations (when appropriate);
 - their responsibilities in the context of health and safety and the need to conform to local or cultural requirements;
- 34 Placement Organisers should check with the Placement Provider that they have insurance cover in place to meet any liability the Placement Provider may have to the student in the event of the student being injured or suffering a serious loss as a result of the Placement Provider's negligence (public liability insurance or employers' liability insurance). They should also check that the Placement Provider has insurance in place to meet any claim made against the student whilst acting in the course of their duties under the supervision of the Placement Provider (professional indemnity insurance).
- 35 Placement Organisers should ensure that, where placements take place outside the UK:-
- students are aware that they will be subject to the laws of the host country;
 - students are provided with information on the University's travel insurance policy and an insurance card with emergency contact details, where applicable;
 - students are reminded to consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for current country-specific travel advice (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>) and to register to receive travel advice updates from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKGOVUK/subscriber/new>);
 - students are directed to resources that inform them about the cultural differences they may encounter.
- 36 Placements Organisers should ensure that a risk assessment is completed, as specified in the UCEA Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of Students 2009: <http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/HSPPlace>, so that any risks associated with the placement can be understood and either eliminated, minimised or mitigated against. The risk assessment may be conducted by a member of staff or the student undertaking the placement. Staff and students responsible for undertaking risk assessments should have received appropriate guidance/training.

- 37 Placement Organisers should ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for students with known disabilities and/or special educational needs. For further advice on arrangements for students with disabilities, contact the Disability Support Office (DSO) – dso@manchester.ac.uk
- 38 Placement Organisers should ensure that students are made aware of their responsibilities during the period of placement to:-
- the placement provider;
 - any members of the public with whom they may come into contact in the context of undertaking the placement;
 - the University.
- Please see paragraph 47-48 for Responsibilities of the Student.

Responsibilities of the Placement Provider

- 39 The Placement Provider should ensure that placement supervisors:-
- have suitable personal, experiential and/or academic qualities or qualifications;
 - that they understand how the placement complements the academic experience of the student;
 - are aware of the appropriate complaints procedures;
 - understand their role in any assessment and/or certification process.
- 40 The Placement Provider should ensure that students undertaking a placement are provided with all local information relevant to the students' placement including local health and safety practices.
- 41 It is important that the Placement Provider ensures that reasonable adjustments are made for students with known disabilities and/or special educational needs during the period of the placement.
- 42 If appropriate, Placement Providers should ensure that they have instructed students to sign a confidentiality agreement and undertaken to comply with the terms of it.
- 43 The Placement Provider should maintain communication with the University during the period of the placement on issues relating to the student's performance, in particular if a student is operating below their required performance levels.

Responsibilities of the University

- 44 The University should ensure that quality procedures are in place to check and monitor that all of the above responsibilities are being/will be fulfilled and that such procedures are clearly documented.
- 45 Appropriate support should be available to Placement Organisers to enable them to fulfil their role (for example, time to be able to carry out the necessary arrangements involved in setting up and supporting student placements; and the provision of up to date information relevant to placements.)

- 46 Faculties, Schools, students and Placement Providers should be made aware of the confidentiality issues around placement programmes and confidentiality agreements should be signed, when required by an employer, and complied with.

Responsibilities of the Student

- 47 Students remain University of Manchester students whilst on placement and should conduct themselves accordingly and with due regard to the requirements and regulations of the University, the Placement Provider and the laws and conventions of the country in which the placement is based. Students should ensure that they adhere to the University's Conduct and Discipline of Students (Regulations XVII) at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=6530>. Students should also ensure that they meet the norms and expectations for professional conduct in the particular area of work they are undertaking; for example, students on health-related practice must conduct themselves and practice within an ethical framework and with regard to confidentiality.
- 48 Students should ensure that they retain contact with their School (or the University office responsible for the placement, e.g. the Study Abroad Unit) during their placement, in accordance with agreed arrangements prior to the placement commencing. Any concerns or queries they have during the placement should be directed to the relevant contact person within their School or the relevant University office.

Further Information and Resources

- *Checklists for placement learning*
A set of checklists to accompany these principles and procedures is available as an aid in the process of arranging student placements at:
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=10453>
- *Careers and Employability Division*
The Division provides placement organisers and students with information and support on finding placements, including: placement vacancies; employer events and fairs; advice on effective applications and interviews. The Division delivers placement related talks in Schools and may be contacted to discuss availability. More information is available at:
<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/staff/studentemployability/placements/>
- *Study Abroad Unit*
The Study Abroad Unit provides Schools and students with information and support for overseas placements, including: guidance on selecting and approving partner universities, pre-departure briefings and resources, and country information. Further information is available from:
<http://www.studyabroad.manchester.ac.uk/>
- *University's Insurance Office*
For further information about insurance issues relating to student placements:
<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/insurance/>
- *QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality – Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others:*

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>

- *UCEA Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of Students 2009.*
<http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/HSplace>

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