

**ASET Annual Conference 2006: Proceedings of the 2006  
Placement and Employability Professionals' Conference**

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**Citation:**

FILDES, Keith (2007). ASET Annual Conference 2006: Proceedings of the 2006 Placement and Employability Professionals' Conference. ASET. [Edited Book]

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ASET

*Integrating Work and Learning*



# **ASET Annual Conference 2006**

**Proceedings of the 2006  
Placement & Employability  
Professionals' Conference**

**Cadbury's Manor House, Birmingham  
5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

**ASET CONFERENCE**

13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Cadbury's Manor House, Birmingham  
5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006

# **ASET Annual Conference 2006**

## **Proceedings of the 2006 Placement & Employability Professionals' Conference**

**Editor: Keith Fildes**

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## **ASET Annual Conference 2006**

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## FOREWORD

### *FOREWORD*

It is with great pleasure that ASET presents the proceedings of the Annual Conference, held at the Cadbury Manor House, University of Birmingham, from 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

The Conference coverage reflected ASET's general expansion of interest from sandwich courses alone – though these continue to be at the centre of so much of our work – towards the broader “Integrating Work and Learning”, which is now ASET's by-line.

In response to feedback from last year, there was a slight change of emphasis from large “set-piece” sessions towards smaller, more practical, opportunities to share experience and good practice. Nevertheless, there was keen interest in the plenary sessions from QAA, Eversheds, Geoffrey Copland and the Managing IT Systems Working Group. ASET continues to keep in touch with both external organisations, knowing the level of interest delegates have shown in their work.

And I know that everyone present enjoyed the “live” and lively presentations by two of our student bloggers, Claire Daly and James Taylor, previously seen only via [www.asetonline.org](http://www.asetonline.org).

The AGM provided a welcome opportunity to pay tribute to our outgoing president Dr Edwin Kerr, whose service to the Association has been deeply appreciated by all who have worked with him, and to welcome our new president Dr Geoffrey Copland, Vice Chancellor and Rector of the University of Westminster, Vice President of UUK and Chair of UCEA. We look forward to a productive partnership with him.

On behalf of all who attended, I should like to pay tribute to the Conference Committee, particularly Sarah Flynn the Chair, and Keith Fildes the ASET Administrator who, working largely behind the scenes before and during the Conference, made all this feasible.

Preparations for the 2007 Conference from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> September in Cardiff are well under way; 2007 is ASET's 25th year, and we are planning to make this Jubilee event an even more special experience than usual. I do hope that you will want to keep these dates free and to be with us there; I look forward to seeing you again, and enjoying sharing in our mutual background of experience and expertise, the application of which is at the heart of ASET's mission.

Dr John Wilson  
ASET Chairman

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

### *ASET's Managing IT Systems Working Group*

The Working Group is made up of:

Gordon Crawford, Victoria Devenney, Philip Houston, Ronald Laird, Colin Turner (all University of Ulster), Ann Doris (Queen's University Belfast), Tamsin Pyne (University of Plymouth)

### **ASET – Developing a Generic IT System to Manage Placements**

#### **Terms of Reference**

##### Background

In recent years, the issue of managing placements using IT has been high on the agenda at ASET events, with a number of institutions showcasing their in-house systems for our members. These systems were widely appreciated and it became apparent that there was a greater need to consolidate the knowledge of those individuals producing these systems for the benefit of our members.

##### Scope

This guide will be able to be used to aid the design of in-house IT systems to manage any period, location or type of placement from year-long sandwich placements, to shorter module linked placements, to three month internships overseas, and even with some reference to professional practice placements, like Nursing and Teaching, who need to work alongside national/centralised external electronic systems.

##### Purpose and Desired Outcomes

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide which displays an ideal IT system for placement management, taking into account the QAA and ASET Codes of Practice. This document is meant to act as a reference foundation from which individuals and institutions can either enhance and improve their own existing systems or develop and implement their new systems. It is not intended to be design-restrictive, but simply exhibit the IT possibilities.

##### Target Readership

This document is meant to be useful to university staff specifically involved in the administration and management of placement learning who wish to improve upon or create 'best practice' placement management IT systems.

For the full draft handout of flowcharts and text that were circulated at the session, please see Appendix at rear or separate file on CD-Rom versions.



## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

*Dr Geoffrey Copland, University of Westminster*

It is a great honour and an unexpected pleasure to be invited to be President of ASET. I am very aware that I am stepping into shoes left by Edwin Kerr who has served ASET and the wider world of higher education well over the years. He will indeed be a hard act to follow, but I will do what I can to help the cause of ASET and the integration of work and learning.

I have been asked to present my thoughts on the challenges and opportunities for ASET members and their work. To do so I will summarise some of the broader challenges facing higher education to set the context. These thoughts are informed from over 10 years as a vice-chancellor, and my roles in Universities UK, UCEA, as a trustee of CIHE and through general gossip and media presentation of HE.

We are in the run up to the new academic year when universities and colleges are anxiously counting heads to see if their plans for the first year of the new English tuition fee for full-time undergraduates were correctly pitched and if the worst projections about the overseas student market will come true. Looking forward beyond the immediate we have, in no particular order:

- the Comprehensive Spending Review of public funding which will set the pattern for the following three years
- the review of the £3000 tuition fee cap in 2009
- the opening up of the higher education sector to private and international providers
- Full economic costing of R and T
- RAE 2008 and the debate about the future of research assessment and funding
- yet another change of method of funding HEIF the “third leg” of funding
- the changing nature of employers’ demands for graduates
- government steer for HEFCE to seek greater engagement of employers in the design and delivery of degree courses
- greater emphasis on enterprise and employability including CETLs in various aspects of work integrated learning
- the increased emphasis on Skills and the rise of Sector Skills Councils and Regional Skills Commissions
- Pay and conditions issues – greater flexibility in salary structures through the Framework Agreement, local interpretations of EU Regulations re part-time, casual working and age and disability discrimination legislation, pension issues (longer term)
- And then there will be a general election probably in 2009.

I could sum this up as increased competition, greater demands for universities to meet demands of markets whether that be from students, employers, research communities, businesses and the international community, greater diversity in the sector.

So there is much I could talk about but let me start with student recruitment this year. The attention is focused at present on the impact of new tuition fee arrangements. The press pundits predicted a major drop in full-time student applications and enrolments. When the first UCAS figures came out in January there was a one-day excitement that there had been a drop in applications and thus the sector faced a crisis. On reflection that story went away once longer-term trends were examined. There was a blip last year but the 5-year trend continues upwards. Now we have the exam results, usually only discussed as A Levels, though there are many other exams, including increasingly the International Baccalaureate. This August the media was preoccupied by the Middle East crisis and terrorism. So the normal frenzy about exam results, standards and university admissions was much less evident. We will not know what the position will be for a few weeks yet. The market in tuition fees is nearly non-existent as most universities are setting the maximum £3000. The market is in bursary and student support schemes. The anecdotal picture is very mixed. Did universities that charged less than £3000 gain more students or less? Are students shopping around to find the most generous bursaries? Is there poaching going on or fee reductions or extra scholarship offers at Clearing (The reverse Easy-Jet

syndrome)? Do students take any notice of League Tables and Teaching Quality information and National Student Surveys? The media are rather silent on this which means that either universities are operating highly confidentially (first time ever?) or not much is happening yet if at all.

An interesting and increasing strand in the media this year has been the view that student debt will increase substantially. So there are many stories saying to potential students that unless you have good A Levels, it is not worth going into HE but you should go directly into employment probably in a vocational area. Are young people taking any notice of this? Possibly in the sectors of the community where higher education has not been a tradition. But this begins to highlight the importance of the employability debate in universities.

These issues reflect the larger concerns that I have. Although there has been competition over the years between universities, it has been reasonably minor. In the future is competition going to become more aggressive? There are signs that it will. Not only will we have the current competition but we undoubtedly will see segments of the market opening up to private sector degree awarding institutions often backed by overseas investors who see higher education as a long term steady option. We already have elements of this in London and I expect this increase. This is likely to be in the professional development market in high demand subjects where employers and students have deep pockets.

I could speak on many of these issues but I will try to confine myself to those of more immediate interest to members of ASET. However, there is no doubt that HE is entering a period of change which is likely to be more far-reaching and rapid than the changes of the past few decades. There will be greater discrimination in the higher education market with universities more directly tackling areas of inefficiency and poor quality in order to remain competitive not only against their usual competitors but against new and international competitors. This will affect all of us.

So let me look at issues related to the work of ASET.

There is strong emphasis from many quarters on areas of direct interest to ASET. Students are undoubtedly more driven by not just studying for a degree but by employment that follows and indeed that takes place during their studies. Many still have unrealistic expectations that the possession of a degree alone will open up doors but these are becoming fewer. Employers are becoming more strident about their needs and their criticisms of the current graduates. Government has a very clear view that higher education is important to the economy and are looking to universities to help meet the higher level skills gaps and to contribute to the UK international competitiveness. Work-based and work-integrated learning are much more talked of now than in recent years. A recent conference at which I spoke, following the Minister, Bill Rammell, on work-based learning was a sell-out, not because either I or Bill was speaking, but because throughout the sector now these are identified as key issues. Many universities have realised the importance of the employability agenda but are unsure how to approach it whilst maintaining their traditional approach to degree course provision and teaching. Some have practised work-integrated learning for decades without realising it.

It is interesting to reflect on the changing nature of the discussion on employability and graduate employment. Too often the self appointed pundits (as The Guardian referred to them a few years ago) do not recognise the changes that have occurred in our universities over recent years. It is too easy to take one's own experience and impose that on one's idea of higher education 2006. We now talk about integrating work and learning, of employability, enterprise, work-based learning, credit accumulation, accreditation of experiential learning. Our pundits talk of graduate level jobs and traditional academic "hard" subjects, referring often disparagingly of vocationally oriented subjects as "soft or mickey mouse" degrees, though of course Mickey Mouse is of course a highly successful world brand. And our pundits do not accept assessment other than traditional 3 hour unseen exams as having any value.

The government has made it clear that they see an urgent need for a more highly skilled workforce, including now an emphasis on higher level skills. So the skills agenda is no longer just the preserve of the school and FE sector. Employers have had a patchy record in providing development, sometimes letting the short term be the enemy of the longer term. We are in an intensively competitive global community where the productivity and creativity of our society is being challenged and so we have to move to higher levels of skill.

I would like to spend a few minutes talking about Work Based Learning. WBL is, I suppose, learning that takes place in or through the work place. That is perhaps obvious but who is learning? Where is it being learnt? Who is delivering something to be learnt? What is being learnt, who evaluates it if anyone and who pays, or should pay? Does it gain any form of academic accreditation?

In many ways WBL is not new but it is being presented as such. The Learning from Experience Trust of which I am a trustee, as is Edwin Kerr, certainly would not accept that WBL is new. It has been espousing the importance of this and of good systems for the recognition of learning from the workplace as well as other areas for twenty years. There are many areas which could fall into the WBL description and we need to explore some of the issues they raise.

1. Traditionally some subjects e.g. medicine have a strong element of WBL and I am grateful that they do, as they are using the traditional clinical placements to translate their theoretical underpinning with learning on the job (a phrase that has gone out of fashion). This form of learning is greatly respected, understood and valued.
2. There are the traditional sandwich degrees, offered in thin or thick sandwich modes. They have lost some of their appeal in recent years for several reasons: lack of adequate placements, length of course and cost to student. They are quality assured by the awarding university and overseen by QAA. And it is likely that potential employers will value a properly structured sandwich programme. But they are not so forthcoming in offering sandwich placements and when they do so, they are not always well structured, and there are some academic debates about how these should be evaluated, except as a line in the CV.
3. Now most full time undergraduates undertake some form of part-time paid work to help meet their expenses and a gratifyingly increasing number undertake voluntary work, perhaps stimulated by the Active Community Fund from HEFCE, and perhaps stimulated by recognition of the importance of this for CV building. The student may benefit in some way beyond just the income that they earn, but of course there is the danger of the student spending too much time, often at unsocial hours, just earning cash. To the detriment of their studies. There are debates as to whether these activities are deemed to be of any value in terms of academic credentials. But let us look at this a bit more. The student gains some skills from these experiences though they may not realise it. The traditional complaint from the employer is that the modern graduate lacks any sense of customer care, team working, communication skills and ability to be responsible for their own behaviours. Yet for many students it is through part-time work that they learn these skills, otherwise their jobs will be very short-lived indeed. So this has value beyond the immediate pay. Some HEIs have found ways of assessing these skills and accrediting them. But do the employers who are looking at CVs value any such credit or the experience of bar working?
4. For many years some HEIs including my own of Westminster have provided part-time modes of study for students who are already in employment, at both u/g and p/g levels. Traditionally these students either study in their own time or, if they are lucky, will get some form of time allowance from the employer. Even more lucky is the student who gets some fee payment from the employer. The classroom based learning will usually take at the HEI but with increasing emphases on project work and on forms of distance delivery, more learning may be taking place in the employer's premises, officially or unofficially, followed by some intensive university based activities.
5. More recently of course in this decade we have Foundation Degrees, two year full-time or longer part-time with a clearly defined requirement for significant employer engagement. There are different models for these and the questions of quality control and accreditation have come to the fore with a significant number of such degrees being given limited confidence by QAA, presumably because of issues arising from assessment of delivery and standards in non-traditional ways. The intention is that both employer and student benefit from FDs but it is still too early to see the long term benefit of Foundation Degrees to both employer and student.
6. Another big area of WBL activity arises through the provision of directly targeted specialist updating and up-skilling, usually through highly specific short courses. They may be

necessary for individuals for retention of professional body recognition. They may be delivered in the work place or in university premises. These are unlikely to be credit rated but there is an increasing trend in this direction. They may be paid for by the employer or the individual. HEIs have only about 5% of this big market. Why is this? Are we too expensive, too rigid in our requirements, inflexible, too slow to respond or just not marketing our offerings effectively?

7. There are increasing numbers of properly structured degrees giving credit for learning from the workplace leading to a validated degree, FT or PT.

So now we are seeing a mixture of types and place of delivery, and who pays, and perhaps who delivers the teaching to support some of the learning. But who then is responsible for the quality of teaching and support and who accredits this? Our Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for Professional Learning in the Workplace is looking at successful models of preparing the employer to play a major role in the delivery of learning and others are grappling with the same issues.

The question we need to address is whether we have the right infrastructure, policies and attitudes to respond to the challenges. Government policy as ever is subject to rapid change and seeks rapid responses to a raft of policy objectives which leave many of the providers confused as to what to prioritise.

In addition to ASET, there is a group of new organisations that have sprung up apparently to help to deliver this agenda. We have established universities and FE colleges, though not all HEIs see the skills agenda and WBL to be part of their mission or tradition. There is a range of private providers some of long standing, some seeing a market in which to make a quick profit. We have Sector Skills Councils, Sector Skills Development Agency, Regional Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies, Train to Gain, Foundation Degree Forward, ASET, UVAC, EDGE, Higher Education Academy, Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in WBL established by HEFCE. I am sure there are more in this alphabet soup.

I want to refer to just a few of these. First take Higher Education Institutions. There is no requirement for them to engage in the skills agenda at all, but some do with vigour and others much less so. There are many factors that can induce change in HEIs.

Key drivers include:

- Reputation, local, national and worldwide
- Attractiveness to chosen markets
- Ability to recruit and retain well motivated students and staff
- Research and Knowledge transfer success
- Employability of graduates
- League table positions and Student satisfaction ratings
- And the greatest of these, MONEY!

We hear of complaints from employers, though they are even more varied than HEIs. Employers want highly educated and skilled, well motivated and adaptable employees. There are continual complaints, often supported by little hard evidence, that modern graduates are lacking in these qualities. HEIs are aware of this and seek to offer in a variety of ways some of the “employability skills” in their offerings. Some of this is grounded in various forms of WBL but is this what employers really seek? Traditional recruitment patterns suggests that the major employers pay less attention to such factors than to A Level points score and university attended. **From where I sit, I gain the impression that new approaches to WBL are seen as something for the less well regarded universities to do for the less able students to go into less favoured jobs.** Such attitudes lead to a polarisation of attitudes to WBL and similar initiatives and to the universities that deliver these. There are of course other, less traditional employers, often smaller and newer organisations that really do value the skills and attitudes from WBL. We encounter other perceptual barriers to innovation. Graduate employment is no longer seen as a sufficient discriminator of employment but we find leagues tables and performance measures now differentiating between “graduate” and “non-graduate” jobs, largely to the detriment of those universities and colleges who are responding to the skills agenda in innovative ways. That of course leads us into the other old debate of the role of universities, but this is not the occasion for this.

Now we have the 25 Sector Skills Councils and the Sector Skills Development Agency. These have been set up explicitly to be employer led bodies to address the skills needs of specific sectors of employment. Higher education is a key constituency for these organisations and yet most of the SSCs have no higher education involvement on their boards. I believe that this is a fundamental flaw in their structures. Many of us in HE want to help to develop a strong and responsive element of our work to help to address the skills needs of the future. It is deeply frustrating to us to be excluded from much of the debate and then have policies and practices imposed on us that do not fit with our vision of helping to create graduates fit, not just for the skills of last week or even next week but for the future. A key aspect of higher education is research and the translation of that into knowledge to help business and society to move ahead and to be internationally competitive. We do think seriously about these matters, yet can find our programmes being assessed and kite-marked by organisations that lack input at the strategic level. Even more irritating is for us to be subject also to the requirements of chartered professional bodies that have different or conflicting requirements for recognition and then we have the Quality Assurance Agency that whilst it does have strong HE input, appears to have difficulty in dealing with unconventional approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Then add another complexity in that the English Regional Development Agencies, with their Regional Skills Partnerships may try to drive yet a different set of priorities to meet their regional needs that do not necessarily connect with those being driven by SSCs.

All HEIs are well aware of the needs of Europe and that the UK, or England is not any longer an island. We have many continental EU students as well as international students. These are vitally important for ensuring that we breakdown the insularity of our home students in their attitudes and beliefs. The curricula we develop need to embrace this diversity for the long term benefit of our graduates and the UK. This may not be compatible with the short term objectives of SSCs and Regional Skills partnerships.

Universities UK has recognised the emerging skills agenda and regional variants through the establishment of a Skills Task Force which is just setting out its work plan. This should help us to draw together many of the strands arising from the new high level skills agenda and the challenges set by new approaches to Work-Based Learning and its acceptance by SSCs, employers, professional and quality assurance bodies.

There is much to do. I have strayed a bit beyond just talking about integration of work and learning to put it into the broader perspective of the pressures on HEIs in meeting the more strongly defined higher level skills agenda, of which I am sure that the issues that are discussed in this conference are key activities.

There are several issues that need to be sorted out to make this successful.

A properly co-ordinated academic credit transfer system – necessary for work-based learning to be transferable. It is regrettable that this has not progressed in recent years. The InCCA project funded by DfEE (dates it) set out the necessary steps but little has happened. Let us hope the Burgess Report is more successful.

Funding arrangements need to be reviewed for institutions to ensure that this work is properly funded, if it is seen as so important and to break out of the implicit assumption that full-time HEI based education is the gold standard and anything else is to fit around the edges.

Quality assurance, accreditation and recognition arrangements need to be brought together to support WBL, not act against it as something unusual.

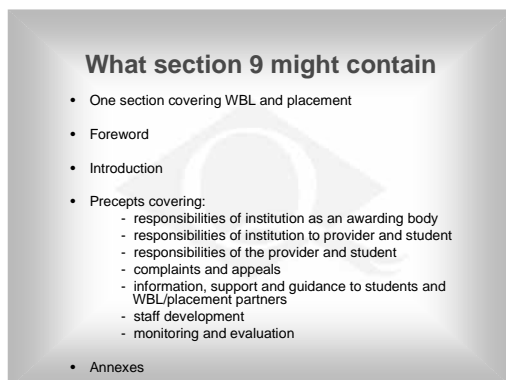
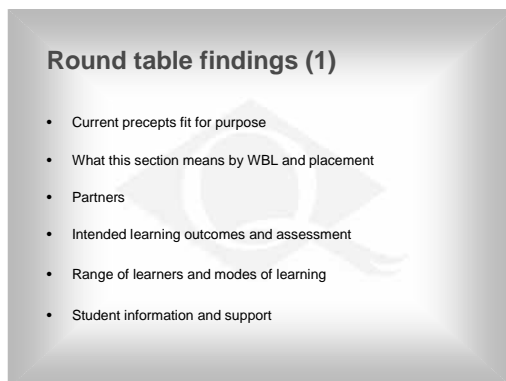
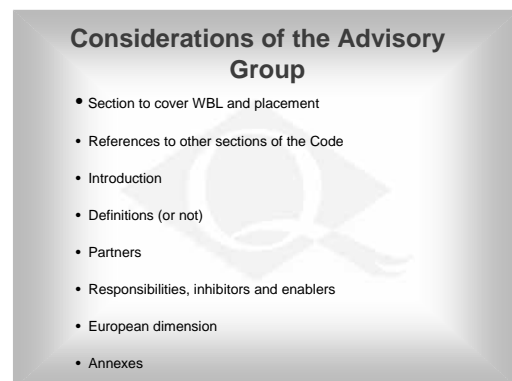
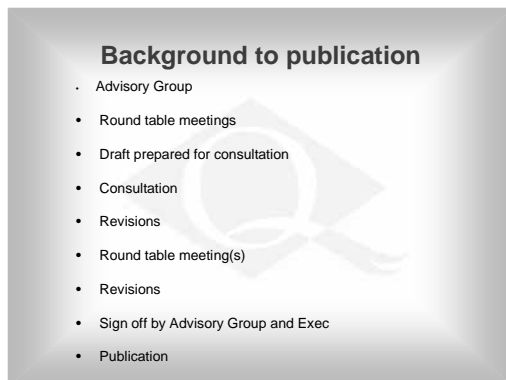
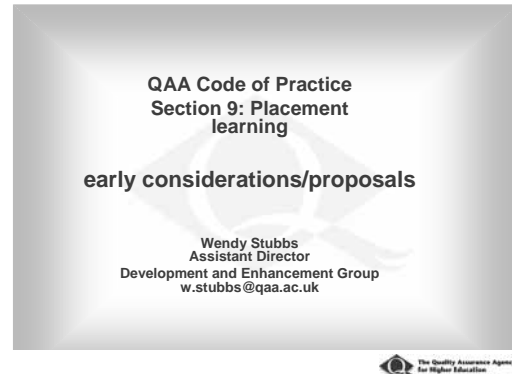
The various bodies, HEFCE, SSCs, SSDA, Regional Skills Councils, professional bodies, QAA, FDF and anyone else who wants to be involved need to recognise the importance of HEI in this work and to avoid setting conflicting or contradictory approaches.

Employers need to give more than token recognition to the value of WBL in their recruitment practices.

Universities need to undergo something of a culture change to value properly the importance of WBL and related activities, not view it as something for the minority to be developed as a minority interest of staff.

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

*Wendy Stubbs, QAA*



## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

*Darren Scott, University of Leeds and QAA Review Working Group*

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

QAA Code of Practice Section 9  
- Institutional Perspective

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

### Climate Changed

- Global economy/Flat world
- Change is the norm
- Growth of work-based learning
- Birth of Foundation Degrees
- Fee paying students
- University as 'big business'
- End of 'sandwich' dominance/hegemony?

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

### Challenges

- Real Market in Higher Education
- Increasingly litigious society
- Students as investors
- Graduate numbers
- Need for adaptable workforce
- Truly international universities
- Focus on enterprise skills / entrepreneurship
- Need for flexible proposition
- Increased competition from within

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

### Opportunities

- Increased demand for quality work experience
- Reinforces need for rigour and quality
- ROI
- Need to acquire USP's/self-branding
- Best proven through supported work experience
- Strong emphasis on employability
- Demonstrated and evidenced through placement
- Innovation in practice essential
- Importance of marketing

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

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### What the Code is NOT

- Stand alone
- To be used in isolation
- Prescriptive
- Revolutionary
- The answer to all your problems

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

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### The Code IS...

- A chapter in a book
- A framework which institutions must demonstrate they are effectively addressing
- At local level, a reminder of what we know should already be in place
- A fantastic opportunity

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

### How to Use Within the Institution

- Top down (all-encompassing Code of Practice)
- Bottom up (local excellence)

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre

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### Conclusion

- The Code of Practice revision will place work placements in the spotlight nationally
- Interesting times
- Sectoral challenges (H&S, Internationalisation, lobbying)
- Fantastic opportunity !!!



## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

### *QAA – Discussion Groups*

#### **1) What their main concerns from the session were?**

a)

Don't have much idea what draft might look like.

Document is getting bigger with more appendixes, yet, is it read already?/pull on lecturers' time.

Explanatory text – quite dense.

QAA's role to ensure standards. Will explanatory text be too prescriptive?

Principal bullet points, clearer and less prescriptive. Real examples can be in appendix.

The wider it gets the more it impinges on other parts of the code.

b)

No concerns.

c)

The group were encouraged by the discussion and had only minimal concerns.

Timescale – is the timescale for development and consultation realistic and will the document be available by early 2007?

Do not get too preoccupied with the 'title' at the detriment of content. Work-based learning is a recognised phrase and although may have a range of interpretations, is still very useful.

d)

Difficulty of giving feedback when draft is too vague.

Are there other ways of raising profile of area apart from QAA, ASET etc?

Difficulty making contact with others in your institution – QAA could bring them together e.g. compulsory training.

Conflict of interest between work-based learning and 'traditional' work placements. Many institutions have more experience in the latter.

e)

Worry about a possible contract between uni/employer/student. Very restricting.

Concern over decline in take up of placements. Are we spoon-feeding students too much?

Concern over league tables putting pressure on placement offices.

f)

Definitely should be inclusive to providers within institutions – internal/external.

Do placement providers get referred to as employers (placement providers as opposed to employers)?

What is a placement? – the extent of what it could cover.

Code of practice needs to be read along with the H&S code of practice.

Terminology and definition.

g)

Need to be diverse in definition/concepts.

Avoid precluding any placements.

Conduct in assessment to be in-line with the code, not beyond it.

Cross-referencing among various codes (QAA, ASET/NCWE etc.).

Need for definitions or models, for example so as to facilitate communication/understanding – finding implications.

European and international, as latter is significant.

Include insurance with health and safety as an item.

#### **2) The positives of what they heard**

a)

Opening out to a wider range of people (though danger of trying to be all things to all people).

Something we can all use (but will be tested against).

b)

Not splitting WBL and work placements.

c)

We were encouraged by the wide interpretation that the presentation gave in the definition of WBL. Good that it was not 'prescriptive' and will allow for expanded opportunities, beyond traditional sandwich approaches.

Acknowledges variety of structures in WBL opportunities (including self employment).

Good that it highlights European and international opportunities.

d)

Procedures could be changed for the better because of pressure from QAA.

Could be useful reminder to institutions...will put WBL at the top of the agenda/raise the profile of the area.

Bringing together people with broader interests in 'employability' (not just placements).

e)

Session from Darren Scott very positive. Excellent to turn negatives into positives.

Trying to see things with 'fresh' eyes.

Positive to hear that we are consulted with the documents.

Felt idea of partnership to be important.

f)

European and international dimensions.

Debating terminology – acknowledge that it is so broad.

Seem to be approaching processing/into consultation.

g)

Beyond 3 year sandwich towards part-time, APEL (Accreditation Of Prior Experiential Learning).

Clarity on code/reform.

Inclusiveness.

No new precepts.

### **3) Questions that the session has provoked/not answered**

a)

Why is WBL being included? Understand what makes it different. Why do you need special precepts e.g. should placement assessment be covered in general assessment section?

Would like it to be addressed appropriately e.g. this section is for placement practitioners.

Employer partnerships may be difficult to establish.

Would like it short, precise and in plain English.

Can code stifle innovation?

By not fitting in.

No introductions and forewords – get in with it.

b)

Not told us what is going to change.

No need to have intended LOs (Liaison officers) for WBL.

c)

We thought that the session presentations were very good and highlighted process, need and activities. We would like these consultations to include the flexible interpretation and recognition of work related and experiential learning in relation to WBL. This should include 'self employment' activities in addition to 'employed'.

d)

Could this be used to put pressure on institutions in a negative way? e.g. some services overstretched and underfunded.

Could QAA insist that every institution has a senior management committee/working group for work-based learning/employability.

Need examples of good practice to be included in the report appendixes.

Need for procedures to be integrated into the PDP process.

e)

Talked about title – need ‘placement’ in title.

Felt that work-based learning is the usual, recognised term. Could also be work-based practice.

Query over how the document will deal with placements abroad.

f)

N/A

g)

Assessment of placements – guidance on approach.

#### **4) Anything else relevant to this session?**

a)

Is it worthwhile?

Yes, if a useful set of guidelines.

Are visits to students mentioned in the code?

b)

If ASET website had an area where we could share best practice.

Revisions need to take account of the fact that some placements can be 40 hours as opposed to whole year. Differences in what is expected of student/provider/institution.

Know more about partners and what’s required of them. Quality of mentoring in the workplace.

More guidance if things go wrong.

Clearer guidelines if placement is not advertised.

Agreed outcomes between uni and providers.

More specific, if not prescriptive guidance for the employer e.g. outline duties and outline what they will do over the placement.

c)

All comments included above.

d)

All comments included above.

e)

Would be good to have stats on students returning to placement company. Excellent marketing tool.

Could be under TQI (Teaching Quality Information).

Discuss that some info is organised into academic/admin sections.

f)

Underlying explanation as opposed to bullet points.

Recognition that it isn’t standalone.

Cross reference to other sector documents.

g)

Collaborative provision (HE/FE) good to hear mentioned.

Providers, students and institutions responsibilities.

About duty of care and meaning of joint and several liabilities.

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

*James Thompson, Eversheds LLP*

ASET Conference 2006  
Crisis Management and Placements – Are  
you prepared for the worst?

James Thompson, Eversheds LLP  
jamesthompson@eversheds.com  
6 September 2006

### Introduction

*Why is Crisis Management Important?*

- Managing risk of criminal prosecution
  - Health and Safety
  - Environmental
  - Manslaughter
- Prevention of further risk or harm
- Media/Public Relations
- Managing important relationships
  - Employees
  - Students
  - Investigators
  - Insurers

### What is Crisis Management?

- Immediate, co-ordinated response to a major incident
- First 72 hours are crucial
- Establishing Management team to initiate internal investigation and communicate effectively with students, employees, investigators and media
- Establishing Technical team (if applicable) to investigate cause of incident

### The First 72 Hours

- No admission of liability
- Dealing with the Authorities and establishing a relationship
- Create Single point of contact with the Authorities
- Crisis Management team
- Involve legal support
- Dealing with initial media attention

### Do we need to worry?

- HSE/Police investigations/jurisdiction
- HSE – will investigate preparations for placements
- Private prosecutions

### Who has responsibility?

- Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990
- Section 3 Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Manslaughter
- Contract law
- Common law duties

### Section 3 Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

"It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety"

## Manslaughter

### The Current Law

- Criminal liability for death
- Murder and manslaughter
- Involuntary manslaughter
  - Death results from an unlawful act which any reasonable person would recognise as likely to expose another to the risk of injury; and
  - Death is caused by reckless or grossly negligent act or omission.
- Corporate Manslaughter
  - Need to identify a “directing mind”

### Choosing Who Is Responsible

- Within a large organisation it's a difficult choice
- Passing the Buck on who is to blame
- Is it possible to identify an individual responsible or is the problem a systems failure?

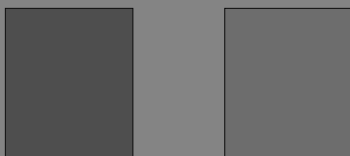
### A Proposed Change in the Law

- The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill has been formally introduced in the House of Commons.
- It will create a new offence of Corporate Manslaughter.
- The offence will apply to organisations including Public Bodies and will introduce unlimited fines if it is found that an organisation is liable for any death due to a gross breach of duty of care by that organisation.

- An organisation will be guilty of the offence if the way in which the organisation's activities are managed or organised by senior management :
  - Causes a person's death.
  - Amounts to a gross breach of a relevant duty of care owed by the company.
- Gross breach is a failure falling below what reasonably could have been expected.

- Senior Managers:
  - Make decisions about how the whole or a substantial part of an organisation's activities are managed or organised.
  - Actual managing and organising of the whole or a substantial part of an organisation's activities.

### *Scenarios - focusing on placements*



### Scenario A (1)

You receive a telephone call from John, who is the Head of Social Sciences at the Institution. John advises that a female student nurse died last night whilst undertaking work experience on the mental health ward of the local hospital.

The student was meant to be working on the childrens ward but had been transferred to the mental health ward yesterday due to staff shortages. It seems that she had been left unsupervised with a patient when he attacked her.

John advises that the Police and Health and Safety Executive have been in contact with John and they wish to interview University staff and other student nurses. What do you say?

You advise him to tell the Police/HSE that the murder occurred off the Institution's premises and therefore there will be very little that anybody could tell them.

You advise him that this must be dealt with under the Institutions major incident policy and that you will meet him immediately.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Scenario A (2)

You advise John that it is fine for the Police/HSE to interview the Institution's staff and students. The Institution does not need to worry as the incident occurred off the Institution's premises and the hospital was responsible for the student. You decide that it is not necessary to instruct lawyers or inform the institution's insurers.

You have spoken with the Institution's lawyers and they are making their way to the site. The Police/HSE have called and advised that they are on their way. What steps do you propose to take?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You advise the HSE/Police that the request is unreasonable because many of the students and staff are distressed as they knew the deceased well. You advise the HSE that nobody from the Institution is prepared to speak with the HSE/Police at this point.

You ask the witnesses if they are willing to assist the Police/HSE and if they would like to be accompanied in an interview by the Institution's lawyers.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Scenario A (3)

You ask the witnesses if they are willing to assist the Police/HSE and ask if they would like to be accompanied in the interview by a HR or Trade Union representative.

John has his interview with the Police/HSE. When John leaves the interview, he says that the Police/HSE were asking him about how the Institution made sure that students who were attending other establishments on placement were safe. He said the Police/HSE were asking him what documentation the Institution had in respect of ensuring the hospital was a safe place to work.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Upon reviewing the deceased's file, it soon becomes clear that the Institution had not taken any steps to confirm that the placement would be suitable for this student. What should you do?

Nothing. It was not the Institution's responsibility to ensure that the hospital had safe procedures in place. The Institution ensures that its own premises are safe and that is sufficient.

Scenario A (4)

You tell John that the Institution needs to produce an employee who can say that he/she did contact/visit the hospital to discuss how safe it would be for students to attend there. You and John discuss who would be suitable to do this.

Once the HSE/Police have spoken to the Institution's staff and students, they request all documents that exist in respect of the deceased's work placement. What should you do?

Advise the HSE/Police that these are the property of the Institution and that you will not allow them to take away the documentary evidence.

You hand all of the paperwork immediately to the Police/HSE.

Scenario A (5)

You discuss the situation with your lawyers. Photocopies of all documents are to be taken before they are handed over to the Police/HSE. The original documents can then be given to the HSE/Police, and not those documents relating to legal advice.

Once the Police/HSE have spoken to who they wish to speak to and have gathered all the evidence, you decide to conduct a full internal investigation as you have been concerned about the comments that the Police/HSE have been making.

In particular, comments have been made in respect of the Institution not fully checking whether or not the hospital would ensure that students were to be only placed on wards in which they had received the appropriate training.

Your insurers advise you not to investigate and prepare a report as the Police/HSE may take this report from you and use it against you in any civil or criminal proceedings that may arise. Is this correct?

Your lawyers advise you that you can investigate and prepare a report. However, they will instruct you to prepare the report for their purposes so that the report does not have to be given to the Police/HSE. This is because the report will be "privileged". Is this correct?

#### Scenario A (6)

You receive a call from John who advises that he is extremely worried that he will be prosecuted for corporate manslaughter. What do you advise him?

He could be prosecuted for manslaughter.

He could be prosecuted for health and safety offences.

The Institution could be prosecuted for manslaughter.

The Institution could be prosecuted for Health and Safety offences.

#### Scenario B

You receive a call from Lee, who is the Head of the Business School. Lee advises that one of his students who is completing a Tourism Management course at the Institution, has died in an accident on the French Alps. The student was completing the third year of his four year degree and was undertaking a placement at a skiing school on the French Alps.



It appears that the student had not been adequately trained in respect of being a ski instructor. Two British tourists had also died in the accident.

John advises that the Health and Safety Inspectorate of France (National Research and Safety Institute for the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Diseases) would like to speak to the Institution. What do you advise John?

As the accident did not occur on the Institution's Premises, the Institution can have no liability for the student's death.

As the incident occurred whilst the student was an "employee" of the French skiing company, the Institution will not have any liability in respect of the death of the student.

As the accident occurred when the student was on foreign soil, the University can have no liability in respect of the death of the student.

As the accident occurred in France, the relevant laws will be the French legislation and not UK legislation.

As the relevant legislation is French legislation, the Health and Safety Executive in Great Britain will have no powers to prosecute the Institution in respect of the student's death.

### Conclusions

- Educational Institutions need to have Crisis Management Plans in place and be prepared for the worst.
- Investment in establishing and reviewing risk assessment procedures is worthwhile.
- The consequences can be serious for the Institution and Individuals.
- Remember, the first 72 hours are crucial!
- Remember, just because the student is on a placement, the Institution is not relieved of its duties!



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## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

### *Eversheds LLP – Health and Safety Question and Answer Session*

In the following answers, where we refer to an Organiser we mean either the university, college or educational establishment as the case may be, who are also deemed to be the Employer under the Health and safety at Work etc Act 1974.

1. ***If a student is responsible for choosing/arranging their placement/employer, does this discharge the university's liability? – Andrew Roberts, Cardiff University***

Organisers of placements have the same duties towards students who find their own placement as they do to students who they directly place, and so the Organiser remains liable during the placement and so should carry out the same strict precautionary measures to ensure they comply with their legal liabilities.

2. ***Should we provide out-of-hours university contact details for students and employers for emergencies (especially for bank holidays, Christmas and New Year)?***

It is imperative that an Organiser of placements, particularly abroad, ensures students know who to contact if they have concerns about their health and safety during a placement or in the case of an emergency. This contact could be the Organiser (in the case of a university arranging the placement) or if different the education establishment at which the student is based. It follows therefore that out of hours contacts should be established including bank holidays.

3. ***Regarding overseas placements, a known problem area, e.g. China, has an appalling Health and Safety record in local companies and would not be used. But what about Chinese students who want to go home for placement years? – Carrie de Silva, Harper Adams University College.***

As point 1 states above, If students arrange their own placements then Organisers still have the same duties towards them. However, students have legal responsibilities for their own safety (Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974) and if they chose to go to work in a country that you categorically advise against, then it could be argued that they do so at their own risk.

4. ***What steps would you consider to be reasonably practicable when arranging student placements? Most of my students arrange their own placements and some do work in several different organisations. What steps are reasonably practicable in this case? – Ruth Plume, Middlesex University.***

We have set out some pointers to assist below, although this question does really demand a far lengthier answer and it would depend on a case by case basis what steps would be reasonably practicable for each company a student is placed with. The Organiser needs to be reasonably satisfied that placement providers have:

- **systems** in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare, so far as is reasonably practicable, of the student while under their control;
- **competence** to manage health and safety in relation to the placement;
- **supervision** of work experience by competent people.

In determining what systems should be in place, an Organiser must assess the proposed placement provider and ensure there is a safety policy and sufficient risk assessments in place (governed by The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992). Safety policies must be in writing if there are more than 5 members of staff employed by the placement provider. Results of any risk assessments carried out by an Organiser in collaboration with placement providers should be carried out before

commencement of a placement, and the students and their parents/guardians should be informed of the results of such an assessment. This must all occur before the placement starts.

If the placement provider is a large organisation (more than 250 employees), you may be able to check their health and safety performance rating through the HSE's development of CHaSPI, a corporate health and safety performance index.

It would also be prudent for site visits to take place which are accompanied by the placement provider. If, as you say, some students work at various organisations, this may not be possible, but a typical sample of sites should be visited. We appreciate that this may place a significant burden on teaching institutions, and it could be argued that any visit would focus on academic issues, with the tutor quite possibly not having sufficient expertise to be able to comment on health and safety issues. It is often a difficult line between encouraging best practice and bare legal compliance, and individual cases require a much more detailed consideration than can be given here.

Arrangements for a placement should be in writing to clarify and agree respective roles, reduce the potential for misunderstandings, particularly about health and safety responsibilities and identify the supervisor and specify the arrangements for supervision.

Once placements have been agreed they should be continually reviewed although it is not necessary for a placement provider to be reviewed each time a new student is placed with them.

The above is not an exhaustive list of the steps that should be taken in determining the suitability of a placement provider but does give some indication as to the lengths it is deemed 'reasonably practicable' for the Organiser to go to to ensure the health and safety of the students they place. If you have any more specific queries about any of these points, we will be happy to provide further information.

5. ***A student was raped in a French hall of residence. Was the UK university liable?***

This is a question loaded with ambiguity and it would be impossible to give a yes or no answer. It would depend on so many different factors and circumstances i.e. were the halls of residence secure and broken into or were they unlocked and therefore a risk; who was the assailant - was it a fellow student, a member of the public, an employer or can they even be identified? Only a police investigation could determine the circumstances and only then could any question of liability on the university be considered.

6. ***If a student were subjected to, say, harassment on placement, e.g. racial or sexual, how could the university be liable if it had 'vetted' the organisation? – Margaret Walsh, University of Wolverhampton.***

This is linked to point 4 above. If it can be shown that the Organiser had taken all reasonable precautions in assessing the placement provider then it would be difficult to hold the Organiser liable for any harassment taking place during the work placement. However, if reasonable precautions had not been taken, i.e. if harassment against staff had been previously reported to the placement provider and records made but the Organiser had failed to reveal this in any assessment they carried out, they would more than likely still be liable.

7. ***Re. students in full-time employment who come to college on part-time courses. We require them to demonstrate learning has taken place at their workplace. Do we have the same duties towards these students at their place of work? – Mike Irwin, Suffolk College.***

We believe that the direct employer of the student in full time employment would have the duties towards the student in this case as they would have to hold the employers liability insurance. The education establishment would have normal duties and obligations for the student's health and safety whilst attending lessons on campus, but not whilst they are at their full time place of work.

8. ***Do we, as an institution, require a European Health and Safety document (for employers) and is there a template we can access?***

From the research we have carried out on this subject there does not appear to be a requirement that a European Health and Safety document be in place between the education establishment as Organiser and an employer/placement provider. HSE merely state the following that an Organiser should be aware of:-

- Students will be subject to the health and safety regulations of the country in question; It is therefore important to find out in advance what rules apply in that country. A good website is [www.osha.europa.eu/OSHA](http://www.osha.europa.eu/OSHA) to discover more about the law and health and safety requirements in different countries
- There may be differences in insurance requirements, see question 10 and its answer below.
- There is, of course, the potential for language difficulties.
- An assessment of risks involved in travel including health and vaccination requirements should be carried out.
- Contacts and numbers should be provided in the event of the students having problems or worries, and who to contact in an emergency.
- The additional preparation required, so students know what to expect and what is required of them.

9. ***I am concerned about pre-placement/pre-accommodation checks and at what level a member of staff should be trained to undertake this responsibility. – Donna Sheringham, Writtle College.***

There are no hard and fast rules about who should be given the responsibility of ensuring the pre-placement checks are carried out, but it is clear that it is an important job and sufficient training should be given to whoever does carry out the role. Someone at a higher level in the educational establishment will not necessarily be the best person for the job if they are not trained properly and they may not have the time to dedicate what they need too to the role. A team dedicated to the task would be ideal.

10. ***How should we manage sending students on overseas placement when we know the employer does not provide Employers' Liability insurance? The placement year is compulsory and must be spent outside the UK in a country where the students' studied language is spoken. Most of the students I work with go on placement in Europe, but sometimes further a field - Russia, South America etc. Employment law seems to vary from country to country and some employers are unable to insure students against accidents in the workplace. These placements are generally low-risk office based placements and the lack of insurance is made very clear to the students prior to accepting the placement. The final decision whether or not to take the placement is left to the student. – Emma Searle, University of Bath.***

As you will be aware employers in the UK are required to take out Employers' Liability Insurance for their employees working in the UK (The Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance Act 1969). This is not the case for those employees who are sent to work abroad including students on placements. However, you should check whether the law in the country to which you are placing a student requires that you take insurance to cover them, or requires any further measures to be taken out to protect them. This may well be the case if, under the law of that country, employers are not required to insure their workers. Students should also be advised of their own obligation to take care of themselves and make sure they have sufficient travel and/or medical insurance in place to work abroad. Once again, the risk assessment mentioned in point 4 above may be relevant here. An Organiser will need to show they have taken all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the students are placed with appropriate providers.



# Improving Student Support in Professional Placement Learning: Lessons from the South West Peninsula Pilot of a New National Process

Mirren Baglin and Graham Williamson  
University of Plymouth

transforming learners, and ultimately health and social care contexts to the benefit of service users




## Improving Student Support in Professional Placement Learning: Lessons from the South West Peninsula Pilot of a New National Process

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1. Background, principles and process
2. Pilot findings on student support
3. Post-pilot activity



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## OQME: Ongoing Quality Monitoring and Enhancement



- Being developed through *Skills for Health* on behalf of DH and is part of CEPPL activity
- This process is set to replace all previous monitoring and regulatory activity (e.g. educational audit and major review, from Sept 2007)



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## Main Principles



- New national process
- Multi-professional; Health Professions Council (HPC) & Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
- Minimise burden on practice placement and education providers, consistent with ensuring quality
- Emphasis on **quality enhancement** as much as quality assurance
- **Parity of practice-based learning with academic education**



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## Process



1. Self-evaluation by HEI and practice placement providers using a template with separate & shared standards (organisational and unit level)
2. A web-based platform (FHSW now a national demonstration site for IT solution with Eduserv)



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## Process contd

- 3 Use existing evidence sources and QA processes wherever possible
- 4 Continuous but formally monitored annually *unless immediate action is required*
- 5 A system for exception reporting
- 6 Clear action plans (and remedies for shortcomings if identified)



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## OQME requirements

- Diversity, values and safety
- Improving and maintaining quality
- Resources and governance
- Teaching and learning
- Student/learner selection, progression and achievement
- **Student and learner support**
- Assessment

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## Pilot sites

- 10 health care placement areas in the South West Peninsula piloted OQME (spring/summer 2005) & 2 HEIs
- NHS & independent sector, acute and community

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## Pilot Process

- Practice areas and HEIs **self evaluated** programmes and practice provision against OQME requirements
- Focus was on **exception reporting** – good practice/problems, risk assessments
- This resulted in sample action plans, collated by SHA

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## What will it look like?

**REQUIREMENT 6  
STUDENT/LEARNER SUPPORT**  
Partners can demonstrate that the learning experience meets the needs of the student/learner in all settings.  
**Criteria Measure:** **SHARED**

	Partners develop and implement strategies to	Fully Evidenced	Partially Evidenced	No Evidence	Location of Evidence	Comments/ Good Practice
S 1	Ensure that appropriate student/learner information is shared to provide a safe and effective learning experience at all times. (Details to be agreed by the commissioner but could include information on performance or specific learning needs, etc).					

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## Suggested Evidence to meet Criteria Measures (Alternative evidence may be agreed locally to reflect local priorities)

- Institutional and faculty reports demonstrating achievement of QAA Code of Practice
- Student/learner and staff handbooks, evaluations, assessment documentation
- Specifications & records for practice supervisor/mentor update programmes
- Practice learning reports
- Minutes of programme management meetings
- Department/Faculty evidence submitted in support of QAA Institutional Audit

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## Criteria Measures: ACADEMIC EDUCATION PROVIDER

	The Academic Provider has processes in place to:	Fully Evidenced	Partially Evidenced	No Evidence	Location of Evidence	Comments/ Good Practice
A 1	Enable students/learners to have access to the facilities and resources available to the wider student/learner body.					
A 2	Implement appropriate arrangements to prepare and update practice supervisors/mentors					
A 3	Provide agreed academic education support in the practice learning environment.					
A 4	Ensure that students/learners manage their own learning experience through effective academic support and have attained appropriate skills prior to their practice learning experience.					

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## Criteria Measures: PRACTICE EDUCATION PROVIDER

	Practice providers put in place strategies	Fully Evidenced	Partially Evidenced	No Evidence	Location of Evidence	Comments/ Good Practice
P 1	To provide students/learners with a named practice supervisor/mentor who meets Regulatory Body requirements.					
P 2	To provide students/learners with supervision and assessment in line with best practice to include: Agreement of a learning contract •Agreed timely schedule of appointments to review progress and achievement •Written constructive feedback					

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## Quotes on student support

Post Pilot Questionnaire: SWPHA Report, 2005)

- *Delighted to see how much good practice there was and for us to be able to congratulate ourselves on all the positive work we are achieving with student support*
- *This process is firmly rooted in what we are doing and need to do to improve/enhance placement quality and opportunities*

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### Taking part in the pilot has enabled (Post Pilot Questionnaire: SWPHA Report, 2005)

- *Quality assurance for students in the work placement*
- *Review of current information given to students*
- *A database to record and evaluate the quality of student placement education and ensure positive development*
- *Stimulate improved student support in our areas*
- *Formation of action plans to improve our placements*

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### Student support self-report example (Post Pilot Questionnaire: SWPHA Report, 2005)

Student Support

We provide students with scheduled appointments with their practice placement supervisors at regular intervals to discuss their progress towards meeting their learning contract.

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### Telephone interview findings

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### Post-pilot activity

- The UoP FHSW PQDD is now a national demo. site for developing a web platform for OQME.
- A further pilot to evaluate that platform will be in Sept 2006.
- Other partners in the project include
  - SWSHA (SW Strategic Health Authority) and other regional HEIs

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transforming teamwork, and ultimately health and social care contexts to the benefit of service users

### Reference

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## Learning through Engaging: The Use of Placements in Politics and International Relations

Alasdair Blair, Steven Curtis (CU) and Caroline Marsh (UoW)  
Coventry University and University of Warwick



### Placement Learning in Politics

Survey of Politics Departments:

- Under utilised (23 out of 94)
- Largely extracurricular

Embedding Placement Learning in the Politics Curriculum:

- Short, during the academic year and regional locations
- Linked to and assessed by modules
- Structured by learning outcomes

*'Who'd have thought something that you learn in a classroom would actually be relevant in real life!'*

### Pedagogy of Placement Learning

Research-Based Learning:

- Researching politics in action
- Research project for placement provider
- Placement learning rather than work experience or (critical) citizenship

*'I am beginning to see issues work their way through the policy process... I think a really good way to get an idea of the workings of the organisation would be to follow an issue around the committees like this - I am beginning to get an idea of how they all relate to each other...'*

### The Project

Three rounds of placements

Developing templates

Partnership agreements

Health and safety issues

[www.politicsinaction.ac.uk](http://www.politicsinaction.ac.uk)

*'Who would have thought a full time job would be so time consuming?!'*

### Assessing Placement Learning

Essays and reports

Blogs

Interviews

Questionnaires

*'It was good to be given some independence and work to do, enabling me to feel as if I was contributing to the work here in a positive way rather than simply shadowing and observing the goings-on of the organization.'*

### Round One Placement Providers

- Andrew Smith MP
- Birmingham Race Action Partnership
- Coventry City Council
- Geoffrey Robinson MP
- Government Office of the West Midlands
- Liz Lynne MEP
- Malcolm Harbour MEP
- Oxfam
- Oxfordshire County Council - Homeless College Network
- Oxfordshire County Council - Gatehouse café for the homeless
- Oxford User Team

*'...the staff have been great, and I haven't stopped learning about the processes and responsibilities of government organisations'*



### **Tentative Conclusions and Emerging Issues**

- High student motivation and commitment
  - Implications for the curriculum
  - The shaping effect of assessment regimes
  - A high maintenance approach
  - The universities' role
  - The revenge of work experience!
- 'I arrived  
home safe  
and sound  
after what  
was a  
fantastic  
experience.'*

## Part-Time Work Placements as an Integral Part of the Undergraduate Programme

Liz Coombs  
St Mary's College



### Accredited part-time work placements (Service Learning)

Liz Coombs  
Director  
the **Centre for Workplace Learning**  
St Mary's College  
Twickenham : London



### St Mary's College

- Higher Education College
- Recently awarded TDAP
- Approx 3,500 FTE
- Size and distinctive mission give opportunity to integrate all aspects of student development throughout the curriculum

### Liz Coombs, Director, the **Centre for Workplace Learning**

- My role:
  - Convene modules
  - Lecture / teaching
  - Liaison with employers
  - Managing placement process
  - Administration / Quality
  - Student assessment
- Provision of quality part-time placements for all undergraduate students

### the **Centre for Workplace Learning**

- Formed with money from HEROBC initiative and subsequently HEIF 1.
- Outreach / economic / quality agenda
- Grown to encompass social dimensions of the Active Community Fund and Service Learning

### Examples of Variety of Placement Opportunities

Cannons Health Centre	Primary schools	St Mary's College
B Sky B	Battersea Arts Centre	St Mary's College
Al Ahrar Newspapers	Fulham FC	St Mary's College
Clever Media	HMP Pentonville	St Mary's College
Dexters Estate Agents	Richmond Borough Council	St Mary's College
Lloyds TSB	Enfield YOT	St Mary's College

### Service Learning

In addition to enhancing and developing employability skills, self awareness and self management, the ability to reflect -

- fosters heightened moral awareness in students (Boss, 1994)
- offers students opportunity to see how economic and social values are linked (Lester et al, 2005)

## Service Learning

Fits with the mission of St Mary's:

'to engage with the wider community in its social and economic development ....'

'offer a college framework within which all students are enabled to develop their academic, professional, moral, physical and spiritual potential.'

DfES agenda:

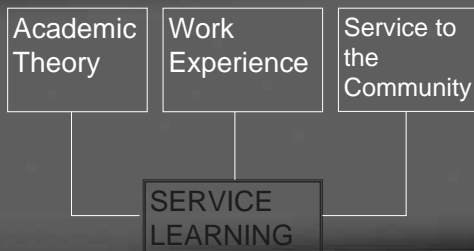
'If Higher Education develops the whole person by contributing to the 'maturing process', then active citizenship is crucial to the wider goals of social inclusion and the creation of a more cohesive Society' (Work Related Learning Report, 2001).

## What is Service Learning?

Service Learning is denoted by a powerful connection between service to the community and specific academic goals.

Community service becomes Service Learning when there is a deliberate and explicit connection made between service and learning, which is then accompanied by thoughtful preparation and reflection by the student.

## Service Learning



## Why Service Learning?

Service Learning can be seen as a form of 'experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning' (Jacoby, 1996)

## Benefits for Students

- promotes learning through active participation in service experiences;
- provides structured time to reflect by thinking, discussing and writing about service experiences;
- provides an opportunity to use skills and knowledge in real-life situations;
- extends learning beyond the classroom and into the community;
- fosters a sense of caring for others;
- nurtures an appreciation of community and ways of contributing to it.

## How Does it Work?

- All students eligible to register
- Part of degree programme
- Part-time, semester time
- Students set own learning objectives
- Students keep a log book
- Employers assign 'workplace supervisor' to provide an assessment

Service learning projects expose students to community needs. Participation in community service projects may provide them with the opportunity to develop critical skills that they can use to advance their careers as well as a greater appreciation of the need to be good corporate citizens.

'To maximise the benefits of service learning, the project should allow for practical skill development as well as personal growth (Toncar et al., 2003).

## Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to :

- appreciate the role of service agencies, in a diverse context
- evaluate and sustain their own role in the community
- demonstrate an ability to plan and manage projects from inception to completion
- critically review their own development in the areas of self-concept, confidence, competence and awareness
- evaluate and deploy transferable and employability skills such as: communication, time-management, teamwork and independent learning
- demonstrate an ability to reflect on and appraise their own experience, performance and growth.

## Reflection

Looking for evidence of reflection on:

- personal development and learning
- the ability to act autonomously
- notions of 'community' and the impact of 'service'

"Above all, employers want individuals who can reflect on their experiences and understand what they have learned" (DfES, 2001, pg 10)

## Assessment

- Clear learning outcomes and objectives understood by students, tutors and workplace supervisors
- Students learning contracts – agreed with employers
- Training and support of workplace supervisors
- Ongoing monitoring of placement and student progress
- Clear criteria for student evaluation

## Issues in Assessment

- Equality of opportunity
- Equivalence of placements
- Equality of assessment

## Case Studies

- Tiffany – Professional and Creative Writing - ambitions to be a writer of children's literature.
- Placement in Soho Family Centre providing a nursery, pre-school education group, family drop in Centre and advice and counselling for local families.
- Opportunity to learn about the way children observe the world, what excites them and how they make sense of things.
- She has developed her communication skills and confidence and confirmed her desire to pursue a career in children's writing.
- In addition, she is grateful for the opportunity to have made a contribution to the Centre.

## Case Study 2

- Deslina – Psychology
- Amyand House day hospital catering for elderly patients with mental health issues
- Healthcare assistant
- Main learning points:
  - communication – both with patients, taking into account their difficulties, and with staff – who were often busy and stressed
  - Ability to work independently
  - Ability to question if in doubt or unsure
  - Ability to confront issues in a diplomatic and appropriate way
  - Career aspirations – need further personal development work if to pursue a career in mental health as find it difficult not to become emotionally involved
  - Able to apply theory to practice, and to see where this doesn't always work!

Research has found that service learning 'has a positive effect on students' moral development, leadership development, and sense of social responsibility. In other words, service learning provides a unique opportunity for students to grow both professionally and personally' (Lester et al, 2005)

## Quality

'Quality' work placement is one in which:

- the student identifies potential **learning outcomes**
- **objectives** are set
- **supervision** is by a supervisor trained in the objectives and learning outcomes of work experience
- regular **feedback** is given
- **achievements are articulated** by the student
- an **assessment** is made
- recognition, **credit** or a certificate is awarded

(NCWE survey, 2000)

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## **International Placements at Regent's College: A Critical View of Placements at the European Business School, London (EBSL) and Regents Business School, London (RBSL)**

Azam Ali, Nick Bowen, Karina Bolivar (EBSL) and Mariona Centellas (RBSL)  
European Business School London and Regents Business School London

### **Introduction & Structure of this Paper**

International placements form a significant part in the undergraduate degree programmes at European Business School London and Regents Business School London, even though the rationales are fundamentally different. For students studying on the BA in International Business degree at EBSL, placements are a compulsory and an integral part of the degree programme whereas, at RBSL, placements are optional for students studying the various undergraduate business and management degrees. However, initial exploratory analysis undertaken indicates that the take-up of placements does not differ in any significant way between the two cohorts of students over the duration of the degrees. This paper analyses the reasons for this possible convergence of experiences and evaluates the lessons to be learnt.

Schaafsma H (1996) defines placement as “a period of time when the student is located in the work-place with the purpose of learning on the job.” In this paper, and in particular for EBSL students, the nature of having international set of undergraduate students leads almost inevitably to the international nature of the placements undertaken by them. For the purposes of this paper, these placements can be organised into three principal categories:

Category	Type	Example RBS	Example EBS
1	Placements outside the UK undertaken by UK students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gul Ahmed Textiles Ltd., Pakistan</li> <li>Del Monte Foods, Italy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SWRW Investment Counselling Service, Cincinnati, USA</li> <li>Deloitte &amp; Touche, Guadalajara, Mexico</li> </ul>
2	Placements outside the UK undertaken by international (non-UK) students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Bulgarian student) Newtech Marketing Network GmbH, Germany</li> <li>(Italian) PWC, Spain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Colombian) Mongoose Technology, Houston, USA</li> <li>(Russian) Railway Transport Communication Ltd, Lugano, Switzerland.</li> </ul>
3	Placements with an international focus inside the UK undertaken by UK students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>W1 Virtual Office Ltd., UK – Advise to more than 200 clients.</li> <li>Conference Europe, UK. Office co-ordinator managing international staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merrill Lynch, London, UK: Client adviser for French customers.</li> <li>Etap Address, London, UK: Created and launched a new bus route from Sofia (Bulgaria) to London.</li> </ul>

The paper attempts to illicit the following:

- Benefits of placements for the key stakeholders (academics, students, employers and schools)
- Role and functions of the various departments on the two Schools, as well as rationale of the placement within the respective degree programmes
- Analysis of the international profile of students engaged in placements (sample)
- Analysis of the international locations of placements undertaken (sample)
- Motivations of business students to undertake placements, whether compulsory or optional

### **Methodology**

For both schools, data was obtained from the students who graduated in 2005 and were featured in the respective Graduate Profiles Portfolio.

100 undergraduates from EBSL and 60 from RBSL were sampled. This is because EBSL has more undergraduate students than RBSL. For comparison reasons the data was converted into percentages.

Due to the international focus of this paper, the sample was divided into three main groups of students:

- United Kingdom (UK);
- European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and
- non-European Union/European Economic Area (non-EU/EEA)

Furthermore, the country where the placements occurred was divided as follows:

- Home;
- United Kingdom (UK);
- European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and
- non-European Union/European Economic Area (non-EU/EEA)

As there has been no formal record keeping of student experiences, the authors of the paper have relied upon anecdotal evidence from the respective Careers departments.

Textbooks and journals have been used to provide the background and other support material such the student handbooks from both Schools.

### **The Context**

Recently, work placements have become increasingly visible in the curricula of universities, colleges and schools (Fanthome, 2004). At the behest of the Dearing Report – Higher Education in the Learning Society (1998), universities need to promote the merits of vocational degree programmes that combine academic rigour with periods of placement within industry (Duignan, 2002). The National Council for Work Experience estimates that in any one year approximately 100,000 higher education students will undertake work experience of some sort (Fanthome, 2004).

### **Benefits of Placements**

Research has suggested that four stakeholders primarily benefit from this process. They are the universities, industry, students and the academics.

### **Higher Education Institutions**

For the universities and schools, the benefits of placements programmes include that of a corporate image of being “connected to the real world”, with the advantages that flow from this in terms of recruitment of students and of teaching staff, research funding and consultancy (Duignan, 2002). Furthermore, additional reasons for universities in finding international placements include (The Need to Develop Industrial Placements abroad, untitled):

- develop international dimension through university-industry cooperation
- experiment with new educational methods
- improve image and attractiveness
- respond to students’ mobility expectations
- encourage internal cooperation between different departments (academic studies, industrial relations, international relations and programmes)

### **Industry**

The same author cites the following reasons for the corporate world:

- a source for international recruitment
- an opportunity to benefit from the association of technological and language skills
- human professional enrichment through encountering foreign views and practices
- an opportunity to develop links with foreign universities

### Students

According to Duignan (2002), placement enhances academic achievement, as well as enhanced professional and employability skills. Undergraduates who have taken, say, one year in industry, will be higher academic achievers than if had they not done so. He argues that students who avoid placements will under perform academically. Thus there are implications for final degree classification, for employability and for graduate labour-market value (Duignan, 2002). The author who wrote “The Need to develop Industrial Placements abroad” also agreed on the above, but cited three additional reasons:

- students personal development (autonomy, maturity, adaptation skills through being confronted with a foreign environment)
- linguistic, intercultural and communication skills
- testing their aptitude for an international career

Velde C and Cooper T (2000) cited that students wanted an opportunity to gain “hands on” experience, and a “head start” to employment.

### Academics

For academics, “work experience greatly enhances teaching as students return with improved subject knowledge, understanding and skills” (National Council for Work Experience, undated)

Unfortunately, even though the above appears valid, little by way of empirical data or examples have been provided to justify the effects of placements. Thus we can only generalise rather than provide real examples.

### **Role of the Placements Departments at both RBSL and EBSL**

For both Schools, placements are handled by the Careers, Placements & Alumni Service (CPAS) at RBSL and the Careers Guidance and Internship Services (CGIS) at EBSL. In this section we will outline their roles and functions and through a diagram will ascertain similarities and differences between the two.

#### **Role of the Careers, Placements & Alumni Service (CPAS) at RBSL**

RBSL London runs combined Careers, Placements & Alumni service (CPAS). Their mission is to create a business and research network which functions as a platform for businesses, current students and alumni, and staff to liaise and profit from cooperation.

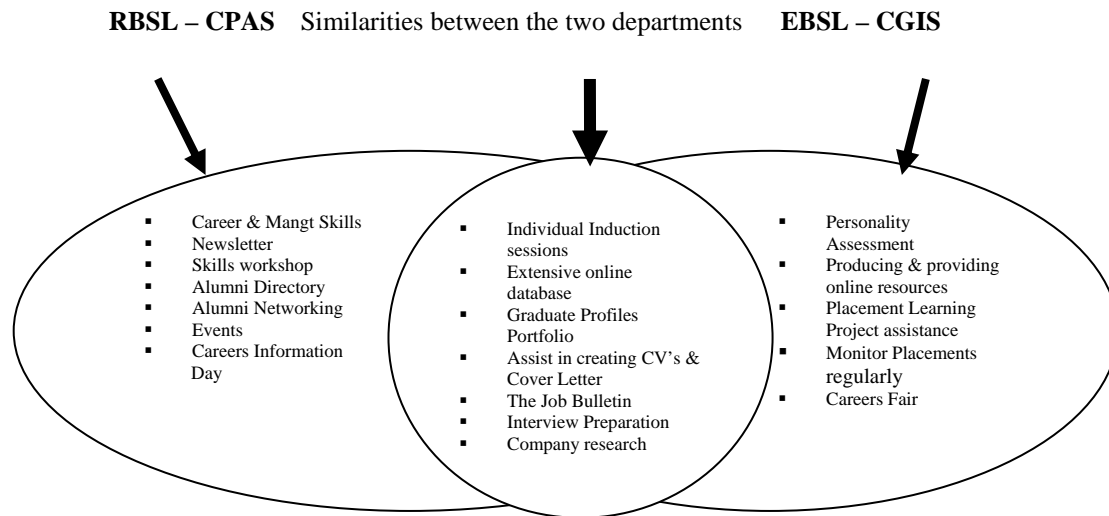
The main aim is to help the stakeholders (students, graduates and alumni) in achieving career related goals for their professional development and career manager.

#### **Role of the Careers Guidance and Internship Services (CGIS) at EBSL**

The Careers Guidance and Internship Services (CGIS) is a resource centre comprising staff from an international and diverse background. Their aim is to prepare, guide and provide efficient support to EBSL students with their career objectives, in order to increase their chances of employability. CGIS also assists the students by providing different resources in order to facilitate access to potential employers.

**Diagram showing summary of differences and similarities of the role and functions of RBSL (CPAS) and EBSL (CGIS)**





The above diagram shows that both departments share the same functions in terms of individual induction session, databases, Graduate Profiles Portfolio, interview preparation, company research, CV and covering letter, the job bulletin and company research. Both schools department's aim is to ensure that students/graduates are prepared for the high pressure and performance-oriented world of international business. Although they organised different events, students from both schools have the benefit to participate in all of them.

Since **EBSL placements are compulsory, the CGIS monitors on a regular basis the number of weeks the students undertake, whereas the CPAS does not.** In addition, EBSL has an optional and formally assessed placement (the Placement Learning Project) that replaces one semester abroad. The PLP is monitored and revised every year and involves academics and CGIS staff members.

In some cases and according to the CPAS's principle of best practice, placements at RBSL are monitored for the purpose of the wellbeing of the student. This usually takes place when the CPAS has provided the contact (an employer) and placed the student.

As can be seen in the diagram above, the key difference then between the two departments is that the CPAS is responsible for the alumni of the school, whereas at EBS the alumni are dealt by another department called the Alumni and Corporate Relations Department.

### **The Rationale of Student Placements from the Two Schools**

Above we have noted the generic differences in terms of roles and functions of the two departments. Now we would discuss the difference in terms of programme rationale for placements within the degrees at the two Schools.

### **The Rationale of Student Placements from an EBSL perspective**

European Business School tackles the issue of placement in two ways, via compulsory 36 weeks placement spread across the whole of the undergraduate degree programme, or by formally awarding credits for a 16 week placement through the Placement Learning Project (PLP).

#### **36 Week Placement**

Work experience is an integral part of the degree programme and students will be required to complete a minimum of 36 weeks by the end of the programme. Work experience is carried out in the periods between semesters and will be certified by the Careers Guidance and Internship Services (CGIS) on the basis of letters of confirmation from the host organisations. Members of the CGIS attend the Final Assessment Board to ratify the status of the students based on successfully completing the 36 weeks. These 36 weeks are **experiential** and facilitate career and organisational awareness, which is important

in students' development, but they are not assessed, they do not receive credit and it does not count towards the degree classification.

### The Placement Learning Project (PLP)

The Placement Learning Project (PLP) is a 4/5 month module that aims to facilitate learning in the workplace through placements and to encourage students to apply previous learning gained in Levels 1 and 2 with real-life business practice. It formalises EBS London's experience of providing and monitoring international placement opportunities for business students. Consequently, this module provides the crucial link in applying the conceptual knowledge and understanding. [Ali A., Bowen, N. and Centellas-Melia, M. (2004)].

It is an optional replacement for one of the two Study Period Abroad (SPA) semesters. In terms of credits, the PLP counts as 30 (i.e. the same credits as an SPA). This module does not replace the 36 week placement.

### Study Period Abroad

It is at this juncture that we note the concept of the Study Period Abroad (SPA), as this term is subsequently referred to in this paper and linked to the PLP. Quite simply, the SPA is where students spend semesters 4 and 5 away from EBS London at one or more approved institutions abroad. Similarly to the PLP, the credits are required for purposes of graduation but do not count towards the final degree classification (taken from EBS London Student Handbook, page 42).

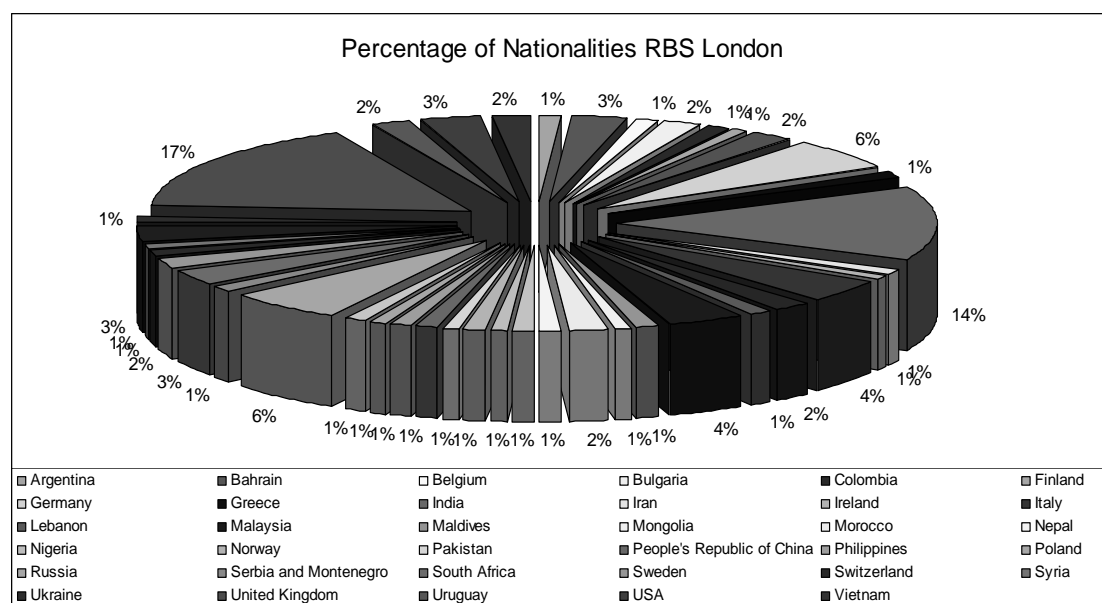
### **The Rationale of Student Placements from RBSL perspective**

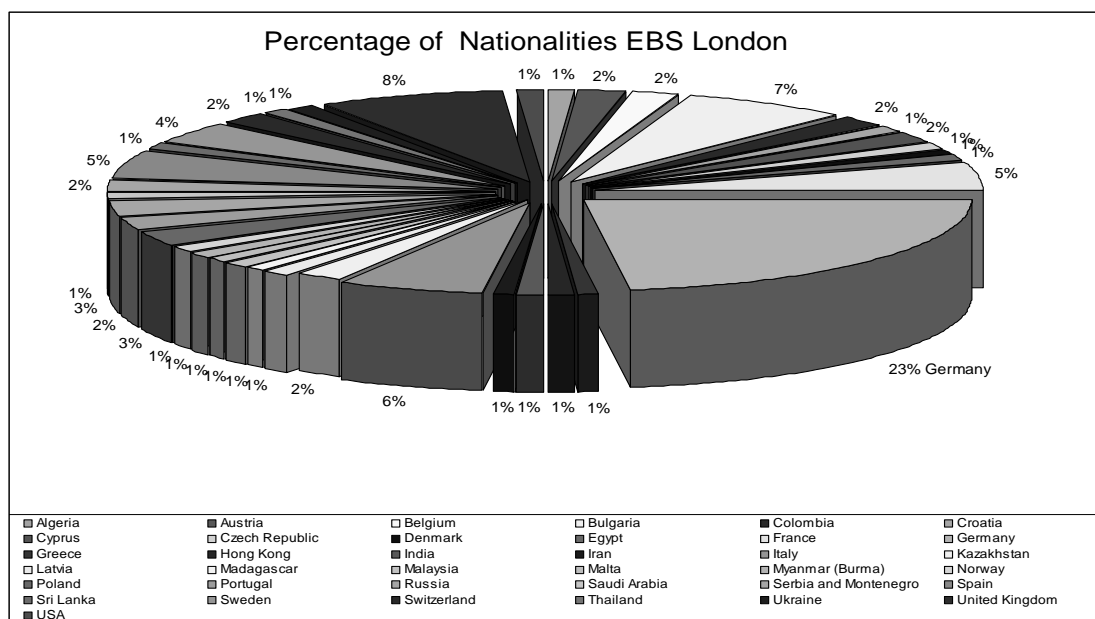
Regents Business School London defines student placement as an activity which form part of a student learning and development, it is related but not part of their programme, and which takes place during vacation periods on a **voluntary basis**.

### Findings

#### **International Nature of Placements**

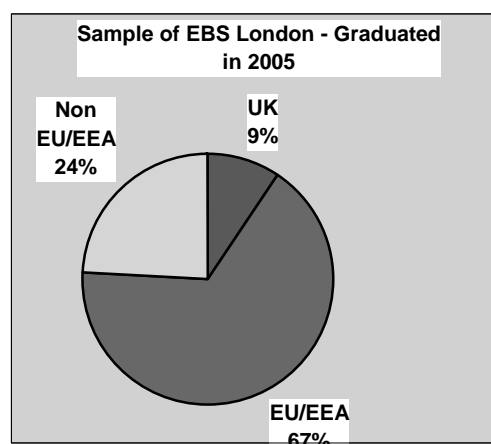
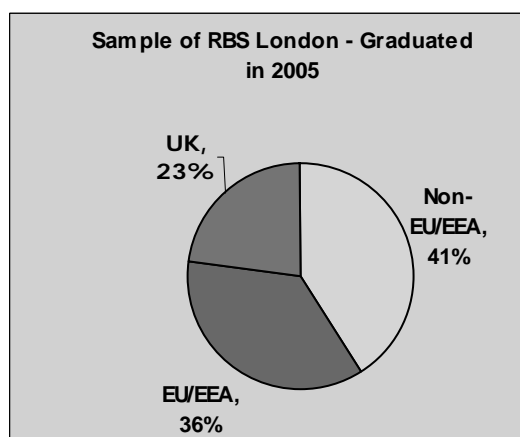
The scope and nature of placements at EBS/RBS are partially determined by the international composition of the undergraduate body at the two Schools. The intake for each School comprises over 80 different nationalities, as can be seen in outline in the diagram below.





This internationality is partly a result of the fee-paying, private nature of the Schools and of their missions as International (EBSL) and Global (RBSL) Institutions of Higher Education. Although both are located in the UK, and are accredited, designated and validated by various UK bodies (BAC, OUVS, DfES), their intakes of undergraduates are very international by design and by circumstance.

#### International profile of students who graduated in 2005

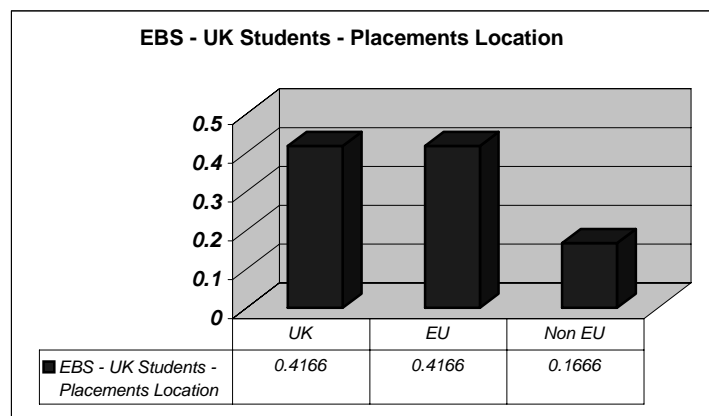
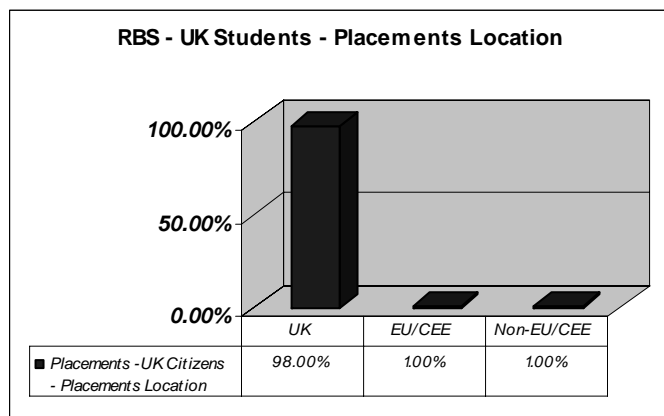


The analysis shows the main tendencies in terms of preferred places to carry out placements.

For EBSL, it can be seen that the majority of students are from the EU/EEA (67%); however a significant number came from non-EU/EEA countries, mainly Eastern Europe, South America and Asia (24%). Only 9% of the students who graduated in 2005 were from the UK.

However, in the case of RBSL, 23% of those students who graduated in 2005 were from the UK and 41% of the students were from non-European countries. The remaining 36% came from EU/EEA countries.

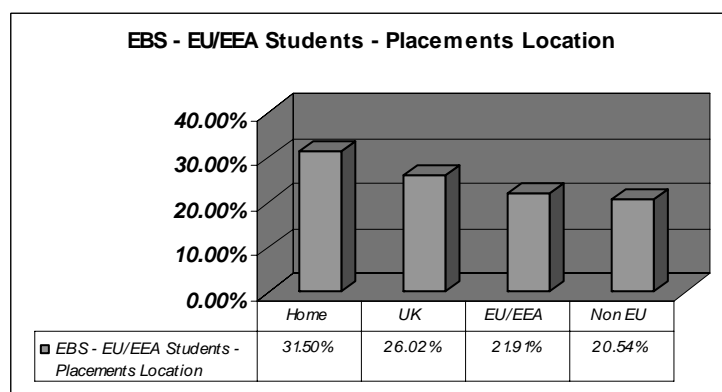
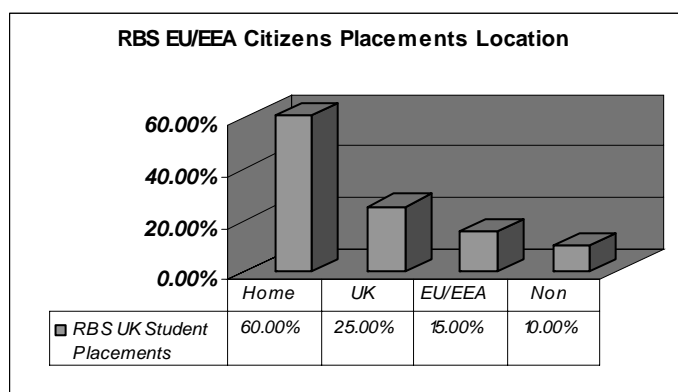
### Placements: UK Citizens



As for EBSL, most of the UK students undertook their placements in the UK or in the EU/EEA countries (72%). Approximately a third of students (27%) pursued their placements outside of the EU (27%). In these cases, most of students had dual citizenship and they undertook their placements in their second native countries. Some of them carried out international placements while on their Study Period Abroad.

A staggering 98% of RBSL UK students chose to stay in the UK for their placements. Thus, even though educated in an international environment (there were 41 different nationalities), they chose to stay in the UK for their placements. Only a minority of the 2% chose to go abroad.

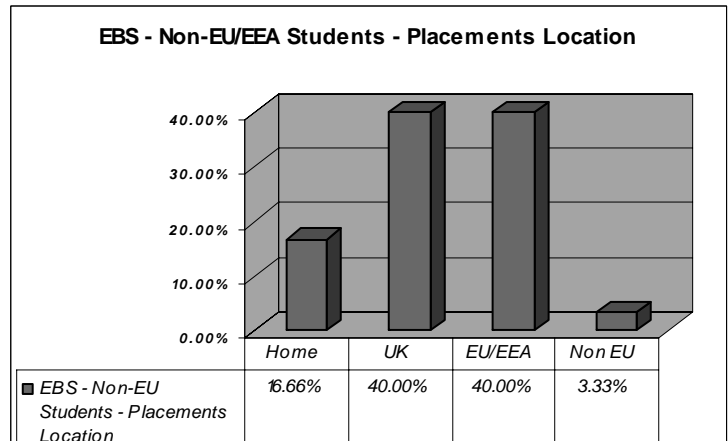
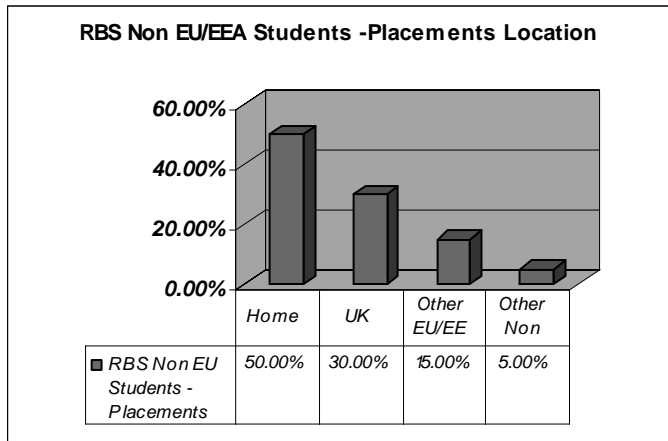
### Location of Placements: EU/EEA Students



For EBSL, most of the EU students (43%) undertook their placements in Europe, many of them in their home countries, and 36% in the UK. A smaller percentage (21%) carried out their placement in non-EU countries. Many of them maximised their opportunity while doing their Study Period Abroad.

For RBSL, 60% of EU students undertook their placements back home and 25% stayed in the UK, mainly London. The remaining 15% either decided to go to a different country within the European Union or went to a non -EU/EEA country like the USA or PR China.

### Placements: Non EU students



For EBSL students, a large number of non-EU/EEA students (79%) opted to do their placements in EU or UK, and only 21% carried out their placement in their home countries. Based on discussions with the students, the non-EU/EEA students are very motivated to do their placements in the UK. The main reasons given by the students were:

- To have the opportunity to put into practice language skills learnt at school.
- To continue their professional careers within EU/EEA region after graduation. Previous EU/EEA work experience facilitates their incorporation in the labour market.
- Work experience in EU/EEA give students a benefit when looking for jobs once they are back in their home countries.

On the other hand, for RBSL students, 50% of non-EU/EEA students decided to go back to their home countries to carry out their placements. It is to be highlighted that 30% of the sample of non-EU/EEA residents undertook a placement in the UK during their vacation.

### Conclusion

- Where there is no compulsion, there is a difference in terms of weeks of placement, when compared with each other. RBSL students spent 24 weeks average on a placement, compared to the compulsory 36-week period for the EBSL.
- For category 1 (Placements outside the UK undertaken by UK students), 58% of EBSL UK students had an international placement, whereas 98% RBSL UK students had a UK placement.
- For category 2 (Placements outside the UK undertaken by international (non-UK) students), 25% of RBSL students had international placements, compared to 43% of EBSL students.
- For category 3 (Placements with an international focus inside the UK undertaken by UK students) - due to the lack of reliable data, the authors of this paper found it difficult to quantify accurately.
- Even though the 36 week is compulsory, all the students sampled have achieved the desired amount of weeks at EBSL – In addition, a small proportion of students at EBSL have carried out more than 36 weeks.
- Even though it was not compulsory, all RBSL students with no exception have undertaken placements for an average of 24 weeks.

### Recommendations

- For future studies, there is a need of better monitoring and evaluation systems. There needs to be exit interviews from students about their placements, and more qualitative data from the placement organisations, rather than simple tick boxes.
- There is a need to have a consistent approach in terms of data recording for both schools depending on their needs.
- Recognition should be acknowledged about the different roles and functions of the two Departments and thus the possible impact for the respective programmes.
- Consideration should be given on the necessity of requiring compulsory 36 weeks placement, especially as our studies suggest that Business Studies students recognise the need to have placements to make them more marketable in the job market, as stipulated by Duignan 2002.

### **Future Projects from this Paper**

- How does academia utilise the knowledge and experience gained by the students into their teaching and learning? Once again data is not available on this. What are the options available to implement this knowledge transfer? Should the data in the Graduate Profiles be formally recorded to potentially assist academia in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment?
- Better qualitative data should be obtained on the benefits, and indeed drawbacks, of placements from the four key stakeholders.
- Should RBSL consider implementing a compulsory placement?

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### **Internal Documentation**

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## Pyramids of Outreach

Jo Clements and Sam Ingleson  
University of Salford

### 1. Background to projects

Evidence from our work with local schools shows that recruitment percentages for Art and Design and Music, Media and Performance can improve. There is also evidence that there are significant numbers of students reaching high standards of achievement at Key Stage 4 in these subjects who are not achieving their ambitions in Higher Education (there is a high dropout of students following KS4 for reasons of mostly social and economic circumstance). This is reflected in similar socio-economic areas of the country.

### 2. Factors

- Insufficient clarity of career and educational pathways in the Arts
- A shortage of role models in the community (and HE experience)
- Low self-esteem and confidence amongst students (particularly relevant to social background)
- The perception of a shortage of opportunities in their chosen field in the Arts
- The perception of a cultural distance between prevailing expectations, aspirations and lifestyle offered by a university education.

### 3. Initial Objectives

1. **To feed undergraduate university students into schools (as role models) for residency projects with younger students with a subject interest.** This is intended to raise the aspirations of students who have a limited understanding of available career path in the Arts. Undergraduates targeted by the programme will typically be local to the area and have a understanding of vocational relevance.
2. **To build a consortium of feeder schools, F.E colleges, HEIs and Arts Organisations.** Partnership possibilities between the University, Secondary schools and Arts organisations would develop further, thereby extending possibilities for teaching and learning through contact with actual works of art, increased knowledge of working processes and additional networking opportunities.

Salford will extend its links with Arts organisations through initiatives such as Creative Partnerships, which provide additional opportunities for school pupils to become involved in Arts activities in partnership with creative organisations. The University has strong links with Artists and Education Ltd who provide artists and training for residency and workshop activities in schools. It is envisaged that some work would take place that involved professional artists working with both undergraduates and school pupils on projects.

We would also be open to the possibility of working with pupil referral units or prisons where appropriate and where we could provide students with an interest and capabilities for such a setting.

3. **To use undergraduate Fine Arts students on placements to broaden the range of art, craft and design practices currently available within schools.** This is intended to help pupils realise there are more dimensions to a career in the Arts than just painting.
4. **To create a model of good practice for 'live' WP Arts projects.** Roll out to other courses within Schools of Art and Design and Music, Media and Performance will provide an opportunity to generate documentary evidence, therefore providing additional materials for

further dissemination of models of good practice for Widening Participation practices in schools, to additional HEIs.

5. **To give KS4 school pupils an introduction to university life and work practices within their chosen disciplines.** This will be achieved through University placements with their undergraduate mentor - working within studios will provide them with a clearer insight and enhanced expectations for future study in the Arts and demystify the concept of 'university'. This aspect is intended to empower the beneficiaries (school pupils) to make informed choices about their future careers and options for continued study from a full range of opportunities.
6. **To increase pupils' access to quality work experience,** with additional mentoring from undergraduates, which will underline the possibilities and rewards of continuing their education at HE level.
7. **To deliver skills workshops during school residencies that will provide opportunities to learn new skills for the young people involved.** Additional tutorials and feedback sessions with Widening Participation co-ordinators will cover basic protocol for working with young people, planning for effective workshops and basic curriculum requirements for subject areas.
8. **To adopt a 'longer term' approach, particularly with reference to pupils' time spent in university, which will give universities an additional model to evaluate the effectiveness of pupil visits to campuses.** As the involvement by pupils is typically short-term, such as taster days and campus tours, it is envisaged that this approach will prove to be more effective in encouraging pupils' aspirations and the scheme eventually adopted by other subject areas. Implementing a programme of exhibitions and staggering the time pupils spend in University over the academic year will help sustain the momentum of the project for pupils and embed the idea that the University is an active part of their community. We would also expect pupils to record their work and University experiences in a visual diary and would expect postgraduates to advise on content and display. Work produced could be presented as coursework for final GCSE displays or performances.
9. **To provide semi-professional experience for postgraduates and assist their vocational development.** The programme enforces their links with local communities, provides them with clear benefits, clarifies their contribution to the community and gives them early semi-professional experiences. Following their placement experiences, postgraduates will be better qualified to mentor undergraduate students who will be carrying out work placements as part of the WP Pyramids of Outreach project following their placements. A separate bid to set up a postgraduate/undergraduate mentoring scheme is currently being written.
10. **To disseminate findings and a best practice model to schools and National Universities.** A programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules for teachers in Art and Design is under discussion at the University of Salford and the implementation of this project will generate further research materials for devising modules that are beneficial for teachers. It is also anticipated that further funding will enable us to publish the results of this, as well as additional Art and Design Widening Participation activities, for dissemination on a National level.
11. **To measure potential for roll out to other subject areas.** The project will also provide materials that could contribute to additional research, such as assessing the viability of the project as a model for the wider University.

## **EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS**

### **1. Pyramids of Outreach**

What does it look like:

- 10 undergraduate students spend 2 days per week in residence over a 5-week period.
- Throughout the project students keep a log of their learning experiences.



- There have been a variety of approaches and outcomes by the students whilst working the school and FE setting. The student's approaches to the work within the residency setting were often process led, showing pupils their methodologies, research techniques and development of ideas. Some students demonstrated new approaches to more conventional ways of working. Others introduced new techniques, themes and specialist materials to the departments. The aim of all the students was to raise awareness of the role of an artist working in an education context and raise aspirations of routes into Higher Education.
- On completion of the school residencies the students complete evaluation forms and discuss their experiences with a project leader
- Many of the students will continue their links with the school and colleges as they progress with their studies in the future.
- Students have commented on how the residencies provided a creative opportunity. They were able to develop their own practices by working in the school environment and working alongside the pupils.
- Bursaries are paid of £100 per student.

## 2. Mentoring Vocational Partnerships

What does it look like:

- **Strand 1 –Undergraduates in Residence**

Undergraduates spend 5 days as artists in residence in Art and Design departments at schools and colleges to illustrate their working practices, give informal advice about university life, deliver skills based workshops and to produce resources to be left as an aid to teaching and a legacy of this strand of the project (up to 10 undergraduates in total).

- **Strand 2 – Partnerships with Arts Organisations**

Undergraduates act as mentors for pupils (1 undergraduate: 2 pupil ratio) on work experience within an Arts organisation. Schools identify suitable pupils to work on a 5-day placement working with undergraduates, to gain an insight into the levels of employment achievable as a result of HE studies in the Arts (minimum 10 organisations).

- **Strand 3 –Pupil Placements in University**

Expanding the mentor/mentee relationship - pupils spend 5 days working alongside undergraduates on campus. Pupils study with undergraduates in their studios where they have the possibility to develop their own art work/performance skills.

- **Strand 4 – Exhibition programme**

A rolling exhibition programme of pupils and students work shown alongside each other at host galleries and Salford University.

- Bursaries are paid of £100 per student.

## 3. Student Associates : Aimhigher Pilot

- The Student Associates : Aimhigher scheme gives level 2 undergraduates, who may be considering a career in teaching, the opportunity to undertake **paid** placements in schools and FE colleges. The scheme is co-ordinated by the Widening Participation team from Visual Arts in the School of Art and Design and extends models of residency from previous Visual Arts projects to include undergraduates from the wider university.
- **Background**

The aim of the pilot is to attract 1<sup>st</sup> generation undergraduates in Higher Education who can act as positive role models, motivating and encouraging young people in schools and colleges to stay in education, and thereby widening participation.

**Objectives of the pilot are to:**

- Support the wider aims of Aimhigher and Partnerships for Progression by basing activity in local education authorities (LEAs) and schools or colleges which have low attainment levels and low rates of progression to Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE);
- Provide a progression route for those undergraduates who subsequently show an interest in teaching as a career.

The placements take place over the course of the school year and each runs for up to 20 days, for either 1 or 2 days per week, in blocks during reading weeks or in a 4 week block at the end of the summer term. For the first 15 days, undergraduates assist teachers whilst gaining knowledge of current teaching practice and gathering information that could be included in PDPs and for additional use in PGCE interviews. The remaining 5 days provide an opportunity to devise and conduct extra curricular workshops with pupils. Teaching staff are on hand to assist with the development and delivery of workshops, with additional support from university project coordinators.

Undergraduates undertake a short induction session at university where they are given relevant teaching information including school protocol, teaching and learning strategies, planning workshops and health and safety issues. They are also provided with comprehensive information and a support pack describing progression routes for teaching and workshop ideas for school placements.

It is expected that students who undertake this are fully committed to the scheme and will use it as an additional opportunity to enrich their university work through interaction with school pupils. Undergraduates will also be able to provide evidence of their experiences and achievements in schools when attending interview or on CVs.

**At the end of the presentation delegates were be given handouts that include examples of actual projects and their subsequent dissemination. Discussion will focus on possibilities for roll out to other institutions and courses.**

# LEO-NET - Your Practical Internship Support Network for Work Placements in Higher Education under the New ERASMUS Programme

Edith Doppelhofer  
Danube and LEO-NET

**LEO-NET**  
Leveraging Education into Organisations  
Your practical internship support network throughout Europe and beyond

ASET Conference, Birmingham 2006  
The Placement and Employability Professionals' Conference

Theme : European/Worldwide Placements

**LEO-NET** - Your Practical Internship Support Network for Work Placements in HE under the New ERASMUS Programme:

Integration of Work placements in Higher Education under the new ERASMUS Programme

Edith Doppelhofer, DANUBE, Vienna, Austria

Leo-Net

**LEO-NET**  
Leveraging Education into Organisations  
Your practical internship support network throughout Europe and beyond

## Overview

- Introduction
- The current LEONARDO da VINCI II Programme
- The New ILLP Programme 2007-2013 - ERASMUS
- LEO-NET Leonardo Network for Academic Mobility
- Future Role for Mobility in HEI- Higher Education/Industry

Leo-Net

**LEO-NET**  
Leveraging Education into Organisations  
Your practical internship support network throughout Europe and beyond

## LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme II 2000-2006

- Educational programme of the EU
- Pilot and mobility projects

Aims:

- Establishing and intensifying international contacts and co-operations
- Stimulating mobility throughout Europe
- Offering opportunities to gather working and intercultural experiences and language skills
- European dimension

Leo-Net

**LEO-NET**  
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Your practical internship support network throughout Europe and beyond

The new Integrated Programme Life Long Learning (2007-2013)  
Main priorities for a new Erasmus

Integrated Programme			
Comenius School education	Erasmus Higher education & advanced training	Leonardo da Vinci Initial and continuing VET	Grundtvig Adult education
Transversal programme 4 key activities - Policy development; Language learning; ICT; Dissemination			
Jean Monnet programme 3 key activities - Jean Monnet Action; European Institutions; European Associations			

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Your practical internship support network throughout Europe and beyond

## The New Integrated Programme

The NEW Erasmus actions:

- Higher education (study) mobility
- *Reflecting the incorporation of student placements in enterprises*
- To envisage specific mobility for students on Joint Masters programmes.

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## The New Integrated Programme

ERASMUS 2007 - 2013  
- decentral -

Old/new	Students		
	Standard-Mobility	Special Mobility	Placements in enterprises
Length	3-12 Months	10 Months	3-12 Months
Target group	BA / MA Phd students	Master Students	Students
Grant size	250 EUR / Month	1.140 EUR / Month	500 EUR / Month

Former LEONARDO - Programme

Leo-Net



## The New Integrated Programme

### What does this mean to the programme?



## The New Integrated Programme

### ERASMUS has different Actions:

- Erasmus "Standard" Mobility
- Erasmus "Special" Mobility
- Erasmus "Placement" Mobility
- (Erasmus-Mundus)



## The New Integrated Programme

### The different Actions need specific structures:

- The University-Enterprise co-operation is different because:
  - No permanent contractual agreements
  - Supervision and recognition differs
  - Industry co-operation needs special attention



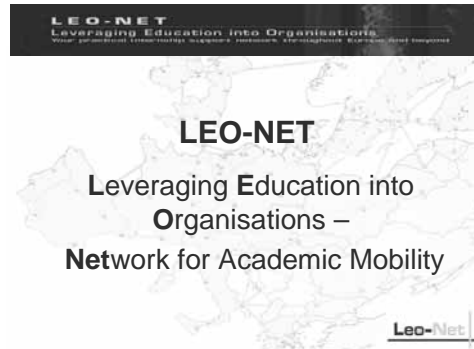
## The New Integrated Programme

### What does this mean to the structure ?



## The New Integrated Programme

- Reinforcement of the regional University-Enterprise-Partnerships
- Separate action/strand *Erasmus-Enterprise*
- Support for these regional networks
- A European-Network (*LEO-NET*)



## LEO-NET as a supporting tool

- Network for Academic Mobility throughout Europe and beyond
- Founded in 1999 in Maastricht with 60 members in 15 countries
- Grown to 146 members in 31 countries in 2006



## Products/Services/Activities

- Workshops and Symposia in 2006/2007
- Continuous update of information [www.leo-net.org](http://www.leo-net.org) and JOE - Online Job Offers Exchange
- Strategic Actions on implications of LEONARDO in ERASMUS beyond 2006 consultation process with EC
- Present during 18th EAIE 2006 in Basel, CH





## The New Integrated Programme

What needs to be done ?



**www. LEO-NET .org**

Leveraging Education into Organisations -  
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## The New Integrated Programme

**5 topics to be tackled for the future of mobility in HE/:**

- Quality Aspects
  - recognition and legal issues
- General framework of the new programme
  - unified implementation procedures
- Access to Academic Work Placements
  - eligibility for students and recent graduates
- Eligibility of Beneficiaries
  - all disciplines for all undertakings
- Administrative and Financial Rules
  - simplify grant administration and financial reporting



## **The Impact of Work Placements on the Development of Transferable Skills in Engineering**

Yussuf Ahmed, George Brown, Adam Crawford, Barry Haworth and  
Richard Holdrich  
Loughborough University

### **Abstract**

This paper presents the initial findings of the pre-placement survey undertaken in three engineering departments (Chemical Engineering, Civil & Building Engineering and the Institute of Polymer Technology & Materials Engineering – IPTME) at Loughborough University. It is a part of the research project on the impact of work placements on the development of transferable skills in engineering. One hundred and seven students participated in the survey.

The main results were that the majority of the students had, in their view, a solid basis for developing transferable skills whilst on placement. They valued work placement and they considered the work placements would have an impact on their transferable skills. These results provide a baseline for measuring the impact of work placements on transferable skills.

This study will be a longitudinal study covering students embarking on, during and after their placements. The results of the first stage of the research, achieved using pre-placement questionnaires, are reported in this paper.

The longitudinal study aims to identify the impact of work placements on the academic performance and the development of transferable skills of a sample of engineering students. This project is funded and supported by the Engineering Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (engCETL) at Loughborough University.

### **Keywords**

Work placement, sandwich placement, summer placement, transferable skills, work-based learning, engineering, skills.

### **Introduction**

This paper provides a summary of the work completed so far for a research project on the impact of work placements on the development of transferable skills in engineering. In this brief introduction, the key concepts are outlined. This paper describes the design of the research and the findings of the analysis of the pre-placement questionnaires, completed by 107 students. The questionnaire was concerned with the students' initial perception of the value of work placements for developing transferable skills. This project is funded and supported by the Engineering Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (engCETL). engCETL was established in March 2005, initially for a five year period, and is located in the Faculty of Engineering at Loughborough University in the UK.

### **How is the Impact Measured?**

The standard method of measuring impact in engineering and in social science is to take measures before and after the impact. This model of pre-test intervention post-test is used in this research. However, the measurement of impact in the social sciences and educational is different from measurement in engineering. Whereas in engineering the measurements include precise instruments, in the social science the measurements relies heavily upon subjective measures such as the perception of students, their university/industrial training tutors and their line managers in industry.

In this research project, a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the impact are being used. These include structured and open ended questionnaire, interviews, focus groups, documentary analysis of curriculum and modules and measures of students' achievement. The core of the overall study is the students' perception and their levels of achievement. The perception of the

students will be correlated whenever possible with the perception of tutors and line managers. A control group of students who have not undertaken placements will be surveyed and their results compared with the results of those who have undertaken placements. In this paper the initial results are reported.

### **What are Work Placements?**

QAA Code of Practice Section 9: Placement Learning provides a broad definition of placement learning: “A work placement is a planned period of learning, normally outside the institution at which the student is enrolled, where the learning outcomes are an intended part of a programme of study.”

Whether work placements are planned, have learning outcomes and are an intended part of a programme of study, is a matter to be examined in this project. It may be that not all work placements fit the QAA’s Code of Practice.

Work placements are increasingly regarded by policy makers as beneficial to all students. The Dearing Report (1997) recommends that, work experience should be made available to a greater number of students. Work experience does not mean only a whole year in industry, it can be a three months summer placement, a few months internships (placement in a firm or agency related to a student's major programme and/or career plans), a few weeks work-based project or work shadowing (where a student observes a member of staff working in an organisation).

The duration and type of placements is a potential problem with work placements. The various types of placements are: sandwich placement (paid work in industry which is part of some degree courses), work-based project (a specific piece of assessed work for a course, undertaken at an employer's premises), work shadowing (where the students observe a member of staff working in an organisation), vacation work (paid or unpaid work undertaken during university holidays) etc. Clearly these different work placements are likely to have differential effects upon students.

Some of the claims for the value of work placements are as follows: it helps students discover and improve the skills that they will need to use to be successful, for example, planning and organising; the ability to work as a team member; the ability to solve problems; learning to present in a professional way; motivation and initiative; providing an opportunity for students to be able to take what they have learnt and apply it to real problems. Whether these claims actually occur in practice is not at all clear.

### **What are Transferable Skills?**

Fallows and Stevens (2000) define “transferable skills” as the skills that someone has acquired and developed through one situation that are useful when transferred into another (next career). The DfES (2005) identified six key skills which are: communication, application of number, information technology, working with others, improving own learning and performance, problem solving. In this study, a composition of skills drawn from the literature were used. These were *communication skills, ability to solve problems, ability to work as a team member, planning and organising skills, management skills, technical skills, personal effectiveness skills, research skills, information technology skills, decision making skills, time management*.

### **Are Skills Transferable?**

It is often assumed that, once learned, personal transferable skills will transfer from the context in which they were acquired to another. However, this may not happen in practice. Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997) suggest that in order for the skills to be transferred, the learner must understand the skills and the context in which the skills are to be transferred.

### **Presentation and Discussion of the Results**

The following are the analysis of results completed so far.

#### **Profile of Students’ Characteristics**

One hundred and seven questionnaires were completed by student from three departments: Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering and IPTME. Students who completed the questionnaires were 84 males and 20 females and 3 did not indicate their gender. The age range of the sample was from 19 to over 23 years of age. The majority (59) were 20 years of age. Twelve of the students were international, 91 reported they were UK/EU students and 4 did not respond.

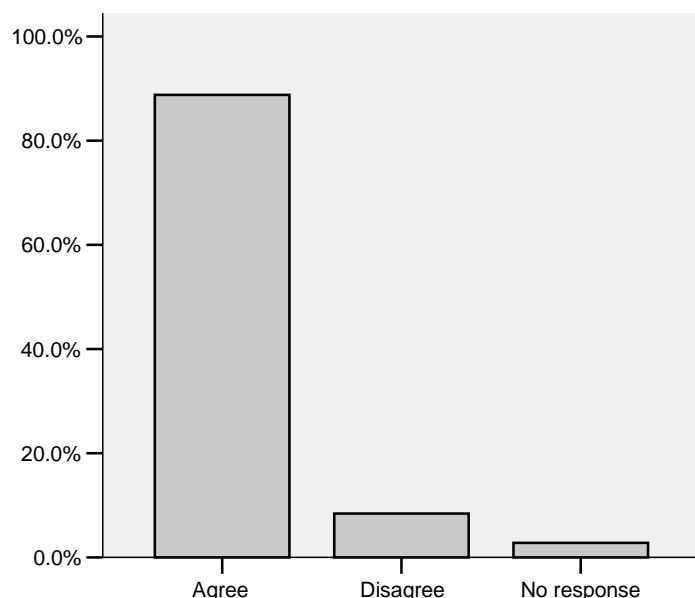
One hundred and three students were second years, 1 was an Erasmus (*European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*) student and three did not complete this question. Forty nine of the students were from Civil Engineering department, 33 from Chemical Engineering and 25 from IPTME.

Eighty seven students expected to do work placements and 18 reported they are not doing work placements. The majority of students will be doing placements at the end of their second year. Thirty three students had an experience of work in engineering prior to their courses, the remaining students did not. Seventy nine students had other work experience, 24 did not and 4 did not respond to this question.

When asked about the factors which would (or have) influenced their choice of company, 58 students were not concerned about the size of the company, 18 preferred to work in a large company, 26 in a medium company, 3 in a small company. Thirty six students preferred to work near their families. Seventy eight percent of the students gave their ID numbers. These will be followed up in the post placements surveys and interviews.

### The Perceived Value of Work Placements

Ninety five students (88.8%) said a degree course which includes a work placement is more effective for the development of transferable skills than a degree course without. Nine (8.4%) disagree and 3 (2.8%) did not respond, see Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1:** The perceived value of work placements

Students were also asked to rate the reasons why students go on placement. Using the mean and standard deviation, the three reasons rated high were for *work experience*, *to improve their chances of getting a job when they finish university* and *to give them an idea of what industry is really like*. This supports previous findings on the benefits of work placements (Harvey et al, 1997; Falconer, S. et al, 2003; Pickle, T. A, 1999) as well as highlighting the students' expectation of doing work placements.

The lowest was because *it is a part of the course*. This item had a wide distribution of views. The next two most lowest were: *they need a break from education* and *because they needed money*.

### Transferable Skills

Students were also asked to give their views on the importance of developing transferable skills. Using the mean and standard deviation, the three transferable skills which the students thought were the most important to develop were: *communication skills*, *planning and organising skills* and *information*



*technology skills*. The least important were *time management, research skills and management skills*, but even these had a relatively low standard deviation.

The highest rating and narrowest range of responses on students' self assessment of their transferable skills were: *ability to work as a team member, ability to solve problems and planning and organising skills*. These results imply the students feel they are fairly competent but will need some support. The three transferable skills the students self-assessed lowest were: *management skills, information technology skills and time management*. From these results one may conclude that, in the opinion of this sample of students, their experiences at university and earlier had laid a solid foundation for the development of transferable skills which they expected work placements would improve further.

The data obtained from the pre-placement questionnaire shows that, the majority of the sample of students reflects most upon *time management, ability to work as a team member and planning and organising*. It is interesting to note that this frequency of reflection does relate to some of the skills which the students were least confident about. This implies a high degree of reflection and self awareness by this sample of students.

The least frequent transferable skills which were reflected upon were: *information technology skills, communication skills and management skills*. These results may be because these skills do not figure largely in the modules taught in the departments surveyed. Different results would have probably been obtained from a sample of Electronic & Electrical Engineering and Computer Science departments.

It is interesting to note that the students thought communication skills, information technology and management skills were important to develop. In their response to the question which asked them "if they were to do (or are doing) a work placement, would they expect it to improve their transferable skills?" 94.4% believe work placements will help them improve their transferable skills, while 2.8% didn't agree and another 2.8% didn't answer this question. But the responses to the question asking why students go on placements revealed that students do not believe that going on work placement will improve their academic performance. If this is true, then work placements do not have an impact upon academic performance even though successful academic performance is based in part upon transferable skills such as the ability to solve problems, research skills and management skills. Analyses of actual performance in degree examinations will be undertaken and these results compared and discussed with this finding to check if their initial perceptions are correct.

From these results one can conclude that the majority of students had, in their view, a solid basis for developing transferable skills whilst on work placements. They valued work placements and they considered work placements would have an impact upon their transferable skills.

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## Peer-to-Peer Communication between Students to Facilitate Placements

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### Introduction

This paper describes the use of a discussion board to facilitate discussion between students on placement and those seeking placements. Evidence is presented that this peer-to-peer communication can alleviate some of the obstacles to students either seeking a placement or enjoying a successful placement experience. This is situated in the context of e-learning and placement support.

### Context

5 years ago when the author presented a paper at ASET on the use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE - specifically Blackboard in this case) to support placements, the use of such tools was relatively novel and there were significant concerns about usability and accessibility (Procter 2001). VLEs have now not only been adopted by the great majority of universities, both in the UK and overseas, but in many institutions their use has become obligatory (Brown and Jenkins 2003). Their integration into mainstream teaching is now of more interest than their existence. In 2001 the context was about how to adapt ideas of distance learning to the practice of e-learning. In 2006 the issue is how to achieve an effective combination of web-based tools with a more traditional work-based or university based experience. This combination is now commonly known as blended learning. The author uses the definition of the verb blend (Collins English Dictionary): to “mix together elements .. to improve quality”. The placement experience in particular and work-based learning in general offers an excellent opportunity for experimentation with blended learning given that, by definition, placement students can only be supported at a distance. The experimentation described in this paper was conducted as a means of provided added value to the student and did not involve the replacement of face-to-face support with electronic resources.

### Placement take up

In many university departments and schools, a placement year is an option for students to take up between their second and final years. This is the case for many degrees at the University of Salford. However, as in many universities, we encounter the problem of low take up of the placement year, despite the many social, financial, academic and professional opportunities afforded by the experience. This low take up is due to many reasons including:

- a culture of wishing to finish with education as soon as possible
- lack of confidence
- lack of motivation or understanding of the value of a placement
- concern at the idea of living away from home for the first time
- perceived financial or personal costs
- lack of A level grades for specific companies (Morgan 2006)

Interestingly, many similar issues have been identified as reasons for the lack of take up of opportunities for British students to study overseas. Our experience suggests that a VLE can be used to address (although not necessarily solve) many of these issues.

### Background

For many years the University of Salford has offered an optional sandwich year on undergraduate programmes. Students on the BSc programmes in Business Information Systems, Business Information Technology and eCommerce Systems can opt to spend the third year of their degree on a paid, professional placement year. The degree programme is of 3 years duration/4 years with

placement. The benefits of the sandwich year in terms of improved grades and employment prospects are well established. Despite that, for many years these programmes have experienced the problem of a low take up of placement opportunities. In 2003 and 2004 less than 20% of eligible students took the sandwich year option.

Since 2000 these undergraduate students have used Blackboard (BB) for accessing placement information. This information has included staff announcements, listings of placement opportunities, contact details for companies and support organisations, proformas and other data concerning past and present placements. In 2002 the author also experimented with using online chat with students on placement which (it has to be said) was an abject failure either because students were not allowed to use chat during working hours, did not want to chat with university staff and students during non working hours (who could blame them), or because the technology was not very good.

The author moderated the development of Blackboard at Newcastle University between 2003 and 2004 (Newcastle FDTL 2004) to support students on placement. In focus groups with students during this process, it became clear that they would welcome a tool that facilitated communication between themselves and between different cohorts or years of study. This would simply allow students on placement to establish contact with each other and find out what each other was doing, and would allow those from other years to keep in touch with and learn from those on placement. When students go on an optional placement year they are not necessarily friends with other students going on placement, although they become thrown together as a group.

### **Description of the VLE support**

The Blackboard site at Salford is for use by both students on placement and students seeking placement. It is used by the placement tutor to provide information and documentation, as well as for peer-to-peer communication between students who are currently on placement and students who are seeking a placement. The six main content areas of the site are: Announcements, Staff/Supervisor Info, Future Placements, Placement Forms, General Info and Student Experience.

**Announcements:** The placement tutor regularly uploads announcements to the front page of the site. The announcements section is used for reminding students of deadlines for report and logbook submission, important fees information, and relevant events and competitions (the tutor encourages participation by pointing out the benefits and offering help if required). The tutor also uses the announcements section to congratulate last year's students on their outstanding marks, which helps to motivate students seeking placement.

**Staff/Supervisor Info:** This shows the contact information for staff: placement coordinator, placement support and administration staff.

**Future Placements:** This section of the site is for students who are seeking a placement. Web links to placement support organisations, useful websites, funding opportunities, European contacts and various placement opportunities are posted here. The student can also access a database showing companies who have taken students from Salford in the past, and can download sample CVs and covering letters.

**Placement Forms:** This section of the site is for students who are currently on placement. All forms (including interim assessment, interim report, final report, log book) which need to be completed and submitted are posted here.

**General Info:** This section of the site is for students who are currently on placement. Useful documents are posted here, such as *Getting Started* - a document which outlines the assessment for the placement; the module specification including the breakdown of marks; and various prizes and competitions.

**Student Experience:** This is a discussion board used to facilitate communication between students on placement and those seeking placements in the hope that peer-to-peer communication can alleviate some of the obstacles to students either seeking a placement or enjoying a successful placement experience. It provides a mechanism for reporting back issues and observations, limiting feelings of isolation and helping students and tutors to keep in touch. This may be the only way students can interact as a group; therefore it can facilitate a supportive learning environment.

### **Discussion Board development**

23 students went on a work placement during the Academic year 2005/2006. The placements began in the summer of 2005 and in September the tutor sent an email to all 23 placement students asking them to log onto Blackboard, select the 'Student Experience' area and to add a new thread named according

to the name of their placement organisation, detailing 'where you are/what you're doing/how you got the placement/if you're willing to have current second years contact you etc.' The students were given a sample thread which helped them to compose and structure their posts. It was made clear that they were under no obligation to do this, but 21 students responded by posting their experiences on the board, confirming that they were happy to be contacted by students looking for placements. In some cases this took a bit of encouragement! The majority of posts were submitted within 4 weeks. Also, some posts were made by students sharing their experiences of looking for placement.

The students concerned were all studying for IT degrees and did not have any issues with accessibility or usability. The majority had extensive experience of the use of online discussion. Two examples of student postings, with names removed, are given below:

### **Example 1**

"Hello! I and xxx are currently on our Placement Year with PricewaterhouseCoopers(PwC). We work in one of our Manchester offices, which is part of UKIT in PwC. ... Our office has about 70 people working in it, who are all very friendly. We are both having a really good time and have really enjoyed our time with PwC so far; we have also had the chance to go down to London a few times already and meet loads of new people. We have even been to a ball and believe our placement is giving us a great experience.

The process to applying to PwC is very straightforward and is the same as applying for an every day job. We both found out about the placement through Blackboard ... We then began the process of applying by sending our CV and Covering Letter to the company.

We then both got letters asking us to come for an interview and we were required to complete a personality test online before the interview. On the day of the interview we had an interview which wasn't as daunting as we thought it would be and we then had an aptitude test. We were made to feel welcome and we had dinner provided for us where we could meet employees who had been placement students so we could ask questions. It was a very enjoyable day and we got to meet loads of new people. A couple of weeks later we were notified that we had been given the job.

If anyone wants to ask me about anything then feel free to post them on this thread or email us directly at ... and we will get back to you asap.

Or if you click on this link it will take you to the PwC UK homepage where you can learn more about the firm.

<http://www.pwc.com/uk/eng/main/home/index.html>"

### **Example 2**

"Hi All,

I moved down to London to undertake the placement year at ... I say it's very posh old chap...chucks away Henry, Savoy ahoy! Money is everywhere and the wine flows like water.

After only two months I found myself in a very strange predicament indeed, as the longest standing member of IT staff. I must say it is quite a pleasant experience to have six people waiting outside your office for you to arrive in the morning. So many questions, so many people... It's a wonderful experience and challenge.

My role here has evolved somewhat, shall we say, from being the first line support dogsbody to pretty much running the show. Everyone knows me I know everyone, life is good as they say."

### **Data collection and analysis**

Questionnaires and email interviews were used to ascertain the views of students.

### *Questionnaires*

In March 2006 all students who were on placement attended the Placement Presentation Day and were asked to fill out a research questionnaire which aimed to profile their usage of the BB site and their use of online technologies within the placement organisation. 12 questionnaires were returned.

Out of 12 respondents, 6 used the BB site weekly, 5 used the site once or twice a month and 1 had only visited the site once. The most used parts of the site were the documents section and the downloadable forms, with 9 out of 12 respondents accessing these areas whilst on placement.

10 out of 12 respondents had visited the 'student experience' forum on BB. 3 commented that they found it useful and interesting to read how everyone was doing. On the basis of their posts on the 'student experience' forum, 6 of the respondents had been contacted by students who were looking for placements, asking for advice on various matters such as company specific information and interview and application techniques.

9 respondents used email within the workplace as the primary mode of communication, while 3 respondents said that email was only occasionally used in the workplace. 10 respondents used the internet for work purposes while on placement. 4 had taken online training courses as part of the placement. 4 out of 12 respondents mostly communicated with their workplace mentor via email.

### *Email interviews*

In April 2006 all students who posted to the board were sent a brief email questionnaire asking them if potential placement students had contacted them after reading their posts on the BB discussion board. Students were also asked if they had recommended going on placement and their reasons for going on a placement.

12 out of the 15 students who responded had been contacted, mostly by several students. The responses were all favourable with regards to using BB to support placements and encourage the uptake of placement opportunities:

"I think the discussion board was/is a really good idea. It allows students on placement to see what sort of jobs other placement students are doing as well as allowing them to share experiences."

"I have been contacted by students asking about how well my placement is going after they read my post on BB and 'if it is worth it' by students who have expressed an interest in doing one next year."

"I have had some final year students asking me if the placement has been beneficial, through MSN or when I came to university for my presentation. They are final year students who chose not to do a placement. I definitely think most of them regret not getting a placement but some of them wanted to get their degree over and done with in 3 years."

"Regarding the use of the discussion board for the Professional Placement Year, I did post a couple of messages but no one emailed me back. However one person did reply to the message and there has been people reading it and I think that, although no one emailed back, the information is good for people wanting to find placements."

"Five students have emailed me with regards to the placement – one of them now has a placement at the same company!"

"I had several emails/queries about my placement, not all were through blackboard though. I had a lot of first years querying and several second years".

"Most of the students who contacted me now have placements. They were asking general questions like what is the placement like, is the placement worthwhile etc."

"I recommended a placement for a number of reasons. The main reason was learning how to apply the knowledge gained from uni into a working environment. I also suggested that a placement could give

you an idea on what area the student will want to go into. They may find the modules the course covers is not for them or the course perfectly compliments the work they wish to do in future. My advice was to go for a placement. I hope these reasons make sense.”

Students seeking placements were also polled for their views and typical comments were as follows:

”Strengths (of BB site) - Good of students to write up experiences whilst on placement which can be accessed by students who are wondering whether to reply. Good that new placements appear on VLE because some people don’t see them all on other sites. Good that CV and cover letter templates were available.

Weaknesses (of placement support) - No experiences written up on application forms, telephone and video interviews and also assessment days. These would have helped people who had no prior experience of job applications.”

### **Discussion and further work**

The use of VLE support for students on placement and those seeking a placement and in particular the use of a discussion board with outlines of student experience resulted in very positive feedback. Furthermore, the placement co-ordinator had only to make a small contribution as facilitator. This helped address some of the concerns of those seeking placements such as a lack of confidence, motivation or understanding of the value of placements. Somewhat unexpectedly, the discussion board encouraged communication amongst students on placement and between these students and their former colleagues still at university. In a modest way the initiative encouraged the development of a ‘Community of Practice’ (Wenger 1999).

A number of issues need further discussion. These will become especially important if any assessment is conducted of online contributions and include:

- Provision of clear guidelines as to the role of the student and tutor, e.g. frequency of moderation of the discussion by the tutor and expected contributions from the students.
- E-moderation skills required by tutor. For example, a balance has to be established between taking an active role in encouraging and guiding discussions, which can ensure more productive participation and a higher number of students engaging with the topics under discussion, against interfering in areas that students would prefer to discuss in an area not moderated by the university.
- Analysis techniques for peer-to-peer communication.

There is significant further development that can be made. New features recently added to Blackboard, but already familiar to users of other VLEs such as Moodle, can be adopted to support placement students. For example, wikis can be used to encourage group working and blogs may replace the traditional log book, as is already being encouraged by ASET. At each stage of development, issues of usability and accessibility need to be considered. Broadening the use of the VLE placement area to ex-students and employers so that it changes from being an intranet to an extranet is another interesting future possibility.

### **Postscript**

During the ensuing discussion at the ASET conference a number of issues were raised by the audience which are worth mentioning here. There is substantial difference in practice amongst universities in terms of online (and VLE) support for placement students. In some universities no online support at all is provided for placement students, whilst in others experiments have been conducted with online video, use of webcams, online chat, and online submission of documentation. Factors influencing this difference include the subject area of the students and staff, the level of technical and training support provided by the host university and the degree of commitment on the part of the placement co-ordinator.

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## New Initiatives to Promote European Work Placements at the University of Liverpool

Pollie Bromilow  
University of Liverpool

### New Initiatives to Promote European Work Placements at the University of Liverpool

Dr Pollie Bromilow  
School of Modern Languages  
University of Liverpool

### Working on the Year Abroad

- Year Abroad: 'compulsory third year of degree in Modern Languages'
- One of three pathways offered to students. Other two are:
- British Council Teaching Assistantships (i.e. teaching English in a school)
- Socrates-Erasmus Studentships (i.e. studying at university)

### Why are work placements important for Modern Languages?

- Enables students to use the target language very intensively
- Gives students an important opportunity to broaden their skills beyond studying or teaching
- Adds 'vocational' element to degree
- Helps us keep pace with our major competitors; plays significant role in student recruitment

### What difficulties face students who want to do a work placement abroad? I

- Finding a job! At a distance...
- Defining areas of interest
- Sourcing vacancies
- Making applications
- Understanding employers' requirements

### What difficulties face students who want to do a work placement abroad? II

- Finding accommodation
- Financing placement
- Adapting to foreign-language business environment (adds a layer of complexity to all of the above!)

### How can these problems be overcome?

- By PREPARING students for the work placement experience
- By SHARING INFORMATION amongst staff and students about vacancies, job hunting, applications, interviews etc.
- By STRENGTHENING LINKS WITH EMPLOYERS to increase students' chances of getting individual posts



### Developing a 'joined-up' approach with the Careers Service

- Award-winning website created by Careers Service in 2000 [www.liverpoolyearabroad.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolyearabroad.org.uk)
- Close liaison throughout conception of projects
- Dedicated Careers Advisor posts to e-mail list; secured funding from Deloitte and Bloomberg for 'work abroad buddy' scheme; hosts seminars on employability; presents at Year Abroad Preparation Days

### Working-Abroad@liverpool.ac.uk

- E-mail list started in 2004 to distribute vacancies and other information to Year Abroad 'stragglers'
- Started as 'Working-in-France' in November 2004 with just four members
- Potential benefit to a wider constituency of students soon realised

### Working-Abroad@liverpool.ac.uk

- Now has approximately 240 student members including students from across the SML, School of English, Management School, Edge Hill College and beyond...
- List members include careers advisors, academic staff, administrative staff and UoL applicants.

### How does the list work?

- Distributing vacancies from employers who 'cold call' the School of Modern Languages (usually by e-mail)
- Forwarding vacancies received by the Careers Service
- Maintaining a list of contacts in different countries (over 100 in France, growing number in Spain and Germany)
- Posting news of students' successes through messages entitled 'Congratulations to...'

### What benefits are derived from the list?

- Students have been successful in getting vacation work, work placements, graduate jobs
- Time-effective way of distributing information, reporting on students' successes
- Enhances employer liaison work as list can be used as a focus for activity
- List can be opened up to University applicants as a cost-effective way of maintaining contact

### Work Abroad Buddies

- Introduced in September 2005; thanks to sponsorship from Deloitte.
- Pairs up (via e-mail) students who have experience of working abroad with those who are looking for work in similar sector
- Buddies contribute to seminars
- Aims to help students share information, whilst freeing up staff time

### Working-Abroad Seminars

- Series of six seminars run in semester 1 on a variety of placement-related topics:
- 'What jobs do Liverpool students do?'
- 'Job-hunting Strategies'
- 'Our Resources at Liverpool'
- 'Placement and Graduate Opportunities at Deloitte'
- 'What to do when things do wrong'
- 'Hitting the target with employers!'

### Socrates-Leonardo Scheme

- University of Liverpool has been allocated 25 grants this year from the EU-funded student work mobility project
- Each grant worth about €110 per week PLUS travel and insurance
- Year Abroad students given priority, although vacation work also eligible
- So far, 15 applications received

### PLUS...

- One-to-one consultations with placement co-ordinators in the School of Modern Languages
- Extensive support from Careers Service
- Generic skills seminars
- 'Quick query' interviews
- Careers Guidance interviews
- E-mail support

### Conclusions: What has been achieved?

- 240 students have 'signed up' for e-mail list
- 90 bulletins sent out in 2005
- 50 bulletins sent so far in 2006
- Students employed at gofluent, ID-AL, the AA, jobs-in-the-alps, ETS, Le Fleuray Hotel, Eurogroup, Haven Europe, ARC UK, Zaenker & Kollegan, Canal +, Eurosport, Daimler-Chrysler.
- Students interviewed at Oxbow, Megalos, Language Safaris, Marcel Advertising, Hays Personnel, Aderly, Bellavista, ID-AL...

### Other benefits

- Encouraging students to work abroad during holidays. e.g. the AA, Language Camp in Siberia, Siblu
- Encouraging students to think realistically about their options
- Maintaining students' motivation during job hunt!
- Peer-pressure (through reports of other students' successes)

### What does the future hold?

- Possible collaboration with Higher Skills Development Programme, Liverpool University Student Training Initiative to expand preparation seminars
- Possible use of virtual learning environment to upload, store and exchange information
- Incorporation of new initiatives into [www.liverpoolyearabroad.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolyearabroad.org.uk)

### Thanks for listening...and over to you!

- Feedback?
- Comments?
- Questions?

## Health and Safety Notes for Placement Managers

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These notes state the law as I believe it to be in December 2006. However, the law is complex and ever changing. In the event of a legal problem or general compliance, the responsibility remains with the reader to take appropriate advice.

**In the interests of developing and sharing good practice, comments, queries and corrections of anything in these notes are welcomed.**

**Carrie de Silva  
December 2006**

## Health and Safety Notes for Placement Managers

### **Note :**

This paper specifically relates to the law of England and Wales. Health and safety provisions are largely the same in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Court procedures are different in those two regions and statutory references are, in some instances, different in Northern Ireland. In Scotland, tort law (delict) is one of the areas which deviates from the English position. Those operating outside England and Wales will need to take local advice on the law. The general suggestions on the administrative aspects of managing placements and good practice are, of course, applicable throughout the United Kingdom.

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The management and responsibility of the health, safety and welfare of students in higher education and on work placement is of great importance to higher education institutions (HEIs) and their employment managers and officers. Employers' liability is relatively clear and will govern the student / employer relationship but the student is not, of course, an employee of the HEI. There is, however, the understanding that there are strong links between the institution and the student and that there is a level of responsibility.

These notes seek to set out, in brief, the scope of that responsibility and to suggest procedures for placement officers for governing the placement / sandwich process which may help fulfil the legal (and moral) duties of the HEI. They are not a statement of law, but of the author's view of the position - compliance remains the responsibility of the HEI. There are many issues surrounding the definition of what the phrase 'placement student' covers. For the purposes of these notes, it is assumed that we are discussing a student in traditional employment, off campus, formally employed by a third party, or a formal employment relationship between the student and their HEI. This 'employment' includes unpaid positions where an element of training is involved.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990.

Although health and safety responsibilities cover a wide remit and are relevant to any employment situation, there have been particular concerns raised where students are going into what are seen as higher risk areas - industries where statistics tell us that most fatalities and serious injuries occur.<sup>2</sup> This paper highlights particularly the construction industry, agriculture, equine and forestry but, clearly, other industries and situations may well come into the 'high risk' category. The noted industries have been particularly highlighted as being the cause of 43% of workplace deaths in 2005/06 and 50% in 2004/05<sup>3</sup>, although employing only 9% of the workforce. Overseas placements also give rise to additional concerns - although not, of course, necessarily high risk, but there may be potential problems of communication, lack of opportunity to visit, insurance issues and local health and safety standards.

So - as well as a general coverage of good practice for HEI health and safety officers, then, the particular concerns of placing students in such areas as construction sites, farm, forest and equine yards and overseas will be considered.

It may be noted that liability for health, safety and welfare does, of course, embrace wider issues than physical safety including discrimination, harassment, disability and mental health matters. This paper does not expressly cover these areas but placement managers and HEIs will need to address these areas in their policies and practice.

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This paper will look at the potential liabilities of the different parties in the student placement relationship. Under the heading 'Placement Manager' some practical suggestions for fulfilling the legal obligations to the student will be made.

### **Legal Responsibility**

Various parties have a legal responsibility towards the health and safety of the student or others affected by the student's work. These will be looked at in turn, with a consideration of the various sources of potential liability.

- HEI
- placement manager
- visiting tutor
- student
- employer

## **Higher Education Institution**

### **Contractual Liability**

- **Contract between HEI and student.**

The contractual relationship between the HEI and the student is established in the admittance of a student onto a course and the acceptance of fees. Health and safety law, although often thought of in an employer / employee context, extends to ensuring that 'persons other than' employees are not exposed to health and safety risks, 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.<sup>4</sup> Students, with or without the contractual link, are clearly persons 'who may be affected'<sup>5</sup> by the work of the HEI. The terms of the HEI / student relationship may be drawn from any assertions by the institution and will include the prospectus, other promotional material, information in websites, induction material, placement handbooks and the like, and the student charter.

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<sup>2</sup> Health and Safety Commission (2006) *Statistics of Fatal Injuries 2005/06*. National Statistics Publication. Sudbury : HSE Books.

<sup>3</sup> But only 9.2% of the workforce in 2004 - *Employment in Europe 2005*, European Commission.

<sup>4</sup> Section 3, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Section 3(1) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Having established the nature of the HEI / student relationship,<sup>6</sup> it is working out how to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act, supporting legislation, such as the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999<sup>7</sup> and common law<sup>8</sup> duties, in practical terms, that this paper is largely concerned with. What must HEIs, and their servants in the form of placement managers, actually *do*?

The HEI is likely, and reasonably, to rely on the guidance of codes of practice. It is important to note that these do not have the force of law (which, of course, comes from the primary sources of legislation and judicial precedent). The courts do, normally, accept that compliance with industry standards will fulfil legal obligations of care. Importantly, however, courts do not *always* accept this<sup>9</sup> and the HEI is ultimately responsible for ensuring that they comply with primary legislation.

Industry statements in somewhat vague, theoretical terms are to be found in the QAA *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in high education: placement learning*<sup>10</sup>. More detailed, practical advice is to be found in *Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students : Management Guidance*.<sup>11</sup> This paper will draw on the UCEA 1997 *Guidance*, along with other sources of practice.

Attempt may be made to minimize or extinguish contractual liability to the student by the use of appropriate exclusion clauses, subject to the restrictions of the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 (and subsequent legislation) which particularly seeks to protect contracting parties of unequal bargaining power and severely limits the use of such clauses. However, it will be an effective and prudent protection to avoid over-enthusiastic promises in any literature (or verbal discussions). HEIs should ‘support’ the placement process, not ‘promise’ or ‘guarantee’ to find the perfect job or intimate unnecessarily high levels of ‘care’ or ‘supervision’.

- **Quasi-contract between HEI and employer.**

There is a quasi-contractual relationship of mutual expectation and responsibility between the HEI and the employer. Although there has not normally been the passing of the most usual form of contractual consideration (i.e. money) to validate the relationship, the implicit and implied expectations, coupled with ideas of benefit and detriment,<sup>12</sup> formalise this side of the triangular relationship underpinning student placement. Although day to day management of the student will, of course, be the responsibility of the employer, it will be incumbent upon the HEI to approve the employer as appropriate, the particular position as appropriate, the particular student as appropriate and to provide access (for both student and employer) to the HEI personnel, i.e. normally a placement manager and / or visiting tutor backed up with out of hours access to Student Services or the like, the student still being under the HEI’s care by virtue of being a registered student and paying fees during the placement year.

### **Legal Redress**

Contractual remedies are sought in the civil courts (County Court or High Court in England and Wales) or in the Employment Tribunal, for employment matters. The remedy will normally be financial compensation, i.e. damages, but discretionary remedies are available where more appropriate, e.g. an injunction or, say, re-instatement in a job in a successful action against unfair dismissal.

### **Tortious Liability**

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<sup>6</sup> See further in Palfreyman, D (1999) ‘The HEI-student legal relationship with special reference to the USA experience.’ *Education and the Law* 11 (1) 1999, pp 5 - 20.

<sup>7</sup> Section 3(1)(b) extends the application of these Regulations to persons other than employees.

<sup>8</sup> Largely the duty of care under the principles of negligence.

<sup>9</sup> *Izzard v Field Palmer* [1999] EWCA Civ. 2045

<sup>10</sup> Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2001)

<sup>11</sup> (1997) London: UCEA/CVCP. At the time of writing (December 2006) USHA/UCEA have had a draft update in progress for some time but the final publication date is not yet known.

<sup>12</sup> *Laythoarp v Bryant* (1836) 2 Bing NC 735., *Currie v Misa* (1875) LR 10 Exch. 153

Under the common law of negligence, the HEI has a duty of care towards the student and employer. This is a civil matter, pursued in the County Court or the High Court, for which damages might be sought in the event of a breach.

This section is a brief explanation of the principles involved. It should be noted that any given scenario could result in legal actions under a number of different heads in different courts.

Example : a student is sent to a high risk job (e.g. on a construction site) where no health and safety assurances from the employer have been sought and no site visit made to an employer who turns out to have been successfully prosecuted in the past for breaches of health and safety legislation. When the student is hurt as a result of a lack of training there is likely to be a criminal prosecution in the Magistrates' or Crown Court for breach of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act (and related legislation), together with a civil action in the County or High Court for negligence.

The idea of negligence was discussed at least as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>13</sup> but the modern law was clarified and developed in the judgment in *Donaghue v Stevenson* [1932].<sup>14</sup>

In short, three matters have to be established to succeed in a negligence action:

- The defendant must owe the claimant (victim) a duty of care.
- The duty of care must have been breached.
- The damage to the defendant, unintended by the claimant, must be a (relatively) foreseeable result of that breach.

### **To whom is a duty of care owed?**

Care is owed to those who are foreseeably likely to be affected by one's actions, sometimes referred to in law as one's neighbours.<sup>15</sup> This clearly sets out a duty on employers for employees and also on HEIs for students and on individual placement managers. This duty must be seen in the context of the placement. The potential scope of duty has given rise for much concern in the USA and the UK with student actions in tort in many contexts, e.g. for an HEI's failure to prevent injury on campus<sup>16</sup> or for academic negligence / failure to teach.<sup>17</sup> The historical development, scope and policy of the duty of care owed by an HEI for its students is usefully and widely explored by Bickel and Lake.<sup>18</sup> Although looking at the American experience, the common law is similar and the situations provide invaluable illustrations. There is no general duty to supervise adult students outside the campus / placement context.<sup>19</sup> A line of thinking in a number of US cases indicates the common sense approach that '... there is no broad duty of care to supervise students as adults in their social / recreational and sporting activities on or off campus ...'<sup>20</sup> and that it is '... unrealistic to impose upon an institution of higher education the additional role of custodian over its adult students.'<sup>21</sup> This is echoed by the English approach to occupiers' liability, such that (briefly) adults of sound mind must take some responsibility

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<sup>13</sup> See *Blyth v Birmingham Waterworks Co.* (1856) 11 Exch. 781

<sup>14</sup> [1932] AC 562, [1932] All ER 1 - a House of Lords decision coming down on appeal from the Scottish courts.

<sup>15</sup> Lord Atkin in *Donaghue v Stevenson* : 'The question of law that you are to love your neighbour becomes in law, you must not injure your neighbour; and the lawyer's question, who is my neighbour? receives a restricted reply. You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be like to injure your neighbour. ... persons who are so closely and directly affected by my act that I ought to reasonably to have them in contemplation as being so affected when I am directing my mind to the acts or omissions which are called in question'.

<sup>16</sup> An action in occupiers' liability which failed in the Court of Appeal in England is *Ratcliffe v McConnell* [1999] 1WLR 523 where a student injured on campus was trespassing over a high wall to a locked swimming pool in the early hours of the morning.

<sup>17</sup> As yet no successful court actions in the UK although there have been out of court settlements by the Universities of Greenwich and Wolverhampton - both, as a matter of fact, relating to law courses, so presumably the litigious students picked up some law (Palfreyman, David in Palfreyman, D and Warner, D (2002)).

<sup>18</sup> Bickel, Robert D and Lake, Peter F (1999) *The Rights and Responsibilities of the Modern University : who assumes the risks of college life?* Chapel Hill, North Carolina : Carolina Academic Press.

<sup>19</sup> See *Ratcliffe v McConnell* [1999] 1WLR 523

*McLean v University of St Andrews* (2004) Outer House, Court of Session, 25/02/2004, A1143/01.

Hoye, William P (2000) 'What a Difference a Millennium Makes: Tort Litigation in Higher Education, Circa Y2K.' *Education Law Reporter*, Vol. 147, No. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Palfreyman, David 'Students Abroad : out of sight, out of mind and beyond the HEI's duty of care in English Law?' in Palfreyman, D. and Warner, D. (2002) *Higher Education Law*, Bristol : Jordans.

<sup>21</sup> *Bradshaw v Rawlings* 612 F.2d 135 (3rd Cir. 1979)

for their own actions and decisions.<sup>22</sup> 'Of course there is some risk of accident arising out of the *joie de vivre* of the young. But that is no reason for imposing a grey and dull safety regime on everyone.'<sup>23</sup>

The position would, of course, be different where a duty of care has been assumed, e.g. in most social drinking situations there is likely to be no duty owed to the student.<sup>24</sup> However, where some control is taken, such as transport being provided, then care will be assumed.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, where the HEI is on notice of dangerous conditions, whether in the workplace during office hours or outside,<sup>26</sup> then a duty may well arise.

In a placement context the idea of being on notice, of having been made aware of a risk, will be highly relevant, whether that notice is from a pre-placement Health and Safety checklist form, site visits or feedback from current or past placement students.

Having established that a duty of care owed is only the first hurdle in the triple fence of the test of negligence. We must then look to:

### What constitutes a breach of duty of care?

Once a duty is established (and as we have seen, this will be clear in terms of the placement process and work but may extend wider), in general terms, there is an objective standard of ordinary prudence, care and skill. Where one is acting in a skilled or professional capacity (whether or not one actually *has* the skill required!) then the guide is a competent member of the trade or profession in question.<sup>27</sup> It will be a question of fact, based on good practice and the experience of the various parties involved.

A duty of care case watched closely by HEIs with overseas placements / study periods was *Erin McClean v University of St Andrew's*.<sup>28</sup> The university was held *not* to have breached its duty of care to a female student raped whilst on an overseas placement (walking along the beach late at night). The student claimed that the HEI was negligent in placing her in Odessa - a Russian city with a high crime rate. The court held that the HEI had discharged its duty by providing appropriate warnings and could not be held responsible for an adult student, walking of her own free will, in a dangerous area at night. Clearly, had there been no student briefings, had the rape taken place in HEI provided accommodation or had the placement been in a country against which the Foreign Office warns UK travellers against visiting, the outcome might have been different. The potentially wide scope of the duty of care for overseas placements, and consequent risk management required, was explored by Tim Birtwistle<sup>29</sup> and Wallace and Chan,<sup>30</sup> stressing the idea of informed consent on the part of the student, as seen in *McLean*.

To fulfil their duty of care the HEI needs to ensure that it has acted 'reasonably'. This will include demonstrating, by way of documentation, that there has been effective risk assessment and management. This is explored below under 'Placement Managers'.

### Resultant Damage

The third requirement in establishing negligence is less likely to be at issue. If the damage resulting from the breach is completely unforeseeable<sup>31</sup> or if the damage did not *result* from the breach,<sup>32</sup> then the action will fail.

<sup>22</sup> *Tomlinson v Congleton Borough Council* [2003] UKHL 47

<sup>23</sup> Lord Scott of Foscote, para. 94 in *Tomlinson v Congleton Borough Council* [2003].

<sup>24</sup> *McLean v University of St Andrews* [2004]

<sup>25</sup> *Jebson v Ministry of Defence* [2000] 1 WLR 2055

<sup>26</sup> See *Knoll v Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska* 258 Neb. 1 (1999) and *obiter* statements in *McLean v University of St Andrews* [2003].

<sup>27</sup> *Bolan v Friern Hospital Management Committee* [1957] 2 All ER 118

<sup>28</sup> (2004)

<sup>29</sup> Birtwistle, T. (2001) 'Higher Education and the Duty of Care: the law is on the move and much remains uncertain'. *Education Law* Vol 2 (2), pp 87 - 94.

<sup>30</sup> Wallace, J D and Chan, S. (1999) 'ACT-TIONS: a model for student safety and institutional responsibility in study abroad.' *Perspectives* Vol. 3 (4), pp 123 - 127.

<sup>31</sup> *The Wagon Mound* [1961] - *Overseas Tankship (UK) Ltd v Morts Dock and Engineering Co. Ltd* [1961] AC 388, [1961] 1 All ER 414 - where a freak fire was caused by a combination of wind and other conditions.

<sup>32</sup> *Barnet v Kensington and Chelsea Hospital Committee* [1967] 1 QB 428 - where poor hospital treatment of an arsenic victim did not *cause* the death as there is no cure for arsenic poisoning.

Also there may be a break in the chain of causation - an example would be where relatively minor injuries are sustained after an accident, caused by another's negligence, but serious injury or death ultimately results due to poor hospital treatment. *But for* the accident the claimant would not have been in hospital, but is it just to sue the instigator of a minor incident for death? It will be a matter of fact and degree as to whether the intervening event (hospital treatment in this example) is sufficient to break the chain of causation.<sup>33</sup> This issue can become even more emotive in the criminal context : where someone is in hospital due to a minor assault and dies due to poor treatment, does one charge the aggressor with manslaughter?

The practical aspects of this paper concentrate on the second stage of the negligence test, i.e. what is 'reasonable' care. In instances where there are complications regarding the chain of causation, legal advice will clearly be required,

As with health and safety, the negligence cases could also (and possibly with greater chance of success<sup>34</sup>) be brought in contract.

### **Criminal Liability**

Breach of health and safety legislation is a criminal matter, whereas breaches of contract or duty of care are civil. The consequence of this is that civil wrongs can result in being sued with, most likely, damages (compensation) being awarded to the successful claimant. Contravention of criminal law results in a prosecution and can, in addition to financial penalties<sup>35</sup> and a criminal record, result in a prison sentence. Successful prosecutions by the Health and Safety Executive are detailed on the internet.<sup>36</sup> Although relatively rare where people are acting in the course of employment, if fault is clearly traced to an individual then there will be prosecution of that individual, rather than an organisation, and imprisonment is available to the courts.<sup>37</sup>

### **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 forms the legislative base of health and safety law, stating the duties of employers, employees and others affected by an employer's management and control of work. The HEI is not, of course, the student's employer but there is still a duty of care under the Act by virtue of s.3 (1) :

*It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby<sup>38</sup> are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.*

There is then a liability under these provisions to students, who are clearly not employees, of the HEI but are 'affected' by the HEI's operations.

The duty not to expose people to risks is not an absolute duty. The HEI must only ensure that persons are not exposed to risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.<sup>39</sup>

This area of law has, since 1974, had considerable detail added by a number of statutory instruments. Attention is particularly drawn to the 'six pack' regulations,<sup>40</sup> originally implemented in 1992 as a

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<sup>33</sup> *Morris v Solihull Health Care NHS Trust* [1999] Horse Law, vol 5, iss 1.

<sup>34</sup> Palfreyman (2002). This book has been updated as Farrington, D J and Palfreyman, D (2006) *The Law of Higher Education*, Oxford : Oxford HEI Press.

<sup>35</sup> Up to £20,000 in the Magistrates' Court and unlimited in the Crown Court.

<sup>36</sup> [www.hse-databases.co.uk/prosecutions/](http://www.hse-databases.co.uk/prosecutions/) - searchable by name, industry and area.

<sup>37</sup> See 'Placement Managers' below.

<sup>38</sup> Author's emphasis.

<sup>39</sup> Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, s 2(1).

<sup>40</sup> Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended 2003)

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Quarries Miscellaneous Health and Safety Provisions Regulations 1995)

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992



result of a European directive.<sup>41</sup> The Regulation affecting all places of work and setting out duties of both HEIs and placement providers is :

### **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 set out risk assessment requirements.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, again, the main duties in the legislation fall on the employer.<sup>43</sup> However, the HEI also has a duty of care regarding risks arising from or connected with their undertaking affecting persons not in their employment.<sup>44</sup> Good practice regarding risk assessment and the elimination or mitigation of risk would include:

- The requirement for placement providers to sign an acknowledgement of compliance with health and safety law to confirm that the placement provider has consciously adopted responsibility. An example of this form is to be found on p.18 of the *Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students*.<sup>45</sup> This guidance is currently being updated. The new draft suggests a brief statement of compliance by employers, (underpinning their primary responsibility) rather than the detailed checklist recommended by the 1997 guidance. Pending any clear legal advice to the contrary, the author and ASET favour the detailed list in the 1997 guidance. Answers given must be reviewed and be satisfactory - HEIs will be deemed to have notice of anything untoward raised by the checklist answers and may thus find themselves assuming a higher level of responsibility.<sup>46</sup>
- Appropriate provision of information, training and supervision of students. The UCEA *Health and Safety Guidance* booklet also includes suggested health and safety notes to be given to all students as part of health and safety briefing.<sup>47</sup>
- Due vigilance by HEI staff on workplace visits, with any queries being reported to the placement manager and followed up.

### **Corporate Manslaughter**

In addition to prosecution for breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act or related provisions, an organisation, as well as an individual, may be prosecuted for manslaughter in the event of a fatality. However, organisations (as opposed to individuals) can only be prosecuted in England and Wales for manslaughter if the directors or superior officers can be deemed to be 'the company' and culpable of the crime (the doctrine of identification). This has only occasionally happened,<sup>48</sup> due to the technical difficulties of successfully prosecuting organisations. As a response, the government has produced the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill.<sup>49</sup> If it is introduced in its current form, the resultant legislation will make it easier to obtain a conviction when death occurs due to senior management failure, i.e. a fundamental failure of systems. This could be applied to the placement provider or, of course, the HEI.

### **Delegation of placement procurement / management**

Although the delegation of the procurement of student employment positions and / or the management thereof (i.e. the use of an employment agency) will give rise to a responsibility on the part of the relevant agent, it will not release the HEI from its own responsibilities. In particular, great care must be taken in appointing such agents to ensure that the appointment itself does not imply a lack of care.

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Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002

<sup>41</sup> Framework Directive 89/391/EEC.

<sup>42</sup> Section 3(1).

<sup>43</sup> Section 3(1)(a).

<sup>44</sup> Section 3(1)(b).

<sup>45</sup> (1999), UCEA.

<sup>46</sup> The potential problems of this are part of the thinking behind the new draft guidance

<sup>47</sup> (1999), UCEA p.23.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, *R v Kite and OLL*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1994, unreported, Winchester Crown Court; *R v Roy Bowles Transport Ltd*, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1999, unreported, Central Criminal Court.

<sup>49</sup> First reading in the House of Commons on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006 :

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/pabills/200506/corporate\\_manslaughter\\_and\\_corporate\\_homicide.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/pabills/200506/corporate_manslaughter_and_corporate_homicide.htm)

## PLACEMENT MANAGERS / SUPERVISORS

An employer will normally have vicarious liability for the civil wrongs or crimes of its employees carried out 'in the course of employment'<sup>50</sup> thus, if the placement manager is negligent in the conduct of his or her duties, or breaches health and safety requirements, legal action will normally be brought against the HEI.

This does not, however, mean that there is no personal responsibility - the placement manager, in both a personal and corporate capacity will, in order to fulfill their duty of care, need to ensure, so far as is 'reasonable' :

- **Adequate preparation of students for placement**, which is likely to include briefings, possibly 1:1 talks and access to a HEI placement supervisor and / or visiting tutor. A written copy of information imparted should be given to the students and should, ideally, be available online. The briefing will include health and safety provisions *and* obligations. As always, HEI staff should be acting within their areas of competence, thus it may be appropriate for health and safety briefings to be given by the placement manager, but HEI or outside health and safety specialists may be more appropriate.<sup>51</sup> Industry specific provisions will be borne in mind, e.g. students working with animals will be warned of the danger of zoonoses<sup>52</sup> and a small card to be carried and given to doctors in the case of ill health might be appropriate. This is an example given to students at the author's institution:

*The holder of this card is a student / employee of ... and works with farm animals / horses. He / she may have been exposed to an animal related disease including:*

<i>brucellosis</i>	<i>orf</i>	<i>salmonella</i>
<i>enzootic abortion</i>	<i>ringworm</i>	<i>tuberculosis</i>
<i>leptospirosis</i>	<i>pasteurella</i>	

- **Adequate approval of employers** in the form of vetting the employer's health and safety provisions. The 1997 guidance suggests a checklist will certainly be required to be completed, signed and retained on file with any doubtful responses followed up. UCEA *Guidelines* indicate that a form should be sent out annually, even where employers have had previous students.<sup>53</sup> Guidance notes for the employer on the completion of the health and safety checklist will aid understanding and ensure that employers are properly briefed. The new draft guidance emphasises the employer's primary responsibility and has thus replaced the detailed checklist with a statement of employer responsibility and compliance. Whether operating a full checklist or a revised note of compliance, good practice requires a signed copy to be returned to the HEI and retained on file.
- **Pre-placement visits** - the 1997 guidance and legal advisers<sup>54</sup> formerly indicated that a pre-placement visit should *always* be carried out as part of the risk assessment for new placement providers. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this is neither practical nor general practice. Common law indicates a 'reasonable' level of care whilst health and safety legislation is couched in terms of 'reasonably practicable'.<sup>55</sup> However, each case should be looked at in terms of a range of factors such as :

<sup>50</sup> *Limpus v London General Omnibus Co* (1862) 1 H&C 526, *Lister v Romford Ice & Cold Storage Co. Ltd.* [1957] 1 All ER 125.

<sup>51</sup> The author's institution has secured an agricultural specialist from the Health and Safety Executive to acquaint students with the specific hazards of the agriculture, forestry, countryside and food processing industries.

<sup>52</sup> Diseases which can be transmitted from animals to humans.

<sup>53</sup> (1999) UUK, p 12.

<sup>54</sup> Proceedings of the ASET Annual Conference 2005, Eversheds LLP - Health and Safety Question and Answer Session, pp 7 – 13. Sheffield : ASET.

<sup>55</sup> Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, s2 (1).

- nature of the work
- age of student
- experience of student
- any special vulnerabilities of student
- nature of the employer
- responses to telephone contact
- third party corroboration of working practices<sup>56</sup>

Comment : given that placement managers and visiting tutors are not expected to be health and safety risk assessment experts, that students may well work on several different sites and that jobs may change and given the problems of the 'assumption of liability', lack of pre-placement visits or the limited scope of visits should be robustly defended on the grounds of 'reasonable practicability' and the primary nature of employers responsibility. Although much available advice talks about pre-placement visits, observing the workplace, etc.<sup>57</sup> when the nature and practicalities of student work is analysed to any extent, how meaningful can such an approach be?

Again - there will be a heavier onus on the HEI in areas of higher risk - agriculture, construction and the like - or other employments, as determined from the risk assessment (e.g. a review of the above bullet points), which will determine the necessity of pre-placement visiting.

- **Appropriate 'matching' of students to jobs** - clearly this is not an exact science and the student and employer take the primary responsibility, but the nature and conditions of work, age of student, any disabilities or mental health issues of which the placement manager is aware, or should be aware, must all be taken into consideration. Note that where courses lead to jobs where Criminal Records Bureau checks are required these need to be done<sup>58</sup> - although there will be a duty on the placement provider to do such checks, it avoids students being accepted onto courses and subsequently being unable to do relevant work.
- **Adequate management of the placement** with student access to HEI staff and (normally) a visit by HEI staff to the student and employer at the place of work. The UCEA *Management Guidance* clearly states : 'It will not be possible for a HEI to fulfil its obligations to review the placement if no visits at all are made, unless the placement is exceptionally short (i.e. a few weeks) and in a very low risk environment.'<sup>59</sup> HEIs will particularly need to be alert to following up any negative feedback from students or concerns raised by employers or during visits.
- **Adequate briefing of employers**<sup>60</sup> to ensure that they are aware of the HEI placement system in general (including health and safety matters) and any student specific issues in particular.
- **Obtaining student and employer feedback**, and acting on any matters raised, as appropriate. This will aid future management and may highlight issues which may need addressing, but which fell short of complaint, whether a health and safety issue or other matters such as discrimination or harassment.
- **Compliance with in-house placement policies** - many areas of placement management are subject to discretion rather than specific rules. HEIs must, however, ensure that anything specifically stated is carried out, e.g. in terms of number of student visits. As with the advice on contracts, use words such as 'likely' and 'aim' rather than 'will'.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. from local professional associations.

<sup>57</sup> As well as general guidance see industry specific notes such as:

'University responsibility for health and safety of students on placement', Briefing Paper 4, Educational Quality in Placements in Engineering (EQUIPE);

Sinclair-Williams, M and K (2006) *Health and Safety Guidance for Inspections of Horse Riding Establishments and Livery Yards*. Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

<sup>58</sup> Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and the Care Standards Act 2000.

<sup>59</sup> (1999) *Management Guidance*, p 14.

<sup>60</sup> QAA *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in high education : placement learning* p 6.

- **Briefing and monitoring of placement visitors** - ensure that HEI staff visiting students on placement are aware of, and understand, their health and safety monitoring role (within the parameters discussed below).
- **Data Protection Act compliance** will mean that where there is to be disclosure of student details then consent must be sought. A blanket consent as part of the placement process would be prudent, in addition to any consent on first admission to the HEI on induction.
- **Overseas placement management** - all guidance in this paper applies but overseas placements may require additional risk assessments, student and employer briefings. Additional guidance may usefully be obtained from UKCOSA - The Council for International Education.<sup>61</sup> Detailed guidance on overseas placements is outside the scope of these notes.
- **Disability issues** - reference might usefully be made to *Providing Work Placements for Disabled Students : a good practice guide for further and higher education institutions*<sup>62</sup> where appropriate.

## VISITING TUTORS

HEI staff visiting students on work placement have a duty of care, under the basic principles of negligence and within Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act provisions, to observe the health and safety practices when on visits and to take any action they consider to be necessary, consequent upon those observations. In extreme cases this might mean instigating the cessation of employment, but will more likely be discussions with the employer, student, HEI placement manager or health and safety officer to ensure :

- correct implementation of risk assessment procedures and the elimination or mitigation of those risks, as appropriate
- suitable training and / or supervision
- a return visit, at the discretion of the parties involved, to check on the revised arrangements

It is not 'reasonably practicable' to expect all placement visitors to be health and safety experts and, given the primary responsibility of the placement provider, and the signed assurances that the employer is complying with their legal obligations, the placement visitors should not normally be carrying out formal risk assessments. Indeed, to do so may give rise to additional legal exposure.

Again, the higher risk industries under consideration may warrant more specialist placement visitors and this is, anecdotally, common practice with many HEIs.

In brief, visiting tutors must be alert to health and safety issues and, importantly, respond to any concerns, either observed or raised by the student (or, indeed, the employer), taking the matter up with the employer and / or the HEI as appropriate.

## STUDENTS

In common with all employees, as well as rights and protections, students have duties and responsibilities attached to their role.

They have a common law duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their 'neighbours', i.e. others likely to be affected by their acts or omissions, be they colleagues in the workplace or others they come into contact with.

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<sup>61</sup> See 'Student Activity Abroad: Risk Assessment frequently asked questions' at [www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/liability.htm](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/liability.htm).

<sup>62</sup> (2002) Department for Education and Skills, available online at [www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/placements/](http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/placements/)

**Under the Health and Safety at Work Act<sup>63</sup> employees must:**

- take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and
- co-operate with his employer in terms of any requirements necessary to enable compliance with the employer's legal duties regarding health, safety and welfare

Also, no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions.<sup>64</sup>

The students must attend health and safety briefings prior to placement and their attendance should be documented as a mandatory requirement of them commencing work.<sup>65</sup>

They must also agree to attend workplace induction and to inform the HEI of their attendance. A written checklist / note of attendance, signed by the student and, preferably, the employer, would be good practice.

In order to maintain the protection of HEI control and responsibility the student must inform their placement manager or visiting tutor of any change to employer, place of work or conditions of work.

Computerised placement management systems often allow records of induction, changes of address, etc. to be completed by students online. Many of us, however, are still working with paper. The important factor is that some sort of easily accessible record is maintained in an accurate and timely way.

## **EMPLOYERS**

As noted above, the primary responsibility for the health and safety of student employees lies with the employers, whether or not they are paying the student. They have the same legal liabilities as they owe to any other employees.

Their duties, as with HEIs (see above) are governed by contract, tort and criminal law. Limited detail is given below as the detailed issues are the concern of the employer, rather than the HEI.

### **Contract**

This contract underpins the primary responsibility for the student's health and safety and it is in place, by reason of the student working for the employer, whether or not payment is made and whether or not there is written documentation although, of course, there should be paperwork in place in accordance with employment law requirements.<sup>66</sup> Both the employer and the student will be required to comply with the health and safety obligations implicit in the employment relationship<sup>67</sup> (as explored above).

It must be noted that, although the employer has the primary liability for its student employee and the HEI clearly cannot control the student's work, the HEI still has a measure of liability<sup>68</sup> - as explored under 'Health and Safety at Work Act', above.

It is an implied (if not an express) term of a contract of employment that reasonable care will be taken of an employees health, safety and welfare. This provision has, of course, been largely superceded by the more specific requirements of health and safety legislation.

<sup>63</sup> Section 7.

<sup>64</sup> Section 8.

<sup>65</sup> See suggested checklist - Appendix 2.

<sup>66</sup> Section 1, Employment Rights Act 1996 requires that a written statement of particulars be given within two months of the commencement of employment but good placement practice should ensure this is provided *prior* to the start date.

<sup>67</sup> The basic provisions are set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 with detail added by many regulations and codes of practice - some of general applicability, such as the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, others industry specific, e.g. the Approved Code of Practice to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 - see further above.

<sup>68</sup> *R. v Associated Octel Company Limited* [1996] 4 All ER 846.

### **Tort**

An employer owes a duty of care in negligence as discussed above. They will also be vicariously liable for the negligent acts or omissions of their employees.

### **Criminal**

The Health and Safety at Work Act stipulates in s.2 (1) that :

It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees, with particular reference to :

- (a) the provision and maintenance of safe plant and safe systems of work.
- (b) the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- (c) information, instruction, training and supervision
- (d) maintaining safe conditions with adequate access in and out.
- (e) overall provision of a safe working environment.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations set out the detail of compliance.

The HEI or the placement manager can take no responsibility for the day-to-day management of workplace health, safety and welfare. What they can do, as detailed above, is to establish, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the firm is complying with their legal obligations and to document that confirmation in their records.

## **SUPPORTING LAW AND PRACTICE**

The applicable law is noted where relevant above, but to summarise, the major sources of health and safety law, as relevant to HEI liabilities, are:

### **Legislation**

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Employers will also be aware of employment legislation such as the Employment Rights Act 1996.

### **Common Law**

- The common law of contract and negligence are relevant as discussed.

### **Codes of practice**

- HEI and Colleges Employers Association *Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students: Management Guidance*, last published in 1997, revision proposed 2006 / 07
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Section 9: Placement Learning*.

These codes of practice do not have the force of law in themselves, under our legal system. However, failure to follow their recommendations is likely to be indicative of a breach of duty of care and give rise to an action in negligence.

#### **KEY DOCUMENTATION**

- health and safety compliance form signed by employer
- guidance notes on the above form to aid employer understanding and informed consent
- health and safety briefing and materials - attendance and receipt signed by student
- health and safety briefing materials lodged online
- health and safety training completed by student
- confirmation of workplace induction by employer, including health and safety information, signed by student
- notes of placement visits

These forms, together with any other correspondence with employers or students, should be kept for three years after the end of the placement.

Depending on the numbers of students involved and the timing of employments, placement managers might implement a *Placement Agreement* for each student (example attached), incorporating tick boxes on :

- signed employer health and safety form receipt
- student placement briefing attendance
- student health and safety materials received
- workplace induction confirmation received

Others might simply have checklists of all of the above with briefing attendance registers.

#### **Information**

There are a number of websites which placement managers might usefully review to keep up to date with health and safety law. In particular :

[www.parliament.uk/pa/pabills.htm](http://www.parliament.uk/pa/pabills.htm)

This site has emerging legislation in the form of bills presented to Parliament, with the current status, debates and explanatory notes.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts.htm)

Full transcripts of all UK Acts of Parliament from 1988 and Statutory Instruments from 1987.

[www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/regulations/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/regulations/index.htm)

The Health and Safety Executive website should need no introduction. This section lists forthcoming legislative and regulatory changes to be aware of.

[www.tuc.org.uk/h\\_and\\_s](http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s)

The Trades Union Congress website, closely connected with [www.hazards.org](http://www.hazards.org) - 'the workers' health and safety quarterly', both sites being a useful online read for staying abreast of current health and safety issues.

### Example Placement Agreement

Name of student .....

Course .....

Employer .....

Contact name .....

Employer's address .....

.....

1. Employer's health and safety checklist received .....

2. Student passed online health and safety test .....

3. Student attended first aid training .....

4. Student attended placement briefing .....

5. Student returned health and safety induction checklist .....

The affirmative completion of numbers 1 – 4 above is required prior to the student named commencing their placement.

This document permits the named student to commence placement on the dated agreed with the named employer, on or after the date of signatures below.

This authority may be withdrawn if circumstances are identified which warrant withdrawal.

.....  
Placement Manager Date

.....  
.....  
Student Date



## ASET Annual Conference September 2006

### Student Health and Safety Law - Management - Problems

Harper Adams University College

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### Scope

- work experience linked to academic studies
- for a third party provider (including HEI acting as an employer, rather than educator)
- paid or unpaid

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### Law

- Contract
- Tort - negligence, etc.
- Crime - Health and Safety at Work Act, etc.

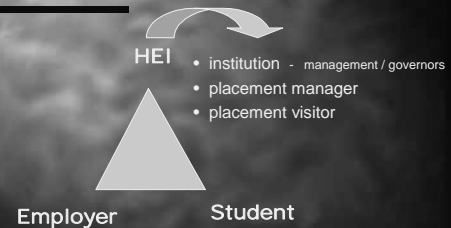
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### Sources of Information

- Primary sources - legislation / cases
- Student Placement Industry guidance
  - USHA / UCEA
  - ASET
  - QAA
- Health and safety industry guidance
  - HSE
  - TUC, etc.

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### Parties



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### Placement Management

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Students           | Briefing of students<br>Management of student on placement<br>Student feedback - during / after placement<br>Appropriate student / job match |
| Employers          | Approval of employers - write / speak / visit<br>Briefing of employers   |
| Placement Visitors | Briefing and monitoring of placement visitors  |
- Compliance with in-house placement policies
  - Data Protection Act compliance

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### Additional

- High(er) risk work
- Overseas placements
- Disability issues

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### Case Studies

- Student finds own placement with farmer who has one other part time employee.
- Placement has been arranged with a large construction company with whom the HEI has worked for many years - you learn that they have just been convicted of health and safety offences.  
Scenario (a) student not yet started placement  
Scenario (b) student already working
- Pre-placement employer checks were successfully carried out in the form of health and safety checklist, telephone conversations and discussions with previous students. Current student rings to say that after 3 weeks they have had no induction and have been asked to work unsupervised and untrained with hazardous equipment (e.g. chain saw).

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### Case Studies

- A student is taken on to do un-paid work experience at heritage site doing outdoor maintenance and occasionally showing visitors and school parties round. The organisation insists that as the student is not an 'employee' they have no responsibilities of training or supervision.
- A student gains a much wanted placement at a prestigious equine competition yard. On completing the health and safety pre-placement checklist, they indicate that they do not have a health and safety policy or any plans to train the student.
- A business student working returning from placement in an office environment indicates that they were pressurised to work 60+ hours per week on a regular basis.

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### Case Studies

- Overseas opportunities exist for your students :
  - an office in Paris
  - a company in India with whom student has family contacts
  - a branch of an English company in Eastern Europe
  - a forestry contractor in Eastern Europe
  - a locally run company in China, the student being Chinese and wanting to live with family during placement year
  - a game reserve in Africa
  - a privately owned farm in Australia

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# **Evaluation of Student Experience on an Overseas Placement: Students of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Clinical Placement at Hospitals Affiliated to Beijing University of Chinese Medicine**

Celia Bell and Sheila Cunningham  
Middlesex University

## **Abstract:**

Evaluation of student placement in the UK is an important element of good practice on all programmes where this aspect of learning is outside of university premises. However, placements overseas have inherent difficulties in distance, levels of support available for the students and also the impact of cultural differences on students. Experiences during these placements may be paramount to the theoretical and practice development of students, depending upon the programme of study. To maximise the experience and more fully prepare students for such experiences, it is necessary to develop more effective and focussed methods of evaluation. This then could feed into improving student learning experiences for future groups of students. The aim of this project was therefore to formally evaluate student experience on an overseas placement and, from this, to develop an appropriate evaluation tool which could be used to help individuals undertaking a placement overseas, in addition, also providing information to aid the preparation of students prior to their going overseas. The group chosen for this study were students on the BSc (Hons) Traditional Chinese Medicine Programme who undertake, in their final year, a one semester compulsory overseas placement at hospitals affiliated to Beijing University of Chinese Medicine.

The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was the method chosen as the most appropriate to evaluate student experience due to its participatory nature and rapid yielding of responses. From the NGT three main issues were identified as needing to be addressed for future cohorts: the assessment requirements for the placement modules; the process of student preparation for overseas placement, including greater preparation for the cultural differences and related lifestyle issues; the need to manage student expectations whilst on placement.

The teaching team concluded that, whilst development of a single evaluation tool is valuable, the process of NGT proved a well accepted and robust method of evaluation in itself. Thus in future, for students returning from an overseas placement, an event such as that held for this cohort of students would become an annual feature. This paper will further explore the methodology of this technique for this study and critically evaluate the perceived advantages and disadvantages.

**Keywords:** overseas; placement; evaluation; students; traditional Chinese medicine; Chinese medicine; Beijing; nominal group technique.

## **Introduction:**

Evaluation of student placement in the United Kingdom (UK) is an important element of good practice on all programmes with a practice or work related component (for example within health), this is equally applicable within the School of Health and Social Sciences. Work initiated and being developed by the Practice and Placements Learning Group within the school, strives to ensure that all placement opportunities are adequately evaluated in line with good practice and with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Section 9: Placement learning; QAA, 2001). In implementing the precepts, the QAA advise that institutions should consider establishing procedures within which feedback on the quality and standards of the placement can be received and appropriate action taken where necessary. In addition to helping define the quality of educational experiences, evaluation should also demonstrate

whether a programme or educational experience is meeting its educational goals and objectives (Dobbie et al. 2004).

Placements either in the United Kingdom or abroad provide a valuable learning opportunity for students. Students on the BSc Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in the final year of their programme undertake a one semester compulsory overseas placement at hospitals affiliated to Beijing University of Chinese Medicine. Whilst placements serve as a powerful arena for transformative learning, these do need to be planned, managed and supported for maximal effect. It is acknowledged that an effective placement learning opportunity is one in which the aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and well understood by all the parties concerned (university, student and placement provider) (QAA, 2001). This placement has specific learning outcomes including developing practical skills, as well as understanding the cultural and applied aspects of the academic discipline. Currently, evaluation is done using the generic module evaluation forms, the report from student representatives to Board of Studies and a report from the link tutors of both institutions. It is recognised that these methods are not ideal, specifically in terms of evaluating the unique aspects of placement experiences. There is no one specific evaluation form or process for evaluating the efficacy of placement learning. Professional programmes such as Nursing have developed their own placement evaluation form that focuses on the specific clinical experiences within partner Trusts and clinical settings. These are used alongside generic evaluation processes to assess the issues and efficacy of nursing placement learning experiences. However, these are of limited use to this programme with its placements overseas and rather different clinical experiences. The uniqueness of this placement overseas, which involves clinical practical experience in a number of settings in Beijing, is compounded by geographical remoteness, language and culture differences. These are difficult to evaluate and to effectively contribute to student preparation.

The aim of this project was therefore to formally evaluate student experience on an overseas placement and from this to develop an appropriate evaluation tool for use with future cohorts accessing placement overseas, as well as to provide information to aid the preparation of students prior to them going overseas.

### **Rationale for using NGT**

In reviewing the range of evaluation techniques reported in the literature, a wide variety are evident which include: on-line and paper surveys of learning, focus groups, semi-structured individual or group interviews, and pre- and post-test of learners knowledge skills and attitudes (Dobbie et al 2004, Jones 2004). The method chosen for this study was the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). This appeared to be the most appropriate to evaluate the students experience and encourage students to reflect on issues, which affected their learning on the TCM programme placement. The NGT method has been applied to a variety of evaluative purposes in educational, business and health settings (Duggan and Cox 1999; Waddell and Stephens 2000; Gibson 2000; Jones 2004; Asmus and James 2005). Burns (2000) identifies that the NGT can be used as an alternative to a focus group, and as an evaluation technique, providing semi-quantitative, rank-ordered feedback in a short space of time (ibid); in this instance of the learners' perceptions of their clinical placement experience overseas. Overall, the most important aspect was that each participant has equal say in generating and rank ordering the items, thus valuing all contributions, despite the rank ordering and apparent 'loss' of some contributions. The views or reflections in response to a statement or question from the evaluator are sought from the student group following return from placement experience. The most significant items are then discussed in groups and problems analysed and actions proposed. The advantages are that the views of everyone are considered, and the time for all stages is low. It is a group in name only as the views of all participants are collected separately and considered alongside the 'nominally derived issues'. This method will also give students a sense of ownership and involvement in their programme development.

### **Method:**

All students from the cohort completing the Beijing placement experience in the academic year 2004/05 were invited to attend the evaluation event. The evaluation event was held within six weeks of the students return from placement. Several students could not attend due to other commitments. Overall 14 of the 19 students in the cohort attended the evaluation event. Due to the large number the students were randomly divided into two equal groups for the NGT process.

The NGT methodology consisted of eight stages and was modified from the original proposed by Delbecq (1975). Stage one comprised individual silent reflection and idea generation. Stages two to six comprised small group interactions, with prescribed activities at each stage (see table 1). Stages seven and eight enabled the small groups to convene as a large group with final consensus on the items and their ranked importance. This process was performed as two cycles, one for focussing on strengths and the second to focus on areas for improvement. The language and trigger questions were selected to create a positive mindset and to encourage productive comments. As part of the methodology, students were also asked to reflect on the process of the NGT. A graffiti board was provided for students to comment on the whole NGT process at the end of the session.

### Results:

Results from the evaluation of the placement experience and from the reflection on the use of the NGT are presented. The main issues which emerged from student reflection on using the NGT as a process were as follows:-

1. Several aspects were considered important and concern was raised amongst participants at how to select most important ones.
2. A clarification of what to include; just placement experiences or the life experiences whilst in Beijing.
3. Some rounds seemed repetitive and especially the two cycles; the consensus was that it would have been preferable to have just one.
4. Voting in stage five caused concern at potentially eliminating important points unnecessarily.
5. One person had to leave half way through due to a prior engagement.
6. The students did not want the programme team present for stage eight (the discussion) but preferred a 'neutral' academic with responsibility for developing placement learning.

To address these concerns, the original post-it notes and flip charts from all rounds were kept and all the points were combined in a list. The final ranked items were given the most attention, but the others were also ensured recognition. The academic staff present for stage eight made notes of the discussion and remained neutral for the duration of the discussion as requested. The details of the discussion were fed back with the data to the programme team.

The rank-ordered feedbacks of the learners' perceptions of their clinical placement experience overseas are presented in tables 2 and 3. Table 2 identifies the 5 strengths of the placement ranked as most significant by students (listed by the two groups A and B) and Table 3 identifies the suggestions for improvement made by students.

### Discussion:

Two main groups of results emerged which lead to a number of conclusions from using this process (NGT) as an evaluation and exploratory tool. The primary aim was to develop an evaluation document which would better evaluate the efficacy of the overseas placement learning experience. To enable this, the items ranked items put forward by the students were explored and incorporated into an evaluation questionnaire. This document has recently been piloted with the next cohort of students returning from Beijing (February/March 2006) and similar themes emerged, these will be reported on more fully in due course. The second group of results emerging from this process was the effect or impact of the NGT itself, more specifically as a process for enabling students to feel heard. The NGT process appeared to dissipate the frustration and isolation students reported feeling on returning to the UK. The process itself was seen as instrumental in creating a re-orientation into the University following the period abroad. To this end, the programme team are considering adopting this as not only an evaluation strategy alongside a written evaluation, but also as a re-orientation method for returning students.

This evaluation exercise highlighted some of the strengths of the NGT. Not only did it succeed in providing a constructive, problem-solving approach that permitted equal participation by all group members, it also restricted the role, and thus the influence, of the evaluator, allowing the students to use their own categories and final selection of issues and prioritise these. A survey of the literature indicates that the NGT minimises the influence of group dynamics on individual choice (Jones 2003).

However, it seemed to enable the group to make their responses with the combined knowledge of the group before them. As Dobbie et al (2004) point out, this safe forum can generate a number of greater ideas and comments than might be gleaned from a survey or single focus group. The student comments implied that the chance to reflect in a group situation engendered a deeper insight or a greater depth of learning from the experience, rather performed alone, which could be considered a perspective transformation (Meizerow, 1990).

As a method of evaluation, the NGT has also proved successful in re-orientating the students to the UK, particularly by facilitating their meeting and reflection on their experiences. In addition, it can provide students with a sense that they were helping to improve aspects for the future cohorts going on placement overseas. The evidence to support this is provided by the graffiti board evaluation and from student discussion following the NGT. The graffiti board evaluation of the NGT experience highlighted that one of the significant perceived benefits of this process was in providing a forum to give meaningful feedback and make suggestions about their educational experience. Students reported a sense of 'closure' from the evaluation day (*Finalises and sums up our trip to Beijing, we loved it!*) as well as a sense of camaraderie/support from peers (*Good to see everyone, as well as knowing we all feel the same way*). In the discussion it became clear that students felt 'deflated' on returning to the UK and felt 'lost', as well as missing seeing their peer group on a daily basis. In some sense the placement in Beijing felt 'like the end of the course' and yet the students still had another semester to complete.

On the graffiti board views expressed suggested that they were pleased to have the opportunity to provide input into making the experience a better one for future students (*Good to voice our opinions and help to make the experience better for future years. Hope all this feedback helps to improve the placement for future years.*) However, during the discussion it was apparent that this was an area where there was dichotomy of views or, at times, an ambivalence. A suggestion that a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for future students could be developed to help future students going on placement was not taken well, and it was noted that some of the group did wish to 'offload', yet not help future students. This was interesting in that they appeared to harbour feelings of dissatisfaction that they could not benefit from the changes or developments. One could argue that they lacked the insight to acknowledge they may have benefited from developments on the basis of previous students feedback.

The students themselves acknowledged the dichotomy of opinions that emerged from the NGT process, and perhaps any process of evaluation, that there are positives and negatives to all experiences with comments such as *'Hope all this feedback helps to improve the placement for future years. We still had a FAB time!!'*. The discussion reinforced this dichotomy, with students 'offloading' about problems encountered, but also repeating that they had also gained much by the experience. The fact that students did not want the programme team present for the discussion stage but preferred a 'neutral' academic with responsibility for developing placement learning raises an interesting issue that should be explored further. It can be surmised that the students felt more able to express their views with a neutral person present. It also suggests that, whilst learners have strong opinions about what they like or dislike about a course, these preferences may or may not correlate with the educational experience being evaluated and may be remnant of issues other than the placement experience itself.

The aims of this project were threefold: to evaluate an overseas placement, to develop an appropriate evaluation tool for use with future cohorts accessing placement overseas and to provide information to add to the preparation of students for overseas placement. The NGT process met these three aims.

Three main issues emerged that can be addressed by the programme leader and link tutor with regard to enabling students to meet the learning outcomes of the module:

1. To address the assessment requirements for the placement modules in discussion with Beijing University of Chinese medicine to ensure that assessment is realistic within the confines of available resources overseas, whilst still meeting the learning outcomes and level 3 requirements.
2. To revisit the process of student preparation for overseas placement, including greater preparation for the cultural differences and difficulties arising from these. Some suggestions were valuable in preparing for the placement experience by the next cohort of students (i.e. formulary revision, language preparation, behaviours and social nuances).
3. Managing student expectations: some suggestions were impractical for financial or logistical reasons (i.e. translators at all clinics). Ensuring that students know what to expect on placement and the limitations of facilities, support etc. will help to limit frustration.

In terms of developing an appropriate evaluation tool, the outcome of this study suggests that the most appropriate method of evaluation for students returning from an overseas placement is an event such as that held for these students. The benefits of such a 'de-briefing' and the opportunity to meet with the peer group with which they have shared a significant experience and exchange views and identify the highlights and the struggles inherent in a placement in a culture very different from the UK, are clear. This event served as an important 'closure' and re-orientation to the UK. Such an event should be held as early as possible after the return of the students to gain maximum benefit, both for them and for the evaluation process itself, preferably within one month.

In addition, an evaluation form was developed as an outcome of this study (see Appendix 1). The use of an evaluation form is recognised to have limitations as it will not be able to give the additional benefits of group and peer support and would miss the synergy and energy created by a technique such as NGT. However, it is an additional tool that can complement the use of the NGT and ensure that all issues are addressed. The piloting and evaluation of the assessment tool has demonstrated sensitivity to the placement aspects. The responses yielded indicate that the issues which emerged from the NGT and translated into the tool provide a more complete picture of the placement experience. However, one of the limitations noted by students was that the placement experience embodies social and cultural aspects and that these are not addressed on this particular evaluation form. This was viewed as important and thus will be explored in future evaluations. The section on Student Support had mixed responses which were not always qualified with rationale, for example 2.1 why the experience was not enjoyed or 2.5 why learning outcomes were not perceived to be achieved. This requires addressing for future documentation which will prompt for further details.

The TCM team have developed the preparation programme for students embarking on placement. In addition to previous preparations, a series of workshops to explore and manage expectations has been inaugurated. This has proven a useful platform to address some of the social and cultural aspects and share the experiences of previous cohorts of students. The impact of this preparation upon evaluations has yet to be demonstrated, but will feed into the quality assurance of these placements for continual development and improvement of student placement learning experiences.

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**Table 1: Nominal Group Technique; Stages in the methodology.**

<b>Stage 1:</b>	<b>Individual silent reflection.</b>	<b>Questions:</b> What were the strengths/highlights of your Beijing placement experience? What suggestions can you make for enhancing this experience?
<b>Stage 2:</b>	<b>Silent phase</b>	Small groups (4 – 8), each has a flip chart. Elect a Scribe for each group. Each participant to have post-it notes: 5 PINK (Strengths/highlights of the experience); 5 YELLOW (Suggestions for enhancing the experience). No conferring or discussion, participant's record ONE item on each post-it note (more provided if needed).
<b>Stage 3:</b>	<b>Round robin phase</b>	Taking turns each participant places one PINK post-it note on the flipchart paper until all items are exhausted ( <i>not ordered for importance</i> ). The Scribe groups similar comments together. Repeat process using YELLOW post-its. Give equal time to both areas
<b>Stage 4:</b>	<b>Discussion/clarification phase</b>	The group clarifies unclear items and edits the group items into themes; this is NEUTRAL, to deal with duplication etc. The Scribe lists and numbers the items in terms of popularity (A = most popular as in number of 'hits', B, C etc).
<b>Stage 5:</b>	<b>Voting phase</b>	Each participant is given 5 cards, on which to write the 5 items of most importance to them (one on each card). Participants rank their top five suggestions using a number from 1 to 5 (1=top). Participants award 5 points to their top, 4 to the second and so on. The scribe collects these lists for data gathering.
<b>Stage 6:</b>	<b>Small group data gathering</b>	In each of the small groups, the Scribe adds the total points for each item to produce a rank ordered cumulative weighted list of the groups opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of the experience which reflect the importance (collectively) for the group. The problem or issue with the highest number is the most important one for that group etc. The Scribe then writes the list (with weightings) on the flipchart. The same groups discuss the results and generate a final ranked list of five responses which will be reported in the plenary to the large group.
<b>Stage 7:</b>	<b>Large group data combining</b>	Reconvene the large group and examine the results from the small groups. The ranked lists of responses are pooled. Overlapping items can be combined. A second 5 point voting system is operated. The outcome is an overall ranking of issues / responses which reflects the concerns of the whole group. Present the large group ranked, weighted opinions of the strengths of the experience and the suggestions for improvement
<b>Stage 8:</b>	<b>Large group discussion around dominant themes</b>	



**Table 2: Learners perception of clinical placement in Beijing: Ranked ordinally (highest first) strengths/highlights of the experience as reported by the two nominal groups (A and B).**

	Strengths/ Highlights	
	Group A	Group B
1.	Extensive use of herbal formulary forcing us to study them extensively	Opportunity to contribute at China-Japan Friendship hospital
2.	Opportunity to gain hands-on Acupuncture experience in China-Japan Friendship Hospital	Experience TCM in a hospital setting
3.	Seeing extreme and unusual cases/treatments and how they vary amongst doctors at the China-Japan Friendship hospital.	Experience of life in Beijing
4.	Some good lectures from doctors who were geared up to provide them	Experience of doctor's experimental treatment
5.	Confirmation of knowledge and chance to implement and expand out knowledge of diagnostics and herbal formulary and be corrected when we were wrong, allowing us to put previous learning into context	Learn authentic TCM concepts and treatments from the doctors

**Table 3: Learners perception of clinical placement in Beijing: Ranked ordinally (highest first) Suggestions for improvement of the experience as reported by the two nominal groups (A and B).**

	Suggestions for improvement	
	Group A	Group B
1.	Proper examinations that are monitored correctly (not held in outpatients) that are under <i>exam</i> conditions and that students can clearly understand how the grades are derived.	No coursework – not enough resources to produce good work
2.	More hands-on experience in acupuncture	Need knowledgeable interpreters for all departments
3.	Improved information given out at consultations	Need to revise herbs, formulary, acupuncture points
4.	Doctors should have encouraged every student to individually interview patients and correct them on diagnosis and the prescription (only a few did this)	Exams need better organisation (information, marking, timing)
5.	Clear introduction to the placement prior to leaving for Beijing	Practice Mandarin before going out

**Table 4: Graffiti board evaluation of the Evaluation day: Student comments.**

<p><i>Good to see everyone, as well as knowing we all feel the same way.</i></p> <p><i>Good for future years....if you listen.</i></p> <p><i>Should have been earlier, good to bring up all issues now.</i></p> <p><i>Good for positive change for the future and to express our opinions. Finalises and sums up our trip to Beijing, we loved it!</i></p> <p><i>Allowing our views to be heard, good stuff!!</i></p> <p><i>Hope others don't have to go through the same.</i></p> <p><i>Good to voice our opinions and help to make the experience better for future years.</i></p> <p><i>Hope all this feedback helps to improve the placement for future years. We still had a FAB time!! PS Try the Pearl Tea!</i></p>
--

**Table 5: Themes arising from the open discussion with students following the Nominal Group Technique.**

**Discussion:**

Dichotomies of feeling and perceptions (good yet bad)  
Feeling empowered (yet within rigid rules)  
Feeling empowered (yet coming back deflated)  
Frustration (with specialist interest group)  
Need for endorsement (of subject area)  
Domestic social strife & surviving  
Camaraderie  
Confusion & being treated differently  
Anxiety moving on and the future

**Appendix 1:**

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Overseas Placement Evaluation Questionnaire  
Beijing University of Chinese Medicine Placement Experience**



Dates of Placement.....

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you disagree with a statement you must provide examples from your placement to substantiate this view otherwise it cannot be followed up. In addition, if you agree examples are also useful.

*Please respond to all statements by ticking in the appropriate section*

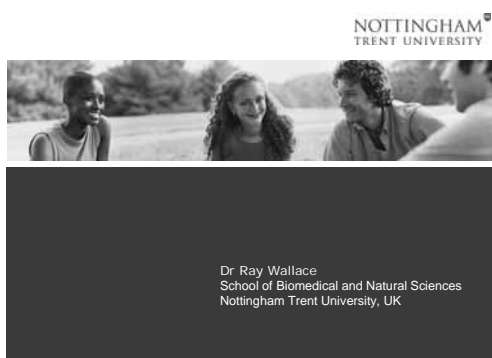
SECTION 1: PRACTICE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.1	I had my initial meeting with Beijing university link at the start of placement				
1.2	I was able to complete and return the health and safety documentation in a timely manner				
1.3	There were a range of learning opportunities that I was able to access				
1.4	During this placement I was able to apply prior learning and experience from my degree programme to date				
1.5	There were learning resources available within the placement area to enhance learning.				
1.6	I was able to recognise of the philosophy of Traditional Chinese Medicine being applied in practice				
1.7	I felt motivated and actively engaged in learning activities				
COMMENTS / EXAMPLES:					
SECTION 2: STUDENT SUPPORT		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.1	I enjoyed my time on this placement experience.				
2.2	The staff were supportive and approachable and I felt they recognized my role as a student				
2.3	I received sufficient information to enable me to attend the appropriate times and places and be fully prepared				
2.4	I was able to fulfill my attendance requirements and have these endorsed by the appropriate person.				
2.5	I was able to achieve the learning outcomes during the placement				
2.6	I felt I was gaining valuable experience				
2.7	The staff were familiar with the principles of assessment and were able to guide me when necessary				
2.8	The practice experience and supervision offered were appropriate to my level of competence and the learning outcomes				
2.9	I had opportunities to discuss and explore issues relating to practice				
2.10	I recognize there are cultural differences and language issues and I felt able to overcome these				
2.11	I was able to utilize the different sources of support both in the UK and Beijing to overcome difficulties inherent in undertaking placement in a different culture				
COMMENTS / EXAMPLES:					

	SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICE	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3.1	I was informed in good time of arrangements for assessment and was aware of what was expected of me				
3.2	I felt I was given feedback throughout the placement on how I was progressing				
COMMENTS / EXAMPLES					
	SECTION 4: PREPARATION FOR PLACEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.1	I was given adequate information / preparation before commencing the placement experience				
4.2	I recognize the importance of taking responsibility for health and safety and completing the necessary documentation				
4.3	Prior to placement Middlesex University endeavoured to make me aware and support my preparation for placement cultural and language differences				
COMMENTS / EXAMPLES					

PLEASE ADD GENERAL COMMENTS:

# The Eurobachelor Has Landed – Co-operative Educationists Meeting Passengers Are Now Advised to Make their Way to the Next Level Up!

Ray Wallace  
Nottingham Trent University



**The Eurobachelor® Has Landed –**  
*Co-operative Educationists Meeting*  
*Passengers Are Now Advised to Make their*  
*Way to the Next Level Up!*

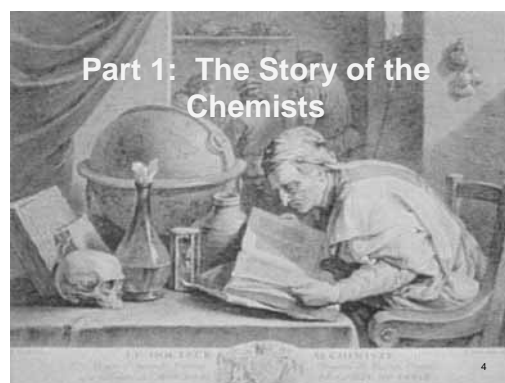


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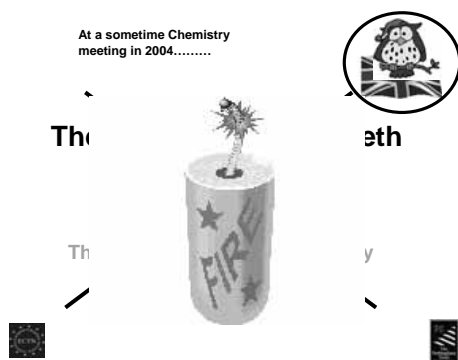
Presentation divided into 3 parts

- 'The story of the chemists'
- Bologna implementation
- How sandwich education could sit in the greater scheme of things

3



4



**Eurobachelor®**

Trademark registered by the European Chemistry  
Thematic Network Association

6



## The beginnings .....

### TUNING

The 'Tuning Project' is the HE institutions' answer to the political decisions underlying the Bologna process

It involves almost 150 HE institutions in 9 subject area groups; apart from chemistry, these are: physics, mathematics, history, earth sciences, business, education sciences, nursing, European studies

The chemistry Eurobachelor® is a product of Tuning

7

8



## The developers .....

### ECTN Association



ECTN is a network with over 120 members from 33 countries; apart from universities these include nine national chemical societies (DE, FR, GB, IT, NL, CS, SK, LT, SI)

ECTN also exists in the form of an Association under Belgian law

Both the Network and the Association are open to the chemical community; further member institutions, chemical societies or other chemistry-interested organisations are always welcome to join the organisation

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### *The Eurobachelor Story So Far*

- 2001-2002: developed by Tuning Chemistry Subject Area Group
- May 2002: presented at Closing Meeting of Tuning Phase One in Brussels
- April 2003: adopted by ECTN Association Assembly in Prague
- October 2003: adopted by FECS (now EuChemS) General Assembly (...from Cork to Vladivostok)
- April 2004: ECTN Association decides to offer 'Eurobachelor Label' to interested institutions
- September 2004: application to EU Commission for funding of pilot project for accreditation of the 'Chemistry Eurobachelor Label' accepted

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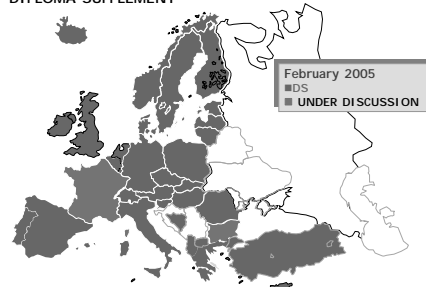
- The Eurobachelor is about **quality**: defining reference points on an international basis
- The Eurobachelor is about **quality assurance**: evaluation and accreditation
- The Eurobachelor is about **autonomy**: not a straitjacket, but a framework to be applied as the institution wishes
- The Eurobachelor is about **flexibility**: it can readily be adapted as the needs of the subject change

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- The Eurobachelor is about **transparency**: together with the Diploma Supplement it is an easily understood qualification
- The Eurobachelor is based on ECTS and its correct application
- The Eurobachelor is about **mobility**: it makes it possible for the graduate to move easily within Europe, but also almost certainly throughout the world
- The Eurobachelor is about **recognition**: even if the Lisbon convention is in force, institutions need to apply it

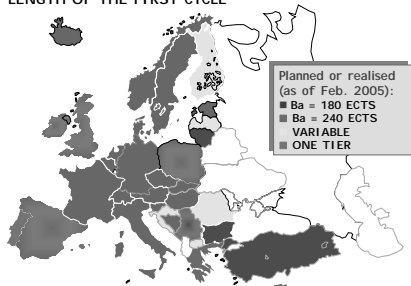
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### DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT



14

LENGTH OF THE FIRST CYCLE



15

The Chemistry Eurobachelor - A framework for a European first-cycle degree in chemistry

#### Outcomes

Define which competences a programme seeks to develop, or what its graduates should be able to know, to understand, and to do

- Aid to transparency
- Aid to the development of better-defined degrees
- Aid to the development of systems of recognition
- Aid to employability

Chemistry Eurobachelor - defined as a programme of 180 credits based on outcomes, but also applicable to institutions using 240 credits

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Quality Assurance:  
the 'Eurobachelor®  
Label'

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The Label Committee is drawn from Chemistry Departments in the universities of

- Complutense, Madrid
- Dortmund
- Institute of Chemistry, Prague
- Jagiellonian University, Krakow
- Technical University, Vienna
- Venice
- University M.-C Skłodowska, Lublin
- Technical University of Dresden
- Thessaloniki
- Helsinki



Institutions approved so far

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION	DEGREE	ECTS	AWARDED	AWARDING PERIOD
Greece	University of Athens	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2006-2010	2006-2010
	University of Ioannina	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2006-2010	2006-2010
Finland	University of Jyväskylä	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
	University of Turku	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
Hungary	University of Debrecen	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2006-2010	2006-2010
	University of Szeged	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2006-2010	2006-2010
Italy	University of Bologna	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
	University of Padua	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
Portugal	University of Coimbra	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
	University of Lisbon	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
Spain	University of Madrid	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
	University of Valencia	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
The Netherlands	University of Amsterdam	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
	University of Groningen	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
United Kingdom	University of Cambridge	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009
	University of Oxford	Chemistry, Bachelor	180	2005-2009	2005-2009

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Further applications likely to be approved later this month from.....

- Austria
- Belgium
- Greece
- Italy
- Portugal
- The Netherlands
- IN TOTAL THE QUALIFICATION WILL BE AWARDED IN 11 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Visit the website for more information:  
[www.eurobachelor.net](http://www.eurobachelor.net)

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In summary then..... The Eurobachelor® is

Supported by the European Commission (pilot project)

Run by an international 'Label Committee'

Involves.....

- First: 'Slimline' self-assessment procedure
- Second: One-day site visit by 1 national and 2 international experts
- Third: Award recommendation made by Label Committee
- Final decision taken by Administrative Council of ECTN Association
- National chemical societies and EuCheMS will play a vital role
- Valid for 5 years with simple renewal procedure

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23

So we have a template for a **3 year** bachelor degree programme which is starting to gain a foothold in Europe

24

....things however have the habit of moving on

In the autumn of this year the European Chemistry Thematic Association will be launching its Euromaster programme for which funding has been received from the European Commission

This is expected to take off rapidly

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## Part 2: The wider picture

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## European Universities Implementing Bologna

...from the Trends IV document published by the European University Association in 2005 (acknowledgement Sybille Reichert, Christian Tauch) and Kate Geddie  
EUA Programme Manager

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### Degree Structures: Implementation of BA/MA/BSc/MSc at national level

- Almost all countries have by now introduced the two cycles system
- Need for reforms is perceived very differently by the various disciplines and faculties: e.g. humanities, regulated professions
- Only medicine generally still excluded in most countries, but also teacher training and other disciplines still cause problems
- In some countries subject-specific coordination groups or pilot projects were considered very helpful for curricular development

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### Degree Structures: Attitudes in Higher Education Institutes

- Most HEIs see advantages of the two cycles system
- Still a challenge: reorientation of curricula, focusing of contents
- In most HEI staff supported the underlying ideas of problem-based learning, a student-centred approach etc., even if they were critical of various aspects of the implementation
- Only in few HEI academics complained: Bologna was imposed on them, by the institutional leadership and/or by the ministry
- The introduction of BA/MA, modularisation, ECTS, etc. often implies a lot of extra work also for administrations  
Even 'pro-Bologna' staff ask for incentives, extra funding

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### Degree Structures: Bachelor level (first cycle)

- Misconception that Bologna 'prescribes' in any way 3+2
- Some scepticism about academic value of 3 year degrees
- Content of traditional 4 (or 5) year programmes often compressed into 3 year: students fail and validates professor scepticism
- Justified concern about 'one size fits all' approach taken by many national laws imposing 3 year Bachelors: Some disciplines request more autonomy in designing their degree programmes
- Discussion still centred on nominal duration, not outcomes: Some universities don't want to award same degrees as professional sector

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Degree Structures:  
Bachelor level (first cycle)

- BA/BSc graduates: labour market or Masters studies? Huge differences between countries. In UK, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Turkey first degrees are well accepted by labour market
- In many HEI students felt badly informed about value of a Bachelors and plan to go for a Masters, often supported by professors
- Universities in some binary systems fear competition from polytechnics: Poly-Bachelor can be more attractive to employers (practical experience)
- Need for more dialogue with employers regarding Bachelor, including governments, that must give clear examples in public service employment (career, service grades, salary)

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Degree Structures:  
Master level (second cycle)

- Despite Bologna-Consensus (300 ECTS): huge variety
- Re-questioning: international competitiveness of 180+60 ECTS
- 300+ ECTS programmes continue to be popular in some countries (PL, HG) and disciplines (medicine, engineering)
- 'Stand-alone' Masters still the exception
- Tendency to create too many Masters programmes: no institutional strategy
- Masters programme often designed with narrow focus on preceding first cycle programmes. Vertical mobility as a threat, not opportunity
- Students worried about (lack of) public funding for Masters

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Degree Structures:  
Modularisation and Learning Outcomes

- No European 'template' for creating course modules
- Many HEI have modularised their programmes (ECTS, TUNING)
- Students welcome the concept of modularisation but complain it often has been done superficially, not leading to more flexibility
- Bachelors curricula seem often more rigidly structured than traditional ones (many compulsory subjects and contact hours)
- In some HEI only vague notions of Learning Outcomes exist (esp. professors & students)
- Context of Learning Outcomes: very positive reference to qualifications frameworks (QF) in DK and UK (curricular development, recognition)

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## Key Facts

- According to the European University Association two thirds of institutions have decided to adopt the Bologna reforms as their own reform agenda
- In a third of European countries the Bologna reforms form an integral part of a wider review of the entire HE system, according to national rectors' conferences
- The Bologna Process is slowly but surely moving forward within Europe

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.....so in the medium term we are likely to see a 3+2+3 system embedded throughout Europe

(In practice many institutions will probably continue to operate effectively an integrated 5 year 'Master' process)

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## What does all this mean for sandwich education?

- In the UK, in the short term probably very little
- In Continental Europe, in the short term, again probably very little

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## What does all this mean for sandwich education?

- In the UK, in the long term possibly the advent of change as to **when** and **how** we do things
- In Continental Europe, in the long term, possibly new developments

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## What does all this mean for sandwich education?

- Although Bologna does not preclude 4 year programmes, 3 year Bachelor programmes are likely to become the 'norm'
- Sandwich education as we know it in the UK, is, with a few notable exceptions, not practised widely throughout Continental Europe – where it is seen, training periods tend to be of relatively short duration
- It is thus unlikely that we will see any sandwich Eurobachelors gaining hold

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### What does all this mean for sandwich education?

- Continental Europe
  - Traditionally university students have entered employment at the Masters & many at the PhD level
  - There is unlikely to be any change in this practice in the medium term
  - There is an appreciation in many countries however that their young people are relatively old when they enter industry
- UK
  - Traditionally the majority of students, particularly in the arts & related disciplines have entered work at the Bachelors level
  - There is unlikely to be any change in this practice in the medium term
  - There is an increasing concern by a number of employers that undergraduates at the end of year 2 have a relatively poor subject knowledge when they start their sandwich training

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### What does all this mean for sandwich education?

- Continental Europe
  - A shift to see that the normal 'exit point' from university is at Masters level could be pursued if governments and employers seriously wish to do something about this age profile
  - This might be tempting to employers if the Masters programmes additionally contained work experience so that academic knowledge could be married with 'hands on' experience
- UK
  - In science 4 year undergraduate are common (MChem, MPhys etc) and there are 5 year variants where a sandwich year is additionally taken
  - The idea that sandwich education could be incorporated in a 2 year Masters programme might be an attractive proposition (at least for the sciences) – more academically knowledgeable students

40

### What does all this mean for sandwich education?

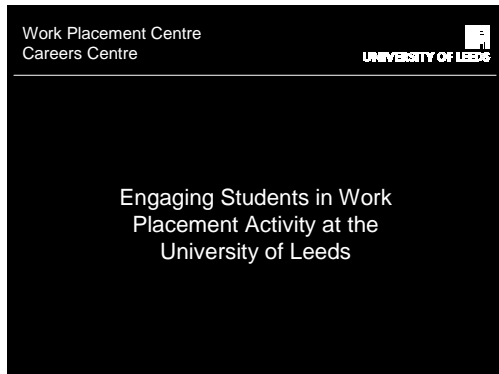
- If the UK and Continental were to move in these directions we could have a model for practically orientated education aimed at the world of work that might harmonise the two different traditions
- 3 year Eurobachelor
- 2 year Euromaster incorporating sandwich education
- And hence the title..... **The Eurobachelor® has landed – Co-operative educationists meeting passengers are now advised to make their way to the next level up!**

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# Engaging Students in Work Placement Activity at the University of Leeds

Pam Cresswell, Rebecca Evans and Anna Worsley  
University of Leeds



- Work Placement Centre Structure
- Discussion / Activity
- Feedback
- Current Practice at the University of Leeds
- Q & A



- A Centralised Provision
- 3 Areas of Activity
  - Students
  - Faculties
  - Placement Providers
- Head of Work Placement Centre
- Work Placement Project Officers x 2
- Faculty Placement Administrator
- Work Placement Support Officer
- Work Placement Enterprise Learning Advisor



How do you sell the benefits of work experience and get students involved at your institution?

If you had unlimited resources what else would you do?



## Engaging Students

- Resource Room
- Drop In / Bookable 1 to 1 Advice Sessions
- Presentations within Relevant Modules
- Marketing Material
- Website / Vacancy Handling System



- Shell Step Work Placement Programme
- Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Funding
- Work Experience Festival

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



### Future Activity

- Department Based Drop in / Bookable Advice
- Student Focus Group
- Accrediting Extra Curricular Activity
- Explore the Feasibility of Bursary / Award for Unpaid Placements
- Updated Website and Vacancy Handling System

Any Questions?

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



Rebecca Evans, Pam Cresswell, Anna Worsley

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre  
University of Leeds  
5-7 Cromer Terrace  
Leeds  
LS2 9JT

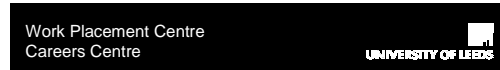
Telephone – 0113 3434915

Email – [workexperience@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:workexperience@leeds.ac.uk)

[www.leeds.ac.uk/workplacementcentre](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/workplacementcentre)

## Supporting Academic Partners – A Centralised Provision

Pam Cresswell, Rebecca Evans and Anna Worsley  
University of Leeds



### Introduction

- Discussion / Activity
- Feedback
- Work Placement Centre Structure
- Current Practice at the University of Leeds
- Q&A



### Discussion



### Work Placement Centre Structure

- A Centralised Provision
- 3 Areas of Activity
  - Students
  - Faculties
  - Placement Providers
- Head of Work Placement Centre
- Work Placement Project Officers x 2
- Faculty Placement Administrator
- Work Placement Support Officer
- Work Placement Enterprise Learning Advisor



### University of Leeds Strategy

Students Expect:

An education that creates excellent career opportunities

- we provide an environment, opportunities and experiences that ensure our graduates develop citizenship, personal and life skills
- our students are well equipped to follow their chosen career and to make a major contribution to society



- we ensure high levels of employability for our students through excellent career guidance, career routes and employment or development opportunities
- we have a strong coupling with industry, commerce and other agencies for student placements
- we have excellent relationships with high profile quality employers and have a reputation for creating excellent and outstanding graduates that meet their needs

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



### Current Practice at the University of Leeds Supporting Academic Partners

- Knowledge Base e.g. Health and Safety
- Reducing Administrative Burden
- Placement Tutors' Forum

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



### Future Activity

- Code(s) of Practice
- Enterprise Training Programme
- Service Level Agreements

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



### Case Study - School of Design

- Their Initial Needs
- Preparatory Sessions
- Standardisation of Materials
- Sharing of Vacancies
- Results

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



Any Questions?

Work Placement Centre  
Careers Centre



Rebecca Evans, Pam Cresswell, Anna Worsley

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Careers Centre  
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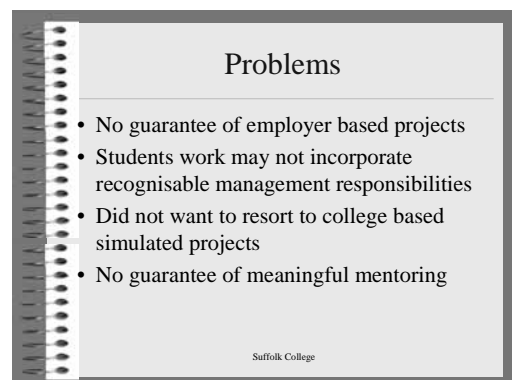
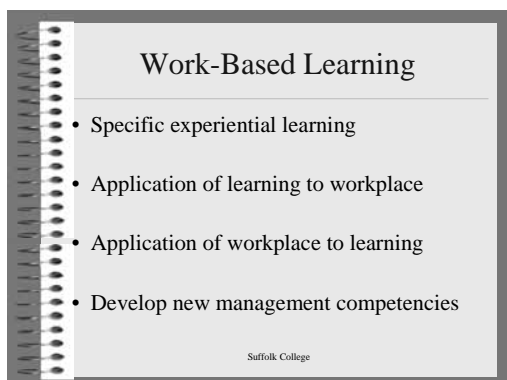
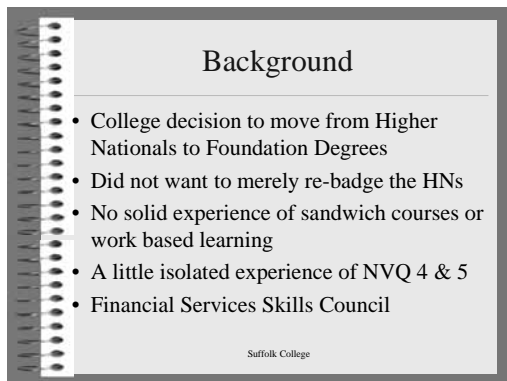
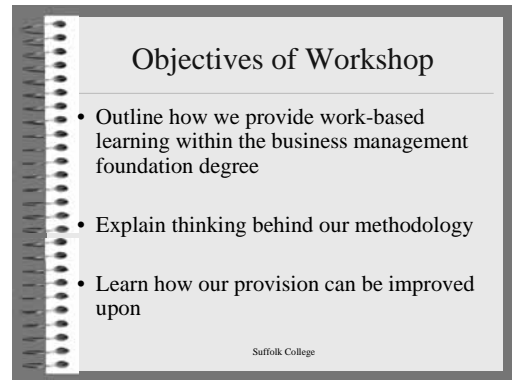
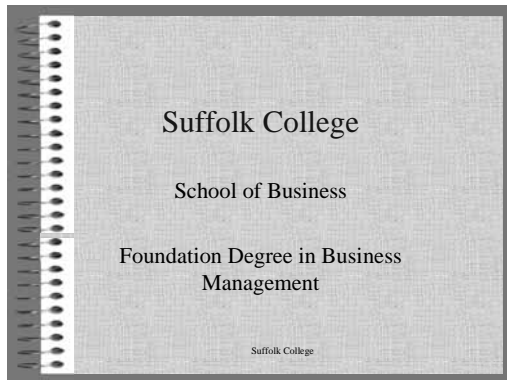
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## Foundation Degree in Business Management – Work-Based Learning

Mike Irwin  
Suffolk College



### National Reconciliations Needed

- Benchmarks for business management
- National management standards
- Qualifications framework (intermediate)
- Framework for, and key features of, foundation degrees
- National Council for Work Experience

Suffolk College

### Local Reconciliations Needed

- College framework  
discrete accredited modules  
personal development and skills
- Employer consultation  
identify most valued competencies  
employer defined competencies
- Student consultation
- Limited module choice & timetables

Suffolk College

### The Package

- Applied assignments  
scenarios  
alternatives
- Negotiated assignments (protections)
- Negotiated programme for module completion (protections)
- Negotiated outcomes of work-based learning

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### Work-Based Learning Support

- “Personal Development” introductory level one module
- WBL tutor (normally doubles as personal tutor)
- Mentoring distance learning package
- Level 2 module “Skills in Research & Problem Solving”

Suffolk College

### Identify Competencies

- Menu, management competencies and personal skills
- Provision for progression levels 1 & 2
- Steer towards employer preferences
- Capable of completion by all

Suffolk College

### Assessment

- Negotiated outcomes
- Typically a portfolio and reflection
- Confirmation by employer
- Assessment decision by academic staff

Suffolk College

### Alternative Competencies

- Employer defines development needs
- Employers own specified competency programme
- Evidence provided through appraisal process
- Assessment decision still with academic staff

Suffolk College





Work Based Learning Competencies

**Bold indicates areas which employer consultees highlighted as being of particular importance**

	Column One	Column Two	Column Three
Manage Activities	Maintain activities to meet requirements	Manage activities to meet requirements	Maintain activities to meet customer requirements
		Contribute to improvements at work	Manage change in organisational activity
Manage Resources	Support the efficient use of resources	Manage the use of physical or financial resources	Determine the effective use of resources
Manage People	<b>Manage yourself</b>	<b>Develop own resources</b>	<b>Enhance own performance</b>
		<b>Develop productive working relations</b>	<b>Enhance productive working relations</b>
	Contribute to selection of personnel	Select personnel for activities	
	Contribute to development of teams and individuals	Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance	
	Lead teams and individuals to achieve objectives	Manage the performance of teams and individuals	
		Respond to poor performance in the team	Deal with poor performance in the team
			Re-deploy personnel: make redundancies
Manage Information	Manage information for action	Facilitate meetings	Chair and participate in meetings
		Provide info to support decision making	Establish information management and communication systems
			Use information to make critical decisions

<b>Manage Quality</b>		<b>Provide advice and support for the development of quality policy</b>	<b>Promote importance and benefits of quality</b>
		<b>Implement quality assurance systems</b>	<b>Manage continuous quality improvement</b>
	<b>Provide advice/support for the development/implementation of quality systems</b>	<b>Monitor compliance with quality systems</b>	
		<b>Carry out quality audits</b>	
<b>Manage Projects</b>		<b>Contribute to project planning and preparation</b>	<b>Plan and prepare projects</b>
		<b>Co-ordinate the running of projects</b>	<b>Manage the running of projects</b>
		<b>Contribute to project closure</b>	<b>Complete projects</b>

New Management Standards

National Management Standards mapped to NVQ levels	2	3	4	5
<u>Managing self and personal skills</u>				
A1 Manage your own resources	X			
A2 Manage your own resources and professional development		X	X	X
A3 Develop your personal networks			X	X
<u>Providing direction</u>				
B1 Develop and implement operational plans for your area of responsibility			X	
B2 Map the environment in which your organisation operates				X
B3 Develop a strategic business plan for your organisation				X
B4 Put the strategic business plan into action				X
B5 Provide leadership for your team	X			
B6 Provide leadership in your area of responsibility		X	X	
B7 Provide leadership for your organisation				X
B8 Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements			X	X
B9 Develop the culture of your organisation				X
B10 Manage risk				X
B11 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in your area of responsibility		X	X	
B12 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in your organisation				X
<u>Facilitating change</u>				
C1 Encourage innovation in your team	X			
C2 Encourage innovation in your area of responsibility		X	X	
C3 Encourage innovation in your organisation				X
C4 Lead change			X	X
C5 Plan change		X	X	X
C6 Implement change		X	X	X
<u>Working with people</u>				
D1 Develop productive working relationships with colleagues	X	X		
D2 Develop productive working relationships with colleagues and stakeholders			X	X
D3 Recruit, select and keep colleagues		X	X	
D4 Plan the workforce				X

D5 Allocate and check work in your team	X			
D6 Allocate and monitor the progress of work in your area of responsibility		X	X	
D7 Provide learning opportunities for colleagues	X	X	X	X
<u>Using resources</u>				
E1 Manage a budget		X		
E2 Manage finance for your area of responsibility			X	
E3 Obtain additional finance for the organisation				X
E4 Promote the use of technology within your organisation				X
E5 Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety	X			
E6 Ensure health and safety requirements are met in your area of responsibility		X	X	
E7 Ensure an effective organisational approach to health and safety				X
<u>Achieving results</u>				
F1 Manage a project		X	X	
F2 Manage a programme of complementary projects			X	X
F3 Manage business processes			X	
F4 Develop and review a framework for marketing				X
F5 Resolve customer service problems	X			
F6 Monitor and solve customer service problems		X		
F7 Support customer service improvements	X			
F8 Work with others to improve customer service		X	X	
F9 Build your organisation's understanding of its market and customers			X	X
F10 Develop a customer focussed organisation				X
F11 Manage the achievement of customer satisfaction			X	
F12 Improve organisational performance				X

### Criteria for good practice in experiential learning

The National Council for Work Experience (NCWE):

[http://www.work-experience.org/cms/ShowPage/Home\\_page/p!eLacegf](http://www.work-experience.org/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/p!eLacegf) puts forward criteria that are recommended to be in place to ensure good practice in work experience components of HE courses.

The following table represents these criteria and how these are met within this programme.

<i>NCWE criterion for good practice</i>	<i>How this is met through this programme</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is taught by Higher Education Institution (HEI) to identify and recognise potential learning outcomes; inc. key skills development and subject related areas</li> </ul>	Students will be tutored through the process of placement gaining in PD module. Skills development areas will be identified and a project negotiated for completion. Links may be made with other modules/subject areas within the assessment if applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning objectives are set (by HEI, students and employer) within an agreed structure or framework</li> </ul>	Objectives for the placement will be drawn up before commencement and agreed by all parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervision is by an employer supervisor who understands the objectives, benefits and learning outcomes of work experience</li> </ul>	The placement co-coordinator/tutor will liaise with the placement organisation to communicate outcomes and objectives before commencement. An employers pack will be provided to inform organisations of their commitment and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic supervision and visits take place at an agreed frequency</li> </ul>	Guidance from tutors will be given before a placement is arranged and once out on placement the students will be visited at least once, may be more often depending on distance and length of placement. In the absence of visits, regular contact will be maintained through telephone or e-mail tutorials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular feedback is given</li> </ul>	Each visit will generate completion of a feedback form in consultation with the employer and the student. This will form part of the students portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An appraisal is given before and at the end of the work experience by the employer supervisor</li> </ul>	This should be part of the organisations own operating procedures. The student should request such an appraisal to contribute to the evaluation of the placement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A project is undertaken and a report is written</li> </ul>	This will form the main assessment of the placement experience. It is anticipated the exact nature of this will depend on the individual and the organisation. The compilation of a portfolio will usually form the project. A template assignment/report will be provided in the absence of a negotiable project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning development and achievements are articulated by the student in written form</li> </ul>	This will comprise the portfolio and reflective report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A presentation is given of results, achievements and personal development</li> </ul>	A short presentation could comprise part of the assessment process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance is provided to integrate this learning into longer term career planning</li> </ul>	Through the PD modules, the work experience will inform the process of further skills development analysis and future directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An assessment is made of skills development (by HEI, employer and student)</li> </ul>	Original objectives are evaluated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student integrates the learning into a career development plan</li> </ul>	Reflection on the placement will inform the PD module/s and the personal development plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition, credit or certificate is awarded</li> </ul>	20 (CertHE) or 40 (FD) credits will be awarded for completion of this module(s)

## **Accrediting Placement Providers – Benefiting Students**

Julie Wilson

NCWE (National Council for Work Experience)

### **Aims and objectives:**

The aim of this paper is to explore how employers can really invest in the students they take on, through commitment and implementing good practices in the placements that they provide. This paper is written with the subject of the conference in mind i.e., the focus on employability and skills development from work related learning.

Employers can invest in students they take on by ensuring that they will undertake a worthwhile placement, which will positively contribute to their employability and skills development. This not only benefits the professional development of the student and gives them the opportunity to see if the career envisaged in their minds is in fact suited to them in reality; it also has many benefits for the employer. For them it facilitates the notion 'try before you buy' and can aide recruitment and retention. On a wider social and moral level the employer can also be seen as benefiting from their contribution to employer responsibility and building up effective employer relationships with those involved in learning.

### **The role of the employer in employability and current debates**

From the employers' point of view it may seem that even though universities equip students with knowledge and theory in a particular subject area, students still leave university lacking in the soft skills required in the workplace. Therefore, increasingly, it is necessary for students to gain those skills, which will enhance their prospects of employment (Stephen and Fallows, 2000). The intention may be apparent in many vocational university programmes, but in the more traditional programmes the gap in skills may be wider. A degree of responsibility therefore falls on the employer to equip the student with the relevant occupational skills necessary for the world of work. With more people entering university this could become a huge task for employers and, even though it may seem right that they take responsibility, it is just as important that the participating Higher Education Institutions, as well as the student, also understand the role they have to play.

Implementing quality placements that are structured and have learning outcomes, so that the placement will benefit the student as well as the employer, is one way that the employer can contribute. Whilst they provide worthwhile and structured placements, there should also be a measure which defines that employer as a provider of a worthwhile placement. Such a measure would be accreditation. If the employer is accredited for their placement, it provides them with formal recognition, which allows them to invest in and attract the highest calibre of student.

Accredited employers will show that they have satisfied rigorous criteria, that the placement is of a standard that will provide positive learning and professional development outcomes, that they are committed and have implemented good practices in the placements they provide. Having a formalised placement with defined outcomes and benefits will contribute to raising the skills awareness of the workforce. Thus employers will be playing an active role.

In light of current interest in integrating work and learning which can be seen from the many conferences that take place on a national level and the somewhat rapid changing nature of the labour market, there is a need for raising the level and standard of placements. We now operate within a highly competitive market both on an international and national level, where not only the businesses are competing, but also the workforce is competing for the best career opportunities (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 1998a). In this atmosphere, developing the skills of the workforce and 'intellectual capital' is ever more important for economic success (DTI, 1999).

It is the concern of this paper to discuss how employers can get involved in contributing to employability and raising skills awareness. One such way is an accreditation programme which not only helps employers and students get the best from their placements, but which also helps raise the level of skills development and increase employability overall.

The accreditation programme, the NCWE Work Experience Quality Mark, was born out of the need, recognised by the government and associated institutions, to raise the skills level of the intended workforce, whereby employers should be encouraged to offer more work experience opportunities for students, whilst at the same time taking a strategic view of their relationship with Higher Education (Dearing Committee, 1997). With this in mind, any form of work experience, which is carried out, should aim to be of a standard, which benefits the student, the employer and the economy as a whole.

The NCWE Work Experience Quality Mark, whilst still maintaining its rigorous codes of practice, essentially recognises the real business benefits of work placements. The motivational bottom line of commercial organisations is a return on investment; hence it is vital in building effective employer relationships that this fact is recognised.

The Quality Mark encourages employers to take a lead in developing the future workforce and enhancing student employability. Essentially, it recognises and accredits employers who meet a national standard for work experience provision for Higher Education students. Accredited employers are acknowledged for contribution to positive workforce development, student learning and society as a whole by championing quality work experience.

The Quality Mark is based around eight main elements or aims. In order to be accredited the employer must show that they comply with rigorous codes of practice (ASET and NCWE, 2001) within each element.

The elements are:-

- Commitment
- Recruitment
- Induction
- Learning and development
- Assessment
- Resources and support
- Partnerships
- Programme evaluation and monitoring

These codes of practice and criteria have been carefully researched and confirmed by occupational and academic professionals to ensure that the Quality Mark Standard is robust and that it contributes positively to workforce development, student learning and society by raising the quality of work experience.

### **What is quality work experience?**

The diagram below illustrates quality work experience. The eight elements listed above make up the essential ingredients for a quality work experience.



Quality Work Experience can be illustrated as follows:



Central to quality work experience is **learning and development**, which must be open and accessible to all without bias or exclusion.

For it to be open and accessible to all, the **recruitment** must be fair, thus giving all concerned an equal chance to undertake work experience and thus access **learning and development**. For learning to be valuable it must be **assessed**.

An optimum learning environment is laid down in the **induction**. A picture of this environment should be given through the **induction** where objectives and expectations are laid down, as well as an overview of the organisation and legal requirements.

**Resources and support** are required for the central elements to flourish and this should be regularly **monitored** and reviewed and continuously improved.

Finally **commitment** encompasses the whole of work experience and, in order to seal the work experience as *quality* work experience, commitment should stem from senior management.

#### The criteria for defining and implementing quality placements

**COMMITMENT** - *'The employer is fully committed to developing employable graduates'*

For an organisation to provide work placements that produce actual benefits there must be commitment. Commitment from individuals is all well and good, but if they don't have the support of the most senior management the results of their commitment will rapidly disappear.

For commitment to be effective it should be collective i.e., both individuals within the organisation and management should be committed and take responsibility for developing employable graduates.

Management commitment formulates the culture of the organisation and people emulate that culture. Therefore positive commitment to developing work placements will result in a positive work experience culture. It is not enough for an employer to express their commitment on paper. For commitment to be effective it must be active and reinforced.

**RECRUITMENT** - *'The employer complies with fair practices in recruitment, selection and equal opportunities legislation'*

When recruiting a work placement student, the process should by no means be inferior to the process adopted to recruit for a non-work experience position or regular employee. Just as with regular employees, the appointment of a work placement student can be a costly procedure. It can be demanding and time-consuming and the method of recruitment is therefore a significant responsibility, requiring careful planning and preparation. A successful work experience appointment is an investment in the present and possibly the future of the organisation; a poor appointment is one that will result in a waste of time, money and resources and a lower level of effectiveness for the employer.

A good selection process provides the opportunity to ensure that the best student is appointed in the fairest possible way. Therefore those involved in the process of recruitment, selection and appointment of a work experience placement must be aware of relevant legislation and Codes of Practice and must ensure that these are not contravened.

These Acts aim to promote equal opportunity in employment and should be applied when recruiting work placements. They make it unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly on specific grounds.

Even though your organisation will already adhere to legislation for non-work experience employees and have a good recruitment process in place, when recruiting a work experience person the process should be no different or inferior.

As well as adhering to relevant legislation and Codes of Practice, a good and fair selection process is achieved by well thought out planning and consideration of the type of student required for the placement. This would be recorded in the form of a job description and competencies against which the selection can take place.

**INDUCTION - *'The employer has a clear and defined induction process which covers key areas, is formalised and obligatory. It should also address expected business and academic outcomes of the student as well as regulatory and legal issues'***

The purpose of an induction programme is to ensure that the student is effectively integrated into the company. It also serves the purpose of ensuring that the student becomes fully operational quickly and is aware of procedures and practices. The induction should start at recruitment stage with the actual length and finer details of the induction process dependent upon the complexity of the job, the background of the new student and the organisation.

A good induction may include a pre-induction checklist, which informs and prepares employees for the arrival of the placement student. It may also include a timetabled schedule of tasks, covering areas such as a tour of the building, briefing on security and health and safety, overview of organisation, products, market, ethics etc., introduction to all company staff, discussion of job description, discussion and agreement of goals and objectives (Red Hot Talent).

**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT – *'The employer provides optimum learning in its environment and programme. Hence the employer has developed both the educational and business objectives and outcomes of the work placement'***

The student will come to the placement wanting to learn and develop skills that employers will look for when they graduate, and the employer will expect the student to develop business and occupational skills which will make them perform better when they progress to full time employment, either with the placement provider or another employer.

Therefore students will expect to develop skills such as:-

- self awareness
- business awareness
- communication
- flexibility
- teamwork
- problem solving

- confidence
- leadership
- confidence
- initiative

A quality work placement means that both sides benefit and it is important that the employer understands that there should be learning outcomes from the placement, which benefit all parties including academic outcomes. Therefore objectives and learning outcomes should be agreed and defined prior to the student beginning the placement (Fanthome, 2004).

Goals and objectives can be used to guide the student in terms of work and career progression. During their time on placement these can be seen as learning outcomes and can enable the student to plan and prioritise their work and above all they should be clear, precise specific and time bound. They can also identify what needs to be done and how they are going to be achieved.

**ASSESSMENT - ‘*The employer has sound assessment mechanisms and techniques in place*’**

Development is central to the notion of work experience. Those undertaking work experience cannot develop if they are not given feedback and don’t know how they are progressing, where they need to improve and what is expected of them. Assessment therefore is crucial. There should be regular reviews of performance, which should openly and honestly assess achievements to date. The assessment should be a two way process which is objective in nature, with input and feedback from both the employer and student. The assessment and evaluation should enable the student the opportunity to learn, develop and reflect. Placements should be concerned with developing employability where employability is about how individuals engage with opportunities and reflect and articulate their skills and experiences.

**RESOURCES AND SUPPORT – ‘*The employer fully supports the placement student. The placement programme has a clear management structure with appropriate allocated resources*’**

The placement programme should have adequate resources and support mechanisms for the students and, equally important, for those involved with the students.

Support for managers and those closely involved with the student

How well the student benefits from the placement is heavily influenced by the managers to whom they report to during the placement. Therefore, it is very important that these managers are adequately trained and supported in their role. Line managers and supervisors need to be fully aware of the placement and what is required of them. It is the employer’s responsibility to ensure those closely involved with the students are made aware, supported and adequately trained. Therefore support is needed in areas including the process and preparation.

Support for the placement student

The essence of a quality placement is support. It is difficult for any employee, let alone a student, to flourish in an unsupportive atmosphere. Providing support is crucial to the student’s learning and development.

Students can be supported in the following ways.

- Assistance with accommodation
- Sound reporting arrangements
- Other placement support networks
- Mentors
- Ongoing career development support
- Regular 1-2-1s

**PARTNERSHIPS - ‘*Where applicable the employer strives to build and maintain relationships with Higher Education Institutions*’**

In those cases where the placement is a sandwich placement, there will be input from the Higher Education Institution. Even if students have won a placement independently of their university, for example, they may have secured a placement in the summer holidays; because the student is still in Higher Education, it is just as important for the employer to recognise the academic link and the importance of encouraging the student to apply academic knowledge with practical knowledge in an intellectual way. An agreement between all parties is seen as beneficial and relevant (Garnett, 2000; Costley, 2000).

The level and degree of interaction with Higher Education Institutions depends on the nature of the placement programme. Whether this interaction is minimal or considerable, the employer is expected to build and maintain relationships with Higher Education Institutions. Just as important however is the employer's awareness and recognition of the reciprocal relationship between themselves, the Higher Education Institution and the student.

#### Understanding the role of the Higher Education Institutions

The Higher Education Institutions role in work placements is to secure learning for students. The Higher Education Code of Practice, written by the Quality Assurance Agency (2001) defines placement learning as

'a planned period of learning normally outside the institution at which the student is enrolled, where learning outcomes are an intended part of a programme of study'

Even though the QAA's Code does not cover learning outside an institution, unless it is a planned part of a programme of study, the Code is neither the less useful in helping the employer understand the students unique position of one foot in the academic world and one foot in the business world.

The QAA also states that

'an effective placement learning opportunity is one in which the aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and understood by all parties and where the responsibilities of the Higher Education Institution, placement provider and student are made explicit'

Depending on the length and type of placement the employer provides, it may be necessary for the employer to consider the relationship that is to be formed with the universities.

#### **PROGRAMME PLACEMENT EVALUATION AND MONITORING – *'The employer has arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work experience placement or programme'***

Continuous improvement is key to keeping the placement programme relevant and effective to the business. For businesses to remain competitive and retain the talent that has already undergone the placement programme, as well as attract new talent, the employer should not be complacent. It is essential that the work experience remains of a high quality through feedback, monitoring and improvement and can be justified as an important part of the employer's business strategy

#### **How does the employer benefit?**

Working towards the Work Experience Quality Mark enables the employer to assess and reinforce processes already in place, to make processes better and to develop new ones. Thus they add value to their organisation and can make a real investment in students by actively showing they are committed to their students' professional development by guaranteeing a worthwhile experience. This can lead to a number of benefits including the attraction and retention of the highest calibre of talent and thereby attracting future experts and leaders. This is particularly important as the need for students to take responsibility for their own careers grows (AGR, 1995).

Recruitment and retention can be a significant cost for employers. An employer accredited with the NCWE Work Experience Quality Mark can effectively reduce the costs of recruitment errors and increase retention through the quality of the work experience they provide. Students who benefit from placements operated to a high standard are more likely to want to return to the employer after finishing

their placement. Benefits can also be gained through raising the profile of the organisation where students will become the vehicle for promoting the organisation. (Smith, H and ESECT).

The Quality Mark confirms the employer's commitment to process and people. It acknowledges that they are committed to the personal and professional development of their placement students and to raising the skills level of the workforce. Such employer responsibility and commitment can help Higher Education Institutions better recognise the role that employers can play, thus opening the way to develop relationships and further the tripartite relationship with the employer, the HEI and the student.

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## **Embedding Work Placements into the Curriculum – The University of Wolverhampton Experience**

Margaret Walsh and Emma Nicholls  
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This paper is based on a presentation, delivered at the ASET Annual Conference, 5 - 7 September 2006, which attempted to demonstrate how the School of Legal Studies is working to embed work placements into the current undergraduate programme of study.

### *Overview*

The University of Wolverhampton is a large multi-campus, teaching-intensive university that excels in widening participation. It offers a diversified academic portfolio, which in the main responds to the needs of the West Midlands and Shropshire. It is organised into ten academic schools, a Graduate School, Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching and seven major central service departments. The University has approximately 22,000 students and 2000 staff. It is widely recognised for enabling achievement within a diverse student body, with a high percentage of students from backgrounds historically under-represented in Higher Education in England and Wales.

### *Case study - the School of Legal Studies and the problems posed*

As a University, there is a strong commitment to enhancing students' employability and the School obviously supports this institution-wide objective. The commitment is driven by a number of factors, including Government-led objectives for Higher Education Institutions and the call from employers to equip graduates with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

It may be useful at this point, for the purposes of clarification, to provide a definition of employability. There has been significant research into this area and there are several interpretations and definitions of employability that are offered. Knight and Yorke (2004) offer the following:

"Employability as a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations."

As a School, we believe that work placements and work-based modules can help us in our aim to increase students' employability, one of the main reasons for embedding work-based modules into the curriculum.

The School is committed to helping its students achieve academic success at the same time as endeavoring to develop a clear understanding of what is required of them once they make the move into full-time, graduate employment. Approximately six years ago, the School began to offer students the opportunity to embark on a work placement as part of their undergraduate programmes. This move towards encouraging work-based learning came as a result of several factors. They include:

- *Increasing competition for graduate positions, particularly in the field of law.* The School works closely with the legal and legally-related sectors and recognises that the competition to secure employment after graduation and postgraduate studies is fierce. By engaging in work-based learning, students could develop skills which would be useful and attractive to employers, enhance their CVs, as well as accrue invaluable hands on experience in their chosen field;
- *A demand from employers to demonstrate a commitment to a particular career.* There is now an expectation on the part of many employers that students will have completed a period of 'relevant' work experience before they begin applying for full-time graduate positions. Therefore, the School is committed to supporting its students in their attempts at securing work placements;
- *Financial reasons.* Many School of Legal Studies students' financial positions dictate that

they have to secure paid employment when they are not at university to support them through their studies. They are unable to commit to periods of unpaid work experience. Therefore, accredited work-based learning provides an ideal solution.

- *Increase students' employability.* The School believes that, by embarking on a well-organised, structured work placement, significant benefits can be gained and potentially lead to students becoming more employable than they might be without this experience.

The challenge the School faced, however, was how to successfully move into the area of work placements, meeting the needs of our diverse student body, while working within a traditional academic curriculum. Unlike other schools within the University dealing with subjects such as health, nursing and business, law is a 'traditional' humanities subject with a strong focus on the 'theory', rather than the practical, at undergraduate level. As many law schools do not offer sandwich courses, it can be difficult to secure work experience for a significant period of time, particularly within law firms and barristers chambers. Despite this, in the long term, the school is committed to offering every student the opportunity to undertake a work placement, with specific annual targets having been set and tracked. The work placements will take place in a variety of organisations including solicitor firms, barrister chambers, public sector and voluntary organisations.

#### *The solution*

The School has taken a holistic approach to work placements, allowing students to choose whether they undertake their placement as part of their degree or opt for less intensive, ad hoc opportunities. However, the commitment to embedding work placements into the curriculum has led to the development of work-based modules at every level of the degree programmes. The following section outlines the options available to students and provides examples of relationships developed in conjunction with specific organisations.

#### *Level one students*

At level one, students can elect to take a 15 credit (one semester) module entitled 'Volunteering in the Community'. The module allows students to train to become a volunteer within their chosen organisation, attending for approximately one day per week. The student also completes a piece of assessed work in order to obtain credits towards their degree. The work is a reflective piece, requiring the student to highlight skills acquired and assess their experiences.

Over the past year or so, with the help of funding from the European Social Fund (ESF), the School has developed close links with local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). We are now able to offer around 40 level one students the opportunity to train to become a CAB advisor as part of their degree. We work along with the CABs to recruit the students and we provide support throughout the module to ensure the students and CABs are happy with progression.

The project obviously has to benefit both the CABs and the students. The CAB invests considerable resources into training the students and we therefore emphasise that they should only volunteer if they are prepared to continue to do so in the long term.

#### *Level two students*

At level two, students can undertake a 30 credit (two semester) module entitled 'Issues in the Workplace'. The objective is to allow students to identify an issue of relevance within their place of work, conduct research and prepare a final report. For example, one of our part-time students works for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and he conducted research into the levels of conviction rates. Often, an organisation requests that a student undertakes client satisfaction research - information which could help with future funding applications.

#### *Level three students*

Finally, level three students have the option to elect to do a 15 or 30 credit module, similar to the level two module described above. The number of words produced, however, is greater and the students are also required to produce a reflective learning log in addition to the report.

Students embarking on these work-based modules have, in the past, volunteered within a variety of organisations including the Witness Service, Victim Support, Youth Offending Teams and domestic violence units.

As the move into a work environment can be daunting for some students, the School provides support throughout all of the modules described above. Regular workshops are held where advice and guidance are provided. For example, a research methods workshop is held for second and third years. One-to-one meetings are also organised throughout to discuss any specific issues or concerns.

Anecdotal feedback suggests that the students' experiences are both enjoyable and extremely useful. For example, some students continue to volunteer with their chosen organisation after the module has been completed and they are no longer required to do so as part of their course. Some students have even gained full-time employment after graduation with their placement organisation.

### *Moving forward: other initiatives*

As emphasised throughout, the School is committed to encouraging as many students as possible to undertake some form of work placement. There is the strong belief that the placements help our students to develop key skills which they may not acquire following a traditional academic route. Many are required to negotiate with organisations in order to agree the parameters of their research, communication skills are enhanced by dealing with other employees and clients and time management is improved as the student becomes increasingly aware that they have to be organised in order to meet both the work placement and university deadlines. As a result, many students complete their placements with increased confidence and awareness of what employers are looking for from prospective employees.

The pilot schemes carried out with the CABs have been successful and will continue in the future. In fact, the School is in the process of validating a LLB (Advice Work) specialist degree. This will allow students who wish to move into this field to undertake significant periods of work experience within the sector by taking the modules described above.

The School is also working alongside West Midlands Police, encouraging level one students to train to become special constables. As the commitment required is significantly less than the CAB, then this may appeal to more students.

More recently, the University as a whole has launched 'Student Placements for Entrepreneurs in Education' (SPEED). A HEFCE-funded initiative, run in conjunction with twelve 'partner' universities, the scheme gives students the opportunity to develop business skills. Students selected to take part in this 36 week scheme will develop a business idea and receive both financial and general support and guidance. For example, financial support for living costs and start up costs are provided. There may be an opportunity for students to combine this scheme with a work-based module.

The School of Legal Studies also has plans to launch its own pro bono clinic. If funding is secured, postgraduate students would work alongside lecturers and qualified solicitors to give business and legal advice to start up and SME businesses in the Black Country region. The initiative will give students 'hands on' experience of dealing with 'real people with real issues'. Students will be supported by members of staff who are qualified solicitors and will signpost clients to law firms where matters are complex.

### **Issues to consider**

Institutions considering developing their work-based modules have issues to consider. The needs of the students and the organisations have to be considered with an attempt made to conduct research which is mutually beneficial.

Clear guidance on the responsibilities and obligations of all parties is important and should be clearly communicated.

Time and resources are major considerations as the effort required to effectively manage work placement programmes is considerable.

As far as the university or department is concerned, being aware of what can potentially go wrong and having contingency plans in place ensures the placements run as smoothly as possible.

### **The students**

Despite significant initial interest, many students will decide that the work-based module is not for



them before beginning the course. This situation needs to be effectively managed as, if the student has been for interview and accepted by the organisation, it will be difficult to go back and inform the placement provider that the student has withdrawn. At the School of Legal Studies, students are given as much information as possible at the outset and meetings are held on a one-to-one basis to ensure they have carefully considered their options.

We have also developed a 'placement agreement' which outlines the expectations and responsibilities the students have. Although not a formal contract, the agreement is signed by the student and the organisation and can be referred to if problems arise.

Planning ahead is key as many voluntary organisations will require students to complete a criminal records check. The checks can take months to complete and therefore need to be planned into the schedule of activities.

### **The organisations**

Developing relationships with organisations takes time and effort. Communication before, during and after the placement is vital as the placement provider wants to feel that they have someone within the institution to refer to. Some organisations can have unrealistic expectations, asking the students to attend more regularly. Obviously, this has to be managed as the student has to have sufficient time to manage other modules alongside their placement.

Occasionally, an organisation may decide that they wish to change the focus or direction of the research being undertaken by the student. Again, the institution should step in to ensure this is dealt with in an appropriate manner, minimising the disruption to the students' work.

### *Conclusions*

Accredited work placements are not an easy option for students or staff. Considerable resources are required if the process is to be professionally and efficiently managed. Issues such as insurance, risk management, all of which have not been addressed in this paper, are vital parts of the process.

Marketing the placements is another important element. The placements need to be attractive to both placement providers and students and, ideally, interest from the students should be gauged before attempting to engage employers. This will ensure there are sufficient students available to fulfill the opportunities.

Students have to understand the commitment required to successfully complete the modules. Some may think that the fact there are no formal lectures means that this is an easy option. It is the responsibility of the School to ensure the student understands the true level of work required. Indeed, the School actively discourages students who already have a lot of other commitments from taking on a placement without having considered the commitment required.

If all of the issues described above have been taken into account, work-based modules can be extremely successful. Students regularly feedback that the experiences have been useful and enjoyable and that they feel it will help them in the future. One recent graduate, in particular, stated that this was their first formal interview and she was glad to have the opportunity to experience this. Other students report increased confidence and networking with valuable contacts.

Embedding work-based modules into the curriculum is one solution the School of Legal Studies has adopted to meet the challenge of providing work-based opportunities for students. Overall the schemes have been successful and provided a platform on which to build for the future.

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## Embedding Work Placements into the Curriculum - The University of Wolverhampton Experience

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Studies



### Introduction

- Why?
  - Competition amongst graduates fierce for those from post 1992 universities
  - Developing key skills is essential to increase employability
  - Call from employers and organisations to raise skills levels
  - Development of skills will enable smoother transition into employment



### The University of Wolverhampton

- Excels in widening participation
  - Diverse student body
  - First generation students
  - Predominantly residents of local area
- Therefore:
  - Many students have to support themselves financially during their three years of study
  - Family commitments play a significant role



### Law and Criminal Justice undergraduates

- Difficult to get work experience in relevant areas
- Many placements need police check and therefore planning ahead is crucial
- Many placements require induction and training before the placement can start



### Contents

- Introduction
- Work placement modules for law students
- Links with the community
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Special Constables
  - LLB (Advice Work)
  - SPEED
- Some considerations for work-based modules
- Conclusions



### Work placements and employability

- Significant research in this area
- 'Employability as a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.'
  - P. Knight & M. Yorke *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education* (London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004), p22



### The School of Legal Studies

- Law is a 'traditional' humanities subject
- Focus on the theory, rather than the 'practical'
- Not available as a sandwich course
- However, demand from the profession for students to gain experience and develop 'soft skills'

Challenge to the school: how can we break into the area of work placements, meeting the needs of our diverse student body and working within a traditional, academic curriculum?



### Our approach

- A holistic approach which aims to offer EVERY student the opportunity to undertake a work placement
- Targets set by the school and tracking
- A broad range of opportunities from one-day work experience and volunteering, to accredited modules
- Targeting a range of organisations within the local community, not specifically law firms





### Accredited modules

- Students often cannot afford to take time out to undertake work placements
- Modules introduced at all levels of the degree programme
- Allow students to gain valuable work experience without having to take time off work, either in their own workplace or with a university link
- Credits gained through assessment



### Some examples



### Level one

- 15 credit (one semester) module
- Students undertake training at their chosen organisation
  - Eg 1.5 days per week at CAB
  - Organised around other modules
- Assessment asks them to reflect on their experiences via a reflective learning log
- Highlight the skills they have acquired and knowledge gained



### Citizens Advice Bureau



- Pilot scheme introduced in 2004/5
- Part-funded by ESF
- Worked alongside a local bureau and recruited 14 students
- Extended the project 2005/6 to include another bureau
- 36 students now training to be volunteers



### Citizens Advice Bureau: the benefits to students?

- Development of skills
  - Communication skills
  - Negotiation skills
  - Time management
  - Listening skills
  - Interpreting and communicating information
- Career benefits
  - CV
  - Potential six month reduction off two year training contract



### Level two

- 30 credit (year long) module
- Students identify and agree an 'issue' to research within work/volunteer setting
- Allowed to develop within a voluntary or paid position
- Develop a 'project' and write a report over two semesters
- Regular workshops held
  - Eg Research Methods
- One-to-one supervision throughout and mentor within organisation



### Organisations

- CAB volunteers can continue at the bureau and develop their research
  - Eg impact of debt on people in the region
  - Social policy issues
- CPS – part-time student developed project based around issue in own workplace



### Level three

- 15 or 30 credit module
- Students identify an 'issue' to research alongside the placement provider
- Project negotiated and written up as well as a reflective learning log
- Regular workshops and supervision as with levels one and two





### Various organisations

- NACRO
- Witness Service
- Victim Support
- Probation Service
- Domestic violence units



### Special Constables

- Developed links with West Midlands Police
- Students applying to train to be Special Constable
- Complete training as part of level one module
- Less onerous commitment and students can work very close to home and at time convenient to them



### SPEED

Student Placements for Entrepreneurs  
in Education



### SPEED

- 750 places in total
- Opportunity to develop business skills through development of a business idea in a supportive environment
- Educational programme not a business start up
- All undergraduates, full and part time, qualify
- Could combine with work placement module for credits



### Moving forward

- Pilot CAB schemes successful therefore expand to other bureaux
- Modules are flexible to accommodate other voluntary organisations in which student is a volunteer



### LLB (Advice work)

- Specialist degree programme for students who would like to move into this field
- Allows the student to develop a structured, work placement pathway
- Undertake placements at level one, two and three
- Combines the academic and vocational aspects of law
- Validation for September 2007



### SPEED

- 12 primary partners led by University of Wolverhampton
- HEFCE funded
- Work with support partners BCC, YE (West Midlands)
- In parallel with traditional placements



### SPEED

- Commences September 2006
- Two year project
- Funded irrespective of whether business succeeds
- Requirements:
  - Viable proposition, idea or development
  - Aptitude / ability to develop





### SPEED

- Duration 36 weeks but can combine some part-time and some full-time e.g. summer recess
- Two intakes per year
- Can be a not for profit social enterprise
- Must be legal and pose no undue risk or require professional certification



### SPEED

- Subsistence allowance for 12 weeks £960 plus £1540 additional support e.g. for stock etc
- Support budget for for institution £1500
- Virtual voucher scheme £2000 to purchase services from own or partner institutions
- Total of £4500 in support of students plus training for students via support budget



### Pro bono law clinic

- Pro bono law clinic for start up businesses and SMEs in the Black Country
- Bid of £50k
- General business and legal advice
- Referral to law firms for more complex matters



### Pro bono clinic

- Hands on experience for LPC students
- Opportunity to develop skills needed to successfully complete that course
- Opportunity to deal with real problems and real people



### Work placements: The benefits

- Students develop key skills which they may not acquire following a 'traditional' academic route
- CV enhancement for students entering the graduate marketplace
- Students can assess whether their chosen career is really for them



### Some considerations for module-based and short-term placements



### Things to consider

- The organisations
  - Contacts can take a lot of nurturing
  - Organisation may have unrealistic expectations
  - Make sure there are students wanting to undertake placement modules first
  - Organisation needs to have clear picture of what they want the student to do for report based assessments



### Things to consider

- The students
  - Huge initial interest may not materialise at the crucial time
  - Students may be unreliable or drop out causing embarrassment
  - Student obligations must be clearly spelled out
  - Placement guidelines and placement agreement





### Things to consider

- Placement will not be as popular if difficult to reach
- Organisations used to taking volunteers seem most amenable
- There must be a 'quid pro quo'
- The organisation **MUST** be clear on the commitment by student e.g. CAB and Specials long term only



### Things to consider

- What can the organisation offer and the student offer the organisation?
- It is not just 'work experience' ... students often forget that there is an assessment to be completed if credit rated
- Students want placements at law firms which do not lend themselves to these modules easily



### Things to consider

- Publicise well and get the organisations in if possible
- Plan well ahead - CRB checks often needed
- Consider organisations who can take a group this is much more time efficient
- Get students to use their contacts as many already in voluntary work



### Conclusions

- Students who undertake placement modules often state it was "the most useful thing they did at university"
- Need to respond to the students' needs; practical, relevant, worthwhile experience gives them a significant advantage
- It increases their confidence as well as their skills



### Conclusions

- Undertaking a placement is not an easy option for students or staff
- Get a team of staff together
- Explore all existing links the university has
- Try to encourage cross-school working
- If new to this get advice from other departments who have experience with placement learning e.g. health sciences



### Any questions?



# Work-Based Learning

Sally Lee and Jane Robertson  
University of Paisley

School of Media, Language and Music



## Work-Based Learning

Sally Lee  
University of Paisley

School of Media, Language and Music



## Introduction

- **Myself**

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## Overview

- **School of Media, Language & Music**
- **Signposts and Strategies**
- **School History of WBL**
- **Case Studies**
- **Conclusion**

10/03/2007

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## School of MLM (1)

- **Started 1995**
- **Located in Ayr**
- **40 students**
- **One degree programme**
- **2006 approx. 1000 students**
- **8 programmes**

10/03/2007

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## School of MLM (2) Degree Programmes

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| • <b>Cinema</b>           | • <b>Media</b>            |
| • <b>Commercial Music</b> | • <b>Music Technology</b> |
| • <b>Digital Art</b>      | • <b>Performance</b>      |
| • <b>Languages</b>        | • <b>Screen Practice</b>  |

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## University of Paisley

- **3 campuses**
  - Paisley
  - Ayr
  - Dumfries
  - + Bell College, Hamilton September 2007
- **After merger 18,000 students approx.**

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## Signposts & Strategies

- **WBL Group**

**"... it is not the experience of work itself that is paramount – rather it is the learning that an individual derives from that experience of work and from reflecting upon it."**

WBL Working Group  
[www.paisley.ac.uk/sth/signposts/workbasedlearning-signpost.asp](http://www.paisley.ac.uk/sth/signposts/workbasedlearning-signpost.asp)  
Accessed 3/9/06

- **School of MLM Strategy**

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## Work-Based Learning (1)

- **There from the start**

- **Original form**

- Core for all 3<sup>rd</sup> year student
- Done as part of the course
- 1 day for 4 weeks in March
- Became unmanageable

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## Work-Based Learning (2)

- **Uncredited – volunteers**

- Lasted for 2 years until September 2005

- **Credit based from September 2005**

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## Work-Based Learning (3)

- **4 distinct areas**

- Industry based
- Students find own work placement
- Community Special Projects
- Industry Brief

12/03/2007

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## Industry based

- **400+ placement partners**
- **Application form and CV submitted**
- **Students placed into ABC categories**
- **Harris Institute, Toronto**

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## Students find own work placement

- **Already relevant work areas**
- **Credit for work done/doing**
- **Employer agrees work is appropriate**
- **Same assessment as other students**

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## Community Special Projects

- **Organisations approach us**
- **Nil budgets**
- **Funded projects**
- **In-house projects**
  - Showcase
  - Ayrspace – web TV

[www.ayrspace.org.uk/show.html](http://www.ayrspace.org.uk/show.html)

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## Industry Brief

- **Commercial Music**
- **Project based**
- **Pitch required**
- **Business plan**
- **New and innovative ideas**

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## Student Allocation

- All students equal opportunity
- But
- Canada – Harris Institute

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## Student Experience

- How do we guarantee it
  - Knowledge of our employers
  - Visit new companies
  - Flexible attendance
- Students not monitored
- Primary/Secondary Education sector

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## Assessment

- 4 parts
  - Company outline – 500 words
  - Weekly diary – 1000 words
  - Project – 1200 words
  - Evaluation – 500 words
- Flexible submission date

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## Case Studies

- Antisocial Behaviour DVD
- Kilmarnock Football Club

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## Antisocial Behaviour DVD (1)

- East, North & South Ayrshire Councils
- Topics
  - Drugs
  - Nuisance groups and gatherings
  - Vandalism and graffiti
  - Alcohol supply/Underage drinking

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## ASB DVD (2)

- Project
  - Funded
  - 3 projects – one from each Council
  - Rolling
- Ardrossan Academy
- School students participation

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## ASB DVD (3)

- Filming
  - Location
  - 3 Paisley lecturers
  - 5 Students – all Media/Cinema degree
- Results
  - Some school students want to join MLM

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## ASB DVD (4)

- Paisley students feedback
- “A fantastic experience, a real sense of responsibility, you felt you were important to the overall production.”

Michael Winters 31/08/06

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## ASB DVD (5)

### Feedback (contd)

- Trusted
- Faith in us
- Let us use our initiative
- Tried to express ourselves in our own right
- Working with industry professionals
- They were willing to help us
- Open to suggestion
- Consulted us
- Open minded – more a democracy
- Really worthwhile
- Possible future work

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## ASB DVD (6)

- Clip
- Launch

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## Reflection on ASB DVD

- Good WBL experience
- Needed able students
- University image
- Potential students
- All positive feedback
- No negatives

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## Kilmarnock Football Club

- Scottish Premier League Club
- 5<sup>th</sup> in League last year

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## KFC Overview

- Remit
- Project
- Positives and Negatives
- Learning Points

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## Remit

- Students work experience
- Increase website hits
- Nil budget
  - Pay students expenses
- Maintain contact

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## Project (1)

- Request date
- Requirements
- Which students
  - 6 FT
  - 1 PT
- Skills chosen

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## KFC Official Website



## KFC Unofficial Web Site



## Project (3)

- **Reality**
  - Not enough time
  - Too many ideas
- **Ideas Chosen**
  - Friendly matches
  - Logo for Kilmarnock FC festival
  - Business card

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## Project (2)

- **Ideas generated by students**
  - Open day – interview celebrity
  - World Cup
  - Friendly matches
  - Logos
  - Competitions
  - Jingle
  - Business Card

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## Negatives (1)

- **Time**
- **Quality of students**
  - Not the best in some areas
  - The best in other areas

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## Negatives (2)

- **My Absence**
  - Meeting/written instructions/contacts
  - Did nothing
  - Did not respond to each other
  - Lacked initiative - no effort
  - Contacted no-one
- **Ton of Bricks**

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## Negatives (3)

- **Digital Art/Graphics students**
  - Worked individually
  - One unhappy student
- **Student financial problems**
- **Difficulty getting PT student to meet**
- **Haphazard presentation of work**

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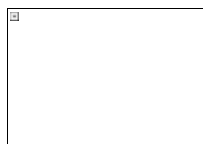
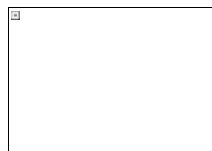
## Positives

- **Good student feedback**
- **KFC**
  - Happy with results
  - Repeat next year
  - Photos on website
  - Fans comments
  - Newspaper coverage of project

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## Learning Points (1)

- **Start first semester**
- **Prestigious project – select students**
- **Tight control of students**
- **No staff absences**
- **Learning curve for me**

## Learning Points (2)

- **Ideas**
  - More focused
  - Fewer
- **Professional presentation of work**

## Reflection on KFC

- **Project worked out well**
- **Students found worthwhile**
- **KFC/myself – awakened awareness**
- **Looking forward to next time**

## Conclusion

- **ASB Staff led project – “fantastic experience”**
- **KFC – students only – difficulties but good experience**
- **Equal opportunity – not all the time**
- **Tighten up on student led projects**
- **Did WBL work successfully - Yes**

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## Work-Based Learning

**Sally Lee**  
**University of Paisley**

## **Enhancing Opportunities for Learning in the Workplace: Developing an Informed Strategy**

Lizzie Dove, Veejay Mistry and James Wilkinson  
Thames Valley University

### **Introduction**

According to the Higher Education Academy (2005), "...students who gain work experience and maximise the learning from it, before and especially during their studies, are contributing strongly to their employability". This view is endorsed by many relevant stakeholders (e.g. Dearing (1997), DfES Work Experience Group (2002), Harvey et al (1994 and 2002)). Moreover, many of these employability attributes can only be developed "in 'real life' situations, ... (and) there is a limit to the extent to which educational establishments can 'teach' the necessary skills and attributes, even where extensive efforts are made to simulate the work situation" (cited by Little et al, 2006).

For how long the benefits continue into an individual's career is less clear, but research undertaken at our own institution, Thames Valley University (TVU), suggests that placements are especially valuable for 'non-traditional' students in institutions like ours. Mortimer and Wilkinson (2002) found that, two or three years after graduating, business graduates with work placement experience were much more likely to perceive their degree to have been relevant to their current employment, had enjoyed faster access to graduate level employment and were earning significantly higher salaries.

Despite these reported benefits, TVU business students are no longer opting to do placements. This may relate to internal factors, notably to placements becoming voluntary. The decline has also been linked to the growing diversity and 'non-traditional' nature of the student body in institutions such as TVU. Anecdotal evidence reported by Hills and Page (2004) "indicates that the take-up of work placements by multi-ethnic students in the inner city post-1992 HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) is very low".

In June 2005, we sought Teaching Quality Enhancement Funding (TQEF) to investigate attitudes and barriers to placements amongst TVU's full-time business students. While our starting point was with placements, we recognised also that for many students, the traditional placement may no longer be feasible, or at any rate, desirable. Informing the wider provision and delivery of work-based learning opportunities was therefore an additional aim of this study, with the focus on full-time business students.

### **Method**

Barriers reported by Hills and Page (2004) were used as a framework, which we tested by using focus groups and survey questionnaires, consulting TVU Year 1 and 3 BA Business Studies (BABS) students, and placements staff from across the UK. Design of these instruments was linked to the framework using the following research question and related sub-questions:

What are the issues contributing to the poor take-up of placements?

- i. What awareness of placements and work experience do students have (concerning benefits, types of placement, etc) ?
- ii. What are the perceived barriers towards placements?

### **Issues affecting the take-up of placement**

Following presentations explaining the benefits of placements, many TVU Year 2 BABS students register with the Placements Office, which receives more than enough offers of placements from employers. Why, then, does the vast majority fail to pursue and secure a placement? In their study of students from similar institutions to TVU, Hills and Page (ibid) identified two categories who did not undertake placement:

1. Students who chose not to pursue it.
2. Students who had been willing to pursue it but reported difficulties and barriers.

For the first category, clash with part-time work, child-care logistics, previous bad experience and lack of confidence (or doubts) were cited as the main reasons. With the other students, the main difficulties included lack of awareness, issues concerning money (e.g. lack of payment for some placements), location / travel difficulties, clashes with part-time work, confidence and unrealistic expectations.

These multiple reasons and barriers paint a “complex picture pointing to structural, procedural and personal factors”, and they suggest that “students’ lack of self-confidence, found to be hindering the employability of many non-traditional students ... is very important.” (Hills and Page, *ibid*: p.10).

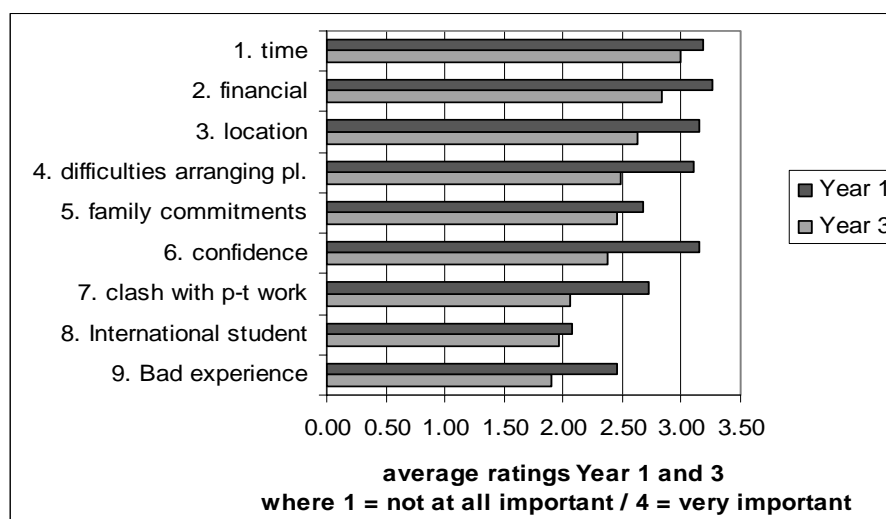
In March 2006, an exchange of emails between several members of PlaceNet, (a forum for university UK placement officers), suggested that low take-up of placements was becoming more widespread and may not be limited to non-traditional students. Conscious that these emails provided only anecdotal evidence, we decided to conduct a survey of PlaceNet members, the findings of which are presented in the next section.

### Findings

Where they relate to student perspectives, our findings are in line with those of Hills and Page (*ibid*). As regards awareness, students appeared to lack an appreciation of the quality of the work they could experience and of the benefits. Their comments included concerns over placements’ value for money and the quality of work that they might be given, suggesting that perceptions of placements were coloured by ‘work experience’ had while at school. The question of being given decent quality work may also relate to self-perceptions held by non-traditional students: “Another thing would be not being treated as equal as other people, because of the background you come from ... (and) the way you look or speak.” (Year 1 student). Making students aware of the realities and benefits is clearly important, and from a practical point of view: “... you need continuous reminders, deadlines, more information” (Year 3 student).

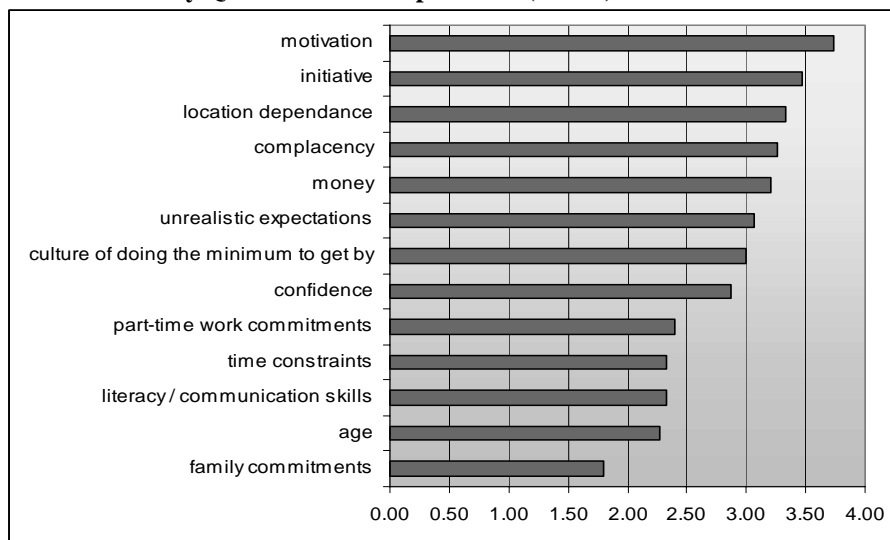
Regarding the barriers to placements, students’ preoccupation with time and money appeared to be the most crucial issues, and these questions were significantly associated with the clash with part-time work. As one final year student commented: “If I wasn’t working part-time, I would have considered a sandwich course.” Having to pay fees while on placement was a recurrent gripe: “The money you have to pay and not come to classes really puts me off...” (Year 1 student). The issue of confidence also appeared in various forms. The higher Likert scores awarded by first year students for all barriers, especially ‘difficulties arranging placement’ and ‘confidence’ suggest that confidence is indeed a key issue.

**Figure 1: Average Likert scores for Barriers awarded by TVU BABS students  
Year 1 (n = 71) and Year 3 (n = 52)**



From a different perspective, placement staff appear to emphasise attitudinal issues as the key barriers. The emails exchanged by PlaceNet members in March 2006 commented on students' poor levels of motivation and initiative, their 'location dependence', inability to take responsibility for themselves, complacency, poor literacy and a tendency to "do the minimum to get by". Issues surrounding fees were also mentioned by several correspondents. The attitudinal issues were scored highly in the PlaceNet membership survey, where motivation, initiative, location dependence, complacency and money appear as the top five factors, followed closely by unrealistic expectations, the culture of doing the minimum to get by, and confidence.

**Figure 2: PlaceNet Survey Questionnaire Respondents (n = 17)**



### Key findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations

Our study appears to support many of the findings reported by Hills and Page, as regards awareness and perceived barriers to the take-up of placements:

#### Awareness

- Students lack awareness of the quality of work that is possible on placements
- Students lack awareness of the benefits of doing a placement

#### Barriers

- Students are preoccupied by issues concerning time
- Students are preoccupied by issues concerning money
- Students' part-time work clashes with the pursuit of placement
- Students are unwilling to move in order to pursue a placement
- Confidence is a pervasive issue
- Perceptions of being a student, not a full-time employee, act as a barrier

The issues of time and money are not entirely rational, since a placement can help with both of these. On the one hand, a one-year placement can bring forward a student's entry into the labour market, and in the longer term can speed the transition into graduate level employment. On the other, a year spent in full-time employment can provide a substantially bigger income than part-time work, and thus help with the problem of money. This is why we believe that time and money are not truly factors in their own right; rather it is the manner in which they prey on the minds of students. This is why we see students' *preoccupation* with time and money as being the crucial issue, rather than time and money *per se*.

The attitudinal issues highlighted by PlaceNet members undoubtedly have a certain resonance; 'poor motivation', 'lack of initiative', the 'culture of doing the minimum to get by' are all comments with which many of us are familiar, whether or not we share such a view of today's students. However, the self-selecting number of PlaceNet e-mailers and survey correspondents is really too small (13 and 18 respectively) to draw robust conclusions. Nevertheless, we see a connection between these alleged deficiencies and the students' preoccupation with time and money, since they relate to the broader issue



of self-management, and to the difficulties students have in managing their complex study / work / life balance. Indeed, it is perhaps the sheer complexities of the life led by today's students that makes the process of finding a placement so daunting. To be successful under these circumstances, they need to be especially confident.

Although our research instruments were not designed to investigate students' self-perceptions, we believe also that students' sense of identity as a student may be a further barrier: "I am a full-time student. While studying for my degree I will undertake part-time, not full-time work". At the ASET Conference in September 2006, it was also suggested that peer pressure is also an important factor, students being unwilling to take a year out if their friends are not. These would appear to be fruitful areas for further investigation.

Strategies to enhance opportunities for learning in the workplace therefore need to tackle a range of issues:

- Strenuous and repeated efforts to raise awareness of the benefits of doing placements
- timely development of career management skills
- greater flexibility concerning work-based learning (e.g. allowing part-time work to be used as a basis for credit-bearing learning)
- efforts to enhance self-management skills, including stress management
- strategies to enhance students' confidence and self-efficacy beliefs
- efforts to widen students' understanding of what it means to be a student
- research into the impact of peer pressure on the take up of placements

## References

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Mortimer, M and Wilkinson, J., (2002) , *Perspectives on Key Skills and Employability: Drawing on Work Experience to Inform Curriculum Design*, ASET Annual Conference Proceedings: Integrating Work and Learning in Europe, Sheffield, 18-22

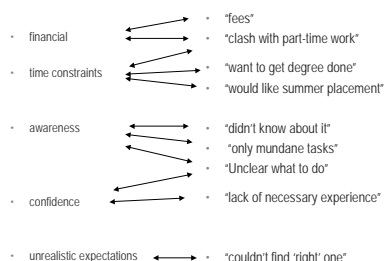
ASET Annual Conference 2006  
September 2006

## Enhancing Opportunities for Learning in the Workplace: Developing an Informed Strategy

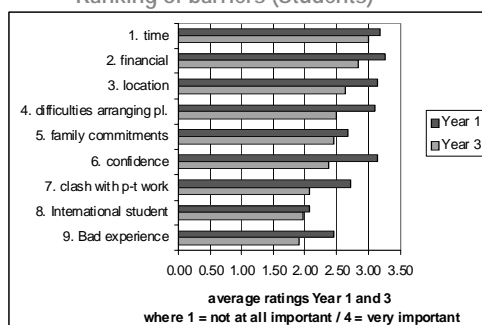
Lizzie Dove  
Veejay Mistry  
James Wilkinson



Literature (Hills & Page, 2004) / TVU Focus Groups



### Ranking of barriers (Students)



## Background

- Concerns over placements:  
i.e. low take-up

- 2001 Graduate Survey<sup>1</sup>  
indicated positive impact of placement:

- Smoother / faster into "graduate" employment
- Greater perceived relevance of degree
- Higher salaries

<sup>1</sup> Mortimer & Wilkinson (2002) (Business & Management Graduates)

## Tutors' concerns

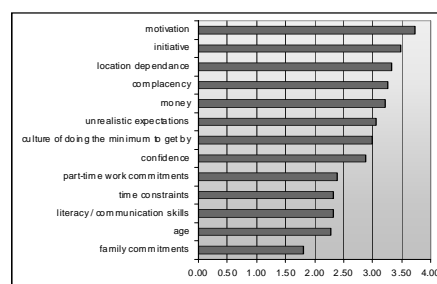
### Barriers

- Expectations
- Culture
- Administration
- Communication
- Equal opportunities
- Fees

### Quality

- Assessment
- Supervision
- Training and support
- Preparation including applications

### Ranking of barriers (PlaceNet members)



## Key findings

### Awareness

- students are not aware of the quality and benefits of placements

### Barriers

- students are preoccupied by time and money  
(understandable but not entirely rational)
- part-time work clashes with the pursuit of placement
- students are unwilling to move
- confidence is a pervasive issue
- students' self-perceptions may also be a further barrier

## Key findings

### A complex picture:

- difficulties managing the study / work / life balance
- issues re. students' self-perception / identity

### Ways forward

#### **Awareness raising**

- Strenuous / repeated efforts to convince students of :
  - the quality of placements
  - the benefits of placements

### Ways forward

#### **Tackling the barriers**

- timely development of career management skills
- greater flexibility concerning Work-Based Learning  
(e.g. allowing part-time work to be used for credit-bearing learning)
- efforts to enhance self-management skills, incl. stress management
- strategies to enhance confidence and self-efficacy beliefs
- research into student self-perceptions / identity

## The Work Experience Management Qualification

Alison Clark

NASES (National Association of Student Employment Services)

### The Work Experience Management Qualification

Alison Clark, NASES Director



Why did NASES get involved?

Established a need for Job Shop Staff

Working with AgCAS and NCWE

Approached HECSU to fund the development of a qualification for Work Experience Management

2004 funding received for a 3 year project



### Is there a market?

Consultation...

- Roles benchmarked
- Professional recognition for the sector
- No current qualification fit
- Added value
- Academic recognition and credibility
- Career path and progression
- Aid recruitment and retention to sector



### Practitioner Mapping

Three distinct roles identified

- Job Shop
- Placements and
- Others

Therefore core components with optional modules to make the qualification relevant and targeted

Interest from FE and Schools Sector



### Academic Partner

The University of Reading –  
School of Continuing Education

To develop, deliver and award

**Postgraduate Certificate & Postgraduate Diploma in  
the Management of Student Work Experience**

Qualification Launch May 2007



### Programme Design

1. The Recruitment Process
2. Working with Students
3. Working with Employers

Elements 1-3  
Certificate (60 credits)

3. Management of the Service
4. Quality Standards
5. Marketing the Service

Elements 1-6  
Diploma (120 credits)

Need further discussion and consultation .....

Encourage transfer and progression from Certificate through to Diploma



## Programme Management

APL

Online Delivery

Qualifications offered through Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment

- Delivery of courses materials in a variety of formats
- Timed release of materials
- Discussion boards
- Online assessment
- Digital drop box

APL scheme available

- Match your prior experience and learning against learning outcomes
- Gather direct/indirect evidence of prior experience
- Gather appropriate certificates/ course details as evidence of prior learning
- Compile a portfolio of evidence and submit



## Fees

£416 per 20 credit module

Investigating a bursary scheme for candidates to apply to

## Other Training

A series of one day training events - NASES (programme to continue in 2007)

- Everything you need to know about Student Employability
- Job Shop Set-up
- Job Shop Master Class
- Marketing
- Working with International Students

AgCAS Training events -



## The Next Step?

Any Questions?...

Further information at [www.nases.org.uk](http://www.nases.org.uk)

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ASET

***Integrating Work and Learning***



**The Placement and Employability Professionals' Body**

ASET is the professional body for placement and employability staff. It has been at the forefront of developments in sandwich courses and other forms of work placements, in both higher and further education, for 25 years. We represent over 1300 academic and administrative placement staff at 90 HE and FE institutions.

ASET has been the catalyst for the development of guidelines in many areas and also the promotion and dissemination of best practice. We also seek to promote the general concept of work-based learning.

ASET is an educational charity run by work-based learning practitioners for work-based learning practitioners and offers support, advice, guidance and representation to all professionals who work in the sector.

As one of the leading NGOs in the sector, we are able to provide independent and influential representation to all those working in the field.

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### **ASET Conference 2007**

The 2006 Annual Conference will take place between 4-6 September at UWIC, Cardiff. More details are on the following page and please keep an eye on the ASET website for further news.

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- Silver Jubilee Event

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A three-day international conference exploring a range of issues relating to the practice of placement/work-based learning and employability. As well as plenary sessions there will be a wide selection of workshop presentations to attend.

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# **APPENDIX**

**ISBN: 0-954-2231-5-2**

**13-digit ISBN: 978-0-954-2231-5-2**

**ASET**

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