A Good Practice Guide for Placement

and Other Work-Based Learning

Opportunities in Higher Education, ASET

**5 Good Practice – the Employer**

5.1 Employers - Before Work-Based Learning

Employers can best contribute significantly to the smooth running of the recruitment process if they:

* Are clear about their motives for recruiting work-based learning students, and have realistic

expectations of what induction/training will be needed and what students can then deliver.

* Are aware of the requirements and expectations of student and HEI.
* Recognise that recruitment will follow a natural cycle, annual or otherwise, related to the

academic year, and where feasible adjust recruitment cycles to fit in with this.

* Treat the recruitment of placement or similar students in the same way and using the same

procedures as for any other graduate level staff, e.g. in drawing up job- and person

specifications, thinking through appropriate remuneration packages, and complying with all

relevant legislation including working-time directive, holiday time entitlement, payment of

national insurance, tax, and compliance with legislation against discrimination on the grounds of disability, ethnic origin, gender, and good practice in respect of non-discrimination on the

grounds of age.

* Advise the HEI of whom they are interviewing, and where, to minimise clashes.
* Promptly pay students out-of-pocket expenses when they attend interview/testing, regardless of the outcome.
* Make employment offers as soon as reasonably possible after interview/testing, in view of the

fact that students frequently need to juggle with several offers or potential offers, and it is in the interests of all parties that arrangements be confirmed as soon as possible.

* Note that the work-based learning employment may in some cases be the first time that the

student has lived away from home, and giving support where appropriate in the finding or

provision of accommodation.

* Co-operate with the HEI in all procedural matters including confirmation of appropriate legal

Health and Safety provision.

5.2 Employers - During Work-Based Learning

Employers should:

* Note that in the UK they have full legal liability for students as employees (or visitors, for very
* short periods).
* Provide induction and training including Health and Safety issues
* Wherever possible involve them in staff appraisal schemes, since this is a valuable way of

learning about employment norms.

* Consider appointing a mentor for each student, distinct from the line manager and possibly from another department, to oversee the training, development and general learning processes of the student.
* Ensure that the immediate supervisor or manager has access to the HEI contact, placement

tutor or officer.

* Make appropriate provision for the student to be visited at a mutually convenient time and place, providing a meeting room and ensuring availability of the student’s manager.
* Co-operate with the HEI in all course requirements such as the need for the student to

undertake assessed work while on work-based learning, possibly involving some procedure for dealing with sensitive/confidential data, and to attend any appropriate event at the HEI during the work-based learning e.g. a residential or briefing day.

* If anything goes seriously amiss with the work-based-learning experience or the student, involve the HEI immediately and jointly seek ways to resolve the situation, and if necessary involve the HEI in any disciplinary action.
* Provide, on request, an appropriate statement on the student’s conduct and performance.
* Provide the student with a debrief session and receive suggestions as to how to make the workbased learning experience even more rewarding for all parties.
* Where a student is required for the following year, involve the existing student in the recruitment process (e.g. drawing up the job- and person specifications) and ideally in the handover and induction of the new recruit.
* Recognise that after a period of work-based learning the student’s priority is to complete an

academic course, and to encourage that process by means such as keeping in contact

throughout the student’s subsequent studies; where appropriate a bursary or opportunity of

subsequent employment may be offered.

5.3 Employers - After Work-Based Learning

After work-based learning, most activity is carried on by the student and HEI. However the employer can usefully:

* Provide the student with an appropriate testimonial, or agreement to provide a reference on

request from a future potential employer.

* If not already implemented, consider a further student from a later cohort.
* Research and where appropriate implement the suggestions identified in discussions between company and student during the debrief session.

**6 Acknowledgements**

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Version 2.1 March 2009 Page 11 of 12