

Work Placement/Release Policy (approved July 2015)

1. Definitions

- 1.1 There are many ways in which students engage with employers, and the terminology used to describe these different forms of engagement may vary across the sector. The definitions as set out below are given for clarity, and apply to the operation of all employer engagement at the Arts University Bournemouth.
- i. **Work Placement** is defined as a workplace experience which is incorporated as part of a student's course. This may be through a requirement in a unit of study, or through inclusion in a learning agreement. Placement/releases will be of a defined duration (normally a minimum of two weeks, and a maximum of 13 weeks), and placement/release learning will contribute to (or comprise) the assessment of the unit.
 - ii. **Work Release** is defined as a workplace experience which takes place during normal taught time, but does not contribute to the formal course of study. With the explicit approval of the Course Leader, a student may be released from the formal timetable for a maximum of two working weeks to undertake a period of work release where it is considered that this will be beneficial to the overall learning experience (for example, where there is an opportunity to work with a company which specialises in the discipline). The Course Leader will approve any amendments to the student's course, including any revisions to assessment requirements for units which are in operation at the time. Given the importance of regular attendance, approved work release is rare.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The University recognises that there are many ways in which a student may engage with the workplace, for example: work experience outside the course of study or volunteering. This policy and procedure applies only to work placement and work release organised and/or approved by the University. (For information on Work Experience at the AUB please see the policy under *HR - Policies and Guidance – Management Guide – Volunteer & work placement Management Guide*)

3. Introductory remarks

The University's approach is based on the following tenets:

- 3.1 Students are normally required to identify potential placement/release providers and to contact them to determine the feasibility of a placement/release. On some occasions, and particularly where the placement/release/release forms a mandatory part of the validated course of study, University staff may initiate this process. Irrespective of the method of identification, the University retains responsibility for ensuring that the provider is suitable and for confirming that all details of the proposed placement/release or work release are satisfactory.
- 3.2 The success of many vocational art, design, media and performance courses is based on high quality relationships between education and business in order to ensure a relevant curriculum and to provide a meaningful learning experience to students.

- 3.3 Work placement/release can give students a competitive advantage in determining career direction and subsequent successful application for employment.
- 3.4 The experience of work placement/release can provide a depth of understanding of employment that is difficult to simulate within an academic environment, the benefit of which is significant.
- 3.5 Students may be given the opportunity to work alongside and in similar circumstances to other people employed at their work placement/release. In taking advantage of this opportunity students will be working outside the disciplined University environment, in the company of adult strangers and with unfamiliar chains of command. They may be at particular risk from:
- possible physical and psychological immaturity and inexperience of work;
 - a relative lack of awareness of the potential risks to their health and safety – both in relation to the tasks they are doing and from the working environment;
 - a lack of awareness of appropriate workplace behaviours and boundaries.
- 3.6 Work-based learning must be offered and monitored with due diligence. This includes ensuring that any period of work-based learning as covered by the scope of this policy forms part of a coherent and structured learning experience, does not have a negative impact on any other aspect of the course of study and does not exploit the student. Work-based learning must also conform to relevant health and safety legislation; equalities legislation and policy; and be in accordance with the University's overall duty of care to the student.
- 3.7 There is no legal requirement that student work placement activity should be paid. Whilst the University does not prohibit payment, it accepts that for many employers within the creative industries, payment is not realistic. A placement/release provider is asked to consider whether it is able to make a contribution to the student's reasonable expenses. It is important that consideration is given to the financial implications of any placement/release opportunity before agreeing to undertake it.
- 3.8 The annual fee for the course remains unaffected by any work placement/release activity.

4. Duties and Responsibilities

4.1 Duties of AUB

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974, organisers for work placement/releases have roles and responsibilities for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of students on work placement/release, including those students who find their own work placement/releases. Students on placement/release remain registered with AUB and so the University's legal responsibilities (for example, in relation to duty of care, reasonable adjustments for disabled students, safeguarding responsibilities etc.) remain whilst the student is on placement/release. For any student holding a Tier 4 Visa, details of the placement must also be added to their Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

4.2 Duties of placement/release providers

Under the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations, students participating in work placement/releases are regarded as employees for the purposes of health and safety. Placement/release providers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.

4.3 Duties of students

Students participating in work experience have the same duties as other employees in the workplace, and are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and co-operate with the placement/release provider in complying with the provider's legal duties and to maintain contact with the AUB.

5. **Suitability of the placement/release**

- 5.1 As an organiser, University staff have a responsibility to make judgements about the suitability of work placement/releases. Course staff need to be satisfied that placement/release providers have suitable systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare, so far as is reasonably practicable, of the student while working for them. **Please complete the document *Work Placement/release Confirmation Form* which makes the AUB and the placement/release providers duties explicit.**
- 5.2 In assessing placement/release suitability, course staff will need to discuss with any potential placement/release/provider the objectives of the placement/release and the implications of accepting students into the workplace. Course staff will also need to ensure that providers are aware that they are just as responsible for students on work experience as they are for their employees.
- 5.3 In particular course staff need to ascertain that the placement/release/provider has appropriate health and safety measures and insurance cover in place. If course staff are not satisfied with the placement/release/provider's standard of health and safety management, the business should not be accepted as a placement/release provider. The *Work Placement/release Confirmation* form outlines the minimum requirements that are needed.
- 5.4 Course staff may feel a site visit is necessary to assist in their deliberations. Whilst such visits are valuable and represent good practice, staff must feel competent enough to assess the provider's business for health and safety awareness. Further advice and assistance may be sought from the Head of Estates and Campus Services and/or Head of Technical Services.
- 5.5 If course staff decide to visit, a brief walk round of the workplace will provide a useful opportunity to look at general conditions in the area where the student will work. Appendix A lists indicators of the standard of attention paid to occupational health, safety and welfare.
- 5.6 UK Health & Safety laws do not apply to overseas work placement/releases; they will be subject to the health and safety regulations of the country in question and course staff will need to find out in advance what rules apply. Furthermore, course staff will be responsible for the planning and organisation of the placement/release with additional emphasis on the assessment of the risks involved in travel overseas. AUB students are covered under the AUB travel insurance for trips abroad subject to the policy exclusions and excluding trips to disturbed areas. The Estates Manager can provide further details of insurance cover.

6. Consideration of work placement/release/release against validated units

6.1 The planning and approval for work-based learning is the responsibility of the Course Leader, who will ensure the suitability and availability within the overall timetable of the course. No period of placement/release or work release may proceed without the Course Leader's written approval.

6.2 The arrangements for the placement/release or work release must be confirmed, in detail, in a learning agreement before commencement of the experience.

The learning agreement must stipulate:

- the dates on which a student is legitimately absent from the University;
- the nature of the activity to be undertaken;
- the arrangements for assessment and any revisions to the standard course delivery, including deadlines for assessment;
- for periods of placement/release which contribute to a unit of study, how the agreed plan of work will contribute towards meeting the learning outcomes of the unit, and how these outcomes will be demonstrated and assessed. This includes giving detailed assessment requirements and submission deadlines, and these must be confirmed by the relevant Unit Leader (prior to submission to the Course Leader);
- for periods of work release, how the agreed plan of work will contribute to the overall student learning experience.

6.3 It will be assumed that units not explicitly referenced in the learning agreement are unaffected, and students will be expected to participate and present themselves for assessment in the usual way.

7. University Process for Student Work Placement/release/release

Following the identification of a possible work placement/release/provider the following action should be taken:

7.1 An initial (courtesy) letter should be sent to the proposed provider thanking them for their potential engagement. This letter should note that any placement/release will be subject to the confirmation of relevant health and safety standards. See sample letter in Appendix B.

7.2 The relevant parts of the AUB *Work Placement/release Confirmation Form* should be completed by the placement/release provider and the Course Leader and countersigned by the student.

The provider must also provide copies of their Health & Safety Policy (unless the company has less than 5 employees) and a specific risk assessment for the student work placement/release.

7.3 Under no circumstances may a placement/release commence without the completion of the *Work Placement/release Confirmation Form*, which should be returned to the Academic Office team. Likewise, the student learning agreement must be signed by the respective Unit Leaders and signed off by the Course Leader before commencement of the experience. The Course Leader must ensure that the student is clear about the financial arrangements for the placement/release experience. It is

the responsibility of the Academic Office to ensure that details of any placement for students holding a Tier 4 Visa are forwarded to the Compliance Officer, for inclusion on the CAS.

- 7.4 Prior to the commencement of any student engagement, all students must be apprised of the need for good Health & Safety practices. They will not be required to prepare a formal risk assessment of the employer's premises, but may be asked to comment on this through subsequent reports on their experience.
- 7.5 If possible, University staff should visit the student on placement/release. Where this is not possible, telephone/email communication must be made at least once per week and the substance of the call/email should be recorded in writing on a tutorial form and kept with all paperwork related to the student's placement/release in the Academic Office.
- 7.6 On conclusion of the placement/release, the student and the Course Leader will normally offer the placement/release provider an opportunity to submit a report on the placement/release, see the *Work Placement/release Report (Providers)* form.
- 7.7 All students must complete a work placement/release self-evaluation using the *Work Placement/release Report (Students)* form. This is not formally assessed, but enables the University to gain an overview of the work placement/release experience. All aspects of assessment, as stated on the learning agreement, must be delivered and assessed in the agreed timeframes and in the agreed manner.
- 7.8 On the successful conclusion of any period of placement/release or work release, the Course Leader or representative should contact the provider both as a matter of courtesy and also to feedback any relevant information emerging from all submitted reports and relevant tutorial forms.

8. Monitoring

- 8.1 A record of all student placement/releases should be maintained at School level to demonstrate that relevant procedures have been implemented.
- 8.2 At the end of each academic year, Schools should provide the Head of Estates and Campus Services with a summary of work placement/releases and educational visits undertaken by courses during that academic year, for the purposes of informing future insurance cover. The summary should include student name and course, purpose of the time away from the University (i.e. work placement/release or educational visit), destination and duration.
- 8.3 The Arts University is committed to the provision of a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where unfair discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness. It has developed and implemented an Equalities Strategy and Action Plan to guide its work in this area. All the University's policies and practices are designed to meet the principles of dignity, respect and fairness, and take account of the University's Equalities Commitment.

This policy has been subject to an equality analysis to ensure consideration with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Date of last Policy Review: July 2015

Appendix A

Site Visits

Site visits are valuable and represent very good practice in:

1. providing a 'snapshot' of a potential provider's approach to health and safety arrangements;
2. identifying any hazards students on placement/releases might face;
3. exploring health and safety issues with the provider at the workplace as part of a wider discussion of, for example, the nature of the work experience;
4. seeing the practical application of the provider's management systems for ensuring occupational health, safety and welfare;
5. observing physical conditions and working environment and practice;
6. making contact with employee safety representatives who can also be a useful source of information.

Indicators

The following indicators give an indication of the standard of attention paid to occupational health, safety and welfare:

1. **Housekeeping:** Is the workplace clean? Are gangways clear? Are stairs or doors obstructed by stored goods?
2. **Lighting:** Is the workplace brightly lit or dingy?
3. **Seating:** Where seated work is done, are suitable seats provided?
4. **Guarding:** Are machines guarded?
5. **Fire Precautions:** Are there any fire extinguishers? Is there a system for checking them? Are fire exits clearly marked, unobstructed and unlocked? Are clear fire instructions displayed? Have there been any fire drills? Is there a fire alarm, where required?
6. **Electrical wiring:** Are there any loose, bare, damaged or disorganised wires or broken plugs or switches which indicate unsatisfactory installation and maintenance?
7. **Toilets and washing facilities:** Are toilets suitable and sufficient and kept clean? Are soap and hand-drying facilities provided?
8. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** is this required for the work to be done by the students? Is it available in appropriate sizes? Will the students be trained in its use? Will its use be monitored?
9. **Safety signs:** Are appropriate safety signs displayed to indicate prohibited areas and to warn that special precautions are necessary?

This is not a comprehensive list and there may be other important indicators at some workplaces (for example, noise levels).

Appendix B

Sample email/letter to Placement/release Provider

Dear *provider's name*

Thank you for taking on *student's name* for Work Placement/release at *company name*. This letter is to confirm that *student's name* is to be placed with you for *length of time agreed*.

We would like to make you aware that all our student placement/releases are subject to a confirmation of relevant health and safety standards at the placement/release company. Thank you for your understanding in this matter. Details of our processes can be found in the AUB *Work Placement/release Policy* and in the *Work Placement/release Confirmation Form* attached to this letter.

Best wishes etc