

Policy and Procedures

Higher Education Work-based Learning and Placements

2014 - 17

Higher Education Directorate



Document approved by:					
HEDMT	Student Engagement	HEMT	HEBS	HE CPD	CMT
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Work-Based Learning and Placement Policy for Higher Education at Weston College

Weston College recognises and values the importance of work-based and placement learning within higher education (HE) and its current and potential future benefits for the approach to students' learning.

In forming its policy, the College acknowledges that there are many different ways students can acquire work-based learning, depending on the nature and level of their programme of study.

“Learning in the work place can take many forms and serves a variety of purposes.” (*Foundation degree qualification benchmark, May 2010*)

This policy is intended to be a general policy which gives guidance on the minimum requirements regarding the delivery of work-based learning, but the method by which this is done can be adapted to suit the needs of an individual programme.

This document closely aligns with the section of the QAA Quality Code B3: Learning and Teaching, Section 2 Work-based and placement learning (2011) and B10: Managing higher education provision with others.

1. Definition of work-based learning

Work-based learning refers to learning that can normally be achieved by learners in and through paid or unpaid work, and where the learning outcomes contribute to the overall aims of their programme of study and can be assessed and recognised in terms of academic credit, in accordance with the appropriate academic regulations of Weston College or its partner Universities.

Its focus is on learning acquired through activity within workplaces, critical reflection in and on this learning and its relevance to learners in terms of enhanced skills, knowledge and understanding and increased critical self-awareness and personal potential.

It takes into account the relevance for employers in terms of enhanced employee and organisational performance, increased innovative capacity, employee contribution and output.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy concerns individuals undertaking workplace activities, in the UK or abroad, for the purpose of acquiring learning that will be assessed as part of the learning outcomes of their programme of study. The activity may be paid or unpaid and may take various forms, including traditional employment, part-time or self-employment, entrepreneurial activity, public performance or exhibition, voluntary

engagements or external engagements with professional practitioners at their place of work as part of a College-organised field trip or residential visit.

Work-based learning may take place within a College location as long as the learning opportunities are not contrived for study purposes but occur in the workplace and arise through the activity of working.

Exclusions

The policy does not apply to employment, paid or unpaid, undertaken by a student outside of the programme of study, even if relevant to the student's programme of study.

3. Policy

Work-based learning activity within HE programmes at Weston College will display some or all of the following characteristics:

- Facilitate the development of a learner centred curriculum within the context of award programme requirements and encourage learner negotiated elements within programmes of study;
- Be flexible in terms of access, delivery and curriculum, feedback and assessment;
- Promote active partnerships with employers/external organisations;
- Promote innovative teaching, learning, support and assessment strategies applicable to the workplace;
- Contribute to the future employability of the learner;
- Promote the professional and personal development of the learner;
- Allow the learner to develop specialist knowledge, theory and skills by using the workplace as a context for project-based or practice evidenced learning.

In implementing the HE Work-Based Learning Policy programme/module leaders must pay due regard to the following minimum expectation, which are designed to underpin the quality of work-based learning provision within HE programmes delivered by Weston College.

4. Responsibilities

The academic member of staff responsible for work-based learning activity within a programme (normally the Programme Coordinator) should be satisfied that each placement provider, whether allocated by academic staff or independently found by the student, is suitable. Procedures for securing, approving and allocating placements should be transparent to all, and take in to account, as a minimum:

- the opportunity for students to successfully meet the learning outcomes¹ (which should be clearly identified; contribute to the overall aims of the student's programme; and should be assessed appropriately, including providing an opportunity for reflection) of the placement;
- that placement providers have been assessed and approved in accordance with Weston College procedures;

¹ Consideration should be given to relevant external reference points, such as Sector Skills Councils; any requirements of PSRBs; and National Occupational Standards.

- health and safety requirements and responsibilities of relevant parties;
- any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements governing the suitability of placements;
- student support on placements, including support provided for student learning.

Information should be given to students on the consequences of failure to either secure or complete a placement.

Employers may be involved with the mentoring and supporting of students and the Higher Education Directorate will supply generic information to support employers with their role (which Programmes may wish to customise, as appropriate).

The Higher Education Directorate will develop and maintain a repository of generic documentation and guidelines, in consultation with its University validating partners, to support work-based learning activity across HE programmes at Weston College, based on the minimum expectation. Programme teams may customise document templates as appropriate for the work-based learning activity for their subject area, as long as they retain the minimum expectation. These documents can be found on the HE Quality & Standards SharePoint site: **Higher Education > Quality & Standard > Work-based Learning**

Where staff are developing programmes of study which include an element of work based or placement learning, the following should be considered:

- intended learning outcomes are clearly identified; that they contribute to the programme's aims; and are assessed appropriately;
- where appropriate, align intended learning outcomes with those determined by relevant PSRBs;
- assessment should include strategies to support student learning as well as measure achievement. Failure or non-completion of this element of the programme should be considered carefully, with thought given to strategies to allow students to be re-assessed in these instances.

5. Information, support and guidance

The Programme Coordinator should make placement providers aware of their responsibilities in relation to:

- their responsibility for the provision of learning opportunities;
- their role in relation to the mentoring of students, and, if applicable, the evaluation of the student's engagement with the WBL activity;
- the health and safety of students, including provision of any specialist materials or clothing needed;

- their responsibility in relation to insurance cover in the event of accident;
- the need to make placement providers aware of their responsibility for making reasonable adjustments for students with a disability.

6. Student rights and responsibilities

The Programme Coordinator should ensure that students are made aware of:

- their responsibilities in relation to the programme of study which the placement makes up part of;
- their responsibilities for managing their behaviour as representatives of the College;
- their responsibilities in relation to health and safety issues;
- their need to remain in contact with the College placement contact in order to provide feedback on progress;
- opportunities for personal development planning;
- their entitlement in relation to tutoring or mentoring, taking into account the nature, location and timing of the WBL activity;
- the need to alert the placement provider and the placement contact to any problems with the placement that may impede their satisfactory progress and completion of the placement.
- the ability of the placement provider to raise any issues with the programme coordinator (or other relevant academic member of staff) regarding the student's suitability to practice.
- their need to comply with PSRB requirements, if appropriate.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

All placements should be subject to effective monitoring procedures. These should include as a minimum:

- The placement contacts should ensure that feedback from students is collected both during the placement and on completion of the placement.
- Analysis of the placements should take place as part of the annual monitoring process.
- The placement contacts should ensure that feedback is collected from placement providers, perhaps by means of a focussed employers group.

8. Useful references

- QAA Quality Code Higher Education B3: Learning and Teaching, Section 2 Work-based and placement learning (2011) and also, B10: Managing higher education provision with others.
- Work-based Learning Policy, UWE, 2010
- Work-based Learning Policy, Bath Spa University, 2012-15
- Intellectual Property Rights Policy and Regulations 2008 (RBI, UWE)
- Student General Regulations, Bath Spa University 2014
- Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark, Quality Assurance Agency
- “Guidance for the assessment of Work-based learning” (Higher Education Academy, 2010)
- “Work Placement Toolkit for Students, Universities and Arts and Cultural Organisations”, Arts Council England and London Centre for Arts and Cultural Enterprise (LCACE)

Glossary of terms

CMT	Corporate Management Team
HE	Higher Education
HE CPD	Higher Education Continuing Professional Development
HEBS	Higher Education Board of Study
HEDMT	Higher Education Directorate Management Team
HEMT	Higher Education Management Team
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RBI	Centre for Research, Business and Innovation
UWE	University of the West of England, Bristol
WBL	Work-based Learning