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INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

This handbook aims to provide you with some information and advice on the placement process, your role within it, what you can expect from students and the support available from Solent University.

DEFINITIONS AND AIMS

A placement is a role in your organisation undertaken by a student for a planned period of temporary work.

For a student, it is an approved period of assessed learning within a workplace and should be relevant to their course.

The aim of a placement is to bridge the gap between academic study and vocational graduate experience by providing the opportunity to apply the theory and skills gained during the course to a period of practical and professional work.

PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The student is required to gain a fixed amount of professional experience to successfully complete the placement unit. This does not mean that you need to provide them with an official placement, only that they must complete the required amount of experience in a related role.

Courses at Solent University require a range of placement lengths to be completed. Depending on the course, they can be six weeks, 13 weeks, six months, a year or more. Employers may advertise a role and contract length that suits them and their company's requirements.

Due to the variety of courses and placements, it is sometimes the case that the University will allow students to count relevant part-time work, volunteering or holiday jobs towards their placement hours.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- The University has an equal opportunities policy which applies to employers providing placements.
- The University recognises that matters relating to national security place restrictions on the employment of certain individuals.
- The University will not disclose any commercially sensitive data or information externally. Where such information is made available, it will, with the employer's permission, be used for assessment purposes only and not subsequently discussed or divulged.
- It is the employer's responsibility to make Disclosure and Barring Service checks on prospective employees.

RECRUITMENT OF DISABLED STUDENTS

It is unlawful for any employer to discriminate against a disabled person when choosing someone for a job or considering people for promotion, dismissal or redundancy.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission can provide information and offer practical guidance to employers and organisations to make sure that disabled people are treated fairly. Often quite simple adjustments help not only disabled people but the general public as well.

You can also access further information through the Equality and Human Rights Commission website:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/employment-workplace-adjustments>

ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ON PLACEMENT

As the employer, we would expect that you will treat our students in the same way as you treat your other employees in respect of their health, safety, welfare and attendance.

The University also expects you to have met your country's legal obligation for health and safety, and to hold the relevant insurance – for example, your country's equivalent to employers' liability and public liability insurance.

You should complete a risk assessment to cover the student's activities for the period of the placement. If the placement involves a student carrying out specific activities such as operating machinery, then additional training and supervision may be required for that individual. In addition, if a student will be driving vehicles on your behalf, you should check that the relevant motor insurance policy covers this. You can access further information on the Health and Safety Act and employers' liability insurance (UK) by visiting the Health and Safety Executive website:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hse40.pdf>

SOLE TRADERS

We understand that, as a sole trader, you may not hold employers' liability insurance. Instead, public liability insurance is available to indemnify you and your company against your legal liabilities. Please be aware that in order for you to be able to provide a placement for a student, you are required to have appropriate public liability and employers' liability insurance cover in place prior to the commencement of the placement. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Solent Futures team at placements@solent.ac.uk

INDUCTION AND TRAINING BY THE EMPLOYER

It is important that you give the student an induction to your organisation, which should include:

- an overview of the organisational and team structure
- the role requirements
- the use of equipment
- relevant health and safety policies.

A POSITIVE PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE

Most placements progress very smoothly. However, occasional problems do arise. If issues are raised at an early stage, they are usually resolved quickly.

In our experience, students respond best when they know:

- who they are working with
- what tasks are expected of them
- what deadlines they have for completion of work.

Initially, students are encouraged to discuss any difficulties with their line manager or in accordance with the procedures of their employer.

If an issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the student and employer may discuss the matter with their placement tutor who will, with the consent of both parties, aim to help, if appropriate.

Employers with pertinent issues are encouraged to deal with matters through their internal procedures, which may include disciplinary processes.

Please keep the University's staff informed – with the student's permission – of any matters that could jeopardise the continuation of the placement. Employers are welcome to contact Solent Futures at any time – via placements@solent.ac.uk – and we can put you in contact with the correct placement tutor.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at the placement is just as important as it is when students are at the University. Please notify Solent Futures if there are any unexplained periods of absence.

OTHER UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Solent University provides other services for students including health and wellbeing support, as well as academic and financial advice. If you have any concerns while our students are on placement with you, please note that these services are here to support students.

You can see all the support on offer from student services here:

[Student Hub](#)

[Wellbeing and Counselling](#)

[Solent Futures](#)

[Find out here](#) what to do if your student needs help urgently.

We ask that you contact placements@solent.ac.uk as soon as possible regarding any concerns you might have. We can put you or the student in touch with the appropriate placement tutor or department to ensure that our students feel supported while on placement.

STUDENTS ON A STUDENT VISA (formerly Tier 4)

Students on a Student/Tier 4 visa can take part in a work placement if it counts towards an assessed unit on their course and does not take up more than a third or a half of the course, depending on their level of study.

As the visa sponsor, Solent University has an obligation to monitor the attendance of Tier 4 students while they are away from the University on a placement, and to advise the Home Office if these students' attendance or engagement is unsatisfactory.

Therefore, it is essential that employers advise the University if a student has not arrived for work and has not communicated why by 1pm that day, or if there are concerns about any aspect of their performance.

Please note: visa students are not permitted to be self-employed or engaged in business activity, including setting up a business, being employed for a company in which they hold shares of 10 per cent or more, or holding a statutory role, such as a director.

In line with immigration rule ST 26.2: 'Students are permitted to undertake work related to a work placement, assessed as an integral part of the course, that meets the requirements at ST 17.1. to ST 17.3.' Students undertaking a work placement are required to submit an online form detailing their placement. Solent University will assess the placement content and its duration to ensure that a work placement is an integral and assessed part of the student's course and in line with immigration rules ST17.1 to ST 17.3. Once Solent University has signed off the placement, employers will be sent an email with details of the placement and outlining employer responsibility.

For more information regarding employing students on work placements, please refer to the Home Office guidance: '[An Employer's Guide to Right to Work Checks](#)', page 39.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

Should the situation arise where you deem it necessary to withdraw the student or terminate the contract, please contact us immediately at placements@solent.ac.uk so that we can discuss this and develop an action plan.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Students receive accreditation for their placement within their final degree, and consequently the nature and level of work must provide an appropriate learning experience.

Potential placements need to be approved for suitability, and the criteria for approval will be:

- Suitability of work in terms of level and relationship to academic course.
- Evidence of intended contractual employment for the period of the placement.
- Suitability of the working environment, with availability of experienced practitioners.

Assessment may take the form of an individual learning contract, objectives, work project outcomes, a reflective journal or a portfolio of evidence.

Students are required to gather information relating to this. Any assessment is designed to encourage the student to:

- reflect upon the relationship between the work they do during their placement and concepts and theories discussed during their course
- evaluate their personal development during the placement.

Details of work that a student undertakes for an employer may be submitted as part of a portfolio of work for assessment purposes.

If you, as the employer, wish this to remain confidential and not be used, please make the student aware and contact the placement unit leader or tutor.

Students have a placement unit leader whose role is to provide academic support and advice, and to monitor progress and development.

The placement unit leader may make contact and visit the student during the placement. Not all placements require a visit to the site. However, if a visit is needed, we ask that the student's line manager is available – this will be arranged in advance via the student.

PLACEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Overall, placements should provide the opportunity for students to apply and develop the skills and knowledge they have already gained during their course in a practical working environment.

The placement should provide opportunities to acquire new skills and prepare students for a future working environment.

The University, the student and you as the employer all have a role to play in ensuring the success and smooth-running of a placement.

Solent University will:

- work within the University placement procedures
- be available to address any queries or issues you may have
- provide information to students to prepare them for placements, including job search training, CV and application preparation, and requirements of a placement
- provide specialist advice and guidance for students with additional support needs
- appoint a 'contact' tutor and establish dates of contact/visits as appropriate.

The student will:

- attend placement preparatory workshops at the University and familiarise themselves with all the relevant information provided
- abide by the employer organisation's guidelines, policies and procedures
- discuss and agree with their supervisor/employer the appropriate time allowed to focus on University assessment requirements
- report any concerns to the employer, including health and safety, personal or health concerns, or a disability that may require adjustments
- consult with both the University and the employer prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement.

The employer or placement provider will:

- provide an offer letter/contract of employment
- provide the student with a full and clear induction to the organisation and its working practices, including health and safety arrangements
- comply with your country's health and safety legislation
- discuss and agree with the student the appropriate time allowed to focus on University assessment requirements
- ensure that you have appropriate employer and public liability insurance in place, if applicable
- nominate a supervisor who will conduct or make arrangements for day-to-day supervision of the student; in most cases this is the student's line manager and needs no extra arrangements to be made
- if your company has not already risk-assessed the student's role, undertake a risk assessment to identify any potential risks/hazards associated with the student's placement and ensure that adequate controls are put in place to address these risks.

In some cases, the University may need to visit the student on placement, and therefore we ask that, if needed, a visiting tutor can have access to meet the student in their work environment.

To enable the University to complete its 'duty of care' and for visa purposes (where applicable), we ask that you:

- promptly inform Solent University of any serious accidents involving medical treatment that goes beyond first aid, or of incidents relating to breaches of discipline by the student
- advise the University promptly of any unexplained periods of non-attendance.

HOW TO ADVERTISE TO OUR STUDENTS

[Solent Futures Online](#) is the University's tailored recruitment site for placements, graduate jobs, work experience, internships and volunteering, where you can post job adverts at no cost to you.

Posting your role on Solent Futures Online will:

- allow users to click through to your own website
- drive more traffic to your website
- make your target audience aware of your company
- promote your company brand and recruitment activities.

If you would like to promote your company on Solent Futures Online and make the most of this service, please contact the team on employers@solent.ac.uk

We will ensure that your vacancy is promoted to the appropriate students and course staff. We require a job description, including details of the nature of the work that the student would undertake.

PAYMENT

While not a legal requirement, most placement students receive an industry-appropriate salary. Where salary is not stated, we find that employers receive fewer applications.

We can discuss the job role and provide recruitment advice that suits your requirements. If necessary, we can also arrange for you to give presentations to potential candidates and deliver interviews on campus.

CONTACTING US

Solent Futures is a central professional careers service that supports placement provisions at Solent University.

Solent Futures greatly appreciates the placements provided for our students and the range of employment opportunities that employers offer. We welcome any suggestions or comments from employers.

Contact us at placements@solent.ac.uk

We work with organisations from all sectors to identify how the University can help move your organisation forward. We have a range of options, from advertising opportunities to our students and graduates, to working with our courses to source live briefs from businesses. Contact us for further information: employers@solent.ac.uk

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