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## INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

This handbook is intended to help Solent University students understand and manage the placement experience.

University staff will help students prepare for their placement and explain the assessment process. As a student, you need to attend the University's preparation workshops and upload all the required documentation.

## UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

A placement is an approved period of assessed learning in a workplace and must be approved by the University and appropriately supervised within the host organisation. The field of work should be relevant to your course to satisfy the requirements of the unit.

## WORK PLACEMENT PROCESS

1. Your placement tutor will introduce the placement process to you. Depending on how many students are signed up for a placement module and what course you are on, this will take various formats and could be via presentations, online resources, email or one-to-one sessions.
2. You should be clear about who your placement tutor is and the placement requirements – as outlined in the module descriptor – prior to starting your placement search.
3. Students at Solent source their own placements; however, Solent Futures and your academic team are here to support you. If you are not sure how to start your search, you should check out [Solent Futures Online](#) – log in using your Solent email address and password. For more support you can email us via [solent.futures@solent.ac.uk](mailto:solent.futures@solent.ac.uk)
4. Once you have found your placement you must add this to the placement app. This can be found via the portal. Placements that are not signed off prior to you starting them may not be counted towards your degree. It is important that your placement tutor has the chance to check your placement before you go.
5. Once your placement tutor has signed off your placement, an email will go to your placement manager. They must also agree to your placement and confirm to Solent Futures before your placement starts. It is your responsibility to check that this has been completed prior to your start date; if not, you will need to get in touch with Solent Futures and we can chase this up with your employer. Failure to have this signed off could lead to you being unable to submit your placement assignments.
6. Before you go on placement you should make sure you are clear on the module requirements – do you need evidence or a time-sheet to be signed? Be prepared, because getting this done after your placement can be difficult as companies and managers are busy.

## THE PLACEMENT APP

Once you have successfully found a placement, you must submit the details to your placement tutor, using the placement app on the portal.

Failure to do so could result in your placement not being considered as part of your course. One of the main reasons we ask you to complete the placement app is to ensure your safety while on placement; therefore it must be done prior to your placement starting.

The details you will be asked to complete will be as follows:

### **Student details**

- Your details and a contact name in case of emergencies
- Your course and tutor

### **Placement provider details**

- Placement role title; organisation's name, address and telephone number
- Supervisor's name and contact details

### **Risk profile**

- A detailed risk profile for your work placement
- Placement role title; organisation's name, address and telephone number
- Supervisor's name and contact details

## DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

Written confirmation of your placement – this could be an email or a letter with a company logo or email signature.

Task list or job description – this needs to outline your tasks as an employee on placement; without this, your tutor cannot assess if the role is suitable.

Employment contract – this outlines your rights with the placement provider and allows your placement tutor to see that you will be treated as an employee. It will also include the hours and weeks you are contracted for.

All larger companies should be able to provide you with this paperwork, while smaller companies or sole traders should provide you with enough information to allow your placement tutor to assess the placement fully.

Your tutor will need to see and approve all the details and documents. Tutors have the right to reject a placement on the grounds of lack of clear information. A rejected placement will need to be amended and resubmitted. If the placement remains rejected, this will not count towards your degree.

## PLACEMENT APP STATUSES

Your placement will go through a number of statuses as part of this process, and you should not go on placement until your placement status shows as approved. You will be emailed at your student email address when your placement has been approved by your tutor, then again once your employer has approved your placement.

- **Saved as draft** – you still have fields to complete on your placement form; please complete these, then 'Submit' the form.
- **Awaiting tutor approval** – your tutor is currently reviewing your form and will either approve the form or ask you to change it. You should get in touch with your tutor if your placement has been at this status for over a week.
- **Awaiting student review** – your form has been reviewed by your tutor and you are required to amend your form; please click view next to the placement to see the tutor's comments. Ensure you make the amendments and resubmit the form or this cannot be approved.
- **Awaiting employer approval** – your tutor has approved your placement; your placement is awaiting final approval from your employer. You should get in touch with Solent Futures if your placement is stuck at this status – we can support you.
- **Approved** – your placement has been approved. You can now go on placement.

## ON PLACEMENT – RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMPLOYER

The world of work is different to university life, but most students quickly adjust and gain an excellent insight into the working world. Many companies have established procedures for students on work experience and the placement runs smoothly. Students are required to dress professionally, turn up on time and use the correct chain of authority to discuss their progress. Find out more about [preparing for the workplace](#) on Solent Futures Online. You can use your Solent email address and password to log in.

## CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT, HOLIDAY LEAVE AND OTHER ISSUES

Before the placement starts you need to have received an offer letter and/or contract of employment. Depending on placement length, you may be entitled to holiday leave, which the employer should explain.

In addition, before commencing the placement, employers may require you to undergo security clearance checks; where work includes access to children/vulnerable adults, checks will be made through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Each company will have its own set of procedures for dealing with problems or disciplinary matters, so you may request a copy. Your line manager or the company human resources team will be initial points of contact.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY ON PLACEMENT

As part of its 'duty of care' to students, the University aims to ensure your health and safety during your placement. Employers are asked to return an agreement on their responsibilities for the student, including health and safety.

Be careful and do not put yourself at risk. NB: If the work involves special qualifications (for example, driving company vehicles), it is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the requirements in terms of training and documentation.

You should expect to receive health and safety information from your placement provider as part of your induction training. If you have any concerns about your health, safety or wellbeing while on placement, you should contact your tutor immediately. To learn more about health and safety, why not take a look at [Solent Futures Online](#).

## LIABILITY INSURANCE

By law, most UK employers are required to have employers' liability insurance cover in place. While you are on placement you are considered to be an 'employee' of the company, irrespective of whether it is paid or unpaid work. If you have decided to carry out a work placement which is not at the University, then your placement provider (employer) is responsible for providing employers' liability insurance – not the University.

The company may also hold public liability insurance which indemnifies the company against claims made by any visitors or customers.

If you decide to undertake a work placement abroad, you need to check if the placement provider has insurance in place to protect you while completing your placement. You will also need to check the country's guidelines on insurance, as some countries do not require employers to have such insurance, or may have insurance schemes in place which are similar but do not provide the same level of liability cover.

If your work placement provider does not have the necessary liability cover in place, speak to your placement tutor for further guidance.

It is important that you fully understand the duties you will be completing and the environment you will be working in. The risk profile within the placement app will be able to guide you when considering the various factors involved when carrying out a work placement.

## TRAVEL AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

### Overseas placements:

For overseas placement insurance details, please contact [placements@solent.ac.uk](mailto:placements@solent.ac.uk) and we can provide you with the most up-to-date information.

### UK placements:

For placements within the UK, free medical treatment is available on the NHS, so you don't need additional medical insurance, provided you are registered with the NHS or have a National Insurance number.

Overseas students on a UK placement should either be registered to receive NHS treatment or have taken out appropriate medical insurance prior to their arrival at the University.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance at the placement is important and is expected by the employer and the University.

Employers are requested to notify the University if there are any unexplained periods of absence.

For any non-emergency absence, please arrange and agree this with your line manager in advance.

## SICKNESS

Find out what the company's policy on sickness notifications is. Normally you are expected to notify your line manager on the first day of absence.

Placement students should register with a local doctor if the work is away from their existing practice.

A doctor's certificate is not required for the first seven days of any illness and you should follow the employer's procedures for this. Sickness-related absence would not normally affect accreditation of the unit, but you should inform the course team if sickness absence exceeds 10 working days.

## ON PLACEMENT – RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY

### ONGOING ENROLMENT AS A STUDENT

Students on a year-long placement are required to enrol as students at the University as usual and will receive information explaining this process. You need to contact the Student Hub if you do not think you have the correct information.

Students undertaking a placement as part of their normal academic year will receive confirmation from their placement tutor as to the appropriate time frame to complete their placement.

Students who need to resit examinations or submit outstanding work are required to do so at the earliest opportunity, in line with University policy.

## CONTACT, VISIT AND VISITING TUTORS

You and your placement provider may receive contact from your placement tutor. This can take the form of a visit, email or phone call.

It is your responsibility to liaise with your work supervisor so that he/she is available to meet University staff for 15 to 40 minutes to discuss your progress.

**Remember:** your placement tutor is the first point of contact for you at the University, so you should ensure that you contact them prior to starting your placement to check the best ways for you to get in touch with them.

## HELP FROM SOLENT AND OTHER SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy your time on placement and would like you to know that the University is still here to support you.

If you have any concerns, please contact your placement tutor as soon as possible – they will be able to provide some support and can direct you to other departments who can support you further.

If you are unable to get hold of your tutor, you can contact [placements@solent.ac.uk](mailto:placements@solent.ac.uk) and we can provide advice and put you in touch with the correct team to help you best.

University services such as the Student Hub and the health and wellbeing teams are still available to you, and you can view all the support on offer to you from student services [here](#).

Support available includes:

- [Student Hub](#)
- [Wellbeing and Counselling](#)
- [Solent Futures](#)
- [Find out here](#) what to do if you need help urgently

## STUDENTS ON A STUDENT VISA (formerly Tier 4)

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

As your visa sponsor, Solent University is required to notify the Home Office if you will be carrying out a work placement. Therefore, it is essential that you log your placement on the University placement app prior to starting the placement; failure to do so could result in you breaking the work conditions attached to your visa. As a visa sponsor, the University is required to monitor the attendance of visa students while undertaking a placement and will receive regular attendance reports from your placement provider. Unexplained absences could result in the University withdrawing your visa sponsorship and reporting this to the Home Office, who will curtail (cancel) your visa. Therefore, if you are unable to attend the placement for any reason, it is essential that you let your employer know as soon as possible, and by 1pm on the day of absence at the very latest.



Please note: Student/Tier 4 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.

If you were granted a Student Route or Tier 4 visa for a course without a placement, you will need to apply and be granted the new Student Route visa before your placement starts. You may be in breach of your working conditions if you undertake work over the permitted term-time hours without Home Office approval. For advice on visa extensions, contact the international support team: [internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk)

## STUDENTS' UNION MEMBERSHIP

Students are entitled to remain members of the Students' Union (SU) while on placement. The NUS Extra Card is useful evidence of this when using reciprocal facilities at other colleges and in obtaining student discounts.

In addition, the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) can be purchased at the same time, and can be used abroad as proof of student status.

## SOLENT FUTURES ASSISTANCE

Solent Futures is your careers team and we are here to support you in both looking for a placement and moving forward with your career.

You can contact us on [solent.futures@solent.ac.uk](mailto:solent.futures@solent.ac.uk) and you can also check out our online resources on [Solent Futures Online](#), available via the portal. You can log in using your student email address and password.

## ACCESS SOLENT – SUPPORTING DISABLED STUDENTS

This confidential service is designed to help disabled students achieve their academic potential, including while on placement. Early contact with Access Solent by students will help to ensure that appropriate support is in place – this includes advising employers.

Find out more on the [Access Solent SOL page](#), or email [access@solent.ac.uk](mailto:access@solent.ac.uk).

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Students on a 26-week placement or longer will still incur tuition fees. This includes students on a full-year industrial placement (standard sandwich year out, NOT the Erasmus+ programme).

## TUITION FEES, MAINTENANCE AND GRANTS

Students may be entitled to a loan or grant, depending upon circumstances, placement length and whether it is paid or unpaid. For more information, email the student funding team:

[student.funding@solent.ac.uk](mailto:student.funding@solent.ac.uk).

Contact Student Finance England or your local authority for further information and application details.

## UNPAID PLACEMENT FUND

This grant is to support students who have been offered a short-term unpaid placement of between 10 and 20 working days. Placements must last a minimum of 10 working days (or 100 hours) and a maximum of 20. If it lasts more than this, students may still apply, but only the maximum of 20 working days will be considered. This grant can only provide a contribution towards your costs; it cannot cover them 100 per cent. Please be aware that if you are undertaking a long-term unpaid placement, this will affect your ability to work, and the fund cannot be expected to cover your costs. Placements outside the UK will need to be justified and will affect the level of funding you may receive. Find more details on the portal or [via this link](#).

## COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

Students on placement will still be classed as students for council tax purposes. The Student Hub can provide a letter as proof of this. However, if a student is the owner or leaseholder of a property and one or more of the residents is not a full-time student, they may be liable for a proportional amount of council tax.

## LIBRARY ACCESS

While you are out on placement you can continue to use the library.

If you are in the local area, you can visit and use it in the normal way. If you are further away, there are many online resources and services for you to access. Check out the library portal pages for more information.

## NATIONAL INSURANCE AND INCOME TAX

Students on placement in the UK earning over £100 per week (approximately) are likely to pay some National Insurance contributions and be subjected to income tax for any earnings that exceed personal allowances. Go to [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) for more information.

## SICK PAY

Almost all employees in the UK receive statutory sick pay if they are away from work owing to illness. If excluded from this because of 'insufficient National Insurance contributions credited', students may claim sickness benefit through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment may take the form of an individual learning contract, objectives, a reflective journal or gathering a portfolio of evidence. Students are required to ensure they have all the information relating to this. Your placement tutor will explain what is required.

Any assessment of the work experience is designed to encourage you to:

- reflect upon the relationship between the work you do during your placement and concepts and theories discussed during your course
- evaluate your personal development during the placement
- keep a diary or make a note of the projects, events and activities you are involved in
- list any resources you have developed and skills learnt.
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## READY TO GO ON PLACEMENT

**Remember to make sure you have your course leader or placement tutor's contact details and a copy of this handbook saved so that you know how to get in touch if you need any support.**

**Now you are ready to go on placement! Good luck – and if you have any questions, you can email us on [placements@solent.ac.uk](mailto:placements@solent.ac.uk)**

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