

Placement Handbook for Placement Tutors

Last updated January 2024

Introduction

This handbook aims to help Solent University staff understand and manage the placement experience for students.

We appreciate that this may sound formal in places, but it is intended to ensure that staff are fully aware of the legal, insurance, and health and safety requirements of a placement.

Solent Futures advises that placement tutors attend an induction session to learn about how the placement app works and to highlight key responsibilities – please contact us on placements@solent.ac.uk for further information. The Solent Futures team is always happy to help and provide advice if you have any queries or concerns.



Support for tutors

We have also set up an SOL resource which we recommend that all placement tutors join as this is where Solent Futures will upload and update information about placements.

It can be accessed by entering the password support4placements.

This page includes resources for you as a tutor, information that you can use to support your students.

Access the [Placement tutor support pages here](#).

[Read the FAQs on the portal](#)



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 the course of study to satisfy the requirements of the unit.

What is a Placement Tutors role?

The placement tutor is responsible for ensuring that the placement meets the course criteria and is appropriate for the student, that it has been correctly risk-assessed and that the student is fully prepared for their placement. As a placement tutor, you are signing off the placement on the University's behalf.



Solent's Responsibilities for Placement

Solent University will:

- ✓ Provide information to the student on general health and safety prior to their placement.
- ✓ Provide specialist advice and guidance for students with additional support needs.
- ✓ Check that University placement procedures are being followed.
- ✓ Appoint a “contact” tutor(s) and establish dates of contact.



Student Responsibilities

Solent Students will:

Student

- ✓ Attend placement workshops at the University and familiarise themselves with all the relevant health and safety information provided.
- ✓ Abide by organisation guidelines regarding health and safety requirements, and other practices and procedures of the placement provider.
- ✓ Report any concerns about health and safety to the employers, including personal or health concerns or disabilities that may require adjustments.
- ✓ Report any accidents or near misses in the workplace to their employer.
- ✓ Consult with the University prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement.



Employer Responsibilities

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.

Work Placement Process

- 1 As part of your role as a placement tutor, you will be required to hold an introduction to placements for your students. Depending on how many students are signed up for a placement module and what course you oversee, this can take various formats – for example, this could be via presentations, online resources, emails or one- to-one sessions.
- 2 Your students should be clear about who their placement tutor is and the placement requirements – as outlined in the module descriptor – prior to starting their placement search.
- 3 Students are expected to source their own placements; however, placement tutors and Solent Futures are here to provide support to students. Solent Futures will also organise sessions such as ‘How to find a work placement’ and ‘How to use the placement app’.
- 4 Course requirements for a placement should be outlined by the course team. We recommend providing the students with an up-to-date copy of the unit descriptor. All units that include year-long placements should have these.

Work Placement Process continued

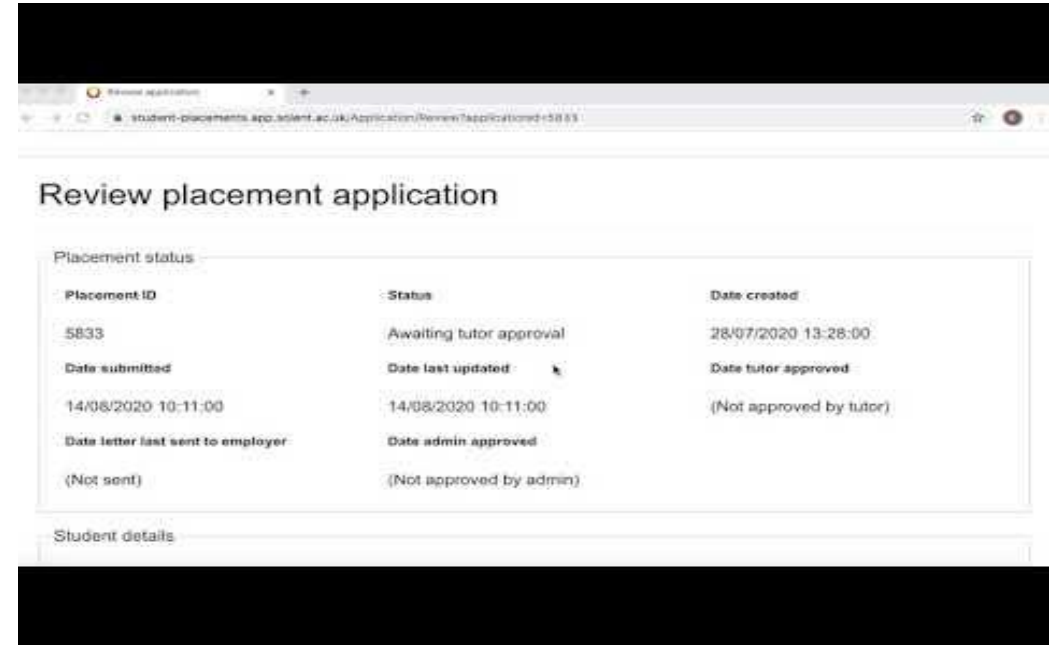
- 5 Once your students have found their placement, they must add this to the placement app which can be found via the portal. Placements that are not signed off prior to students starting them may not be counted towards their degree. It is important that, as a placement tutor, you have the chance to check the placement before the student starts.
- 6 Once you have signed off the placement, an email will go to the student's placement manager, who must also agree to the placement and confirm this to Solent Futures before the placement starts. It is the student's responsibility to check that this has been completed prior to the start date.
- 7 Before your student goes on placement, you should make sure that they are also clear on the module requirements. This could include requiring evidence of work carried out or a time-sheet being signed – it is a good idea to remind your students of what is needed, because completing this after the placement can be difficult.

Placement App

The placement app on the portal is used to capture all the relevant information that the University requires in order for the placement/work-based learning to be approved by the University. As part of its 'duty of care' for students, Solent University requires students to register their placement on the placement app.

They input the details of their placement using the link on the portal. Students should only start their placement once it has a status of 'Approved'. If the placement is not showing as approved, the tutor should contact the student as soon as possible to get this resolved. Solent Futures can support in following up with companies who have not signed off the placement.

Students should not go on placement without the placement App status being fully approved.



Review placement application

Placement status		
Placement ID	Status	Date created
5833	Awaiting tutor approval	28/07/2020 13:28:00
Date submitted	Date last updated	Date tutor approved
14/08/2020 10:11:00	14/08/2020 10:11:00	(Not approved by tutor)
Date letter last sent to employer	Date admin approved	
(Not sent)	(Not approved by admin)	

Student details

[Watch our short guide to the placement app for tutors here](#)

[Access the placement app click here](#)

Documents Students need to complete the app

Written confirmation of the placement: This could be an email or letter with a company logo or email signature.

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

Employment contract: All larger companies should be able to provide your students with this paperwork, while smaller companies or sole traders should provide enough information to allow you, as an academic, to assess the placement fully. As a placement tutor you 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 the student's degree.

Remember, all placements should have approved status prior to the placement commencing. If you, the tutor, approve the placement but the student starts work before the employer has approved it, it is essential that the student gets in touch with placements@solent.ac.uk. We can provide the student with a document to forward to their employer to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities as an employer.

Risk Profile

The placement app allows students to create a risk profile, which enables them to reflect on where they will be working and the risks of carrying out a placement. It is essential, therefore, that students complete the risk profile.

Students will need to assess the level of risk of their own placement at either low, medium or high, and provide a brief explanation why it has been assessed at the chosen level. At medium or high risk, students will additionally need to include actions to reduce the risk. It is important that this section is assessed fully. If you believe that the risk should be reviewed, do not approve the placement until this has been done. As the placement tutor, it is your responsibility to review the student's placement duties and risk profile on the app. It is important that this section is scrutinised and only approved if you believe that the student has a full understanding of the risks of their placement, and that this has been assessed thoroughly before approval.

If you reject a placement, we strongly recommend that you discuss with the student individually why you have rejected the placement and support their completion of the risk profile. If, following an update to the risk profile, you still believe that the work placement is not suitable as regards the student's safety, you must reject the placement.

Find out more about the [risk profile](#) on our tutor guidance pages.

Share the [student support for the risk profile](#) with your students.

If you are unsure if you can sign off a placement you should discuss this with your Head of Department for higher level sign off.

Health and Safety while on placement.

The placement tutor is responsible for ensuring that the placement is appropriate for the student.

The placement provider undertakes responsibility for the student's safety while on placement. Nonetheless, the University has a 'duty of care' to its students when they are on work placement. It is vital, therefore, that students are prepared for their work placement and that a thorough risk assessment has been completed by the company before they start.

Ultimately, it is the placement tutor's responsibility to ensure that the student is fully prepared for their placement. It is essential, therefore, that placement tutors provide placement preparation session or support, which must include considering their health and safety on placement.

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/young-workers/employer/work-experience.htm>

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



Liability Insurance

By law, most UK employers are required to have employers' liability insurance cover in place.

Employers' liability insurance indemnifies the policy holder (in this case the placement provider) by meeting their financial liabilities should their negligence cause injury to the employee (in this case the student on placement). The company may also hold public liability insurance which indemnifies the company against claims made by any visitors or customers.

There are some exemptions to this, and sole traders will often not hold EL insurance. If a Sole trader is providing a placement, they are required to have appropriate public liability and employers' liability insurance cover in place prior to the commencement of the placement as they will be the student's employer.

Solent makes the employer aware of these requirements and asks them to confirm as part of the [placement employer email](#). This is why it is essential that a placement is at Approved status before the placement starts. If a student starts a placement without this the employer may be unaware of their requirements and you as a tutor should contact the student to either chase their approval or withdraw the placement if approval cannot be acquired.

Policy wordings, limits of liability and the requirement for statutory insurance cover vary from country to country. Whilst on placement the student is considered to be an 'employee' of the company, irrespective of whether the work is paid or unpaid. If your student undertakes a placement outside of the University, then the placement provider (employer) is responsible for providing liability insurance – not the University.

Placements Abroad

Before you approve a placement abroad, it is important that you consider the potential location of their placement.

You should:

Consult the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) - If the FCO and or the insurance provider advise against travel, then the student must reconsider their placement location. Insurers will not normally permit travel in these circumstances as it is not possible to guarantee that the student can be evacuated in the event of an emergency. The student's safety is our greatest concern. If the work placement is planned in a country where the FCO has raised concerns but not advised against travel, then the student must include this information in the risk profile section of the placement app.

The in-country risks should be considered, and the placement must be approved by the placement tutor and/or the Dean of School or Head of Service. If the University's insurers consider that the risk of travel is too high for the student's safety to be guaranteed, then travel insurance may not be available. Under these circumstances, the placement will not be supported by the University. The safety and wellbeing of students is the University's highest consideration, students should not knowingly be put in potential danger.

For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the University's travel insurance page - <https://students.solent.ac.uk/student-hub/insurance>

If a student has found a work placement abroad it is essential that they consider where they will be traveling and the work, they will be carrying out in advance of their placement. As a tutor you should guide them to read the student handbook and the support pages found [here](#).

Travel and medical insurance

The University's travel insurance provides emergency medical and travel insurance for students on placements of up to one year.

Placements of over six months must be notified in advance to the insurance office: insurance@solent.ac.uk If the work placement is in excess of one year, the student will need to purchase their own independent cover.

If the student does this, they must ensure that the insurance provider knows that they will be working, as some policies exclude any cover for this. If the student is seeking to gain work experience that is not a formal part of their course, they will not be covered by the University's travel insurance and should arrange their own cover.

Placements in the UK

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.



Liability Insurance Abroad

If your student decides to undertake a work placement abroad, they will need to check whether their placement provider has appropriate Employer and liability insurance in place.

This should provide them with protection while undertaking their work activities. 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.

Students should be made aware of the risks if they are in a country that does not provide liability cover at the same level as the UK.



Preparing for the workplace

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.

Some suggested pages to help your students with settling into a workplace:

[Tips for the workplace](#)

[How to impress on the first day of a new job.](#)

[How to ace your first day](#)



Ongoing enrolment as a student

Students on a year-long placement are required to enroll as students at the University as usual and will receive information explaining this process.

Students need to contact the Student Hub if they do not think they have the correct information.

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

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



Help from Solent and other support

We hope your students enjoy their time on placement, and it is important that they know that the University is here to support them along every step of their placement journey. The following pages provide detailed information to enable you to help your students prepare for their placements. As a placement tutor, you will be their first point of contact to provide support. You can also guide students to more specific support provided by other departments within the University.

You can view all the support on offer to students 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](#)

Please make sure your students know how to contact you or your course team while on placement – there should always be someone within the course team whom students can contact. If you are going on leave, then students should be aware of the best contact to support them in your absence. You should also ensure that you have contact details for your student and are keeping in regular contact with them during their time on placement.

Students on a Visa

Students on a Student 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 is required to notify the Home Office if a student will be carrying out a work placement. Therefore, it is essential that students log their placements on the University placement app prior to starting the placement; failure to do so could result in a student breaking the work conditions attached to their visa.

It is the student's responsibility to report their placement via the placement app, and as a placement tutor you should also be aware of who is going on placement and if they have completed the information required in the app.

Placement tutors should remind students who have not completed the app process to do so prior to their placement starting.

As a visa sponsor, the University is required to monitor the attendance of visa students while they are undertaking a placement and will receive regular attendance reports from the placement provider.

Students on a Visa (continued)

Unexplained absences could result in the University withdrawing its visa sponsorship and reporting this to the Home Office, who will curtail (cancel) the student's visa. Therefore, if they are unable to attend the placement for any reason, it is essential that they let their employer know as soon as possible and by 1pm on the day of absence at the very latest.

Student 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. Please note: if the work is not an integral and assessed part of the student's course, this would not be regarded by the Home Office as a work placement, but would instead be regarded as work experience. Student visa students are not permitted to miss scheduled classes to undertake work experience. Students undertaking work experience should ensure that they are doing so within the work conditions of their visa.

The International Student Support team can advise students appropriately. They can be contacted on internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk

Students on a Visa (continued)

If you have any further questions about Student visa students and work placements, please contact the UKVI Compliance Manager, Andy Carre: andy.carre@solent.ac.uk or internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk

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'. If you are speaking to a student who was granted a Student Route visa for a course without a placement, they will need to apply and be granted the new Student Route visa before any placement starts.

They may be in breach of their working conditions if they 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

Financial Information

For information about funding on a Year-long placement please read the Funding team's guide [Funding for Placement Years](#).

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.

Students should contact Student Finance England or their 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 costs; it cannot cover them 100 per cent.

Please be aware that if a student is undertaking a long-term unpaid placement, this may affect their ability to work, and the fund cannot be expected to cover these costs. Placements outside the UK will need to be justified and will affect the level of funding students may receive.

[Find out more.](#)



Assessment

Assessment may take the form of an individual learning contract, objectives, a reflective journal or gathering a portfolio of evidence. Tutors are required to ensure students have all the information relating to this.

Students should be recommended to:

- reflect upon the relationship between the work they do during their placement.
- Evaluate their personal development during the placement
- keep a diary or make a note of the projects, events and activities they are involved in
- list any resources they have developed, and skills learnt.



Conclusion

The placement app process and the guidance in this handbook have been produced to support you as a placement tutor.

The information has been created in line with guidance from Solent's health and safety team and using the support of the advisory bodies ASET and the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) – an organisation for the promotion of safety and health in higher education. ASET was established to advance the prevalence, effectiveness and quality of work-based and placement learning in higher education by promoting and publishing research into that system of education.

You can find their resources, including their good practice guide, [here](#).