

# INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PLACEMENT AND WORK-BASED LEARNING

<b>Approved by Academic Board</b>	May 2009
-----------------------------------	----------

*Click on section below for quick link or scroll down for full text*

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Institutional Background</li><li>2. Purpose</li><li>3. Definitions</li><li>4. General Principles</li><li>5. Responsibilities of the University</li><li>6. Responsibilities of Placement and Work-based Learning Providers and Student Exchange Partners</li><li>7. Responsibilities and Rights of Students</li><li>8. Implementation of the Institutional Code of Practice</li></ol>
---

*Click on title for quick link to websites relevant to this section*

<a href="#">QAA Code of Practice Section 9 : Work-based and Placement Learning</a>
--

# MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PLACEMENT AND WORK-BASED LEARNING

### 1 Institutional Background

- 1.1 The University's strong professional and vocational bias has given rise to a large number of programmes which incorporate one or more elements of placement or have a focus on work-based learning. These activities are normally undertaken outside the University and which may or may not incorporate a formal assessment. For the purposes of this Institutional Code of Practice (ICP) placement learning (see 3.1) also includes any student exchanges.
- 1.2 Many programmes, and in particular foundation degrees, require students to undertake work-based learning. In parts of the University, especially in those departments which operate sandwich programmes, foundation degrees or professionally validated programmes there are well developed administrative and academic support arrangements to accompany the processes of securing the placement, assessing its appropriateness, monitoring the performance of the students and, where applicable, overseeing arrangements for their assessment.
- 1.3 In 2007 the QAA revised the Code of Practice for Placement Learning to include details of work-based learning. As with other sections of the Code, the University established a working group to revise its Institutional Code of Practice (ICP) to ensure that internal procedures addressed the good practice recommended in QAA guidance. The outcome of that process is the ICP set out below.
- 1.4 The University will ensure that the requirements of relevant bodies, including the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) and the National Health Service (NHS) are adhered to in relation to the arrangements for placements and work-based learning. The University will also draw on guidance produced by other relevant organisations, including ASET.

### 2 Purpose

- 2.1 The University 2020 Vision identifies as one of its aims 'to be the UK's leading University for World Class Professionals' (University Strategic Plan 2007 – 2020). This is based on a commitment to promote part-time, open- and distance learning, sandwich placement experiences and other opportunities for work-based learning and assessment. The 'Embedding Employability' project further enhances the University vision by helping students to develop and enhance their employability skills and by providing students with a range of opportunities relevant to employability. The University recognises that one of the characteristics of being a University for World Class Professionals is to 'produce annually a large number of professionally qualified graduates who were highly

employable'. Highly employable, professionally qualified graduates often require placement or work-based experiences. This Code is intended to articulate the minimum requirements for students, placement providers and MMU staff in engaging with placement or work-based activities.

- 2.2 This ICP addresses arrangements for all types of placement learning, including student exchange, and work-based learning, including Erasmus work placements. It is concerned with learning that is a planned and intended part of an academic programme, which takes place outside the University, typically but not exclusively with the support and cooperation of a work-based or placement provider. The ICP is not intended to cover learning outside an institution that is not a planned part of the programme of study, such as part time, term-time and vacation work which students have arranged for themselves.
- 2.3 The purpose of this ICP is therefore:
- (i) to ensure that programme teams and departments have appropriate procedures in place to provide placement and work-based learning of high quality and that complies with health and safety requirements;
  - (ii) to detail threshold standards for placement and work-based learning;
  - (iii) to clarify the responsibilities and rights of the various parties involved in placement and work-based learning.
- 2.4 All sections of this ICP are operated in accordance with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and its Health and Safety requirements. The University will take action to communicate these to staff, students and others who are involved in placement and work-based learning activities.

### **3 Definitions**

#### **3.1 Placement Learning**

Placements will:

- be clearly identified in the approved definitive document for a programme of study;
- consist of planned periods of learning in a workplace or an academic institution outside the University;
- either be arranged by the University, or be arranged by a student and approved by the University;
- be of sufficient length and quality to ensure that an identified set of learning outcomes can be met, but be at least one week or the equivalent in duration and normally significantly longer. Activities with a shorter duration than this

- will be regarded as visits rather than as placements (although where five or more planned one-day visits to the same placement area occur within one academic year, this will be regarded as a placement);
- be supported in a specified way by the University, through a placement supervisor or a mentor, who will help students to meet the learning objectives for the placement.

Placement learning outcomes will be clearly identified within units of study, either as part or all of an academic unit or separately within practice credits.

The ways in which it will be ensured that placements provide appropriate learning opportunities will vary according to the nature of the placements. In all cases, including student negotiated placements, these should be clear and well documented for students, programme teams and placement providers. As with work-based learning, the learning outcomes are intended as integral parts of a programme of study.

The types of placements available to students may take many forms (for example short, extended; full-time, part-time; paid, unpaid; University funded; assessed, non-assessed; awarding academic credit or practice credit; student exchange; formal learning, experiential learning; field work; independent study; project work or other tutor directed activities; studying or working abroad).

Student exchanges are particular types of placement learning. They are arrangements negotiated by MMU departments (or equivalent) to enable their students to participate in educational exchange programmes including European and Worldwide exchange agreements and other study abroad arrangements. Student exchanges allow students to undertake a period of study at a partner institution with which MMU has an institutional level agreement. MMU International is responsible for all student exchange procedures and for institutional-level monitoring of student exchanges.

The exchange experience must conform to this ICP and be consistent with approved aims and learning outcomes. In accordance with this ICP, prior to consenting to a student exchange, the relevant department(s) must satisfy themselves that the programme of study which will be followed has appropriately comparable curricula consistent with the aims and learning outcomes of the MMU programme on which the student is registered. The arrangements for incorporating assessed work that is undertaken as part of a student exchange into the overall assessment for an MMU award will be specified in an appendix to the University's Assessment Regulations. Where departments develop student exchange opportunities and wish to amend the programme aims and/or reflect the international experience within the award title, such proposals shall be subject to University approval, e.g. under modification procedures outlined in the Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook.

[Note: this ICP relates only to MMU students engaging in exchange activity. Those involved with student exchange where students from other institutions are undertaking periods of time at MMU must adhere to any code of practice relating to the student's home institution.]

### 3.2 Work-based learning

Work-based learning will:

- be an integral and accredited element of an approved programme of study, which will normally be achieved through engagement with a workplace environment;
- involve active partnership between programme providers and employers with the aim of developing students' skills and knowledge relevant to their employment, whilst providing academic recognition of the learning that students acquire in the workplace;
- either be arranged by the University, or be arranged by a student and approved by the University;
- be of sufficient length and quality to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes, but be at least one week or the equivalent in duration and normally significantly longer. Activities with a shorter duration than this will be regarded as visits rather than as work-based learning experiences.

Work-based learning can vary from a single unit of study within a programme to an entire programme that includes academic and specific work related activities that focus on the unit learning outcomes designed around the activities that students will undertake in their workplace. Work-based learning may be offered for those students in full-time or part-time work whether that be paid or voluntary work.

### 3.3 Placement or work-based learning provider

A placement or work-based learning provider includes persons, partnerships, companies, institutions and organisations providing opportunities for placement or work-based learning.

### 3.4 Placement or work-based learning supervisor/mentor

A placement or work-based learning supervisor/mentor is a person, designated by the placement or work-based learning provider, who is responsible for supervising the student while on a placement or a work-based learning experience.

### 3.5 Placement or work-based learning tutor

A placement or work-based learning tutor is a member of staff of the University designated to be responsible for overseeing the placement or work-based learning experience of an individual student. Part of that responsibility might include arranging and/or approving placements, supporting students during the placement period and making visits to students during their placement or work-based learning experience for assessment and other purposes.

### 3.6 Practice credits

Periods of assessed placement or work-based learning experience that are additional to the academic credits required for an award may attract practice credits based on the benchmark of 120 such credits representing not less than 36 weeks of placement or work-based learning experience normally undertaken within one academic year. Practice credits are not assigned to a level.

## 4 **General Principles**

Where placement or work-based learning is an intended part of a programme of study, the general principles that are set out below will apply.

- (i) The University will ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that placement and work-based learning environments are safe for students and appropriate to the programme of study being undertaken. The University will therefore take reasonable steps to ensure that all such environments are compliant with statutory health and safety requirements. These arrangements are set out in the University's document '*Health and Safety Practical Guide on the Placement of Students*'. Whilst the University cannot accept responsibility for matters over which it has no control, in those circumstances where matters of health and safety arise, the University will undertake prompt investigations and give due consideration to the implications for any other student(s) who may be engaged in the same or a similar placement.
- (ii) The University will ensure that the responsibilities of students, staff and providers of placement and work-based learning are clearly defined and communicated to all parties concerned.
- (iii) Programme teams will ensure that explicit reference is made in all definitive documentation to the intended learning outcomes of any placement or work-based learning. The assessment of such learning must form part of a coherent learning strategy for the programme as a whole, be reflected in the Programme Specification and assessment

guidelines, and be subject to the normal processes of assessment and moderation.

- (iv) The University will ensure that the aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and understood by all parties.
- (v) The University will ensure that a placement or work-based learning experience provides adequate opportunities for the intended learning outcomes to be achieved.
- (vi) Information relating to the contribution that placement or work-based learning makes to the overall aims and outcomes of each programme will be communicated to applicants, students and placement providers.
- (vii) The University will ensure that the standards applied to the assessment of placement or work-based learning are consistent with available benchmark statements and, where appropriate, professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.
- (viii) Where a placement or work-based learning experience is assessed summatively, appropriate arrangements will be in place to ensure that such assessments are subject to the same moderation processes as other assessments.

## **5. Responsibilities of the University**

### Policies and procedures

- 5.1 The respective responsibilities of the University, providers of placement and work-based learning experiences, and students will normally be set out in a formal agreement between the University and the provider. Standard templates for these agreements, with associated briefing material, will be provided by the University's Legal Team, who will also advise on process.
- 5.2 Student exchanges will always be governed by a formal agreement between the University and the other institution or organisation, except where students undertake a fee-paying period of study abroad, in which case there will be a clear statement of the respective responsibilities of the University, the other institution and the student. The initiation or renewal of student exchange agreements is undertaken through MMU International.
- 5.3 Each programme must have agreed procedures for securing, approving, allocating, monitoring and curtailing placement and work-based learning experiences. These will be defined at the programme approval stage, and subsequently in the definitive documentation at programme review.

- 5.4 Procedures for placement and work-based learning experiences must:
- (i) take proper account of health and safety considerations. Placement and work-based learning providers must be made aware of the University's requirements, and each programme should have a process for making reasonable enquiries of providers in relation to ensuring the safety of students. The University's Health and Safety Unit provides a standard form for this purpose. Students who undertake placements and work-based learning must also receive appropriate briefing on health and safety matters. Briefings can be provided by the Health and Safety Unit;
  - (ii) reflect any specific requirements of the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
  - (iii) include reference to the University's guidelines on ethical procedures.
- 5.5 Where placement or work-based learning involves a collaborative arrangement between institutions and/or employers, clear information on the allocation of placements or work-based learning opportunities must be available in definitive documentation.
- 5.6 If the University determines to enrol a student on a programme of study that incorporates a mandatory placement or work-based learning experience, there is an obligation on the University to provide support for securing that placement or work-based learning experience. The nature and extent of the support should be clearly set out in the definitive document for the programme.
- 5.7 In approving placement and work-based learning experiences, the University will have regard to the ability of the provider to:
- (i) provide opportunities for intended learning outcomes to be achieved;
  - (ii) support students on placement and work-based learning experiences;
  - (iii) monitor and assure the proficiency of their staff who are involved in supporting placement and work-based learning;
  - (iv) fulfil responsibilities under health and safety legislation.

This will be done having regard to the level of skill and experience of the students and the academic level students are expected to achieve.

- 5.8 Programme teams should ensure that students are given an early opportunity to disclose a disability in order for any appropriate reasonable adjustments to be put in place to support their placement or work-based learning activity. The

disclosure of such information will normally be subject to obtaining the informed consent of the student.

- 5.9 The University recognises that students' availability to undertake placement and work-based learning activities may be limited by family, religious or other legitimate commitments. Any such circumstances will be respected by the University and will be taken into consideration when allocating placement and work-based learning opportunities.
- 5.10 If University officers consider that the arrangements for a placement or a work-based learning experience may expose a student, or the University and its staff, or a placement or work-based learning provider (including a student exchange partner), to an unacceptable level of risk, the matter shall be referred to the Registrar, who shall decide whether to proceed with the placement or work-based learning experience. The decision of the Registrar shall be final.

#### Student support and information

- 5.11 The University requires programme teams to provide students with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during, and after placement and work-based learning experiences. Wherever it is practicable, placement and work-based learning providers should be involved in the development of guidance to students.
- 5.12 The following is an indicative list of areas which, where relevant, should be covered by the guidance:
- (i) information on the nature and extent of the placement or work-based learning experience and its relationship to other aspects of the student's programme;
  - (ii) the support that is provided to students when the responsibility for securing a placement or work-based learning experience rests with the student;
  - (iii) appropriate induction to the placement environment, including health and safety information (copies of the University's *'Health and Safety Practical Guide on the Placement of Students'* must be available to students, staff and placement providers);
  - (iv) any occupational health considerations or requirements, including immunisation (for example, for health service or some international placements);
  - (v) any Criminal Records Bureau checks;

- (vi) any legal or ethical considerations (for example, client or patient confidentiality);
- (vii) the means of recording the achievement of specific learning outcomes and progress, through the Student Progress File/Personal Development Planning arrangements developed by Universities UK, SCoP, LTSN Generic Centre and the QAA;
- (viii) the availability of additional language or skills preparation;
- (ix) insurance arrangements, including:
  - personal insurance cover on placement or work-based learning activity, including the use of personal transport;
  - medical insurance cover when on a placement, work-based learning or student exchange experience abroad;
  - any other insurance requirements, including professional indemnity insurance where this is relevant;
  - provisions relating to legal jurisdiction;

[A briefing note on insurance for placements and work-based learning will be provided for programme teams to use. The briefing note will identify insurance issues that are specific to overseas placements and work-based learning experiences]

- (x) cultural orientation and work expectations;
- (xi) a written statement of the full range of the University support services, both academic and other, that students can expect to receive while they are on a placement or work-based learning experience;
- (xii) appropriate re-orientation on return from a placement or work-based learning experience abroad;
- (xiii) the need to take account of travel advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of any overseas travel;
- (xiv) information on the rights that students have to any intellectual property they might develop as part of a placement or work-based learning experience;
- (xv) information on complaints procedures;

- (xvi) guidance on the standards of behaviour expected of students on placement and work-based learning experiences, and the consequences if those standards are not met.
- 5.13 Programme teams may also have to take cognisance of any other relevant guidance that may be issued from time to time by the University.

#### Staff development

- 5.14 It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that staff who are involved in placement and work-based learning are competent to fulfil their role. The University will therefore ensure, through appropriate training, that its staff are competent to identify, develop and supervise placement and work-based learning opportunities. The University is also responsible for providing adequate supervision of staff who are involved in placement and work-based learning activities and will ensure that such staff are aware of the University's policy '*Health and Safety Practical Guidance on the Placement of Students*'.
- 5.15 Guidance on development needs will be provided by the relevant central University departments and also by any committees and groups that may from time to time have responsibilities in this area.

#### Monitoring and evaluation of placement and work-based learning opportunities

- 5.16 Programme teams shall monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and procedures in securing effective placement and work-based learning opportunities. This shall be conducted through the Programme Committee and reported in the Quality Action Plan. Programme teams must formulate procedures for:
- (i) encouraging supervisors and students on placement and work-based learning opportunities to provide feedback on progress and concerns;
  - (ii) periodically reviewing the progress of students;
  - (iii) using feedback from staff involved in these arrangements, supervisors and mentors in provider and partner organisations, external examiners and students;
  - (iv) gathering feedback on a formal and informal basis from placement and work-based learning providers and student exchange partner institutions and organisations about the arrangement;

- (v) managing situations where a student's placement or work-based learning opportunity is unexpectedly curtailed for reasons other than the performance of the student.

5.17 MMU International will monitor the operation of all student exchange arrangements. This monitoring will cover:

- (i) ensuring that there is clarity about the mode of study, enrolment details and expected hours of study of each student;
- (ii) ensuring that partner institutions are adequately reviewing student progress;
- (iii) ensuring that departments and faculties provide clear information to students about which members of staff have responsibility for student exchanges, and how and in what circumstances students can contact those members of staff.

#### Dealing with complaints

5.18 The University will ensure that procedures are in place for dealing with complaints from students relating to placement and work-based learning activities and that programme teams are aware of and can make use of them. The procedures will cover, *inter alia*, matters relating to allegations of discrimination and harassment. Such procedures should be in line with the University's Student Complaints Procedure.

5.19 The University will also ensure that procedures are in place for dealing with complaints from providers of placement and work-based learning opportunities (including partner institutions and organisations in student exchange arrangements) about students and that programme teams are aware of and can make use of them.

5.20 Records will be kept of all formal complaints and of the follow-up action taken.

5.21 Students and providers of placement and work-based learning experiences (including partner institutions and organisations in student exchange arrangements) should be made aware of who, in the first instance, is responsible for investigating and responding to reasonable causes of complaint.

## **6 Responsibilities of placement and work-based learning providers and student exchange partners**

6.1 Each programme team responsible for placement or work-based learning will ensure that providers and student exchange partners are aware of their responsibilities for:

- (i) the provision of learning opportunities;
- (ii) their role, where appropriate, in the assessment of students;
- (iii) the health and safety of students;
- (iv) making reasonable adjustments to meet equality and diversity legislation requirements where appropriate.

6.2 Programme teams should also ensure that providers and student exchange partners have timely information on:

- (i) the objectives of the placement or work-based learning opportunity or student exchange;
- (ii) their involvement in monitoring student progress and reporting it to the University;
- (iii) the responsibilities that attach to any mentoring or supervisory role that they undertake;
- (iv) University policies, procedures, and support structures that may apply when action is required where issues arise that relate to student performance and/or to discipline or conduct;
- (v) the arrangements and procedures for visits to the provider or partner by University staff;
- (vi) University policies, procedures and processes that may apply where students complain about aspects of their placement or work-based learning experience.

## **7 Responsibilities and rights of students**

7.1 Prior to the start of a placement or work-based learning activity, programme teams should ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities:

- (i) as representatives of the University for maintaining goodwill within the host organisation, fulfilling contracted obligations (including any agreed weeks of placement or work-based learning experience that exceed the University's normal term dates) and demonstrating commitment and appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards the provider or partner organisation and its customers/clients/patients/employees/students;
- (ii) for managing their learning and professional relationships, including ethical considerations;
- (iii) for recording their progress and achievements;
- (iv) for alerting the provider or partner organisation and the University to problems that might prevent the progress or satisfactory completion of the placement or work-based learning opportunity or student exchange, including any health and safety or ethical matters;
- (v) for undertaking any assessments during the placement or work-based learning experience or student exchange which may be required in fulfilment of the programme regulations.

7.2 Students should also be informed by the appropriate programme team(s) of their rights:

- (i) to a safe environment;
- (iv) to be treated in accordance with applicable legislation;
- (iii) to provide feedback on their placement or work-based learning experience;
- (v) to be aware of the nature and scope of the learning support they can expect from academic and work-based or placement staff;
- (vi) to be fully informed of their responsibilities whilst on placement or undertaking work-based learning.

7.3 The University will work with the Students' Union to ensure the provision of appropriate information, advice and guidance to students about placements and work-based learning.

## **8 Implementation of the ICP**

The Centre for Student Employability and Success will ensure that the ICP is communicated within the University, regularly reviewed and updated, reflects

relevant national requirements and continues to meet the precepts of the relevant section of the QAA Code of Practice. The Centre will also support the development of best practice in the provision and management of placement and work-based learning opportunities.