Code of Practice on Student Placements

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CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Preface

This Code of Practice was developed in accordance with the guidance contained in the section of the QAA’s Code of Practice covering Placement Learning (July 2001), and was first published in October 2002. It incorporates and replaces an earlier University document entitled Notes of Guidance Relating to Students Studying Abroad (approved by the Standing Committee of Deans in 1995).

Copies of the Code are sent to senior University Officers, Deans, Sub-Deans, the Associate Dean (Combined Arts), Heads of Department and relevant Administrative Officers, Faculty Board Secretaries, the Director of the EDSC and the Secretary of the Academic Review Committee. It can be found on the Academic Office website on http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/quality/Codes/ Any comments on the operation of the Code should be addressed to Faculty Board Secretaries or the Academic Registrar.

The Code is reviewed annually by the Standing Committee of Deans. Revisions take account of procedural issues arising from the previous year, lessons learned from the annual and periodic monitoring procedures, and relevant national developments, particularly recommendations of good practice contained in QAA publications.

The Academic Review Committee is responsible through its academic reviews of departments for monitoring overall compliance with the Code.

Kathy Williams
Academic Registrar
October 2004
Equal opportunities and risk management statements

**Equal opportunities:** The Code articulates the University’s expectation that all students on placement should have the equal opportunity to benefit from the educational or work experience provided, and that the intended outcomes of each experience should be achievable.

**Risk Management:** Risk assessment may be a compulsory requirement of attendance on a placement, either because of its geographical or physical location (for example, some field work), or because it is a requirement of an employer. Aside from this, the Code fulfils the generic function of alerting departments to the measures which must be put in place in order to minimise the risks associated with placing students outside the University’s direct day-to-day influence. These measures include clear briefing, good communications and back-up support, but for the University to manage the risk successfully, it must also ensure that students accept responsibility for, and have the confidence to deal with, the risks inherent in their new environment.
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Learning activities covered by this Code

1.1 The following aspects of provision are covered by this section of the Code:

- periods of study in another institution, either in the UK or abroad
- periods of work experience, either in the UK or abroad
- field work
- medical electives/clinical placements undertaken by medical students and clinical psychology students
- PGCE placements in schools
- any paid or voluntary work which contributes to the curriculum of a programme offered by the University.

1.2 The Code applies to all the above categories of learning whether the activity is assessed or not, and, if assessed, irrespective of the form of assessment.

Departmental responsibilities

1.3 Departments are responsible for ensuring that where placements are offered, these are integrated into the curriculum and enhance the overall learning experience. This means that the placement must:

- be consistent with subject benchmarks
- fulfil the requirements of relevant statutory or professional bodies
- be located in the course in such a way as to ensure that any necessary or desirable pre-requisite study can be undertaken prior to the placement, and maximum benefit obtained from the placement in terms of its contribution to the remainder of the programme.

1.4 Each placement must have clearly-defined objectives and learning outcomes and these must be recorded in programme specifications.

1.5 A clear departmental assessment strategy must be in place covering as many of the following as are relevant:

- the place of the assessment in the overall programme scheme;
- the function of the assessment if it does not contribute to the programme scheme
- the extent to which completion of the placement is in itself an assessment outcome

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• the form of the assessment
• the way in which the assessment will be conducted
• the involvement of University staff as examiners or moderators
• the way in which examinations conducted by other institutions or work placements will be monitored
• the timing of mark returns
• resit arrangements and the consequences of failure
• the relationship between marks obtained overseas and the University’s mark schemes, and any arrangements for adjustment/scaling
• the method by which feedback on performance will be delivered
• the involvement of the external examiner.

1.6 Students must be left in no doubt about the expectations of the department in relation to their placements. Any queries associated with the purpose of the placement, its place in the overall curriculum, and the way it will contribute to progression or the programme outcome must be addressed before the placement commences.

1.7 There must be a clear understanding in the department about where the responsibility lies for organising each placement, and this must be communicated to students at an early stage (see 8 to 10 below).

1.8 If it is the department’s intention that students should make their own placement arrangements, this should be identified as a formal placement objective, and students should be issued with clear written guidelines setting out the department’s expectations of them in relation to:

• the type of placement and the timetable for the completion of arrangements (providing contact names where relevant)
• the required length of the placement
• travel and accommodation arrangements
• any financial obligations, including (where relevant) the payment of deposits or final sums to third parties
• any legal or official requirements or ethical issues associated with working or studying in a foreign country
• language training
• health and safety issues and any requirements to take out personal insurance
• learning and assessment expectations (see 5 above).

1.9 Students on placements organised by the department must be notified in writing of:

• deadlines for providing relevant information to the department
• any financial obligations, including (where relevant) the payment of deposits or final sums to the department

……..continued
the travel and accommodation arrangements which have been made on their behalf
health and safety issues and any requirements to take out personal insurance
how language training will be provided
learning and assessment expectations (see 5 above)

1.10 Where departments and students share responsibility for the organisation of placements, their respective roles should be clearly defined and communicated.

1.11 Students making placement arrangements should be provided with the name of a member of the academic staff or other authorised person to whom queries can be addressed.

**Placement providers**

1.12 Students on placements remain registered students of the University. The University cannot delegate absolute responsibility for its registered students to any third party and placement providers must therefore be made aware of University expectations in relation to:

- the provision of learning opportunities which accord with purpose of the placement
- their role in supervising, monitoring and assessing students
- any deadlines for the provision of results and/or feedback on performance
- the health and safety of students in their temporary care.

1.13 The means through which this compliance can be achieved will vary according to the type of placement being undertaken, but include:

- an agreement between the University and the placement provider (including providers of industrial placements)
- MBChB electives
- contracts between groups of institutions (for example, SOCRATES exchange arrangements)
- one-to-one agreements
- partnership arrangements, (for example between the University and the NHS Confederation and Strategic Health Authority for D. Clin. Psy. students)
- specific funding arrangements (for example, research council studentships involving laboratory placements)
- the purchase of specific goods and services (for example, field courses held at field centres, language courses offered by language schools).
1.14 Placement providers should be made aware of the provisions of this Code and of their specific responsibilities under it.

1.15 Formal contracts with external placement providers must be approved by the relevant Head of Department and signed by the Registrar and Secretary, or another designated officer, as well as by a senior person in the provider institution/company.

Students’ responsibilities

1.16 As registered students of the University, students on placement represent the institution in their new place of study/work, and their behaviour should reflect this (see also the University’s Student Code of Social Responsibility). Students must comply with the regulations or codes of conduct of their host institutions or companies, but the University's own disciplinary regulations may also be applied where this appears to be warranted.

1.17 Students on work placements should recognise that the placement is likely to involve:

- understanding and fostering customer and client relationships
- managing workplace relationships with all grades of staff
- meeting the placement provider’s expectations in relation to time-keeping, leave arrangements and workplace behaviour.

1.18 Students on placement should be aware that some of the benefits of their time away from the University might fall outside the formal learning outcomes of the placement. Such benefits might include:

- increased self-reliance and self-confidence
- improved organisational skills
- an understanding of a different culture
- new language skills
- clarification of future career or study plans.

In order to recognise and appreciate these benefits, students should take time to reflect on their progress and achievements. A requirement by the department to complete a progress file, diary or report may assist in this process of reflection.

1.19 Students are responsible for alerting the placement provider to any problems which might affect the satisfactory nature of the placement or its outcome, and for referring these to the University department if they are not resolved (see also Student Complaints Procedure).

1.20 Students are required to provide their families with full details of the academic and domestic arrangements which will apply for the duration of their visit.
1.21 Students must ensure that they keep departments and either the Registry or the Graduate Office (as appropriate) informed about their whereabouts during the year abroad; the regulations requiring students to notify the University of any change of address apply throughout a student's course, not just for periods spent at the University.

1.22 In order to ensure that proper notification is provided to LEAs and the Student Loans Company about the placements they are undertaking, undergraduate students on one semester or full-year placements must comply with any instructions concerning registration and any requests for the provision of information issued by the Registry. Students on SOCRATES/ERASMUS exchanges must also notify the International Office if for any reason their placement is abandoned (for example, if they obtain employment in the overseas country concerned). Mobility grants are only paid for approved academic exchanges.

**Student support and guidance**

1.23 Students must be notified before they commence their placements about the nature of the departmental support which will be provided for them during the placement. This should include, as relevant:

- the name of a departmental contact, together with contact arrangements (e-mail, telephone, hours of availability)
- information about action to take in an emergency, including a 24-hour contact number for the Welfare Service
- dates of any visits by departmental staff and the purpose of these
- arrangements for staff presence at supervised or semi-supervised placements (for example, field trips)
- any requirements for compulsory contact with the department (for example, confirmation of safe arrival).

1.24 Departments should satisfy themselves that students who are due to spend periods of study in non-English-speaking countries have sufficient written and oral competence in the language of the country to be visited to ensure that they can benefit academically from the experience. This competence can be gained in the following ways:

- for students on modern language degree courses, through the study of their main subject(s);
- through recent study, for example at A or AS level;
- by selecting a relevant modern language supplementary subject;
- by taking language modules in place of main subject modules;
- by taking language modules in addition to their main subject modules
- through self-guided study in the Language Centre.
1.25 Students on placement should be contacted by the department at least once term. Contact may be established by:

- a personal visit arranged specifically for the purpose of providing support
- an invitation to meet a member of staff who might be visiting the placement site for other purposes, but is willing to act as advisor
- at least one letter or e-mail each term inviting students to relay any comments or concerns back to the department.

Departments should make specific provision in their non-pay budgets to meet the direct costs of supporting students on placements.

1.26 Where the content of the course does not prepare students going overseas for the cultural, social or academic experience of studying abroad, departments should provide support and information either by recommending appropriate literature (maps, guidebooks, etc) or, preferably, by preparing their own notes of guidance. Practical details, such as the type of clothing required for a protracted stay in a particular country, should be included in such guides, as should relevant advice on cultural norms and personal safety. Where possible, students should be provided with the opportunity of meeting students who have spent time abroad in previous years, so that there can be an informal exchange of information.

(Note: Outgoing students on ERASMUS exchanges are provided with Country Guides by the International Office.)

1.27 Risk assessments must be conducted where appropriate, and action taken as necessary (advice on this can be sought from the University’s Safety Services).

1.28 Students visiting EU countries should be informed about reciprocal health care arrangements (Form E128, not E111 which is for short-stay tourists). Students visiting countries outside Western Europe and North America will require information well in advance of their journey about compulsory and recommended preventative health measures, including vaccination requirements, and if intending to study in a high risk area should be told to obtain relevant information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office web site at http://www.fco.gov.uk/

1.29 Arrangements must be made to ensure that all students travelling abroad in the context of their studies are also insured under the University’s Business Travel Insurance Policy. This is in the interests of protecting both the students’ and the University’s interests, and reliance upon any other policy is not acceptable. This is irrespective of whether students feel that they have their own (or parents’) adequate insurance arrangements, already hold cover under the University’s annual scheme or are arranging personal cover for a one-off visit abroad.

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The insurance premiums for providing this cover for students are met centrally, (until further notice) except where under Vacation Awards arrangements, students are required to make a 25% contribution to costs.

All students arranging study visits abroad should be advised to contact Sue Banbury, Estates Office (extension 2769, e-mail sdb16@le.ac.uk) prior to their departure or departments should submit composite lists stating the country and dates of expected return to the UK.

(Note: If insurers revoke cover in respect of the country being visited, there is only a seven-day period before the policy is void, so it is essential that students are contactable at short notice).

1.30 For students on placements in the UK, the University’s Public Liability insurance policy provides insurance cover for the University’s legal liability for bodily injury to other persons and damage to material property arising from the negligent activity of a student whilst on work experience placement. Any indemnity forms for agreed term-time placements must be submitted to David Masters, Estates Office.

(Note: This cover does not extend to employment undertaken by students in a personal capacity and indemnity forms will not be signed on behalf of the University in respect of such work.)

1.31 As registered students on campus-based courses, students on placement have standard access rights to the services of Library, the Central Computer Service and EDSC, but the extent to which they can benefit from this will vary according to the type of placement and its location (for example, a student on an industrial placement with a local company will be able to use the University’s facilities, a medical student on an overseas elective in the Far East will not). Departments must therefore provide students who will be without direct access to the University’s academic support services and who require alternative support with details of the way in they can obtain this, for example through:

- the facilities provided by their host universities
- putting in place access arrangements to libraries in universities in the region in which the placement is taking place.

Student Records

1.32 Placements will be assigned University credits if they fall within modules, constitute one or more modules in their own right, or make up the whole of a semester or academic year. These credits are recorded in the University transcript issued to students at the end of their course. It is not currently possible for the titles of modules offered by overseas institution or the grades received to be incorporated into the University transcript, and arrangements should therefore be made for students to obtain a separate transcript from the overseas institution to cover their period of study there.
Criminal Records Bureau

1.33 For placements involving work with children or vulnerable adults, students must obtain a criminal record check through the Criminal Records Bureau. Further advice can be obtained from the Academic Office.

Evaluation and monitoring

1.34 Departments should obtain feedback on the operation of their placements by as many of the following means as are appropriate:

- questionnaires
- de-briefings
- reports from placement providers
- reviews of students’ academic performance during and after the placement
- external examiners’ reports
- the Graduate Survey.

1.35 The operation of this Code of Practice and departments’ general arrangements for overseeing student placements are monitored through the departmental reviews conducted by the Academic Review Committee.