Placements Policy – tier 4 obligations

1. Executive Summary

Placement learning plays an essential role in broadening students’ experience, developing skills within a practical context and enhancing employability skills to prepare them for the world of work. Placement learning opportunities are also highly valued by students and placement providers.

Although placement learning primarily takes place off-campus, students on work placements remain registered with the University throughout the duration of their placement and must abide by University regulations and policies.

This policy sets out the University’s requirements for ensuring that it remains compliant with all tier-4 sponsor duties whilst students are on work placement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to work-placements approved by the University where the achievements of the learning outcomes for the module or programme are dependent on the arrangement made with the delivery organisation or support providers, for example:

- Work-based learning in a UK or international company where this is a requirement of the programme which will be formatively or summatively assessed.
- A period of work-related learning in a clinical setting, including optional (elective) work-related learning.
- A block of work undertaken on a PGCE programme.

Voluntary placements, work experience or paid term-time/vacation work arranged by students and where the work does not contribute towards meeting programme learning outcomes fall outside the remit of this policy.

Periods of study spent in overseas higher educational institutions (for instance year and semester-abroad) are also excluded from this policy as are periods of supervised study undertaken by postgraduate research students at another institution or with an industrial sponsor.

3. College / Departmental Work Placement Structure

The arrangements by which work placements are established and managed varies across the institution. For instance, work placements within the College of Science and Engineering are coordinated through a College-level placements office, whilst those that take place within other Colleges are coordinated principally at departmental level. For the purposes of clarity under the terms of this policy the College level Science and Engineering placements office is considered as a ‘department’.
4. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Departments that offer placement learning must ensure that they have processes in place to outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties during the period of the work placement; students, University and placement providers.

Departments must also ensure that they provide clear and unambiguous information to students before commencement of the work placement to outline students’ obligations during the period of their work placement and to ensure there are clear and established means of communication between all parties during the placement period.

5. **Reporting Placement Locations**

The University is required to report the initial location of, and any subsequent changes to, the work placement addresses of any students sponsored under tier 4 of the points based system within 10 days of becoming aware of the change.¹

**Students:** must notify their department immediately if their placement location is changed after commencement or if they leave their placement earlier than outlined in their placement agreement.

**Departments:** must provide the Registry with the full address (including postcode) and duration of any work placements arranged for students sponsored under tier-4 of the points based system. Departments must also notify the Registry if the location or duration of a student’s placement changes after the initial report has been made. These notifications must be made within 5 working days of the placement beginning or the location/duration changing.

**The Registry** must report the location and duration of any work placements undertaken by tier-4 sponsored students to the UK Visa & Immigration via their sponsorship management system within 5 working days of receiving notification that a work placement has been arranged.

6. **Instances in which a Work Placement ends Early**

The duration and timing of all work placements will be outlined in the placement agreement entered into at the start of the work placement.

It is acknowledged that there may be instances where the student’s place on their placement may cease prior to the official end-date included in the agreement. In these circumstances:

**Students:** must notify their department immediately if they withdraw (or intend to withdraw) from their work placement before the end-date as outlined in the placement agreement.

**Departments:** must notify the Registry within 5 working days of becoming aware that a student has not completed the duration of the agreed work placement or has been withdrawn from a placement before the specified end-date.

**The Registry:** will report the early completion of the work placement to the UKVI via their sponsorship management system within 5 working days of receiving the notification.

Departments who offer placement learning must ensure that they have processes in place to mitigate the risks of placement providers being unable to deliver against contractual work-

¹ This includes each individual hospital rotation plus the final elective for students registered on the MBChB programme.
placement commitments and of placement providers withdrawing or terminating placements before the specified end-date.

The department, in combination with the Registry, will review the circumstances of any student who leaves (or intends to leave) a placement before the specified end-date to determine whether the student has completed enough of their placement to meet the specified learning outcomes or needs to complete another placement with alternative provider. The student’s status will also be reviewed to determine whether any reports need to be made to be UKVI.

7. **Instances in Which a Placement-Bearing Course is Withdrawn**

Departments who offer placement learning must ensure that they have processes in place to ensure that they can meet their contractual commitments to students registered on courses with work placements.

In the exceptional instance in which the University withdraws a course that includes an element of placement-based learning, immediate advice must be sought from the Academic Registrar who will also consider any UKVI reporting obligations.

8. ** Provision of up to Date Contact and Visa Details**

All students, including those on work placements, must ensure that they provide the University with a copy of their up to date contact details (and any changes thereof) including a UK contact address and telephone number in accordance with the provisions of Senate Regulation 4 and 9.

Students must also provide the University with a valid visa for study and ensure that any changes to their immigration status (including any changes that take place during the duration of a work placement) are immediately communicated to the University along with a copy of the new visa.

Failure to meet these provisions may result in the student’s registration being terminated under provisions 4.13 – 4.19 of Senate Regulation 4.

9. **Attendance Obligations Whilst on Placement**

All students, including those on work placements, must abide by the terms and conditions of the University’s published attendance management policy and any departmental procedures designed to ensure compliance with this policy. Students must also meet the attendance requirements of their placement provider.

Students who fail to engage with this process or who have sustained and unexplained absences will be considered under the provisions of Senate Regulation 4 (4.16 – 4.19).

Notwithstanding the processes and procedures outlined in the attendance management policy, in cases where due to non-attendance or non-engagement the University considers that a student has withdrawn themselves from a programme whilst on work placement the student will be contacted at their registered University email address and asked to contact the University by a specified date. If a student fails to respond satisfactorily by the specified date it will be assumed that they have withdrawn from the University and their record will be closed off accordingly. Students sponsored under tier 4 of the points based system will have their withdrawal reported to the UKVI within 10 working days.
Requests for short periods of authorised absence of up to 5 working days must be considered in accordance with the terms of Senate Regulation 4 (4.2) and departments must ensure that they maintain records of all authorised absences granted during periods of work placement.

10. **Use of University Email**

All students, including those on work placements, must ensure that they regularly check their University email and that they respond to communications from the University within 5 working days.

11. **Suspensions of Study**

Students who experience personal mitigating circumstances such as illness while they are on work placement may apply to suspend their studies in accordance with the provisions of Senate Regulation 2 (students following a taught programme of study) and 9 (students following a research-driven programme of study).

**Students:** in this position must contact their department immediately to discuss their situation and to consider how a temporary suspension will affect their existing work placement, overall registration (including tuition fee liability) and visa status.

**Departments:** must notify the Registry immediately if a student on placement temporarily suspends their studies.

**The Registry:** must report all temporary suspensions of study to the UKVI within 10 days of the commencement of the suspension.

The department, in combination with the Registry, will review the circumstances of any student who is considering suspending or has suspended their studies to determine the most appropriate course of action and what reporting activity, if any, needs to take place.

12. **Permanent Withdrawal**

Students who opt to withdraw from their studies permanently whilst on work placement must ensure that they do so in accordance with the provisions of Senate Regulation 2 (taught students) and 9 (research students).

**Departments:** must notify the Registry within 5 working days if a student on placement permanently withdraws from, or is withdrawn from, their studies.

**The Registry:** must report all permanent withdrawals from study to the UKVI within 10 working days of the withdrawal being agreed.

13. **Breaches in Conditions of Stay**

Students must not breach the terms and conditions of their visa whilst they are in the UK, including whilst they are on work placement.

If departments become aware that their students are breaching the conditions of their stay then they must report this to the Registry immediately and the student will be reported to the UKVI via the sponsorship management system.

End of Policy