



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

PLACEMENT PROVIDER GUIDE

Thank you for offering professional placement work experience to a student from Birmingham City University (BCU). Along with its academic aims BCU is committed to providing its graduates with the tools they will need to be competitive in the job market they will enter after graduation.

We recognise that many of these attributes and skills can best be obtained by developing a partnership between universities and placement providers. Such a partnership provides students with skills and insights that are essential for them to make the successful transition between university and employment.

We view the placement as crucial to the learning experience of our students because it allows them to link their theoretical understanding developed through academia to insights developed in a more applied context.

We hope that the following notes will provide useful background information for you during the placement.

PLACEMENT APPROVAL

All student placements need to be formally approved by the University **before** the student commences their placement. As part of the approval process the placement provider will be required to satisfactorily complete and return a Health, Safety and Insurance Declaration.

The Placement must meet the number of hours/weeks required by each specific programme.

The Placement must offer meaningful learning and if applicable offer the opportunity for appropriate academic learning outcomes to be met.

STUDENT SUPERVISION

Birmingham City University – Placement Tutors

Students undertaking a professional placement as part of their study programme will be assigned an academic placement tutor. The tutor's role is to ensure that the placement is running smoothly in terms of the student's performance and the placement provider's expectations.

Depending on the duration and mode of the placement the placement tutor may meet with the placement student and their line manager at specific intervals during the placement period to discuss progress and clarify objectives. We request that provision is made for the visit/s to take place either in person or via MS Teams. Visit arrangements will be made well in advance to fit in with your operational schedule.

It is expected that in the event of difficulties or issues arising from the placement, students and/or placement line managers should immediately contact the relevant BCU placement tutor.

Placement Provider – Line Manager/Mentor

It is recommended that the placement provider assigns the placement student a line manager or mentor who will be primarily responsible for the general supervision of the student's day to day workplace programme during the placement period.

It is important that the student has regular supervision meetings with their placement line manager. These meetings are necessary to provide students with a point of reference and a forum where they can discuss problems and issues that might emerge from the placement, and where they can devise strategies for their future progress.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT

In accordance with UK Visa and Immigration's monitoring of international students the University is obliged to monitor attendance of international placement students at their placement organisations. The University may therefore contact the student's line manager at the placement organisation at regular intervals to confirm the student has been in attendance.

The placement provider is required to notify the University of any period of prolonged absence taken by the placement student, even if consent has been given.

To ensure that the placement meets with UKVI requirements, international students are not permitted to undertake work placements which involve them solely working from home. There is an expectation that at least 60% of the placement is based in the workplace.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Some students will be required to undertake academic assessment whilst on placement. For further information please discuss this with the student or their placement tutor.

Students are expected to respect confidentiality and comply with UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when undertaking their assessment which might relate to their placement provider's organisation. Any information used will only be viewed by academic members of staff within Birmingham City University unless specific permission is granted.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Whilst students are on placement, the placement provider has the primary duty of care to ensure their health and safety. As students are also enrolled with Birmingham City University, we are concerned that the placement location and working conditions meet appropriate standards of health, safety and welfare.

The Health, Safety and Insurance Declaration (HSID) forwarded to you must be completed satisfactorily and returned to the University as soon as possible.

Please inform the University of any health and safety issues which involve any of our students. Overall, it is expected that placement providers will take reasonable precautions to ensure that placement students will be working in a safe environment and will not be exposed to unnecessary risk or danger.

The University expects placement providers to draw attention to health and safety issues during a student's induction into the organisation.

INSURANCE

Placement providers must hold Employer's Liability Insurance and be insured against its legal liability for accidental death, injury, illness or property damage. This insurance must extend to cover placement students.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

Birmingham City University operates an equal opportunities policy for both students and staff. Whilst students are undertaking a work placement it is expected that similar policies will apply within their placement organisation. Our students should not be subjected to any form of harassment either during the recruitment process or within the workplace. We expect that placement providers will have policies and procedures in place to prevent and deal with issues of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE

Whilst on placement, students are under the day-to-day supervision and guidance of the placement provider. Students are expected to conform to the normal discipline of the organisation, working the hours specified for the department in which they are employed, and adhering to the normal codes and practices, and standards of conduct expected of both permanent and non-permanent employees.

Should persistent or prolonged periods of absences occur whilst the student is placed with your organisation, please contact the student's placement tutor to discuss. It is also important that the University is made aware of any persistent periods of lateness.

The overwhelming majority of placements prove highly successful and mutually beneficial for all concerned; where problems have arisen in the past, the following have often been observed:

- a) There has been an inadequate induction programme e.g., the student has not been properly introduced to colleagues, their terms of reference has not been clarified and customs or standards have not been outlined.
- b) There has been inadequate discussion with supervisors or mentors to provide guidance on progress and plan placement objectives.
- c) There has been insufficient balance between challenging targets given to the student and routine work to be completed.

We understand that placement students might be required to undertake some routine tasks which may be viewed as tedious or repetitive, however, they also need the opportunity to take responsibility for work assigned to them, which is challenging, requires self-initiative and motivation to solve problems or meet given deadlines.

- d) Problems have not been addressed early enough.

For some students, their placement represents their first 'real experience' of the professional working environment and as such they may simply be unaware of what is expected. Discussion with the student when problems first arise may be sufficient to draw attention to the situation and provide a solution. If problems persist, please contact the student's placement tutor as soon as possible to discuss the situation and

a way forward. Tutors will always be pleased to provide advice and would welcome being kept informed of any potential problems.

PLACEMENT PROVIDER CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENTS

The three main parties involved in the process of recruitment and supervision of work experience placements are the academic institution, the placement provider and the student.

The following is a placement provider code of practice which can help eliminate misunderstandings, add professionalism to the placement and disseminate best practice. It has been developed after consultation with a cross section of placement providers.

PLACEMENT PROVIDERS

Placement Providers are requested to:

- Agree the actual placement start and end dates with the student. Be aware that academic year ends may affect earliest start dates.
- Explain to whom and where the student should report on their first day and outline any induction procedures.
- Keep the University informed of any changes e.g., terms and conditions, start date, job description and location.
- Provide suitable induction training in the first few weeks, to enable students to gain an awareness of their role within the organisation.
- Recognise that, although primarily an employee with responsibility to the organisation, the student is still registered with the academic institution and, as such, is likely to have certain obligations as part of their course.
- Provide students with adequate learning opportunities to enable them to achieve their own objectives or any objectives required by their course.
- Identify a workplace supervisor or mentor who will take responsibility for the student's progress towards achievement of objectives set by the organisation, the course, and the student.
- Allow access to placement tutors from the academic institution to discuss progress with the student and the workplace supervisor/mentor.
- Keep the placement tutor informed of any potential problems involving the student.
- Ensure that students are covered by Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurance Policies and that those insurers are notified of placements in accordance with the requirements of the said policies.
- Assist with an overall assessment of the achievement of student's objectives.
- Provide feedback to the academic institution to assess how well the placement process has been managed.

End