

Work Placement

A Best Practice Guide for Employers

Work Placement – Enhancing Employability



Association of
Higher Education
Careers Services

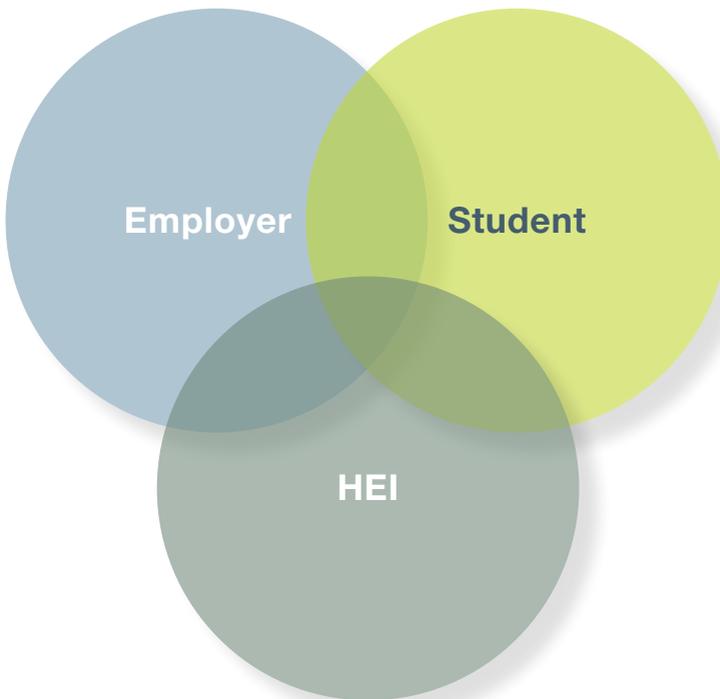
AIM

The aim of this document is to provide a guide to best practice for employers who wish to provide a Work Placement learning opportunity to a student as part of a course of study in a Higher Education Institution (HEI).

While the term Work Placement is used, the information may be

applied and adapted to any work-based learning component of a HEI course, regardless of duration.

This Guide is intended to act as a reference document, to be used in conjunction with detailed, course-specific information from individual HEIs.



BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS

It is important that all three parties involved – employer, student and HEI - work together before, during and after the Work Placement and that all are clear about their roles, responsibilities and entitlements at all stages.

BEFORE PLACEMENT

- Have clear reasons for recruiting a student and have realistic expectations of what a student can deliver.
- Contact your local HEI to find out which courses are most appropriate to the role to be filled. Get a clear understanding of the Placement process and the expectations of both student and HEI.
- Consider availability of a budget to pay the student, where appropriate.
- Prepare a job and person specification for the role and actively engage in the selection process by interviewing students.
- Consider how you can meet the student's course learning outcomes.
- Appoint and prepare a mentor in your organisation who will support the student in the workplace.

DURING PLACEMENT

- Provide induction and training, including Health & Safety, to help the student transition to the world of work.
- Allow the student every opportunity to learn and develop skills, as well as to work.
- Provide the student with support and guidance appropriate to the role.
- Treat the student with the same duty of care as all other employees.
- Keep the student active, engaged and motivated to ensure they have a positive experience in your workplace.

- Co-operate with the HEI in all course requirements such as documentation for assessment of student performance.
- Make provision for the HEI to visit the student, where required.
- Communicate any issues of concern to the contact person in the HEI in a timely manner and jointly agree ways to resolve the situation.
- Provide appropriate performance feedback to the student and HEI.

AFTER PLACEMENT

- Provide feedback on the student's performance as part of the assessment process.
- Agree to provide the student with a reference for future employers.
- Organise a meeting with the student to review the experience for both student and employer.
- Implement suggestions for changes identified in discussions with the student or HEI.
- Provide feedback and suggestions to the HEI for improvements to the Placement process.
- Consider further engagement opportunities with the HEI.

WHAT IS WORK PLACEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Work Placement is a planned period of professional learning or experience, which may be accredited, where the learning outcomes are part of a Higher Education programme or module.

It is a three-way partnership between an employer, a student and a HEI, where a student is given the opportunity to work and learn in a professional environment relevant to their studies, in order to achieve set goals.

REASONS EMPLOYERS RECRUIT STUDENTS

- Organisational need.
- Develop talent and skills for the future.
- Desire to support a local HEI.
- Help to up-skill the next generation.

BENEFITS OF WORK PLACEMENT TO EMPLOYERS

- Students offer a source of skilled labour and an insight into new practices being taught in HEIs.
- Students provide a flexible and cost-effective solution to recruitment needs and help ease staff workload at busy times.
- They bring new ideas and new perspectives into the workplace.
- Employers can recruit an additional resource to undertake projects.
- Employers can identify potential new recruits and create a feeder pool for future graduate recruitment.
- It provides people management development opportunities for staff.
- It develops links with HEIs for a range of purposes, such as R&D.

ABOUT AHECS

Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) is the representative body for Careers Advisory and Work Placement Professionals in Higher Education in Ireland.

Its mission is to lead, support and facilitate collaboration among Higher Education Careers Services throughout Ireland and be the recognised authority on graduate career development, learning and employability.

All 27 Universities and Institutes of Technology in Ireland, North and South, are members.

ABOUT THE AHECS WORK PLACEMENT TASK GROUP

The Group promotes the concept of Work Placement and its policy development through engagement with all stakeholders involved: students in Higher Education, Work Placement staff, academic staff and management in Higher Education, employers and their representative professional bodies, statutory regulatory bodies and Government departments.

It is committed to developing best practice policy and guidelines for Work Placement learning, producing relevant research publications and creating a forum for the sharing of expertise and experience among Work Placement professionals.

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Produced by the AHECS Work Placement Task Group:

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