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INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

This handbook is intended to help Solent University students and staff understand and manage the placement experience.

University staff will help students prepare for their placement and explain the assessment process. As a student, you need to attend the University’s preparation workshops and upload all the required documentation.

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

A placement is an approved period of assessed learning in a workplace and must be approved by the University and appropriately supervised within the host organisation. The field of work should be relevant to your course to satisfy the requirements of the unit.
FACTS, FIGURES AND BENEFITS OF PLACEMENTS

A placement aims to bridge the gap between academic study and vocational experience so that you can apply the theory and skills learnt to practical situations.

Employers benefit from up-to-date knowledge and fresh insights for a specific piece of work. You give them dedicated energy and skills to focus on a particular project.

Research highlights the positive impact of a placement on degree classification and graduate employability as employers require work experience.

50% OF EMPLOYERS WILL NOT TAKE A GRADUATE WITH NO PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

Highflyers, 2015
SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES YOUR GRADUATE CV, GAIN A GOOD REFERENCE FROM YOUR EMPLOYER AND THUS ENHANCE YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS.

Graduate Recruitment Bureau

STUDENTS 40% MORE LIKELY TO BE IN GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT AFTER THEY CARRY OUT A WORK PLACEMENT.

The Times Higher Education, 2017

63% OF EMPLOYERS BELIEVE THAT GRADUATES WHO HAVE UNDERTAKEN WORK EXPERIENCE WERE WORK READY

Rate My Placement, 2018
WAYS TO FIND A PLACEMENT

It’s a student’s responsibility to find and secure a placement; however, help and resources are available from the University’s Solent Futures’ staff and course teams. Students are encouraged to:

• attend unit preparation sessions and use the information on your placement unit page on Solent Futures Online

• find key placement information within the Solent Futures pages on the Portal

• use specialist websites dedicated to placements and register on Solent Graduate Jobs, where you can find local and national placements; you can also find opportunities at Student Ladder, RateMyPlacement and The Big Choice

• use Solent Futures Online to help identify employers for speculative applications.

• approach contacts, family, friends, relatives, guest speakers and tutors who may know of employers who would consider, or have, placement opportunities

• contact companies and find Solent alumni on social networking sites for speculative applications

• visit Solent Futures to speak to a member of the team, 11am–4pm weekdays (in RM001) – get advice, attend events and discuss your plans

• explore Solent Futures Online to track down employers for placement opportunities – find the link on the Portal > Careers

• investigate a work placement abroad funded by the Erasmus+ programme – look up Erasmus Intern at erasmusintern.org to find opportunities.
TIPS ON SECURING A PLACEMENT, APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Create a winning application, CV and cover letter:

- Research the organisation and role to find out what knowledge, skills and experience the employer is looking for. Find information on the employer’s website regarding job description and person specification.

- Tailor the application form and CV to the placement role and company. Positively demonstrate how you meet the requirements in a professional and compelling manner, using clear and concise evidence.

- Prepare for interviews and provide examples that best highlight your most relevant knowledge, experience and skills.

If you would like further support, visit the Solent Futures team (in RM001, 11am–4pm weekdays).

PLACEMENTS IN EUROPE UNDER THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

If you are considering a placement in Europe as part of your degree, you may be eligible to apply for funding through Erasmus+. Find out more at www.solent.ac.uk/studyabroad – select ‘Outgoing exchange’ and review the ‘European work placements’ section.

To be eligible for Erasmus+ funding, placements must meet the following criteria:

- Last for a minimum of two months (and a maximum of 12)

- Take place within one of the 33 countries (other than the UK) which participate in the Erasmus+ programme (EU member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey)

- Be recognised as part of your Solent University degree programme.

APPLYING FOR AN ERASMUS+ GRANT

The Erasmus+ grant is non-means-tested and non-repayable, and does not affect student loans.

To discuss Erasmus+, email international.exchanges@solent.ac.uk to make an appointment. Alternatively drop in to the Study Abroad and Exchange team in room A201 in the Andrews Building – contact number: 023 8201 3893.
ONLINE PLACEMENT ENROLMENT

PLACEMENT APP

Once you have successfully obtained a placement, you must enrol using the Placement App on the Portal. Please fill in all the tabs and upload the required documents.

Student details
• Your details and a contact name in case of emergencies
• Your course and tutor

Placement provider details
• Placement role title; organisation’s name, address and telephone number
• Supervisor’s name and contact details

Risk profile
• A detailed risk profile for your work placement
• Placement role title; organisation’s name, address and telephone number
• Supervisor’s name and contact details

Click to submit all the uploaded information
• Your tutor will see your placement submission and is required to review and approve this before your placement can go ahead.
• You will receive notification when this has happened.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

The employer should send you an offer letter or contract. A phone call alone will not suffice. The University requires official confirmation of the placement within a headed letter that contains the company logo and contact details to ensure the placement meets the unit requirements. Your tutor will need to see and approve all the details and documents.
Ms J Umper  
C220 Bright Halls  
Fast Lane  
Southampton  
SO14 2RW

15 March 2017

Dear Josie,

**Summer work placement – deVere Group**

I am pleased to confirm our telephone call that, following your interview, you have a summer placement as a Fitness Assistant in the deVere Group Fitness Suite. This placement is from Monday 5 June until Friday 15 September 2017.

Your role will be to work for the deVere Group in the Fitness Suite, on the reception desk and in the gym, operating and tanning rooms. You will assist clients in using the gym equipment and explain their programme cards to them.

If you require any further information on your placement with us, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Isabel Ringing

Isabel Ringing

Head of Customer Services  
deVere Group
EXAMPLE OF A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Contract of Employment Incorporating a Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment

In Accordance with Employment Rights Act 1996

The Employer: Merseywaves University, Merseyside, Liverpool LP22 3PP

Telephone: 0161 333 777

Employee: Mr Bill Jobs

Job Title: IT Student Placement

Job Level: Level 2a

Department: Liverpool Oceanography Centre (LOC) IT Group, Corporate Service Division, LOC, Liverpool

Date of Start of Employment: 04/07/2017

Date of Expiry of Employment: 29/06/2018

Probationary Period: Ends on 7/10/2017, during which period either party may terminate the employment upon giving the other one week’s written notice. The University reserves the right to extend the probationary period if deemed necessary.
EXAMPLE OF A JOB DESCRIPTION
OR JOB PROFILE OR ROLE

Job Title: Work Placement Events Executive (Events)
Company: Solentstream Race Course

Main purpose of the job: The role of the events executive is primarily focused on non race-day business sales and event planning. This will involve a high level of wedding business, as well as other event-based sales. High levels of commitment and responsibility are required within this role which is a key part of a fast-paced event sales environment. Delivering sales targets and managing client accounts effectively are critical.

1. Responsible to: Events Sales Manager, Commercial Executive
2. Liaison with: Clients, General Manager, contractors

Main tasks of job

• Liaise with events manager/commercial executive to aid with daily tasks.
• Help prepare proposals to clients making enquiries and ensure these meet a four-hour turnaround time.
• Ensure all sales enquiries are encouraged to visit the site; enquiry-to-tour ratio should be above 25 per cent.
• Aid with site tours for new and existing clients.
• Proactively generate new business through cold calling, account management and marketing the business to the local market.
• Develop relationships with local corporate clients and account manage accordingly under the instruction of the ESM.
• Ensure the operations manager and catering team know all the event’s requirements as soon as the booking is made.
• Cross-sell race-day packages where appropriate.
• Raise contracts and invoices for all bookings made and ensure they are updated during the run-up to the event.
• Liaise with clients with reference to planning their event and follow through actions.
• Host events and ensure high levels of customer service are delivered.
• Regularly update and maintain the database.
ON PLACEMENT – RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMPLOYER

The world of work is different to university life but most students quickly adjust and gain an excellent insight into the working world. Many companies have established procedures for students on work experience and the placement runs smoothly. Students are required to dress professionally, turn up on time and use the correct chain of authority to discuss their progress.

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT, HOLIDAY AND OTHER ISSUES

Before the placement starts you need to have received an offer letter and/or contract of employment. Depending on placement length, you may be entitled to holiday leave, which the employer should explain. In addition, before commencing the placement, employers may require you to undergo security clearance checks and, where work includes access to children/vulnerable adults, checks will be made through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Each company will have its own set of procedures for dealing with problems or disciplinary matters, so you may request a copy. Your line manager or the company human resources team will be initial points of contact.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ON PLACEMENT

As part of its ‘Duty of Care’ to students, the University aims to ensure your health and safety during placement. Employers are asked to return an agreement on their responsibilities for the student, including health and safety.

Be careful and do not put yourself at risk. NB: If the work involves special qualifications (for example, driving company vehicles) it’s your responsibility to ensure that you meet the requirements in terms of training and documentation.

You should expect to receive health and safety information from your placement provider as part of your induction training. If you have any concerns about your health, safety or well-being while on placement, you should contact your tutor immediately.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

By law, most UK employers are required to have employers’ liability insurance cover in place. While you are on placement you are considered to be an ‘employee’ of the company, irrespective of whether it is paid or unpaid work. If you have decided to carry out a work placement which is not at the University, then your placement provider (employer) is responsible for providing the employers’ liability insurance – not the University.

The company may also hold public liability insurance which indemnifies the company against claims made by any visitors or customers.

If you decide to undertake a work placement abroad, you need to check if the placement provider has insurances in place to protect you while undertaking your placement. You will also need to check the country’s guidelines on insurance, as some countries do not require...
employers to have such insurance or may have insurance schemes in place which are similar but do not provide the same level of liability cover.

If your work placement provider does not have the necessary liability cover in place, speak to your placement tutor for further guidance.

It is important that you fully understand the duties you will be completing and the environment you will be working in. The risk profile within the Placement App will be able to guide you when considering the various factors when carrying out a work placement.

TRAVEL AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

For overseas placements the University’s travel insurance will provide travel and medical cover for students on placements of up to one year, though placements of over six months must be notified in advance to the insurance office at the University. If your work placement is in excess of one year, you will need to purchase your own independent cover. If you do this, you must ensure that the insurance provider knows you will be working, as some policies exclude any cover for this.

If you are seeking to gain work experience that is not part of your University course, you will not be covered by the University's travel insurance; in this case you should arrange your own cover.

Before you start to apply for work placements, it is important that you consider the location of your work placement. You should consult the Foreign Office and Drum Cussac’s RiskMonitor online platform, which will provide up to date travel information, security advice, alerts and risk profiles for regions and countries worldwide.

If Drum Cussac advises against travel, or lists the region as ‘high’ or ‘extreme’ risk then insurance will not be in place for your trip as it will not be possible to guarantee your safety or ensure that it will be possible to evacuate you in the event of an emergency.

To access drum Cussac please visit: https://www.drum-cussac.net/self-registration

Ultimately, if our insurers consider that the risk of travel is too high for your safety to be guaranteed then travel insurance may not be available; under these circumstances the placement will not be supported by the University. The safety and well-being of staff and students is the University's highest consideration and staff and students will not knowingly be put in potential danger.

For more information please refer to the university’s flow chart on qualifying for Travel Insurance and to the insurance portal pages. If you have any questions please contact your Placement Tutor or a member of Solent Futures at placements@solent.ac.uk. If you have any questions, please contact your placement tutor or a member of Solent Futures at placements@solent.ac.uk.
UK PLACEMENT – MEDICAL INSURANCE

If a placement is in the UK, then free medical treatment is available on the NHS, so you don’t need additional medical insurance as long as you are registered or have a National Insurance number. Overseas students on a UK placement should either be registered to receive NHS treatment or have taken out appropriate medical insurance prior to their arrival at the University.

OVERSEAS PLACEMENT – MEDICAL INSURANCE

For overseas placements all students will be covered under the University’s insurance as detailed in the summary. The policy is designed to cover students for work and study activities, but check that the policy also covers you for the range of leisure activities you may wish to participate in. In addition, EU students will require a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which you should carry with you. You can print the University’s Security and Medical Assistance card to take with you on your work placement.

CLAIMS PROCEDURE

To make an insurance claim, contact insurance@solent.ac.uk with details of the loss. Please note that in the event of a theft claim you must make a report to the local police within 24 hours of the loss and obtain a police report and crime number, and this should be in the country that you are in. A claim cannot be made without this. You will also need to provide proof of original ownership and receipts for high-value items; mobile phones are not insured. For medical expenses claims, please obtain copies of invoices from doctors or medical professionals.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at the placement is important and is expected by the employer and the University. Employers are requested to notify the University if there are any unexplained periods of absence. For any non-emergency absence, please arrange and agree this with your line manager in advance.

SICKNESS

Find out what the company’s policy on sickness notifications is. Normally you are expected to notify your line manager on the first day of absence.

Placement students should register with a local doctor if the work is away from their existing practice. A doctor’s certificate is not required for the first seven days of any illness and you should follow the employer’s procedures for this. Sickness-related absence would not normally affect accreditation of the unit, but you should inform the course team if sickness absence exceeds 10 working days.
ON PLACEMENT – RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY

ONGOING ENROLMENT AS A STUDENT

Students on placement are required to enrol as students at the University as usual and will receive information explaining this process. You need to contact the Student Hub if not.

Those who have resits or outstanding work are required to retake them at the earliest opportunity, in line with University policy.

STUDENTS ON A TIER 4 GENERAL STUDENT VISA

If you are on a Tier 4 visa you can take part in a work placement if it is counted towards an assessed unit on your course and does not take up more than one third or half of your course, depending on your level of study.

As your Tier 4 sponsor, Solent University is required to notify the Home Office if you will be carrying out a work placement. Therefore, it is essential that you log your placement on the University ‘Placement App’ prior to starting the placement; failure to do so could result in you breaking the work conditions attached to your visa.

As a Tier 4 sponsor, the University is required to monitor the attendance of Tier 4 students while you are undertaking a placement and will receive regular attendance reports from your placement provider. Unexplained absences could result in the University withdrawing your Tier 4 sponsorship and reporting this to the Home Office, who will curtail (cancel) your visa. Therefore, if you are unable to attend the placement for any reason, it is essential that you let your employer know as soon as possible and by 1pm on the day of absence at the very latest.

Please note, Tier 4 visa students are not permitted to be self-employed or engaged in business activity, which includes setting up a business, being employed for a company in which they hold shares of 10 per cent or more, or holding a statutory role, such as a director.

STUDENTS’ UNION MEMBERSHIP

Students are entitled to remain members of the Students’ Union (SU) while on placement. The NUS Extra Card is useful evidence of this when using reciprocal facilities at other colleges and in obtaining student discounts (more at www.nus.org.uk).

In addition, the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) can be purchased at the same time and can be used abroad as proof of student status.

SOLENT FUTURES ASSISTANCE

Solent Futures can help you with the application and interview process. Our drop in desk team can check your CV, linked in and provide interview tips and handy hints on where to start your search. We are open 11 – 4 Monday to Friday so please come in and see us. You can also check out our online resources and placement tutorial on Solent Futures Online.
ON PLACEMENT – RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY

ACCESS SOLENT – SUPPORTING DISABLED STUDENTS

This confidential service is designed to help disabled students achieve their academic potential, including while on placement. Early contact with Access Solent by students will help to ensure that appropriate support is in place – this includes advising employers.

Contact Access Solent on 023 8201 3201 or email access@solent.ac.uk.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Students on a 26-week placement or longer will still incur tuition fees. This includes students on a full-year industrial placement (standard sandwich year-out, NOT the Erasmus+ programme).

TUITION FEES, MAINTENANCE AND GRANTS

Students may be entitled to a loan or grant, depending upon circumstances, placement length and whether it is paid or unpaid. For more information, speak to a student funding adviser in the Student Hub, or call 023 8201 3427. Contact Student Finance England or your local authority for further information and application details.

2017/18 students studying abroad for a full academic year, who are in receipt of an Erasmus+ grant, will be required to pay the full University tuition fees.

COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

Students on placement will still be classed as students for council tax purposes. The Student Hub can provide a letter as proof of this. However, if a student is the owner or leaseholder of a property and one or more of the residents is not a full-time student, they may be liable for a proportional amount of council tax.

NATIONAL INSURANCE AND INCOME TAX

Students on placement in the UK earning over £100 per week (approximately) are likely to pay some National Insurance contributions and be subjected to income tax for any earnings that exceed personal allowances. Go to www.hmrc.gov.uk for more information.

SICK PAY

Almost all employees in the UK receive statutory sick pay if they are away from work owing to illness. If excluded from this because of ‘insufficient National Insurance contributions credited’, students may claim Sickness Benefit through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
ASSessment

Assessment may take the form of an individual learning contract, objectives, a reflective journal and gathering a portfolio of evidence. Students are required to ensure they have all the information relating to this.

Any assessment of the work experience is designed to encourage the student to:

• reflect upon the relationship between the work they do during their placement and concepts and theories discussed during their course

• evaluate their personal development during the placement.

• keep a diary or make a note of the projects, events and activities you are involved in

• list any resources you have developed and skills learnt.

COnTACT, VISIT AND VISITING TUTORS

You and your placement provider may receive contact from academic staff. This can take the form of a visit, email or phone call. It is your responsibility to liaise with your work supervisor so that he/she is available to meet University staff for 15 to 40 minutes to discuss your progress.

Remember to take the contact details of your course/unit leader at University.
5 THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. You are required to work in a field relevant to your course

2. It is up to you to find and secure a placement and it’s a good idea to start looking early!

3. You will need to register your details on the Placement App (including your risk assessment and employment documents) prior to starting your placement – top tip – leave enough time for your tutor and your employer to approve this.

4. Graduates are more likely to be in full-time paid work within six months of graduating if they have undertaken some form of work-based practice.

5. Remember Solent Futures is here to help – Come and visit us in RM001 between 11 – 4 or email placements@solent.ac.uk
Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this leaflet is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to print (March 2019). For the latest information, visit our website or get in touch.