INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

This handbook aims to help Solent University staff understand and manage the placement experience for students. We appreciate that this may sound formal in places, but it is intended to ensure that staff are fully aware of the legal, insurance, and health and safety requirements of a placement.

Please note that this handbook complements the information supplied to students, including their roles and responsibilities. You can view the Student Placement handbook on the portal.

The Solent Futures team is always happy to help and advise, if you have any queries or concerns. Please contact us on placements@solent.ac.uk

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 the course of study to satisfy the requirements of the unit.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SOLENT UNIVERSITY

• Provide information to the student on general health and safety prior to their placement.

• Provide specialist advice and guidance for students with additional support needs.

• Check that university placement procedures are being followed.

• Appoint a “contact” tutor(s) and establish dates of contact / visits as appropriate.

STUDENT

• Attend placement workshops at the University and familiarise themselves with all the relevant health and safety information provided.

• Abide by organisation guidelines regarding health and safety requirements, and other practices and procedures of the placement provider.

• Report any concerns about health and safety to the employers, including personal or health concerns or disabilities that may require adjustments.

• Report any accidents or near misses in the workplace to their employer.

• Consult with the University prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement.

EMPLOYER

• Plan the work or study programme and associated health and safety training to be undertaken by the student.

• Provide the student with a full and clear induction to the organisation and its working practices, including health and safety arrangements.

• Undertake a risk assessment to identify any potential risks/ hazards associated with the student’s placement and to ensure that adequate controls will be put in place to address these risks.

• Nominate a supervisor who will conduct or make arrangements for day-to-day supervision of the student.

• Comply with the appropriate country’s health and safety legislation.

• Facilitate access to the student for up to two contacts by the visiting tutor as appropriate.

• Ensure that appropriate employer and public liability insurance are in place.

• Promptly inform Solent University of any serious accidents which involve medical treatment that goes beyond first aid, or advise Solent University of incidents relating to breaches of discipline by the student.

• Advise the University promptly of any unexplained periods of non-attendance.
## Work Placement Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation sessions are delivered to students, including expectation of work placement, working abroad, and health and safety.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When the student is offered a placement, the student completes the Placement App online which then needs to be submitted to the placement tutor for approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The placement tutor is notified of the placement via email. Information is reviewed on the Placement App, including a thorough review of the risk profile and evidence of the placement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The placement tutor accepts or rejects the placement via App. Communication can be made via the Placement App: for example, the student may not have completed the risk profile in detail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If the tutor approves the placement, an automated email is sent to the placement provider asking them to confirm their role and responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Once the employer confirms their responsibilities, the placement is then approved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>An email is sent to the student advising that the placement has been approved.</td>
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The world of work is different to university life and students may not have worked in professional employment or in an industry that is linked to their course. It is vital, therefore, that the students are offered preparation sessions to help them adjust to the working environment.

Courses which offer work placement units should, in addition, support students with the tools to find a work placement. Although the University does not find students work placements, we can offer support and advice to secure a placement. We recommend that all courses which offer work placement units, should timetable sessions to help prepare their students for work placements.

These sessions could include:

- where and how to find work placements
- advice on CVs and applications – including LinkedIn
- expectations for work placements, including health and safety preparation and briefing of risk profiles (see pages 10 to 15).

In addition to timetabled placement sessions, students can access a number of resources to support their search and preparation for placement.

Solent Futures offers career guidance appointments, or students can attend the Advice Desk, based in RM001, to speak to a member of staff.

Students can get Online placement support via Solent Futures Online. This includes placement handbooks and the placement tutorial.
ON PLACEMENT ENROLMENT

PLACEMENT APP

Once the student has successfully obtained a placement, the student must enrol using the Placement App on the Portal. All tabs of the App need to be completed and required documents must be uploaded.

The student will need to complete the following on the App:

Student details
• Student to upload details and a contact name in case of emergencies
• Course and tutor

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

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

Click to submit all uploaded information

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FROM THE PLACEMENT PROVIDER

The employer should send a copy of the offer letter or contract to the student. A phone call alone will not suffice.

The University requires an official confirmation of the placement within a headed letter that includes the company logo and contact details. There are some occasions where an email from an employer sent from a legitimate company email address, which includes details of the placement, hours, days, and job description, will be sufficient.
DUTY OF CARE

The placement tutor is responsible for ensuring that the placement is appropriate for the student. The placement provider undertakes responsibility for the student’s safety while on placement. Nonetheless, the University has a duty of care to its students when they are on work placement. It is therefore vital that students are prepared for their work placement and that a thorough risk assessment has been completed before they start.

Ultimately, it is the placement tutor’s responsibility to ensure that the student is fully prepared for their placement. It is essential, therefore, that placement tutors deliver placement preparation sessions, which must include health and safety on placement.

These sessions should include information relating to:
- H&S considerations for students undertaking their placement abroad
- insurance requirements for placements in the UK and abroad
- how to complete the risk profile on the Placement App, including examples of high, medium and low risks for each category.

The following pages will provide ample information to enable you to help your students prepare for placement.

ACCESS SOLENT

Students with personal factors (for example, health, disability, language or culture) may require specific workplace adjustments or support, and should have equivalent opportunities in choice of placements. You should work with placement providers to ensure that access and support requirements will be provided for the student when on placement.

The University encourages students to make disability disclosures where this may impact on study, including work placements. The impact may be different in a work placement environment compared to the student’s current experience on their course.

Access Solent can provide advice and guidance about disability-related support at the University and on placement. Access Solent can set up academic support for the following:
- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, AD(H)D)
- Mental health conditions (e.g. anxiety, depression, eating disorders)
- Long-term or chronic medical conditions (e.g. chronic pain, epilepsy, ME, HIV, diabetes)
- Physical or sensory impairments (e.g. brain injury, partial sight, cerebral palsy)
- Autism spectrum conditions (e.g. Asperger syndrome).

If you or your students require further information, please contact Access Solent at access@solent.ac.uk
A growing number of students are undertaking work placements abroad. Students may arrange these placements with employers directly or through a third party. For placements abroad, we advise that the placement cannot be determined as ‘low risk’ on the risk profile. Therefore, students travelling abroad to work must assess all aspects of the risk profile and give details.

To help prepare your students for working abroad, we recommend that the following topics are taken into consideration.

**Travel arrangements**
- Students should pre-arrange their flights and transfers to and from the placement location. They should be clear about where they are going to and ensure that they have plenty of time to make any connection journeys!
- Accommodation – students should ensure that they have suitable accommodation booked before departing.
- Bear in mind the effects of long-haul travel (jet-lag, fatigue) and how to avoid them.

**Personal safety**
- Students should research the area they are travelling to prior to departure, and avoid ‘no-go’ areas and areas of high crime.
- Safe use of public transport, taxis, etc. – where possible, students should only use registered taxis/buses and should pre-book taxis if necessary.

**Climatic conditions**
- Students should consider the climate of the area they are travelling to (e.g. higher temperatures, monsoon seasons, arid conditions, extreme winter conditions) and pack accordingly.

**Health risks and vaccinations**
- Venomous animals and insects
- Contagious diseases
- Students can refer to the NHS Fit for Travel website for vaccination information for every country, and check that their vaccinations are up-to-date.
- Students should avoid consuming contaminated drinking water and food. For some countries it may be advisable to drink bottled water only.
- Students will need to apply for an EHIC card online.

**Cultural differences**
- Other countries may live by different customs and/or speak another language. To avoid causing offence to locals or breaking the law, it is advisable that students familiarise themselves with the ‘cultural norms’ of their placement country, such as the following:
  - Accepted behaviour
  - Local laws and religions
  - Dress codes
  - Alcohol use.

**Obtaining medical or other emergency assistance**
- Local healthcare arrangements and contact number(s) of local emergency services.
Insurance is a transfer of risk between the policy holder and the insurance company by paying for the provision of professional support and financial recompense if things go wrong. Wordings and compulsory insurances vary from country to country.

**LIABILITY INSURANCE IN THE UK**

Within the UK it is compulsory to hold employers’ liability insurance. There are some exemptions to this and Sole traders will often not need this cover please be aware that for placements deemed Medium to High risk we will require sole traders to hold Employers Liability cover for the duration of a UK placement. This is not the case in all countries, and in some instances the insurance cover may in fact be wider to include personal accident insurance, for example.

While the student is on placement they are considered to be an ‘employee’ of the company, irrespective of whether the work is paid or unpaid. If your student undertakes a placement which is not at the University, then the placement provider (employer) – not the University- is responsible for providing liability insurance.

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

**LIABILITY INSURANCE ABROAD**

If your student decides to undertake a work placement abroad, they will need to check if the placement provider has appropriate insurance in place to protect them while undertaking their placement. The student will also need to check the country’s guidelines on insurance. Some countries do not require businesses to have such insurance, or may have insurance schemes in place which are similar but do not provide the same level of liability cover.

It is essential that the student includes the details of liability insurance in the risk profile. If the placement provider does not offer this, the student must notify you.

If the placement provider does not have the necessary liability cover in place, speak with the insurance team at the University, who will be able to offer assistance.

**EMPLOYERS’ LIABILITY VERSUS PUBLIC LIABILITY – WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?**

Insurers provide cover for businesses’ legal liabilities by issuing:

• employers’ liability: covers employers for financial awards made against them following the company’s proven negligence in causing injury or disease to people they employ

• public liability: covers businesses for financial awards made against them following injury, disease or damage to people they do not employ, for example, visitors and customers.
The University's travel insurance will provide travel and medical insurance for students on placements of up to one year. Placements of over six months must be notified in advance to the insurance office at the University. If the work placement is in excess of one year, the student will need to purchase their own independent cover. If the student does this, they must ensure that the insurance provider knows that they will be working, as some policies exclude any cover for this.

If the student is seeking to gain work experience that is not formally part of their course, they will not be covered by the University’s travel insurance and should arrange their own cover.

Before your students start to apply for work placements, it is important that you consider the potential location of their work placement. You should consult the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the University's appropriate Travel App prior to deciding on the location of their placement.

If the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the insurance provider advise against travel, then the student must reconsider their placement location. Insurers will not normally permit travel in these circumstances as it is not possible to guarantee that the student can be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

The student’s safety is our greatest concern. If the work placement is planned in a country where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has raised concerns but not advised against travel, then the student must include this information in the risk profile section of the Placement App, and this must be approved by the placement tutor and/ or the Director of School or Service as appropriate.

Ultimately, if our insurers consider that the risk of travel is too high for the student’s 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 wellbeing 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. If you have any questions, please contact the insurance team at the University.
RISK PROFILE

The Placement App allows students to create a risk profile, which enables them to reflect on where they will be working and the risks of carrying out a placement. It is therefore essential that students complete the risk profile.

The student will need to assess the level of risk of their placement - low, medium or high- and provide a brief explanation as to why it has been assessed as the chosen level. With medium or high risks, students will need to give an explanation as to why it has been deemed as this risk level and include actions to reduce the risk. It is important that this section is assessed fully. If you believe that the risk should be reviewed, do not approve the placement until this has been rectified.

As the placement tutor, it is your responsibility to review the student’s placement duties and risk profile on the App. It is important that this section is scrutinised and only approved if you believe that the student has a full understanding of the risks of their placement and that this has been assessed thoroughly before approval.

The App enables you to send a comment to the student and reject the placement. We strongly recommend that you discuss with the student why you have rejected the placement and support their completion of the risk profile. If, following an update to the risk profile, you still believe that the work placement is not suitable as regards the student’s safety, you must reject the placement.

If you have any concerns about the health and safety of your student’s placement, please contact the health and safety team, who will be able to advise you.
EXPLANATION OF RISK PROFILES

WORK AND/ OR STUDY FACTORS

These relate to the placement provider and to the work that the student will be carrying out. They include the nature of the work-based hazards to which the student may be exposed. Control measures may include thorough training, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), and/or the professional knowledge and expertise of the student.

High
• Potential risk that may cause permanent injury, including working at height, manual handling and/or working with/maintaining electrical systems, operating manufacturing plant or equipment such as weights, ropes or moving parts.
• Working with vulnerable groups of people or location, (e.g. vulnerable adults, children).
• Activities that need specific licences or qualifications, (e.g. diving, security, REPS, coaching, SIA).
• Work involving significant risks in small companies that do not have professional health and safety advice, (e.g. gym instructor, sailing instructor, fitness and personal trainer, coach).

Medium
• Working close to the above high-risk factors, but not directly with them, (e.g. events assistant, event co-ordinator, working at home, wedding planning assistant).

Low
• Office work or other low hazard (risk) environments and activities, (e.g. marketing assistant, web developer, retail systems consultant, assistant account manager, office-based events coordinator).

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION FACTORS

Driving and travel, while carrying out the business of the placement provider, can be a risk. Placements do not just involve the work carried out for the placement provider. Depending on the nature and location of the placement, the student may face significant health, safety and welfare issues associated with their travel to and from the placement and to and from their accommodation.

High
• Significant travel to the building where the placement is based or travel on public transport facilities known to be high risk (e.g. abroad or unknown).
• Placement requires students to drive other people in unfamiliar vehicles (e.g. minibus of school children).

Medium
• Night travel or long daily commuting required (one hour or more).
• If students are driving for business-related purposes (i.e. not commuting, but driving between business sites, for example), then they will need to have ‘business use’ on their personal motor insurance.

Low
• No significant travel, comfortable daily commute (less than an hour on known roads).
• No driving associated with placement.
LOCATION AND/OR REGIONAL FACTORS

The location of the placement can have considerable impact, particularly if it is abroad in a country that the student is not acquainted with and where the culture and customs are very different to the UK. This could also apply to international students enrolled at the University and going on placement in the UK.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel pages provide security cautions and specific warnings which can help you determine the risk level of the placement location/region. The student should refer to the FCO before selecting the relevant risk level, and again before they depart for their placement.

High
• Significant risk of danger in the area – e.g. placement in war zones, or any countries/regions where the FCO advises against travel. These examples are considered extreme. The University will not be able to support these placements and we strongly advise against travel.
• Locations where the student can expect that the majority of their work and communication will be in a language that they are not fluent in.
• Lone or remote working where local infrastructure is underdeveloped, so transport, medical and rescue services are not available quickly or locally.

Medium
• Placements abroad (including inside the EU) should be medium risk, unless the location is determined as high risk.
• Higher than normal risk of civil disorder, crime or comparable danger.
• Delays likely in communicating with tutors and others – (e.g. due to lack of communications/connections, mobile network coverage and Wi-Fi).
• Locations which have different cultures and customs to the UK, (e.g. appropriate behaviour, dress codes, religion, etc).

Low
• Placements in the UK with no significant local risks.
EXPLANATION OF RISK PROFILES

GENERAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FACTORS

The student may face significant health, safety and welfare issues associated with the environmental conditions in their place of work, including the general location, manual work, their accommodation, or their food and drink.

High
• Regional/local health risks require specific health protection measures (e.g. vaccinations).
• Very hot /cold or strenuous working conditions (e.g. manual working, working outside or in the sun).

Medium
• Regional/local conditions require some action (e.g. optional vaccinations)
• Occasional working outside.

Low
• No significant environmental health risks.

PERSONAL STUDENT FACTORS

Each student is an individual. Their health, their knowledge, skills and experience, and their personality could have an impact on health and safety in particular environments, and on their ability to benefit from a placement.

High
• The student has personal risk factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or cultural) which may result in absence or illness/accidents, or episodes of illness during their placement, after adjustments have already been made to the workplace. This may include disability-related needs.
• The student’s knowledge, skills and understanding are unsuitable for this type of work.

Medium
• If the student has personal factors which may require specific adjustments or support during the placement (e.g. disability, homesickness). This may include disability-related needs.

Low
• The student has no known long-term medical conditions or disability.
• The student has relevant knowledge, understanding and skills for this type of work.
INSURANCE LIMITATIONS

An assessment of the extent and limitations of the insurance arrangements of both the University and the placement provider, the contractual arrangements in place and the legal requirements in the country or countries where the placement will take place should be made by both you and the student prior to approving the placement.

It is useful to distinguish between issues that can be resolved by the University and issues that are specific to a particular placement.

The risk assessment for each placement must take into account the individual circumstances, and these will vary tremendously from placement to placement. There cannot be a definitive list of high-medium- and low-risk factors, but the following provides indications of what will generally fall into each category.

High

• Locations, activities and/or circumstances that are excluded from the University’s travel and other insurance cover. Please check with the insurance team: insurance@solent.ac.uk
• Locations where the placement provider does not hold employers liability insurance or their country’s equivalent.
• Placements where the placement provider’s insurance does not cover the student for personal/third party liability associated with the work undertaken. (please ask the placement provider).

Medium

• Locations, activities and/or circumstances that require prior acceptance from the University’s insurers before being covered.

Low

• Locations and activities that are included in the University’s insurance (please check with the insurance office: insurance@solent.ac.uk).
• UK locations (where the placement provider will normally hold employers liability insurance cover).
Students on a Tier 4 (General) visa are permitted to take part in a work placement, provided it is an integral and assessed part of their course and the placement does not exceed 50 per cent of their overall course.

International students from outside the EEA are sponsored by Solent University and are subject to immigration control under the Tier 4 (General) immigration rules. As a Tier 4 sponsor, Solent University is required to notify the Home Office if a Tier 4 visa student will be carrying out a work placement. Therefore, it is essential that students log their placement on the University Placement App prior to starting the placement. Failure to do so could result in them breaking the work conditions attached to their visa. It is the student’s responsibility to report their placement via the Placement App, with reminders from academics being greatly appreciated.

**Please note:** if the work is not an integral and assessed part of the student’s course, this would not be regarded by the Home Office as a work placement, but would instead be regarded as work experience, which Tier 4 students are not permitted to miss scheduled classes to undertake. Students undertaking work experience should ensure that they are doing so within the work conditions of their visa. The international support team in Students 1st can advise students appropriately.

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 by a company in which they hold shares of 10 per cent or more, or holding a statutory role, such as a director.

If you have any questions about Tier 4 students and work placements, please contact the UKVI Compliance Manager, Andy Carre: andy.carre@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.