

**Student placements and other vocational opportunities during studies**

**Health and safety guidance**

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**1.0 Purpose of the guidance**

This guidance provides academic schools with principles that can be adopted to manage the health and safety risks arising out of students going onto placement and other vocational opportunities required by, or useful to their studies.

It sets out reasonably practicable actions to: -

* Secure clear understanding of statutory and common law duties of care in placement situations and other vocational opportunities;
* Ensure the university fulfils its duties of care towards its students in terms of ahead, during and post-placement or other vocational opportunity; and
* Empower students to question their placement providers or similar in respect of health and safety, also being a component part of the health and safety monitoring process.

**2.0 Health and safety risks**

The following are viewed as the main areas of health and safety risk associated with student placements and other vocational opportunities: -

* Injury or ill health to a student arising out of activities being undertaken on behalf of the placement provider or similar third party;
* Injury or ill health to a student or others (e.g. placement provider’s employees) arising from the student’s own actions whilst on placement or vocational opportunity;
* Injury or ill health to a student not arising from an actual placement or similar activity but as a consequence of being on placement etc. (e.g. an incident during the student’s own time whilst undertaking an overseas placement); and
* Injury or ill health to university staff during placement or similar visits.

**3.0 Health and safety responsibilities, criminal and civil law liabilities**

These primarily reside with the provider of the placement or other vocational opportunity (i.e. whenever the student is undertaking activities, on premises etc. that fall under that provider’s control).

Students have a responsibility to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions whilst on placement or similar.

Liabilities against the university could arise from: -

* Civil liability for injury or ill health to students whilst on placement, including reasonably foreseeable risks outside of placement activities;
* Civil liability for loss, injury or ill health arising out of the negligent actions of students;
* Limited statutory liability for injury or ill health to students whilst on placement; and
* Statutory and civil liabilities arising out the health and safety risks to members of staff during placement visits.

**4.0 Sensible health and safety risk management**

Figure 1 illustrates the aspects that are viewed as being integral to sensible health and safety risk management as this relates to placements and similar vocational opportunities:



Figure 1: Aspects integral to sensible health and safety risk management and placement opportunities

**5.0 Health and safety risk management process for student placements**

Figure 2 illustrates the health and safety risk management steps involved from placement conception through to completion.

The coloured-coding assigned to the process indicates where the respective placement:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Green** | Progresses without health and safety issue |
| **Orange** | Health and safety issue encountered and how this is potentially progressed including to satisfactory outcome |
| **Red** | The health and safety issue encountered warrants the placement not going ahead or being cancelled  |

The process should be read in conjunction with the explanatory notes for each of the respective steps.

The process applies to placements forming part of an individual degree programme, whether continuous (e.g. an academic year) or periodic that contribute towards successfully completing that degree. The university’s Professional Experience Programme (PEP) or short-term vocational opportunities **do not fall** under this process.

****Figure 2: Health and safety risk management process – placement conception to completion

**Figure 2 – explanatory notes**

1. Any placement that is part of a student’s course is subject to this process to ensure the university takes all reasonable steps to fulfil its applicable statutory and common law duties of care.

If a placement is self-generated, the student must advise their placement tutor, the school’s placement unit or organiser etc. before that placement goes ahead. Failure to do so will result in the placement not being accepted. [Appendix A](#AppA) can be used to advise students of the overall placement process.

If the placement will involve the student acting in a self-employed capacity, that placement will **only be accepted** if it falls under the university’s [Enterprise Placement Year](https://students.hud.ac.uk/enterprise/enterpriseplacementyear/) (EPY) scheme.

1. At an initial stage health and safety-related aspects that could deem the prospective placement as NOT suitable can include: -
* Previous issues with the particular provider that were not resolved to the university’s satisfaction;
* An overseas placement where the governement’s [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) is advising AGAINST all but essential or all travel to the particular country or region of that country;
* Becoming aware the prospective provider has a poor health and safety record (e.g. repeated breaches of health and safety legislation). The Health and Safety Executive’s [register of prosecutions and enforcement notices](https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/convictions.htm) can be a source of verification; and
* Student having a disability or illness that increases risk to them or others which the prospective provider feels cannot be reasonably managed.
1. The prospective provider must indicate its acceptance of the university’s health and safety expectations. These for, form part of the overall placement agreement form.

These are expectations are the provider will: -

* + Comply with all relevant health and safety legislation;
	+ Provide the student with an induction in the workplace health and safety arrangements, including fire precautions, specific hazards and health and safety precautions;
	+ Include the student in the risk assessment programme as it affects activities undertaken by them.
	+ Provide appropriate instruction and training in working practices and in the particular control measures identified in the risk assessments;
	+ Facilitate any visits to the student undertaken by university staff during the placement;
	+ Provide on-going supervision and training for the student in the performance of their duties;
	+ Notify the university immediately of accidents, injuries or incidents involving the Student that the Provider is made aware of;
	+ Cooperate with the university as far as is necessary where the university is following up on health and safety issues that are raised; and
	+ Ensure that insurance is in place to cover liability for any injuries or ill health sustained by the student that is attributable to their activities on placement during the placement period.
1. In addition to direct discussion with the prospective provider on issue with the health and safety element of the placement agreement form, advice may also need to be sought from personnel within the university (e.g. Office of Health and Safety, Financial Services for insurance-related aspects).
2. As part of the agreement the unviersity commits to ensuring its students are prepared, including the general health and safety aspects of placements. The preparation will be general in nature and not specific to work activities and environments asscociated with indivdual placements. It can be through: -
* The issuing of a guidance (Appendix B provides suggested content);
* Delivering a short group briefing session at which attendance is recorded – here is the link to a suggested [PowerPoint presentation](http://halo.hud.ac.uk/UoHDocumentSearch/DocSearch.aspx?DocRef=002351064) that can be utilised as part of any briefing; and
* One-to-one or smaller-sized group discussions, this having greater relevance to overseas placements (Appendix C provides guidance on the specific aspects of overseas placement that should be covered).
1. Monitoring for health and safety during the placement can include: -
* Regular feedback from the student;
* Feedback from the placement provider;
* Observations and discussions during periodic tutor visits; and
* Other periodic contact with the student.
1. Health and safety issues that arise during the placement can include: -
* Concerns raised by the student (e.g. lack of information and training);
* Concerns raised by the placement provider (e.g. student failing to observe their health and safety responsibilities);
* Observations during placement visits (e.g. unsafe working conditions or practices); and
* Following receipt of an incident report involving the student (the [university’s web-based incident reporting system](http://www2.hud.ac.uk/has/incident_report.php) can be utilised as a means of ensuring the university is aware as quickly as possible).

Follow up to health and safety issues that arise during the placement must be timely and proportionate. Whilst this will typically involve discussions with both the student and the placement provider, advice may need to be sought from personnel within the university (e.g. Office of Health and Safety).

1. Incorporating health and safety ino the review mechanisms for individual placements will assist in determining suitability for future use. Review mechanisms can include: feedback from the student, placement provider and placement tutor; and the level of cooperation by the provider during the placement process.

### Appendix A: information for the students on the health and safety aspects of placements

Going on placement is an integral and important part of your studies. However, there is a necessary process to be undertaken to ensure whilst on the placement your health and safety is protected. This process applies to all placements whether in the UK or overseas.

Primary responsibility rests with the third party providing your placement

If you have identified a placement and begun the process of confirming with your placement provider, immediately inform your placement organiser at the university so the health and safety process detailed below can be carried out.

**The university will not accept a placement as part of a course until it has successfully completed the initial ‘approval’ aspects of the process**.

The process will follow these steps: -

* An initial assessment of the suitability of the proposed placement from a health and safety perspective will be made.
* The university will convey its health and safety expectations to your prospective placement provider and request it provides written acceptance of these.
* If the prospective placement provider informs it cannot meet these expectations further discussions will take place to resolve this to the university’s satisfaction from a health and safety perspective.
* **You** should consider informing the placement unit of **any** health issues, including any disability, which may affect your health and safety whilst on placement. This will permit the university to liaise with your prospective placement provider to consider any reasonable adjustments which may be required to ensure your health and safety and that of others during the placement.
* The placement provider is responsible for ensuring you’re provided with the necessary information, instruction and training on commencement and during the placement.
* Whilst on placement, if you have any concerns regarding your health and safety **you** must inform your placement unit as soon as possible. Also advise your placement tutor of the concerns you’ve raised.
* Whilst on placement you must adhere to the health and safety arrangements, policies and procedures of your provider.
* When the placement ends your tutor or placement unit will ask for some feedback to ascertain whether the placement is suitable for other students.

**Appendix B: Health and safety guidance for students going onto placement**

1. **Introduction**

Placements provide an opportunity for you to apply skills and knowledge acquired whilst at university to ‘real-life’ situations. Many attributes can also be learned and developed during a placement that could improve your employment prospects.

There are health and safety aspects to every placement, namely: -

1. Being under the supervision of a third party;
2. Being involved with, or undertaking, activities where you have little or no experience; and
3. Working in and visiting environments and locations that you are unfamiliar with.

This guidance provides you with awareness on the health and safety aspects of placements. It’s important to remember **you have a vested interest – it’s your health, it’s your safety.**

1. **Health and safety responsibilities**

Over the period of a placement the following health and safety responsibilities are applied:

* 1. **Placement providers – organisations providing placements**
1. A general duty to ensure your health and safety whilst on placement;
2. Take account of your potential inexperience for activities you’ll be expected to undertake and put into place appropriate controls; and
3. Provide you with information, instruction, training and supervision including an induction.
	1. **Students**
4. Not to do anything that puts your or other people’s health and safety at risk;
5. Follow health and safety instructions, information and training;
6. Never intentionally misuse equipment or anything provided for health and safety reasons; and
7. Bring any health and safety concerns to the attention of your placement provider and your placement tutor or unit at the university as soon as possible. **Do not wait for their next visit or contact with you.**
8. **Placement preparation**

There are many aspects to placements that you have to prepare for, health and safety included. It is important you: -

1. Attend briefings prior to placements commencing as health and safety will be covered; and
2. Familiarise yourself with the health and safety aspects of placements, particularly your and your placement provider’s responsibilities, and the training and support you should receive particularly in the initial period.
3. **Information, instruction, training and supervision**

These form the ‘backbone’ of ensuring your health and safety whilst on placement and can include: delivery in classroom-type situations or through virtual platforms; health and safety notices and signs; safe working procedures and protocols.

On starting a placement you must receive a health and safety induction. If you do not receive an induction then raise this with your placement provider. Checklist A provides guidance on the health and safety aspects that should be included as part of your induction.

1. **Emergency information**

Whilst on placement it is essential that you receive information and instruction on what action to take should an emergency situation arise. Such situations include: -

1. Hearing the fire alarm;
2. Discovering a fire;
3. Requiring first aid assistance;
4. A threat to personal safety; and
5. Accident release or spillage of a dangerous substance.

If you are not made aware of what correct actions to take raise this with your placement provider. Such information must be given at the induction stage and where a change of work location or activity occurs.

1. **Assessing and managing health and safety risks**

Your placement provider will assess the risks encountered with the activities you will be involved with and put into place measures to control these risks. Such measures may be no different to those already in place for any of their employees. However, because of your potential inexperience, or other factors, a higher level of measure may be required, especially in the early periods of the placement.

Measures to control risks can include: -

1. Providing information, instruction, training and supervision;
2. Having in place guarding, ventilation systems etc. to control risks at source;
3. Ensuring equipment used is appropriate and in safe condition; and
4. Providing, and ensuring the use of, personal protective equipment and clothing.

It is important that you are made aware of the risks associated with the activities you will be involved with and what is in place and required of you to control these.

As your placement progresses so will the information, instruction and training you receive. Never undertake an activity or go into an area unless you have received appropriate information, instruction and training for you to feel competent and confident to carry on.

Levels of supervision will vary from placement-to-placement and at points within a particular placement. Don’t be afraid to ask questions of your supervisor and if you feel there is a lack of supervision then raise this concern.

1. **Personal protective equipment**

An element of managing health and safety risks may be the use or wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE encompasses goggles, hard hats, ear defenders, face masks, overalls, gloves, waterproof clothing etc.

If you are issued with PPE it’s important you are made aware of: -

1. The reason the PPE is required;
2. How to ensure a proper fit so the PPE work effectively; and
3. How to maintain, store the PPE, recognise any defects and the action to take including obtaining replacements.

If you believe an item of PPE is defective do not continue to use it. Ask your placement provider for information on its correct operation and adjustment, and how to obtain replacements if required. Do not carry out activities without the correct PPE.

1. **Reporting health and safety incidents**

It is important that you report health and safety incidents you are involved in whether injury has resulted or not. This enables your placement provider to investigate the circumstances and take any necessary action. Reporting no injury incidents – often referred to as ‘near misses’ - could ensure nobody is injured next time. At induction you must be made aware of your provider’s reporting procedures.

Any health and safety incidents you are involved in should also be notified to the university through your placement tutor. This enables the university to liaise with your placement provider to be assured the necessary follow up actions have been taken.

1. **Raising health and safety concerns**

If you do have any health and safety concerns during your placement the first action is to raise these with your placement provider. Where you believe these concerns are serious also make your placement tutor aware. Don’t wait to the next scheduled visit or conversation.

Never undertake an activity, using equipment or go into an area unless you are competent and confident to do so.

1. **Working from home**

A significant outcome from the coronavirus situation has been the move to working from home. Whether for reasons associated with coronavirus or the nature of your placement role, where this involves working from home your provider retains health and safety duties of care towards you. These are primarily based around: -

1. The suitability of your workstation set-up within your home working environment; and
2. Maintaining regular contact to ensure your on-going physical and mental wellbeing.

You continue to also have a responsibility for ensuring your own physical and mental wellbeing within your home working environment. It’s important you play your role in maintaining the regular contact with your placement provider, raising any concerns and you continue to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

Checklist B provides guidance on the heath and safety-related areas of working from home that you and your placement provider will need to consider.

1. **Monitoring and feedback**

You are an essential element in the monitoring of health and safety performance of your placement provider. Ensure you discuss health and safety aspects with your placement tutor and complete any feedback that is requested of you.

At the end of your placement give thoughts on how you feel the placement provider approached health and safety. This information is very useful to the institution as a means of reviewing the health and safety arrangements of the placement provider and deciding whether or not the placement is suitable for other students*.*

1. **Overseas placements**

Whilst types of work and activities undertaken during overseas placements may vary from country-to-country there are also other aspects that can have potential health and safety implications. Throughout your placement, including during your own time, these aspects are but are not limited to: -

1. Any restrictions on travel to the country or specific area and returning to the UK;
2. Long-haul travel and effect on the body (e.g. jetlag, difference in local hours);
3. Unfamiliarity with, and little knowledge of, placement locations and surrounding areas (e.g. personal safety, no-go areas, areas of high crime, safe use of transport);
4. Different climatic conditions (e.g. higher temperatures, more extreme winters);
5. Contracting illnesses, receiving injuries, accessing medical treatment and having the necessary insurance covers in place (e.g. vaccinations for contagious diseases and venomous animals, contaminated drinking water, local health care arrangements, contacting emergency services); and
6. Cultural and language differences (e.g. religious practices, LGBT-related laws or attitudes, accepted behaviours, communication more difficult).

It is important that prior to undertaking a placement overseas you discuss the necessary arrangements that need to be in place and what you require to do in preparation. This will include: -

1. You are in possession of the card detailing the university’s travel insurance cover;
2. You have received the required inoculations for the country of destination;
3. Any medication requirements you have;
4. Any additional travel insurance you may have
5. Signing up to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel alerts service
6. Registering with the UK government’s embassy at the country of destination; and
7. Through the student portal ensuring your and your next of kin/emergency contact details are up to date.

The government’s FCDO travel advice website is an important information resource:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>



