

Placements Policy - Version 1

Key requirements:

- All placements must be risk assessed.
- Any risk assessments completed by the placement provider (third party) for the placement must be validated.

Definition

Down time. Any significant time occurring during the placement where the person travelling is not working or travelling: essentially a period of personal leave within the University business. For example, most placements will involve work Monday to Friday and the weekends would be considered down time if no business activities were planned.

Third Party. This is the organisation outside the University who is offering the placement to the student.

More information on planning placements can be found at Appendix 1. This is guidance and indicates the suggested way to compliantly operate placements. Alternative processes can be used but these must be comparable in terms of the level of control and risk management.

1 All placements must be risk assessed.

Those arranging placements must ensure that the risk associated with the travel, work while on placement, and any reasonably expected down-time are considered.

Where the University is responsible for providing the risk assessment, this should be completed by the student and the department organising the placement.

Some placements may be organised with, or through, a third party. In such cases the University remains ultimately responsible for the student and for the elements of the placement that we are facilitating. A risk assessment may be provided by the third party, as covered in the requirement below, and could form part of another document, such as the tripartite agreement.

Further considerations include:

- How much influence the University has over the provider – how much assurance do we have that students will be safe
- The nature of the relationship between the placement provider and the University
- The duration – a week, a term or a year?
- Whether it is a work experience, study, voluntary, or mandatory work placement.
- For study placements, will the student be taking taught courses at a recognised partner university, or undertaking independent academic research?
- Does the placement occur in the UK or abroad? If abroad, what is the risk level for travel?

- Is the placement a requirement of registration with a professional body e.g. Department of Social Work placements.
- Whether there is central support available for the arrangement of the placement (e.g. the international exchange study placements facilitated by Academic Skills).

Guidance to assist with this decision making is provided at Appendixes 1 to 3; these are generic documents and may not be suitable for every placement type.

2 Any third-party risk assessments for placements must be validated.

As a rule, for medium or high-risk placements, this validation would be completed by a Health and Safety Coordinator or member of the Health and Safety Office, with any local deviation formally captured. For example, for academic placements in a specialist area, such as with the NHS, the course tutor may be responsible. This would be covered in the local policy covered under Requirement 7 below.

For low-risk placements such as for the Business School, the Placement Officer may validate the risk assessments.

Any third-party risk assessment must be checked to ensure that it is suitable and sufficient. Where there are issues or concerns, these should be raised with the third-party. If agreement for them to implement additional controls cannot be reached, then another risk assessment must be created by the University to cover any gaps – if this cannot be achieved then the placement cannot proceed.

This process may be carried out for individual placements or groups of placements where all the elements are the same.

3 All placements must be authorised.

The level of authorisation will depend on the nature and risk associated with the placement. In general, a similar level for travel would be appropriate, with Heads of Department / Directors of Professional Services responsible for routine placements and Faculty Deans or Professional Services Leads responsible for any that are higher risk. The authorisation process would be covered in the local policy covered under Requirement 7 below.

Faculties or Divisions may delegate authorisation to members of staff, this may include signing a Learning Agreement on behalf of the University.

This process may be carried out for individual placements or groups of placements where all the elements are the same.

4 All placements must have appropriate emergency procedures in place.

The level of detail will depend on the type of placement and would generally be captured in the risk assessment. For students studying overseas this may just require confirming that they must make themselves aware of the procedures at the location they are studying as well as requesting they inform us in the event of any incident.

For occupational placements this should describe any arrangements for scenarios such as terrorist attack, travel disruption, severe weather, serious injury response and if applicable personal security, evacuation and repatriation plans. This could be a procedure covering the site or organisation or one for those attending the placement; the latter may be necessary where providers cannot share their local policies and procedures for security reasons.

5 The limits of University's responsibility must be clearly communicated to students, as must their responsibilities in terms of insurance and risk management.

Many placements will include down time, and this may even be the element that is most attractive in terms of the student experience. However, the University will not be responsible for the student during these periods.

Those managing placements must inform students clearly what elements the University is responsible for and what elements are the student's responsibility, such as vaccinations, visa, licences etc. Particularly for overseas placements, the student may want to travel, and it must be made clear that this occurs outside of the remit of the University.

6 Students conducting placements overseas must be provided information to allow self-management of risk.

While the University does not have responsibility for students in their down time, appropriate information must be provided to allow them to manage this risk themselves. This may be completed through a briefing and the provision of resources, including signposting to online sources of information.

7 Faculties or Directorates organising or facilitating placements must have suitable local policies, processes, or procedures in place to ensure their safe operation.

Placements encompass a wide range of durations, risks, locations, and some require safeguarding to be considered. No single policy can identify all requirements of such a diverse range of activities. Therefore, local arrangements, which meet the requirements of this policy must be implemented.

Approved by: University Health, Safety, and Security Committee

Date: 13 November 2025

Review Risk: Medium (3 years)

To be reviewed: November 2028

Appendixes:

1. Risk Control Measures
2. Placement Planning Checklist
3. Pre Placement Visit Guidance

Roles and Responsibilities

Those Arranging Placements	
1	All placements must be risk assessed.
2	Any third-party risk assessments for placements must be validated.
4	All placements must have appropriate emergency procedures in place.
5	The limits of University's responsibility must be clearly communicated to students, as must their responsibilities in terms of insurance and risk management.
6	Students conducting placements overseas must be provided information to allow self-management of risk.

Health and Safety Coordinators	
2	Any third-party risk assessments for medium or high-risk placements must be validated.

Health and Safety Office	
2	Any third-party risk assessments for medium or high-risk placements must be validated.

Faculty Deans	
3	All placements must be authorised.
7	Faculties or Directorates organising or facilitating placements must have suitable local policies, processes, or procedures in place to ensure their safe operation.

Professional Services Lead	
3	All placements must be authorised.
7	Faculties or Directorates organising or facilitating placements must have suitable local policies, processes, or procedures in place to ensure their safe operation.

Heads of Department	
3	All placements must be authorised.
7	Faculties or Directorates organising or facilitating placements must have suitable local policies, processes, or procedures in place to ensure their safe operation.

Directors of Professional Services	
3	All placements must be authorised.
7	Faculties or Directorates organising or facilitating placements must have suitable local policies, processes, or procedures in place to ensure their safe operation.

Appendix 1 - Example of Risk Control Measures

RISK FACTORS	Indicative HAZARDS (these are not exhaustive)	RISK PROFILE	Indicative CONTROL MEASURES (these are not exhaustive)
Work Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction work (e.g. work at height, machinery, mechanical and electrical hazards) Laboratory work (e.g. exposure to toxic or hazardous materials) Community work with known high-risk groups (drug abusers, violent patients) Requirement for special licences/qualifications (e.g. diving) Work involving significant hazards in small companies with no professional H&S advice 	HIGH (potential to cause permanent injury or fatalities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm Provider's expectations about prior competency and ensure student meets them Confirm training and supervision to be provided throughout the placement, include this in written agreements Consider pre-placement site visit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in proximity to high risk factors (but not directly with them) Individual student factors General environmental or health factors 	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm with Provider that student will not be expected to participate in high-risk activities and will be appropriately supervised in medium risk activities, include this in written agreements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office work or other low hazard environments / activities 	LOW	None
Travel and transportation factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant travel to reach placement Local transport known to be high risk due to poor driving, or poor vehicle standards Demanding travel during placement Student required to drive in unfamiliar vehicles or in difficult terrain 	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief student on travel arrangements - discuss implications and confirm they are acceptable Arrange accompanied travel where practicable Confirm relevant driving licenses and insurance Specify regular contact times
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Night travel Long daily commute Requirement to drive vehicle in reasonable conditions 	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief student on arrangements and confirm these are acceptable Check for the necessary driving licenses and insurances
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant travel, comfortable daily commute and no driving required for placement 	LOW	None
Location and / or regional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant civil disorder, or crime (e.g. countries where the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advises against travel) Unavoidable lone or remote working in proximity to significant risk (e.g. refugee camps) Emergency medical /rescue services unavailable locally Communications likely to be difficult or compromised 	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check FCDO for travel restrictions and recommendations - seek alternative placement where FCDO advises against travel If placement deemed absolutely necessary, then full detailed risk assessment required If approved, then a detailed briefing will be required and the need for additional training must be discussed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher than normal risk of disorder, crime or comparable danger Delays likely in communicating with tutors and others Placements in areas identified as low risk by the FCDO 	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check FCDO for travel restrictions and recommendations Provide information on cultural issues, and behavioural norms and supplement with briefing on medium risk factors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placements in the UK with no significant local risks 	LOW	None

Appendix 1 - Example of Risk Control Measures

General / environmental health factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional health risks require mandatory and specific health protection measures Very hot or strenuous working conditions (e.g. manual work outdoors) Very cold working conditions (e.g. placements in cold storage facilities) 	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student to consult medical health professional for advice regarding immunisation and other protective measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional conditions require some precautionary measures 	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student to consult medical health professional for advice regarding immunisation and other protective measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant environmental health risks 	LOW	None
Individual student factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student has personal factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or cultural issues) which may increase the risk of illness or accident during work-related activity, even following adjustments Student has personal factors which will require specific adjustments or support if living away from home makes them more susceptible to episodes of illness (as above and including pregnancy). Student's skill, knowledge or understanding are low for the type of work 	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss activities with student with view to eliminating or reducing them Student to engage with disability support teams to develop reasonable adjustments – confirm them with the Provider in writing Consider pre-placement site visit Consider additional training for student, confirm requirement for close supervision with Provider
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student has personal factors which will require specific adjustments or support during work 	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student to engage with disability support teams to develop reasonable adjustments – confirm in writing with the Provider
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student has no long-term medical conditions or disability likely to cause episodes of illness or which require special support while on placement Student has relevant knowledge understanding and skills for the type of work 	LOW	None
Insurance limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locations, activities and /or circumstances where the Provider's insurance does not cover student for personal or third-party liability associated with the student's work The student's working overseas travel insurance policy specifically excludes 'business', specified activities and / or the location 	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If placement is to proceed additional insurance will be required – consult the Insurance Office Brief student on 'small print' limitations of insurance cover Seek alternative travel insurance provider and check 'small print' limitations to confirm adequate cover, in particular for medical emergencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locations, activities and /or circumstances require prior acceptance from the College's Insurers for cover 	MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that notification is provided, and acceptance is confirmed Brief student on 'small print' limitations of insurance cover
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locations, activities and /or circumstances that are automatically included in the College's cover UK locations (mandatory Employer's Liability cover) 	LOW	None

Placement Planning Checklist and Risk Assessment Summary

PLACEMENT PROVIDER		Student (student group)	Start / end dates
Organisation / Institution			
Location			
Description of placement (identify any agreed restrictions or limitations on the scope of the work to be undertaken)			
1. GENERAL ARRANGMENTS	Yes/No	Action necessary?	Action completed?
Has the Provider been used previously for placements?			
Has the Provider been reviewed in relation to H&S If 'yes', are there unresolved concerns?			
Has the student (group) been provided with a suitable pre-placement briefing?			
Is the Provider accredited with a professional body?			
2. H&S MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS			
Does the Provider have a written H&S policy?			
Have details of the Provider's H&S arrangements been supplied?			
Does the Provider have an H&S adviser?			
Have roles and responsibilities for the placement been assigned, and have arrangements been agreed in writing?			
Is/are the student(s) to become a temporary employee(s) of the Provider?			
What H&S induction training will the student(s) receive?			
What industry or job specific H&S training will the student(s) receive?			
Has a workplace supervisor been assigned?			
Does the Provider's risk assessment of the work consider the student's age and inexperience?			
Does the Provider have a formal accident / incident reporting procedure?			
Is there a system to ensure that accidents / incidents involving students are reported to the department for information?			
3. INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS			
Does the Placement Provider have Employers' and Public Liability insurance?			
Have the Provider's insurers been notified of the student placement?			
Will the student(s) be fully covered by the Provider's insurers?			

4. RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY	Risk Rating H, M, L	Action necessary?	Action completed?
Work factors			
Travel and transportation factors			
Location and / or regional factors			
General and / or Environmental health factors			
Individual student factors			
Specific Insurance limitations			
5. CONCLUSIONS	Yes/No	Action necessary?	Action completed?
Is a site visit required prior to approval?			
Is a site visit required during the placement?			
Are the risks acceptable such that the placement can be approved?			

Risk Profile	Placement Type	Controls	Visit frequency / communications
Low Risk	Administrative / financial	None required	Periodic contact with student(s) by email
	Libraries / museums	Office-type work	
	Design / architect studios		
Medium Risk	Laboratory work (biological, radiological, chemical)	Well regulated	Regular contact with student(s) by email
	Metal / wood workshops	Safety adviser advice usually available Well established procedures / systems	
	Governmental / legal offices in FCO flagged locations	Supporting documents provided Risk assessment reviewed by Health and Safety Office Emergency plans established	Regular, pre-determined contact with student(s) by email (or as indicated by individual risk assessment)
High Risk	Site-based construction work	Procedures / systems in place but dynamic environment	Robust communication processes in place
	Manufacturing floors (not offices)		
	Community based work		
	New placement provider in the UK	Limited information	Site visit may be required to resolve unanswered questions
	Small business	No established safety policies or professional health and safety advice	Regular contact with student(s) by email
	New placement provider in FCO flagged location	Limited supporting information Health and Safety Office review of risk assessment raises concerns	Seek alternative provider or site visit required to resolve unanswered questions Robust communication processes to be put in place

This table is intended as a guide only; departments must evaluate the need for pre-site visits according to their own placement risk profiles, and other factors such as the length of placement, number of students using the provider, and history of previous issues and/or incidents should be taken into account when making the decision.

If a site visit is indicated but is impractical, and serious issues are unresolved then the department should consider an alternative placement.