



***Placement Advisors for Tourism and Hospitality***

# **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

**for**

**Work Placements in Hospitality,  
Leisure, Tourism & Events  
Management Courses**

## Introduction

This document provides a blueprint for the operation of work placement in Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism & Events Management Courses.

Given the range of courses and diversity of work experiences involved, these guidelines can be no more than a framework of good practice for each of the parties. It can in no way replace or detract from the importance of good communication between educator, employer and student.

Work experience in higher education is not a new practice. However, the expectations of all stakeholders – Government, educators, employers and students – have changed. It is essential that work placements provide students with a meaningful learning experience, and one from which they can develop both personally and professionally. It is important also that employers encourage students to develop the skills that will add value to their business (and to the industry more generally) both during the placement and for the future.

It is widely recognised that work placement can offer opportunities for students to enhance their subject knowledge in addition to developing their employability skills and attributes. The potential for learning from work placement is immense, as are the benefits for all of the stakeholders involved. Students can benefit from experiences that enhance their CV and self-reflection can help them articulate skills they have developed that will help them realise their career potential. Self confidence, communication, problem solving and teamwork are just some of the skills that will provide them with a competitive advantage in the graduate labour market. Educators should have more motivated, commercially aware, independent learners who can self-evaluate their own performance. Employers should also see the benefits in future recruits who are 'work ready' and who have the appropriate skills and work experience to hit the ground running once they have graduated. Indeed, employers should consider the placement period as an integral part of their recruitment strategy, offering the opportunity to assess potential candidates on-the-job and to develop them for future employment with the company.

Work experience is not enough in itself to guarantee the benefits outlined above. An effective work placement is one that requires students to reflect on and evaluate their learning and the benefits of work placement will only be realised if there is a strong partnership forged between the key stakeholders in the process – the student, the employer and the educator. High quality work placements require high standards and this document is intended to provide a benchmark for the operation and management of work placements. The following guidelines outline a common set of procedures which should be followed by stakeholder groups to help ensure good practice and high quality standards.

## **Background and Acknowledgements**

Placement Advisors for Tourism & Hospitality (PATH) works with universities/colleges and employers to promote, support and develop high quality work placements within tourism, hospitality and related industries. PATH operates for the benefit of students in higher and further education in the UK and seeks to provide advice and support to educators and employers who wish to provide work placement opportunities in their organisations.

PATH operates as part of The Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME). CHME is a voluntary non-profit making body which represents those UK universities and colleges offering programmes of study and qualifications in Hospitality Management.

There are many PATH members (past and present) who have worked on this document, too many to name individually. Contributions and feedback on the Guidelines have been received from academics and by industry professionals and we gratefully acknowledge their work. Thank you all.

## **Endorsements**

These Guidelines have been endorsed by the following educational and professional organisations:

Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE)

British Hospitality Association (BHA)

British Institute of Innkeepers (BII)

Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME)

Hospitality and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA)

Higher Education Academy Subject Network for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism

People 1<sup>st</sup>

Savoy Educational Trust

SkillsActive

Springboard

Tourism Society Scotland

Tourism SouthEast

## Purpose of Work Placement

Employers, educators and students hoping to gain maximum benefit from work placements share some common aims. The purpose of work placement is to:

1. Enable students' to develop employability skills, self-evaluate, and gain in self-awareness, confidence and maturity.
2. Provide opportunities for structured practical experiences of the industry, its operations, its customers and its staff.
3. Provide an opportunity for students to consolidate skills learnt during academic studies, appreciate industrial standards and levels of performance, and provide opportunities for practical application of conceptual theory.
4. Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop lifelong learning skills
5. Provide an opportunity for employers to assess students skills for employment, invest in the workforce of the future, and to demonstrate potential career paths for graduates

### The Employer

1. Should receive in writing meaningful information on the objectives of the course and the learning outcomes for the placement. This should be communicated to all key staff who will be associating with the student during the placement.
2. Should agree in writing with the educator that opportunities exist for the student to meet the learning outcomes for their work placement. In particular employers/mentors should be aware of the coursework and assessment requirements that the student must undertake and should be prepared to offer appropriate support to the student in this regard (whilst acknowledging that it is **solely** the students responsibility to produce coursework for assessment).
3. Should be confident that their organisation has adequately resourced and selected competent personnel to initiate, manage and develop work placement opportunities within the company, and that this is part of company staff-development activities
4. Should select students in line with recognised good practices in recruitment and selection, and on the basis of non-discriminatory criteria.
5. Should identify a workplace mentor who will be responsible for the student during the period of work placement. The mentor should be willing to provide regular feedback to the student about progress, be available to meet/talk to tutors and ensure that a written evaluation of student performance is given to the educational establishment.
6. Should provide the employing department, the student and the educator with clear details of terms and conditions of employment including: hours of work and pay rates; overtime/holiday pay arrangements; health, safety & hygiene guidelines; information on professional standards of behaviour; and other company policies as appropriate. This

should be provided before the placement begins and terms and conditions of employment should be no less favourable than for other members of staff.

7. Should provide the educator with evidence that health and safety procedures are in order and that the student on placement is adequately covered by the statutory insurance requirement.
8. If operational demands make it necessary to change a student's planned programme of work, agreement about the changes should be reached via consultation between the employer, educator and student **prior** to any major changes being implemented.
9. Should organise an orientation programme commencing on the first day of employment covering the terms and conditions of employment including:
  - a. the company and/or individual unit
  - b. introduction to appropriate staff, including mentor
  - c. health, safety and fire procedures
  - d. outline of planned work placement programme
  - e. grievance/disciplinary procedures
10. Should arrange an end of placement debriefing between the student and the employer/mentor.
11. Must notify the educator immediately if there is a problem with a student's performance and prior to actions being taken to terminate a student's placement. The educator should be notified in advance of any disciplinary proceedings and should be invited to be present at any disciplinary interview.
12. Students should not, on a regular basis, be required to work hours in excess of the norm for colleagues in similar jobs within the organisation.

## **The Student**

1. Must fully engage in the preparation process for work placement. This includes taking a full and active part in any pre-placement course activities and also includes recognising the characteristics and requirements of the organisation in which their work placement is to take place.
2. Must fully understand the learning outcomes and assessment requirements for the work placement and take responsibility for ensuring that these are achieved by setting themselves appropriate learning objectives and meeting them. This means students must actively seek out learning opportunities and appreciate the nature and type of work that will enable them to meet learning objectives/outcomes.
3. Must take responsibility for their own learning and professional relationships during the placement.
4. Should be aware of their rights to a safe work environment and be treated in accordance with applicable employment and health & safety legislation.

5. Should be aware of standard terms and conditions of employment, including;
  - a. grievance and disciplinary procedures and codes of conduct (incl. sickness, absence, etc)
  - b. hours of work and rates of pay
  - c. hygiene, health & safety and fire regulations
  - d. uniform and equipment requirements
  - e. accommodation (if provided)
6. Must perform to standards set by the employer towards customers, clients, employees and the business.
7. Should accept instruction and direction from identified workplace mentor and/or supervisors at the placement.
8. Will undertake reasonable tasks and projects for the employer as requested.
9. Must communicate regularly with the workplace mentor and the visiting tutor/educator. (The educator should provide written guidance on frequency and methods of communication).
10. Should contact his/her tutor with any concerns that cannot be resolved with the workplace mentor/supervisor.
11. Should recognise his/her role as an ambassador of his/her educational establishment and should be aware that they are bound by the disciplinary and behaviour code of their educational establishment whilst on work placement.
12. Should be aware of the penalties for incompetence and poor performance during the placement period.

### **The Educator**

1. Should provide students and employers with a clear written document that specifies:
  - a. learning outcomes for the placement and how they contribute to the overall aims of the course
  - b. the assessment requirements and assessment criteria for the work placement element of the course
  - c. the responsibilities of the employer, the student and the educator in assessment processes
  - d. information on tutor visits and support for the employer and the student
  - e. Good Practice Guidelines for work placement
2. Should allocate sufficient academic and administrative resources to fully support the work placement component of the course.

3. Should ensure that the placement provides adequate opportunities for achievement of the aims and intended learning outcomes for the placement element of the course, and that employers confirm this in writing.
4. Should provide support and advice that enables the student to make the most of the learning opportunities available to them. The educator should also provide some tools that will help students reflect on work experiences and relate theory to practice. The tutor should be prepared to spend time meeting with the student discuss their progress towards the learning outcomes/coursework in accordance with the agreed procedures for that course.
5. Should help prepare the student for the recruitment and selection process and provide guidance on CV writing and interviewing.
6. Should inform students of their statutory employment rights and responsibilities prior to the start of the work placement (including a full briefing on health & safety requirements and obligations).
7. Should provide a thorough brief for students on the general expectations of industry and provide information that will help the student assess the particular needs of the company and/or businesses providing the placement.
8. Should establish regular contact with the employer and workplace mentor and provide information and contact details for visiting tutors (where used).
9. Should make arrangements for contacting the organisation to discuss with the student and the mentor the work performance and progress achieved. The process and timing of such communications should be clearly specified in the written information provided to students and employers.
10. Should ensure that visiting tutors (if they are used) are fully briefed and conversant with the aims and learning outcomes for the placement element of the course and the assessment and coursework requirements. Tutors should also have information on the student to be visited, the name of their workplace mentor, and should adhere to the agreed written procedures for visits to the work placement.
11. Should have a complete procedure in place, ensuring that all formal complaints, from either the student or the employer, and any issues regarding the placement are documented and follow-up action taken.
12. Should provide a post experience debriefing and re-orientation of the student into their course on completion of the placement.