



UK COLLEGE  
OF BUSINESS AND COMPUTING

# Employer Engagement and Work Placement Policy

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## Introduction

UKCBC fully embraces the importance of work based learning and placements as providing current and future benefits of employability to individual students by raising sector knowledge and experience and also the demonstration of key abilities such as interpersonal skills, problem solving, time management and professional team work. Additionally, the value of working with employers provides benefit to the college and the employer community in many different ways.

This policy is expected to direct the support given to students during work placement and the parameters of engaging and working with employers.

## Links to QAA Quality Code

This document is designed to ensure the maintenance and promotion of academic standards and adequate learning opportunities for all students learning at UKCBC. The delivery of this learning is collaborative in nature including engagement with students and employers alike. This policy therefore relates to the roles of the college, employers and students and in doing so takes reference from the Quality Code expectations for standards core practices and expectations for quality core practices:

- Learning and Teaching: **Guiding Principles 1-9**
- Monitoring and Evaluation: **Guiding Principles 1-7**
- Work-based learning: **Guiding Principles 1-9**
- Student Engagement: **Guiding Principles 1-7**
- Partnership: **Guiding Principles 1-7**
- Enabling student achievement: **Guiding Principles 1-9**

Furthermore, the policy has been informed by

- QAA report – Employer Engagement Emerging Practice (2014)
- QAA report – New Challenges, New Solutions: Quality Assurance of Placements (2013)
- ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education (2014).

## Links to other policies

The remainder of this policy will relate to the employer engagement and also work placements. UKCBC recommends that this policy is understood in the wider context of stakeholder engagement and administration of work placements, particularly in relation to the following policies and documents:

- Safeguarding Policy

- Student Engagement and Feedback Policies
- Teaching and Learning Strategy

### Scope and definition of Employer Engagement and Work Placement

**Work based learning and placements** are usually part of a UKCBC course being self-contained as a discrete credit bearing module. In essence it is any learning where a student works or applies their taught studies in an approved alternative location. The learning outcomes of the module are assessed by UKCBC academic staff, contribute to the overall credit of the programme studied.

Placements are generally unpaid however the employers may, but are not obliged to, contribute to subsistence or travel expenses unless directly related to the placement role being carried out by the student. Placements are available in many difference guises:

- Student identified and negotiated
- UKCBC identified and negotiated
- Employer led enquiry
- Private local employer
- Charity or third sector organisation
- Public organisation (local government)
- Regional large employer

At all times the safety of the student is central to the placement, along with the safeguarding of any vulnerable individuals that may be involved in the placement setting. Each placement is considered on the basis of the following:

- Sufficient opportunity to achieve relevant assessment criteria
- Sufficient and appropriate support for additional requirements of the student
- Reputation of UKCBC and the placement provider
- Credibility of the role undertaken by the student
- Suitable health and safety standards of the location and operation of the placement
- Location of the placement
- A named contact at the placement who will supervise the opportunity

**Employer engagement** is the channel to productive and meaningful work placement opportunities. It is in essence relational and therefore the process of employer engagement is one that develops over time. Additionally, whilst the quality and resilience of the placement is dependent on several factors, the energy can be provided from multiple input. UKCBC understands that these inputs can be developed from

- Personal contacts of staff
- Professional contacts through academic staff
- Alumni
- Current students' employers
- Professional contacts through formal external networking and partnerships

The benefits of sustainable employer engagement can be demonstrated through various means but may include:

- Placements
- Field visits/trips
- Insight and advice on curriculum and programme development
- Production of live assignment briefs
- Delivery of subject specific or employability themed masterclasses
- Scrutiny of student development awards
- Strategic comment on College development and growth
- Strategic comment on local employability or skills issues
- Professional development opportunities for UKCBC staff

UKCBC welcomes these benefits and the opportunity to reflect on the views of ‘critical friends’ as they are welcomed into the college environment by means of its formal committees and scheduled class room activities.

## **Responsibilities**

UKCBC recognises that in order to mature and develop the interconnecting relationships between student, employer and college, each party must agree and embrace certain responsibilities.

**UKCBC students** are expected to subject themselves to the following:

- their responsibilities in relation to the programme of study which the placement makes up part of,
- their responsibilities for disclosing any special or additional requirements,
- their responsibilities for managing their behaviour as representatives of UKCBC,
- their responsibilities in relation to health and safety and safeguarding issues,
- their need to remain in contact with the UKCBC placement contact in order to provide feedback on progress,
- opportunities for personal development planning,
- intellectual property rights of activity undertaken at the placement,
- opportunities to engage with ongoing tutoring or mentoring,
- the need to alert the placement provider and the placement contact to any problems with the placement that may impede their satisfactory progress and completion of the placement and therefore the module,
- the ability of the placement provider to raise any issues with the UKCBC placement contact regarding the student’s suitability to practice,
- the formal complaint procedure.

**Employer Partners** for the purposes of placements are asked to understand and agree to the following

- the provision of learning opportunities (not teaching or tuition);
- a named contact to act as placement supervisor;
- their role in relation to the mentoring of students, and, if applicable, contribute evidence towards the assessment of students;

- the health, safety and wellbeing of students, including provision of any specialist materials or clothing needed;
- their responsibility in relation to insurance cover in the event of accident;
- their responsibility for making practicable reasonable adjustments for students with a disability or specific requirements;
- any obligation to attend any meetings concerning the placement at the provider or UKCBC, or provide a report on the placement;
- any changes in a provider's or student's circumstances either before commencement of or during the placement.

The diligence and scrutiny of **UKCBC staff** are key to the implementation of a placement and the successful achievement of the module learning outcomes thereafter. Therefore, UKCBC Staff are expected to lead on and ensure the following

- the opportunity for students to successfully meet the learning outcomes
- suitable guidance and information is available to students and employers;
- the opportunity for the student to provide feedback or raise concerns in confidence
- the opportunity for the student to gather relevant evidence and present an assignment at the end of the placement
- maintenance of records and analysis relating to employer/placement contacts and future opportunities.
- information should be given to students on the consequences of failure to either complete a placement or achieve a pass assessment.

The Work Placement Handbook will be made available to ensure all contact details are accurate and up-to-date. The Handbook will include all relevant details appropriate for the student and placement supervisor including details of the assessment requirements. Additional content will include templates for:

- Initial meeting: set the expectations for the placement (hrs, regularity, cost, DBS, activity, training, etc)
- Mid-placement meeting/telephone conversation
- Sign-off of hours
- Examples of documentation for assessment portfolio and personal reflection
- Cause for concern form: if requested by placement