Higher Education Work Based Learning Policy

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Person Responsible	DEP Curriculum and Strategy
Approval/ review body	SLT
Frequency of Review*	36 months

* Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require

Review History:		
Date	Reviewed by	Reason for review
Sept 2016		Policy written
Apr 2017	AP Sport, Care & Computing	Change in job title
Aug 2019	AP Sport, Care & Computing	Review
May 2023	DEP – Curriculum & Strategy	Review

Contents

1.   **Policy Statement**

North Kent College ("the College") which has various campuses, sites and incorporates Hadlow College, is committed to working with employers and, where relevant, professional bodies to ensure its academic provision meet employer needs as well as being attractive to students.

While the policy provides a degree of underlying standardisation, it is also intended to be sufficiently flexible to allow the specific requirements of individual programmes and any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies ("PSRBs") to be met. This policy recognises that the way in which Work Based Learning ("WBL") is organised and managed will vary according to specific programme aims and learning outcomes and their related learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Programme-specific WBL requirements are provided within programme documentation, which is approved at validation and re-approval.

This policy provides guidance and expectations for the successful operation of Work Based Learning and work experience modules within higher education programmes at the College. Within this document, all forms of Work-Based Learning and work experience within higher education will be referred to collectively as work-based learning.

2.   **Scope of the policy**

The scope this policy encompasses Higher Education ("HE") students undertaking WBL units of study for which credit is awarded. The activity may be paid or unpaid and may take various forms, including traditional employment, part-time or self-employment, entrepreneurial activity, public performance or exhibition, voluntary engagements or external engagements with professional practitioners at their place of work as part of a College-organised field trip or residential visit. WBL may take place within a College location as long as the learning opportunities are not contrived for study purposes but occur in the workplace context and arise through the activity of working.

This policy is not applicable to forms of work that do not contribute towards academic credit, including employment that is not being included or reflected upon within qualification assessment.

3.   **Arranging and Approving WBL Environments or Methods**

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange a suitable WBL environment or practice and this should be agreed on an individual basis by the module or programme leader. However, information, advice and guidance will be provided to students to assist them in arranging a suitable WBL environment or practice.

The module or programme leader should satisfy themselves that for each student, the activities, work context, and environment in which the WBL is proposed to take place is appropriate, and meets the aims of the module.

Procedures for securing, approving and allocating WBL activities and environments should be transparent to all, and take into account, as a minimum:

3.1.   the suitability of the WBL environment or activity to allow students to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the module;

3.2.   health and safety requirements, including any requirement for DBS checks;

3.3.   any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body ("PSRB") requirements governing the suitability of the WBL environment or practice; and

3.4.   student support within the workplace, including the mechanisms for dealing with any problems or complaints.

Information should be given to students on the consequences of failure to complete the stipulated requirements of the WBL module where this is a programme requirement. Consideration regarding contingency plans should also be made in cases where the WBL practice needs to be terminated early by one of the parties involved. A form of learning contract appropriate to the module requirments should be agreed by the student, module tutor and where applicable, the workplace provider.

4.   Information for students

Students will be fully informed about their responsibilities and entitlements relating to their WBL and be given appropriate and timely information, support and guidance prior to, throughout and following their WBL. The WBL module tutor will be responsible for ensuring that students receive information or have access to the following:

4.1.   WBL module specification, module guidelines and assessment criteria and guidelines. (This should ideally take the form of a handbook and should be available via virtual learning environments);

4.2.   the expectations and responsibilities of students, staff and organisation employees or other stakeholders;

4.3.   professional conduct and behaviour, cultural orientation, work expectations and ethical considerations;

4.4.   legal issues and procedures (such as insurance cover and DBS requirements where relevant);

4.5.   health and safety issues and risk assessment;

4.6.   confidentiality and/or data protection and copyright issues;

4.7.   precautions that should be taken to maximise personal safety;

4.8.   entitlements with respect to support, tutoring and mentoring; and

4.9.   systems for complaints and termination of WBL agreements.

5.   Information for WBL providers

Some students may carry out WBL within an employment organisation. As such, providers of WBL must be fully informed of their responsibilities and be given appropriate and timely information, support and guidance in preparation for, during and after students' WBL.

The module tutor should ensure that providers are aware of their responsibilities by providing information in relation to:

5.1.   the requirements of the WBL module, including scope and assessment requirements;

5.2.   the information that has been provided to students;

5.3.   the specific roles and responsibilities of the provider and, where applicable, workplace mentor;

5.4.   how students will be assessed and the responsibility and quality assurance of this;

5.5.   the role and responsibility of a workplace mentor (if applicable);

5.6.   requirements of the workplace in allowing the student to develop their skills and knowledge and achieve their learning outcomes;

5.7.   health and safety considerations including risk assessment and specialist materials or clothing;

5.8.   the requirement for the employer to submit evidence of adequate insurance cover in the event of an incident;

5.9.   making reasonable adjustments for students with a disability;

5.10.   any obligation to attend any meetings concerning the placement, or provide a report on the placement;

5.11.   any changes in a student's circumstances either before commencement of or during the placement; and/or

5.12.   contact details of Programme Leader and Module Tutor.

The method that module tutors choose to communicate the above information may be unique to each programme but written acknowledgement that the WBL provider has received, understood and accepted the information, requirements and responsibilities should be gained.

6.   Methods of assessment

The term "Work Based Learning" encompasses a range of practices and methods and, as such, applicable assessment methods may vary considerably. Depending on the nature of the programme and module, the following assessment methods, or combination of these, may be deemed appropriate:

6.1.   **Work-based projects**: Involves construction of a learning agreement between the employer and student that enables the specific achievement of learning outcomes or formulation of conclusions through tasks undertaken within a workplace.

6.2.   **Reflective practice**: Students reflect upon their learning within a workplace environment, often through the form of a reflective portfolio. Recognition of prior learning is a means of recognising learning in past practice.

6.3.   **Work placements:** Block, serial and semester placements may be negotiated between the College and an employer. Generally, a learning contract between the employer, student and College is utilised, often with the College having authority on this. Students often complete a portfolio or project as part of this work placement.

6.4.   **Work-related learning:** In some areas it may be difficult to arrange placements, but many students will be engaged in some form of work-related learning through part-time employment and/or voluntary work. "Generic" workplaces have been used in institutions where sector-specific placements have been difficult to secure and such employment can provide an important basis for the development of students' transferable skills and contribute to their employability.

6.5.   **Small scale consultancy projects:** Employing organisations may be asked to identify projects/areas they would wish to develop and

these projects are then assigned to individual students or groups of students to complete.

6.6. **Employer-devised case studies:** This enables students to work on real work-based issues and involves engagement with the workplace but does not require the organisation to provide an extended and regular period of work placement. Such an approach requires employers to provide time, resources and materials to establish the case study.

6.7. **Work-related case studies and assignments:** This requires students to relate assignments clearly to employment, having gone through a period of employment or work placement

6.8. **Simulation:** This may be used as a recognised method of training or assessment within the workplace and can be used within a College environment. However, assessment practice should not rely fully on this method.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation of WBL

All WBL practices should be subject to effective monitoring procedures. These should include the following requirements as a minimum:

7.1. feedback from students is collected by the module tutor both during and on completion of WBL;

7.2. analysis of the placements should take place as part of the annual monitoring and reporting process for the programme (where relevant); and

7.3. feedback is collected from placement providers by the module tutor (where relevant). This may be accomplished by various formats including meetings, surveys or other forms of correspondence

8. Responsibilities

8.1. The student is responsible for: (where applicable)

8.1.1. arranging a suitable WBL environment or practice that is agreed by the module tutor;

8.1.2. fulfilling the roles and activities agreed in the Learning Agreement;

8.1.3.   ensuring that WBL documentation and guidance is made available to the WBL provider, and that all relevant documentation has been completed by the WBL provider;

8.1.4.   completing an induction into their work experience organisation;

8.1.5.   conducting themselves in a manner appropriate to a representative of the College and their WBL provider;

8.1.6.   informing their WBL supervisor/mentor of any major problems that may arise during the WBL period, including absences from work or lateness;

8.1.7.   seeking feedback from the WBL provider on their own WBL performance;

8.1.8.   ensuring that all WBL activities undertaken are ethical, safe and appropriate to the requirements of the module;

8.1.9.   reporting any concerns or complaints relating to a WBL provider to the College (generally the module tutor); and/or

8.1.10.   completing assessment activities adequately and on time.

8.2.   The College is responsible for: (where applicable)

8.2.1.   evaluating the appropriateness of a student's requested WBL method and environment including WBL providers;

8.2.2.   fulfilling the roles and activities agreed in the Learning Agreement;

8.2.3.   preparing the student for WBL so that they are aware of their responsibilities;

8.2.4.   providing reasonable support to students, including dealing with any major problems which may arise during the WBL;

8.2.5.   assessing and providing feedback to the student on their performance (this may take various forms and may not be conducted within the workplace);

8.2.6.   evaluating the effectiveness of the WBL opportunity in the light of feedback from the student and the employer; and

8.2.7.	to regularly liaise with a workplace mentor

8.2.8.	to provide where appropriate according to the risk assessment checklist in Appendix 1, an additional risk assessment (overarching any currently in place in the workplace) for the WBL episode

8.3.	The WBL provider is responsible for: (where applicable)

8.3.1.	completing the relevant WBL documentation, including a learning agreement and health and safety documentation;

8.3.2.	fulfilling the requirements of Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and other legal requirements in relation to the student (e.g. DBS);

8.3.3.	fulfilling the roles and activities agreed in the Learning Agreement, including any additionally identified needs of students with a declared disability;

8.3.4.	enabling the student to adequately gather evidence or perform activities that relate to assessment tasks;

8.3.5.	nominating an individual who will supervise, support and mentor the student and ensuring that this individual is adequately trained and experienced to fulfil this role;

8.3.6.	ensuring the student is inducted into the organisation and is fully aware of the relevant Health and Safety and insurance requirements;

8.3.7.	providing the student with helpful feedback on their progress and performance;

8.3.8.	participating in evaluation of the WBL; and

8.3.9.	promptly reporting any concerns about the student to the College.

Appendix 1: **WBL risk assessment Checklist**

Example	Status
Student contracted to work within an organisation (i.e. it is their normal place of paid employment), that was commenced prior to start of WBL module (e.g. computing company, travel agency).	No risk assessment required
Student becomes contracted to work within an organisation with the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of a WBL module (commenced during or just before commencement of the WBL module) (e.g. computing company, travel agency).	No risk assessment required
Student works voluntarily within an organisation for purposes other than that of fulfilling the requirements of the WBL module (e.g. coaching a gymnastics club, assisting in a nursery).	No risk assessment required
Student chooses to work voluntarily within an organisation in order to fulfil the requirements of the WBL module (e.g. coaching a gymnastics club, assisting in a nursery).	Risk assessment required
Student working alongside a sole trader (e.g. a sports coach).	Risk assessment required
Student works as a sole trader, which was commenced prior to start of WBL module (e.g. sports coach, personal trainer, freelance photographer).	No risk assessment required
Student starts to work as a sole trader with the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of a WBL module (commenced during or just before commencement of the WBL module) (e.g. sports coach, personal trainer, freelance photographer).	No risk assessment required
Student works voluntarily as a sole trader for purposes other than that of the fulfilling the requirements of the WBL module (e.g. sports coach, personal trainer, freelance photographer.	No risk assessment required
Student works independently in a specific role directed by the tutor to fulfil the requirements of the WBL module e.g. homework (e.g. as a photographer, writer, or personal fitness trainer).	No risk assessment required
Student chooses to work independently to fulfil the requirements of the WBL module but not by the instruction of the tutor (e.g. as a photographer, writer, or personal fitness trainer).	No risk assessment required
Student specifically required to leave campus to attend a specific set-destination for the WBL module (e.g. trip to an Art gallery).	Risk assessment required
Student works at North Kent College as directed by the tutor to fulfil the requirements of the WBL module (e.g. as a lecturer or radio DJ).	No risk assessment required
Student chooses to work at North Kent College to fulfil the requirements of the WBL module but not by the instruction of the tutor e.g. as a photographer, writer, or personal fitness trainer (e.g. as a lecturer or radio DJ).	No risk assessment required