

Work Placement Update - April 2017

1.0 SFC - Work Placement Standard for Colleges

- 1.1 In September 2016 the SFC developed a new Work Placement Standard for Colleges. The guidance has been developed to provide direction and highlight best practice in the college sector. It sets the expectation that all college students will benefit from high quality work placements or other workplace experience in line with the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) strategy. The aim of this guidance is to significantly and consistently improve the future employment prospects of all students studying in colleges in Scotland.

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCGD202016_WorkPlacementStandardforColleges/Work_Placement_Standard_for_Colleges.pdf

“Any student, who is studying in a college, should have a work placement or other workplace experience linked directly to their course, appropriate in nature, duration and location and tailored to their individual needs.

The Learner Journey

	Inspiration	Simulation	Placement
Student	Careers events, Research tasks, Employer presentations Site visits, Personal skills analysis activities	Learning in simulated work environments e.g. college salon with paying clients, Enterprise activities, Interview skills	Work Placement with an employer Working in a Social Enterprise Working in a Charity
College	Engaging with a wide range of employers to interact with students in college Taking students to visit employers	Arranging placements within college in any relevant department, Working with other FEIs/HEIs to organise placements on campus	Arranging a wide range of tailored placements with employers, both locally and nationally across all curriculum areas
Employer	Attending college events, Talks and info sessions for students, staff and parents Hosting groups of students and staff for visits	Hosting practice interviews or application sessions Running project based work in colleges	Hosting work ready college students with one to one support, following placement plans drawn up in partnership with the college and student

1.2 Employer Engagement

The guidance is also intended to support employers to understand the college's approach to developing the future workforce. Examples include:

- Affording dedicated employer engagement time to all teaching staff to build and maintain their industry knowledge and networks.
- Using in-house custom built software to track and monitor all employer based activity and paperwork across the college.
- Establishing a single point of contact within a college to handle administration of work placements.

1.3 Enterprise and entrepreneurial activity should enable students to be more opportunity-focussed, self-aware and attuned to the business environment and can be delivered in collaborative and engaging ways. Can we link some of our work to our new Entrepreneurial theme?

1.4 Gender and equalities

It will be the responsibility of all partners to address the issue of equality, with a particular emphasis on gender balance. With this in mind, the Scottish Funding Council's Gender Action Plan should be fully considered when supporting students to gain meaningful placements. All stakeholders involved in a work placement should provide advice, guidance and opportunities that contribute to:

- Eradicating discrimination.
- Promoting mutual respect.
- Equality of opportunity across genders, social background, disabilities, ethnicities, sexual orientation and religions.

1.5 What makes a good work placement in College?

1. Tailored - learners may require tailored experiences dependent on their individual needs and abilities.

2. Real and Meaningful - the opportunity to 'stretch, challenge' and learn on the job.

3. Mutually beneficial - should also benefit the employer, challenging them to invest time and knowledge transfer in the future workforce.

4. Meets Expectations - may include a period of research for the student, potentially an application and interview process and a suitably detailed induction schedule to clarify expectations.

5. Roles & Responsibilities - should lay out clearly each party's roles and responsibilities.

6. Supported - college staff are required to establish and maintain strong links with employers in the local area. They should also support students while on placement.

7. Feedback – constructive feedback, either strengths or development needs

8. Enjoyable - a positive experience for all will strengthen employer-college relations and improve students' employment prospects.

9. Resourced - sufficient college resource should be given to employer engagement and staff allocated adequate time to conduct this and business development activities in order to meet the increased demands of work placements and other activity.

10. Followed up – colleges should routinely evaluate work placements – involving the employer and student to ensure continuous improvement.

2.0 Regional Outcome Agreement Guidance (October 2016)

- 2.1 The guidance clearly identifies Work Placement and Workplace Experience as a principal means of aligning provision with labour market need to ensure all vocational courses, including those delivered in the senior phase, comprise a significant element of relevant, high quality work placement and workplace experience. It also highlights the potential of work experience to help address inequalities in vocational education and employment.
http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCGD212016_CollegeOAGuidance1718/SFCGD212016_College_Outcome_Agreement_Guidance_2017-18.pdf
- 2.2 SFC, therefore, expects colleges, in partnership with schools and employers as appropriate, to:
- ensure all vocational provision includes such workplace experience or work placement
 - addresses gender imbalance; and
 - prioritises young disabled people and others who experience inequalities
- 2.3 The aim of the standard is to significantly and consistently improve the future employment prospects of all students by providing guidance for colleges and employers and highlighting best practice in the sector. Colleges should ensure that the guidance within the standard is consistent with their delivery of work placement and work place experience
- 2.4 SFC has included “work experience” course and unit indicators to FES to begin to collect and measure “work experience” activity. We will extract and report on this data.

Regions should:

- With reference to the College Work Placement Standard provide evidence of how college provision meets the standard across curriculum areas and outline improvement plans.
- Set stretching targets for expansion of work place experience and work placement places in 2017-18, detailing the number of places to be offered and the curriculum areas covered.
- Make clear the arrangements in place to work with key partners, especially employers, to expand work place experience / work placement in future years, in line with the national expectation that all vocational courses should include a significant element of this.
- Adopt a joint approach involving schools and local authorities with shared responsibility to grow work experience within senior phase vocational pathways.

3.0 College Procedures

- 3.1 Our current procedures and associated documents will be updated to reflect new roles and titles but broadly provide appropriate documentation to cover the planning and delivery of work placements.
1. Work Placement Procedure (4.3.1)
 2. Work Placement Letter of Understanding
 3. Work Placement Register
 4. Work Placement Student Declaration

4.0 College Baseline Data

- 4.1 The Faculties have gathered data from their areas using the Inspiration, Simulation, Experience and Placement journey model above to capture a baseline position in relation to their portfolio. **These consist of four spreadsheets and haven't been included with the papers but can be supplied to members of the committee if required.**
- 4.2 The new Education Scotland Quality Framework '*How Good is our College?*' in section 2.2 poses the following challenge question;
- How effectively do curriculum teams ensure work placement and work experience opportunities develop skills for employability?
- 4.3 The baseline data will be shared with Heads and SLs and clear Self Evaluation Actions identified in areas where there's limited engagement and also how areas with some work related learning can improve? (eg Science has identified that it needs to develop stronger work placement partnerships).
- 4.4 Some reflection and further actions are required around the following points:
- Do we need to make clearer the arrangements and guidelines when working with key partners, especially employers, to expand work place experience / work placement in future years, in line with the national expectation that all vocational courses should include a significant element of this?
 - Are the processes being appropriately observed with regards to Health and Safety checks etc?
 - Are there courses with little or no work related learning activity which should have some built in?
e.g. Science, Interactive Media/Software, Business/Admin (beyond simulation), Schools courses
 - How can we develop and maintain a database of placement contacts? At present this valuable information is kept in various locations and in various formats. We could utilise this data resource to great effect for a variety of engagement and employer evidence and also commercial purposes if it was better collated and monitored.
 - In what ways can we introduce relevant work related learning to our school–college programmes?