Higher Education Directorate

WORK BASED LEARNING POLICY 2022-2025

CONTENTS

Change Control

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Version	Type – New/Replacement/Review	Date	History

This Policy applies to University Centre Weston (UCW) and meets the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and the Revised UK Quality Code. Where required guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) will be observed.

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1   PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of the University Centre Weston (UCW) Work-Based Learning Policy is to ensure that all programmes UCW adhere to both the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018), the Office for Students (OFS) (2018) requirements and forms part of the overall Weston College Group Work Placement Strategy.

1.2. This document sets out UCW's expectations and processes for safe effective work-based learning.

1.3. The Policy is designed to protect and maintain the academic quality and standards of Higher Education (HE) provision at UCW, in terms of the student experience. teaching and learning and quality assurance.

1.4. The Policy meets the following areas of both the:

Office for Students (OfS) Quality and Standards B Conditions, specifically:

- Condition B3: The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers and/or enable further study.

- Condition B4: The provider must ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.

- Condition B5: The provider must deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) at Level 4 or higher.

- UK QAA Quality Code: Theme 12: Work-based Learning

2   SCOPE

2.1 The UCW Work-Based Learning Policy and Procedure will apply to all higher education provision at UCW and will form part of the overarching Work Placement Strategy for the Weston College Group.

2.2 The policy concerns individuals undertaking workplace activities, in the UK or abroad, for the purpose of acquiring learning that will be assessed as part of the learning outcomes of their programme of study. The activity may be paid or unpaid and may take various forms, including traditional employment, part-time or self-employment, work placements, 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.

2.3 Work-based learning may take place within a College location as long as the learning opportunities are not contrived for study purposes but occur through the activity of working (for example, 'live briefs' set by a business organisation or professional individual external to the programme of study may be completed within the College and make use of College facilities, making it effectively the student's workplace) – Please see appendix 1 for and explanation of example for work-based learning)..

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3   POLICY STATEMENT

The UCW Work-based Learning Policy has been developed to sit within the overarching Work Placement Strategy developed by the Weston College Group. As a result of this, all practices and procedures will be constant within the whole group with regards to students undertaking work placement.

Objectives of the UCW Course Development Policy and Procedure

3.1 The objectives of the policy are to:

o   Provide both relevant and safe work-based learning opportunities for UCW students.
o   Ensures effective communication between all parties.
o   Establishes clear lines of responsibility for each part of the process.
o   Ensure that where assessing students in the workplace takes place, staff are suitably qualified.
o   Provide a standardised approach across to work-based learning across the whole of the Weston College Group
o   Effectively contributes to the success of the Weston College Group.
o   Meets all criteria as set down by both the QAA Quality Code (2019), the Office for Students and where appropriate Ofsted.

4   PROCEDURE

4.1 The procedures for the UCW Work-based learning policy are (please see appendix 2 for the flow chart):

- Stage 1

Securing a placement and notifying UCW

Students will be encouraged to wherever possible find their own placements; Weston College considers this an important learning exercise in terms of their future employability. Once a student has secured a placement, they should seek approval from their tutor for the placement to proceed.

- Stage 2

Approval of placement

- To gain approval for the placement; the module coordinator will liaise with their faculty to send communication to the provider thanking them for taking the student and include all information regarding the roles and responsibilities expected of them, the provider (as well as the student and UCW).

- The use of the CRM database is essential at this stage to check whether the provider has been risk assessed or needs risk assessing. If not risked assessed, then it will need to be done so before the placement can take place as is standard within the Weston College Group Policy.

- The communication should include either a Letter of Expectation (for low risk placements) or a Placement Agreement (for medium or high risk placements). Acknowledgement of receipt should be received for a Letter of Expectation, whereas a signed copy of the Placement Agreement must be received before the placement can be approved.

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- The module coordinator will confirm their approval of the placement, normally via email, to the student once all risks has been assessed and confirmed.

- Stage 3

Communication plan whilst on placement

- Approval of a placement must be accompanied by a communication plan, initiated by the Module Lead and agreed with the student and, if appropriate, the provider.

- The communication plan should be proportionate and appropriate for the type of placement being undertaken. It should take into account any risk management measures previously identified.

- As a minimum, the communication plan will include UCW emergency contact details for the student/provider to use in the event of an emergency occurring during the activity (even where activity maybe a one-off occasion for only a few hours). Where placements take place abroad or outside of normal working hours, or where activities are being supervised remotely, appropriate arrangements must be in place to ensure "immediate emergency communications" are available to the student so that immediate measures can be undertaken to normalise the situation, in accordance with the Weston College Business Continuity Plan.

- The communication between UCW, student and provider should be maintained in accordance with the agreed communication plan.

- Stage 4

Sustained management

- The faculty will monitor all externally supervised work-based learning and placement activity and records of placement providers through a central database (CRM). Data gathered will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and may be used internally to enhance the Weston College Groups management of work-based learning and placements and links with employers.

- In instances where the employer or work placement provider will assess students on behalf of UCW, appropriate staff development will be taken to ensure that staff are both suitably qualified and experienced to carry out the role at the appropriate standard.

5   RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

5.1 This version of the Policy will apply from 2022-2025.

5.2 The faculty where the higher education programme sits, will be responsible for ensuring that all procedures are adhered to.

5.3 The Policy has been designed to help meet the Work-based Learning section of the QAA Quality Code (2018).

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5.4 The Policy has been designed to help meet the OfS Regulatory Framework for Higher Education and in particular conditions B3, B4 and B5

Reporting

5.4 All work-based learning reporting will be done through the faculty and form part of the annual monitoring review for each programme and form part of the faculty report for AQSC to ensure the effectiveness of the Policy.

Records management

5.5 The faculty will be responsible for all internal and external course management systems are complete and updated.

5.6 This will adhere to the administration of the Policy and Procedure using the Weston College (ISO) record keeping system.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 The following definitions provide clarification of the key terms used in this Policy and their relevance to its implementation.

Terms and definitions

Advice and Guidance: The Advice and Guidance section of the QAA Quality code. It is divided into 12 themes and its purpose is to support new and existing providers in meeting the mandatory requirements of the Quality Code. It has been developed in partnership with the higher education sector and includes guiding principles, practical advice and further resources. The Advice and Guidance is not mandatory for providers, but illustrative of possible approaches.

Awarding Organisation: The academic organisation responsible for the approval of courses and awarding of qualifications, where delivery is by UCW.

Expectations: Statements in the UK Quality Code that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Practices: Effective ways of working that underpin the delivery of expectations. These include:
  a.   **core practices** that must be demonstrated by all UK higher education providers as part of assuring their standards and quality;
  b.   **common practices** focus on enhancement and are applied by providers in line with their missions, their regulatory context and the needs of their students.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA): The Quality Assurance Agency is the official body designated by the Office of Students to monitor and review the quality and academic standards of higher education provision across the UK.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education: UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet. It was developed with the Higher Education community and is owned, maintained and published by QAA.

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7. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Office for Students Ongoing Conditions of Registration
Office of the Independent Adjudicator, The Good Practice Framework: Supporting Disabled Students
UK QAA Quality Code: Learning and Teaching
Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework
The Equality Act 2010
> The Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education (The Equality Act 2010 technical guidance)

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Appendix 1
Examples of Higher education work-based learning

Company visits	Usually undertaken as a supervised, group activity either as part of the curriculum or outside, as an enrichment activity for students.
Enterprise Projects	Student devised entrepreneurial initiatives that lead to a commercial output. Exhibitions and public performance would come under this category, as would the public launch of a student business or product developed within a programme of study.
Insight days	May be offered by employers, or arranged by academic staff. Where accompanied by staff, field trip procedures would apply.
Internships/ Vacation placements	A short term placement opportunity usually offered and advertised by employers although may also be secured through a speculative application. Taken by students at any level of study in a vacation time or part time during an academic year. Elsewhere, the term "internships" is used in another context to describe opportunities for new graduates.
Practice placements	Governed by a formal agreement between the Higher Education provider and employers, these placements are usually undertaken on programmes where qualification leads to a licence to practice such as in health or education. Students will often do multiple practice placements as part of their programme of study and employers may be involved in the assessment of students.
Live Projects	Negotiated pieces of work, either group based or individual that may be sourced by the Higher Education provider or the student. Alternatively, businesses or organisations may approach the College with a proposal or brief that may be appropriate for an individual student or group. The project may be located at the employer's premises or may be completed within the College setting.
Work shadowing	Short term, informal activities where a student will spend time on company premises but will have no contract or expectation of making a working contribution; it is an observation opportunity.

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Appendix 2 – Flow Diagram

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Work-based Learning Flow Chart

Action	Responsibility

Student is made aware of Work based learning opportunities and expectations

Via
Module Handbook/Course tutor/Module lead
☐ WBL Strategy

During induction and first half term initial discussions taken about wants and needs of work based learning

Module Handbook/Course tutor/Module lead/Careers advisor

Learner preparation sessions – including, module and assessment expectation, letter of application, initial skills analysis and PDP

Course tutor/Module Tutor/Careers Advisor

Students source work-based learning opportunities through discussion with module leads.

Student/Module Lead

Student and module lead tutor to liaise directly with the faculty WPO who will CRM check the organisation ensuring HS Doc is in place.

WPO-student/module lead

Once due diligence of the placement is complete is complete, a Letter of agreement is signed by all parties.

WPO-student/module lead/Employer

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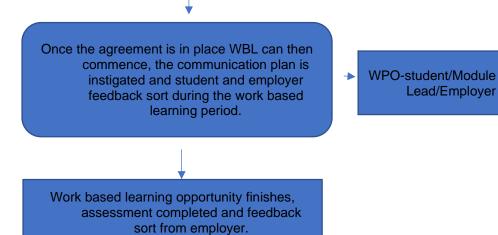
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Once the agreement is in place WBL can then commence, the communication plan is instigated and student and employer feedback sort during the work based learning period.

WPO-student/Module Lead/Employer

Work based learning opportunity finishes, assessment completed and feedback sort from employer.

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