



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT & ENGINEERING

**BA (Hons) Human Geography**  
**BA (Hons) Human Geography and Planning**  
**BA (hons) Human Geography and History**  
**Master of Planning**

**Placement and Professional Skills Module**

**Work Placement**

# **Guidelines for Employers**

2018/19

## Introduction

This is a guide for employers considering taking students on placements. We hope to cover the main points you will need to know but please do get in touch if you have any questions. Contact details are given at the end.

## The students

The work placement is an important part of the students' degree course. It forms an integral component of their Year 2 'Placement and Professional Skills' module for our Human Geography / Human Geography & Planning, Human Geography & History and Master of Planning students. We have approached reputable employers who we feel would be able to offer relevant experiences to the module, and their course as a whole, principally relating to housing, planning, communities, voluntary organisations, issues of social inclusion and the dynamics of difference and diversity.

Obtaining a University degree is no longer just about turning up to lectures and passing assignments. Students have to develop a set of skills that sets them apart from a crowd in a very challenging and crowded labour market.

The aim of this module is to help students develop professional or employability skills through placement programme and a series of supporting taught sessions/workshops. As everyone is different in the way they possess, perform and reflect on skills in the workplace, the module will enable students to recognise the skills and competencies that are required to develop a related geographical, planning or housing related career.

We hope that this sounds relevant to your work but if you would like to discuss how a student might link their studies to work experience at your organisation we would be more than pleased to give ideas from previous cohorts and discuss what might work.

When we have received placement adverts from you the employer, we will work with students to match them to your placement and then put them in touch with you. We have found this works very well for most employers and students but if for any reason you have doubts about the student being suitable please get in touch and discuss it with Dr David Haigh (contact details below).

## What's in it for you?

Well, it is a great opportunity for you to help a student into your field of work. The labour market is extremely competitive and you might be able to help them build key skills sets for their CV. It is also an opportunity for you to engage them in a meaningful project; something that you actually want to achieve or produce. We know that our employers have found our students able to contribute and make a real difference. In short, you would have a student helping you on a meaningful project whilst helping develop the employees of the future, hopefully in your specialist field. Here are some quotations from employers from last year:

- *I just wanted to let you know that [the student] was an absolute credit to the University. He was attentive, punctual and a pleasure to work with. He spent time in a number of services such as housing management, housing maintenance, housing regeneration....The feedback from all the people he spent time with was that his attitude and his whole manner was first class.*

- *In every aspect of our dealings I found [the student] to be a cheerful, outgoing and willing person whose placement proved to have been a positive experience for us. I would not hesitate in working with her again and wish her well for the future.*
- *I would like to say what a pleasure it was to meet and work with [the students], they were both very keen, enthusiastic and dedicated to the tasks that were set for them. They adapted very well to the world of work and were very well received by my team, nothing was too much trouble, they were polite and professional in their approach and contact with our customers and I would quite happily welcome them back should the opportunity ever arise.*
- *Very satisfied with diligence, timekeeping and attitude. [The student] was a pleasure to have around.*
- *To put it simply I would have all 5 back to help with our volunteering program any time they wanted.*

*We have more of these comments, it certainly isn't an exhaustive list!*

### **Timescales and process**

Students need to be ready to start their placement with you at the start of semester 2 (roughly early February 2019 until the mid-April,). Before then we have to ensure students are tied to a placement. What we ask you do is to complete a 'job advert' which includes a job title, description and list of skills they might gain during their employment with you. We then make a judgement who is most suitable and link them to you. There might be an opportunity to contribute to the employers fair in early November, depending on when we contact you about a placement)

**No later than w/c 28/01/19** agreement in principle from employers to take a student (or multiple students) and submit a job advert. Preferably we will have your advert in October or November 2017 giving a good lead-in time.

**If applicable on 15/11/18 – 2-5pm (approx.)** employers fair for employers to present a snapshot of their work and placement and discuss with students. We understand not all employers will be able to attend – all job adverts will be circulated to students anyway. The fair gives students an idea what might be available and gives employers a chance to promote their organisation and placement. We find it helps students identify a placement that they want to be part of which is more likely to be successful. We will inform you separately where this is

**w/c 21/1/19 & 28/1/19** Students begin to make contact with you to arrange a meeting (if they haven't already arranged something during late 2017)

**w/c 4/2/19** placements start.

**w/c 29/4/19** all placements should be complete (unless you have agreed to keep them on).

### **There is some flexibility when they work with you however...**

The students need to complete 70 hours of work placement over a 10 week period. This notionally works out at one day per week starting from 4/2/19. We say notionally one day per week as they have a full timetable of lectures to attend too. They will not be able to work a full 10 weeks in succession as they have a weeklong overseas field trip commencing 25<sup>th</sup> March.

There is no requirement for the 70 hours to be completed solely on the basis of one day per week. So we have some options you can explore with the student:

1. Depending on their class timetable they can do one day per week for 10 weeks excluding the field trip
2. Depending on their class timetable they could work two days per week for five weeks consecutively at the beginning or end of the module (planning students have more time at the end of the semester).
3. Depending on their class timetable they could work two days per fortnight for a 10 week period, notwithstanding the field trip.

In short, the 70 hours can be accounted for more flexibly, as long as it is convenient for both employer and student. The student will tell you what their individual timetable will be

It has to be said too, they don't have to be office bound; you might also set them work and report back the following week. In other words part of the 70 hours might not be 'with you' in your office but might be shadowing, out of office work or site visits for example.

### What we need from you

Students should be given meaningful tasks, or project work to complete, and are expected to develop practical work experience in line with the learning outcomes of the module or the key module aims; they are not there to make the tea, but also not to write your new finance strategy or planning policy guidance.

Tasks should be realistic and achievable considering their time and their relative experience. This can be negotiated with the student as a series of outputs/outcomes. If there are any issues with this please contact the University

It is also an opportunity for them to develop negotiation, communication, analysis and other practical skills used in the workplace

### Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Risk

They should be inducted into your place of work with appropriate health and safety training or any other suitable/necessary induction. They must be provided with necessary clothing/safety equipment as necessary. It is reasonable to assume they will bring basic stationary etc. You must also make them aware of data protection and confidentiality as appropriate.

Students will be covered under our liability insurance but also under your workplace or liability insurance.

We will conduct a risk assessment for all of our students prior to the commencement of their placement. (We may contact you about the specifics of the placement to help us do this)

If you suspect the student is struggling in any way with aspects other than their work placement (issues relating to home, family or any obvious issues relating to mental ill health) **please talk to us immediately.**

You can also refer them to our student wellbeing team if you deem it necessary or appropriate <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/student-wellbeing-team/> 0113 8128507

### Safeguarding Young Adults

Dr David Haigh is a University Designated Safeguarding Officer and should be contacted if there is any concern about the vulnerability of the student in your care.

He can be contacted on [d.p.haigh@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:d.p.haigh@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) or 0113 8127624

Further advice on this can be sought here <https://www.leedslscb.org.uk/>

Your organisation may also have a DSO; please seek advice from them too

## Cost to employers

There is no expectation of remuneration to the student. If they have to travel offsite during office hours there may be a reasonable case to consider paying some travel/subsistence, as you would one of your employees.

## What you can expect from students

They must turn up and complete work set by you to a satisfactory standard. If they do not you must let us know so we can challenge them about it. Similarly they will contact us if they feel they have been mistreated.

They must abide by a series of conducts in the workplace principally relating to appearance, attitude and behaviour. They will have signed a disclaimer to this end before they work with you.

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## Outcomes

The students will have to produce a placement file reflecting on what they have learnt during their placement and how this relates to the aims of the module. They will need to evidence some of the skills they develop or experiences with appropriate evidence. This might be some of the work/tasks you set them. They will have the support of tutors from the University to help them do this. We hope there will also be helpful outcomes for employers- we have some very good reports on this from previous cohorts.

## Feedback

There is an opportunity at the end of the placement to provide some feedback to the University about the student and the work they have been involved in.

## Any questions?

Please do get in touch if you have any queries or want to develop some ideas for a placement with us. We would be only too pleased to help and provide examples from previous years.

## FAQ's

Q: *Can I interview students and choose my own?*

A: We are not (and the students are not) set up or prepared for competitive interviews going up against other external candidates. We will ensure there is only one student contacting you for your placement offer so you shouldn't have to interview, even if several have registered an interest. However, you are under no obligation to take them after your first meeting if you are not happy; we will identify someone else. We undertake a range of quality checks to make sure we allocate you the best student for your organisation.

Q: *When will they contact me?*

A: We ask all students NOT to contact you until early Semester two. This is week 28th January 2019. We suggest you meet with them, work out their days of employment with you and start setting tasks/inducting them.

Q: *I can't make the employers fair (I have just been asked to take a student at the last second)?*

A: Don't worry, you are not left with dis-interested students! Some of our better students are the more selective type and will wait for something that interests them to come along. If you missed that fair and want to chat about the whole process please contact David or Neil

Q: *Will they be assessed on what they produce for me?*

A: No. We ask them to produce a reflective portfolio about skills and employment. This is because there are so many different types of job on offer it would be hard to assess all jobs equally. You will not be involved in their assessment, however you could of course talk to them about skills with them more generally.

Q: *I think they're doing a good job, can I keep them on?*

A: Yes, in fact this happened last year when a student gained summer employment following their placement. There is nothing stopping you taking the student on as an intern or offering them an official placement. This would be outside of our placement programme and would be your own arrangement with the student.

Q: *Can I take more than one students?*

A: Yes you can, many employers take more than one.

## Key contacts

If you have any questions please contact:

Dr David Haigh - 0113 812 7624 or [D.P.Haigh@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:D.P.Haigh@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Dr Neil Evans - 0113 812 3232 or [N.Evans@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:N.Evans@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Michelle Wishardt – 0113 8129294 [M.Wishardt@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:M.Wishardt@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)