Good Practice Guide
on
Placement Learning
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Executive Summary

The Good Practice Guide on Placement Learning identifies examples of good practice in the establishment and management of placement learning activities and highlights specific examples of particularly effective methods of enhancing placement learning. The Guide is not intended to be definitive, especially in light of the diversity of placement learning opportunities offered across the University. It does, however, apply to all courses falling within the QAA’s definition of placement learning, which includes:

- Intercalated years for work or study (optional and mandatory)
- Study abroad (departmental exchange or ERASMUS)
- Work-based learning and professional experience (UK or abroad)
- Industrial and clinical experience placements (UK or abroad)
- Experiential learning

There are three parties to any placement: the placement provider, the student, and the University. It is important that each party should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The University has Health and Safety Policy and Guidance that is designed to reduce the likelihood of injuries or ill health arising from placements. This policy and the supporting guidance for placement learning co-ordinators encourages a risk-based and risk management approach that can be applied to all student placements; allowing a lighter touch on placements with relatively low risks and more rigorous control measures where the risks are greater. The application of these arrangements should encourage students to learn how to assess and manage risk. Departments should check that their written and oral advice to students is aligned with this Guidance.

The University approves, monitors and reviews placement learning through the course approval process, Annual Course Review and Periodic Review. Departments proposing new courses incorporating placement learning opportunities or seeking substantial amendments to the structure of such a course must complete Parts 1 & 3 of the course approval documentation for approval by the relevant University committees.

Departments are responsible for the organisation of placement learning, supported by the International Office as appropriate. This includes establishing procedures and criteria for the approval of individual placement opportunities and meeting the requirements of relevant statutory regulatory, professional or funding bodies.

There are two main areas of responsibility of which placement providers need to be aware; the provision of appropriate learning opportunities to ensure that students have access to the modules they require for their degrees, the assessment of the students’ placement learning activities and the health and safety of the student. A Learning Agreement, which lists the modules the student has chosen, confirms that the home institution considers these modules to be appropriate and that the placement provider guarantees their availability, forms a useful safeguard for students and should be seen as a model for placements undertaken in other education institutions.

Regardless of the form placement learning takes, departments need to consider the contribution that placement learning makes to the overall aims of the course and course learning outcomes.
when designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the course and when designing and implementing the associated assessment strategy. Any assessment of placement learning should be subject to the usual departmental procedures for internal moderation and external examining, and standards applied to the assessment of placement learning must be consistent with Subject Benchmark Statements and other reference points, such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Prior to students embarking on a placement, departments should ensure that they are made aware of their rights and responsibilities. Students should be provided with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during and after their placements, including information on the financial implications of a placement and sources of pastoral support whilst on placement. Whenever possible, guidance to students should be developed in consultation with placement providers. All students should be made aware of the University’s Academic Complaints procedure which can be used vis-à-vis any aspect of the teaching and learning process and University provision to support teaching and learning.

Departments should ensure that members of academic staff involved in placement learning are competent to fulfil their role. Departments are encouraged to ensure that documentation covering the departmental role is available and that adequate handover between staff takes place when departmental responsibilities change.

The Academic Quality and Standards Committee has instituted an annual meeting be held of staff involved in managing placement learning in departments, to discuss issues which have arisen during the year, to identify solutions to difficulties where appropriate and to develop good practice at institutional level.
Introduction and Definition

The University offers several different types of learning opportunities as integral parts of courses which can be deemed ‘placement learning’. In recognition of the value of such diversity and in order to share good practice that exists within departments, a survey of departmental literature and placement learning handbooks has been conducted which should serve to enhance the policies and practices of all departments. This Good Practice Guide is intended to identify general good practice in the operation of placement learning activities, highlight specific examples of particularly effective methods of managing placement learning and to set out the framework for Health and Safety Guidance to students, academic staff and placement providers. It also offers departments advice on meeting the key components of the Code of Practice on Placement Learning, developed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and is intended to serve as a reference point for staff in departments responsible for placement learning.

The Guide:

- Defines placement learning opportunities and identifies types of placement learning offered by the University
- Addresses the precepts of the QAA Code of Practice on Placement Learning
- Identifies common issues, sources of advice and resources available to departments offering placement learning opportunities
- Highlights examples of effective ways of organising different aspects of placement learning.

The Guide is not intended to be definitive or prescriptive, especially in light of the diversity of placement learning offered across the University, and the Teaching Quality team would be grateful for feedback from colleagues for future editions.

What Constitutes Placement Learning?

The QAA regards work-based and placement learning as follows:

‘Work-based learning is learning that is integral to a higher education programme and is usually achieved and demonstrated through engagement with a workplace environment, the assessment of reflective practice and the designation of appropriate learning outcomes.

Placement learning is the learning achieved during an agreed and negotiated period of learning that takes place outside the institution at which the full or part-time student is enrolled or engaged in learning. As with work-based learning, the learning outcomes are an intended as integral parts of a programme of study. It is important that each student is supported by the institution throughout his/her placement experience, to ensure that specific learning related to the programme can be achieved.’

Source: QAA Code of Practice Section 9: Placement Learning

(The Code of Practice precepts are not intended to cover learning outside an institution that is not a planned part of a programme of study, such as part-time, term-time and vacation work which students have arranged for themselves.)
The QAA definition encompasses many types of placement learning offered by the University of Warwick, including:

- Intercalated years for work or study (optional and mandatory)
- Study abroad (departmental exchange or ERASMUS)
- Work-based learning and professional experience (UK or abroad)
- Industrial and clinical experience placements (UK or abroad)
- Experiential learning
**Institutional and Departmental Policies and Procedures**

The [University’s Health and Safety Policy and Guidance](#) on Student Placements defines placement learning as:

‘A period of work or study experience, paid or unpaid,:

- which is undertaken as an integral part of the student’s course; and
- where the student is enrolled at the University during this period; and
- where there is the transfer of supervision of the student to a third party.’

The following risk management principles must be applied to student placements:

- **clarity of understanding** by each party of their roles and responsibilities
- **preparation of the student** such that they are in a position to understand the risks and to make informed judgements
- **there are processes for enabling problems to be raised and resolved** prior to, during the course of, and at the conclusion of the placement
- **there are contingency plans** in case there are exceptional circumstances

Guidance on the how this can be achieved as an integral part of the placement process is provided in the section on 'Health and Safety in the Placement Process - Guidance for Placement Learning Co-ordinators' which describes what is required by the University in approving placements, preparing students for placement, and supporting the students in terms of their health and safety on placement both in the UK and overseas.

The Health and Safety Policy and Guidance also includes useful information on risks and liabilities, and insurance matters.

The University approves, monitors and reviews placement learning through the course approval process, Annual Course Review and Periodic Review. Responsibility for the organisation of placement learning activities at the University rests with departments, supported by the International Office as appropriate, which co-hosts preparatory briefings, assists students applying to overseas universities and acts as a contact point for students studying abroad.

The University requires Departments to set out their proposals for new placement learning opportunities in Part 3 of the course approval documentation. Departments should establish procedures and criteria for the approval of individual placement opportunities and to meet the requirements of relevant statutory regulatory, professional or funding bodies. Click here for further information relating to [course approval, monitoring and review](#).

Some departments have a departmental committee with responsibility for the placement learning activities, which is able to address issues and introduce policies at an operational level; for example the Institute of Education has established school review and partnership steering groups.
Criteria for the approval of individual placement opportunities

The University expects that departments will establish relationships with organisations or departments whose missions and national or international standing are comparable to its own. Departments should determine that that the placement provider is able to:

1. Provide learning opportunities which enable the intended learning outcomes to be achieved. These learning outcomes should be identifiable.
2. Support students during their placement.
3. Fulfil their responsibilities under health and safety legislation in the workplace, having regard to the level of skill and experience of placement students.

In addition, departments should attempt to assess the academic facilities at a partner institution, such as library and computing provision, academic accommodation and teaching facilities and facilities for students with special needs.

The Institute of Education's Handbook for Training in Schools sets out criteria for placement selection on the Initial Teacher Training courses, including the following characteristics:

- A clearly stated commitment to working in partnership with the University to provide newly qualified teachers of high calibre, and to enhancing teachers' professional development through their involvement in ITT. The School Development Plan should include development of its role as a training establishment.
- The provision of supportive placements which trainees and tutors rate highly. The placement provider should also provide school experience reports and classroom observations of high quality.
- A commitment to providing a Mentor who is in a position to lead other staff in supporting trainees, who attends professional training as required, and who is committed to the development and evaluation of ITT programmes in partnership with the University.

The Department of History takes into account a partner institution's competence in the area of visiting foreign students, in addition to academic standing, when establishing a placement arrangement.
Responsibilities of Placement Providers

Work-based or placement providers should be encouraged to play an active role in the opportunities provided for the student. To support them in this role they need clear information from the Departments about the objectives of the work-based or placement learning, their particular roles and responsibilities, the nature and scope of the activity involved and how responsibilities are to be fulfilled. They will benefit from guidance about their involvement in the procedures for the monitoring of the progress of students and mechanisms for reporting to the awarding institution at the end of the work-based or placement learning opportunity.

A work-based or placement provider may be involved in providing a mentoring or supervising role. The responsibilities of these important roles need to be clearly identified and any training for the mentor or supervisor provided before the student begins the opportunity.

It is good practice to inform the work-based or placement provider about visits from the academic or support staff, and any change(s) in the student's circumstances, in advance of the experience commencing.

Work-based or placement providers find it helpful to have clear information about action to be taken if they are no longer able to offer a work-based or placement learning opportunity or if they have any kind of problem or complaint concerning the conduct of the student.

Once a placement provider has been deemed an appropriate partner for Warwick, there are three main areas of responsibility of which placement providers need to be aware:

Provision of learning opportunities

Once the level and content of modules and workload is established with a partner institution, it is necessary to ensure that students have access to the modules they require for their degrees. This is especially true where the year abroad constitutes an entire year of registrations for a Warwick degree. Departments must consider the level and content of modules offered by proposed partners and accessibility of modules to Warwick students, particularly when certain Learning Outcomes must be achieved as part of the placement.

The European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS), used by the Law School, Warwick Business School (International Business) and the Departments of Engineering, Chemistry and Computer Science require a ‘Learning Agreement’ (Annex A) to be drawn up between both institutions prior to a student’s departure. This lists the modules which the student has chosen; confirms that the home institution considers these modules to be appropriate and that the placement provider guarantees their availability. A Learning Agreement forms a useful safeguard for students and should be seen as a model for placements wherever possible. Departments should make it clear in Study Abroad Handbooks that all module choices must be approved by the student’s academic department at Warwick where credit is to be awarded for the work undertaken by students on placement.
In the Department of German Studies, where a student has him/herself organised a full year work placement, the department requires an assurance from the placement provider that the student will be taken on (i.e. contract or informal agreement) as well as information about salary and accommodation. Full-year placements are subject to departmental approval to ensure the placement is deemed ‘career-enhancing’.

The School of Health and Social Studies involves placement providers for the MA & Diploma in Social Work in a three-way meeting to discuss contents of the Working Agreement, which sets out details of the placement including induction activities and working hours. Learning objectives, procedures for dealing with difficulties and complaints, workload, supervision and assessment requirements and dates for submission of work and future meetings are discussed at this meeting.

The School of Theatre Studies offers support to MA in European Cultural Policy and Administration students arranging placements through the provision of a sample contract document to enable students to negotiate their own contract with the placement provider.

The Department of Biological Sciences requires Intercalated Year placements to provide a suitable research element, which is ensured by Warwick tutors evaluating the project and the work undertaken by the student during the placement.

The Institute of Education negotiates a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the student and placement provider to define the purpose of the placement, learning outcomes and the trainee’s and placement provider’s entitlements.

In instances where students organise their own placement, it is important that the student is aware of the level of support available from the department for securing the placement and the learning outcomes they must meet whilst on the placement.

Role of placement providers in assessment

Although an evaluation of the student by the placement provider may not contribute to degree credit, it has been identified by many professional and statutory bodies as a required aspect of a student’s professional development and as useful in terms of personal development.

For Institute of Education Initial Teacher Trainees, a Training Record sets out what the trainee has done and achieved, the training received and ways in which progress has been assessed.

Language Assistants in France and Germany receive an evaluation report from the school in which they have taught. Those on other work placements are encouraged to ask their manager for a report on their time with the company.

Placement organisations accepting School of Theatre Studies MA in European Cultural Policy and Administration students following the Placement and Case Study module must submit a report on the student’s work.

The Department of Computer Sciences asks a student’s manager or tutor for a brief report on
work done by the student whilst on placement.

The Warwick Business School provides module leaders at partner institutions in the U.S. and Canada with an evaluation form (Annex B) for Warwick students, which seeks comment on a student’s comparative performance and any feedback on essays, practical work, discussion and examinations.

**Health and Safety of Students**

Guidance on the roles and responsibilities of placement providers is provided in Health and Safety in the Placement Process – Guidance for Placement Learning Co-ordinators, Step 1, Clarifying expectations with the placement provider.
Assessment and Achievement of Learning Outcomes

Introduction

Regardless of the form placement learning takes, departments need to consider the contribution that placement learning makes to the overall aims of the course and course learning outcomes when designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the course and when designing and implementing the assessment strategy. Any assessment of placement learning should be subject to the usual departmental procedures for internal moderation and external examining, and standards applied to assessment of placement learning must be consistent with Subject Benchmark Statements and other reference points, such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. If the placement learning forms a substantial part of the course credit, the learning outcomes should be identified and the assessments test whether these agreed outcomes have been achieved.

Placement Learning and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

Placement Learning opportunities may provide students with many of the outcomes identified in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. For example, the descriptor for an Honours (H) level degree includes the following statements:

- Students should demonstrate the ability to manage their own learning
- Students should be able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- Students should have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts and the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training

You can view the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications online: www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq/EWNI/default.asp

The variety in teaching and examining practices at overseas universities, as well as the diversity of placement opportunities for students on the same degree, means that many departments have devised various means of monitoring students’ progress and ensuring achievement of learning outcomes. Many departments give students assignments to complete while abroad, with set deadlines throughout the year, which are sent to Warwick for marking.

Students who spend the second year (or third in the case of CAS students) of their degree in North America are required to complete coursework which is marked by the host university, judged in light of the North American grade, converted to a Warwick equivalent against an equivalence grid (which should be published in student handbooks) and is either moderated or re-marked by an internal examiner. In common with all work contributing to final degree credit, this work is made available to External Examiners. Students are advised to keep copies of module descriptions and assessed coursework/test papers, as they may be helpful for Warwick exam boards in translating North American marks. Advice on the translation of marks is available from the International Office.
The **Department of Italian Studies** strongly recommends that students take exams in Italy. Students in Italy are required to complete a number of assignments and submit them to the Italian department at Warwick to set deadlines. Upon return, students undergo a language examination consisting of a written paper and oral component, which comprises 30% of the language mark for the year.

The **Department of German Studies** requires outgoing exchange students to provide personal tutors with proof of assessment of modules taken for the Department’s Easter vacation school at Schloss Dhaun and upon return to Warwick.

### Placement Portfolios

Assessment of portfolios of work by the department upon a student’s return is a common way of ensuring that students record their experiences, learning and professional development and achieve learning outcomes.

**Institute of Education** Secondary teacher trainees compile a portfolio comprising 6 professionally-focused tasks and write short summaries of the ways in which school practices are relevant to the work of new teachers.

**MA/Diploma in Social Work** students compile an Assessed Practice Portfolio throughout their placement to provide evidence of competence.

Students in the **Medical School** on the MBChB compile a portfolio of 36 word-processed case studies throughout Phase II (January year 2 - Easter year 3), of which 20 must be marked and signed before the student sits the Intermediate Clinical Examination. During each clinical block, clinical tutors will examine portfolio entries and provide feedback on progress.

A year abroad portfolio completed by International Business students in the **Warwick Business School** requires a substantial element of reflective learning as students are required to consider their expectations before they left the UK, to reflect on achievement of goals they set for themselves and to offer suggestions for ways in which they would act differently.

**Politics with French** students compile three dossiers on topics of particular interest, collecting as much varied material as possible (extracts from books, newspapers reports, reviews of TV programmes). The aim is for students to gather relevant vocabulary and identify key issues and points of view relating to them which can then be drawn upon when writing essays in their final year. Tutors in the French Department examine the dossiers when the students return to Warwick.

### Intercalated Year Reports

Most Intercalated Year and language placements require some form of report from the student upon return to Warwick to demonstrate that the student has made constructive use of the period abroad and that there are convincing indications of academic progress.
Politics and International Studies students on Intercalated Year degrees and German Studies students on placement submit a report at the start of Term 1 on return to Warwick addressing the question 'What have you gained from the Placement Year in terms of personal development, knowledge, skills and experience?'

The Department of Biological Sciences holds an Intercalated Year presentation evening when students and staff can compare and learn from each other's experiences.

What if the work a student does on a placement is classified as confidential by the placement provider?

It is important that placement providers requesting confidentiality of students' reports are aware that the report must be available to a third party for scrutiny in the event of a dispute or at an External Examiner's request. Conditions of the confidentiality agreement should be set out in the learning agreement between the University, student and placement provider.

In the Department of Chemistry, staff involved in marking confidential reports sign a confidentiality agreement, which is checked by Research Support Services. The staff members are sometimes required to go to the placement site to mark reports which are not allowed to leave company premises. An oral presentation given by the student may be given only to those academic staff members who have signed the confidentiality agreement. However, preferred practice is for the student to give to a general audience a presentation (which has been censored by the placement provider), thus allowing the presentation to retain its value as a recruitment tool to potential placement students.

The Department of Biological Sciences ensures that a confidential report and poster presentation are only seen by those staff who have signed a confidentiality agreement with the placement provider. Reports are retained securely within the department for the requisite time period before being destroyed as confidential waste.

Taking modules whilst on placement

Some placement learning experiences require students to complete modules delivered by Warwick while on the placement:

The MChem Chemistry with Industrial Training degree requires students to undertake a 12 month work placement and simultaneously complete 4 modules (30 credits) by distance learning of which the first, 'Research Skills for Industrial Placement' takes place in July. The modules are examined at the end of Term 2. The student earns a further 90 credits during the placement by writing a substantial report (15,000 words) on a project or assignment undertaken on placement, making an oral presentation upon return and from an assessment by the student's industrial supervisor.

The Year Abroad for International Business students in Warwick Business School counts for 10% of final degree classification and is worth 60 credits split over two core modules:

1. 'International Business in Context' is a three-day seminar held at Easter, generally in Paris,
providing a forum for discussing experiences. Through group work and case studies students demonstrate a critical awareness and understanding of major issues and problems associated with business in a chosen country. The module is assessed 20% by evaluation of class contribution and presentation and 80% by an individual written assignment of 3000-4000 words.

2. 'The Year Abroad Experience' requires students to produce a portfolio, 5000-6000 words in length, documenting and critically evaluating the year abroad experiences, providing a record of how time was spent and conducting a critical evaluation of personal experiences.
Students’ Rights and Responsibilities

Prior to embarking on a placement, departments should ensure that students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Students’ Rights

Students have the right to expect that opportunities will be available to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes established for a placement by the relevant Warwick department. Departments are responsible for making students aware of the learning outcomes, identifying and making students aware of opportunities for skills training which will enable learning outcomes to be met (i.e. language skills, personal development planning) and by establishing a Learning Agreement between the department, the student and the placement provider.

The student needs to be in a position to understand the risks and to make informed judgements. You and the placement provider can help by providing general information about the placement and information on health and safety factors to the student before the student accepts a placement. The student should be encouraged to seek out further information and to consider the risks associated not only with the placement provider but with the environment in which they will live and socialise. The amount of information that the student will need in advance will depend on the extent to which the placement is unusual, complex, or involves significant risk.

In all cases the student should also be provided with the following information:

- instructions about the general requirements and arrangements for the student to report any concerns about their health and safety while on placement.
- extra information on any additional issues or concerns highlighted by the risk assessment
- a copy of your expectations of the student, the placement provider, and your department with regard to their specific placement.

As placement students continue to be registered Warwick students, they have the right to access student support services available within the University.

The Institute of Education’s Initial Teacher Training Service Level Agreement (SLA) sets out the trainee’s entitlement to quality, time, planned provision, feedback and monitoring, and any additional experiences in which they can be involved (e.g. extra assignments and learning opportunities, work shadowing and extra-curricular activities). This is balanced by a School (placement provider) entitlement to information, written guidance, support from University tutors and the partnership office, training of mentors and feedback.

Students’ Responsibilities

Generally, the student has the following basic set of health and safety responsibilities, though these may need to be amended so that they are relevant to the placement.
**Their responsibilities to the Placement Provider:**

- Abide by all rules regarding health and safety requirements, and other practices and procedures of the placement organisation.
- Carry out the work or study programme specified by the placement provider under the supervision of the specified supervisor(s).
- Inform the placement provider of any health concerns or disability that may require adjustments.
- Report any concerns about health and safety at their placement to their placement provider.

**Their responsibilities to the University / Department:**

- Attend briefing sessions and access all provided information.
- Inform the Placement Learning Co-ordinator of any personal factors (e.g. health, disability, linguistic or of differing national expectations) that may affect the level of risk or may require adjustments.
- Consult with the Placement Learning Co-ordinator prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement.
- Report any incidents in which they are involved and any health and safety concerns that are not addressed by their placement provider to their Placement Learning Co-ordinator.

Most departments impress upon students their role as representatives of the institution and responsibilities towards placement providers, customers, clients, patients and employees. This is generally mandated by professional body requirements for students on the MBChB, MA/Diploma in Social Work and Initial Teacher Training courses and is good practice in all placement learning contexts.

'Students have a responsibility to meet the norms and expectations for professional conduct in the particular field of work or study that they are undertaking through the work-based or placement learning including those students who are on an overseas placement. For example, students on a health-related practice must conduct themselves and practice within an ethical framework' *QAA Code of Practice Section 9: Placement Learning*

Where a placement may provide the student’s first experience in a foreign country or work environment, it is also important to inform students of their responsibilities for managing both their own learning and professional relationships, recording progress and achievements and for alerting the placement provider and University to problems with the placement as soon as possible.

**Additional Responsibilities identified by Departments**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The 'Year in Italy' handbook produced by the Department of Italian Studies clearly sets out the student's responsibilities in preparation for, during and upon return from years abroad. These include:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance at meeting and workshops in preparation for the year abroad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for and adherence to guidance offered by the Italian Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of paperwork for the host and home Universities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conduct of preparatory arrangements for the year abroad
• Engagement in Correspondence with the host institution
• Provision of information to the Italian Department of address abroad
• Contact with the International Office/ERASMUS Co-ordinator in the host institution
• Respect for the laws and culture of the host country
• Responsibility for their own learning
• Timely completion of assignments
• Submission of assignments and feedback forms to the department within deadlines
• Response to communication from the department or University
• Attendance at the Easter Venice visit
• Notification to the department of any emergencies or major problems
• Arrangements for return to Warwick
• Participation in a debriefing upon return

The Department of French Studies defines similar expectations, including 'You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning in developing your command of both spoken and written French, and for the development of your knowledge of the culture, history, traditions and social circumstances of the country in which you are staying'.

The School of Comparative American Studies and Department of History require students to sign a 'Study Abroad Declaration' stating that they will remain at the designated institution during semester dates, provide information required by the History Department, fulfil the requirements of the course, be available for interview by Warwick staff visiting the placement, comply with formal instructions relating to course regulations and inform the department of e-mail and postal addresses abroad.

The MA/Diploma Social Work handbook prepared by the School of Health and Social Studies sets out the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in the placement; the tutor, student and practice teacher.
**Student Support and Information**

Students should be provided with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during and after their placements. Whenever possible guidance to students should be developed in consultation with placement providers.

**Pre-Departure Information and Advice**

Students should be provided with detailed information before their placement comprising guidance notes and briefing meetings. Briefing meetings should ideally involve students who have already completed placements in earlier years and incoming exchange students from the relevant countries and institutions. Generally, the following information should be provided to students prior to the start of a placement, though in certain cases such as privately arranged internships responsibility for collecting this information may rest with the student:

1. Departmental support for a placement arranged by the student.
2. Information on health and safety issues.
3. Legal or ethical considerations, such as any professional requirements for confidentiality and differences in legislation, local customs and practices.
4. Means of recording achievement of learning outcomes and progress. Departments should ensure that their course regulations and student guidance notes make clear what the expectations are of the year abroad. Course regulations must be clear about the outcome for students if the year abroad is failed.
5. Additional language or skills preparation. Departments should consider carefully the level of written and oral linguistic competence required before a student is permitted to undertake a placement. This will clearly vary depending on whether or not modules taken overseas will contribute towards the Warwick degree.
6. Practical issues relating to travel, insurance, financial and banking arrangements, personal security, accommodation, cost of living and any host country formalities (such as residence permits).
7. Cultural orientation and work expectations.
8. Information about the placement provider including the nature of the institution, contact names, details of holidays and/or term times, study facilities, induction and registration procedures, pastoral care arrangements, facilities for special needs students, library and other facilities provision, social and leisure activities. Students on study abroad programmes should also receive information about degree structure, modules available and guidance on suitable modules.
9. Institutional support services available to students during placements at Warwick and the placement provider.

Most departmental handbooks provide ample information for a student going on placement, including what to expect before, during and after placement in terms of pastoral support and the achievement of learning outcomes. It is also useful to include information as to what students can expect in terms of access to computers, the Internet and other resources. All departments sending students abroad require students to purchase personal medical insurance – students participating in the ERASMUS programmes sign a contract which requires confirmation of insurance details.
The **Department of Chemistry** provides students with a list of previous and current placement providers to which students can apply for a placement.

A year prior to departure, the Year Abroad Tutor in the **Department of History, School of Comparative American Studies** and in the **Departments of German, Italian and French Studies** informs all first and second year students about the study abroad courses, matches students to host institutions and ensures the appropriate procedures are completed prior to departure, assisted by the International Office.

The **Comparative American Studies** Year Abroad handbook explains the differences students may encounter in the American University system and provides an A-Z directory of advice. Informal Year Abroad guides written by previous years’ students are also made available.

The Phase II handbook for the MBChB students in the **Medical School** provides information on each local NHS Trust which includes site-specific information on where to report on the first morning, who to contact, accommodation, location and hours of the library and IT provision, any health requirements before starting and where to get a pager/bleep.

The **Department of Politics and International Studies** and **Modern Languages departments** hold a series of meetings and briefing sessions throughout the academic year preceding the exchange. Social events are held in the first and second terms at which outgoing students can meet students from the host universities who are currently studying at Warwick and Warwick students who have previously studied abroad.

The **Warwick Business School** holds pre-departure meetings for students studying International Business and German and Business and another for students interested in going to North America. Warwick students returning from an exchange and students currently at Warwick from partner institutions are in attendance. Both meetings are followed by a social event to allow students to mingle and discuss experiences.

The **Departments of Italian and German Studies** handbooks include information from the Careers Service on making the most of the year abroad. The Departments run an extensive pre-placement programme with the International Office involving the Careers Service and other cohorts of students.

**Disability Support**

The disability support service at Warwick ([disability@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:disability@warwick.ac.uk)) can help students apply for any funding they are eligible for, offer advice to departments on reasonable adjustments/assistive technology and help advise on placement issues.

Funding available for disabled students is through Student Finance England (if they apply for it) and is called the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). The disability support service can provide advice, guidance and facilitate support arrangements but do not directly provide any funding.

DSAs can fund assistive technology (software, equipment, digital recorders etc.), individual support (note taking, dyslexia tuition, library assistance etc.), general allowances (for travelling, books,
photocopying) based on individual requirements. Students who have evidence of their disability and are fully enrolled on a course (FT or PT of at least 50% FTE attendance) are eligible for DSAs. Individual academic support is provided by Warwick and Student Finance England invoiced for any such support provided. If students are not eligible for the DSAs and they require a note taker for example, or dyslexia support, it may be possible to facilitate this internally but the disability support service should be consulted.

DSAs are not intended to fund anything that is seen as an Institutional responsibility to make reasonable adjustments and it is usual that placement learning would fall within this definition.

In most cases the reasonable adjustments required can be accommodated with a bit of flexibility and creative thinking. The reasonable adjustments that need to be considered will vary depending on the level of need but could include making adaptations to the physical environment to ensure the space is accessible, resources in accessible formats, TAs (where appropriate), mentoring, software and equipment etc. For some International placements, this might be more challenging. Students in this position may find that the culture, policies and legislation were very different to that of the UK and this can, in some cases, cause problems. Working in advance with placement providers to make them aware that there might be students with disabilities accessing those placements can lead to early identification of any problematic areas. The Disability support service (disability@warwick.ac.uk) should be contacted for advice.

**Support from the International Office**

Students going abroad through the ERASMUS programme or an academic exchange to North or South America are provided with the following information from the International Office:

- University of Warwick Insurance Policy and Health Questionnaire
- University and Visa applications
- Information on Local Educational Authorities and the Erasmus Grant (if applicable)
- ‘To whom it may concern’ letter confirming student status
- Accommodation form for the following year
- Checklist of things to do before leaving the UK (Annex C).
- Country-specific information and advice where available

A pre-departure briefing is held for all outgoing Warwick students, as well as individual meetings with each outgoing S-E student. International Office representatives are available to co-host briefing sessions for outgoing or incoming students. The International Office also holds files on ERASMUS/exchange links, available for student consultation.

For more information, contact:

Helen Johnson (North and South America)
Amanda Ashby (ERASMUS)

**Placement learning and immigration**
When considering if a non-EEA student will be able to participate in placement learning, it is important to establish whether the course would be suitable for the student to apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa under the Points Based System. All students entering on a student visitor visa are entirely prohibited from working, and this includes work placements and internships, whether paid or unpaid.

If the course would not enable them to apply for a Tier 4 visa, the international student is unlikely to be able to enter or remain in the UK for the purpose of studies. For further information or guidance, on this or any of the below, please contact the University’s Immigration Service: immigrationservice@warwick.ac.uk.

**What is the Points Based System?**

It is a new immigration system that came into effect from February 2008. It affects most migrants coming to the UK for work or study. It is underpinned by the principle of sponsorship: whereby the institution or organisation receiving the students/workers is responsible for ensuring that these migrants do not abuse the immigration system.

In order to recruit international students, who will enter the UK under Tier 4 of the Points Based System, institutions are obliged to apply for a sponsor license. Warwick has applied for and been granted Highly Trusted Sponsor status. This comes with certain sponsor duties:

- Record keeping of student’s immigration status
- Monitoring and reporting – non-enrolment, withdrawal from studies etc

Failure to exercise our HTS duties could result in the loss of this status and ultimately to the revoking of our licence to bring international students into the country for study. These duties apply even where a student is undertaking a period of placement learning.

**What does a student need to qualify for a Tier 4 visa?**

Applicants require a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from their Tier 4 sponsor. We may only create CAS for a full-time programme of studies, where the candidate has met all conditions of our offer. The course must also meet specific minimum academic requirements.

**Work placements during the course**

If the course contains a course-related work placement, any period that the applicant will be spending on that placement must not exceed half of the total length of the course spent in the United Kingdom, except where it is a United Kingdom statutory requirement that the placement should exceed half the total length of the course.

**Financial Implications**

Most departments set out in their handbooks that students should consider the financial implications of a year abroad when selecting the course or how they will spend the year. University of Warwick students are eligible for hardship funds while on placement if they meet the application
criteria; information can be obtained from the Senior Tutor’s Office, the Academic Office or Students’ Union Advice and Welfare Services.

In general, students undertaking a year abroad/sandwich year are normally only charged 50% of the usual full-time fee during the year abroad. Further information about current fees in any given academic year can be obtained from the Student Finance section of the Academic Office (http://go.warwick.ac.uk/studentfinance/tuitionfees)

Students on ERASMUS programmes normally receive a mobility grant that covers some of the extra expense associated with living abroad (approximately €250 per month of placement for a minimum of 3 months and maximum of 10 months). ERASMUS funds also may be available to support an intensive language training course in the host country immediately before the start of the academic year.

The Department of Italian Studies handbook provides a list of anticipated costs for the year abroad. Accommodation in Venice during the Easter visit is free, meals are provided and the Department will reimburse reasonable travel costs. At the residence in Rome students complete a Year Abroad Questionnaire (Annex D), which asks questions about costs incurred throughout the year and is used to update the departmental handbook annually.

The Warwick Business School warns students going to the United States that they will be required to show evidence of access to funds totalling $5000 in order to obtain a student visa. The North American handbook is updated annually with the most recent costs available for accommodation and meal plans to ensure students are aware of the financial implications of the placement.

The Department of French and German Studies’ Year Abroad handbook explains that students are required to pay fees to the University of Warwick during their year abroad (unless participating in an ERASMUS exchange or working as a language assistant in the EU) to cover the costs of academic guidance, pastoral support and administration for organising the year abroad. If you are participating in a ERASMUS exchange or working as a language assistant in the EU then you will receive a maintenance grant.

The School of Comparative American Studies will reimburse the cost of any compulsory Spanish language textbooks for departmental students upon remittance of receipts. CAS students based in Latin America who are required to pay extra for certain modules will be reimbursed, provided the Department’s permission is obtained before they enrol on the course.

Support and Advice While on Placement

Students should be provided with an induction to the placement environment, including appropriate health and safety information and provided with a point of contact at the placement location and within the University to approach with any problems or questions. Courses which do not require assessment throughout the year should have an alternative means of monitoring the academic progress of students on placement to ensure that they are on track for achieving the learning outcomes, as well as their general safety and well-being. Students on placement should
also have access to the e-mail addresses of appropriate SSLC representatives on campus, should they wish to raise issues regarding the academic aspects of placement learning.

Guidance on support and advice for students on health and safety matters and in particular about the processes for enabling problems to be raised and resolved while on placement is provided in the [University’s Health and Safety Policy and Guidance on Student Placements](#).

### Monitoring Progress: Pastoral Support

Departments should ensure continuity of access to pastoral support, including continued contact with personal tutors (by email or by other means). Students on placements are entitled to access to the University’s Student Support services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Support and advice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Department of Economics</td>
<td>The Department of Economics sends out an e-mail questionnaire towards the end of each term for students to answer and send to their personal tutors, to keep them informed of progress and any problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and advice for students in Warwick Business School is complemented by the use of my.wbs, a web portal available whilst at Warwick, as well as when on placement. My.wbs has a facility for discussions, which are monitored by the module tutors for the two year abroad modules and is a means to provide students with news and course-specific information, handbooks, SSLC materials and staff e-mail addresses.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department of Politics and International Studies provides students with a set of five forms prior to leaving with deadline for submission to the department, ensuring that the student communicates their whereabouts when they arrive, half way through the first term, at Christmas, in early March and at the end of the year. Each form requests summaries of progress, problems and positive aspects of the placement. At the University of Massachusetts, students from Warwick have a designated faculty adviser, who offers academic and pastoral support and communicates with the PAIS exchange co-ordinator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The German Year Abroad Co-ordinator and personal tutors are available for guidance via e-mail and a web board, which also contains downloadable information about the final year of studies at the University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The School of Health and Social Studies requires an interim three-way meeting (student, placement provider and University) to review the progress of the student on placement, using the initial Working Agreement as a starting point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>During industrial placements, students from the Department of Chemistry have a nominated tutor from the department who visits them on site and acts as a point of contact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institute of Education Initial Teacher Training students receive at least one tutor visit, mentor meetings, lesson observations and review meetings. The Initial Teacher Training handbook includes a suggested list of topics for discussion between the placement mentor and student, such as health and safety rules, policies and procedures and meeting with school governors.</td>
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</table>
**What if a student wants to come home?**

If a student contacts the department wanting to leave the placement due to homesickness or other non-medical reasons, they must be made aware of the academic consequences of failing to complete the placement. The student and department should consult with the University’s Senior Tutor as and when appropriate.

If the student must leave the placement due to medical problems, the Senior Tutor should again be involved. All students travelling abroad for their placement should purchase personal medical insurance enabling them to receive medical attention in the country of placement. In either situation the department should maintain contact with the placement provider and the student.

**Academic Progress: Recording Achievement of Learning Outcomes**

Achievement of learning outcomes is generally recorded through assessed or formative coursework. Although many placement learning opportunities require students to submit a report or even assessed essays, outside of the University environment students are required to take responsibility for recording more of their own learning and development.

| The Department of German Studies advises students to keep a personal record of progress during the year abroad to help prepare for what lies ahead, to enable students to learn about themselves and to help them reflect on academic and personal learning. It also encourages year abroad students to take every possible opportunity to improve knowledge of or acquire another foreign language besides German. |

**Preparing for return to Warwick**

**Accommodation and module selection**

While students are on placement, they need to be informed about and prepare for their next year at the University. The International Office sends all students studying abroad accommodation request forms for the next year at Warwick. Some departments include a discussion on module selection for the next year when visiting the students on placement. In all cases, departments should ensure that students away on placements are given the same information about module selection, at the same time, and the same opportunities for choice and discussion (by email as necessary), as those students on campus.

| The Department of German Studies holds an orientation and module selection workshop, tutorial meetings, debriefing sessions and a meeting with a Careers Advisor during its Easter vacation school at Schloss Dhaun, Germany. |

**Re-orientation on return**

Departments may wish to hold re-orientation meetings and events.

| The Warwick Business School holds a welcome back meeting in the first week of Autumn Term to |
de-brief students and ensure they are aware of forthcoming events such as careers talks.

The Department of Italian Studies holds debriefing workshops between returning students, Italian exchange students and first year students, to encourage reflection on the year abroad, help prepare those yet to go and provide a forum for discussion on how to improve the programme.

On returning to Warwick, Politics and International Studies students meet directly with the Director of International Students to discuss their placement learning and the evaluation of the written report.

Students in the Departments of French and German Studies complete a Year Abroad Report Form upon return to Warwick to reflect upon the contribution the Year Abroad experience has made towards personal development.

**Careers advice**

Students away from the University just before their final year may miss out on careers advice vital to the start of graduate recruitment early in the Autumn Term. Many departments assist students by providing careers advice in their handbooks, during visits and upon the students’ return to campus.

The Careers Service delivers many of its advice and information services through its website and students should be encouraged to take advantage of these to integrate their career planning with their personal development planning. Many departments include input from the Careers Service in their pre-departure briefings for students and the Careers Service can send information to students at their placement that will support their career planning. Individual support is also available by e-mail.

Appendices in the Department of German Studies’ handbook include information on ‘Transferable Skills’, ‘Typical graduate form questions’ and ‘Typical graduate interview questions’. The handbook also includes information from the Careers Service on how to conduct a careers search from abroad, the German/Austrian/Swiss approaches to recruitment, postgraduate study and preparing for career search activities in the final year. There are exercises for students to complete, such as identifying skills they want to use, and how to demonstrate that they possess them.
Complaints

Dealing with Complaints

University Academic Complaints procedure

Complaints procedure which can be used vis-à-vis any aspect of the teaching and learning process and University provision to support teaching and learning. The procedure should be included in departmental handbooks. Students should be clear on the distinction between the Academic Complaints procedure and procedures for other problems or complaints, such as the Disciplinary Regulations, the Harassment Guidelines, the appeals mechanisms in the Degree, Diploma or Certificate Regulations and the Code of Practice for Dealing with Allegations of Scientific Misconduct. More information about the Student Academic Complaints procedure is available from the Academic Office.

History and Comparative American Studies students are advised that complaints about host institutions can be approached through the local grievance procedures (the equivalent of Warwick’s Academic Complaints procedure) and that they can seek support from the departmental Year Abroad Tutor.

The MBChB Phase II handbook uses a flow chart (Annex E) to identify potential problems and the appropriate sources of support/procedures for each.

The MA/Diploma Social Work handbook identifies a ‘Problem Solving Procedure’, which can operate outside of or prior to engaging the formal Academic Complaints procedure. It includes students taking responsibility for raising issues of concern as early as possible; students approaching someone to discuss the experience; identifying people to approach to pursue the issue who can decide how to best handle the situation and whether the experience should be recorded. The handbook then outlines the University procedures for filing a formal complaint, as well as the General Social Care Council complaints if students remain dissatisfied after pursuing an appeal or complaint. A section is also included on using the SSLC and Student Evaluation of the course and sources of confidential support and advice.

The Department of Politics and International Studies has defined procedures for acting upon informal complaints. They are initially handled by the Director of International Students and the dedicated administrative member of staff. The DIS reports matters to the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Departmental Teaching Quality Committee and informs the International Office.

Problems and Emergencies

Prior to undertaking a placement, students should be provided with a named departmental contact at the University of Warwick and names of contacts at the placement organisation. In addition to local emergency contacts, the students should be given contact numbers for support services at the University of Warwick, such as the Senior Tutor, the Students’ Union Advice Centre and Nightline.
Departments should obtain details of next of kin or another person to be contacted in the event of an emergency prior to the student’s departure.
**Staff Development**

Departments should ensure that the members of academic staff involved in placement learning are competent to fulfil their role. This may require knowledge specific to the type of placement. Departments are encouraged to ensure that documentation covering the departmental role is available and that adequate handover between staff takes place when departmental responsibilities change. Placement Learning Co-ordinators should understand and be able to apply the University Health and Safety Policy and Guidance on Student Placements. The University’s Health and Safety Department provide training sessions through the Learning and Development Centre. Placement Learning Co-ordinators can also obtain advice from their Health & Safety Advisor (see [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/safety/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/safety/)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Director of International Students in the Department of <strong>Politics and International Studies</strong> is an experienced academic member of staff who normally has direct experience studying abroad, knowledge of the ERASMUS programme and foreign language competence, as does the administrative member of staff responsible for placements.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Year Abroad Co-ordinator in the <strong>Department of German Studies</strong> shadowed his predecessor for two years prior to taking up the role. He has also attended several ERASMUS conferences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation of Placement Learning Opportunities

Course Approval

The contribution of a placement learning opportunity within a Warwick course should be reflected in the course approval documentation, Course Specification, assessment guidelines and information and guidance for applicants, students and placement providers.

Course approval documentation

Departments proposing new courses with placement learning opportunities or seeking substantial amendments to the structure of a course with placement learning opportunities must complete Parts 1 & 3 of the course approval documentation for approval by the relevant University committees. Part 3 of the course approval documentation must be completed only if the placement constitutes an entire year in duration, is necessary for the award of a degree or constitutes 25% or more of a course (in terms of credit and/or length of study).

Departments establishing new partnerships for existing courses, which do not alter the structure of the course, should maintain a register of partner organisations to feed into an institution-wide register. The institutional register of placement learning partners will be updated on an annual basis, as a result of the annual forum for placement co-ordinators.

When seeking approval for placement learning opportunities within new or existing courses, departments must address the following, as set out in Part 3 of the course approval form:

- Academic support available to students on their placement from the partner institution and the University
- Pastoral support available to students during their placement
- Pre-departure briefings
- Placement providers’ ability to provide learning opportunities that enable the intended learning outcomes to be achieved (through a mechanism such as a Learning Agreement)
- Structure of the placement and credit transfer
- Details of the learning programme
- Assessment
- Failure of placement
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Health and safety

Prior to the development of a new Industrial Training degree, the Department of Chemistry sent proposed guidelines to companies who had previously offered placements to Warwick students for consultation.

Learning Programme in other academic institutions
When proposing a course or module involving placement learning in another academic institution which involves the transfer of credit from the placement institution to Warwick, the department needs to ensure that the level of modules is comparable with the Warwick modules they replace, the appropriate workload for students (60 ECTS credits corresponds to one year of full time study in the European Credit Transfer Scheme) and the comparability of module content. The modules students are allowed to take for credit at Warwick must contribute to a coherent course of study and enable students to be prepared for modules they will take when they return to Warwick.

**Monitoring and Review**

The Academic Quality and Standards Committee requires that an annual meeting be held of those involved in placement learning in departments, to discuss issues which have arisen during the year and the development of good practice at an institutional level.

All placement arrangements should feed into departmental monitoring and review processes, such as Annual Course Review and Periodic Review. There should also be mechanisms in place to solicit feedback from current and former students, placement providers and external examiners to ensure the quality and standards of a placement. The review process should include any concerns about health and safety (Health and Safety in the Placement Process – Guidance for Placement Learning Co-ordinators, Step 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institute of Education</th>
<th>monitoring and review for Initial Teacher Training placements includes placement evaluations completed by the student, University tutors and Schools. The results are then considered by school placement review groups and partnership steering groups.</th>
<th>Students in the School of Health and Social Studies and Medical School are encouraged to use the SSLC to discuss and raise issues relating to placement learning opportunities.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Department of Economics takes into consideration the reports submitted by previous placement students to make changes for the next year. Warwick tutors conduct an annual programme of visits to selected partner institutions to examine the resources available to students.</td>
<td>In the School of Theatre Studies, both students and placement hosts are asked to evaluate the experience after the placement, which informs policies and procedures on an on-going basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Department of Politics and International Studies conducts an annual review of institutional arrangements with partner universities to ensure that the appropriate learning opportunities are being met. The Director of International Students evaluates student feedback to ensure that quality of placement learning is upheld and reports to the Departmental Teaching Quality Committee.</td>
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</table>
Conclusion

The variety of placement learning opportunities for students studying at the University of Warwick has resulted in a wide range of good practice across the institution. Although the aims and circumstances of each type of placement are different, there are many practices which may be adaptable to other areas of placement learning provision. This Good Practice Guide will be updated in conjunction with the annual forum for placement learning coordinators in the University referred to above. To make amendments or additions to the Guide please contact the Senior Assistant Registrar or Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality).