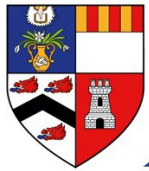


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# Mapping Against the UK Quality Code

SECTION 12: WORK-BASED LEARNING

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# SECTION 12: WORK-BASED LEARNING

## INTRODUCTION

The Quality Code is split into 12 themes, available online on the QAA website at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>. As part of this, *Work-based Learning* brings together aspects of provision which involves elements of practical, work-based education. In providing opportunities for students to engage in work-placements or apprenticeships, it allows students to gain a variety of applied practical-based skills not otherwise gained through academic study. The Quality Code describes this theme as follows:

*Work-based learning for higher education courses describes courses that bring together higher education providers and work organisations to create learning opportunities. This Theme needs to be considered in conjunction with other regulatory requirements including providers' academic regulations, funding body requirements and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies' (PSRB) rules and regulations.*

This theme applies to academic provision that utilises work-based learning, and to courses offered by colleagues in Professional Services teams, such as the Careers and Employability Service, where similar courses or programmes of activity are offered.

In defining key terms that are used in this section, the Quality Code notes the following:

**Apprenticeships:** This Theme is intended to be relevant to all apprenticeships that include higher education irrespective of the nation in which they are delivered. This will include, for example, Degree Apprenticeships, Graduate Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships. Providers will need to make reference to other relevant guidance from QAA and other involved bodies for specific requirements, advice and guidance, relevant to the apprenticeship being delivered.

**Student:** Where the term 'student' is used in this document, it should be used to refer equally to those students who are also 'apprentices'.

**Work-based learning:** This involves learning through work, learning for work and/or learning at work. It consists of authentic structured opportunities for learning which are achieved in a workplace setting or are designed to meet an identified workplace need. This type of learning typically has a dual function of being designed to meet the learning needs of the employees, developing their knowledge, skills and professional behaviours, and also meeting the workforce development needs of the organisation.

Work-based learning is, therefore, learning which is distinguished from work-related or simulated learning activity that has not been formulated or commissioned by, or in partnership with, employers to address a current workforce need.

## SECTION 12: WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to the University’s own policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University’s practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or other document.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS & CORE/Common PRACTICES	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/Common PRACTICES
The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student’s achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.
	The provider’s approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES	UNIVERSITY PRACTICES	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b>		
<p>1. Work-based learning courses and opportunities are designed and developed in partnership with employers, students and other stakeholders (where appropriate) and contain learning outcomes that are relevant to work objectives.</p> <p>Within the context of the Code and the advice and guidance, work-based learning is integral to the course of study and is designed in partnership between the education organisation, employers and students. Other stakeholders may be involved, for instance, care users, professional bodies and regulatory authorities. To ensure integration and an effective experience, course design should include learning outcomes that are directly relevant to work objectives.</p>	<p>The University currently offers a limited range of work-based learning opportunities including one Graduate Apprenticeship programme which is being phased out due to limited student recruitment.</p> <p>The University’s Strategic Plan, ‘Aberdeen 2040’, states that we will “equip our graduates for global employment through our curriculum and teaching methods” and “ensure that all our students can experience innovative, challenge-led education involving external stakeholders”. To drive forward this strategic vision regarding growth of work placement opportunities, a Task and Finish Group has been established.</p> <p>The University’s Guidance Note on Placements provides advice to staff, students and placement providers in regard to placement provision. This guidance is currently being updated and taken through our Committee structure for approval.</p> <p>Through Programme Advisory Boards (PABs), Schools are able to engage with employers and local organisations to discuss programme and course design as well as enabling close links with work-based learning providers.</p> <p>Additionally, the requirement for work-based learning in some programmes (e.g., school placement provision in Education Degrees) is a Professional Statutory and Regulatory (PSRB) requirement and where this is the case the work-based learning is developed in close alignment with the PSRB requirements.</p> <p>Schools are responsible for ensuring that any work-based learning activity clearly defines the relevant responsibilities of the various parties, intended learning outcomes and appropriate assessment. The development of work-based learning is undertaken in partnership with employers, students, and other stakeholders where appropriate.</p>	<p><a href="#">Course and Programme Approval Processes (Webpage)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Policy)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Policy)</a></p> <p>Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)</p> <p>Work Placements Task &amp; Finish Group – Remit &amp; Composition (Document)</p> <p><a href="#">Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage)</a></p>

	<p>The University’s procedures for course and programme approval apply equally to periods of work-based learning, Within the documentation submitted for approval Schools are required to provide details of learning outcomes and clearly map how this will be assessed.</p> <p>In developing any period of work-based learning, academic Schools are also required to take account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The capability of the workplace provider to fulfil the University’s expectations and legal responsibilities in regard to the Disability Discrimination Act;</li> <li>- The University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;</li> <li>- The health, safety and welfare of students;</li> <li>- Whether the placement will require students to complete a Disclosure Scotland check (e.g., School-based placements for teacher training).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Work-based learning consists of structured opportunities for learning and is achieved through authentic activity and is supervised in the workplace.</b></p> <p>Work-based learning in the context of the advice and guidance is a structured opportunity. It is an integral part of a course that is achieved through authentic activity which is intended to contribute to meeting a genuine workplace need. Arrangements between employer, education organisation and student should be agreed on how the student is supervised within the workplace, and regular</p>	<p>Academic Schools are responsible for the organisation and management of work-based learning activity. When organising work-based learning, a member of University staff is identified as having responsibility for the activity. Where students have proactively identified an opportunity for work-based learning to support their overall learning experience, the School works closely with the students and the organisation to there is full clarity and understanding around the relative roles and responsibilities of all parties.</p> <p>Heads of School are responsible for ensuring those staff members who are arranging and overseeing placements and work-based learning are competent to do so, and that they are provided with appropriate training opportunities. This makes sure the learning opportunities are authentic by ensuring staff have current knowledge and can therefore support students because they have real world expertise and are aware of current trends within the discipline.</p> <p>Academic Schools must also ensure that work-based learning providers are aware of their role and responsibilities in the support of students</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document) <a href="#">Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Policy (Policy)</a></p>

<p>contact should be maintained - appropriate to the student, the workplace context and specific work-based learning opportunity.</p>	<p>during the placement and, where appropriate, assessment of students, if they are required to carry out assessments as part of the agreed activity. Training is provided for providers on assessment practices and procedures that are used by the University.</p> <p>Where an activity is identified as requiring students to complete a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check, academic Schools ensure that this has been completed satisfactorily before the work-based learning period begins. Schools are also responsible for ensuring that students complete the correct level of (PVG) checking as required for the planned activity.</p>	
<p><b>3. Work-based learning opportunities are underpinned by formal agreements between education organisations, employers and students.</b></p> <p>Work-based learning opportunities will be agreed between education organisations, employers and students; they will need to be formally agreed to ensure all understand the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations. The format and detail of the agreement will vary depending on each opportunity and may follow a format specified by another organisation, for example, apprenticeship agreements and commitment statements in England (see also Partnerships Theme).</p>	<p>Arrangement of work-based learning opportunities involves close liaison between the academic School and the work-based learning provider to agree the structure of the placement, the support that will be provided to the student and the assessment, where required. These are supported by an agreement detailing relative responsibilities of the various parties.</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)</p>

<p>4. Education organisations and employers consider any specific issues in relation to the workplace environment and deal with them appropriately, including informal agreements where appropriate.</p> <p>Education organisations, employers and students have responsibilities to themselves and to others in relation to the workplace environment. These will include, for example, health and safety and safeguarding. Education organisations and employers need to be clear on their respective responsibilities and provide guidance to each other and to students on the specific issues with relevant training, if required. Formal agreements may also need to include details on how specific issues, such as sharing of data, are dealt with.</p>	<p>Arrangements are agreed in writing with University staff, the student(s) and the work-based learning provider. In advance of any work-based learning activity taking place, academic Schools should liaise with the work-based learning provider to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The learning outcomes and assessment arrangements are confirmed.</li> <li>- Issues of health, safety and wellbeing are discussed.</li> <li>- The responsibilities and rights of all parties are discussed.</li> <li>- Contact details are shared, including guidance on who to contact should a student have a concern or complaint.</li> <li>- Implications for accessing University and work-based learning organisation services, salary, holiday entitlements and other statutory terms and conditions.</li> <li>- Specific needs of the student are arranged (e.g., disability requirements).</li> </ul>	<p>Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)</p>
<p>5. Work-based learning is delivered through a meaningful partnership between students, employers and the education organisation.</p> <p>Work-based learning covers a range of opportunities which, if well designed and managed, will</p>	<p>During the delivery of the work-based learning activity, academic Schools are responsible for ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regular contact is maintained, usually via e-mail and more recently Teams/Zoom calls;</li> <li>- where appropriate, visits are carried out as required;</li> <li>- any problems notified to them by the student and/or provider are dealt with promptly;</li> </ul>	<p>Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)</p>

<p>provide a quality experience for all involved. In order to ensure that the needs of the student, employer and education organisation are fully met, the partnership arrangements should be considered and agreed prior to the work-based learning commencing. These arrangements will vary depending on the nature of the work-based learning, as will the format of the recording of the agreed arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- any concerns raised by the provider relating to the conduct of the student are dealt with promptly and in line with University procedures;</li> <li>- appropriate monitoring of the student's progress is undertaken, with a formal record being kept.</li> </ul> <p>For some students on longer term work-based learning programmes (e.g., year-long industrial placements), following the placement, academic Schools provide appropriate guidance and support to assist the student as they re-integrate into their University studies.</p> <p>For students on our Graduate Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering, we have a tri-partite agreement that explicitly details the meaningful partnership between the student, the university and the employer.</p>	
<p><b>6. Work-based learning opportunities enable students to apply and integrate areas of subject and professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to meet course learning outcomes.</b></p> <p>The significant potential benefits for workbased learning are best achieved where the opportunity exists to integrate all aspects, that is, subject and professional knowledge, skills and behaviours. Learning outcomes for work-based learning should be written to enable these areas to be fully integrated (see also Course Design and Development, Learning and Teaching, and Assessment themes).</p>	<p>Work-based learning opportunities are explicitly linked with specific degree programmes and as such must have defined learning outcomes that allow students to apply their subject-specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. The course and programme approval process includes consideration of work-based learning opportunities and as such learning outcomes are reviewed together with their alignment to the assessment.</p> <p>For those students on programmes that have defined Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) (e.g., Medicine and Dentistry programmes), these PSRB requirements also form part of the quality assurance and approval processes that are required for the work-based learning activity.</p>	<p><a href="#">Course and Programme Approval Processes (Webpage)</a> Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)</p>



<p>7. Parties understand and respect the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of the education organisation, employer and student, and appropriate training and support is provided where required.</p> <p>It should be clear what the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations are for the education organisation, the employer and the student. These will vary depending on the type of work-based learning and the relationships between the employer, student and education organisation. They should be clear and transparent and communicated to all involved in the work-based learning provision. Where employers are involved in assessment, their role is clearly defined, appropriate training is given, and, for summative assessment, standard mechanisms of moderation, standardisation and external examination are fully used.</p>	<p>The University Guidance Note for Placement Learning provides advice to staff, students and placement providers in regard to the development, delivery and monitoring of placement provision.</p> <p>Further, and more specific, responsibilities and expectations are communicated through course and/or programme handbooks, which specify all of the required information for work-based learning frameworks, assessment and feedback processes and outline the timeline of work that is required to be completed throughout the work-based learning activity.</p> <p>Assessment and feedback for most work-based learning is carried out by University academic staff. It is sometimes carried out by providers of work-based learning. Where providers are involved in assessment and feedback, training is provided to ensure they are familiar with all of the current University assessment practices and regulations. Any provider-led assessment is subject to the University policies and procedures on the quality assurance of assessment (e.g., moderation). Providers may, where appropriate, also be granted access and appropriate training for the virtual learning environment to allow them to complete assessments and monitor course/programme activity virtually.</p> <p>Within the academic School at least one individual is identified as being responsible for managing the work-based learning opportunity. This person, or persons are, required to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to support the student. They are required to engage with development and training support so that they can carry out their role appropriately (e.g., maintaining up to date health and safety training records).</p> <p>The University works with work-based learning providers to identify training and development needs that the University can support.</p>	<p>Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)</p>
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<p>8. Education organisations and employers acknowledge individuals have unique needs within the education organisation and in the workplace, and collaborate to ensure opportunities are inclusive, safe and supported.</p> <p>Providers, whether the education organisation or the employer, establish the unique learner needs for the learning environments and work in partnership to ensure an inclusive approach to the provision of work-based learning opportunities. This will include through reasonable adjustments to procedures, activities and physical environments (see also Enabling Student Achievement Theme).</p>	<p>The University of Aberdeen’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy applies to all students, including those accessing work-based learning opportunities.</p> <p>In the planning phase of any work-based learning opportunity, the academic School is responsible for ensuring all aspects of the student’s individual needs are discussed and appropriate support put in place if it is required.</p> <p>Students on work-based learning courses and/or programmes maintain access to all of the relevant student support opportunities such as being able to contact their Personal Tutor or access the Student Advice and Support Service. In addition, the student has access to a staff contact who is there to offer support academically and pastorally through the University Personal Tutor system. Furthermore, the Aberdeen University Student Association (AUSA) provides support for all students including those carrying out work-based learning.</p> <p>As work-based learning opportunities are developed collaboratively between student, academic staff and employer where appropriate, this approach ensures that support mechanisms are bespoke to each individual arrangement.</p>	<p><a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Policy)</a>  <a href="#">Pastoral and Guidance Support (Webpage)</a>  <a href="#">Student Advice and Support Team (Webpage)</a>  <a href="#">AUSA Advice Team (Webpage)</a></p>
<p>9. Work-based learning opportunities are designed, monitored, evaluated and reviewed in partnership with employers.</p> <p>Work-based learning consists of authentic structured opportunities for learning which are achieved in a workplace setting or are designed to meet an identified workplace need. In order to meet the respective</p>	<p>The Guidance Note on Placement Provision sets out the requirements for monitoring, evaluation and review on work-based learning opportunities</p> <p>Academic Schools are responsible for ensuring that feedback is gathered from staff and students on the quality and standards of the work-based placements provided. This feedback is collected through completion of evaluation forms by the students and discussions at student-staff liaison committee meetings, plus additional feedback from the placement provider.</p>	<p><a href="#">Annual Course and Programme Review Process (Webpage)</a>  Guidance Note on Placement Learning (Document)  <a href="#">Programme Advisory Boards (Webpage)</a></p>

<p>objectives for employer, student and provider, the design, monitoring and evaluation of the workplace learning opportunities should be carried out in partnership between the employer and the provider, with input from student representatives where possible and relevant. This partnership should include obtaining feedback from employers and students and involving them in the evaluation process.</p>	<p>The feedback obtained from students and from the work-based learning placement provider informs the Annual Course and Programme Reviews that are overseen by the University's Quality Assurance Committee.</p> <p>Following review of the feedback received, any appropriate actions are identified and will then, in collaboration with the work-based learning provider, be discussed and changes made when required. These changes are then subjected to the same quality assurance measures as other University courses and refined as appropriate, thus always ensuring the work-based learning is current and fit for purpose. The changes are then subjected the same quality assurance procedures as any course and/or programme changes.</p> <p>Schools formally engage with employers through their Programme Advisory Boards (or equivalent) and also informally through staff-employer interactions or informal meetings throughout work-based learning activities.</p>	
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