### **Guidance document 2: Guidelines for sourcing your own credit bearing collaborative project with business (CPB)**



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1. **Introduction**
	1. Many students choose to secure their own CPB as they may already have good connections in the sector who may be able to offer a valuable and relevant opportunity. This guidance document provides you with:
		* Clear definitions of what a CPB is;
		* Advice on how to source your own CPB;
		* What issues to consider when searching and securing a CPB;
		* Referral to the required documentation during the project scoping stage;
		* Processes to adhere to in collaboration with your CPB module co-ordinator
		* It should be noted that all work CPBs are underpinned by the University Work Placement and Project policy[[1]](#footnote-1)
2. **What is a credit bearing ‘Collaborative Project with Business’?**
	1. ***Collaborative Project with Business*** ***(CPB)*** is a piece of work e.g. a dissertation or consultancy project, which is undertaken in conjunction with an organisation. The term business refers to all sizes and types of external organisations: public, private, third sector. The CPB is assessed as part of your module/degree programme and is designed to meet identified learning outcomes.
	2. They are usually shaped collaboratively between the student, the project provider and the CPB module co-ordinator. Projects may be based: off campus ‘onsite’ i.e. at the business and their field sites; at the University; a mixture of the two; or remotely, where all project planning and discussion with the external business is conducted online using trusted platforms such as CANVAS, MS Teams and MS Planner. They are typically undertaken by individual students in collaboration with an organisation, although in some degree programmes, can be undertaken by a groups of students. All CPBs are supported by a University representative, typically the CPB module co-ordinator.
3. **Sourcing your own Work-Project where to start?**
	1. Before searching for a suitable CPB or organisation to provide a project, it is necessary to first identify ***what*** you want to focus on, then research your preferred industry sector and explore the type of organisation and role which is of interest. Be aware of what skills you have and those you want to develop. Also consider practicalities such as when you are available, travel, IT equipment and how this might align with your future **career and educational goals**.
		* Speak to appropriate members of staff associated with your module/course about potential ideas and external contacts.
		* Take full advantage of your own contacts; speak to family, friends and fellow students to identify what people do and where they work.
		* If you have a particular topic in mind, research your networks, join and search [the Stirling Network](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/careers/the-stirling-network/), LinkedIn and other social media, the press and professional magazines to explore what companies and organisations operate in this field. Find relevant events to attend through industry bodies, Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise etc.
		* The CES webpage [‘researching employers’](https://www.stir.ac.uk/internal-students/careers-and-employability-service/careers/finding-a-job/researching-employers/) will help you get started -
		* The CES [leaflet](https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/services/internal/careers-and-employability/careers/documents/researching-employers.pdf) ‘Researching Employers’ may prove useful, and can be found on the CES website
		* Utilise your contacts from previous employment
		* If your CPB is going to be virtual/remote, location is not always an issue for choosing employers. You may want to think global!
		* Our Going Global site gives you insights into companies and working culture abroad. You can access this through the [**Careers and Employability web pages**](https://www.stir.ac.uk/internal-students/careers-and-employability-service/careers/work-experience-and-volunteering/part-time-and-vacation-work/part-time-and-vacation-work-abroad/) on working abroad
	2. When initially speaking to the organisation, be aware that if you can help the organisation, they are more likely to be interested in hosting your placement. Consider the following in your discussions:
		* Does the employer have any projects that they either don’t have the time, or knowledge to look into themselves?
		* Is there perhaps a piece of research that you could undertake on their behalf in order to allow them to be able to make a future business decision or help progress an ongoing project further?
		* Establish that the project needs to be sufficiently research focused and is not about ‘doing’ a job in terms of everyday operational tasks. If this is the case, advise the organisation that a traditional placement, paid internship or part-time job may be more suitable, and put them in touch with the Employer Team in CES employers@stir.ac.uk
		* Establish that any suggested project has an appropriate academic fit to meet the learning outcomes of the module. This must be discussed with your module co-ordinator or course director to ensure that the project is appropriate
		* It is particularly important to ensure that the nominated provider has read and understood the Stakeholders Responsibilities and Expectations document, which will outline their responsibilities with regard to ongoing support, review and feedback. This is needed in order for students to have sufficient material and content to complete the required assessments to the best of their ability within the prescribed timescales.
	3. If sourcing your own CPB, it is imperative that it is a specific project and not simply a continuation of something you are already doing with an existing organisation that you know or work with. In other words, there needs to be some ‘added value’ with regard to input to the employer and your professional and personal development.
	4. Once you have had an initial discussion with the organisation, liaise with your module coordinator to plan your next steps and discussion with the employer. They may suggest a tri-partite discussion with you and the employer to go through project scope, risk assessment and project agreement in detail. The documentation cited below will be available from your module coordinator.
		* The ***CBP Project Proposal Form*** ***Template 2*** in conjunction with ***Guidance document 3: Stakeholder Responsibilities & Expectations*** are useful at this stage to help outline expectations and scope ideas. The latter of these documents outlines key aspects which need to be discussed upfront to ensure that all parties (student, organisation and CPB module co-ordinator) are in agreement with what is being proposed, and that due diligence has been taken with regards to CPB health and safety and ethical considerations.
	5. Once a project has been agreed by your module coordinator, it is mandatory to have all documentation completed as soon as possible and **before** the start of the project. Check with your the risk assessment has been undertaken and actions taken to mitigate risk as part of signing off the Project Agreement Form for Collaborative Projects with Business prior to the project commencing**.**
1. Work Placement and Project Policy revised April 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)