### **Guidance document 1: Guidelines for sourcing your own credit bearing Work Placement**



**Guidance document 1: Guidelines for sourcing your own credit bearing Work Placement**

1. **Introduction**

In some cases and courses, it may be appropriate for you to source your own work placement, which is likely to include a specific project or piece of work. Often, you may already have some good connections in the sector who may be able to offer you a valuable and relevant opportunity. This guideline document provides you with:

* clear definitions of what a placement is;
* some practical advice on how to source you own placements;
* what issues to consider when searching and securing a placement; referral to the relevant policy documents and required documentation which should underpin any placement search;
* processes to adhere to in collaboration with their placement module co-ordinator.
* All work placement and projects are underpinned by the University of Stirling Work Placement and Project Policy.
1. **What is a credit bearing ‘Work Placement’?**

A ***work placement*** is time students spend with a business or an organisation, onsite or remotely, to learn and gain insight into a sector and complete a designated piece of work or a role. This is typically referred to as work-based learning. There may be many reasons for undertaking a placement. Some examples are:

* + - to put teaching and learning undertaken at University into the context of the workplace;
		- to learn more about a particular business, perhaps your chosen industry for their anticipated future career;
		- to gain practical 'on the job' training or experience, perhaps with a particular group of ‘clients’.

The structure and timing of the placement and activities undertaken will vary depending on the module and the organisation and is usually agreed in discussion with your placement supervisor. Hours will vary depending on your course requirements.

1. **Sourcing your own work placement: where to start?**

**STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO AND RESEARCH THE SECTOR**

* 1. Before searching for a suitable placement or organisation, it is necessary to first identify what you want and then research your preferred: industry sector: type of organisation; role which is of interest. You also need to think about what you want to get out of your placement, for example, what skills would you like to develop? How does this align with your future **career goals?** Don’t forget to consider practicalities such as when you are available, where you want to be based and how will you travel.
* Speak to appropriate members of staff associated with your module about potential ideas and external contacts.
* 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/) (hyperlink), LinkedIn and other social media; the press and professional magazines etc. to explore potential companies and organisations to contact. Find relevant events to attend through industry bodies, Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise etc.
* The CES webpage ‘researching employers’ will help you get started - [**https://www.stir.ac.uk/internal-students/careers-and-employability-service/careers/finding-a-job/researching-employers/**](https://www.stir.ac.uk/internal-students/careers-and-employability-service/careers/finding-a-job/researching-employers/)**.**
* The CES leaflet ‘Researching Employers’ may also prove useful, which can be found on the CES website at [**https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/services/internal/careers-and-employability/careers/documents/researching-employers.pdf**](https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/services/internal/careers-and-employability/careers/documents/researching-employers.pdf)**.**
* Consider placement host organisations located in your home area.
* Don’t forget your own contacts; speak to family, friends and fellow students.
* Utilise contacts from your previous employment.
* If your placement is going to be virtual/remote, location is not an issue for choosing employers. You may event 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.

**STEP 2: PLAN HOW YOU WILL APPROACH THE EMPLOYER**

* 1. 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 help them make a future business decision?
* Establish that any suggested placement has an appropriate academic fit to meet the learning outcomes of the module and advise that this has to be discussed with your module co-ordinator or course director to ensure that the placement is appropriate.
	1. When sourcing your own placement, **it is imperative that it is a specific project or new activity, 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. Please refer to the Work Placement and Project Policy for further guidance.

**STEP 3: COMPLETE MANDATORY PROCESSES AND PAPERWORK**

* 1. For any **work** **placement** that you arrange yourself, it is essential to complete the appropriate documentation as advised by your module co-ordinator. You must obtain written confirmation from your placement provider that they will host your placement according to the agreed terms set by the University. You must liaise with your placement/module co-ordinator to ensure the following documentation is completed. It is mandatory to have this documentation in place and completed as soon as possible, and **before** the start of your work placement.
		+ ***University Placement Proposal Form***
		+ ***University Work Placement Project Agreement Form***
		+ Complete a ***Pre-placement checklist***
		+ Complete a ***Risk Assessment Form***
	2. It is particularly important to ensure that the nominated placement provider has read and understood the Placement Provider Handbook, which outlines their responsibilities with regard to ongoing support, review and feedback. This is needed to ensure that you will have sufficient material and content to complete the required assessments to the best of your ability within the prescribed timescales. Your placement co-ordinator will ensure that this is available to your placement provider.
	3. If your placement is to be conducted either in part or completely remotely, you need to confirm with the placement provider if there would be any specific equipment, IT packages etc. that you would require access to in order to be able to successfully completed your placement.
	4. Finally, it is worth reminding your placement provider(s) that for the duration of the placement you will be regarded as one of their employees and need to be treated in the same way as other members of staff with regard to insurance and health and safety policies and procedures. This ensures that you are sufficiently protected during your placement, and that it will be undertaken in a safe manner.
	5. Suggested Process map for finding your own placement