UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

PLACEMENT LEARNING POLICY

[Academic Quality & Development]

NB. This policy is available on the University of Cumbria website and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.

POLICY SCHEDULE	
Policy title	Placement Learning Policy
Policy owner	Academic Quality & Development
Policy lead contact	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Approving body	Academic Board
Date of approval	October 2015
Date of implementation	October 2015
Version no.	3
Related Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Practice etc.	(i) QAA Quality Code 2012 B3: Learning and teaching http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/quality-code-B3.aspx (ii) QAA Quality Code 2012 B10: Managing higher education provision with others http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-B10.pdf (iii) UoC Learning and Teaching Plan 2012-17 (iv) UoC Corporate Strategy 2 Tier Plan – Diversity and Equality (2012) (v) UoC Health and Safety website information https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/about/organisation/professional-services/facilities-management/health-and-safety/ (vi) UoC Confidentiality Policy 2011

	(vii) UCEA H&S Guidance http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/HSplace (viii) UoC Student Code of Conduct Student Code of Conduct & Adjudication Procedure (ix) UoC Fitness to Practise Policy (x) UoC Fitness to Study Policy (xi) UoC Fitness to Teach Policy
Review interval	Three yearly basis

1. Introduction

The University of Cumbria is committed to offering learning opportunities that enhance the student experience and that strengthen partnerships and our profile and reputation. To achieve this, in many areas the University has placement learning as a core component of its programmes. Furthermore, the University's Employability Plan sets out plans to embed an element of placement learning in all programmes. These placement learning experiences are valued as fundamental, and are frequently essential, elements that prepare students for their future work on chosen career pathways and must ensure students have the relevant employability skills and are fit for practice and fit for purpose.

Effective placement learning facilitates the development of core and specialised practical, intellectual and employability skills related to a programme, occupation or profession which is undertaken in the cultural or employment context for that academic discipline; and enhances the application of theory to practice. On many programmes the placement learning is assessed and so ensures that students are fit for practice.

2. Aims and Objectives

Aim
This policy sets out to articulate shared understandings that are relevant to all staff, students and stakeholders in regard to expectations, responsibilities and quality assurance of placements whilst reflecting the contexts of local, regional, national & international placement experiences. The policy also seeks to assure compliance with relevant sections of the UK Quality Code, in particular Chapters B3 and B10.

Objectives
The policy is intended to:

- Provide an over-arching framework for placement learning.

- Support compliance with UK Quality Code.

- Establish a set of high level principles applicable to all University placement settings, recognising that more detailed procedures may be developed within Departments and individual programmes reflecting the varied nature of specific placement activities and individual PSRB requirements.

- Identify and benchmark best practice across the institution.

3. Scope

This policy relates to all University of Cumbria placement provision. It applies to all University staff and students involved in placement learning opportunities as defined below regardless of whether placements are arranged by the University, by students themselves or are constituted by the student employer.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of the Policy, 'placement' refers to a period of work experience, either paid or unpaid:

- Which is undertaken as an integral part of the student's programme
- Where the student is enrolled at the institution during this period

- Where there is the transfer of direct day to day supervision of the student to a third party

[Adapted from the UCEA (2009) definition]

5. Policy Principles

5.1 Establishment of areas as suitable placement experiences

5.1.1. Departments must, through University procedures for programme development, approval and review, provide evidence that placement learning provides every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the placement learning approved at validation.

5.1.2 Departments must ensure that appropriate staffing is committed to the identification, the development and delivery of placement learning.

5.1.3 Departments must ensure a risk-based approach is undertaken to programmes comprising a placement element.

5.1.4 Departments must ensure that there are procedures in place for the termination of any placement learning opportunities where the need arises.

5.1.5 Departments must ensure that all partners providing placement learning opportunities are fully aware of their related and specific responsibilities with regard to: the provision of appropriate learning opportunities, the health and safety and the duty of care to the students and accident or incident reporting and, where delegated by the University, any assessment of the student(s) and this must be captured in written agreements.

5.1.6 The appropriate agreement must be in place BEFORE students attend for placement. The Department is responsible for maintaining records of placement venues and reviewing the awareness of and commitment to health and safety of the placement provider.

5.1.7 Where placement learning takes place outside the UK students must be registered with the International Development Office.

5.1.8 The placement provider bears primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student whilst on placement and for ensuring that significant risks are appropriately controlled. Due to the diverse nature of placements, University staff may not possess sufficient information or expertise to make a valid assessment of the Health and Safety risks which may exist or arise during a placement and therefore cannot make a direct assessment of Health and Safety risks associated with individual student placements. However, programme staff must consider written evidence (*) detailed by the provider relating to their awareness of and commitment to Health and Safety issues prior to the approval of the placement.
(*This may be information in the public domain, e.g. published on an organisation's website)

5.1.9 Risk assessments **must** be undertaken by Programme Staff **prior** to permission being given for the student to study abroad (whether elective or summative). It is recommended that the following six health and safety factors applicable to all placements are considered in the risk assessment and review process:
- Work
- Travel and transportation
- Location and/or region
- General/environmental health

- Individual student
- Insurance limitations

The risk assessment and review process involves considering the placement, the placement provider, and the specific student group in terms of each of the six factors above.

The University Risk Assessment Form for placement activity can be found on the University's Health & Safety webpage: https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/about/organisation/professional-services/facilities-management/health-and-safety/

5.1.10 Departments must comply with the University's Safeguarding Policy and ensure compliance with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Home Office requirements where appropriate.

5.2 Preparation of students for placement experiences

5.2.1 Every student must be provided with clear and current information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them whilst on placement.

5.2.2 All students must be provided with appropriate and timely information, support and guidance prior to, throughout and following their periods of placement learning.

5.2.3 Students must be in a position to understand the risks to their health and safety associated with the placements and make informed judgements.

5.2.4 Information relating to placement travel allowances and other expenses will be available in the relevant Placement Handbook provided to students and on the course page of the website.

5.2.5 Where students have notified the university of disabilities / specific learning disabilities and have in place individual action plans, these will be shared by the university with the relevant placement provider. The agreements covered within 5.2 and 5.3 and other sections of this policy will be supplemented with the details of agreed and appropriate reasonable adjustments. It is recommended that the supplementary information covers the operational aspects of any additional travel needs, disability awareness, risk assessments, emergency egress, support, provision of non-medical help support and where necessary staff supervision, as they pertain to individually identified and assessed needs.

5.3 Principles of Student Support

5.3.1 Departments will be required to have in place a Placement Handbook for relevant programmes.

5.3.2 Departments must provide information to students regarding the level and amount of guidance and support, both academic and / or personal, available to them during placement learning, how they can access it, who will be providing it, the frequency that such support may be available and who to contact in the case of an emergency. Students will be provided with clear guidance on action to take if they have a concern in their Placement Handbook.

5.3.3 Departments must ensure that placement learning partners have effective measures in place to monitor and assure the proficiency of their staff involved in the support of the relevant placement learning. In particular, the following should be considered:

- Who supports the students if the placement partner is not involved in providing a mentor or supervisor
- What qualifications are required / established for staff involved in providing a mentor or supervisor role
- What training development and support (initial and ongoing) is provided and/or required

5.3.4 Departments must ensure that students and placement learning partners are provided with appropriate and timely information prior to, throughout and following the students' placement learning. Full details of the information to be provided to students is listed in the Placement Handbook.

5.4 Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Placement Learning Environments

5.4.1 Placement activity is monitored and reviewed through the University's annual monitoring processes (AER). The Placement Handbook will detail the mechanisms for evaluating the programme.

5.4.2 Departments must ensure arrangements for securing, monitoring, and reviewing placement learning environments are in place, are effective and are reviewed regularly.

5.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (with particular reference to disability & reasonable adjustments) and Equality Assessment Statements

5.5.1 Departments must comply with the University's Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objectives and implement the Equality Act within its practices.

5.5.2 Programme staff must liaise with the Disability/ SpLD Manager /Team, and Occupational Health if necessary, to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made, as appropriate.

5.6 Data Protection and Records Management

5.6.1 Departments must comply with the University's Data Protection Act procedures to ensure that data is held securely, is not disclosed unlawfully and is destroyed when no longer needed whilst also ensuring that PSRB requirements with regard to Fitness to Practise are met.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The **University of Cumbria** shall:
- Provide the student with information on general health and safety prior to placement
- Provide additional support and guidance for students with additional support needs
- Maintain within the Department, a central database/register of students on placement
- Inform the placement provider of the University of Cumbria's expectations of them in regard to health and safety
- Work with the placement provider to share student individual disability action plans and to deliver any necessary reasonable adjustments

- Request from the placement provider written confirmation of their health and safety and insurance arrangements and act upon any concerns on receipt
- Notify the University of Cumbria's International Office of any placements that are being undertaken outside the United Kingdom

6.2 The **Placement Provider** shall:
- Confirm in writing or electronically their health and safety arrangements as requested by the University of Cumbria
- Inform the University of Cumbria of any basic competencies that they require the student to have attained to be able to undertake the placement. These would include competencies associated with any requirements of individual professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRB)
- Plan the work or study programme and associated health and safety training to be undertaken by the student
- Provide the student with a full and clear induction to the organisation and its working practices, including health and safety arrangements
- Comply with health and safety legislation
- Report to the University of Cumbria any serious incidents or accidents involving the student, or breaches of discipline by the student

6.3 The **student** shall:
- Attend pre-placement briefing sessions and familiarise themselves with the information provided
- Inform the University of Cumbria of any personal factors that may affect the level of risk or require adjustments
- Abide by the placement provider's health and safety requirements, policies and procedures
- Carry out the work programme specified by the placement provider
- 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 the placement provider
- Report any incident or accident in which they are involved and any health and safety concerns that are not addressed by the placement provider to the University of Cumbria

7. Risk Management Statement

Failure to comply with this policy could have implications in the following areas:

i. Academic Regulations & Procedures and Processes
ii. QAA
iii. Health & Safety
iv. Finances
v. Student Progression
vi. National Student Survey
vii. External Monitoring e.g. Ofsted, NMC, NHS

This policy mitigates the following risks in the University's Risk Register.
- SE1: We fail to improve our student experience
- PS1: Our academic and business systems and processes do not serve the needs of the business

8. Best Practice and Benchmarking

The University recognises the need to share and benchmark best practice across the institution in order to continually develop and enhance the student placement learning experience. There is some very good practice within the University. Staff are encouraged to engage with the 'I-Lead' resource for sharing good practice.

Policy Document Control Schedule

All University of Cumbria Policies must include a completed Policy Document Control Schedule consisting of the Policy Schedule (see front cover), Review Schedule and Drafting Schedule (see below) which should be completed as appropriate.

REVIEW SCHEDULE				
Review no.	Due date	Reviewed by	Approved by	Completion date
2	Sep 2015	AQSC	Academic Bd	Oct 2015
3		AQSC (i) Deanery to 'Department' (5.1.6, 6.1) (ii)Cumbria Academic to 'I-Lead' (8)	Housekeeping changes only (Restructure)	Jul 2017
	Sep 2018			