WORK PLACEMENT POLICY

Background and Legislation

Introducing students and young persons to the world of work can help them understand the work environment, choose future careers and prepare them for employment. It can take the form of a short or longer placement with a placement provider (employer) where they will have the opportunity to observe and practice work tasks.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, trainees from various training schemes were not considered as employees for the purposes of health and safety legislation. However, the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990 now extends the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act to cover people provided with “relevant training”.

Within these regulations “relevant training” is defined as approved work experience provided pursuant to a training course or programme, or training for employment, or both.

This means that all people receiving training or work experience from an employer in the workplace are deemed to be employees for the purposes of health and safety legislation. School pupils on work experience and college students on sandwich courses are also included. Previous provisions covering participants on government training schemes are re-enacted.

The regulations do not apply to “relevant training” provided at educational establishments on courses run at such establishments, or on training received under a contract of employment.

Trainees also have the full protection of the various sets of regulations, made under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Many trainees will be young persons (under 18 years of age).

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employees to carry out a risk assessment on any work related risks to young persons and implement appropriate control measures. Consideration must be given to trainee’s youth and lack of appropriate experience.

The Education (Work Experience) Act 1973 enables children of compulsory school age to participate in approved Work Experience Schemes. This includes at premises where the employment of children is normally prohibited.
Work Experience/Placement Providers

Organisers include schools, colleges or those organising placements on their behalf.

The placement provider (employer) has primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student and should be in a position to manage any significant risks.

Under health and safety law, work experience students are classed as employees and they must be treated exactly the same as employees.

Existing employer’s liability insurance policies will cover work placements provided the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers or Lloyds so there is no need to obtain any additional employers liability insurance if work experience students are taken on. It is good practice however to inform insurance providers of such placements.

Definition

The National Centre for Work Experience (NCWE) defines the term quality work experience as a “temporary period of student employment as part of a student’s course which is effectively planned and managed and takes in the negotiated requests of the student, employer and educational provider”.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what at work, could cause harm or injury to people, weighted up against whether enough precautions have been taken (or more should be done) to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

Employers and the self-employed have a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees and of other persons who may be affected by work activities.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 further impose a specific duty upon employers to carry out a suitable and specific assessment of all risks to the health and safety of employees and others, arising at or from a work activity. There are specific provisions requiring a risk assessment to be carried out where there are risks to new or expectant mothers or young persons.

If employers and placement providers already conduct risk assessments and record their findings there is no requirement to carry out a separate risk assessment for young persons or those undertaking a placement. They should however review their existing risk assessments and take into account the specific factors for young persons or those on placement before they commence work. The specific findings and contents of these risk assessments should be communicated to those on placement.
For those undertaking a placement in a low risk environment, such as an office or shop, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the person on placement, a simple briefing on everyday procedures and arrangements will be enough.

For environments with less familiar risks such as a light assembly and packing facilities it should be established by talking to the employer and confirming they have arrangements for managing risks. This will include induction, supervision, site familiarisation and any protective equipment that might be needed.

For a placement in a higher risk environment such as construction, agriculture, aquaculture and fishing and manufacturing, discuss with the employer what work the person on placement will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed. Although the placement might be in a higher risk environment, the work the person on placement is conducting and the surroundings they are working in may not be. It is important that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through.

It should also be agreed what items of working equipment and tasks, if any the person on placement will be prohibited from undertaking or using.

Persons on placement should be aware of the means of raising any health and safety concerns with their named supervisor at the placement provider.

**Arrangements for LCC Students Undertaking a Work Placement**

Initially, it should be agreed by the student and their course tutors that the placement provider is appropriate to their needs and will fulfill the requirements of their course of study.

Thereafter arrangements should be made for a competent member of College staff to visit the placement provider and complete the LCC Form "Work Placement Health and Safety Checklist". The checks carried out must be proportionate to the work activity and environment. It is possible that in a low risk environment, such as an office or shop with everyday risks that it will not be possible to complete all sections of the checklist. The checklist demonstrates that reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that any work-related risks are managed by the placement provider.

The findings of the visit will be recorded on the LCC Register of Work Placement Providers to avoid the need for duplicate visits and checks on employers and placement providers to be carried out.

The need for additional paperwork should be avoided if possible. The employer should already have risk assessments and appropriate risk control measures in place and interference might give the false impression that these have been “approved” as part of the checks.
Employers with fewer than five employees are not required to have written risk assessments.

Prior to participating on a work placement programme, it should be established if the student has any known medical or behavioural conditions that might affect their placement. This can be brought to the attention of the placement provider (employer). Any other relevant information about the student should be passed onto the placement provider (employer) to confirm the suitability of a student for a particular placement.

**Work placements must not commence unless the Work Placement Health and Safety checklist has been completed and the Head of Department has signed the checklist to confirm that the placement can go ahead.**

**Accident and Incident Reporting**

If students are on a training scheme or work placement, they are deemed to be employees for the period of the placement. In these circumstances, the employer as the responsible person should report a death, injury or disease which arises out or in connection with work to comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). Lews Castle College must also be informed of any such accidents and incidents as soon as practicably possible.

**Protection of Young Persons**

Employers must protect young persons who may be participating in a work placement programme from any risks to their health and safety which are associated with the young person’s lack of experience, lack of awareness of existing risks or immaturity.

In addition employers may not host young person’s where the work:

- Is beyond their physical or psychological capacity.
- Involves exposure to toxic or carcinogenic substances, or substances which cause heritable genetic damage, harm to unborn children, or cause other chronic health effect.
- Involves harmful exposure to radiation.
- Involves the risk of accidents which young persons may not reasonably recognise due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training.
- Involves a risk to health from extreme temperatures (hot or cold), noise or vibration.
Arrangements for Those Undertaking a Placement at Lews Castle College

Initially, it should be established if the individual can be gainfully employed and will benefit from a placement at the College.

Prior to commencement of the placement, arrangements must be made by the LCC staff member with day to day responsibility for the placement person to attend health and safety induction.

Consideration must be given to the inexperience and possible lack of training and competence of placements prior to assigning tasks. At this time, risk assessments may need to be reviewed to ensure that any additional risk management measures are put in place.

To assist with this process, the LCC Form “Work Placement Health and Safety Checklist” should be completed by the respective line manager and any deficiencies rectified.