

6.1. Work Placement Procedures

6.1.1. Introduction

This appendix describes the set of guidelines for students, staff and organisations who are involved in the Work Placement element. Work Placement plays an important role in the students' overall course of study. It is also crucial that everyone involved understand their roles and responsibilities. The host employer(s) for the student placement will normally be from the commercial, industrial or public sector, and is referred to as the Placement Company. A Work Placement Coordinator within TU Dublin will also be appointed by the programme to oversee the Work Placement element and act as a liaison between the programme, the student and the Placement Company.

All reasonable efforts will be made to provide an appropriate Work Placement for each student. However, when this is not possible an alternative will be provided. Details of the alternative procedures are given below.

6.1.2. Benefits of Work Placement

The Work Placement enables students to experience the culture and ethos of a working environment and formal employment. They will benefit from seeing how the skills and knowledge they have acquired is applied in a practical setting. Some specific objectives and benefits to all stakeholders are given below.

6.1.2.1. Objectives

The objectives of the Work Placement can be summarised as follows. Students will

- be exposed to the methodologies, and organisational structures of a commercial/industrial/public sector work environment;
- apply Industrial Mathematics to industrial/commercial applications;
- experience the corporate culture;
- further develop and enhance their problem-solving skills;
- assume responsibility for completing assigned tasks.

6.1.2.2. Benefits for Students

Students will benefit from:

- work experience that will be of significant advantage in post-graduation employment;
- improved self-confidence;
- enhanced teamwork and communications skills;
- the opportunity to explore career options.

6.1.2.3. Benefits to Employers

The benefits for the Placement Company of engaging in the Work Placement element of the programme are numerous and include

- a source of highly-motivated, highly-skilled employees;
- greater awareness of the company amongst graduates;
- ability to feed back into the educational system and ensure the production of industry-ready graduates;
- alternative and cost-effective means of recruitment;
- access to specific student expertise and knowledge of modelling and problem-solving techniques and technology;
- availability of additional skilled staff during peak periods;

- establish liaisons with the School of Mathematics & Statistics, TU Dublin, and third-level education in Ireland.

6.1.2.4. Duration and Commencement Dates

The Work Placement element will normally be a minimum of six months in duration. The student will be entitled to annual leave during this time as agreed with the Placement Company. The placement may commence any time in January or February, subsequent to the Winter examinations and should be completed by the last week of August. In exceptional circumstances, a placement may commence after February but only if the late commencement date has been pre-approved by the Work Placement Coordinator prior to the end of February and facilitates the monitoring and assessment of the placement by the Work Placement Co-ordinator and Programme Team. Students may extend their work experience with the Placement Company beyond six months but will only be assessed on the first six months of their Work Placement.

6.1.2.5. Alternative to Work Placement

In the event that suitable Work Placements cannot be found for all students, an alternative to Work Placement will be provided. Students will only be permitted to undertake an alternative to Work Placement at the discretion of the Programme Team in exceptional cases or if all reasonable Placement Company vacancies have been exhausted.

The alternative to Work Placement will be specified by the Programme Team. In accordance with normal employment practices each student engaged in an alternative to Work Placement will be allocated a supervisor. They will be informed of assessment procedures and required to submit weekly logs. Attendance will be mandatory and failure to attend may lead to failure of the Work Placement.

6.1.2.6. The Placement Allocation Process

Sourcing Vacancies

The Work Placement Co-ordinator will establish contact with suitable companies based mainly in the greater Dublin area but also more widely throughout the country. Details of curriculum will be given to potential placement companies to enable them to identify suitable vacancies. Companies will be requested to provide job specifications to assist the Work Placement Co-ordinator in matching students to available positions. Students may put forward potential Placement Companies (in Ireland or abroad) with which they have developed links and have offers of employment under the terms of the Work Placement. However, in all cases TU Dublin procedures for Work Placement will be applied and acceptance of the nominated Placement Company is entirely at the discretion of the programme.

Allocation of Students to Vacancies

The students are required to provide the Placement Co-ordinator with an electronic copy of their curriculum vitae by a specified date during the first semester of Stage 3. The matching of students to placements will be undertaken by the Work Placement Co-ordinator with regard to the following considerations:

- companies may request curricula vitae of suitable candidates based on specific requirements and select their own students for interview;
- companies may provide job specifications and only accept a small number of applicants. In such cases, students will be selected by the Work Placement Co-ordinator;
- as enthusiasm and motivation are key factors in a successful Work Placement, the Work Placement Co-ordinator will provide the students with a list of vacancies as they become

available and students will be asked to indicate their preferences. The Work Placement Co-ordinator will endeavour to match student profiles and preferences with each vacancy;

- job offers will be sent to the Work Placement Co-ordinator, who will have the final decision on assigning students to job offers. Once a student is offered a placement they are expected to accept that placement.

6.1.2.7. Roles and Responsibilities

Student

For the duration of the placement, the student is an employee of the Placement

Company and is expected to conform to all rules and regulations of that company. These include timekeeping, holiday policies, and dress code. The student must comply with all professional and ethical requirements regarding confidentiality, intellectual property, security and copyright. In addition, the student must adhere to Health and Safety regulations.

After an initial familiarisation period, the student will be expected to perform all assigned duties as a normal employee. It is of prime importance that students use their initiative to gain the widest possible experience of the working environment including, use of technology, and work protocols. The student should remember that their work placement company may become a source of a personal reference for their future employers and they should make every effort to perform to the best of their ability during their placement.

The student will be required to complete a Placement Contact Form within two weeks of commencing employment. In addition, the student must complete weekly logs of their employment detailing the activities they performed during that week and send these to the Work Placement Co-ordinator. Each task should be detailed in terms of content and duration. The Placement Company Supervisor should authenticate the log entries on a monthly basis and forward comments to the Work Placement Co-ordinator. The logs should be included as an appendix in the final placement report.

As part of the final assessment of the Work Placement element students will also write a final Placement Report. This is a professional document describing the placement work and student's experiences. The purpose of the report is to enable the School to assess the work undertaken and the student's ability to communicate this information. Any suitable documentation produced by the student in the course of their work may also be included. A suggested format for the Placement Report is as follows:

- an overview of the company and the specific department or section in which the student was employed;
- a description of each project that was undertaken;
- a detailed description of the tasks that the student accomplished;
- conclusions on the overall placement.

The student is representing TU Dublin and their programme and should make every effort to positively promote these to the work placement company who is a potential future employer.

Placement Company

The student will be allocated a Supervisor within the Placement Company for the duration of the placement. This person will work closely with the student and with the TU Dublin Work Placement Co-ordinator. The company will facilitate visits by the Work Placement Co-ordinator (or his/her

representative) to review the student’s performance and other issues relevant to the company and TU Dublin.

As part of the continual monitoring of student progress, Supervisors will be requested to submit monthly logs of the student’s employment to the Work Placement Co-ordinator and verify student’s weekly logs.

The Supervisor should complete a short questionnaire appraising the student’s work, at the end of the placement. This questionnaire will contribute to the overall assessment of the student’s work placement. The following is an example of the feedback sought:

Please rate the following attributes	Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Punctuality					
Attendance					
Time Management					
Communication Skills					
Technical Writing					
Productivity					
Willingness to Learn					
Ability to Learn					
Initiative					
Attention to Detail					
Creativity					
Technical Ability					
Teamwork Attributes					
Willingness to Help					
Adaptability					
Other:					
Overall comments on student:					
<p>Signed:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Placement Company Supervisor</p>					

Work Placement Co-ordinator

The Work Placement Co-ordinator is appointed to oversee all aspects of the Work Placement element, acting as a liaison between the Programme Team, the student and the Placement Company. The duties of the Work Placement Co-ordinator include

- establishing communications with potential placement companies;
- allocating students to placements;
- liaising with the student and their Supervisor including co-ordinating visits to the Placement Company and regular contact to ensure that the placement is progressing satisfactorily for both the student and the Placement Company;
- acting as overall co-ordinator for student assessment;
- ensuring that the student completes the Placement Contact Form within two weeks of commencing employment;
- collecting weekly logs from the students and make any necessary comments which are related back to the student;
- collecting monthly logs from the Placement Company Supervisor and verifying student's weekly logs;
- assisting the student in writing their Placement Report;
- collecting the Student Appraisal Form from the Placement Company Supervisor;
- requesting an appraisal of the Work Placement Report from the Placement Company Supervisor;

6.1.2.8. Progress Monitoring

The Supervisor will complete the Student Placement Contact Form within two weeks of the commencement of the placement and send this directly to the Work Placement Co-ordinator. The Supervisor will be requested to meet with the Work Placement Co-ordinator after four weeks of the placement. This initial visit is to establish contact and discuss the schedule of future visits. Subsequent visits may involve separate meetings between the Work Placement Co-ordinator and the Supervisor and the Work Placement Co-ordinator and the student and will focus on the progress of the placement from both the employer's and student's point of view.

The Work Placement Co-ordinator and Programme Team will be responsible for the satisfactory resolution of any difficulties that may arise with any aspect of the Work Placement element.

6.1.2.9. Assessment of Placement Programme

The student is assessed on their performance in the work placement by the following means:

- Weekly Placement Logs. These logs are sent directly to the Work Placement Co-ordinator on a weekly basis and are to be reproduced in an appendix of the Placement Report. The logs are sent by the student on a monthly basis to their Placement Company Supervisor for authentication;
- Formal Placement Report;
- a short appraisal of the Placement Report completed by the Placement Company Supervisor;
- a short questionnaire completed by their Placement Company Supervisor based on the performance of the student in the placement;
- delivery of a 30-minute presentation on the placement.

The assessment criteria are:

- i. Diary of Logs
- ii. Report quality
- iii. Placement Company Supervisor's Student Appraisal Questionnaire Form

- iv. Presentation
- v. Quality and performance of placement work and conduct of the student as determined by components 1 to 4

Based on the above criteria the student is awarded an overall pass or fail.

A student who is not successful in the work placement must repeat the placement the following academic year and is normally permitted only one further attempt for this unless otherwise decided by the University.

The Placement Presentation

The student will be required to make a formal presentation of 30 minutes duration, which will be scheduled to take place after the work placements are completed and prior to the examination boards required for progression to Stage 4. The presentation should include a short summary of the report and its conclusions using visual aids. The student will also be required to answer questions from the examining panel.