

Work Placement Policy

Introduction

This Work Placement Policy recognises that the University of Lincoln seeks to help each student to flourish academically and personally through its programmes of study.

Part of the University's mission is to provide an environment for students where they are able to take an active part in communities of knowledge, practice and work that prepare them for their future lives. To create confident, knowledgeable graduates whose reputation makes them sought after by employers.

One way of ensuring that students' subject knowledge and understanding is well-grounded is to broaden their learning and life experiences beyond the University environment. An increasing number of the University's programmes contain such opportunities, by offering Work Placements that are integral to academic programmes either on a compulsory or an optional basis.

All programmes are subject to University Regulations and details of Work Placements offered are included in the programme and module specifications, which are approved at validation in accordance with processes detailed within the associated Quality Assurance Manuals. This will include reference to optionality of modules, and how any academic credit will be awarded for Work Placement Learning. A module specification should be completed for any Work Placement.

The University has adopted the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code and all programmes which include Work Placements are designed and managed to ensure that the expectations of the Quality Code Chapters are met. *This is without prejudice to any specific requirements that might exist in professional or practice-based areas of study.*

Definition

The University adopts the following definition of Work Placement Learning, in line with the QAA Quality Code:

Work Placement Learning is a planned specific period of learning in a work environment, where any learning is an intended and integral part of the learning outcomes of the programme of study.

Oversight of Work Placements

The University requires that for any programme of study containing a Work Placement, the validation shall particularly address this aspect of the programme to ensure maintenance of quality, standards and the student experience. In particular, that learning outcomes are clearly identified, assessed appropriately and contribute to the aims of the programme.

While the University retains responsibility for the academic standards of its awards, programme teams should ensure that all industrial partners and employers who provide Work Placement opportunities are aware of their responsibilities in this regard, and that these are being fully discharged.

Industrial partners and employers are responsible for providing sufficient and appropriate learning opportunities for students on Work Placement, and programme teams should ensure that these requirements are fully met.

Programme teams should ensure that both students and employers are fully informed and supported through Work Placement Learning. Programme teams should also ensure that both programme staff and employers are appropriately qualified to fulfil their roles in supporting students in their Work Placements.

Annual programme monitoring reports require specific commentary on the management of quality in Work Placements. These reports will be considered and approved through the appropriate University committees.

College Boards of Study, through College Academic Affairs Committees, are responsible for all Work Placement Learning across College programmes.

NB: International students who require a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK must remain compliant with the conditions of that visa, and may not be eligible to undertake Work Placement opportunities. Advice must be sought from the Tier 4 Visa Compliance Team in advance of Work Placement opportunities being arranged for students with Tier 4 visas. Further details are set out in the appendix.

Office of Quality, Standards and Partnerships
April 2016

Work Placements & Study Abroad (including ERASMUS) Policy for Tier 4 visa students

Home Office requirements

- 1.1 The Home Office's Tier 4 Sponsor guidance states that the work placement undertaken by a Tier 4 visa student must be an integral and assessed part of their programme. The work placement can be based within or outside the UK and if the students meet the Home Office requirements, they are still permitted to retain their current Tier 4 visa for the duration of their placement. This is provided that the student remains compliant to the Policy and conditions of their visa and the University is able to uphold their sponsorship duties to the Home Office. If the work placement or period of study abroad does not form an integral or assessed part of the course, students will not be able to retain their Tier 4 visa during the work placement or study abroad and must do this outside the UK or during non-term time.
- 1.2 If the University of Lincoln is not able to uphold the sponsorship duties as stated in the Home Office's Sponsor Guidance, we would not be able to continue to sponsor the student's Tier 4 visa during their work placement or study abroad. In such cases, the University will be required to report the student's current Tier 4 visa for curtailment and the student will be required to leave the UK to undertake the work placement outside the UK. After the work placement or period of study abroad, the student would need to request a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to apply for a new Tier 4 visa, prior to resumption of study in the UK.
- 1.3 Students on a Tier 4 visa are not able to spend more than 50% of the total length of the course on a work placement unless there is a UK statutory requirement for the course to contain a specific period of work placement which exceeds this limit.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 Schools that offer a work placement or a period of study abroad, must ensure that they have processes in place that outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties; students, the University and placement providers.
- 2.2 Schools must ensure that they provide clear information to students before commencement of the work placement or study abroad and also ensure that there are established means of communication between all parties during this period.
- 2.3 Staff in the School responsible for the work placement or study abroad must ensure that every placement provider has signed an agreement to inform the University of the Student's absence and have a clear process in place to monitor engagement. The School retains a copy of the process provided by the placement or study abroad provider
- 2.4 The School is also responsible for monitoring the engagement of students undertaking a work placement or period of study abroad. Where poor attendance is reported, investigation should be undertaken to check wellbeing and to establish the reason for poor attendance.
- 2.5 The placement or study abroad provider must notify their normal University contact when a student has missed 7 working days without authorisation/notification. The School should attempt to make contact with the student, if the student's absence remains unaccounted for after the tenth working day. The School would be required to report the absence to the Tier 4

Compliance team within Student Administration at tier4visa@lincoln.ac.uk. The Tier 4 Compliance team will then report the student's Tier 4 visa to the UK Visas & Immigration for curtailment within 10 working days.

Reporting Work Placement or Study Abroad locations and duration

- 3.1 Schools must provide the Tier 4 Compliance team with the full address and duration of any work placements or study abroad arranged for students with a Tier 4 visa. The School must also notify the Tier 4 Compliance team if the location or duration of a student's placement or study abroad changes after the initial report has been made. Any notifications must be made within 5 working days of confirmation.
- 3.2 Students must notify their School immediately if their work placement or study abroad location has changed after commencement or if they leave their placement earlier or later than outlined in their placement agreement.
- 3.3 The Tier 4 Compliance team must report the location and duration of any work placement undertaken by the Tier 4 visa student and any subsequent changes to the UK Visas and Immigration via the Sponsorship Management System.

Alternative options for Tier 4 visa students undertaking study abroad

- 4.1 If the University is not able to meet the Home Office sponsorship duties during the period studying abroad, the student will be required to surrender their Tier 4 visa. The Tier 4 Compliance Team will report the Tier 4 visa for curtailment and this will be reported as a deferral to their course. When the student is due to resume study in the UK, the student would be able to request a CAS to apply for a new Tier 4 visa.

Annex – Tier 4 visa students undertaking a period of work placement or study abroad (including ERASMUS) case studies

The following case studies illustrate how the student's Tier 4 visa is affected in a range of circumstances and the compliance duties required to uphold the University's Tier 4 Sponsor Licence. The case studies provide additional support and are not intended to be a definitive list of circumstances.

Case Study 1 – An undergraduate Tier 4 visa student would like to undertake a work placement over the summer break in the UK or overseas. What are the sponsorship duties and how does this affect the student's Tier 4 visa?

- A.** An Undergraduate Tier 4 visa student may be able to work full time (check the conditions of their Tier 4 visa first) during their vacation period. The student will be able to undertake full time employment during this period. There is no action required by the Tier 4 Compliance team and the student will be able to retain their Tier 4 visa during this period.

Case Study 2 – An undergraduate Tier 4 visa student would like to undertake a work placement in the UK that will have an impact on their visa expiry end date. For example, a Tier 4 visa student was originally issued a visa that expired on 30th September 2019 but the work placement meant that they will not be able to complete the course until after the visa expiry deadline, what are the sponsorship duties and how does this affect the student's Tier 4 visa?

- A.** The work placement must be an assessed and integral part of the course and should not account for more than 50% of the total length of the course (unless the placement is a UK statutory requirement for the course).

As the student will no longer be able to complete their course within the existing visa period due to them undertaking a period of work placement, they will need to leave the UK to apply for a new Tier 4 visa prior to commencing their work placement. The new Tier 4 visa should encompass the work placement period and enable the student to complete the course by the new course end date.

The School and student would need to comply with the Work Placements & Study Abroad (including ERASMUS) Policy for Tier 4 visa students during the period of work placement.

Case Study 3 – An undergraduate Tier 4 visa student would like to undertake a work placement alongside taught modules and is still be able to complete their course by the original course end date and will not need to extend their visa to complete their course. What are the sponsorship duties and how does this affect the student's Tier 4 visa?

- A.** The student will not need to apply for a new Tier 4 visa prior to undertaking the work placement. The work placement would have to meet the requirement of the Home Office guidance and need to be an 'integral and assessed' part of their course.

The School and student would need to comply with the Work Placements & Study Abroad (including ERASMUS) Policy for Tier 4 visa students.

Case Study 4 – A Tier 4 visa student would like to undertake a work placement at home or in another country for a period of time. What are the sponsorship duties and how does this affect the student's Tier 4 visa?

- A.** The work placement would have to meet the requirement of the Home Office guidance and need to be an 'integral and assessed' part of their course. The School and student would need to comply with the Work Placements & Study Abroad (including ERASMUS) Policy for Tier 4 visa students. Also, if undertaking the work placement means that the student will not be able to complete their course by the visa expiry date, they will need to apply for a new Tier 4 visa outside the UK before resuming study. Therefore, it may be advisable to curtail the existing visa during the work placement and for the student to apply for a new Tier 4 visa prior to returning to the UK to resume study. If the Tier 4 visa is curtailed during the period of work placement abroad, there are no Tier 4 Sponsorship responsibilities during this period.

Case Study 5 – A Tier 4 visa student wishes to undertake a year or term abroad to complete a period of study at an ERASMUS or partner institution overseas. The period of study abroad will count towards the student's completion of the course. What are the sponsorship duties and how does this affect the student's Tier 4 visa?

- A.** If the student can still complete the course within the existing leave granted by the Home Office, the student would not be required to apply for new leave prior to undertaking a year or term studying abroad. The period of study abroad must meet the requirements stated in the Work Placements & Study Abroad (including ERASMUS) Policy for Tier 4 visa students.

If the student will not be able to complete the course within the existing leave granted on the visa, they will need to leave the UK to apply for a new Tier 4 visa prior to study abroad. If this is the case, then Case Study 6 may be more preferable to the School and the student.

Case Study 6 – A Tier 4 visa student wishes to undertake a study year abroad which will increase the course duration and the existing Tier 4 visa will no longer cover the whole duration of the course. The institution that the student is going to, does not have a set process for attendance monitoring for the University to maintain the sponsorship duties. What are the options to allow the student to undertake the study abroad?

- A.** As the student's existing Tier 4 visa will no longer cover the whole duration of the course and the University is not able to meet the sponsorship duties of the Home Office whilst the student is studying at the overseas institution, the only way the student would be able to undertake a period of study abroad is to surrender their existing Tier 4 visa.

By surrendering the Tier 4 visa during the period of study abroad means that there are no sponsorship duties to the Home Office to uphold whilst the student is abroad and the Work

Placements & Study Abroad (including ERASMUS) Policy for Tier 4 visa students would not need to be adhered to.

If the student wished to enter the UK whilst studying abroad, for a break during vacation period for instance, they would be able to gain entry by applying for a visitor visa.

The student would then need to request a CAS approximately 3 months prior to resumption of study in the UK to apply for a new Tier 4 visa which will cover the student until the new course end date. The student would need to apply for the Tier 4 visa outside the UK.

Case Study 7 – A postgraduate taught Tier 4 student wishes to undertake a period of work placement to gain experience which will not be assessed or integral to their course. What are the sponsorship duties and how does this affect the student's Tier 4 visa?

- A. A Tier 4 visa student would not be able to undertake a work placement if it does not meet the conditions of the Home Office's definition. However, the student would be able to undertake full time employment (check the conditions of their Tier 4 visa first) during vacation/holiday periods. For postgraduate taught students who do not have timetabled sessions as they are working on their thesis, this is still considered as term-time as they are expected to work on their dissertation on a full time basis.