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| Institution: | University of Ulster |
| Programmes: | BSc (Hons) Environmental Science with Diploma in Industrial Studies |
| Module: | Industrial placement |
| Activity: | Sandwich placement in an environmental organisation |
| Level: | 2 |
| Learning hours: | 48-week sandwich placement (60 credit points) |

Work-related learning outcome(s)

On successful completion of this programme the student should have:

1. developed enterprise and personal skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, decision making, initiative and creativity;
2. consolidated, complemented and extended the academic programme carried out at the University;
3. developed an in-depth understanding of a subject-orientated work environment;
4. assessed and developed their career focus.

Description of the learning activity which achieves the learning outcome(s)

Students are placed in an appropriate organisation for 48 weeks. During that time they are a paid employee and are expected to undertake activities as directed by their placement provider. The University negotiates with the provider to ensure that these activities include a training element and are at an appropriate level for the student. As placement providers vary, each student gains a different experience. Placements to date have included: Northern Ireland Electric's environmental management division, environmental consultancies, fishery agencies, the DOE Planning Service and the Industrial Research and Technology Unit's freshwater laboratories.

Rationale for the selection of the learning activity

This module enables students to link the academic content of their first two years of university to the world of work. Work experience in an appropriate organisation gives students the opportunity to develop additional skills and experience. Our placement module also helps to maintain and develop links between the University, employing organisations and the community.

Assessment – approach and detail

As students are working as employees of their placement organisation over an extended period the following assessment strategy has been developed to assess their achievement of the learning outcomes. Placement providers are given training and support in their role of assessor.

Visits

Students are visited by the Placement Tutor on two occasions:

- initially (October- December) to ensure that the student is settling in, and to guide them in assignments and to monitor progress in work and breadth of experience and discuss the plan for the industry-based study; and
- in April/May/June to confirm that progress has been maintained and assignments completed.

At each visit, the Placement Tutor will meet the Industrial Supervisor and student. Progress will be discussed and any problems raised. The student's log book will be examined and the progress form completed.

Log Book

The Log Book is for the student's benefit, to keep a record of, and to reflect upon, activities and achievements of a particular day, contacts within or outside the organisation, problems encountered and how they were overcome etc. It may be written as a laboratory notebook or as a diary. It should be checked by the academic tutor on each visit.

Progress form

This form should be completed during a formal interview between the Placement Tutor and the student on each visit. Consultation with the Industrial Supervisor will be necessary. Any problems must be discussed with the student.

Student's final report

This 2000-word report is the student's evaluation of the industrial experience in terms of career and professional development, insight into the world of work, interrelationships of theory and practice, and technical understanding.

Student's industry-based study

This is a 2000-word report on a project that the student completed either on their own or as part of a team. The format is that of an R&D paper or report.

Industrial Supervisor's report

The Industrial Supervisor will complete a short report on the student's performance during the placement. This will comment on the student's enterprise and personal skills, particularly communication, teamwork, problem solving, decision making, initiative and creativity.

Future developments

The QAA guidelines for students undertaking placement activities state that all students should be adequately prepared for these activities. In order, therefore, to achieve this we have introduced a compulsory 10-credit module at Level 2 for all students intending to go on placement. This module 'Enterprise and employability' aims to provide students with a range of environmentally orientated business and management skills and practices so they can integrate more successfully into a particular company or set up their own business. This module will also assist students in the development of their own career paths and ensures that they are prepared for applying for placements.

Contact details

Dr Sarah Maguire
Placement Co-ordinator

Tel: 028-70-32-4413

Email: cs.maguire@ulst.ac.uk