

Royal Northern College of Music
Work-based and Placement Learning Policy
Policy & Procedure
Department: Academic
Document owner: Director of Programmes
Approval Committee: Education and Quality Committee
Revised: June 2024
Period of Approval: 3 Years
Review Date: June 2027

RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN
COLLEGE of MUSIC

Work-based and Placement Learning

1. Principles

The RNCM recognises and values the importance of work-based and placement learning and the potential benefits to the student learning experience. This policy will help to ensure that the RNCM facilitates best practice in designing, organising and managing the work-based and placement learning of its students.

- Work-based learning elements of the curriculum, align with the relevant national qualifications framework, Characteristics Statements and the application of Subject Benchmark Statements
- Assessment judgements are based on objective criteria and are reliable, fair and transparent and in line with sector norms.
- The RNCM maintains responsibility for standards and ensures that all students have an equitable opportunity to succeed.
- Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement at both threshold and beyond threshold standards.
- The RNCM retains the right to refuse to approve any placement on health and safety grounds.

2. Scope of the Policy

Definition

The term 'placement' is one of several terms used within higher education providers to refer to credit-bearing work experiences (e.g. internship, professional practice). This term is used in this document to refer to any period of work experience, paid or unpaid:

- Which is offered by the RNCM as an integral part of the student's programme of study at any level, Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught or Research.
- Where the student is enrolled at the institution during this period,
- Where there is the transfer of direct supervision of the student to a third party or to the student themselves if acting in a self-employed capacity.
- For placements in the UK or abroad.

There are other work experience related activities that occur within the RNCM but that do not fall within this definition and therefore the scope of this policy (e.g. volunteering activities, work experiences facilitated or recorded but not accredited as part of a student's studies). Consideration should be given to the level of control the RNCM has over the activity and their level of responsibility for health and safety in these cases as in some instances it may be appropriate to adopt the principles of risk management outlined in this document.

Credit-bearing placement activity falls within the scope of RNCM degree programmes are conducted in line with UK visa parameters:

- A work placement must be an assessed and an integral part of your course. Usually, it must not be longer than one third of the total length of your course.

In all cases, work experience outside of credit-bearing activity, whether voluntary or paid, must be carried out in accordance with visa restrictions.

Key Principles

The following key principles apply to the policy:

- RNCM staff, providers and students understand the scope of the work-based and placement learning tasks which will be undertaken and the methods of assessment.
- The RNCM and providers have formal agreements in place which ensure that the academic experience is high-quality, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
- Students will have access to all support provided to those on other modes of study. Where relevant, additional support to meet specific needs of work-based and placement learning students will be provided.
- Students are supported by both the RNCM and the provider and understand the different roles of the RNCM, provider and themselves. Students have the right of complaint to the RNCM and guidance is given on when and how the relevant process(es) can be accessed.

Eligibility

The policy applies to all students registered on an RNCM module/programme of study relating to credit-bearing work-based and placement learning activity. All credits associated with work-based and placement learning are validated and awarded by the RNCM. Full details of credit-bearing opportunities appear in the relevant module descriptor in each Programme Handbook.

The RNCM delivers a range of core and optional modules across its programmes that involve an element of work-based and placement learning, primarily with established placement providers and employees of the RNCM.

Employment Opportunities

Students who seek their own employment/self-employment with a placement provider independently and in addition to their work-based and placement learning activity (i.e. for their own personal/professional development) are responsible solely to the provider for the employed work. The RNCM will support student learning but can take no responsibility for the work activity.

Students studying on a visa are responsible for ensuring that any employment is carried out in line with their visa conditions.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The opportunity to undertake work-based and placement learning is open to all students, subject to the requirements of individual programmes, including those with additional needs.

International students are permitted to complete a work placement as part of their programme, provided the work placement is an assessed part of the programme. In this instance, the work placement must normally be no more than 50% of the length of the student's programme in the UK.

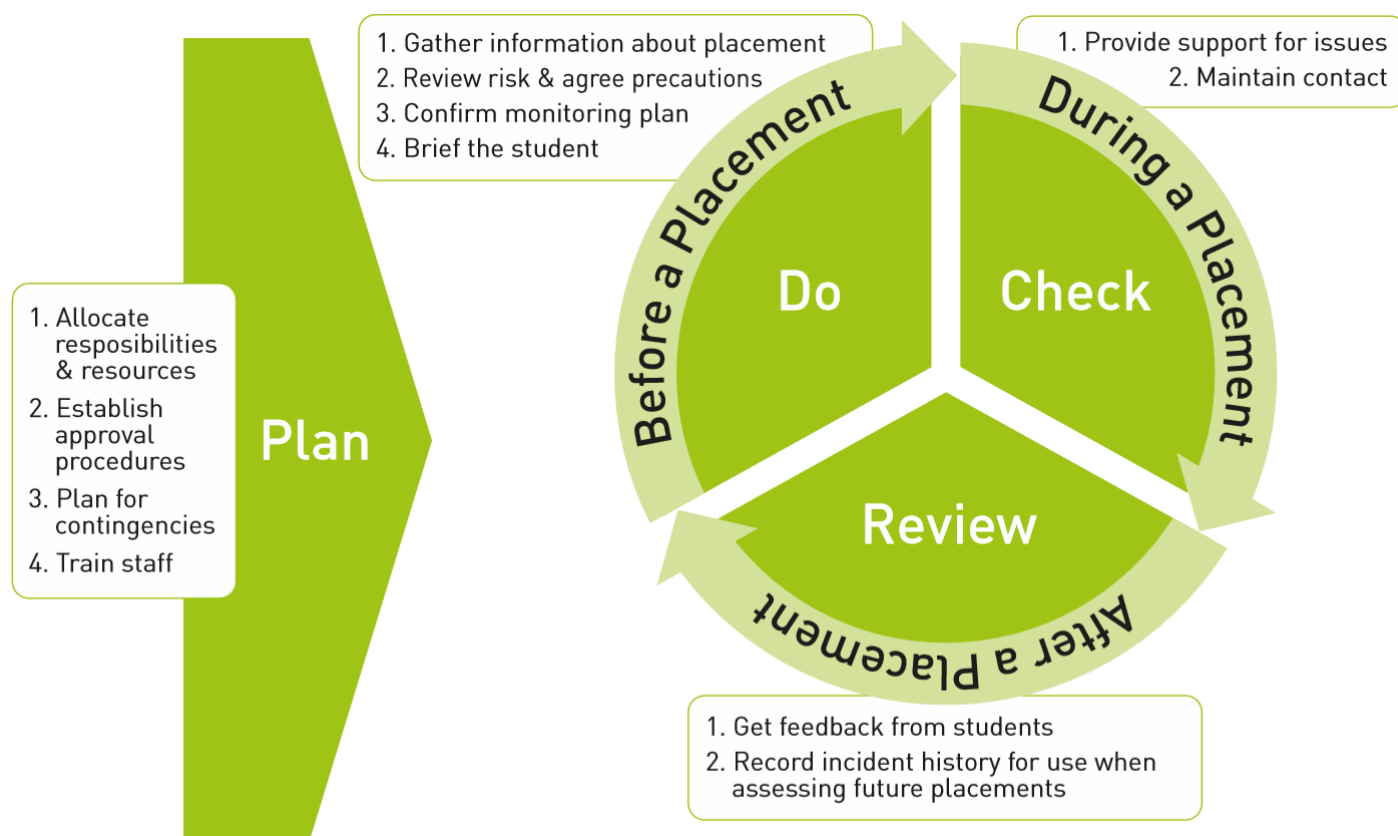
Placement of students under the age of 18 is not currently permitted.

3. Responsibility for Work-based and Placement Learning

Each programme of study should identify a named person(s), usually the module coordinator, with responsibility for the coordination and oversight of WBPL activities on each relevant module. The named person is expected to keep up to date with best practice in the sector with respect to work-based and placement learning and disseminate this to colleagues.

All placements for students must be formally approved by the relevant module coordinators under the supervision of the appropriate Head of Programme. Details of the approval process are contained later in this policy.

Programme Leaders and Module Coordinators will adopt the following risk management principles to their management of student placements:



USHA Guidance on H&S of Placements

The RNCM is responsible for:

- Providing clarity of understanding by each party of their roles and responsibilities.
- Preparing students such that they are in a position to understand the risks and to make informed judgements.
- Setting in place processes for enabling problems to be raised and resolved prior to, during the course of, and at the conclusion of the placement.
- Providing contingency plans in case there are exceptional circumstances.
- Ensuring that staff involved in organising placements are provided with guidance and training on the policies and arrangements that they must follow, and sufficient resource for their implementation

Placement Provider information and risk assessments will be sought annually and stored in Academic Services Department in accordance with GDPR and RNCM data policy, together with student learning agreements. Placement providers will be informed of their responsibilities for the health and safety of RNCM students in the workplace in accordance with the USHA Health and Safety Guidance of Placements as part of that annual process.

Staff, Student and Provider Responsibilities

The Director of Programmes will establish and review the WBPL Policy in a three yearly cycle to be approved by the Education and Quality Committee (EQC).

Staff responsibilities in relation to work-based and placement learning are set out in the table below:

Role	Responsibility
Programme Leader/Deputy Leader	Allocate responsibilities and resource (with DoP); Ensure staff appropriately trained; Provide strategic direction of work-based and placement learning in programme; Ensure quality of provision at programme level; Provide high-level conflict resolution between provider and student.
Module Co-ordinator	Approve each new provider and ensure risk assessment is completed, implementing appropriate precautions, reviewing complicated cases with Programme Leader; Oversee annual re-approval of provider provision, re-assessing risk and any appropriate risk-related precautions; Curate placement provision; Co-ordinate placement allocation; Co-ordinate contributions of placement providers to taught elements of modules, risk assessing if appropriate; Review placements and feedback meetings with providers; Planning and briefing students, and approval of Student Learning Agreements; Monitoring of placements; Mid-level conflict resolution between provider and student, and escalation of high-level conflict resolution to Programme Leader.
Module Tutors/Mentors	First point of contact for students; First point of contact for conflict resolution between provider and student, and escalation of mid- or high-level conflict to Module Co-ordinator.
Placements Co-ordinator (Administrative)	Communications with placement providers – gather and send out information for module co-ordinator(s), issue and receive annual placement proformas, first point of contact for queries, liaise between provider and module co-ordinator(s), issue and receive risk assessment forms, issue and receive feedback forms; Communications with students – schedule tutorials and interviews for module co-ordinator(s); issue information on placement offer to students; issue and gather Student Learning Agreements, feedback forms, information and other relevant documents pertaining to placements, including travel expense forms; monitor contact and attendance, escalating issues to Module Coordinator at pre-defined trigger points.

This table contains an indicative list of generic responsibilities. Specific module-related responsibilities will vary as the module demands.

Students will:

- Comply with the WBPL Policy and requirements of the placement.
- Engage with the Provider to complete their placement and follow the pre-determined contact plans.
- Engage with tutors to complete their studies and assessments.
- Provide feedback on their experience.

Placement Providers will:

- Engage with the approval of placements process and complete the relevant *pro forma* and risk assessment, and other documentation as required.
- Induct and support students through their placement experience.
- Protect the health and safety of student
- Provide feedback on their experience.

Learning Outcomes

All work-based and placement learning activities delivered as an integral part of a module must have clearly identifiable learning outcomes associated with them. These should relate to the overall aims and objectives of the programme and should be assessed in an appropriate way.

The programme, through the module coordinator(s), must ensure that all students undertaking work-based and placement learning have the opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes, irrespective of the work-based and placement learning situation. The programme should provide support to a student who is no longer able to achieve the learning outcomes within the original setting due to unforeseen circumstances and should provide alternative arrangements.

Assessment

Assessment judgements are made in relation to the module learning outcomes and marking criteria, and assessment. Assessment is performed by suitably qualified staff employed by the RNCM. Marking will be moderated and subject to review by the relevant External Examiner.

Academic Quality and Standards

Each module coordinator will monitor and evaluate all aspects of module-based work-based and placement learning provision as part of each programme's annual review process. Opportunities to provide and gain feedback from both the work-placement provider and students should be made available and reported on at Programmes Committees and in the programme annual review by the Course Leader.

Approval of Placement Providers

The following stages should be followed in the approval of a work-based and placement learning or placement provider:

- a) The RNCM will approach placement providers annually with the appropriate pro forma, in preparation for the following academic year, issued and received by Placements Co-ordinator, including Risk Assessment forms.
- b) Providers will complete and return the *pro forma* to the Placements Co-ordinator; Module Co-ordinators will review *pro forma*, risk assessments and related precautions, and sign-off approval of the placement opportunity for academic year.
- c) The placement approval record and provider declaration will be stored in Academic Services Department, together with a copy of Students' Learning Agreements as appropriate to each module.
- d) Placements will only be secured with providers who can demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate experiential learning opportunities for students in relation to the learning outcomes of the module/programme to which the work-based and placement learning contributes.
- e) Placement providers will provide details of the placement(s) available to students via the appropriate *pro forma*, which will be reviewed annually and stored in Academic Services Department.
- f) Placement providers must assure the RNCM of their ability to offer a suitable level of support to institutional placement staff and students involved with work-based and placement learning.

NOTE**Health and Safety Issues**

Placement providers should be made aware of their responsibilities for the health and safety of RNCM students in the workplace in accordance with the USHA Health and Safety Guidance of Placements. It is expected that they will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the institution and ensure that students receive appropriate written or verbal guidance at the commencement of their placement.

Placement providers should assess the risks to which students may be exposed when undertaking a placement by completing and returning the RNCM's annual pro forma.

4. Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals

- The Student Attendance Policy will be applied where pre-agreed contact is not made, triggering defined points for escalation.
- The RNCM will provide students with guidance on professional behaviour and etiquette.
- The Student Conduct and Discipline Policy applies to all work-based and placement learning.
- The Student Complaints Policy and Academic Appeals Policy apply to work-based and placement learning.
- Extenuating circumstances and absence requests should be directed to the Academic Services Department, who will discuss as relevant with Module Co-ordinators and/or Programme Leaders.

5. Review and Monitoring

Module Co-ordinators will provide statistics and feedback to the Programme Leader as part of the annual review process and record incident history for use when assessing future placements.

The **Programme Leader** will incorporate module feedback into the annual review and action plan for Programme Committees and EQC.

EQC will review and approve the WBPL Policy in a three-yearly cycle.

RISK FACTORS

All teaching, assessment and credits are provided by the RNCM. Placements are not legally binding, except in terms of student/ staff welfare, and there are internal RNCM opportunities if providers withdraw from the agreement, mid-term. Risk factors are taken from USHA Guidance on H&S of Placements

Work:

Risk profile	Indications	Possible specific action to reduce risk
Low	Office work or other low hazard environments and activities.	None
Medium	Working in proximity to high risk factors (but not directly with them). Work involving more practical elements with moderate potential for harm, e.g. education and service sectors.	Ensure student is aware of the hazards of the placement as part of the briefing process.
High	Work with hazards that have potential to cause permanent injury or fatalities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of machinery with mechanical hazards such as, crushing or entanglement risks. • Community work with known high risk groups of clients or locations (drug abusers, homeless, violent patients). Work with animal bedding or large or dangerous animals. • Work involving significant hazards in small companies that do not have professional health and safety advice. 	Ensure competency requirements for high risk activities have been agreed and ensure student meets them. Confirm that training & supervision will be provided by the placement provider. Consider pre-placement site visit. Ensure student is aware of the hazards of the placement as part of the briefing process.

Travel and transport factors:

Risk profile	Indications	Possible specific action to reduce risk
Low	No significant travel, comfortable daily commute. No driving associated with placement.	None
Medium	Night travel. Long daily commuting requirement. Student required to drive their vehicle in reasonable conditions.	Discuss travel arrangements with the student to ensure risks are considered. Advise them to check that they have the necessary licenses, insurances & experience.
High	Significant travel to reach placement, prolonged or on local transport facilities known to be high risk (poor driving or vehicle safety standards). Demanding travel during placement. Role requires student to drive others in unfamiliar vehicles or locations.	Discuss travel arrangements with the student to ensure risks are considered. Get confirmation they have relevant driving licenses, insurances & experience. Consider actions to reduce risks where practicable e.g. providing accompanied travel, avoiding night driving, and use of public transport rather than drive.

Location/ Regional factors:

Risk profile	Indications	Possible specific action to reduce risk
Low	Placements in student's home region with no significant elevated local risks (e.g. low/medium risk countries*).	None
Medium	Higher than normal risk of civil disorder, crime or comparable danger. Delays likely in communicating with tutors and others. Placements not in the student's home region with no significant elevated local risks (e.g. low/medium risk countries*).	Include within briefing or direct students to sources of information about travel advice* on their location (personal safety, accommodation, food safety, cultural differences etc.) Agree how the student will maintain contact with the HEI. Ensure student understands the implications of differences in legal frameworks.
High	Placements in international locations with significantly different regulatory frameworks. Significant risk of civil disorder, crime or similar danger (e.g. placement in war zones, countries where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against travel). Unavoidable lone or remote working in proximity to significant risk (e.g. medical student elective in a refugee camp). Medical and rescue services not available quickly or locally or where means of communication likely to be difficult or compromised.	In addition to the above: Check travel advice* restrictions and recommendations and agree precautions with the student. Encourage them to subscribe to travel advice updates for destination. Agree robust arrangements for maintaining contact with the HEI. Consider providing information from someone with local experience or knowledge of conditions (e.g. student on previous placement) or a placement practitioner at a local HEI in the overseas country).

Health and environmental factors:

Risk profile	Indications	Possible specific action to reduce risk
Low	No significant environmental or health risks.	None
Medium	Regional/local conditions recommend precautionary measures, e.g. optional inoculations against diseases.	Advise student to seek medical advice regarding immunisations, medications and management of health conditions. Highlight potential issues which could occur regarding medication (potential for loss, unavailability in country, illegality, and requirement for GP note). Include within briefing or direct students to sources of information about living arrangements (health, accommodation, food safety, cultural issues etc.)
High	Regional/local health risks require mandatory and specific health protection measures e.g. inoculations or quality of healthcare services uncertain. Very hot or strenuous working conditions (e.g. manual working outdoors in the sun). Standards of safety / hygiene very low.	In addition to the above: Consider ensuring the student consults a medical/travel health professional or occupational health for advice regarding immunisations and other preparations, for example to advise on pre-existing health conditions. A medical travel kit is a sensible precaution.

Individual student factors:

Risk profile	Indications	Possible specific action to reduce risk
Low	The student has no mental or physical medical conditions or disability likely to cause episodes of illness or require specific support whilst on placement. Student has relevant knowledge, understanding and skills for the type of work.	None
Medium	The student has personal factors (e.g. mental or physical health conditions, disability, pregnancy, linguistic or cultural) which may require specific adjustments or support during work, or in social interactions at work.	Engage with student, placement provider and health & / or disability support professionals to develop and agree reasonable adjustments. Confirm these in the written communication with the placement provider and student.
High	The student has personal factors (e.g. protected characteristics) which may increase the risk of illness or incident even following adjustments. The student has personal factors (e.g. mental or physical health conditions, disability, pregnancy, linguistic or cultural) which may require specific adjustments or support if living away from home, or makes them susceptible to episodes of illness. The student's knowledge, understanding, and skills are low for the type of work.	Discuss elements of high risk with the student to try to eliminate or reduce them where possible. Take account of impact of other risk factors identified in the risk profiling table when determining suitability of placement. Engage with student, placement provider and health & / or disability support professionals to develop and agree reasonable adjustments. Confirm these in the written communication with the placement provider and student. Consider provision of additional pastoral support contact. Discuss with provider and student how any competence / capability gaps can be addressed. Consider pre-placement site visit.

Insurance limitations:

Risk profile	Indications	Possible specific action to reduce risk
Low	Locations, activities & /or circumstances that are automatically included in HEI's insurance cover. UK locations (where the placement provider must have employers' liability insurance cover).	None
Medium	Locations, activities and/or circumstances that require prior acceptance from the HEI's insurers before being covered.	If locations, activities and/ or circumstances require prior acceptance from the HEI's insurers, ensure notification and acceptance is given. Raise student awareness about potential restrictions within insurance policies.
High	Locations, activities and/or circumstances that are excluded from the HEI's travel and other insurance cover. Locations where the placement provider's insurance does not cover the student for personal or third party liability associated with the work by the student.	If locations, activities and/ or circumstances require prior acceptance from the HEI's insurers, ensure notification and acceptance is given. Raise student awareness about potential restrictions within insurance policies.

QAA UK Quality Code:	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
----------------------	---

Further information links provided by *USHA Guidance on Health and Safety of Placements*:

ASET (Work-Based and Placement Learning Association):	http://www.asetonline.org
Information Commissioner's Office:	https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/
British Council:	https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-workcreate/practicalities
DFES Guide on Work Placements for Disabled Students:	http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10158/
Equality and Human Rights Commission:	https://www.equalityhumanrights.com
Foreign & Commonwealth Office:	https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/travelabroad
Health & Safety Executive:	http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/
ILGA (Intl Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Intersexual Association):	http://ilga.org/
Student guide on placements abroad:	http://www.thirdyearabroad.com/
Student guide on placements abroad:	http://www.thirdyearabroad.com/
Studentpad guide on accommodation:	www.studentpad.co.uk/HousingGuide
Universities Safety and Health Association:	www.usha.org.uk