

Work Experience, Internships and Placements Procedure	
Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:	Our Colleagues – Chief Operating Officer – Operations Committee
Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non-disclosable)?	Disclosable
Associated Policy Statements:	N/A
Authorised Owner:	Human Resources Director
Authorised Co-ordinator:	Associate Director (People Services)
Effective date:	14 July 2026
Due date for full review:	14 July 2029
Sub documentation:	Work Experience Induction Checklist General Risk Assessment Laboratory Risk Assessment Student Work placement Job Purpose (for paid placements) MS Application Form

Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	Full Procedural review and migration to the POPP structure	Operations Committee	14 July 2026

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The University is committed to supporting the development of individuals through the provision of high-quality work experience, internships, and student placements. These opportunities play a vital role in enhancing employability, developing practical skills, and providing meaningful insight into professional working environments. Recognised as valuable developmental experiences, they enable individuals to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and are often instrumental in supporting progression into paid roles, both within the University and externally.
- 1.2 As part of its wider commitment to education, community engagement, and workforce development, the University seeks to ensure that the arrangements for all work experience, internships and placements are well-structured, equitable, and aligned with institutional values and legal requirements. This procedure, therefore, outlines the framework for the provision, management, and oversight of these workplace opportunities, ensuring a consistent and positive experience for all parties involved.

2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all employees from their first day of employment at the University of Surrey and its subsidiaries. It also applies to any person(s) undertaking work experience, an internship, or work placement at the University.
- 2.2 Work experience, internships and student work placements must not be used to fill vacancies; rather, they are intended to provide individuals with the opportunity to gain practical experience of the workplace, including working collaboratively, meeting deadlines, understanding how the University operates and developing professional networks.
- 2.3 This procedure does not apply to apprenticeships (fixed term placements as part of an external accredited programme) as they follow strict frameworks in accordance with specific industry or sector requirements. If you require information on apprenticeships, please contact our L&D team at hrlid@surrey.ac.uk
- 2.4 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time with appropriate consultation with recognised trade union representatives.

3. Definitions and Terminology

3.1 Work Experience

Work experience refers to a short-term period of exposure to a professional environment in which an individual (normally a student) observes and develops a basic understanding of workplace practices, roles, and responsibilities, typically without undertaking significant duties or receiving remuneration.

This generally includes unpaid placements of one to two weeks' duration, commonly arranged through schools for students aged 14 to 18. It is recognised that, due to the nature of their activities, some departments may require a higher minimum age for participation.

3.2 Internship

An internship is a structured, time-limited work arrangement in which an individual (usually a student over the age of 18 and a recent graduate or post graduate) undertakes supervised tasks in order to develop practical skills, gain industry-specific knowledge, and enhance employability; it may be paid or unpaid. An intern is not an employee and should not be used to fill a vacancy, so will not normally have a contract of employment with the University.

3.3 Student Work Placement

A work placement is a structured period of professional experience that forms an integral part of an academic programme. It allows students to apply their theoretical knowledge in a real-world setting over an extended period, typically with defined learning objectives and assessment criteria.

Work placements are usually fixed-term opportunities undertaken as part of a degree course, most commonly lasting up to one year and often taking place during the third year of an undergraduate sandwich degree. They may be paid or unpaid, and their exact duration will vary depending on the requirements of the student's programme of study, though they typically do not exceed one year.

3.4 Child

This definition as set out in the Children Act 1989 states that a child is a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

4. Procedural Principles

4.1 WORK EXPERIENCE

This procedure should also be read in conjunction with the [Safeguarding Procedure](#).

4.1.1 Work Experience Restrictions for Children

There are restrictions informed by the Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998 on the engagement of children in certain jobs and the number of hours that children may work. The regulations apply to all children aged 13 and above and apply until they can legally leave school on the last Friday of June in Year 11 of their secondary education. The legislation **continues** to apply after the young person's sixteenth birthday if this falls before the school leaving date. A child is employed if they assist in a trade or occupation which is carried out on a for profit basis whether or not the child receives pay or reward for that employment. In general, the law prohibits the engagement of children under the age of 13. This therefore, includes work experience, and the guidelines in this procedure should be adhered to.

University staff should be aware that children must not be engaged:

- During school hours, on any day on which the child is required to attend school
- Before 7am and after 7pm on any day
- For more than two hours on any school day, or more than one hour before school
- For more than two hours on any Sunday
- For more than 12 hours in any week that includes a school day

On non-school days (excluding Sundays) children aged 13 and 14 may be engaged for up to five hours. Working hours must not exceed 25 in any one week.

Children aged 15 and 16 (if under school leaving age) may work for up to eight hours on any non school day (excluding Sundays). Working hours may not exceed 35 in any one week. Where a child is engaged for more than four hours, a break of at least one hour must be granted. A child must have at least two consecutive weeks without employment during the school holidays.

All children of compulsory school age need to be registered with the local authority and have a permit. See [Child employment guidance for parents and employers - Surrey County Council](#) for more

details

The following activities are considered prohibited for children undertaking work experience:

- work involving exposure to radiation;
- work that is physically or psychologically demanding;
- working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults;
- work involving exposure to extreme temperatures, excessive noise, or vibration;
- work involving the sale of alcohol;
- work where there is a risk of accidents that a young person may not recognise or avoid;
- working in isolation or with a single individual for extended periods;
- working away from home overnight;
- work that may expose the young person to sensitive or confidential information, including information relating to staff or students; or
- work that may involve exposure to distressing information, particularly relating to the mental or physical wellbeing of others.

Further examples of prohibited employment as established by Surrey County Council can be found at their website and must be adhered to: [Child employment guidance for parents and employers - Surrey County Council](#)

Higher-Risk Activities Requiring Assessment and Supervision

The following activities may present a higher level of risk and must be carefully assessed before a young person undertakes them. These activities must be clearly identified in the risk assessment, and the young person must be continuously supervised at all times:

- working in areas involving animals;
- working with patients in a clinical setting;
- working with or near potentially hazardous machinery;
- work involving potential exposure to toxic or carcinogenic substances;
- work involving the use of sharp knives; or
- working at height.

4.1.2 Arranging a Work Experience Placement

The University has partnership agreements in place with local secondary schools through Widening Participation's Surrey STARS (<https://outreach.surrey.ac.uk/activity/surrey-stars/>) programme. Faculties /Departments may wish to prioritise placements for students from these schools.

Typical activities that are deemed safe, supervised, and appropriate for their age and experience level include:

- **Administrative Support:** Filing, photocopying, data entry, document preparation, and general office tasks under supervision.
- **Student Support Observation:** Shadowing staff in student services, careers, or library support to gain an understanding of day-to-day operations.
- **Marketing and Events Assistance:** Supporting outreach activities, social media, promotional tasks, or attending events in a supervised capacity.
- **IT and Digital Support Observation:** Observing helpdesk operations, assisting with non-technical tasks, or supporting digital learning teams in safe, low-risk ways.

- **Campus and Facilities Support:** Assisting with reception, general enquiries, or administrative aspects of facilities management in a controlled environment.
- **Academic Observation (Limited):** Observing teaching, lectures, or research activities in classrooms or laboratories, provided health and safety guidance is followed and risks are appropriately managed.

4.1.3. Process

The University may receive requests for work experience placements through a variety of channels. Where an enquiry is received directly by a Faculty or department, and they believe they are able to support the request, the individual should be referred to the [Schools and Colleges](#) webpages. From there, they will be directed to the HR pages to complete an application form, submit a CV, and provide consent for this information to be shared with the relevant team. See Appendix 1 for the process flow.

HR Operations will monitor all requests received, including those submitted directly via the website. Requests received directly by HR Operations will be shared with the relevant department for consideration and approval.

Where a work experience placement is agreed, the department must confirm the details of the arrangement with HR Operations. HR Operations will write to the individual to formally confirm the placement details.

If Faculties or departments require further guidance, they should contact HR Operations at HROperations@surrey.ac.uk in the first instance.

4.1.4 Process for Surrey Sports Park

For work experience requests within Surrey Sports Park, requests should be sent to: sspworkexperience@surreysportspark.co.uk

Individuals will be asked to complete an SSP Work Experience Application Form and once agreed this will be confirmed in writing.

All other parts of the process outlined in this procedure with regards to DBS checks, risk assessments and induction will be adhered to in the same way.

4.1.5 Health and Safety, including risk assessment, training and supervision

It is widely recognised that young workers face a higher risk of injury, as they may be less aware of the risks. They will often be vulnerable, as they may:

- Lack experience and maturity
- Not have reached physical maturity and lack strength
- Be eager to impress or please people they work with
- Be unaware of potential risks and how to raise concerns.

As an employer taking on a young person for work experience, the University has the main responsibility for their health and safety. Before a young person starts their work experience, a risk assessment must be carried out. This responsibility lies with the supervising manager, who should then share this with the Head of School/Department/Directorate, the local lab manager (if relevant) or other relevant senior manager for approval. The risk assessment must take into account the above additional factors for young persons. As such it will be useful to talk about the placement in advance with the organisers and take account of what they and the parents or carers tell you about the student's physical and psychological capacity and any particular needs, for example, due to any health conditions or learning difficulties. Once the risk assessment is complete, the supervisor should explain to the parents/carers of the child what the significant risks are and what has been

done to control them. This can be done verbally to the parents/carers or via the work experience organiser.

An example risk assessment to cover the placement of work experience students/young persons working in a general office environment can be found on the [HR Procedures](#) page under 'Work Experience'. You can also access a risk assessment which is specific to work experience in laboratories.

As the work experience student will be new to the workplace and facing unfamiliar risks from both their work and surroundings, they should be provided with clear and sufficient instruction, training and supervision, so they can work without putting themselves and others at risk.

Any information and training provided should be proportionate to the risk and tailored to the tasks they will be undertaking. Supervisors should check if they have understood the instruction and training, including the hazards and risks in the workplace and the health and safety precautions in place.

Young people are likely to need more supervision than adults. Good supervision will help to get a clear idea of their capabilities and monitor the effectiveness of their training. Regularly checking progress will also help identify where any additional adjustments may be needed.

4.1.6 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

At the University, the level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check required for staff supervising under-18s on work placements depends on the age of the student and the nature and frequency of the supervision. Where a placement student is aged 16 or 17 and the activities are in relation to their paid or unpaid employment or work experience, the person who trains or supervises them is not in regulated activity with children for that supervision role and is therefore not eligible for an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check on that basis alone, although a Basic DBS check will be required as a matter of University policy.

Where the placement student is under 16, this exception does not apply and supervision may fall within the definition of regulated activity with children, particularly where a member of staff provides teaching, training, instruction, care, or supervision on more than three days in any 30-day period or overnight; in such cases the role is eligible for an Enhanced DBS check with a Children's Barred List check and University policy is that the supervisor must hold this level of clearance before the placement begins, with alternative supervision arrangements required if this is not in place. One-to-one working with a placement student under 18 (for example, alone together in a laboratory or office) does not automatically trigger a DBS check but increases the need to assess the role carefully against DBS eligibility guidance, and the supervisor, host, or academic responsible must determine the appropriate level of check (if any) and seek advice from HR or the safeguarding lead where there is uncertainty.

To arrange a DBS check, staff should contact HR Operations with details of the role and the level of DBS check they believe is required, and may use the government [eligibility tool](#) to identify which roles or activities may be eligible for a basic, standard or enhanced DBS check; as processing times can be several weeks, applications for planned placements should normally be submitted at least three months before the start date, and applicants must provide valid, original identity documents in line with DBS identity checking guidelines and will normally attend the HR office for document verification, as the University does not currently use Post Office identity verification.

4.2 INTERNSHIPS

4.2.1 Arranging an Unpaid Internship

The Faculty / Department should write a brief outline of the activities to be undertaken by the intern (by way of a short paragraph) and email it to HR Operations. In all circumstances the individual should be asked to complete the Internship (Unpaid) Application form. HR will then confirm the arrangement in writing and share this with

the Supervisor.

4.2.2 Arranging a Paid Internship

If a staff member receives a direct request from an individual to gain experience in their School and is interested in hosting them, they should contact HR Operations to ensure that the internship fulfils the developmental goals outlined in the 'Job Purpose' which is saved as a sub document to this procedure.

For paid internships these will normally be advertised. The Faculty / Department would need to raise an Online Staff Recruitment Form via SurreyRecruit and follow the process as outlined on the [Recruitment pages](#). Please contact resourcingteam@surrey.ac.uk who will support with the recruitment process.

Where the role is salaried, this will be at the level 1b grade as a minimum (linked to the National Minimum Wage) on the single pay spine. All terms and conditions relating to appointments at this grade will also apply.

4.3 STUDENT WORK PLACEMENT

4.3.1 Arranging a Student Work Placement

Although degrees may include the Industrial/Professional placement year as part of their course, it is always the responsibility of the student to apply for and obtain the offer of a placement.

If the Faculty/Department are able to accommodate a student work placement, they will need to submit the proposed advert (and, if a salaried placement, the generic placement job purpose) via SurreyRecruit. The Resourcing Team will support with the recruitment process. If the Faculty/Department receives a direct request from a student to work for the Faculty/Department and they are interested in hosting them, please contact HR Operations to confirm the process.

Placement opportunities are an important part of our commitment to supporting the development of students' employability skills. However, departments must also consider the resources required to provide appropriate supervision and mentoring throughout the placement.

As a general principle, placement opportunities should be paid. The host department may provide a salary and/or reimburse course fees and receipted travel expenses, depending on the nature of the placement and the funding available. Where a placement is salaried, the appointment will be made at a minimum of Grade 1B on the Single Pay Spine and in these cases, the standard terms and conditions associated with appointments at this grade will apply.

In exceptional circumstances, an unpaid placement may be offered where this is appropriate although placements that exceed one year must comply with applicable National Minimum Wage requirements (see the GOV.UK website for current guidance).

For unpaid arrangements HR will confirm the arrangement in writing. The agreement will confirm that neither party intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future. The University will agree a role with the individual and there will be an expectation that the intern will meet the role's requirements and that the University will provide work experience. However, the individual is free to refuse to fulfil the proposed activities and the University is not bound to provide them. It is however desirable, that both the University and the individual will give as much notice as possible if either party is unable to meet these expectations.

4.4 Induction for Work Experience, Internships and Placements

The staff member hosting the individual is responsible for providing an appropriate local induction that meets the University's standard onboarding requirements, this includes requesting affiliate IT accounts and organizing a campus card as appropriate.

It should be recognised that, for many individuals in these categories, the workplace may be an unfamiliar environment. It is therefore important that the induction supports them in settling in and enables them to make the most of their placement.

In addition to general information about the organisation and its work, the induction should include clear guidance on who is responsible for the intern's health and safety, as well as any specific rules or regulations that must be followed.

A planned induction programme will include the following and should be arranged by the line manager:

- Health and Safety briefing (by means of reviewing the Staff Health & Safety handbook and discussing any Health & Safety requirement specific to the placement)
- Background to the University
- Tour of the building and facilities
- Meeting of key team members
- Introduction to main tasks and skills to be used
- Introduction to any key policies and procedures to the role.

A sample Induction programme can be found on the [HR Procedures](#) page under 'Work Experience'.

4.5 Expenses

Work experience, internships and student work placements are often carried out voluntarily (without payment). Where unpaid, the department may, at its discretion, opt to reimburse travel expenses (against receipts), by the cheapest means available, unless these expenses are already covered externally. Please follow the process for Visitor Expenses.

A written agreement will be issued via HR Operations. This agreement is binding in honour only, it is not a legally binding contract between the University and the individual and it may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

4.6 Supervision and the role of the Supervisor

All work experience, internships and placements should have a member of staff assigned as a Supervisor (this may be an academic or non-academic) who is their first point of contact. In this role, they should agree with the individual the sort of tasks they can work on and also what they are not allowed to do in terms of tasks and equipment.

It is important that the Supervisor understands the health, safety and welfare aspects of what the placement will be doing and knows what action to take if the individual has a problem or needs help. The supervisor will be responsible for monitoring the individual's work, giving feedback, discussing progress and providing a final debriefing discussion at the end of the individual's assignment.

4.7 IT accounts

If the individual requires an IT account during their placement, they will be given an Affiliate Account via our IT department. If the individual is under the age of 18, you will need to liaise with the IT department with regards to the options available.

4.8 Campus Card

Before an individual can apply for a campus card, they must first complete their University IT account activation.

Once an IT account has been activated, they can access the University's campus card portal, Card Exchange, using the link <https://campuscard.surrey.ac.uk>

A Campus Card at the University of Surrey is an official staff identification card. It grants the individual physical access to campus buildings, unlocks printing and scanning services, provides access to the library and serves as campus ID.

4.9 Parking

All individuals are required to comply with University parking regulations. Please see our [Parking Hub](#) for more information.

4.10 Health and Safety

Specifically for health and safety purposes, and in accordance with the legal duties placed upon an employer, any individual on work experience, internship or student work placement is considered an employee of the University. This is in recognition of the fact that primary responsibility for these individuals' health and safety sits with the University. For additional requirements of work experience, please see Section 4.1.5.

4.10 Insurance

Individuals undertaking a placement are covered for insurance purposes by the University's Public and Employers' liability policies. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside of the placement agreement. Full information is available on the [Insurance](#) website.

4.11 Driving

Any individual wishing to drive a vehicle on University business (including their own private vehicle) must comply with the [University Driving at Work Procedure](#), complete an online driver approval form and receive authorisation from their supervisor prior to driving.

4.12 Pension

Any individuals on paid placements, who are paid through the University payroll, will automatically join the relevant University pension scheme. Please contact pensions@surrey.ac.uk for further information.

4.13 Confidentiality

Those individuals undertaking a placement may become aware of confidential information about the University, its staff, customers and suppliers. Individuals should not disclose this information or use it without the consent of their supervisor. Approval should be obtained by the individual before using any information as part of an assignment. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the individual's breach of

confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

4.14 Equal Opportunities

The University has a policy of equal opportunities. It is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and treatment of all individuals is carried out without prejudice regarding sex, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, age, class, sexual orientation, disability or any other grounds which cannot be justified, thus making opportunities as accessible as possible.

4.15 Disputes and Complaints

We hope and intend that all periods of placements will be happy and rewarding to all parties. Any problems that may arise on either side should ideally be resolved through informal discussion. The University is at liberty to terminate the placement without notice, with or without cause. For staff on a University contract of employment, the University's Grievance and Disciplinary procedures will apply. These can be found on the Human Resources web pages.

5. Governance Requirements

5.1. Implementation: Communication Plan

The procedure is available on SurreyNet (HR Procedure Page) for all staff to access.

5.2. Implementation: Training Plan

Further support will be provided to colleagues implementing the procedure when required.

5.3. Review

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by a change in legislation or practice.

5.4. Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements

This procedure complies with the following legislation:

- Children and Young Persons Act 1933 & 1969
- Education Acts 1996
- Children Act 1989
- Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998 and 2000.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992) as amended by the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulations (1997)

5.5. Sustainability

The University's work experience, internships, and student placements contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals by providing safe, inclusive, and meaningful learning opportunities. These activities:

- Enhance quality education and employability (SDG 4);
- Promote decent work and career readiness (SDG 8);
- Support equality and reduce barriers to participation (SDG 5 & 10);
- Encourage ethical conduct and social responsibility.

Faculties and departments are expected to design placements that reflect these principles and encourage students and interns to consider their role in contributing to sustainable development outcomes.

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 18 March 2026 and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

6.2 Procedure applies to all subsidiaries.

a.) Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	Request EB Approval (Y/N)	Date	Name of Contact
Governance	Review of V1.0	N	05/06/2026	Kelley Padley, Governance Officer
H&S	Review of V1.0	N	15/06/2026	Matt Purcell, Director of Health and Safety
Sustainability	Review of V1.0	N		Martin Wiles, Head of Sustainability
Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom	Review of V1.0	N	12/06/2026	Joshua Andresen, Academic Lead for Freedom of Speech

Appendix 1: Requests for unpaid Work Experience/Internships Process Flow

