

A1.5

Inclusion at the University of Worcester



Design inclusively Being inclusive in Placements

What?

Ensure learning outcomes are clear.

How?

Clarity about the purpose and intended learning outcomes in the design stage will show whether all elements of a placement are necessary or whether they can be designed out. This may include thinking about any requirements of professional bodies.

Why?

Placement activities can sometimes require additional skills that are not necessarily going to be assessed. This can cause stress for some students and may create barriers.^{1,2}

Review course publicity materials.

Publicity information needs to be clear about the requirements for the course. Provide video examples of placement settings to help students envisage the type of activity they may be involved in.

Publicity materials should represent diverse groups.

Communicate a willingness to adapt and consider reasonable adjustments where required.

This ensures that students are better able to anticipate any support needs they may have and speak to the course team prior to application.

This helps students to feel a sense of belonging if they can identify with the images they see.

This will encourage disabled applicants, and those with faith or cultural requirements to apply and not feel that they are unsuitable for the course.

Ensure students know what to do in unforeseen events.

Provide clear and readily available information about arrangements for sickness/ emergencies.

Provide a safe environment and supportive culture for students to raise any issues of inequality that arise during the placement.

This reduces stress and ensures that students with additional needs, fluctuating medical conditions and caring responsibilities can follow procedures easily.

Many students try to deal with workplace inequality themselves and therefore personalise the problem³. Students need to be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to address such situations with support.



What?

Be prepared for disabled applicants when organising placements.

How?

Audit placement providers to collect information about physical access, travel considerations and working hours. Make them aware of University policies on Equality and Diversity and ask that they respect these in reference to our students. For further guidance on work placements disabled students, refer to the University's Guidance for staff in managing work placements for disabled students (<https://www.worc.ac.uk/documents/work-placements-for-disabled-students-guidance.PDF>).

Invite feedback from students about their views on the inclusiveness of their placement experience so that issues can be addressed in future planning.

Provide clear procedures, rationale and multiple opportunities for students to disclose disability or any specific needs.

Why?

This ensures that information is available if specific adjustments need to be considered, ensuring there is a fair procedure for allocating placements depending on requirements.

Where students have been treated unfairly on the basis of protected characteristics, these placement providers should not be used again.

Their disabilities or specific needs might not affect them too much in study, but may present more of a barrier in a placement setting so students may need to be able to disclose at that point if they haven't already.

Support students to find placements.

Where there is a requirement for students to find their own placements, create a level playing field by sharing and disseminating information about possible placements and the industry contacts.

Some students may face a disadvantage with finding placements due to their background or lack of skills and experience in professional and social networking.⁴

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What?

Support students to prepare for placements.

How?

Embed structured support for preparation for placement into the curriculum.

Promote awareness of University policies and equality legislation both to students and placement providers – ensuring that students are aware of their legal rights within placement settings.

Follow procedures for finding out how disabled students' support requirements can be met during placement.

Help students to think through any other requirements they may have, e.g. in relation to religious observance or caring responsibilities, and how they will arrange this while on placement.

Why?

This ensures that students don't have to find additional time outside of their normal timetable and workload commitments to attend sessions, which could be problematic for some students including those who need to work part-time or have caring responsibilities.

University policies should be consistently applied to students' experience of course requirements so should still apply in off campus learning.

This may not have been fully explored during a student's Needs Assessment, particularly if the placement is optional.

Contact the 'Disability and Dyslexia Service (<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/disclosing-a-disability.html>)' for further advice.

Pre-empting practical or logistical considerations will reduce the need for additional arrangements to be made once the placement has started, which could be stressful. Engaging with support services can help to reduce anxiety and provide better information for staff arranging placements.



¹ Trinity College Dublin. (2016). 'Learning outcomes' Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, Ireland. [Online]. [Accessed 3 August 2018]. Available from: <https://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/TIC/guidelines/design/outcomes/index.php>

² Shirley Hill & Angela Roger (2016) The experience of disabled and nondisabled students on professional practice placements in the United Kingdom, *Disability & Society*, 31:9, 1205-1225, DOI: 10.1080/09687599.2016.1236718 <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/guides-to-support-inclusive-teaching-and-learning/how-to-support-students-on-work-placements/>

³ Race, P. 2014. *The lecturer's Toolkit: A practical guide to assessment, learning and teaching*. United Kingdom: Routledge

⁴ Hockings, C. 2010. *Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 August 2018]. Available from: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/inclusive_teaching_and_learning_in_he_synthesis_200410_0.pdf

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<https://inclusiveteaching.leeds.ac.uk/>; <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity>.

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