

Guidance: Assessing a placement provider's health and safety arrangements

Introduction

As a placement provider the University has to take reasonable steps to assure ourselves that we are not placing a student in an unsafe environment. We also want to ensure that we are using responsible employers that take health and safety seriously, so that the student benefits from working for a good employer. However the prime responsibility for health and safety rests with the employer. You just need to ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy yourself that they have health and safety arrangements in place. You may find it useful to refer to HSE guidance for placement providers: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/organiser.htm>

The following guidance will help you to use a risk based approach to assessing the health and safety arrangements of an employer.

Risk levels and action

Your approach to assessing the placement provider's health and safety arrangements will depend on how you categorise the risk. You will need to take account of the size of the organisation, whether or not it is UK based and the type of work that will be carried out.

Low risk:	UK based with more than 250 employees, or well-established multi-national organisation and the student will be doing low risk (e.g. office based) activities. Employer known to you and has a good track record.	No action required. Just record on risk as low on <i>Student placement risk assessment record</i> .
Medium risk:	Smaller employer or work involves practical elements with moderate potential for harm.	Ask about activities, training, supervision, induction. Record findings on <i>Student placement risk assessment record</i> .
Higher risk:	Small/ medium size employer who has not responded positively to questioning. Student will be working in high risk environment.	Seek written confirmation of competency requirements, training and that suitable risk controls are in place. Record findings on <i>Student placement risk assessment record</i> .

For medium or higher risk placements you can gather health and safety information through questioning or, if you prefer, by using one of the two checklists:

- The [Employer Health and Safety Checklist: UK Placements](#) asks specific questions based on UK legislative standards.
- The [Employer Health and Safety Checklist: Non UK Placements](#) asks similar questions, but is more general in nature.

Note: You only need to assess an employer's health and safety arrangements once, unless there are substantial differences with the work placements being offered.

What to assess and what action to take.

Refer to the table on the back of this guidance to find out what you need to check about the employer.

The [Risk Profiling and Actions Table](#) available at <http://www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/activities/student-placements.aspx> will then help you to assess the suitability of the employer from the information they provide. If you are not sure, contact the Health and Safety Advisory Service (HSAS) for guidance (tel: (01206 (87)2944, email safety@essex.ac.uk).

Consider	Guidance
<i>Size of organisation:</i>	<p>Generally larger organisations have better health and safety systems in place. You can assume that a UK based or multi-national large organisation (over 250 employees) will have suitable arrangements for health and safety and so will be considered low risk, unless the work the student is undertaking is medium to high risk (see next row).</p> <p>For smaller organisations refer to the Work Factors on the Risk Profile and Actions Table for further guidance.</p>
<i>Nature of business / office based tasks / type of work student will be doing:</i>	<p>Establishing what work the student will be doing for the employer will help you to assess whether the placement is low, medium or high. If the work is office based it will be low risk.</p> <p>Otherwise refer to the Work Factors on the Risk Profile and Actions Table for guidance.</p>
<i>Will the student be required to travel regularly:</i>	<p>If the placement is a comfortable daily commute away and there is no driving associated with placement, travel and transportation factors will be low risk.</p> <p>Otherwise refer to the Travel and Transportation Factors on the Risk Profile and Actions Table for guidance.</p>
<i>Health and safety processes:</i>	<p>You can assume that a UK based large organisation (over 250 employees) will have suitable arrangements for health and safety and so do not need to ask them to confirm they have them.</p> <p>In the UK employers with less than 6 employees are not required to record their arrangements.</p> <p>If a small employer or voluntary organisation has answered no to questions relating to health and safety processes, you could consider asking them to complete the HSE's Health and Safety Policy Template. See: Small Employer: Health and Safety Requirements and confirm to you that they have done so.</p> <p>If you are unsure about an organisation you can ask to see documentation such as a Policy statement as evidence that they do have arrangements in place.</p>
<i>Instruction and training:</i>	<p>As a minimum students should be given information on what to do in the event of fire and emergencies, or a first aid incident, how to report accidents and who to contact for help.</p> <p>You can assume that a UK based large organisation (over 250 employees) will have suitable arrangements for training and induction. However you should confirm training arrangements if the student is going to be exposed to significant risks. Refer to the Work Factors on the Risk Profile and Actions Table for guidance.</p> <p>The training should cover the hazards they may be exposed to. If you are unsure about the employer's response seek advice from HSAS.</p>
<i>Supervision arrangements:</i>	<p>This is very important for new, young employees. Ideally the student will have day to day contact with their workplace supervisor, along with regular formal 1:1 meetings. If the student will be working without direct supervision, you need to be assured that there are formal arrangements in place for regular contact with their workplace supervisor.</p>
<i>Competent Health and Safety Advice:</i>	<p>Employers are legally required to have competent health and safety advice under UK legislation. You can assume that a UK based large organisation (over 250 employees) and a large multi-national organisation will have suitable arrangements for competent advice.</p> <p>Smaller organisations may not have regular access to a qualified professional but it may still be acceptable to use them if work factor risks are low. HSAS will advise if you have concerns.</p>
<i>Insurance</i>	<p>Refer to Insurance Limitations in the Risk Profile and Actions Table for guidance. If the employer has answered "no" to any of these questions and has not indicated that they cover the potential liability seek advice from the Insurance Officer: email: insurance@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Note that for certain overseas placements where cover is limited you will need to explain the limitations and ask the student to sign an <i>Insurance Disclaimer</i>.</p>