

Work Experience Policy and Guidance for Users



Contents

1	Summary.....	3
2	Introduction.....	3
	Section One – Guidance for Possible Candidates.....	4
3	Functions of the Agency.....	4
4	Background to Departments.....	4
5	Types of Work Placements.....	6
6	Department Specific Requests.....	9
7	Indemnity Insurance.....	9
8	Employment Opportunities.....	9
	Section Two – Guidance for Staff.....	10
9	Selection Process.....	10
10	Induction.....	10
11	Support.....	10
12	Supervising and Mentoring.....	11
13	Feedback Review and Careers Advice.....	11
14	Reporting of Work Experience Placements.....	12
15	Document Review and Amendment.....	12
	APPENDACIES.....	13
	Annex 1 – Work Plan for Placement Students	
	Annex 2 – Employer Work Experience Feedback	
	Annex 3 – Feedback Review following Work Placement	
	Annex 4 – Application Form	
	Annex 5 – Quarterly Meeting to Discuss Needs	
	Annex 6 – Letter to Placement Student Following Work Experience	

1. Summary

1.1 This document provides clear guidelines on the management of work experience placements and best practice principles. Its purpose is to promote a clear, fair and uniform approach to accommodating student placement requests from schools, colleges or other educational bodies.

1.2 The objective of the policy is to ensure Loughs Agency's compliance with mandatory requirements covered in legislation (e.g. health and safety). It also offers an equitable and good practice approach to ensure an effective and meaningful placement for students and young people.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Agency recognises the benefit that work placements and internships can play on the career of young people and is committed to offering opportunities where this is practical and safe to do so.

2.2 The Agency comprises of four Departments, Corporate Services, Conservation and Protection, Development and Aquaculture and Shellfish. Each of which plays a key role in the development, implementation and delivery of services to the people of the Foyle and Carlingford catchments.

2.3 It is the aim of the Agency to have a workforce which is broadly representative of the population of Ireland / Northern Ireland. In order to achieve this aim we recognise that it is important that individuals considering careers choices have an opportunity to learn as much as possible about the opportunities that exist in the Agency. By offering opportunities to participate in work experience placements organised by schools, universities or business/education links bodies we hope to promote the Agency as an employer of choice.

2.4 There is a great diversity of jobs within the Agency across administrative, finance, information technology, human resources, conservation and protection, scientific, environmental, GIS, biology, tourism and marine development, educational, fishery management and marine environment related areas.

SECTION 1 - GUIDANCE FOR POSSIBLE CANDIDATES

3. Functions of the Loughs Agency

3.1 The functions of the Agency are set out in North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (NI) Order 1999, the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999, the Foyle Fisheries Act (NI) 1952 (as amended) and the Foyle Fisheries Act 1952 (as amended). These are as follows:

- The promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters;
- The management, conservation, protection, improvement and development of the inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas;
- The development and licensing of aquaculture; and
- The development of marine tourism.

4. Background to the Departments

4.1 The following are examples of positions in each Department.

4.2 Due to availability of resources, many of these positions are based in the Foyle area, however, we will make every effort to accommodate requests in both the Foyle and Carlingford areas as they arise.

Corporate Services Directorate

As the business end of the organisation, the objective is to effectively and efficiently deliver our statutory mandate and responsibilities. This directorate will consider work experience opportunities in the following areas:

1. Finance
2. Administration
3. Information Technology
4. Human Resources

Conservation and Protection Directorate

The objective of this directorate is to conserve and protect the fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford areas. This directorate will consider work experience opportunities in the following areas:

1. Fishery Conservation and Protection
2. Environment Protection
3. Fresh Water Environment
4. Biology
5. Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

Development Directorate

This directorate exists to develop the partnerships with the tourism authorities, local government, the private sector and fishing clubs, associations and owners to identify areas with potential for development. Support through diversification and broadening will be provided for the improvement of infrastructure, raising visibility of the tourism and angling products available, consistent with the protection of the stocks. This directorate will consider work experience opportunities in the following areas:

1. Environmental Education (Riverwatch Centre)
2. Development of Marine Tourism
3. Angling Management

Aquaculture and Shellfish Directorate

The Loughs Agency uses an evidence based management system to control and protect the shellfisheries and aquaculture in Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough. This is founded on the principle of gathering good scientific information about the fisheries/aquaculture and the environment.

In recent years the Agency has broadened its approach to fisheries research to include monitoring of estuary water quality, shellfish population surveys, seed mussel surveys, seabed surveys and aquaculture surveys. This directorate will consider work experience opportunities in the following areas:

1. Marine Science
2. Aquaculture Development

5. Types of Work Placements

5.1 There are a number of routes through which work experience within the Agency can be facilitated. The following is an outline of the different routes on offer and the process involved. The list shows currently available programmes, however these may change from time to time.

(a) **Work experience placements of young people who are in years 11/12 or 13/14 of full time education or are students in further and higher education**

The normal duration for work experience placements for students under 18 years of age is one week. A reduced placement will be considered if required.

Process:

- Application - carried out by School Employer Connections
- Agreement of objectives and preparation of Work Plan (Annex 1)
- Induction
- Review of work – Supervisor (Annex 2)
- Exit Feedback Interview – HR (Annex 3)

(b) **Unpaid Internships arranged through Colleges or University**

An internship is a period of work experience arranged by a university in which the intern will be placed in a Government Department. The period of the placement is likely to mirror a university semester (i.e. 10-12 weeks) and the placement will be in a Department which is providing a function directly related to the nature of the course being provided by the college or university and being undertaken by the student.

Process:

- Application - (Annex 4)
- Selection
- Agreement of objectives and preparation of Work Plan (Annex 1)
- Induction
- Review of work – Supervisor (Annex 2)
- Exit Feedback Interview – HR (Annex 3)

(c) Department of Employment and Learning

(i) Programme Led Apprenticeships

This is a two year programme led by the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and which involves work placements of one day a week. The placements are arranged by training suppliers approved by DEL and which requires the training supplier to have adequate insurance which will indemnify their apprentices placed within the Public Sector.

(ii) Steps to Work

'Steps to Work' is the main adult return to work programme for the unemployed and economically inactive in Northern Ireland, replacing the former New Deal programmes. The programme provides a broader range of back to work assistance than previously available under New Deal and is tailored to individual's needs by identifying and tackling their barriers to work.

(iii) Graduate Acceleration Programme - GAP

GAP is the Graduate Acceleration Programme run by Business in the Community; it is a work placement programme, lasting up to 26 weeks, in which graduates will complete a project or piece of work and study for a graduate certificate with either Queens or the University of Ulster.

(iiii) JobBridge – National Internship Scheme (ROI)

JobBridge is a new National Internship Scheme that will provide work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period.

The aim of the National Internship Scheme is to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills. The scheme will also give people a real opportunity to gain valuable experience to bridge the gap between study and the beginning of their working lives.

Process:

- Application - carried out by relevant programme provider
- Agreement of objectives and preparation of Work Plan (Annex 1)
- Induction
- Review of work – Supervisor (Annex 2)
- Exit Feedback Interview – HR (Annex 3)

(e) Sandwich year or sandwich period placement (i.e. 13/26 weeks)

The Agency may from time to time (subject to available funding) provide one year sandwich placements for students undertaking relevant degree courses. These placements will be publicly advertised and the successful students become paid employees for the period of their placement.

Process:

- Application – (Annex 4)
- Selection
- Agreement of objectives and preparation of Work Plan (Annex 1)
- Induction
- Review of work – Supervisor (Annex 2)
- Exit Feedback Interview – HR (Annex 3)

(f) Volunteers – North West Volunteer Centre

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.

Process:

- Advertise opportunity through North West Volunteer Centre
- Application – (Annex 4)
- Selection
- Agreement of objectives and preparation of Work Plan (Annex 1)
- Induction
- Review of work – Supervisor (Annex 2)
- Exit Feedback Interview – HR (Annex 3)

5.2 Applications for any of these placements **MUST** be processed through Corporate Services Human Resources where further detail and guidance will be provided.

5.3 Applications submitted by or on behalf of individuals who are not associated with an educational organisation or training scheme will not be considered.

5.4 Corporate Services Human Resources will meet with directors on a quarterly basis to discuss their requirements (and those of their staff). To

facilitate this directors will be required to plan 3 months in advance (with their staff) to allow for the process to operate smoothly and efficiently. (Annex 5)

5.5 Corporate Services Human Resources will collate the needs of all directors and seek approval to proceed from the CEO based on numbers and available resources.

5.6 There will be no ad hoc arrangements accepted outside of these timeframes.

6. Department Specific Work Experience Requests made by Universities or other Colleges of Higher Education

6.1 Some Agency departments have well established links with universities or other educational centres (e.g. Foyle Language Centre) through which students may be offered placements, usually in a specialist area related to the course they are undertaking and/or a particular specialism within the Agency. These links are important and should be developed in liaison with Corporate Services Human Resources.

7. Indemnity Insurance

7.1 Indemnity forms provided by the individual's school or organisation will be required prior to the application being considered.

7.2 No individual accepted for work experience should be unsupervised and any risks should be managed in the same way as for other employees.

8. Employment Opportunities

Candidates should be aware that at no time will the completion of a period of work experience be a guarantee of permanent employment within the Agency. All recruitment competitions carried out within the Agency are in compliance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and are applied consistently at all times with equality of opportunity in a fair and transparent manner.

SECTION 2 – GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

9. Selection of Candidates

9.1 The selection of candidates will be determined by the route of entry to the Agency. All details are available from Corporate Services Human Resources.

10. Induction

10.1 An induction will be carried out by Corporate Services Human Resources on the first morning of the placement before handing over to the relevant member of staff for a further introduction to the department in which they will be placed.

10.2 The departmental induction should be seen as an opportunity to get to know the placement student; this is where you can start building a good relationship, understand their previous experience, talk about the expectation on each side, identify areas for development, establish their goals and allow space for the placement student to ask questions.

11. Support

11.1 During their time with the Agency the placement student should be treated with exactly the same degree of professionalism and duty of care as regular employees.

11.2 As a supervisor / line manager, you will be required to have a pre-determined work plan in place for the placement student's arrival. (Annex 1).

11.3 The work plan will be a standard plan which is adapted for each candidate, so you do not need to develop a new plan each time a work experience placement is hosted. This needs to be flexible and while responding to the needs of the Agency, should also be tailored to the individual's abilities.

11.4 Good practice is to offer them a small project (as predetermined in their work plan) that they can work on at points during the placement supporting and developing their skills to increase their employability skills, giving them a real flavour of the world of work.

11.5 Remember that the placement student is here to learn so it is important to keep them active and engaged throughout their placement to ensure their

motivation levels are kept up and they have a positive experience including what it means to be part of a team.

12. Supervision and Mentoring

12.1 As the person selected to dedicate time in your own work schedule to supervise the placement student you should be reminded that good management is crucial in terms of building up confidence and demonstrating to them the positive role they can play.

12.2 In order to develop and enhance the experience gained you should:

- Allow time for them to ask questions throughout
- Build a supportive working relationship
- Act as a point of contact for any concerns
- Supervise and coach them during every working day
- Provide ongoing constructive feedback
- Help them with their communication skills
- Give advice on working life
- Reflect on their progress and have regular conversations about their attitude to work.

12.3 Be clear on the tasks you want carried out and/or projects you want them to contribute to. If planned work requires specific training and/or PPE these need to be planned for in advance.

12.4 Each work experience participant will be different, with varying skill levels and abilities. However, it is important to manage the placements expectations and to ensure that they have a realistic understanding of their role in the Agency.

13. Feedback Review and Careers Advice

13.1 At the end of the work placement a feedback review will take place to review how everything went for both the student and for the Agency and to offer additional advice on the recruitment application process. This will be carried out by Corporate Services Human Resources and the supervisor / line manager.

13.2 Each placement student will be issued with a standard letter at the end of their time at the Agency as evidence of their work experience. Annex 6.

14. Reporting of Work Experience Placements

14.1 Corporate Services Human Resources will be reporting annually on all work experience opportunities provided by Agency. A log will be maintained by Corporate Services Human Resources of all opportunities provided, together with any information illustrating the benefits obtained by both the Agency and those undertaking the placements.

15 Document Review and Amendment

15.1 This policy will be formally reviewed every 36 months (or sooner if work processes change).

15.2 To ensure that each copy of the policy contains a record of all changes, a record of the change or amendments will be kept on the amendment list. The amendment list along with any revised or new pages will then be circulated to all staff.

Amendment List

Date	Section	Brief description of change	Page no.	Version no.
	All	Complete review of all policies	All	1
21/05/14	15	Inserted date column on amendment list	12	2
12/04/18	15	Review frequency changed to 36 months	12	2
17/01/19		Add New Logo to front cover and Annex documents.		3

ANNEX 1

Work Plan for Placement Students

Objectives: What do you want to accomplish?	Activities: How will the objective be accomplished?	When: When will the activity begin and end?	Outcome: What are the desired outcomes?	Evaluation: How will the outcomes be measured?	Comments
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

Name of supervisor / Line Manager _____

Signed _____ Date _____

NB: You may amend this form to reduce or increase the number of objectives as necessary. Please forward a copy to Human Resources.

Employer Work Experience Feedback

ANNEX 2

Student Name _____

Name of School/University/Educational Body _____

Dates of Work Experience _____

Please tick the relevant box:
5 = Excellent 3 = Satisfactory 1 = Needs Improvement N/A = Not Applicable

	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
PERSONAL SKILLS						
Attendance						
Punctuality						
Appearance						
HEALTH & SAFETY						
Regard of Health & Safety						
COMMUNICATION SKILLS						
Written and Oral (Speak, listening and discussion)						
Asking and responding to questions						
RELATIONSHIPS						
Supervisor						
Colleagues						
TEAMWORK						
Ability to work in a group						
Being flexible, versatile and adaptable						
RESPONSIBILITY						
Initiative						
Enthusiasm						
Commitment & Motivation						
PROBLEM SOLVING						
Recognising and describing problems						
Seeking the right information						
Decision making & judgement						
LEARNING & PERFORMANCE						
Ability to follow instructions						
Learning ability: Seek and use feedback						
Recognising strengths and weaknesses						
Develop Confidence						
Understand Business Issues						

Comments on the student _____

Name of Supervisor / Line Manager _____ Signed _____

Date _____

(Please return to Human Resources on completion)

ANNEX 3

Feedback Review following Work Placement

Q1. What have you learned and how have you developed during this work experience?

Q2. How well do you think you have you met your objectives?

Q3. What do you see as your strengths?

Q4. What are your areas for improvement / development?

Q5. What have been your biggest / proudest achievements while at the Agency?

Q6. What projects have you contributed to while you were here?

Q7. In what ways do you feel you are better prepared for the job market after completing this work experience?

Q8. Can you identify areas from your experience in the Agency that you can use to update your CV? If so, what are they?

Can you provide some feed-back on your impression of the Loughs Agency?

For the supervisor / mentor:

Comment on performance (in general and/or on specific projects).

Comment on strengths and weaknesses.

Comment on suggested areas for concentration / development.

Name (Placement Student)_____

Directorate_____

Name of Supervisor_____

Signature_____

Name (HR)_____

Signature_____

Date_____

ANNEX 4

Work Experience / Placement Application Form

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name of student _____

Proposed dates of placement _____

Telephone (including dialling code) _____

Mobile _____

Email address _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Name of parent / guardian / next of kin _____

Address (including postcode) _____

Mobile / Telephone Number _____

UNIVERSITY / ORGANISATION CONTACT DETAILS

University / Organisation _____

Careers contact name _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

Please use the space below to tell us about yourself. Explain why you have chosen Loughs Agency for your placement and how it relates to your plans for the future.

Please sign and date the application form below and return to Human Resources Officer, Loughs Agency, 22 Victoria Road, Derry~Londonderry, BT47 2AB

or

siobhan.mccarron@loughs-agency.org

SIGNATURE _____

DATE OF APPLICATION _____

NB: Remember to attach your CV and proof of indemnity cover!

Quarterly Meeting to Determine Work Placement Requirements

DIRECTORATE _____

DATE OF MEETING _____

Job title of vacancy _____

Line Manager/Mentor _____

Details of project / work to be carried out _____

Type of person required (i.e. skills / qualifications) _____

Duration of Placement (including start and finish date) _____

Training required (YES / NO) please detail _____

PPE required (YES / NO) please detail _____

Location of Workstation _____

SIGNED (HR OFFICER) _____ **SIGNED (DIRECTOR)** _____

ANNEX 6

[enter date]

[enter address]

Dear [enter name]

RE: WORK PLACEMENT

This letter is to confirm that you have successfully completed a period of work experience at Loughs agency from [enter dates] and may be used as proof of same to prospective employers and as back up to your CV.

You were placed within the [enter department] under the direction of [enter name and job title] who acted as your mentor/supervisor during this time. Your responsibilities included [enter details of responsibility]. Your progress was monitored throughout your placement by comparing the objectives set out in your work plan at the beginning of your placement against your performance and completion of these. [Enter supervisor name] has made the following comments:

1. [enter details on performance]
2. [enter details of strengths and weaknesses]
3. [enter details on areas for concentration]

I hope that this experience will assist you on your journey towards your chosen career and would like to thank you for the work you carried out while you were here. I would also like to stress that if we can be of any further assistance to you we would be happy to help.

Yours sincerely

Siobhan McCarron
Human Resource Officer