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Handbook for Tutors

– How to Prepare Students for Foreign Work Placements



Education and Culture DG

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Introduction

◆ *This Handbook for Tutors – ‘How to Prepare Students for Foreign Work Placements’ is designed to assist in preparing students for a foreign work placement abroad. The Handbook is based on procedures and long-term experiences of vocational colleges’ training professionals in the fields of social and health care. However, the Handbook is to serve preparations for all sectors’ vocational training institutes.*

The approach used in the Handbook for Tutors is broad. Preparing students for foreign work placements is not just handing students some information on placement organisation and work to be done, nor is it just providing them with some lessons on language and culture.

Preparing students includes their involvement in the various necessary processes. The more students are involved in the process, the more they will become committed and feel responsible.

However the responsibilities lie with organisations and their employees (sending and hosting colleges’ tutoring teachers and work placement supervisor). Therefore the structure of Handbook has been derived from their viewpoint.

The Handbook sums up the processes and topics that have been found to be important and useful. All vocational training institutes have their own internal norms and limitations for dealing with issues - one being, how many resources, especially time, can be used for preparation and arrangements – this Handbook will not give any detailed number of hours that should be allocated for various procedures and topics, it merely states out what should be covered and suggestions on how this may be done.

As this Handbook is aims to serve any sectors’ vocational training it can therefore be modified according to varying interests. Thus this Handbook gives guidelines that should be taken into account when preparing students for placements. Please feel free to modify and utilise it in any way you like.

The structure of booklet is divided into three main sections:

I. Co-operation and Internal Processes prior to Placement

II. Co-operation and Internal Processes during Placement

III. Co-operation and Internal Processes after Placement

These three main sections have been dealt both from:

A. Sending college's viewpoint

B. Hosting college's viewpoint

C. Work placement organisation

Organising foreign work placement opportunities and preparing students for them is based on continuous interaction between tutors of both the sending and hosting college, the student going abroad and the work placement supervisor. There are clear phases and always at least two main organisations, the colleges, are playing major roles (do not understand this sentence). This Handbook is providing a general and holistic overview on the entire process and is not focusing only on the sending college's preparations.

This Handbook is complementary to the previously released 'Handbook for Work Placement Supervisors – How to Supervise Foreign Students at Work Place'.

We hope this Handbook will serve you well!

I. Co-operation and Processes prior to Placement

◆ Organising work placement opportunities for foreign students with a network of colleges is a challenging task. The Objective of the whole process is to provide students with a successful, positive and safe experience abroad. Usually co-operating colleges are acting in dual roles; sending and receiving students, therefore arrangements should be as standardised as possible in this reciprocal process. The more unified or standardised the arrangements are the fewer gaps there are likely to be.

The first prerequisite for co-operation is that there is mutual trust and commitment between colleges. This is verified by official 'Letters of Intent' i.e contracts between organisations.

These documents should also include clear statements of the duties and responsibilities of partners. Should there be any fees to be paid by either the colleges or students – there should be clear definitions how these are managed.

It is recommended that those responsible for the co-operation in co-operating colleges should be able to meet each other and build up personal relationships, this will increase and ease extensive communication that is to take place later on.

The second prerequisite is to be aware of the provision of work placement opportunities that partner colleges are capable of offering for foreign students. It is recommended that organisations give each other lists of different the types of placement opportunities available for foreign students – and if any limits should exist: also the number of placements they are capable of organising for foreign students per term.

I.A. Processes of the Sending College

I.A.1. Informing the Hosting Partner College about Possible Work Placement Trainees

The starting point for student mobility is to map out the number of students, types of placements needed for them and their placement

periods. Please keep in mind that most colleges are co-operating with a number of other colleges as well. The flow of students to certain destination colleges may increase to such numbers that the hosting college has to limit the number of students taken in. It is important therefore that information is made available as soon as possible as it may place the sending college in a more advantageous position. If information from the trainees is sent to the hosting college close to the starting date of placement period there is a danger that the necessary arrangements cannot be completed in the time available. This may lead to cancelling the placement period.

If possible, this should be done during the previous term before the placement takes place: Please organise applying for foreign placements during previous term (see 2.1.)

I.A.2. Selecting Students for Foreign Placements

This chapter is designed to give general guidelines on the selection process and crucial issues related to it. Procedures may have to be adjusted especially as “a sending organisation” consists of a network of national level colleges.

I.A.2.1. Informing of Opportunities Available

All students should have equal opportunities in relation to the type of placement available as part of their vocational education. The possibility of applying and the subsequent process should be transparent and reach all eligible students. There should be several ways for students to have access to the necessary information in time.

The *Recommended means of informing candidates could include:*

- ◆ the use of mass emailing-systems (i.e. emailing the same information package to all students eligible to apply for foreign placements). It is important to ensure that all students have been targeted.
- ◆ the use of internal bulletins, internal television-screens, newsletters, intranets (information available for active students showing interest and taking initiative by following the news and various opportunities).

- ♦ organising information / marketing events at college: the college organises specific events to provide information regarding foreign placement opportunities. Together with college staff, students that have been abroad during previous terms will disseminate their experiences for fellow students (marketing is thus peer-to-peer-based and more inspiring).

The aim in general is to make students aware of the mobility options available and to enhance interest among the students. The interested students hand in their applications for the foreign placements they express an interest in. Students should be aware that handing in the application is the first step of the **selection process**. The information available during the applying process should make it clear to the students that handing in the application form does not automatically mean that they will be accepted to go abroad. It should be stated very clearly that the college will send the best possible candidates for placements abroad. It is beneficial that students are aware that there will be competition over placements abroad: this will increase the significance of the work placement and underline the added value of working abroad for those ones chosen in the end.

Informing students should take place **in good time during the previous term** before going abroad. This is to enable enough time for both the selection process and the preparation course.

The earlier this will take place the easier the process will be and allow more time to react if later changes are required to be made.

1.A.2.2. Applying Process

It is recommended that the applying process should be carried out through the college's intranet or separate IT-based platform. The e-based platform is to facilitate an actual template or application form that will be immediately available to all necessary parties: e.g. tutor, teacher of applicant, study counsellor, mobility co-ordinator, economic administration etc. all depending on the college's internal procedures.

Students should also have the option to hand in their applications either via an e-mail attachment or even as a paper version.

The information package sent to students should include at least following topics:

- ◆ A motivating introduction “why they want go abroad – professional added value”
- ◆ What the selection process is going to be like / criteria
- ◆ What destination countries are available for students
- ◆ What type of work placements opportunities are available in the different destination countries
- ◆ A general description of how the accommodation will be organised
- ◆ What is the selection criteria focusing on:
 - ◆ Grades of vocational studies, both theory and previous work placements
 - ◆ Language competences
 - ◆ Good manners, behaviour / social skills / maturity / personal competencies and characteristics
 - ◆ Topics of possible selection-related interview
 - ◆ Financial matters (external funding available / student’s own funding)
 - ◆ Insurance cover

There should also be a clear explanation as to whether the foreign work placement period is part of the qualification (officially acknowledged) or is it part of optional / additional studies completed on top of the qualification.

Specific issues relating to possible competence-based exams or skills demonstration tests – arrangements have to be clarified as well.

A separate application document (e-version, intranet address/ template, paper version) has to be included with detailed instructions on how the application is to be completed and handed in by a definite deadline.

The information package should also instruct who to contact when a student is in need of further information before handing in the application.

I.A.2.3. Application

The information given by the student in the applying phase with the application form should cover all necessary details from:

- ◆ full name and identification codes (i.e. personal social security/ID-code and college's internal ones: e.g. student's code/number and group code)
- ◆ date of birth / age (if not already in personal ID-code)
- ◆ contact information (emails, telephone number(s), address)
- ◆ bank account (for payment of grant)
- ◆ phase of studies (to go abroad for placement)
- ◆ destination country and the type of work placement the student wants (recommendation: the student should mention three countries in case their first option is not available)
- ◆ justification / motivation for the chosen country and placement type
- ◆ short description why him/her should be chosen
- ◆ reference (e.g. group tutor, study counsellor)

The identification codes are handy in order to facilitate direct access to study records and grades. Age is important as in many cases being of minor age may be a hindrance – and maturity of added value.

Students should write a clear positive justification of why they want to be chosen for a foreign work placement in their chosen setting. It is beneficial for the applicant if they are able to articulate what is expected from an added value perspective of this period abroad. This refers also to a description of why they should be given this opportunity.

More detailed information by the student should have been already handed in during the applying phase – less additional work has to be done after selection has been carried out: it is already available once applied.

Once the deadline for applying has expired, the co-ordinator or the team responsible for selection will process the applications immediately.

The pre-processing of applications should differentiate students according to their **professional competence**: ones with best grades and assessment results especially from previous practical training periods should be prioritised. ***The level of professional competence can be***

checked from the college's study register that includes completed courses with grades. It may also be of added value to consult colleagues who have been teaching the applicants: what is their opinion regarding the applicants' eligibility to be sent on a foreign placement.

In general main the guidelines to be considered should be that students going abroad have scored better grades than the majority of other students – with grades good to excellent. Once again, each student going abroad is not only representing him/herself but also the profession, sending college and home country. It is worthwhile to bear in mind that one badly behaving, self-centred and arrogant student may cause permanent damage: the work placement may not take any foreign students in future regardless of the country of origin. This also applies to behaviour at their accommodation and during leisure time.

I.A.2.4. Selection Criteria

Once applicants have been placed in order of their professional competence (i.e. grades from their completed studies) it is important to consider their *command of the foreign language* they should be using in the destination country. In most cases the language will be English but it may vary from one European country to another. Command of foreign language should also be tested in practice by using additional written and oral exams together with an interview. Interviewing applicants will provide a primary comprehension of the students' language proficiency - what type of vocabulary they have and furthermore: how anxious and accustomed they are to communicate in a foreign language. Minor grammar mistakes should not be an obstacle – ability and courage to communicate are more crucial factors.

The larger the college selecting students the greater the likelihood is that staff members dealing with applicants will not personally know the students. *Therefore it is recommended that applicants will be interviewed regarding their expectations, wishes and professional goals.* This interview can be carried out by the coordinator, study counsellor or as a recommendation by the teacher who is going to be student's tutoring teacher at the sending college for the placement period abroad.

Personal characteristics should include: a positive attitude, the ability to take and show initiative, have good manners and be polite. These are basic factors as students do not only represent themselves as individuals they also represent their own college and future profession and especially their home country and its people.

When having the selection discussion / interview with the applicant it is also worthwhile to pay attention to any previous experience of living abroad and travelling. Any other relevant experiences should be taken into consideration. During the interview it is important to pay attention to the students way of expressing themselves, especially in the manner of their speech: does student respect the interviewer, paying attention and not talking on top of the interviewer, the use of ‘please’, “thank you” etc. Politeness of discourse is an important factor.

The Discussion / interview should also focus on what type of **fears and threats** they may have. The interviewing teacher should evaluate how realistic these may be. The student may also be asked questions how would they solve different type of problems that may confront them in their destination country. Some examples may be:

- ◆ losing their passport and / or credit card
- ◆ falling sick
- ◆ feeling homesick
- ◆ encountering communication problems with clients/staff colleagues and/or appointed supervisor – how to solve the problem
- ◆ not being able to get along with the host family or fellow students residing at the same address – how to solve the problem?

The interview should take place either in English or in the language of the destination country – in order to get an overall comprehension of the student’s ability to manage with the language of the destination country.

From a practical viewpoint the student should be informed of any **liabilities** attached to the practical training period abroad. The student should be fully aware of the contractual and financial liabilities he/ she will have before making a final decision to participate. External funding will not cover all expenses – investment of their own funds for the period abroad will likely increase their commitment to this experience. All norms and regulations to be obeyed should be clarified - especially in cases of:

- ◆ cancelling just before the placement commences (expenses have already been incurred e.g. in form of pre-paid flights or other tickets)
- ◆ student having to return back home as a result of it being their own fault (e.g. poor behaviour, use of intoxicants)
- ◆ other reasons, unexpected ones.

Contracts related to external funding have to be explained to the student in a detailed manner.

Insurance cover has to be clarified: what risks are covered by the college's own insurance and what risks student has to cover by taking additional insurance.

Before making his/her final decision the student should also be aware that the hosting college or working life organisation may require a ***criminal record / police background check***. This is increasingly common when dealing with social and health care work placements, however it may occur also with other branches' of training.

His/her

Interviewing of students as part of selection process can also act as one form of providing more detailed information on practices that one can encounter in the destination country.

I.A.3. Preparing Students for Foreign Placements – process

After students have been selected the preparation course should be launched.

The preparation process can be divided into two separate parts – or areas of issues to be dealt with:

- 1) practical arrangements referring to facilitating and organising placements
- 2) the student's preparatory learning workshops assist in promoting a successful work placement experience abroad and in encouraging the students to become acquainted with culture in their destination country.

I.A.3.1. Preparatory Practical Arrangements

Carrying out practical arrangements before the students go abroad should start with defining what type of work placement/organisation should be looked for by the partner college abroad. Therefore the sending college tutoring teacher should discuss the matter in a detailed way with the student going abroad. **Defining the type of work placement should be based on the student's curriculum/vocational qualification and learning goals for the on-the-job-learning period in question.** On the basis of this discussion the student and tutoring teacher at the sending college should define and describe three suitable but alternative placement-types and set them in order of priority. This discussion also clarifies for the student his/her learning goals for the period abroad and will encourage him/her to focus on their own professional development during their period abroad.

These alternatives are also a necessity for the hosting college abroad as the hosting college may not be able to find an exact match for their first choice. Thus having three options available in order of priority will help the hosting college abroad to find suitable work placements.

After listing three suitable work placement types the student will write a **personal introduction letter and EU-Curriculum Vitae**. The introduction letter is to include at least the following information:

- ◆ personal information: age, sex, educational background in general, language proficiency, areas of interest / hobbies, health status (especially if it may have an impact on the duties and tasks at the work placement).
- ◆ vocational education background: what qualification he/she is studying,
- ◆ phase of studies (what has been done – what is still to be learned), what have been the student's previous work placement experiences, recent phase of studies (what are the core competencies to be learned during the placement period abroad, especially at the work placement).
- ◆ work placement wishes in order of priority (1st, 2nd, 3rd) with a short justification.
- ◆ personal justification of why he/she chose the destination country, areas of interest in relation to the culture and the country.

The EU-CV is a general and official form of documentation of education and has already possessed competencies, contact information, work history etc. If available a passport photo should be included. The photo will help the hosting college's teacher to recognise the foreign student at the airport / railway station or other agreed meeting point when arriving at the destination. The EU-CV is available at: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

The hosting college abroad should receive both an introduction letter and EU-CV, if possible, three months before the placement is to take place.

Once confirmation on the work placement in the destination country has been received from the hosting college the tutoring teacher or other responsible staff member at the sending college will **draw up a contract between the student and the college concerning financial support / grant given to the student**. Before the student signs the contract he/she has to be clearly informed over their obligations related to the funding. **It is recommended that the student will get written instructions on their obligations i.e. what expenses have to be reported with receipts and invoices after their placement abroad**. The tutoring teacher has the responsibility of clarifying the contract's legal issues to the student i.e. under what circumstances does the student have to return the received grant (an interrupted placement period due to student's own misbehaviour, use of intoxicants, neglecting work responsibilities and working hours).

The student will also be informed of the **insurance cover** that he/she will have from the sending college. The sending college is always responsible for organising insurance cover for its students. The student will be advised to take out **additional insurance** (leisure time accidents, personal property) at this point. As soon as information from the hosting college on the work placement and accommodation arrangements arrives, it will be forwarded to the student.

It should be preferable that the **student themselves organise their own travel arrangements** to their destination under the supervision of the tutoring teacher – thus taking responsibility and showing commitment to the placement period abroad. Once the travel

arrangements are ready the student will hand in all their information to the sending college's tutoring teacher / coordinator who in turn will forward this information to the hosting college's contact person immediately.

The student also has to be informed of the kind of certificate he/she will receive after their placement period abroad (e.g. Europass).

I.A.3.2. Student's Preparatory Learning Process

Once the student has been chosen to participate in the work placement abroad he/she should start preparing themselves for the period. Apart from the practical arrangements it is crucial to get acquainted with the work methods and tasks to be done at the work placement.

In the case where the information concerning the work placement is already accessible and work tasks known the student will get acquainted with these. The description of the work placement and the tasks to be undertaken require to be considered in relation to the goals of the curriculum, especially in relation to on-the-job-learning period.

If the work placement is not familiar to the sending college and therefore the duties and tasks are also unknown or unclear the tutoring teacher will contact the hosting college's colleague and ask for a description of the organisation. This description is to include the main characteristics concerning the placement organisation and the tasks that the student can carry out during their placement. Once this information is received, both the tutoring teacher and the student will discuss and plan how the student can obtain information and even practice for such tasks.

It is recommended that the student will revise the underpinning knowledge and skills that are needed in such line of work. Recapping on these necessary skills and knowledge will build up self-confidence for the period abroad and also make it easier to cope with anything they may encounter and to adapt to challenging situations at the placement abroad. If suitable learning materials are available in English or other languages used the student is to use the materials according to the instructions given by their home college's tutoring

teacher. The student should pay attention to learning essential professional vocabulary needed in daily working.

When preparing for actual working in the destination country's work placement, it is recommended that the student should be able to explain to their own appointed supervisor and other staff members at placement address abroad the following information:

- ◆ how the same work is organised in their home country
- ◆ what are the duties and responsibilities of the qualified worker / student in the home country
- ◆ work safety regulations in their home country
- ◆ any other relevant norms, guidelines and practices regulating work in the home country
- ◆ how vocational education of the specific qualification and training sector is organised in the student's home country.

The added value of preparing to explain the working methods and practices of the home country is to create a basis for **making comparisons** that will take place in the destination country's work placement. Being able to describe working methods and practices of home country will also be helpful for the placement organisation's staff members to comprehend the student's professional performance. Such explained and described information is also beneficial for the supervisor and placement's staff members as it will be easier for them to pinpoint the differences and new work approaches and practices.

The core of preparation is to focus on the learning goals of the practical training period. This ensures that both the sending college's tutor and the student go thoroughly through the curriculum's goals for the work placement period. Learning goals for practical training are stated in the curriculum and these have to be analysed and interpreted to understand what they may mean when working abroad. Therefore when the student is preparing their introduction letter and CV for the hosting college's tutor the introduction letter should include curriculum –based goals for the work placement period.

Once hosting college's tutor receives the letter that is defining student's learning goals, tutor has more information available to look for most suitable working life organisation for student's placement period.

When the hosting college's tutor has found a suitable placement organisation, he/she is to inform the sending college's tutor about the organisation.

This information should include:

- ◆ name and address of the placement organisation
- ◆ description of the organisation (also clients, if applicable)
- ◆ duties, work tasks that the student is supposed to carry out
- ◆ name of an appointed work placement supervisor
- ◆ other relevant information related to the placement organisation
- ◆ accommodation arrangements (hosting college's responsibility).

After the sending college's tutor has received the information the tutor will modify and adjust the goals together with the student. This is the most important part of the preparation process. The student has to have a clear vision what they should be aiming for when working as a trainee at a foreign work placement.

The student will take their specified learning goals with them together with the necessary assessment sheets and other learning assignments when going abroad.

It is recommended to send all of these documents to the hosting college's tutor beforehand.

Furthermore, the student's preparation process is also to include a **description and explanation of how supervision at the foreign work placement is going to take place.** The student has to be given an explanation on what they can expect from their appointed work placement supervisor. The role and duties of the placement supervisor has to be clear for the student. In a similar manner the student has to be made aware of their role and duties and explain this to the placement supervisor. The third party present in the destination country is hosting college's tutoring teacher whose role and duties have to be known both to the student and supervisor.

The supervising process, and roles and duties have been described in the "Handbook for Work Placement Supervisor – How to Supervise Foreign Student at Work Placement". The student is expected to get acquainted with the Handbook.

Cultural aspects are usually somewhat similar and at the same time different. The student should also get acquainted with the general descriptions of the destination country's history and culture. These can be easily found in e.g. travel guides and short history booklets. Once arriving at the destination country the students could demonstrate respect and interest for hosting college's tutoring teacher and placement's supervisors and staff members by having some knowledge of general events of history and cultural features. The student should also prepare him/herself to be able to describe their own country's history and culture.

Language preparation should be arranged at the sending college before the placement period, if possible. Language preparation should focus on essential professional vocabulary and encourage the student to communicate. If language preparation can be organised at the sending college, it would be preferable if it could focus on:

- ◆ student's vocational qualification and competences
- ◆ culture and history of the sending country
- ◆ culture and history of the destination country.

I.B. Processes of Hosting College

◆ The main working processes i.e. tasks to be done by the hosting college's tutoring teacher before the foreign student arrives should focus on finding a work placement organisation willing to take foreign students for a training period and finding accommodation for them. On top of this there are several other practical matters to be arranged as well.

I.B.1. Searching for the Work Placement Organisation

When the foreign student's introduction letter and CV arrives the hosting college's tutor can start to search for suitable work placements. The more detailed and informative the letter, the easier it will be to search for the placement. **It is recommended that the work placement organisation and potential supervisor will receive the student's introduction letter and CV in advance** – even before making the final decision as to whether to take the student for the training period or not.

The hosting college's tutor should also emphasise that supervising a foreign student is somewhat more challenging than supervising native ones. It is highly likely that both the incoming student and placement supervisor will be coping with a second language – they both have to make more effort in communication. Thus attention should be paid to **language competence** when deciding who should be appointed as a supervisor. Similarly a supervisor must have **personal motivation and interest** to take on such a challenge. Furthermore, as the foreign student is not accustomed to the working environment, work methods and practices the **supervisor must pay more attention to instructing and guiding the student** – and give explanation and justification all the time so that the student comprehends the work being done.

When the work placement organisation and supervisor have been chosen it is **recommended that the hosting colleges tutor will send the following type of information to the sending college's tutor:**

- ◆ name, address, telephone and fax numbers, email-address, www-address (if available) of the placement organisation
- ◆ name and contact information of the appointed supervisor
- ◆ short description of possible pre-planned work duties (to be defined later through discussion on the first days of the students arrival)
- ◆ general information on the working days/hours
- ◆ lunch arrangements (available at the placement / own responsibility)
- ◆ possible vaccination and/or health certificate, criminal record extract needed
- ◆ work clothes and shoes (available at the placement / own work clothes)
- ◆ other placement-related special information.

Once agreement has been reached that the placement organisation will take foreign students for their placement period the hosting college's tutor is to send a printed version of **Handbook for Work Placement Supervisor – How to Guide Foreign Student at Work Placement** for the appointed supervisor. The Handbook will support the supervisor in his/her role and give an overall description of the duties and responsibilities as a supervisor.

I.B.2. Search for Suitable Accommodation

Accommodation is one of the topics that prompt the most questions from the students. Wishes for different types of accommodation vary from one student to another. From a practical viewpoint it is recommended that students express their wishes on the type of accommodation they would prefer and the hosting college's tutor will search for safe and suitable accommodation according to the provision available. According to experience, it is in many countries more difficult to find accommodation than the work placement organisation. Thus the earlier the hosting college's tutor receives information on the incoming student's placement period, type of placement needed and wishes for accommodation the easier it will be to have all these completed without haste.

When arranging accommodation the hosting college's tutor will have some pre-information available from the incoming student via the introduction letter or the sending college's tutor will forward the student's wishes. There is also a possibility that students are coming as a small group, varying from 2 – 5 students at the same time. Thus it is beneficial for the tutor searching for accommodation if they have pre-information indicating which of the students are willing to share with one another. Sharing also cuts down the accommodation costs per student.

The form of accommodation may vary from an independent dormitory type to family accommodation depending on the culture and options available. The following listing is based on the accommodation wishes of a large number of students who have carried out foreign placement periods:

- ◆ reasonably priced per week / month
- ◆ rent should include linen, towels, utensils and kitchenware / possibility to cook independently
- ◆ shower / toilet, possibility to use washing machine, cleaning equipment
- ◆ located within a safe area
- ◆ own bedroom (if possible)
- ◆ easy public transport connection to the work placement
- ◆ clear house rules from the accommodation provider
- ◆ if several students are coming for the same period, distance between the accommodation addresses should not be extensive
- ◆ not very far from the centre i.e. in distant suburbs.

As soon as accommodation arrangements are known, this information with address details should be passed to the sending college's tutoring teacher who is go over it thoroughly through with the student. If questions should arise, they can be dealt with before the student's departure.

I.B.3. Other Practical Preparations

Ensuring that the incoming foreign student has **access to the Internet** either at college or at the accommodation address or by some other means i.e. internet café is essential. Facilitating username and password for the foreign student may require permission within the college, therefore the tutoring teacher should ensure that access is possible from the first days of their arrival as both the sending college's tutor and student's family will want to hear that the student has arrived in the destination country safe and sound. It would be beneficial if the student could have internet access available also from the work placement, however this not always possible. Therefore it is recommended that the student is given clear instructions on how to manage communicating back to their home country. Use of mobile phones is not recommended due to the high price of international calls and text messages.

It is recommended that the hosting college will have an **information package** for the foreign student on arrival. The basic package should include:

- ◆ instructions on the use of public transport (route maps, timetable)
- ◆ city map (if not included in public transport information)
- ◆ general tourist information on the local sights
- ◆ written document with relevant contact information (addresses, telephone numbers etc. of accommodation and the placement address, hosting college and its tutoring teacher, address of the closest health centre)
- ◆ emergency instructions for odd situations (i.e. losing bank cards, passport, accident, getting lost): whom to contact regardless of the time of day
- ◆ other relevant information i.e. opening hrs of banks, grocery shops...

Ensuring the contact person is there to meet the student on the day of arrival. In many cases it may be that the hosting college's tutoring teacher is not able to meet the student due to other work duties, family obligations or holidays etc. Once flight schedules and other travel timetables are known to the tutor, he/she must ensure that the student is aware of who is going to meet them and where and when. **Therefore both the contact person and the incoming student must have each others' mobile numbers in case of possible delays in the travel arrangements.** This information has to be exchanged and the connection tested before the student's departure from their home country.

It is also recommended, if possible to arrange, that the hosting college's tutor will recruit **students from the hosting college to support and guide the incoming foreign student.** This type of peer support is very valuable and the contribution made by both the home and foreign students can assist in helping the foreign students settle in quicker and help the home students prepare for their experience abroad. Even if the home students have been abroad their contribution is still very worthwhile. From the incoming student's viewpoint it is likely easier and more fun to have a presentation from the home students on work placements, the town/city and tips for leisure time than from the tutoring teacher... This will also give the foreign student the possibility to share experiences with those of the same age-group and allow them to mingle with locals and enjoy ordinary daily and weekly activities.

II. Co-operation and Processes during Placement

II.A. Processes of the Sending College

◆ Once the student has travelled to the destination country the sending college's tutor has the responsibility to keep in regular contact especially with the student. Similarly the home college's tutor has to be in contact with hosting college's colleague.

II.A.1. Communication with Student Abroad

The duties carried out by the sending college's tutor/ teacher does not stop once the student has travelled to their destination country. Keeping in contact with the student should be continuous, e.g. on weekly basis at least. This should be carried out by emails or by an e-learning platform. The student may encounter challenges that they will have to ask for advice and support from their own college's tutoring teacher as well.

As an example of such a situation could be that a student may be asked to carry out or to participate in work tasks or duties that are not allowed to do in their own country. For the students who follow are more advanced programme in their own country they may not be allowed to carry out certain tasks at their work placement abroad. This information can be given before the student arrives by the host college tutor. This creates a conflict of interest. Basically in such cases the student should recognise their own professional limits and seek guidance. Contacting the home college's tutoring teacher for advice and confirmation on how to act is a necessity and the tutoring teacher must be contactable by some means.

This applies also to other possible challenging situations i.e. student is not allowed to work according to their learning goals or supervision at placement is not proceeding as it should be. Adapting to the destination country, town/city and work placement may also cause feelings of uncertainty and home-sickness. These types of problems are primarily the responsibility of the hosting college's tutor, but may also demand support measures from the home college's tutor.

The sending college's tutor must therefore keep in regular contact with both the student abroad and the hosting college's tutor in order to follow how the period abroad is proceeding in general. The sending college's tutor has an important role in providing the student continuous encouragement and support via these contacts.

At the end of the placement period it is recommended that the sending college's tutor will contact the student to ensure that all necessary assessment-related documents have been properly filled at the work placement.

II.A.2.Communication with the Hosting College

During the student's placement period abroad the sending college's tutor should contact the hosting college's colleague on a regular basis in order to receive information on how the student's training is proceeding. It is necessary to have such information from a colleague as there may be some issues taking place that will not come to the surface when communicating with the student.

Also possible adjustments may be needed at the work placement, (i.e. specifying the student's tasks, giving continuous feedback etc.) This will be easier to implement if the foreign student and placement supervisor get support for that from the hosting college's tutor. The hosting college should be responsible for facilitating these adjustments to make the process easier for the student who may lack the confidence to make these changes themselves.

It is recommended that the hosting college's tutor will visit the work placement during the placement period, usually in the middle of the period, and inform the sending college's tutor about the outcome of the interim assessment discussion.

II.B. Processes of the Hosting College

◆ At the beginning of the foreign student's work placement period the hosting college's tutor has quite an extensive number of duties.

The tutor must check that the **person** (if not him/herself) **to meet student on arrival is aware of the exact date, time and place**

where to meet the incoming student and that accommodation arrangements are clear. The student has to be escorted to their accommodation address and given the package of information (see chapter I.B.3. 'Other Practical Preparations'). It is recommended, if possible, that the student should arrive e.g. on Saturday so that they would have one day to get acquainted and to orientate to the destination town/city before starting their placement period on the first working day.

On the day of arrival both the student and the tutor have to agree in detail the program for the first days. There should be an agreement as to whether the student is to come to college on the first day or is the student to be escorted directly from the accommodation address to the college or placement address.

Picking the student up from their accommodation address is recommended, especially in case he/she will have to use public transport in order to get to college or placement. Student should also be given assistance to purchase the most economic public transportation ticket/pass.

On the first working day the student should be escorted from their accommodation address to their work placement and be shown where to change commuter trains or buses so that they will not get lost once going there independently.

Different hosting colleges have traditionally different practices, in some cases students do not have any orientation day(s) at college, but start their practical training on the first working day.

It is however recommended that students should have at least one (first working) day at the hosting college. During the first day the tutoring teacher take the student for a tour of the college and give an overall description of the vocational education of the country paying attention to any similarities in the qualification that they are studying at home. The first day at college should also **include practical instructions** on how and when the student can have access to the internet, whether lunch is available at the placement (free/charged) during the working days, what are the working hours and role of student during training period. (typical working tasks for during such a placement).

A crucial topic to be discussed on the first day at college is the student's learning goals and checking the necessary assessment sheets and possible learning contracts. As a professional teacher the tutor is capable of commenting and clarifying the student's learning goals. It is important that the tutor is already acquainted with the student's goals as both tutor and student are to discuss these goals with the placement supervisor on the first day of working. Once both the tutor and student have discussed the learning goals, then discussion with the supervisor will be easier. **It is also recommended to revise the supervising process i.e. what kind of support and feedback the student can expect and what the interaction is going to be like.** (According to the **Handbook for Work Placement Supervisors – How to Supervise Foreign Student at Work Placement**).

This is to be revised on the first day at placement so that all parties are aware of their roles and duties.

On the first day at college **it is recommended (if possible) that the foreign student will get acquainted with local students.** Peer students can take some responsibility to present leisure time and cultural activities available. It would be worthwhile to recruit such students who have already been abroad during previous term(s) or ones going abroad.

II.B.1. Communication with Sending College

Please see chapter II.A.2. Communication with the Hosting College as are interrelated.

II.B.2. Communication with the Placement Organisation and the Student

At the end the first day at the hosting college the tutor and the student are to agree at what time the tutor will come to pick the student up from his/her residence. The tutor will go with the student and help them to purchase a public transportation pass (if not done already on the first day).

The tutor is to instruct the student in the use of public transport i.e. show commuter train/metro/bus lines and escort the student to their work placement. Travelling together with student to work placement will ensure that the student will learn the route to the work place.

As foreign work placement periods are organised between sending and hosting colleges the main responsibility lies with both the sending and receiving colleges' tutoring teachers. When arriving at the work placement on the student's first working day the tutor will lead the discussion between the supervisor and the student thus making sure that both are aware of all the necessary issues that have to be taken care of.

During the first days at least the following issues have to be dealt with:

- ◆ providing general information of the work placement organisation
- ◆ providing necessary contact information (if not already available)
- ◆ providing a general description of work done at the work placement
- ◆ checking the student's learning goals, discussing the goals and defining the work duties in detail.
- ◆ checking assessment sheets and other documents to be filled during the period
- ◆ discussing how the supervising process will be carried out, emphasising continuous support and feedback
- ◆ ensuring that the student is aware of work safety regulations and how to act in emergency situations, who the student should inform in case of illness/absence (both the supervisor and the hosting college's tutor)
- ◆ agreeing on work days and daily working hours (sending college's norms have to be adhered to)
- ◆ agreeing on the use of the internet / computers at the work placement, lunch arrangements, closet for clothes and other similar practical matters
- ◆ explaining the code of conduct and confidentiality issues at the work placement
- ◆ agreeing on the date of interim and final assessment discussions
- ◆ agreeing on possible placement visits during the period
- ◆ agreeing that both the student and the supervisor should contact the tutor immediately if any questions or problems should arise.

It is also recommended that the hosting college's tutor will keep at least in weekly contact with the supervisor and also call/email the student every once in a while. These regular contacts will keep the tutor aware of how the placement is progressing.

During the student's placement period it is recommended that there would be an interim assessment discussion taking place approximately in the middle of the period. All three parties, the hosting college's tutor, the student and placement supervisor are to meet face- to-face and check how the student's working is proceeding according to their set goals. If so needed and decided the goals can be revised during an interim assessment discussion.

At the end of the placement period similar assessment discussion will take place. In the final assessment discussion the student's training period and goals are thoroughly checked and necessary assessment sheets filled up and signed. The core of the assessment discussion will be the student's professional, cultural and personal development. The student is expected to bring these documents back to their home college.

The tutoring teacher will have a leading role in both assessment discussions ensuring that all necessary topics have been covered.

II.C. Processes of the Work Placement Organisation

◆ The core processes at the work placement organisation are dealing with the student's learning process and practical training period. This section has been thoroughly dealt with in the Handbook for Work Placement Supervisors – How to Supervise Foreign Student at Work Placement.

Please download: <http://www.hesote.edu.hk/fi>

Please see the description of supporting the student's learning process and assessment.

III. Co-operation and Processes after Placement

III.A. Processes of the Sending College

◆ Once the student has arrived back to their home country the following procedures have to be carried out.

Reporting

The student has to provide official documentation on occurred expenses for the tutoring teacher. Depending on internal instructions of the home college documents may vary – therefore just a list of expenses to be verified is presented here:

- ◆ travel arrangements: all receipts and invoices relating to travels from the student's home to destination country's accommodation address and in similar manner the travels back home at the end of the period. If the actual ticket does not bear the travelling person's name, then supporting documentation should be included, i.e. payment made with the person's name, dates of travel and price. This could include:
 - ◆ taxi receipts, bus tickets, metro or train tickets bearing at least the date of travel and price of ticket
 - ◆ flight tickets and boarding passes bearing the name and date and price
 - ◆ boat or ferry tickets bearing the date, name and price.
- ◆ receipt on accommodation / rent: in many cases such receipts are not obligatory but receipt on rent will provide verified information on the level accommodation costs in the destination country and thus be of assistance when informing future students on accommodation cost-level.
- ◆ insurance: if the student has taken insurance for leisure time and/or luggage, for sickness or for other purposes, these have to be verified by invoices/receipts bearing the person's name and clarifying the nature of the insurance.
- ◆ daily living costs: a realistic estimation on costs incurred or receipts according to the internal regulations of the sending college. Local public transportation costs should be included in the daily living costs – not in travel expenses.

- ◆ possible language and/or cultural preparation programmes paid either in the home country prior to departure or those ones paid at the destination country. The Invoice/receipt has to clarify the nature of the programme, name of the organisation, name of the participant (student), extent of programme (days/hrs) and price.

Travel report

The student is typically expected to write a free-form travel report describing the period abroad. This report should include:

- ◆ description of the work placement and work carried out
- ◆ description of the accommodation arrangements
- ◆ description of the destination country and city/town
- ◆ free-form evaluation (pros and cons) of the entire period.

The travel report is to serve as a pre-informative document for next students that are considering carrying out a work placement in same destination.

Other required forms of evaluation:

In different countries national level organisations may also require official feedback for all beneficiaries that have received external funding (grants) from them. The feedback to be given by the student may vary from paper-forms to internet-based templates. The required feedback to be given should be stated in a contract between the student and the sending college and thus giving feedback will be compulsory.

Whatever the form feedback is gathered in, it is recommended to forward it to the hosting college and work placement organisation abroad. Such information is also of added value for these organisations in developing their own processes.

Assessment sheets and learning assignments

The student is expected to hand over the completed assessment sheets and learning assignments to the home college's tutor once returning to college. The tutor will have a final assessment discussion with the student at college and check the assessment sheets and assignments. If further information is needed to be completed i.e. assessment sheets then the home college's tutor will ask the hosting college's tutor for further information.

This is especially important with documentation related to competence-based exams or skills demonstration tests.

The student is also expected (if possible) to participate in marketing the foreign work placement period and to share their experiences for younger generations of students who are interested in going abroad afterwards. **It is recommended that the student will send a thank you letter or card to the hosting college's tutor and to the work placement and supervisor.**

Reporting: receipts, boarding passes, accommodation invoices, feedback (sent to hosting college as well). Making a travel report (free form) for future students.

Work Placement documents: assessment sheets, learning assignments, grades and details for study registers, certificate for the foreign placement period (for students CV)

Recruiting students to share their experiences for fellow students for encouragement

III.B. Processes of Hosting College

◆ The hosting college's tutor is to receive feedback from the sending college's tutor after student has given her/his feedback at home college. It is important that feedback and expressions of gratitude will also reach the work placement organisation and supervisor. Even such a minor gesture will motivate the placement organisation to take in foreign students in the coming years as well. Feedback will also act as a basis for developing processes related to foreign students' placements.

In a similar manner it is recommended that the hosting college's tutor will have a discussion with the placement supervisor in order to receive feedback from the working life organisation after the student has returned home. The content of the discussion should be forwarded to the sending college's tutor together with feedback from the hosting colleges tutor. There may be some opinions and viewpoints that the supervisor and hosting college's tutor may not have expressed when the student was still present. Real and honest feedback especially from the supervisor is vitally important both for the hosting college's tutor and the sending college's tutor. In the end it will be the work placement supervisor that will be dealing with the student most of the time and therefore the most

valuable person to give direct feedback on the actual placement period.

It is recommended that the hosting college will provide the student with a “work placement certificate” for their period abroad. The certificate will include the students name, details of the placement organisation, the period of practical training, name and title of the supervisor and, if possible, a short description of duties the student has undertaken together with a short assessment. The document should be printed on letter-headed paper of the hosting college, signed and stamped. From the student’s viewpoint this certificate may be of added value when looking for employment. The hosting college will also to fill in other similar documents, like the Leopass of the Leonardo da Vinci-programme.

These certificates can either be handed to the student just before their departure home – or sent by mail afterwards.

III.C. Processes of Work Placement Organisation

◆ Once the student has departed to his/her home country it would be of added value if the student’s supervisor would give feedback to the hosting college’s tutor. Responsibility to gather such feedback lies primarily with the hosting college. Feedback can be given in written form by using some a feedback form or in a more unofficial manner e.g. by having a discussion on the phone. An important part of the discussion should focus on the important question: is the working life organisation and supervisor willing to take foreign students in future?

IV. Conclusion

◆ In order to secure the provision of successful work placement opportunities, each party involved in the process should give honest and reliable feedback to each other concerning their contribution and express their development ideas freely. All procedures relating to organising work placements and preparing students for foreign training periods need to be undertaken using a developmental approach i.e. receiving constructive feedback and acting on it, as appropriate. Hopefully this Handbook will be of assistance for you when facilitating foreign work placement opportunities for your students!

Glossary

Hosting College = college of the destination country – college organising the work placement opportunity abroad.

Hosting College's Tutor = teacher at the destination country's college responsible for organising the work placement opportunity for the foreign student, main contact for the sending college's tutor and the person responsible for the student during their period abroad.

Sending College's Tutor = the teacher in the student's home country responsible for preparing the student for their foreign work placement.

Sending College, Home College = college in the student's home country

Work Placement Supervisor = the appointed person at the working life organisation responsible for supporting and promoting the foreign student's learning process.

Work Placement Period = practical training period, learning by working

Appendices:

Model for Introduction Letter

dd/mm/yyyy

Dear Mrs Doe, _____ College, City, Country

I am Ms. Maija Meikäläinen, a 19-year-old student from Helsinki, Finland. I study practical nursing at the Helsinki City College of Social and Health Care. I am in the middle of the fourth term; next autumn I will start my specialization studies - the Study Programme in Care and Nursing. I chose practical nursing because I am very social and want to work with people, not with papers. I have liked my studies very much. I am an average student – most of my marks have been 3s (the scale is from 1 to 5).

I live now in Helsinki but I grew up in Northern Finland in a small town called Kemi. My parents and my three younger brothers still live in my home town. I moved to Helsinki two years ago to live with my boyfriend. Unfortunately things didn't work out for us and now I am single and I share a flat with a friend of mine. She is a student of Dental Technology at the same college where I study. I am not allergic to anything, but I don't eat red meat and I don't drink milk (although I'm not allergic to milk products). My hobbies are going to a gym, aerobics and reading. (If there are any health-related issues hosting college and placement should be aware of, please describe shortly)

I have quite a lot of working experience. When I lived in Kemi I worked in an ice-cream stall during the summer holidays. In Helsinki I have worked on a playground during summer and sometimes I work at a hospital at weekends when they need extra staff. During my studies I have had three periods of practical training: I have worked in a kindergarten, a hospital and within home service. In the kindergarten I worked in a group of five-year-old children and in the hospital I took care of old people who were quite ill. When I practiced within the home service I visited clients at their own homes with my supervisor. (Please provide a short description of your learning goals = what you should be practising at placement would help us when searching for placement)

Why did I choose Ireland and Dublin? First of all I wanted to improve my skills in English. I have studied English for seven years and I understand spoken English very well, but I want to learn to speak more fluently myself. Secondly, I have always wanted to visit Ireland and to learn about your culture. And of course I am interested in comparing Finnish and Irish systems in the care of the elderly people. If possible I would like to work in elderly care organisation, e.g. in a nursing home as I would like to see how rehabilitative work approach is carried out in Ireland.

Best wishes,
Maija Meikaläinen
Tel:
Email:

European Curriculum Vitae Format

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

EUROPEAN CURRICULUM VITAE FORMAT



PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name [SURNAME, other name(s)]
Address [House number, street name, postcode, city, country]
Telephone
Fax
E-mail

Nationality
Date of birth [Day, month, year]

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Dates (from – to) [Add separate entries for each relevant post occupied, starting with the most recent.]
- Name and address of employer
 - Type of business or sector
 - Occupation or position held
- Main activities and responsibilities

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Dates (from – to) [Add separate entries for each relevant course you have completed, starting with the most recent.]
- Name and type of organization providing education and training
- Principal subjects/occupational skills covered
 - Title of qualification awarded
 - Level in national classification (if appropriate)

PERSONAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

Acquired in the course of life and career but not necessarily covered by formal certificates and diplomas.

MOTHER TONGUE [Specify mother tongue]

OTHER LANGUAGES

- Reading skills
- Writing skills
- Verbal skills

[Specify language]

[Indicate level: excellent, good, basic]

[Indicate level: excellent, good, basic]

[Indicate level: excellent, good, basic]

SOCIAL SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

Living and working with other people, in multicultural environments, in positions where communication is important and situations where teamwork is essential (for example culture and sports), etc.

ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

Coordination and administration of people, projects and budgets; at work, in voluntary work (for example culture and sports) and at home, etc.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

With computers, specific kinds of equipment, machinery, etc.

ARTISTIC SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

Music, writing, design, etc.

OTHER SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

Competences not mentioned above.

DRIVING LICENCE(S)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Include here any other information that may be relevant, for example contact persons, references, etc.]

ANNEXES

[List any attached annexes.]

**PERSONAL SKILLS
AND COMPETENCES**

*Acquired in the course of life and career
but not necessarily covered by formal
certificates and diplomas.*

MOTHER TONGUE

[Specify mother tongue]

OTHER LANGUAGES

[Specify language]

• Reading skills [Indicate level: excellent, good, basic]

• Writing skills [Indicate level: excellent, good, basic]

• Verbal skills [Indicate level: excellent, good, basic]

SOCIAL SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

*Living and working with other people, in
multicultural environments, in positions
where communication is important and
situations where teamwork is essential
(for example culture and sports), etc.*

ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

*Coordination and administration of
people, projects and budgets; at work, in
voluntary work (for example culture and
sports) and at home, etc.*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

*With computers, specific kinds of
equipment, machinery, etc.*

ARTISTIC SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

Music, writing, design, etc.

OTHER SKILLS

[Describe these competences and indicate where they were acquired.]

AND COMPETENCES

Competences not mentioned above.

DRIVING LICENCE(S)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Include here any other information that may be relevant, for example contact persons, references, etc.]

ANNEXES

[List any attached annexes.]

Handbook for Tutors – How to Prepare Students for Foreign Work Placements

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