

Annex A7: Work-Based Learning and Placement Provision

Document Owner:	Northern School of Contemporary Dance – Quality Office
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Further information:	

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Introduction

Northern School of Contemporary Dance has a long-standing commitment to integrating work-based learning and placement activity into its programmes of study, recognising the value of professional experience in developing students' skills, knowledge, and readiness for employment.

This Annex sets out Northern School of Contemporary Dance's (NSCD) framework for the design, governance, delivery, and quality assurance of work-based learning (WBL) and placement provision that forms an assessed component of NSCD-validated programmes. This Annex applies only to assessed work-based learning and placement activity that contributes to academic credit as part of an NSCD-validated programme. It does not apply to informal work experience or to collaborative provision, which is governed separately.

The document clarifies institutional accountability, strengthens oversight of placement partnerships, and ensures that student support, academic standards, and monitoring arrangements are applied consistently across all placement activity. NSCD retains responsibility for academic standards, student welfare, and regulatory compliance, regardless of where learning takes place.

1. Governance

NSCD retains overarching responsibility for the academic standards, quality assurance, and student welfare associated with all work-based and placement learning.

Placement provision must be clearly articulated within programme and module specifications, including learning outcomes, assessment methods, and progression requirements.

1.1 Purpose and Scope

This section sets out the institutional governance framework for work-based learning (WBL) and placement provision at Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD). It defines the principles, responsibilities, and quality assurance arrangements that apply to all placement-based modules delivered as part of NSCD-validated programmes.

This Code of Practice applies **only** to work-based learning and placement activity that forms an assessed component of a programme of study and contributes to credit. It does not apply to informal work experience or to collaborative provision, which is governed separately.

Students studying teaching practice in placements will only fall under this policy if the module(s) involves learning and assessment directly in the teaching environment and is specific to the NSCD module.

1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code:

- **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** refers to vocational or academic learning undertaken in a workplace or professional setting, which enhances a student's skills, professional practice, and/or academic knowledge and contributes to assessed learning outcomes.
- **Placement** refers to a defined period of professional-level vocational experience, paid or unpaid, during which:
 - the student remains enrolled at NSCD;
 - supervision may be partially or wholly transferred to a third-party provider;
 - the experience is integral to the programme and normally assessed.
- **Placement Provider** refers to any organisation or individual hosting a student for the purposes of assessed WBL or placement learning, including where NSCD itself acts as the provider through in-house projects.

1.3 Institutional Responsibilities

NSCD retains overarching responsibility for the academic standards, quality assurance, and student experience of all work-based and placement learning undertaken as part of its validated programmes, regardless of where the learning takes place.

The School will ensure that:

- placement activity is aligned to programme aims, learning outcomes, and level descriptors;
- assessment of placement learning meets the requirements of the Academic Regulations and Credit Framework;
- students are treated fairly, lawfully, and consistently while on placement;
- placement provision complies with relevant legislation, including health and safety, equality, safeguarding, and immigration requirements.

1.4 Programme Design and Approval

Where work-based learning or placement activity forms a compulsory or optional element of a programme:

- this must be clearly identified in the programme and module specifications;
- the contribution of the placement to the overall aims of the programme must be explicit;
- learning outcomes, assessment methods, and credit weighting must be clearly defined;
- approved alternatives must be specified where a placement cannot take place or is terminated.

Programme approval and modification processes will ensure that placement provision is coherent, equitable, and appropriate to the level of study, recognising the varied professional roles students may undertake.

1.5 Academic Standards and Assessment Principles

Assessment of work-based and placement learning is governed by NSCD's Academic Regulations and Credit Framework. Assessment practices will:

- be valid, reliable, and inclusive;
- reflect professional practice while maintaining academic rigour;
- ensure consistency through appropriate moderation and standardisation processes;
- support progression decisions that are fair and transparent.

Where placement modules cannot be reassessed on a like-for-like basis, approved alternative assessment methods may be applied in line with academic regulations.

1.6 Equality, Safeguarding, and Student Protection

NSCD is committed to ensuring that all placement provision operates in accordance with the Equality Act and safeguarding expectations. Governance arrangements ensure that:

- students are informed of their rights and responsibilities while on placement;
- reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented where required;
- safeguarding and DBS requirements are applied where students work with children or vulnerable adults;
- students on placement remain subject to NSCD's academic and non-academic misconduct procedures.

1.7 Review and Institutional Oversight

Work-based and placement learning provision is subject to ongoing institutional oversight and periodic review through NSCD's established quality assurance mechanisms, including annual monitoring and periodic review processes.

Feedback from students and placement providers, alongside achievement, progression, and equality data, informs evaluation and enhancement.

2. Partnership Management

NSCD approves and manages placement providers through undertaking due diligence processes and establishing formal agreements.

Placement providers must offer learning opportunities aligned to programme requirements and provide a safe, inclusive environment. Responsibilities of NSCD, the provider, and the student are defined through pre-placement documentation.

Health and safety oversight, insurance confirmation, equality policies, and safeguarding arrangements form part of provider approval and ongoing review.

2.1 Purpose

This section sets out the arrangements by which NSCD identifies, approves, manages, and reviews placement providers for work-based and placement learning. It defines expectations of placement providers and clarifies the respective responsibilities of NSCD, the provider, and the student.

2.2 Principles of Partnership

All placement partnerships must:

- support the achievement of approved learning outcomes at the appropriate level of study;
- provide a safe, lawful, and inclusive learning environment;
- operate within a clearly defined agreement setting out roles and responsibilities;
- be subject to proportionate due diligence and ongoing oversight by NSCD.

NSCD retains academic oversight at all times and does not delegate responsibility for standards or student welfare to placement providers.

2.3 Identification and Approval of Placement Providers

Before a placement commences, the relevant Faculty must confirm that the proposed placement provider:

- offers learning opportunities appropriate to the student's programme, module, and level of study;
- is capable of supporting the student in a professional role aligned to the learner contract;
- has completed all required pre-placement documentation, including health and safety and insurance declarations.

Placements may be sourced by NSCD or, in appropriate circumstances, proposed by a student. Where a student proposes a provider not previously used by the School, the same approval and due diligence requirements apply.

2.4 Due Diligence and Risk Assurance

NSCD will complete proportionate due diligence on all placement providers prior to approval. This includes confirmation that the provider holds:

- appropriate public liability and, where relevant, employer's liability insurance;
- suitable health and safety arrangements;
- policies relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion;
- appropriate safeguarding arrangements where students may work with children or vulnerable adults.

Completed due diligence records must be retained by the School and reviewed periodically to ensure continued suitability of the provider.

2.5 Placement Agreements and Expectations

All placements must be underpinned by a formal agreement, normally completed through pre-placement documentation, which sets out:

- the learning outcomes and assessment arrangements for the placement;
- responsibilities of NSCD, the placement provider, and the student;
- arrangements for supervision, mentoring, and feedback;
- procedures for raising concerns, complaints, or safeguarding issues;
- expectations regarding professional conduct, confidentiality, and intellectual property;
- arrangements for site visits and ongoing communication;
- monitoring requirements for students, where applicable.

Placement providers are expected to ensure that staff involved in supporting students are appropriately experienced and capable of providing a safe and constructive learning environment.

2.6 Health, Safety, and Legal Compliance

Placement providers have primary responsibility for the day-to-day health and safety of students while on placement. For these purposes, students are treated as employees of the provider.

NSCD will ensure that:

- students are informed of relevant health and safety procedures before placement begins;
- risk assessments are completed and reviewed as required;
- appropriate escalation routes are in place should health, safety, or welfare concerns arise.

2.7 Communication and Points of Contact

Clear points of contact must be identified for each placement. Placement providers and students will be provided with:

- a named NSCD academic contact for academic matters;
- a named contact for student support;
- clear guidance on how and when to raise issues.

Effective communication between NSCD and placement providers is essential to maintaining oversight and addressing concerns promptly.

2.8 Termination or Withdrawal from Placement

Where a placement is terminated or a student withdraws due to circumstances beyond their control, NSCD will:

- liaise with the placement provider to understand the circumstances;
- advise the student on alternative approved routes to meet learning outcomes;

- ensure that decisions are fair, documented, and consistent with academic regulations.

If not otherwise stated in a contract, placement providers are expected to provide a **minimum of 30 days' notice**, wherever practicable, of any intention to terminate a placement, in order to enable NSCD and relevant partners to source an appropriate alternative opportunity.

3. Student Support

Students undertaking placement learning remain registered students of NSCD and retain access to all academic and pastoral support services.

Each student is assigned an NSCD mentor who maintains regular contact throughout the placement period. Safeguarding measures, DBS checks where required, and reasonable adjustments are applied to protect student welfare.

3.1 Purpose

This section sets out the support, safeguarding, and welfare arrangements for students undertaking work-based learning and placement activity. It clarifies student entitlements, expectations, and the mechanisms in place to ensure that students are supported academically, professionally, and personally throughout the placement period.

3.2 Pre-Placement Preparation and Guidance

Before commencing a placement, NSCD will ensure that students receive appropriate preparation and guidance, including:

- clear information about the placement provider, location, professional context, and key contacts;
- confirmation of academic and professional expectations, including learning outcomes and assessment requirements;
- guidance on professional conduct and the student's responsibilities as a representative of NSCD;
- information on complaints, disciplinary, and escalation procedures;
- where applicable, briefing on international placements, including pre-departure guidance.

Where placements are unpaid or low-paid, Faculties will work with students in advance to ensure that the financial implications are understood and that participation does not place the student at unreasonable disadvantage.

3.3 Safeguarding, DBS, and Risk Management

Where placements involve working with children or vulnerable adults, appropriate safeguarding arrangements must be in place. This includes:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required by the nature of the placement;
- proportionate risk assessment of any disclosed convictions in line with safeguarding and Criminal Records procedures;
- implementation of alternative approved learning arrangements where a placement cannot proceed on safeguarding grounds.

Where the placement requires a DBS and forms part of NSCD delivered module, NSCD will cover the cost and manage the administration of the DBS check.

Students must not be placed in situations that compromise their safety or wellbeing.

3.4 Ongoing Academic and Pastoral Support

While on placement, students remain registered students of NSCD and retain access to the full range of institutional support services, including:

- academic guidance and supervision;
- counselling and wellbeing services;
- disability and learning support;
- careers and financial advice where appropriate.

An NSCD mentor or academic tutor will be assigned to each student undertaking placement learning. The mentor will:

- establish early contact with the student at the start of the placement;
- maintain regular contact throughout the placement, using methods appropriate to the student's needs and circumstances;
- monitor academic progress, professional development, and welfare;
- keep appropriate records of contact and actions taken.

Where students fail to engage with agreed contact arrangements, the mentor will follow up with the placement provider and escalate concerns where necessary.

3.5 Supervision in the Placement Setting

Placement providers are expected to ensure that students receive appropriate day-to-day supervision. Students should not be left unsupervised in situations that are inappropriate to their level of experience or training.

Supervision is intended to support learning and professional development and may contribute to formative feedback, which complements formal assessment undertaken by NSCD.

3.6 Equality, Inclusion, and Reasonable Adjustments

NSCD is committed to ensuring that students are not disadvantaged during placement due to disability or other protected characteristics. Students will be informed of their rights under equality legislation, including their entitlement to request reasonable adjustments during recruitment and throughout the placement period.

NSCD will work with placement providers to support inclusive practice wherever reasonably practicable.

3.7 Conduct, Discipline, and Escalation

Students undertaking placement learning are subject to:

- the professional conduct expectations of the placement provider; and
- NSCD's policies and procedures including academic and non-academic misconduct procedures.

Where concerns arise regarding student conduct, NSCD will work with the placement provider to manage the situation appropriately, inline with NSCD policies. Serious concerns may result in withdrawal from placement and referral to formal disciplinary procedures in line with institutional policy.

4. Assessment and Standards

Assessment of placement learning aligns to NSCD's Academic Regulations and Credit Framework and approved learning outcomes.

NSCD retains responsibility for all summative assessment decisions. Placement assessment is marked and moderated by NSCD staff and recorded through approved institutional systems.

Recognition of Prior Learning and alternative reassessment methods may be applied in line with academic regulations.

4.1 Purpose

This section sets out the principles and requirements governing the assessment, marking, feedback, and progression of work-based and placement learning. It ensures that academic standards are maintained consistently across all placement activity and that assessment practice is fair, transparent, and aligned to approved programme and module specifications.

4.2 Alignment to Academic Framework

All work-based and placement learning that contributes to academic credit must be assessed in accordance with NSCD's Academic and Credit Framework. Assessment arrangements must:

- align explicitly to approved learning outcomes and level descriptors;
- reflect the professional context of the placement while maintaining academic rigour;
- support equitable assessment across varied placement settings.

Assessment methods, weighting, and submission arrangements must be clearly set out in module documentation and communicated to students in advance.

4.3 Assessment Design and Professional Context

Assessment of placement learning recognises that students may undertake a range of professional roles. Assessment criteria must therefore:

- focus on the achievement of learning outcomes rather than the specific nature of the placement setting;
- allow students to evidence learning through appropriate professional practical work, such as plans, resources, reports, portfolios, recordings and evaluations;
- be informed, where appropriate, by formative input from placement supervisors, without transferring responsibility for summative assessment.

NSCD retains responsibility for all summative assessment decisions.

4.4 Marking, Moderation, and Feedback

An appropriately qualified member of NSCD staff will be assigned responsibility for marking placement-based assessments. Assessment processes will:

- follow established marking and moderation procedures;
- include standardisation where required to ensure consistency;
- provide students with timely, constructive feedback that supports learning and progression.

Marks and feedback will be recorded through the School's approved assessment systems in line with NSCD practice.

4.5 Administration and Submission Arrangements

Module guides will define how placement learning is administered, including:

- assessment deadlines and submission methods;
- any approved variations to deadlines necessitated by the placement context;
- requirements for evidencing engagement and completion of placement activity.

Any variations to standard assessment timelines must be clearly communicated and documented to avoid ambiguity or disadvantage.

4.6 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning may be considered in relation to work-based and placement learning in line with NSCD's RPL policy. Programme specifications must clearly identify:

- where RPL may be applied to placement-related learning outcomes;
- any learning outcomes for which RPL is not permissible.

RPL decisions must be consistent, transparent, and academically robust and will be managed by the Quality Office.

4.7 Reassessment and Alternative Assessment

In some cases, it may not be feasible to reassess placement learning through the same mode of assessment. Where this applies:

- approved alternative assessment methods may be used to allow students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes;
- arrangements must be consistent with academic regulations and approved at the appropriate level;
- students must be informed clearly of reassessment options and requirements.

4.8 Progression Decisions

Decisions regarding progression and completion of placement-based modules will be made in accordance with programme regulations and the Academic Regulations and Credit Framework. Placement learning will be treated equivalently to other assessed modules in progression and award decisions.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Placement provision is monitored throughout the placement period and reviewed through student feedback, placement provider feedback, and institutional quality assurance processes.

Evidence from monitoring and review informs enhancement actions and continuous improvement of placement provision.

5.1 Purpose

This section sets out how Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) monitors, evaluates, and enhances the quality and effectiveness of work-based and placement learning. It ensures that placement provision is subject to systematic review, informed by evidence, and integrated into institutional quality assurance processes.

5.2 Ongoing Monitoring During Placement

Monitoring of placement activity takes place throughout the placement period and is proportionate to the level of risk and complexity of the arrangement. This includes:

- regular academic and pastoral contact between the student and the assigned NSCD mentor;
- oversight of student engagement, progress, and welfare;
- timely escalation and resolution of concerns relating to academic standards, conduct, safeguarding, or wellbeing.

Records of monitoring activity and any actions taken must be maintained in line with institutional requirements.

5.3 Student Feedback and Evaluation

NSCD will systematically gather feedback from students who have completed work-based or placement learning. This feedback will:

- be collected through approved evaluation mechanisms;
- inform module-level review and enhancement;
- contribute to annual monitoring and quality review processes.

Student feedback is recognised as a critical source of evidence in evaluating the effectiveness of placement provision and identifying areas for improvement.

5.4 Placement Provider Feedback

Feedback from placement providers will be sought, where appropriate, to inform evaluation of:

- the suitability of learning opportunities;
- the effectiveness of preparation and communication;
- the support provided by NSCD;
- the readiness and professionalism of students.

Feedback will be considered alongside student feedback and academic outcomes. Where provider feedback is discussed more widely, appropriate confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.

5.5 Institutional Review and Quality Assurance

Work-based and placement learning is reviewed through NSCD's established quality assurance mechanisms, including:

- annual monitoring and reporting processes;
- Module Assessment Boards and other academic governance structures;
- periodic review in line with institutional policy.

These processes ensure that placement provision remains aligned to programme aims, academic standards, and regulatory expectations.

5.6 Equality and Impact Review

As part of institutional review, NSCD will consider the impact of work-based and placement learning on equality, inclusion, and student outcomes. This includes:

- reviewing access to placements;
- monitoring outcomes where relevant;
- identifying and addressing any unintended disadvantage.

Findings will inform enhancement activity and future development of placement provision.

5.7 Continuous Enhancement

Evidence from monitoring, feedback, and review will be used to:

- inform enhancements to placement design and support arrangements;
- refine guidance and expectations for placement providers and staff;
- improve the student experience and academic outcomes of work-based learning.

Enhancement actions will be documented and tracked through appropriate academic governance processes.