



*A line manager's guide
to supporting participants
on Business Interchange
placements*



Helping you support work placements and exchanges which help teachers, tutors and trainers in the learning and skills sector update their vocational skills.

Connecting your organisation and employers

As a line manager, you may have already identified the benefits of updating your tutors* vocational skills and knowledge through a business placement. Or a tutor might have approached you with a request to carry one out. Business Interchange can offer you and your tutor support for a range of placements of many lengths, types and planned outcomes, so that you can gain all of the benefits effective work placements can bring. These benefits include:

- Insight into the skills needs of local employers
- Input from employers for the development of relevant high quality courses
- Courses which reflect local employment and recruitment needs
- A greater understanding between businesses and your organisation
- More opportunities for work and placements for your learners.

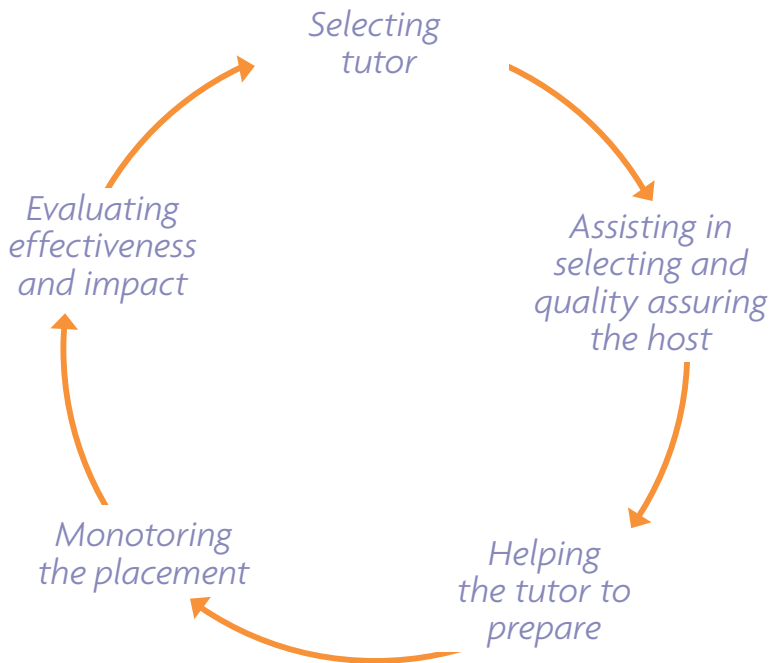
As a line manager, what do you need to do so that your tutor, your organisation and the host employer benefit from a good placement?

* For the purposes of this document, the term tutor has been used generically to represent teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the sector.



Planning

It is critical that you plan effectively for placements. Following this simple model can help you to ensure all necessary considerations are taken into account:



Agreeing/selecting individuals to participate in work placements

Whether you are promoting opportunities for placements to your tutors, or receiving requests from them to undertake placements, you will need to ensure that your selection processes are effective and fair. You will therefore need a process that ensures that:

- Tutors' placement objectives, outcomes and outputs are clearly defined
- Tutors' objectives also meet the objectives of their department and/or your organisation
- There is a clear definition of how the work placement will benefit, and have an impact on, the delivery of learning
- Tutors are able to provide evidence of outcomes and outputs that you and they can share within your own organisation and with the further education workforce nationally.

You should make sure that you consider all applications on an equal basis without regard to race, gender, faith or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other basis protected by law.



Top Tips:

Using a standard application or enquiry form to collect information from tutors applying for placements gives everyone the chance to provide the same level of detail.

Use criteria to assess and short-list applications and assess them against individual and organisational objectives. These criteria should be identified in the placement description. This approach will help you to:

- Sift applications objectively
- Identify people who will get the most from the opportunity on offer
- Comply with equal opportunities legislation.

You might find it helpful to monitor and record the number of people from different backgrounds who apply, are short-listed, are interviewed (if applicable), are offered and take up Business Interchange placements. This would help to identify if there were any groups under-represented and any potential barriers at each stage of the process.

How to help define tutor objectives

Your role as a line manager is to guide the individual through the process, acting as a critical friend, questioning, suggesting and signposting to organisations that can help them to find a business host. You'll need to answer the following questions to help you fulfil this role:

Why do you want your tutor to take part in a Business Interchange placement?

What do you and your tutor hope to achieve? Some examples of the types of things you may wish to achieve as a result of a placement are detailed below. You will need to make sure that your aims are clearly reflected in the tutor's objectives with measures in place to demonstrate that it has been achieved. Examples of the results you may want your tutor to achieve are:

- Gaining practical experience in their industry sector
- Learning new technical skills
- Reinforcing and complementing existing skills
- Gaining an understanding of new processes or industry changes
- Self development through critical reflection
- Improving employer links.



What does your tutor want to do?

Your tutors need to be realistic in their ideas and choices taking into account the restrictions placed on some activities by the potential business hosts in your sector. For example, the requirements for Criminal Records Bureau checks, the holding of basic food hygiene certificates, the provision of personal protective equipment etc. You may need to help your tutor research this.

Think about the skills and knowledge you would like the tutor to update and be clear about what you want them to achieve. For instance, if they teach business studies do you want them to develop skills in financial reporting or e-marketing? What activity does the tutor want to undertake and at what level? Is this job shadowing, hands on involvement, project work, mentoring or coaching?

The more flexible the tutor is in their requirements the more likely they are to gain access to an effective placement. It will also help your tutor to find a placement if they can offer something useful to the host organisation. For example, by undertaking a development project that the business host's staff do not have time to undertake.

You might also want to offer the business host the opportunity to visit or work in your organisation to strengthen links further and to increase the host's understanding of the learning and skills environment and learners' experience.

How to help define tutor objectives *cont.*

When does your tutor want to do it?

Once you and the tutor have determined 'why' and 'what', you will be able to assess how long the tutor will need with the business host, whether this be one day, a block of days or weeks, or several days over a period of weeks/months. This will be influenced not just by the tutor's availability but also by the requirements of the business host and the implications for their normal work patterns and routines (including down times, holidays, seasonality, shift patterns and peaks and troughs of activity). In some cases, the tutor will gain more experience in busy times and will be more valued, whereas others may not be able to support you sufficiently without a detrimental effect on their productivity. Again the more flexible and willing the tutor is the more likely they will have access to an effective placement.



Where, ideally, would the tutor like the placement to take place?

Consider the basic factors such as:

- How far are they prepared to travel to meet their objectives?
- What method of transport is available?
- What are the costs?
- How will these be met?
- Would the tutor's objectives be met with a small local employer or large national/global chain?

In terms of the type of organisation, think about the options that are available. Would yours and your tutor's objectives be met with a small local employer or large national/global chain? Having a clear idea of the type of organisation you think the placement would work best with, whilst retaining some flexibility, should help the tutor to find a suitable placement more easily.

How to help define tutor objectives *cont.*

How will the tutor transfer their learning to the workplace?

This is the output of the placement and will help you and your tutor to measure whether it has been effective or not.

Typical outputs might be:

- Information to feed into lesson plans including practical examples
- Case histories
- Case studies
- New/updated resources and materials
- Learner projects
- Evidence of input from employers into the delivery of the curriculum
- Future learner projects
- Future learner placements
- Evidence of increased numbers of learners on programme
- Ability to assist with careers advice and guidance for learners.

The tutor will need your input when they write their learning objectives for the placement. Examples of good and bad objectives are provided on the next page.

Top Tips:

Remember, when the tutor finishes their placement, they need to evaluate their experience and upload their outputs using the Learning and Skills Improvement Service Excellence Gateway.

You can use our examples for ideas on how to set good quality outputs, please visit our website at **www.businessinterchange.org**



An ineffective objective would be:

To work in a department store for a week.

This does not contain any detail about the outcome the tutor wants to achieve, the scope of the work, how it will ultimately benefit the tutors, learners and the workplace.

An effective objective would be:

To review induction methods, internal training systems and procedures in a national fast moving consumer goods retailer in order to understand the impact on training of shift patterns and customer expectations. As a result, the tutor will update course materials for the retail apprenticeship programme. The host will also benefit from an objective review of their systems.

Another good example could be:

To spend one day per week over a period of four weeks working alongside a human resources manager from a manufacturing environment, attending meetings to observe how recruitment and selection decisions are made in order to help learners prepare for interviews. As a result, the tutor will update guidance materials for learners. In addition, the human resources manager will spend a day with us to appreciate the technical input provided to learners.

Top Tips:

When setting your objectives you may find it useful to use the acronym SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound) to ensure that they are set properly.

Ensure that the host organisation signs off the objectives, outputs and outcomes. This should be in the form of a written agreement that also describes what information about the outcomes and outputs can be shared in the public domain.

Selecting and assuring business hosts

You or your tutor may already have contact with an organisation that would be able to provide a placement. If not there are a number of organisations that would be able to assist:

- The Skills for Business Network of Sector Skills Councils (www.sectorecareersinfo.co.uk)
- Regional Development Agencies (www.englishsrda.com)
- Employer associations.

Remember – always keep the outcomes and outputs your tutor wants to achieve in mind when looking for a business host. Which organisation is the most likely to provide the opportunity they are looking for? How committed is the organisation? How will they ensure that managers and supervisors are prepared for the placement and that they have built in time to support the placement (further guidance can be found in '**A guide to engaging with business hosts**').

Before finalising which organisation will provide the placement, you should hold a pre-placement meeting with the business host to agree objectives and activity and to check the responsibilities of the tutor and of the host.

It is important to check for any health and safety risks and equality and diversity considerations, and to satisfy yourself that the host organisation provides an environment suitable for, and that meets the needs of, the tutor.



Top Tips:

Health and safety are important considerations in the arrangements for placements. You should carry out a risk assessment in advance of any placement and brief individuals about health and safety issues at your meetings with the host and your tutor. The business host will need to complete an induction to their specific industry and workplace issues.

You are also responsible for providing appropriate training for all activities that individuals are asked to undertake which have health and safety implications. Individuals on Business Interchange placements may, therefore, need the same health and safety training that the host would provide to a new member of staff.

The principal risks which may arise as a result of individuals on work experience placements are:

- Injury to the individual themselves
- Injury to others on the premises, e.g. employees, visitors and customers
- Injury to others who are not on the premises, including customers and members of the general public
- Damage to or loss of placement provider's property
- Damage to or loss of other property, e.g. the individual's or a customer's property.

You will, therefore, need to take steps to counter these risks. It is your responsibility to ensure that proper insurance cover is in place at the business host and that the host has effective health and safety procedures.

Selecting and assuring business hosts *cont.*

Does the host have:

- Public liability insurance?
- Employer's liability insurance?
- Insurances that cover any liability incurred by a tutor on placement?
- Written health and safety policies and procedures?
- Induction procedures, which include health and safety training for people working in their organisation? Does this include training on the safe use of vehicles, plant and equipment and will they provide all necessary training for the tutor?
- Personal protective equipment – if it is required and the host cannot provide it for the tutor, who will?
- A formal procedure for reporting and recording accidents in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)? Will they allow you to see reports and/or statistics?
- Procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to people at work in their organisation?
- A process to report to you all recorded accidents involving tutors on placement?
- A process to report to you any sickness involving tutors on placement which may be attributable to work they are doing on the placement?
- A registration with the Health and Safety Executive?
- A registration with the Local Authority Environmental Health Department?
- Risk assessments of their work practices that they have carried out to identify possible risks to their own employees or to others within their organisation? Are risk assessments kept under regular review? Are the results of risk assessments implemented?

You will also need to take account of the type of environment the tutor will be visiting/working in. For example, if the placement involves working closely with children or young people, you will need to be aware of Criminal Records Bureau implications.



Top Tips:

There are special legal requirements in respect of engagement with children and young persons, i.e. those under age 18. You should seek specific legal advice on this issue if you are intending your tutor to undertake work placement in a child centred environment. One specific example is that under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, in certain situations employees are required to declare if they are disqualified from working with children. If you are undertaking placements with young people under age 18, make sure your employees are aware of this and, if appropriate, use the Government's Criminal Records Bureau (www.crb.gov.uk) to carry out checks on employees who are involved in such placements.

In design, manufacturing or research and development environments, confidentiality could be an issue and it may be necessary for the tutor to sign confidentiality or indemnity forms depending on the nature of the host.

You should ensure that equality and diversity considerations are also checked. You might wish to ask the following questions:

- Does the organisation have an equality and diversity policy in place?
- How effectively are its equality and diversity practices monitored?
- What practical steps are being taken to support equality and diversity, including flexibility around religious festivals, caring responsibilities and in terms of dress?
- Does the organisation have a robust process in place to arrange reasonable adjustments?
- What examples are there of the organisation taking positive action to promote equality and diversity?

Helping the tutor to prepare for the placement

After selecting the business host, you need to help your tutor to prepare for their placement. You will need to hold a pre-placement meeting with them, reviewing any issues arising from your risk assessment with the host and addressing any concerns.

How much do you and your tutor know about the organisation they will be visiting/working in?

Some basic points to consider:

- Is there a dress code?
- How are personal protective equipment requirements being addressed?
- If there are shift patterns, does this have implications for the tutors domestic and/or travel arrangements and how can you assist them?
- Is there anything specific you need to provide them with to take on the placement?
- How will they capture their learning and how will you monitor this?
- Do they have contact details of anyone they may need to get in touch with whilst on placement?
- Are there any specific arrangements for entry to the hosts premises (including access for any participants with disabilities) and who do they need to liaise with?
- Do you intend to visit them whilst on the placement and what are the arrangements for this?

You should also agree:

- Deadlines for the production of outputs and outcomes
- What additional support the tutor may need.



Monitoring the placement

If your tutor is taking part in a placement over a period of weeks, you should be in regular contact with them to ensure that the activity they are undertaking meets the agreed objectives, and that they will be able to produce the appropriate outputs and outcomes. You also need to check that things are going well and you may wish to visit them. Remember for some it will be a very new experience and they may feel isolated.

This will also give the tutor the opportunity to raise any issues relating to health and safety and equality and diversity.

Evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the placement

When the tutor has completed the placement, you should conduct an initial evaluation. This is critical to ensuring that your tutor has achieved their learning outcomes and that their learning outputs meet the original objective. Best practice is to work with your tutor to finalise how they will apply their learning in their curriculum area and how they will measure the impact. You may wish to support this reflection with your own internal processes, for example, evaluation forms and/or impact assessments. Examples of things you may want to think about if there are no formal processes in place are:

- How has the placement helped the tutor to achieve their learning objectives, outcomes and outputs?
- How will the experience improve their learning delivery and overall job performance?
- Are they demonstrating increased confidence in their subject knowledge?
- How will they share what they have learned with colleagues?
- How will they retain links with the employer they visited?
- How will their engagement with the employer now benefit your curriculum area/organisation?
- How will they build work placements into their ongoing CPD activity? They may wish to develop up a Business Interchange 'portfolio' of regular vocational placements.
- Would they recommend vocational placements for colleagues, and what advice would they give them?



After the outputs and outcomes have been produced and implemented, it is your responsibility as the line manager to work with the tutor to establish:

- How has the tutor's delivery of learning changed as a result of the activity?
- What contribution has been made to the development of the curriculum?
- What contribution has been made to the development of fellow tutors?
- In the longer term, what impact has there been on the learners?

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Skills for Learning Professionals



This information is available in alternative formats on request.

Business Interchange is delivered by Lifelong Learning UK, part of the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils.

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