**Work-Related Experience – FAQs**

**What is the policy on Work-Related Experience?**

The University is committed to all undergraduate programmes including a compulsory and assessed element of work-related experience, to the value of twenty credits or equivalent, in the form of a single module or across modules and levels. By September 2017 programmes need to have this in place or, if this is not possible within that timescale, demonstrate that an action plan is in place to implement the requirement.

This commitment should be seen as one way of enhancing graduate employability and be viewed as part of a holistic approach to embedding employability. There is no single prescribed model for integrating work-related experience into programmes, as it is critical that the work-related experience is discipline specific and aligned to programme outcomes.

In essence, the twenty credit work-related experience is:

* A compulsory and assessed element to the value of twenty credits or equivalent.
* In the form of a single module or across [[1]](#footnote-1)modules and levels within a programme.
* To enable students to achieve specific work-related learning outcomes.
* To be linked with occupationally relevant external organisations.

**Why Work-Related Experience?**

Work-related experiences provide students with the opportunity to develop and enhance their employability skills and attributes whilst experiencing the world of work. Research indicates that work-related experiences (e.g. traditional work experience through placements, completing an assessment designed by an employer, or taking part in a simulation day) have a positive impact on degree performance, as well as enabling the successful transition to graduate employment and/or further study. It also has a positive impact on student retention.

**What is the difference between Work-Related Experience, Work-Based Learning and Employability?**

**Employability** is a broad definition and is not simply about finding a job, setting up a business or freelancing. It is about making connections between study, personal development and other activities that influence the individuals’ ability to find, gain and be successful in their chosen employment: *[employability is*] *“A set of achievements -* ***skills, understandings and personal attributes*** *- that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.” (Knight and Yorke, 2003).*

**Work-Based Learning** islearning that is integral to a higher education programme and which is based in the workplace and assessed and credited as part of a University programme. It is usually achieved and demonstrated through engagement with a workplace environment, the assessment of reflective practice and the designation of appropriate learning outcomes (based on the QAA definition), for example, professional placements and Degree Apprenticeships.

**Work-Related Experience** is about providing a “window” into, and an experience of, the world of work, for example, micro-placements, employer-led projects and enterprise activities.

**What do I need to consider in designing my curriculum for work-related experience?**

In developing your work-related learning opportunities, it is helpful to consider how the experience:

* Provides students with tangible learning opportunities to integrate theory and practice, as they would need to do in the workplace.
* Is authentic, i.e. match as near as possible real-world tasks.
* Encourages and supports students’ interest in a wide variety of careers.
* Provides a ‘window’ into the world of work.
* Provides the opportunity to develop and enhance their Graduate Attributes.
* Requires students to take on an active rather than a passive role in the learning process.
* Provides students with the opportunity to develop their subject understanding, skills, efficacy, and meta-cognition (USEM model).
* Provides an opportunity to develop communities of practice with employers.
* Impacts on student choice, particular in relation to Combined Honours.
* Is impactful, clear and concise. A dispersed approach across a number of modules may limit the impact of, and learning gained from, the experience.
* Encourages progression.

**My programme is a combined honours, what do I need to do?**

Students on Combined Honours will have a minimum of one opportunity to undertake twenty credits of WRE and can choose which subject to complete this in. Students can choose to undertake more than one work-related experience opportunity.

It is recommended that WRE options are discussed as part of the Combined Honours induction programme. Personal Academic Tutors (PATS) are expected to work closely with Combined Honours students to assess where their WRE should be. Programme teams will be expected to monitor choice/take up.

In designing WRE within the context of Combined Honours programmes, programme teams need to be mindful not to limit student choice and therefore, where possible, avoid a dispersed approach where the twenty credits of WRE sits across a number of modules.

Where programmes share a WRE module which is available to Combined Honours students (for example, programmes from within the same School), programme teams need to ensure combined honours students are only taking the WRE module once.

A list of the WRE Modules for Combined Honours students will be compiled and will be made available to Programme Teams for Combined Honours.

**How will compliance with this policy be monitored?**

Work-related experience will be built into programme design, and therefore programme modification will be required where programme change to implement that design is needed. For 2017-18, Faculty Quality Committees will monitor all programmes to ensure that they have identified the twenty credits of work-related experience and/or have made the necessary modifications.

**Who can I talk to about developing our approach to WRE?**

Employability and Skills Managers, Faculty Directors of Learning and Teaching, and Learning, Teaching Enhancement can support you to integrate employability into your curriculum

**Where can I find out more?**

Currently, the Employability and Skills team is developing a bank of careers, work-related experience, enterprise, and employability materials to support staff to be made available on Blackboard via the Academic Support tab. Please contact careers@canterbury.ac.uk for further information.

1. Jonesa, Green and Higson (2015) Do work placements improve final year academic performance or do high-calibre students choose to do work placements? Studies in Higher Education

 “Over a third of recruiters who took part in the research repeated their warnings from previous years – that graduates who have had no previous work experience at all are unlikely to be successful during the selection process and have little or no chance of receiving a job offer for their organisations’ graduate programmes.” High Fliers’ Graduate Jobs Survey 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)