PRACTITIONERS GUIDE TO PLACEMENTS

Student Finance England (SFE) relates to English domiciled students studying higher education courses at universities or colleges in the UK

What is a placement?

A placement is a period of work experience which is an integrated and assessed part of a student's degree. Placements usually take place in the third or fourth year of a course. If necessary, we'll ask the student or their Higher Education Provider (HEP) to confirm placement details. This is because the financial support available to them may change for that year.

Types of placements:

Voluntary placements - Placements must be part of the student's course and designated by the HEP before SFE can offer funding.

There are 3 different types of work placement. The amount of support available to the student depends on their situation and the type of placement.

(A) An unpaid work placement anywhere not covered in the type B list below. Although these students are on an unpaid placement, funding works the same as a paid placement so if the student is at their home HEP for 10 weeks or more, they'll be entitled to full support. If they're at their home HEP for less than 10 weeks, they'll be entitled to reduced tuition fees and reduced rate maintenance loan (they'll also not receive any grants including Grants for Dependants and Disabled Students Allowance).

(B) An unpaid work placement in one of the following. Students on unpaid type B placements are entitled to full support. Evidence is required of unpaid type B placements where the student is at their home HEP less than 10 weeks. This can be a letter from the student's HEP confirming the placement details.

Before awarding full support, SFE need to make sure that the primary role of the placement relates to one of the categories below:

Unpaid Type B list

a) unpaid service in a hospital or in a public health service laboratory or with an integrated care board in the United Kingdom.
b) unpaid service with a local authority in the United Kingdom acting in the exercise of its functions relating to the care of children and young persons, health or welfare or with a voluntary organisation providing facilities or carrying out activities of a like nature in the United Kingdom;
(ba) unpaid service with a local authority (within the meaning of section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006) acting in the exercise of public health functions (within the meaning of that Act);
c) unpaid service in the prison or probation and aftercare service in the United Kingdom.
d) unpaid research in an institution in the United Kingdom or, in the case of a student attending an overseas institution as part of the student's course, in an overseas institution.
e) unpaid service with—
(i) a Special Health Authority established pursuant to section 28 of the National Health Service Act 2006;
(ia) NHS England;
(ib) the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence;
(ii) a Local Health Board established pursuant to section 11 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 or a Special Health Authority established pursuant to section 22 of that Act;
(iii) a Health Board or a Special Health Board constituted under section 2 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 ; or
(iv) a Health and Social Services Board established under Article 16 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972; or
f) unpaid service with either House of Parliament.

With the exception of unpaid research placements at overseas institutions, type B placements from the list above must take place in the UK to be eligible for funding.

(C) Paid work placement in the UK/Overseas.

Consideration also needs to be given to how long the placement lasts as students can attend part-year placements:

- if a student is at their HEP for 10 weeks or more, they'll usually be entitled to full support
- if a student is at their HEP for less than 10 weeks, they'll usually be charged lower fees and receive reduced rate Maintenance Loan .They'll not receive any grants, including Grants for Dependants or Disabled Students' Allowance.

Social work students indicating that they will be on a placement will be assessed as at university. This is because the placement is an integral part of their course.

Where Migrant Workers are on a paid placement, the paid placement does not count as Migrant Worker employment. The student would need to be working alongside the work placement to retain their Migrant Worker eligibility. If the student no longer meets the Migrant Worker eligibility criteria, they may still be eligible for tuition fee funding only.

Placements abroad

We will assess placements abroad as a placement, not study abroad. These students are entitled to the elsewhere rate of Maintenance Loan, not the abroad rate. (unless it is an Erasmus placement as Erasmus placements abroad will be entitled to the abroad rate).

Students attending a placement at a HEP abroad are entitled to the same support as those studying abroad at a HEP; they can also apply for study abroad manual payments. Evidence is required in these cases to show that the placement is for unpaid research and is in an educational institute (HEP).

Applying for Placement funding

Students will apply in the normal way, either online or via a paper application.

Repeating a placement year

Students are eligible for funding if they are repeating a placement year due to an academic failure and have enough remaining entitlement or if due to a health reason and they qualify for CPR (compelling personal reasons).

HEP unable to secure a placement for the student

If the repeat is due to the HEP failing to get the student a placement, the student is not entitled to funding. The student shouldn't be confirmed as in attendance on a placement if they aren't in attendance on one. In these instances, we would expect the student to be either suspended or moved to a year of study at the HEP.