Career-ready Placement Risk Assessment Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This procedure sets out the process by which the University assesses the suitability of potential Host Organisations including any related health and safety risk associated with career-ready placement (placement) activities.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This procedure is designed to offer guidance to Course Co-ordinators and other University staff with placement-related responsibilities involved in the risk assessment process for placements.

(3) The aim is to inform the University about potential risks associated with placements and to establish effective measures for either mitigating identified risks or appropriately escalating concerns.

(4) The objective of this procedure is to ensure that the University meets its duty of care responsibilities by undertaking risk assessments and implementing control measures to ensure that students participating in placements are not exposed to potential harm.

(5) The procedure provides information on gathered data and risk assessment related to placements. In cases where Schools and Colleges have existing local processes aligned with the University's risk management obligations, stakeholders can continue using these approaches. However, the risk assessment must still align with the University's Work Health and Safety Policy.

Section 3 - Scope

(6) This procedure applies to all career-ready placement activities within courses and focuses on the risk assessment process. Also see the Work Integrated Learning Policy, Career-ready Placement Procedure and Career-Ready Placement Flowcharts.

Section 4 - Definitions

(7) In the context of this document:

   a. 'control measures' means actions that can be taken to eliminate or minimise the identified risks.
   b. 'reasonably practicable' as defined by the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW).

Section 5 - Audience

(8) This Procedure and the related documents are designed for University staff with responsibility relating to placements, students, host organisations, and third-party providers.

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Section 6 - Details

(9) The University standard Career-ready Placement Host Survey (host survey) provides a mechanism to collect information from a host organisation for the purposes of risk assessment and due diligence. Schools and/or Colleges may choose to utilise an alternate host survey or equivalent mechanism.

(10) The host survey is intended to allow host organisations to provide information about the proposed activity and to answer specific work, health and safety (WHS) questions that relate to the location and the type of activity that the student will be undertaking. Required information in the host survey includes:

   a. Host organisation details;
   b. Site and location details;
   c. Activity details including dates;
   d. Student requirements including any certifications, licences or PPE requirements;
   e. Work, Health and Safety details such as Host Organisation policies, procedures or processes;
   f. Risk and hazards identification and management;
   g. Emergency procedures and emergency contact details;
   h. Supervisor and Work Health and Safety contact details; and
   i. Host Organisation Declaration.

(11) The host survey should be completed by the host organisation, this may be done in collaboration with University staff.

(12) The information obtained via the host survey will enable staff to determine that there is:

   a. sufficient information for the completion of the risk assessment;
   b. insufficient information for the completion of the risk assessment and further information needs to be sought from the host organisation; or
   c. insufficient information for the completion of the risk assessment and based on the information provided, a specialist review should be undertaken by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

Undertaking the Career-Ready Placement Risk Assessment (Risk Assessment)

(13) The results of the host survey, plus any additional information obtained, will allow the completion of the risk assessment using the Career-ready Placement Risk Assessment Tool (risk assessment tool) (or existing School or College mechanisms). This assessment must be undertaken in line with the University's Health and Safety Management System Framework, by the School/College.

(14) During the risk assessment it may be determined further information is required from the host organisation or an on-site risk assessment may be required.

(15) Staff completing the assessment using the risk assessment tool must know:

   a. What activities the student will undertake as part of the placement experience and the expectations of the student.
   b. Where the placement will take place.
   c. Any risks the student may be exposed to based on the nature of the activity and the site where the student undertakes the activity.
   d. The control measures planned to manage, mitigate or minimise the risks.

e. If the host organisation's existing control measures effectively address or minimise the risk.

f. If the host organisation's existing management strategies are sufficient to manage the risk.

g. The level of residual risk once the control measures are implemented.

(16) If the risk assessment or host survey identifies the potential for previously unidentified risks, further assessment or information may be required to allow the host organisation to take steps to eliminate or minimise the risk. Details of concerns and the host organisation's response should be included in the risk assessment tool.

(17) If there are any ongoing concerns about the identified risk/s of an activity, the host organisation should be contacted. This may involve resending the host survey to the host organisation so they can add any additional information.

(18) An on-site visit may be appropriate if:

a. the information provided by the host organisation raises particular concerns about the risk to students undertaking activities and/or the site where the placement activity is based;

b. it is not possible to reach conclusions about the nature of the risk without obtaining further information about the activities and/or the site where the placement activity occurs; or

c. the detail provided by the host organisation is not satisfactory even though clarification has been sought.

Control measures included in the Career-ready Placement Risk Assessment

(19) Control measures should be effective and reasonably practicable.

(20) Appropriate control measures for each risk need to be identified in discussion with the host organisation and/or the University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

(21) Control measures will vary depending on the nature of the activities and the location.

(22) Examples of control measures include debriefing, counselling, training and preparation, or supervision and protective equipment for hazardous material. The 'residual risk rating' is the risk level remaining when controls are implemented.

(23) Information on the management of risks and the hierarchy of risk controls is available from the relevant section of the Safe Work Australia site.

Completion of the Career-ready Placement Risk Assessment

(24) When there are identified risks, the placement should only be approved if there is sufficient specific information about how the risks will be eliminated or minimised by the host organisation.

(25) After the risk assessment is completed, the relevant delegate may:

a. Agree to the accuracy of the risk assessment, approve the placement activity and, where relevant sign the Host Organisation Agreement.

b. Request that there is further investigation be undertaken to determine if additional control measures can be implemented.

c. Indicate concerns as to the accuracy of the risk assessment and require that the risk assessment be reviewed after further information is obtained from the host organisation.

d. Indicate concerns as to the accuracy of the risk assessment and refer the activity for specialist review by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

e. Determine that the placement should not be approved.

Determination

(26) The risk assessment tool will provide a Highest Overall Residual Risk Rating for the placement. Approval levels of the differing risk levels are listed in table 1.

(27) Where the residual risk is confirmed as Extreme, the activity must not proceed.

Table 1 – Activity and Host Organisation Agreement Approval Matrix

Highest Overall Residual Risk Rating	Risk Assessment and Activity Sign-off	Host Organisation Agreement Templates	Approval of Host Organisation Agreement
Very Low	Course Co-ordinator	Low Risk Host Organisation template Sole-trader Host Organisation Agreement template	Agreements made on the Low Risk Host Organisation Agreement template - Course Coordinator Agreement made on the Sole-Trader Host Organisation Agreement template - Head of School
Low	Course Co-ordinator		
Medium	Head of School in consultation with the College Health and Safety team	Medium Risk Host Organisation Agreement template Sole-trader Host Organisation Agreement template	Head of School
High	Pro Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing team	High Risk Host Organisation Agreement template Sole-trader Host Organisation Agreement template	Pro Vice-Chancellor
Extreme	N/A	N/A	N/A

Placement Monitoring and Evaluation

(28) The student experience whilst on placement will be monitored by the Course Co-ordinators, by making contact with the student and/or host organisation, mechanisms and timeframes for monitoring will vary based on the activities undertaken.

(29) A revised risk assessment should be conducted if the student or host organisation advise that circumstances or conditions described in the risk assessment change during the placement.

Record Keeping

(30) Notes that relate to each stage of the assessment process are required to ensure a full record is kept to show that all steps were taken to assess the risks involved in the placement activity. This will help protect staff and the University in the event of an incident.

(31) Records, including the completed host survey and the risk assessment, must be stored in accordance with the Records Governance Policy. Records may be in the University's Placement Management System and/or the University's Record Management System (TRIM).

(32) In addition to this Procedure, the University provides training for University staff through the Careers and Employability team. Collaboration by the College Professional Experience Units and the Career-ready Graduates Community of Practice (CoP) build expertise and capacity across the institution. The University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing team is also available for advice when needed.

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Section 7 - Appendices

(33) Career-ready Placement Host Survey

(34) Career-ready Placement Risk Assessment Tool

Status and Details

Status	Not Yet Approved
Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	To Be Advised
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Mark Hoffman Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President
Enquiries Contact	Cassie Connor Senior Executive Officer

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Risk management" - The co-ordination of activities to optimise the management of potential opportunities and reduce the consequence or impact of adverse effects or events.

"Risk assessment" - The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.