

# HIGHLY SKILLED EMPLOYMENT

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## COVID-19 PRINCIPLES

### **Business and Enterprise: The Hallam Model**

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## Introduction

Covid-19 has and will continue to have an unparalleled impact on students and graduates. It is now more important than ever for us to prepare students for their future. With regards to the impact on students and graduates we have been able to synthesize the following intelligence:

- Vacancies are down, although it hasn't stopped and there is still hiring going on and jobs are still being created.
- Smaller businesses enterprises (SME) are in survival mode and recruitment is a low priority.
- Different industries and different parts of the country are experiencing this differently and will continue to experience it in other ways.
- Finalists continue to report vacancies and offer being withdrawn.
- Standard graduate jobs are affected, but not as badly as placement, work experience, and apprenticeships
- Recruitment processes have moved virtually with an increase in virtual assessment centres and interviews. Your Careers and Employability team have developed a full 'digital first' curriculum offer that will support the HSE modules through new features through Careers Connect e.g. assessment centres, video interviewing, CV analysis, employer advice and psychometrics. To take full advantages of how this resource can be used in curriculum please discuss this with your Employability Adviser.
- There is anticipation for an increase in demand for postgraduate study. Hallam has updated their PGT offer in support of this with discounts for relevant courses. [A list of eligible courses is available](#) with more information available through the [Class of 2020](#).
- The impact could be felt strongest by those graduates who don't have financial and family resources to fall back on. In such a case Covid-19 may serve to exacerbate wider inequalities in the access to decent work.

For up to date information the [High Peak site](#) provides stats and research about UK higher education from labour market analyst and speaker Charlie Ball. Also, the Institute of Graduate Employers provides a weekly [Covid-19 bulletin](#) which offers a summary of developments in student and graduate recruitment and developments. You can also subscribe to '[The New Normal](#)'. A weekly digest that seeks to provide academics, career teams, students, and employers with a regular dose of news, industry updates, and ideas for making the most of self-isolation, including top recommendations for MOOCs, podcasts, TED talks and more.

## Highly Skilled Employment: Principles

As we look to support students and graduates as they navigate this complicated and changing future, the work we do with the student in the curriculum provides the foundation for this. It is important for us to continually and objectively take a fresh look at all curriculum design, delivery,

and assessment towards a new delivery model. Course Teams have adapted their curriculum and chosen a work experience category in collaboration with employers, students and other relevant stakeholders to best suit employer needs and learning outcomes through authentic learning activities. As we move through the impact of COVID-19, there may be increased risks associated with some elements of HSE module design, depending on how this was originally planned by course teams.

Course teams are being asked to review their courses in line with the university's *Course Delivery Principles*. Due to the newness, complexities and increase reliance on external stakeholders associated with the HSE commitments, the following principles are a both a reminder of original principles and adaption in response to Covid-19. They aim to provide clarity, reassurance, and flexibility to best enable future planning of work experience modules while ensuring a quality student work experience pathway.

*Please note that these principles are only relevant to those courses originally in-scope for HSE and were processed through Faculty Approval Panels in 2019.*

## **Work experience modules**

1. Work experiences can be adapted to virtual delivery as appropriate e.g. project, consultancy, or research-driven to achieve a specific challenge, goal, or ambition of an organisation.
2. All work experience modules should provide a meaningful experience for students.
3. All work experience modules should be progressive and develop throughout the degree increasing students' knowledge, skills, and attributes towards graduate-level employment.
4. All work experience modules should embed work experience within the subject area and make explicate connections between subject-specific module content and work experience. It should not be an add-on or separate experience for students.
5. Students should recognise the connectivity of their work experience with a specific organisation to their areas of study and/or future careers plans.
6. There should be a pragmatic approach to the level and depth of employer engagement allowing for experiences to be authentic while there not being a requirement for a student to be immersed in an organisation.
7. Management of student expectations should be carefully considered.
8. Communications with students and employers should be clear, understood, and timely throughout a module.
9. Considerations should be made for all areas to support Access and Participation and inclusion to ensure equality for all students.

10. Assessments should allow students to identify and review the breadth and depth of their accumulated learning from their course and placement demonstrating knowledge, skills, and attributes aligned to the subject area.

### **Short work placement principles**

With specific reference to the 120 hours work placement category, the following principles have been reiterated and/or updated.

1. Considerations and redesigns should be made with a focus on [virtual placements](#) including all preparation and supervision.
2. 120 hours can involve preparation, training, recruitment, selection, engagement, and assessment as and where these are aligned to work readiness and provide a holistic and meaningful placement. Students should undertake a mutually beneficial role and/or responsibility/outcome(s)/project.
3. The flexibility of placement focus/location/industry should be considered where possible. In many cases graduate employment is not necessarily directly related to the discipline of the student's degree and therefore, is non-linear. Whatever a student has chosen for their degree subject, it is vital they are helped to see there is a vast range of organisations that could be relevant for their knowledge and skill set.
4. Placement providers can support individuals, groups, or cohorts of students.
5. An interdisciplinary opportunity could be exploited to offer a more impactful result to employers.
6. An agreed placement experience can involve:
  - Virtual. Resources to support virtual placements are in development and will be available through BESE. Please contact Charmaine Myers.
  - Employer outcome - e.g. Projects, consultation, resource development, research, etc.
  - Flexibility and authenticity in design - projects, collaboration, consultations, networking events, etc.
  - Incorporated - with a current employer.
  - Enterprise Residence - student investigate self-employment activities.
  - External, off-site engagement with a placement provider (when safe to do so).
  - On-campus activity with the University as a placement provider.
  - Mixed delivery of both on and off-site engagement with the placement provider.
  - Support is available to students through the Hallam [Student Placement Site](#).
7. Sourcing of placements is through a mixed-method approach involving the students to self-source, through academic contacts, and through employer partnership teams through BESE. The module design will influence which method/mix of the method is most appropriate.

8. BESE resource to source placements will be based on university priorities, timeliness of requests, and are reliant on external circumstances. Prioritisation will be determined by college Associate Dean, Business and Enterprise, and Head of Academic and Strategic Employability.
9. When delivering a placement module, the Health and Safety of students and placement providers must be adhered to. All health and safety policies are being reviewed in response to Covid-19 with specific focus on placements. The Employability Operations Team (BESE) can offer support via examples of best practices, resources, and templates you can use. Course teams can contact them directly at [EmployabilityOperations@shu.ac.uk](mailto:EmployabilityOperations@shu.ac.uk).
10. All placements activities should follow and adhere to the advice and guidance from UK Government in response to Covid-19.

## **Key Contacts and Support**

*If you are challenged with finding opportunities, there are these points of support within the Business Engagement, Skills, and Employability (BESE) team:*

- Phil Clarke - Head of Employer Partnership
- Jenny Cole - Senior Employer Partnership Manager
- Caroline Nouvellon - Student and Graduate Enterprise Manager
- Academic Development (Employability)/Lead for Venture Matrix - Charmaine Myers

*If your work experience module needs additional support about content, design, and delivery to support placement preparation or work readiness, gets in touch with the Careers and Employability Team:*

- Head of Student and Graduate Employability - Simon Thompson
- College Employability Consultant:
  - BTE - Julian Smith
  - SSA - Rachel Firth
  - HWL - Darcy Gillie
- College Senior Employability Adviser
- Dept. Employability Adviser

*If you are unsure of the Health and Safety considerations which need to adhere to there is a dedicated team in BESE to support you through this:*

- For advice, guidance and best practice to ensure all Health and safety policies are met to protect students, placement providers, and the university please discuss your placement

module designs with the Employability Operations Team in BESE at [EmployabilityOperations@shu.ac.uk](mailto:EmployabilityOperations@shu.ac.uk).

## **Additional information and resources**

- Teaching and Assessment Essentials:
  - [Virtual Placement resources](#)
  - [Applied Learning in Practice](#)
  - Teaching and Assessment Essentials Site: This will be an academic focused resource to support integrated curriculum for employability design and delivery (under continual development)
    - i. [Highly Skilled Employment site](#)
    - ii. [Integrated Curriculum for Employability](#)
- [Student Placement site](#)
- [Coronavirus FAQs for students on sandwich and short placements](#)
- [Careers Connect](#)
- [QAA Covid-19: Thematic Guidance Work-based Learning](#)
- [QAA: UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Advice and Guidance for Work-Based Learning](#)
- [QAA: UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Advice and Guidance Enabling Students](#)
- [ASET Good Practice Guide for Work based and Placement Learning in Higher Education](#)