



Health, Safety & Welfare

For Students On Placement

The ASET office has recently received several requests for advice on best practice concerning the health, safety and welfare of students while on placement. There are two aspects to this:

- the protection of students' future health and avoidance of injury or death
- the protection of the university or college, and their staff, against possible legal action.

Questions were first raised at ASET conferences in the early 1990s and resulted in the guidance given in Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students', (the Report) published and commended by CVCP (now UUK) in March 1997.

The Report addressed both of the above aspects but did not lose sight of the fact that the first is the more important. However, as the Report itself points out, following published and recommended best practice means that an individual is more likely to be protected against legal action. Conversely, not following it would leave someone more vulnerable than if the advice had not been published.

The Report was based on independent legal advice and we have seen nothing since its publication to suggest that this should be modified in any way. Our very strong advice, therefore, is to continue to follow all of the recommendations in the Report. Any departure should be only on the recommendation of independent lawyers with expertise in this field.

We intend to commission an updated legal opinion on the recommendations of the Report. It would be extremely useful if you would let us know:

- whether you would like to see any of the recommendations modified, giving reasons
- whether you have obtained any legal opinion that any advice given in the Report should, or could, be modified.

Please send your comments, as soon as possible, to the ASET office.

If any change to the recommendations is advised by competent legal opinion, we shall, of course, let members know.

¹ 'UCEA/USA Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students (a reprint of the former CVCP publication)', available from www.ucea.ac.uk/publications.html for £7.50, is a reprint of Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students.



Keynote speaker Alan Johnson MP, with ASET Chairman John Wilson at Septembers' conference.

ASET
Integrating Work and Learning



contact

3 Westbrook Court,
Sharrow Vale Road,
Sheffield, S11 8YZ.

T: 0114 221 2902
F: 0114 221 2903
E: aset@aset.demon.co.uk

www.asetonline.org

IN THIS ISSUE

- Health And Safety Advice
- 2004 Conference
- Meet The ASET Executive - New Chairman Dr John Wilson
- Student Employment Services
- Essay Competition Winners
- Notice Board Of Upcoming Events

ASET Conference Fitzwilliam College Cambridge September 2004 - An overview

ASET welcomed 79 delegates from 7 different countries to its annual Conference and AGM, held between 7-9 September in Cambridge. Keynote speeches were given to the delegation by Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson MP, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, John Brennan from CHERI, and Bernd Wächter from the ACA. In addition, to enhance the participatory nature of the Conference, 35 papers were presented to smaller groups and discussions held on a range of issues relating to all aspects of work-based learning. The ethos of ASET was alive and well, in the broad range of papers representing the wide activities of participants, ideas old and new, and a warm spirit of sharing information and expertise. Themes to come out of the Conference included:

- An increase in the use of technology in placement administration, collaboration between colleagues, and in assessment.
- Increasingly, learning from part-time work is being accredited.
- Employability is still high on many institutions' agendas and represents a major "selling" opportunity to potential students and their parents.
- Frustration was also evident - both with colleagues, increasingly in a minority perhaps, who cannot see the relevance of work experience to their discipline, and with administrations which take the revenue from placements but don't adequately fund the necessary student support that the revenue is intended for.
- An ongoing theme was the need for students to be aware of the importance of understanding the work culture when entering a placement - for perhaps the first time in their lives they are entering an environment which has not been designed primarily for their benefit.
- Research was presented demonstrating the greater preparedness of ex-placement students for graduate positions - in terms of both having the skills desired by employers, and of being able to manage with the process of getting employment.
- Centrally, placement puts emphasis on the role of reflection as the core process in independent autonomous learning.
- One of the major challenges facing us all, and impacting on the future of sandwich degrees in general, is the inter-relationship of several factors - Foundation Degrees, tuition fees, and the take-up of sandwich degrees. The increase in tuition fees - even if paid for retrospectively, may tempt many students onto shorter courses such as Foundation Degrees and non-sandwich courses, which may not be in their longer-term interests.

These are areas that we need to keep in view, collect evidence and as and when appropriate to lobby on, both within institutions and with government/DfES.

The full Conference proceedings is now available from the Publications section of the ASET web site. Bookings for the 2005 Conference can now be made by downloading a form from the Events section.

John Wilson, with acknowledgements to Deirdre Deery

Meet the ASET Executive - New Chairman Dr John Wilson

Following many years' service by the founder chairman Malcolm Brewer, Ray Robinson has been Chairman since 1999/2000. Ray has steered the organisation through a challenging time of change and development, at the end of which it is back near its roots in Sheffield. John Wilson has taken over as Chairman from October 2004, and acknowledges with thanks the clean handover; Ray has left things in good shape.

John's original discipline was Heavy Electrical Engineering [but he says that the words dim and distant come to mind]. He worked for 15 years for Leyland Trucks, in a variety of roles centring on Product and Legislation Planning. A change of career took place in 1988 when he did a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Information Technology at the then Manchester Polytechnic, and became a lecturer at Lancashire Polytechnic - now the University of Central Lancashire, in Preston. The original idea was to teach Business Information Systems and Quantitative Methods, but John was soon visiting placement students and became a Placements Tutor. Seamlessly, his career had moved on to work-based learning and employability. One of the rich rewards at this time is working with mid-life career changers, typically on part-time courses.

He first became involved with ASET in the early 1990s, through the UCSC committee [Universities' Committee for Sandwich Courses] and in due course became Chair of that group. During this period he was instrumental in editing and helping to launch the ASET Code of Good Practice on the operation of Sandwich Placements [2001]. John is deeply involved in all aspects not only of sandwich placement but of work-related learning in general, and in 2000 was invited by CIHE [Council for Industry and Higher Education] to contribute to the work of a DfES-commissioned group, preparing a report which ultimately surfaced in February 2002 as the "Work Related Learning Report".

John looks forward to being involved in continuing the important work of ASET, and to working with other members of the Executive team in furthering ASET's role in the promotion of Integrating Work with Learning.



ASET

Essay competition

2004

ASET

Integrating Work and Learning



For several years, ASET has offered a prize - currently 1000 Euros - for the best essay from a post-placement student, summarising the learning from placement. The winner also benefits from an impressive extra entry on their CV, and public recognition in the form of a presentation.

It is recognised that many students in the final, post-placement year of their degrees naturally want to concentrate on their academic studies and that this can be a factor deterring students from entering. However, in 2004 both the number of entries and the standards were high, and it was very clear that applicants had both learned from their placement experiences, and could articulate that learning. Entrants came from a very wide range of institutions and courses, including some from shorter, as well as traditional year-long sandwich, placements.

The competition was judged by John Wilson, Chair of ASET; Ray Robinson, University of Ulster; Angela Peers, Manchester Metropolitan University; and Alan Smith, who has been involved with ASET conferences and the Essay Competition for many years. Reviewing the entries separately, they were unanimous about the winner, Stacey Shepherd from University of Surrey who wrote about her placement at Guildford Pupil Referral Unit, calling it "From Crazy Idea to Brilliant Decision".

The standard was so high that the judges decided to recommend two other entries as runners up, and Tal Elgar from University of Kent and Celia Wyndham from Leeds Metropolitan University received a commendation and 250 Euros each.

Although there aren't explicit criteria for the essay, ASET is clearly interested in promoting the benefits of placement learning, and the best essays, as always, contained "quotable quotes" which did precisely that.

The winning student wrote (all quotes in "..." are the student's own words from the essay, editorially adjusted for brevity in this summary.):

"The application process was an experience in itself.... And I could not imagine doing it without the help of the placement tutor"

"As soon as I began to work at the Pupil Referral Unit, I began to see how what I had learnt on my course was extremely relevant to the job."

"... helping to resolve particular situations proved extremely rewarding."

"During the placement, I was able to utilise and extend my knowledge and skills, attending courses... that were extremely relevant to the PRU and covered topics both from my degree and on new subjects"

"Most of these skills would have been useful in many different places of work."

"In terms of personal development, I noticed a huge change... I encountered and dealt with many new situations, increasing my confidence."

"Working at the PRU has given me a goal and therefore motivation to work harder in my final year. I has helped me clarify my career plans, as I am now certain that I would like to work with children with behavioural problems"

"I now appreciated how important effective time management and punctuality are, and they have already been crucial in my final year."

"In addition, I feel that I am more able to apply what I have learnt in my final year to real life situations, and vice versa."

"I also decided on my dissertation topic."

"When asked recently by a second year student if it was worth taking a placement year, I didn't even have to think about the answer. Integrating academic and work-based learning has made my degree so much more worthwhile, and has been invaluable at both an academic and personal level; I would therefore recommend it to anyone."

Well, the judges felt that we couldn't have put it any better ourselves.

Well done, Stacey who is studying Sociology at University of Surrey - you are a worthy winner of the ASET essay competition 2004.

Dr John Wilson, ASET Chair, and Chair of the Essay Assessment Panel



Student Employment Services Ltd: If you are a placement tutor or administrator and find that, when trying to place your students, you come across ambivalent employers, then SES can help. Your employer may refuse a placement student because they have headcount restrictions; or they don't want the hassle of fixed term employment contracts; or just don't want the administrative burden. SES will employ your student on behalf of the employer removing these issues, and many others, leaving the employer and student free to concentrate on the tasks at hand. All terms and conditions of employment, including the salary, are specified by the employer so that the student will look and feel just as if he was an actual employee of that company.

SES has been employing placement students in this way for many years and our experience of sandwich courses, placement students and employers' requirements is second to none.

Please ring for further information, alternatively put your employers in touch with us directly on 0114 266 9999. We'll be happy to help.

notice board: dates for your diary in 2005

ASET Staff Development Programme 2005

Delegate fees for 1-day sessions £130 ASET Members, £150 Non-members

Health and Safety For Placement Students

Wednesday 29 June - Leeds Metropolitan University

This session will explain the philosophy behind and the application of the UUK recommended 'Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students' guidelines. This will include advice on the preparation of students, the preparation of staff, and on having an adequate defence against legal action. Both operational briefings about best practice and the legal intricacies will be covered. The status and nature of the USHA report will also be explored.

Marketing For Placements - October - London (date and venue TBC)

This new addition to the ASET Staff Development Programme will cover ways to market the concept of placements to students and also marketing students to employers.

Introduction To Work Placement Management

November - London (date and venue TBC)

Aimed at work placement organisers, academics and careers adviser, and particularly for members of staff new to placement management, this session is designed to introduce all the fundamental aspects of the field. Share ideas and good practice on placement preparation, implementation and debriefing; review current legislative aspects with regard to placements; have your questions answered by experienced placement organisers and share a fresh focus on what work experience can and should achieve.

ASET Conference and AGM 2005

6-8 September - York Conference Park

Themes: Employability and Work Experience; Managing Work Placements & Supporting Students; Using Technology to Support Placements; International Students, Placements and Partnerships; Assessment and PDP; Effective Employer Relationships.

Keynotes Speakers: TBC

Conference Prices: if booked before 30 July - Members £375, Non-members £405. If booked after 30 July - Members £445, Non-members £475. These rates include 2 nights' accommodation plus refreshments and meals.

ASET Membership

ASET continues to provide a comprehensive range of services for its members. For almost 25 years ASET, the professional body for work-based learning practitioners, has been at the forefront of developments in sandwich courses and other integrated periods of work in both higher and further education. It has been the catalyst for the development of guidelines in many areas and also the promotion and dissemination of best practice. ASET is a charity run by work-based learning practitioners and so we are able to offer support, advice, and guidance to all professionals who work in the field.

ASET has runs a staff development programme including one-day sessions, three of which are scheduled above, and an annual conference in the autumn. As well as this, an essay competition for returning placement students is run to promote the concept of placement learning and encourage students to articulate their experiences. Bi-annual newsletters, the web site (www.asetonline.org), publications such as the conference proceedings, and mailings have continued to inform members of developments within ASET and the field of work-based learning.

ASET also offers advice, and where necessary, is prepared to act on behalf of its members. The impending impact of the government's post-2006 fee policy on placements and the new USHA report on Health and Safety will be just two of the issues where ASET will be doing so in the coming year. Our association will do all we can to promote the concept of work placements and to help all involved in work-based learning meet the challenges posed by the ever changing and expanding debate on work experience/placement learning.

The benefit of membership includes reduced fees for conferences and sessions on the staff development programme for all staff in member institutions and this alone recoups the cost of joining for many member institutions. If your institution is neither on the list of members on the right, nor one of our new 2005 members, and you would like to initiate membership, please contact the ASET office.

2004 MEMBERS

Anglia Polytechnic University
Aston University
Aylesbury College
Birmingham College of Food, Tourism & Creative Studies
Blackburn College
Bolton Institute
Bournemouth University
Brooksbury Melton College
Brunel University
Cannock Chase Technical College
Carnaud Metalbox Plc
Chichester College
City College Brighton & Hove
City of Bath College
City University
De Montfort University
Doncaster College
Fife College of FE & HE
Glasgow Caledonian University
Henley College Coventry
Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine
Institution of Civil Engineers
Joseph Priestley College
Kings College London
Kingston University
Leeds Metropolitan University
Liverpool John Moores University
London Metropolitan University
London South Bank University
Loughborough University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Mid-Cheshire College
Middlesex University
Milton Keynes College
Newark & Sherwood College
Newcastle College
Nottingham Trent University
Park Lane College
Plymouth College of FE
Queen Margaret University College
Queens University Belfast
Ravensbourne College Of Design & Communication
Richmond Upon Thames College
Royal Agricultural College
Salford College
Salisbury College
Sheffield Hallam University
St Brendan's Sixth Form College
St Mary's College
Staffordshire University
Technische Universiteit Eindhoven
Thames Valley University
The Robert Gordon University
University College Cork
University College Northampton
University of Abertay Dundee
University of Bath
University of Bradford
University of Brighton
University of Central England
University of Central Lancashire
University of Derby
University of East London
University of Gloucestershire
University of Greenwich
University of Hertfordshire
University of Huddersfield
University of Hull
University of Kent
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Limerick
University of Liverpool
University of Paisley
University of Sunderland
University of Surrey
University of Teeside
University of the West of England
University of Ulster
University of Wolverhampton
Writtle College

2005 NEW MEMBERS

Blackpool & The Fylde College
International Business School Budapest
Kent Institute of Art & Design
University of Salford
Utrecht University of Professional Education
Westminster Kingsway College.