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**“PROMOTING ACTIVE INCLUSION OF DISADVANTAGED PERSONS  
EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET”**

**PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: 12-9137 / 1**

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### **Guidelines for Work Placements**

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# 1. Preface

The “Guidelines for Work Placements” is developed within the project “Promoting active inclusion of disadvantaged persons excluded from the labor market”, Contract No. 12-9137/1, financed by the European Union within the Operational Program for Development of Human Resources – The European Union’s Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance IPA.

The project aims at increasing the activation and involvement of persons at risk of social exclusion in the labour market by mobilizing and/or improving their skills, education, qualification and facilitating their full integration into the society and in particular their access to the labour market.

Specifically, the project is consisted of the following objectives:

- To enhance the employment potentials of people at risk of social exclusion by promoting individual pathways towards employment;
- To develop and implement targeted employment services and trainings leading to sustainable integration into the labour market of people at risk of social exclusion;
- To identify and transfer good practices of labour market integration of people at risk of social exclusion and ensure their greater impact and multiplication.

It is structured into three interrelated clusters of activities:

- Enhancing the skills of employment and social care professionals.
- Reinforcing the motivation, participation and employability of the groups at risk.
- Fostering networking and partnership-building of service providers.

One of the most crucial aspects of the project is the work placement program. Work experience offers many benefits and opportunities. It provides an opportunity for those wishing to enter the job market to gain an insight into the industry, to acquire new skills in a structured environment, and increase opportunities for future employment. For employers, it is an opportunity to raise the profile of career opportunities available within the organisation and develop management skills for existing staff.

The “Guidelines for Work Placements” has been designed to be a reference point for both individuals who are going to be placed and employers. These guidelines outline the responsibilities and required action that should be undertaken in implementing the work placement program.

## 2. Introduction

The work placement program will be undertaken by ...

It is time limited, it will last approximately ... hours, over ... weeks (full/ part time).

It should give everyone on work experience the chance to try various tasks and develop skills that will make them more attractive to prospective employers. However, employers should not rely on those doing work experience to fulfil roles that are necessary for the company and would otherwise be undertaken by a member of staff.

It is important that all three parties involved – employer, individual and project staff (especially mentors) - work together before, during and after the Work Placement and that all are clear about their roles, responsibilities and entitlements at all stages.

Work placement should provide the following elements to comply with best practice:

### A. Quality assurance

- Insurance cover.



- Legal guidance if it is envisaged that the individual will contribute to a piece of work that requires copyright protection.

#### **B. Commitment**

- The business need should be developed whilst taking in to account the skills that will be developed by the individual.
- A statement of agreement should be prepared to be signed by the employer and the individual.
- The individual should have clear learning objectives.
- Fair treatment of the individual should be promoted amongst other staff.
- Measures to accommodate those with a disability should be in place.

#### **C. Induction**

- A detailed outline of the required skills and the skills that will be developed should be provided, alongside full details of the duration of the placement, working hours, and the process for claiming expenses (if applicable).
- A detailed induction should be carried out on the first day of the placement, covering, as a minimum, introductions to other staff, office procedures, best practice in an office environment, health and safety, details of what to do if they wish to make a complaint and company confidentiality requirements.

#### **D. Learning, assessment and support**

- A responsive individual should be assigned as the individuals' trainer and key point of contact throughout the placement, especially for collaborating with the individuals' mentor and supporting the implementation of the individual learning plan agreed between the mentor and the individual.
- The individual should keep a learning log detailing their experience on the placement, how it is benefitting them and the achievement of goals.
- Regular progress meetings should take place between the trainer and the individual, and should be logged in a written report that will be used by the mentor as well.

#### **E. Evaluation, monitoring and review**

- In the final week of the placement, there should be a comprehensive feedback session with the individual and their trainer, concluding all aspects covered in the "Learning, assessment and support" stage of the placement.
- A certification of achievement should be provided to the individual as formal recognition of the work they have carried out.

### **3. Ensuring Quality Placements**

The work placement depends for its success upon quality. This means, employers and project partners will need to invest time and effort in planning their programmes in order to reach the desired standard and gain the maximum benefits. If the placement is to be a success, due account must be taken of the following elements:

- 1) Aims and objectives.
- 2) Planning.
- 3) Training framework.
- 4) Preparation and briefing.
- 5) Induction.
- 6) Debriefing and evaluation.



### 3.1. Aims and Objectives

A clear rationale is a pre-requisite for ensuring a good quality work placement program. Companies participating in the program should be supported by the project's partners to develop an overall policy with regards to their participation and specifically to consider the reasons why they want to become, or remain, involved in the work experience placements. These should be stated clearly and developed into broad aims and specific objectives for their programmes. This will enable employers to assess their value properly.

A meeting with project staff is helpful as it will clarify mutual aims and objectives. Possible objectives might include:

- to undertake a range of tasks as would an employee,
- to develop and show good understanding of the purpose of the post and how it relates to the work of the company,
- to help prepare the individual for working life by learning to meet the appropriate standards of company behaviour, for example, time keeping, dress sense, conduct, and
- to appreciate the importance of good health, safety and welfare policy and practice.

Wherever possible, objectives should be supported by appropriate performance targets, as this will assist assessment.

Staff at all levels in the company should be given the opportunity to be involved in the implementation of the program and demonstrate their commitment to it. Senior management will need to give it their positive backing, and all those likely to be directly concerned with the individuals must understand the purpose of the exercise. Individuals' trainers should be briefed about their roles, what is expected of them and what support they can get from project staff, e.g. individuals' mentors.

Monitoring and evaluation of progress towards objectives will be a key requirement for successful program. Feedback on outcomes should be given to senior management and employees to indicate the achievements of the programme. Employers are also advised to compare their estimated use of resources, particularly staff time, with actual use and outcomes. This should help the planning process and evaluation of program.

### 3.2. Planning

Thorough planning and preparation will ensure that work placements operate smoothly and efficiently. Project staff, especially mentors are encouraged to meet initially the employers (and thereafter an assigned responsive individual, who will act as a trainer), to agree on policy, organisational and managerial matters. Good planning will normally mean that the details of placements are confirmed in writing. Such details might include:

- dates and duration,
  - location and hours of work,
  - duties and responsibilities of the post,
  - dress and conduct,
  - arrangements for transport and meals (if applicable)
  - significant risks and control measures,
  - confirmation of any mid-placement visit by the mentor/s,
  - name and telephone number of the individual's line manager (or responsive staff - trainer);
- and



- name and telephone number of the contact at the workplace in case of difficulties.

### **3.3. Training framework**

When arranging work placement program, employers need to bear in mind that such placements should focus directly on individuals on site/ on the job training. Employers should also be aware that, to derive full value from work experience placements, project staff are encouraged to take account of the following basic principles:

- The contribution of the placement to the individual's training should be clear.
- The nature of the placement and its timing should be determined with the needs of the individual in mind.
- The individual should play an active role in the preparation, planning and evaluation of the placement.
- The experience should build on, and carry forward, the individual's any previous experience of business.
- All placements should be open equally to men and women, whatever their background. Project staff will welcome help from employers in encouraging equal opportunities and breaking down stereotypes.
- All individuals should be properly prepared and briefed before the placement and debriefed towards the end of their placement.

### **3.4. Preparation and briefing**

Before individuals begin their workplace activities they need proper preparation and briefing. This is a vital stage in the process and it is extremely useful if employers can be involved in it. An opportunity might be offered for individuals and mentors to visit the organisation to discuss their programme beforehand. It would also be helpful if individuals could meet their immediate supervisor/ trainer in the workplace, in advance.

### **3.5. Induction**

There is a possibility the duties of work placement will be unfamiliar to many individuals and it is important that they have an introduction which helps them to make the most of the work experience placement. In addition to more general information on the organisation and its work, the introduction should cover details of who in the workplace will be responsible for the individual's responsibilities and any specific rules and regulations which must be followed. The supervisor/ trainer should be made aware of any visits from mentors and of the telephone number of a contact at the project headquarters in case of accident or emergency. Mid-placement visits should be used to monitor and review the placement and to check on individuals' progress, to which process employers can make a valuable contribution.

### **3.6. Debriefing and Evaluation**

Reviewing the results of the placement with the individuals emphasises its importance to their training. It also provides the opportunity to recognise the strengths and aptitudes they have shown. Employers can give feedback to the project's staff and help them make use of individuals' experience for closing the project and for similar activities in the future.

Mentors should help individuals to prepare a brief report regarding their work placement (goals/ objectives and achievements, problems and ways of solution), signed jointly with the employer. This



gives useful feedback which can be used to measure the value of the program and to find out how best to make it more effective.

This evidence is extremely useful to future employers and should include the name of the individual, the dates of the placement, a brief description of the type of work undertaken, and comments on the key skills, personal qualities and positive attitudes evidenced by the individual. Examples of such things as the use of initiative are very useful, as are positive comments on the individual's suitability for employment. The report should be printed on company headed paper and given to the individual or sent to the project staff after the placement.

## 4. Organizational Considerations

There are many organisational considerations which should bear in mind when planning work experience placements. These are dealt with below.

**Hours:** The number of hours worked is generally for agreement by employer, project staff (mentors) and individuals. Unless there are strong reasons to the contrary, it is recommended that individuals should not be asked to work more than a standard eight hour day. Employers should take steps to ensure that individuals on a placement are not asked to work excessively long or unnecessarily unsocial hours.

**Equal Opportunities:** Employers and project partners should adopt a policy of equal opportunities in their work experience programs. This should be taken forward particularly in the areas of gender, race and disability. This may need special preparation for the reactions they may encounter and even more careful supervision during the placement, by mentors.

**Confidentiality:** Employers sometimes raise questions about confidentiality. In practice, few problems have been found to arise. There may be some posts to which it would be preferable not to assign individuals, or a few aspects of work which it would be inadvisable for them to see or hear about. It should, however, be possible to plan around this. In most cases, it is enough to underline directly to the individuals the trust placed in them.

**Extent of involvement:** The extent of employers' involvement is clearly a matter for them to decide. They may not want to do more than offer a few occasional placements. They may find, once they start, that they want to provide more placements and become involved in wider training-business activities. Those employers who have often been involved in work experience report very favourably upon it and are clear that their own staff enjoy it.

**Activities in which individuals participate on host company** include:

- **Work shadowing:** in which an individual is assigned to 'shadow' an individual employee going about his or her normal activities, allowing close observation of jobs which for reasons of complexity, safety or security cannot be actively undertaken by the individual.
- **Work observation or visits:** in which an individual or a group of them are guided round the workplace to watch a range of employee activities or work processes.
- **Work-based projects:** in which an individual or a group of them carry out projects on employers' premises, for example, work-related problem solving exercises set by employers, enterprise projects or work assignments.
- **Company briefings:** in which the company invites individual for a seminar. Various people in the company speak about their roles and aspects of the business, for example, marketing, career progression, sales etc.
- **Mock interviews:** in which individual is given experience of job interviews.
- **Coaching:** in which individual meet on a regular basis with an employee to enhance his/ her motivation, knowledge and skills.



## 5. Health and Safety

Health and safety are important considerations in the arrangements for placements. It is essential that:

- Individuals are properly prepared and briefed on the hazards of the workplace and the control measures provided to reduce or eliminate risk or injury, before they start work;
- Employers, workplace supervisors and other employees know exactly what is expected of them and are aware of their legal responsibilities, and
- The project staff (including mentor) are clear about their responsibilities in arranging placements for individuals and introducing them to general health and safety at work issues, prior to their placement.

Before agreement is reached on possible work experience placements/visits, representatives of the project organising the activity are advised to look around the premises from the point of view of health and safety. They will probably ask:

- to see the employer's written safety policy,
- for confirmation that the premises have been notified to the relevant enforcing authority.

Once there is agreement in principle, there needs to be a more detailed discussion to ensure a clear understanding between the employer and the project staff on respective responsibilities, in particular on:

- The results of the employer's health and safety risk assessment (before the individual takes up the placement) and the measures taken to control to eliminate the risks.
- The activities which individual is to undertake, whether there are any areas of work, or processes, to which access should be denied to all, or to individual; and what needs to be done to ensure that individual does not have access to them.
- Whether there is any individual who needs special arrangements, for example, individual with disabilities and on medical grounds such as asthma, colour blindness, epilepsy, hearing impairment, other special needs or maturity/ behavioural considerations.
- Arrangements to be made for briefing, health and safety induction, training and supervision, including supervision during meal-times, breaks etc.



## 6. References

The “Work Placement Guidelines” was developed by adapting material from the following sources:

- 2.1. British Secretary of State - Department for Education and Skills & Confederation of British Industry. (2002). “Work Experience: A Guide for Employers”. Retrieved from: <https://hr.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/Students.pdf>
- 2.2. Association of Higher Education Careers Services. “Work Placement - A Best Practice Guide for Employers”. Retrieved from: <http://www.ahecs.ie/wp-content/uploads/Work-Placement-A-Best-Practice-Guide-for-Employers-AHECS-Publication.pdf>
- 2.3. Association of Higher Education Careers Services. “Work Placement - A Best Practice Guide for Students”. Retrieved from: <http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/work-placement-a-best-practice-guide-for-students-ahecs-publication.pdf>
- 2.4. Holmes Institute. (2009). “Work Placement Agreement”. Retrieved from: <http://www.holmes.edu.au/Uploads/Higher%20Ed/work-placement-agreement-HI-Mel.pdf>

**Appendix 1****Work Placement Agreement****Work Placement Agreement**

<b>Host Company Information</b>	
Name	
Address	
e-mail	
Contact Person at Workplace	
Contact Phone No. at Workplace	
<b>Individual Information</b>	
Name	
Phone No.	
e-mail	
<b>Project Responsible Information</b>	
Contact Person	
Phone No.	
e-mail	

<b>Placement Structure</b>	
Location of placement	
Description of placement	
Length/ Dates of placement	
Hours of work	
Proposed start date	



Proposed completion date	
Daily starting time	
Daily finish time	
Special conditions (e.g. safety)	

Tasks assigned
▪
▪
▪
▪
▪
▪ <i>This section needs to list the activities that the individual has to undertake during his/her placement</i>

Individual Responsibilities
<b>Before placement</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Be aware of the information in this agreement.</li><li>2. Provide accurate and timely information where requested to satisfy any company's or legislation requirements prior to commencing a work placement.</li><li>3. Inform project manager of any medical or other factors that may adversely affect personal health and safety or the health and safety of others while on placement.</li><li>4. Ensure all learning requirements while on placement are understood.</li><li>5. Understand all conditions of employment while on placement (inc. hours, uniforms etc.).</li></ol>
<b>During placement</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Participate in an induction on the first day of the placement or as required.</li><li>7. Follow the host company rules and follow all reasonable instructions of the organisation and their staff.</li></ol>



8. Be punctual, courteous and act in a manner appropriate to a workplace. For example, telephone the host organisation if you are going to be absent, preferably in advance, otherwise as early as possible.
9. Complete any assessment/ supervision requirements set by project staff (mentor), including gathering evidence of competence.
10. Comply with all legislative requirements of the host company. Such requirements may include occupational health and safety matters, maintaining commercial confidentiality or privacy of personal information.
11. Comply with all occupational health and safety policies and legislation, including wearing protective clothing and using safety equipment as directed by the host company.
12. Take reasonable care to protect your own health and safety and the health and safety of others in the workplace. This includes not consuming alcohol or drugs, which may constitute a risk to personal safety or the safety of others.
13. Report all incidents and accidents to the host company and to project staff (mentors) as soon as possible after the event. A Holmes Institute incident form must be completed to document this, as well as any other reporting requirements of the host company.

#### **After placement**

14. Complete an evaluation form for the placement if requested to do so by your mentor or/ and host company.
15. Write a letter of thanks to the host company for accepting the placement.

### **Project Responsibilities**

#### **Before placement**

1. Contact host company and negotiate the work placement program, including the type of training placed individuals will undertake.
2. Discuss individual safety with the host company and ensure that individual is not placed in a work situation where there are:
  - general unacceptable workplace risks or working conditions,
  - identified OH&S risks or issues
  - specific unacceptable risks or hazards due to the individual's age, maturity, ability, disability or medical condition.
3. Advise the host organisation in writing of any relevant medical or other factors that may affect the individual's health and safety or the health and safety of others while on placement.
4. Ensure that both the host company and individual have a copy of, and fully understand, the work placement support materials and the approved work placement agreement.



5. Ensure a work placement agreement is completed, signed and held at the project prior to the individual starting their placement. The host company and individual should also be given copies.
6. Make sure the individual has fulfilled any industry specific requirements.
7. Make sure the individual has fulfilled any industry specific requirements.
8. Assist the individual to prepare for the placement, ensuring a full understanding of the work placement requirements is understood.
9. Provide the host company and individual with the contact details of individual's mentor.
10. Provide all required documentation to individual and host company such as Agreements, Work Placement logs, and any other required documentation to support the work placement.

#### **During placement**

11. Ensure that the individual undergoes an appropriate induction at the workplace.
12. Make (through mentor) regular contact with the host company and individual during the placement to monitor progress and provide support as required. This may include developing the host organisation's capacity to coach and train the individual.
13. Visit (the mentor) the workplace to monitor the individual's progression (at least once every two weeks) and working conditions. Assessments will also be conducted to confirm individual progress.
14. If mentor (or other competent project staff) is made aware of any accident or incident they are required to ensure that the individual and host company complete an incident form for the accident or incident that occurs within the workplace during the Work Placement.
15. Terminate the program immediately if there is any concern that the individual's physical or emotional health and safety is placed at risk.

#### **After placement**

16. Provide the host company with an evaluation form or other method of giving feedback on the work placement program and send a letter or call the host company to thank them for hosting the company.
17. Keep an accurate record of the work placements and make sure that this is kept in individual file as evidence.

### **Host Company Responsibilities**

#### **Before placement**



1. In consultation with the project responsible person, participate in an appropriate process for assign individuals for placement.
2. Plan for the individual's time in the workplace, including discussing the learning needs of the individual with the mentor.
3. Notify the mentor of any significant risks, restrictions or legislative requirements imposed in the work place so that the project staff and mentor can determine the appropriateness of the workplace for Work Placement purposes.
4. Complete and return to project manager a signed Work Placement Agreement for each individual that will be conducting Work Placement within the host company's workplace.

#### **During placement**

5. Ensure that the individual receives an appropriate induction into the workplace, including tour of premises, introduction to work colleagues, identification and explanation of all OH&S requirements, confirmation of hours, duties, and reporting procedures.
6. Provide supervised training and relevant learning experiences as discussed with the mentor and as contained in the individual's learning plan.
7. Provide a safe working environment where the individual is:
  - adequately supervised by the host company and its staff,
  - fully informed of the risks associated with the work environment,
  - provided with protective clothing and safety equipment as needed,
  - safeguarded from injury or risks to health.
8. Participate in the training and assessment processes as required and directed by the project professionals (including mentor). This will involve providing support and guidance in the development of specific skills and knowledge and providing support in the assessment process.
9. Ensure that individual can contact his/ her mentor if necessary.
10. Provide the individual with ongoing feedback and complete any assessments of the individual where these have been negotiated with project manager.
11. Ensure that individual participating in work placement is not subjected to any form of sexual harassment, victimization or discrimination, in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination acts and other similar legislation, and at common law.
12. Report all incidents/accidents immediately to the mentor or other project staff assigned as contact person. Complete an incident report for each incident/accident on the form provided by the project.
13. Verify all hours the individual completes as part of the Work Placement via an individual's Work Placement Log.

#### **After placement**



14. Complete an evaluation of the work placement program to provide project with feedback on the Work Placement program and the individual's outcomes.

### General Information

#### Termination

1. This agreement may be terminated immediately where any party (individual, host company or project staff) feels any party is being placed in a position of unreasonable risk or danger.
2. Where the host company or individual believe, the placement has become untenable for any reason they should contact the mentor and project staff and seek further advice.
3. Termination must be communicated verbally to each party immediately upon its occurrence, followed up by notice in writing to each party giving the reasons for the termination.
4. Where appropriate options such as replacing individual or workplaces may be possible and shall be determined by project manager on a case by case basis.

### Declaration

#### Company Representative

I have read and understand my responsibilities under this Work Placement Agreement and ..... (*company title*) accepts the work placement outlined above.

Authorised company representative signature:

Name and Title:

Date:

#### Individual

I have read and understand my responsibilities under this Work Placement Agreement.

Signature:

Name and Title:

Date:

#### Project representative

I have read and understand my responsibilities under this Work Placement Agreement.

Signature:

Name and Title:

Date: