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Internship guidelines for students with disabilities for academic departments England, United Kingdom

Case study overview

Within many educational programmes, placements form either a required (mandatory) or optional part of the student learning experience. Such placements can be within another higher education institution (HEI) or industrial based, and can be either within the student home country or abroad (such as through the Erasmus+ programme for education, training, youth and sport). Such placements have many benefits to the student, both for learning within their discipline area and at a personal development level. In addition, the HEIs benefit with increased external (national and international) links and when students have positive placement experiences, their learning experience is enhanced. Whilst placements for non-disabled students are commonplace and managed at a “routine” administrative and academic level, students with disabilities can face many additional challenges which may, unfortunately, prevent them from undertaking placements and receiving the benefits that placements can provide. Therefore, there needs to be support in place within the HEIs in order to overcome this barrier and enable all students to undertake placements no matter whether they have a disability or not, and where the student does have a disability then the type of disability should not be a barrier to full participation in education.



Guidance on how academic departments can and should support students with disabilities forms one key foundation pillar for such support. The Disability Services at the University of York (United Kingdom (UK)) have developed an advice and guidance document (available at [1]) in collaboration with the academic departments that identifies practical, workable and legal requirements on the HEI in order to support students and is underpinned by national legislation.

The key sections of the document identify how, when and why academic departments can provide the necessary support to students with disabilities. In this way, the potential barriers that students with disabilities can face when applying to undertake a placement, whilst undertaking a placement and post-placement can be understood by the department and dealt with in a sensitive manner and with the necessary empathy.

References

- [1] SALEIE project home page. ONLINE, available: <http://www.saleie.co.uk>
- [2] University of York, Disability support. ONLINE, available: <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/disability/>

Document information

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