

# P7 Learner Placement Policy

Professional Practice Placements in the Early Learning and Care



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<b>Effective From:</b>	08/04/2023	<b>Renew Date:</b> 08/04/2025
<b>Reviewed:</b>		
<b>Version:</b>	001	

## POLICY STATEMENT

At Forus Training, a large number of programmes have a Learner Placement/ Work experience element. Learner Placements give Learners the opportunity to:

- Gain practical work and/or an independent learning experience relevant to their course;
- Integrate the theoretical knowledge gained from their study programme within live practice and experience in a work-based setting; and
- Use this experience to develop and reflect upon a range of generic, subject and programme specific skills which are likely to be required in any future career/area of employment.

In addition, Learners will be encouraged to apply knowledge gained through Work Placement/ Experience to:

- Build sound working habits and develop ways of thinking to approach day-to-day problems in the workplace;
- Work with supervisors and learn how to complete tasks effectively; and
- Develop life skills in the broadest sense as part of their training.

Furthermore, application of this policy ensures that Forus Training complies with specific QQI programme validation requirements as they relate to Learner Placement/ Work experience.

Our purpose for authoring this Learner Placement Policy is to set out Forus Training's minimum required standards for the organisation and management of Learner Placements.

The Policy:

- 1) Sets a framework of clear and transparent processes for the organisation and management of Learner Placements;
- 2) Sets out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in Learner Placements;
- 3) Ensure that Learners are properly engaged so that they gain the maximum value from their work placement and effectively support the service provider in delivering its service; and

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- 4) Identifies the relevant procedures underpinning this Policy.

## DEFINITIONS

This Policy governs the organisation and management of Forus Training Learners going on Professional Practice placements.

For the purposes of this Policy, certain terms are used throughout this Policy and shall have the following meanings in the context of this Policy:

**Learner Placement:** The placement of a Forus Training registered Learner with a third party for a period of time during their course of study which forms part of the accreditation award to the Learner.

**Work/Project Based Placement:** A period of work experience with a third party organisation, paid or unpaid, which is part of the Learner's course and where the Learner remains registered with Forus Training. The direct supervision of the Learner's activities is the responsibility of the third party, and academic credit is given.

**Host Organisation:** The third party organisation with which the Learner Placement occurs. During the Learner Placement responsibility for the direct supervision of the Learner is transferred to the Host Organisation.

**Learner:** A Learner is registered as a student with Forus Training.

**Incident:** An Incident is an event or occurrence that may have a negative impact on either a Learner, Forus Training, or a Host Organisation. The negative impact may be physical, psychological and/or financial.

## TRAINING AND CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FORUS TRAINING STAFF

**The Policy is intended to ensure Forus Training's compliance with Forus Training's legal responsibilities and insurance requirements.**

Relevant and appropriate briefing sessions will be provided to those delivering programmes which include Learner Placements to enable them to comply with this Policy. Each Programme Leader will be required to identify the people who need training and the QA Officer will ensure Trainers and Programme Advisors attend the relevant training sessions. A summary of training is contained with the appendix CPD for Stakeholders relevant to Professional Practice Placements.

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## Associated Documents and Forms

[Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations](#)

[Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Learners](#)

Professional Practice Placement Letter

ELC Form 1 - Professional Practice Placement Arrangements Form

ELC Form 2 - Professional Practice Placement Attendance Log

ELC Form 3 - Professional Practice Placement Absence Log

ELC Form 4 - Professional Practice Placement Supervisor's Overview (Stage 1, Level 5)

ELC Form 5 - Part 1 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 1) Level 5

ELC Form 5 - Part 2 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 1) Level 5

ELC Form 5 - Part 3 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 1) Level 5

ELC Form 5 - Part 4 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 1) Level 5

ELC Form 5 - Part 5 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 1) Level 5

ELC Form 5 - Part 6 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 1) Level 5

ELC Form 6 - Grading the Professional Competencies - (Stage 1) Level 5 61

ELC Form 7 - Work Experience Placement Supervisor's Report - Sector Specific Competencies Setting 1

ELC Form 8 - Work Experience Placement Supervisor's Report - Sector Specific Competencies Setting 2

ELC Form 9 - Grade Adjustment Form (Administration)

ELC Form 10 - Professional Practice Placement Supervisor's Overview (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 1 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 2 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 3 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 4 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 5 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 6 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 7 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 11 - Part 8 - Verification of Mandatory Activities (Stage 2, Level 6)

ELC Form 12 - Grading the Professional Competencies (MIPLOS) - Stage 2/Setting 1 & 2)

ELC Form 13 - Practice Placement Supervisor's Report - Sector Specific Competencies Setting 1

ELC Form 14 - Practice Placement Supervisor's Report - Sector Specific Competencies Setting 2

ELC Form 15 - Grade Adjustment Form (Administration)

ELC Form 16 - Checklist for monitoring Professional Practice Placements

ELC form 17 - Child Observation Permission Form

ELC Form 18 - Learner Feedback form for Professional Practice Placements

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## Scope

**The Policy is based on the following principles:**

- Forus Training has a responsibility to its Learners who are undertaking Learner Placements to take reasonable care to ensure that they are provided with a safe environment for the duration of their Learner Placement.
- This Policy applies to all Forus Training's Learners undertaking Learner Placements.

## Compliance with Learner Placement Policy

Failure of a Forus Training employee or Learner to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal in the case of staff or expulsion or, in the case of Learners, action being taken in accordance with Forus Training's disciplinary procedures and Disciplinary Procedure for Learners (as amended or updated from time to time).

## Roles and Responsibilities

This Policy sets out the responsibilities of staff members of Forus Training in relation to the organisation and management of Learner Placements.

Clear identification of roles and responsibilities will ensure the successful operation of Learner Placements.

### Academic Manager

The Academic Manager of Forus Training is responsible for the Learner Placement Policy. The responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that this Policy is reviewed, updated and approved by the Forus Training Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council.

### QA Officer

The QA Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place to support this Policy;
- Liaising with Forus Training Programme Leaders to ensure implementation of the Policy as appropriate;
- Ensuring that any breaches of the Policy are properly dealt with in accordance with Forus Training's codes of conduct.

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## Programme Leaders

The Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring the Policy is implemented within their respective programmes. The duties of the Programme Leaders are to:

- Maintain a list of nominated contact persons within their programmes with responsibility for organising and managing Learner Placement matters within their own areas;
- Ensure their staff attend targeted training and briefing sessions as required;
- Carry out regular reviews of adherence to the Learners Placement Policy and procedures and ensure documentation is updated as appropriate.

Programme Leaders are responsible for approving the Learner Placement processes within their Programmes and ensuring they are implemented in line with this Policy. The Programme Leaders must ensure an appropriate level of oversight of person(s) implementing this Policy on their behalf.

Programme Leaders are responsible for coordinating compliance with this Policy within their respective area. Such matters include:

- Being a point of contact regarding Learner Placement for Learner and Host Organisations;
- Ensuring satisfactory measures exist to ensure this Policy and its procedures are adhered to;
- Participating in training in relation to Learner Placement Policy and procedures.

## Learners

The Learner is responsible for:

- Attending mandatory work placement briefing sessions provided by Forus Training;
- Attending mandatory induction sessions provided by the Host Organisation;
- Notifying Forus Training of any issues that may affect their ability to successfully complete their Placement;
- Full compliance with the terms and conditions of their agreement(s) with Forus Training and the Host Organisation in relation to their Learner Placement;
- Adhering to the Host Organisation's own policies and procedures;
- Contacting their nominated Forus Training representative at the agreed intervals.

Compliance with these responsibilities is mandatory for the Learner. The Learner will be required to sign an agreement confirming that they will comply with these responsibilities.

**\*IMPORTANT\*** - Learner self-disclosure relevant to any learner health and welfare issues that may impact their engagement with placement learning is encouraged by Forus Training. This assists Forus Training in working with the Learner in developing appropriate strategies as part of learner supports. However, on a professional level, personal matters that have no relevance to Work Placement and its related learning opportunities should not be disclosed to any member of the Forus Training team or the Host Organisation.

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## Host Organisations

The Host Organisation, in association with Forus Training, is responsible for providing the Learner with appropriate Learner Placement activities to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes in relation to their study programme.

Whilst reasonable efforts will be made by Forus Training to facilitate Host Organisations, failure on the part of Host Organisations to cooperate with Forus Training may lead to the cessation of current and future Learner Placements within their organisation.

## Managing Director

The Managing Director is responsible for sourcing appropriate advice and guidance to Staff of Forus Training on insurance, legal and risk management matters in relation to Learner Placement.

## Learner Placement Management

The key to success in Learner Placement lies in the management of the relationships. There are three key relationships involved in Learner Placements:

- Forus Training and Learner;
- Forus Training and Host Organisation;
- Learner and Host Organisation.

Each participant has an obligation to nurture and develop these relationships to ensure that each Learner Placement is a success.

### For all Learner Placements the following steps must be followed:

- Step 1: Policy and Procedure for Placement Selection with Host Organisations
- Step 2: Pre-Placement Preparation of the Learner
- Step 3: Monitoring and Communication during the Learner Placement
- Step 4: Incident Handling
- Step 5: Feedback and Debrief Post-Placement

### Step 1: Policy and Procedure for Placement Selection with Host Organisations

Placements are an integral part of certain QQI programmes and must take place at organisations currently registered with relevant authorities as service providers, e.g., in the case of the 5M21473 Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care Major Award programme the relevant authority is TUSLA.

Whilst the Learner may identify a potential practice placement setting, Forus Training has final responsibility for approving the placement in line with the programme validation criteria, risk assessment procedures and other appropriate factors.

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In order to effectively manage risk associated with Learner Placements, a documented up-to-date risk assessment should be in place for the Host Organisation. This risk assessment must be taken into account and considered when assessing the appropriateness of a proposed Learner Placement for a particular Learner. A risk management plan should be prepared. The risk assessment should be undertaken in keeping with Forus Training's Risk Management Policy, and also take account of Forus Training's Garda Vetting Policy.

## Identify the Risks

Forus Training and the Host Organisation should contribute to the documented risk assessment. The Learner should provide any information required to the person completing the risk assessment.

### The following should be included when identifying the risks:

- Location of Learner Placement;
- Nature of the work / activities;
- Environment;
- The Learner;
- The setting and track record of the Host Organisation.

## Assessing the Risks

For each risk identified, at outset consider the current management controls implemented and determine if they are adequate or require improvement. Then assess the likelihood or frequency of any risk arising for Forus Training, the Learner and the Host Organisation. Next consider the impact and consequence of the risk if it materialises.

## Managing the Risks

For each risk detected, identify and implement suitable management controls to mitigate the risk in line with Forus Training's [Risk Management Policy](#)

Based on the risk assessment and management controls in place (and having regard to Forus Training's Learner Garda Vetting Policy), the Programme Leader will then decide to either approve or not approve the Learner Placement. The decision must be documented along with the reason(s) for the decision.

## Step 2: Pre-Placement Learner Preparation

Appropriate written information and instructions should be provided to the Learner prior to undertaking their Learner Placement. When providing written advice/guidance to Learners, signed confirmation must be obtained from the Learner to confirm that they have:

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- Received the information;
- Read and understood it;
- Agreed to comply with it; and
- Will not bring the good name of either Forus Training or the Host Organisation into disrepute.

Learners must be advised in writing that if they act in an unprofessional manner and/or fail to comply with the Host Organisation's policies and procedures, then disciplinary action may be taken by Forus Training and/or the Host Organisation, which may result in dismissal from the Learner Placement or the programme itself.

Prior preparation of the Learner by the Trainer must be undertaken in line with the programme descriptor of the validated programme.

### **Step 3: Monitoring and Communication during the Learner Placement**

During the Learner Placement, there should be ongoing and regular three-way communication between the Forus Training designated contact person (e.g. the Trainer) nominated by the Programme Leader, the Host Organisation and the Learner.

The Learner Placement should be monitored by the Forus Training designated contact person to provide appropriate support and guidance, ensuring that the Learner is achieving their learning objectives and to address any concerns or issues .

Monitoring of risks should be ongoing throughout the Learner Placement and should be undertaken in keeping with the Monitoring and Communication during the Learner Placement procedure (see section 5 below). All communication and attempts at communication must be documented as per this procedure.

### **Step 4: Incident Handling**

During the Learner Placement, if a Learner (s) is affected by a Critical Incident then the designated person at Forus Training tasked with managing the response must carry out the following steps:

- Verify the information received,
- Establish the key facts of the situation,
- Assess the risk potential,
- Communicate with relevant third parties,
- Manage the ongoing situation,
- Deal with queries from the media or other external parties,
- Perform a post-incident review.



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A critical incident report will be completed and distributed appropriate to the level of risk. All communications during the handling of the Incident must be documented and treated as confidential information.

## Step 5: Feedback and Debrief Post-Placement

After completion of the Learner Placement, Learners and Host Organisations are required to provide feedback to the Forus Training designated contact person in relation to their Learner Placement experience. Based on this feedback a review of the Placement process and experience, including the risk assessment, should be carried out. The Learner, Forus Training and the Host Organisation should be involved in the review process. The review should also be documented.

The risk assessment should be regularly reviewed and updated based on the feedback and debrief process.

## Documentation / Recording

Documentation and recording of information must be completed throughout the entire Learner Placement Process. This includes but is not limited to:

- Host Organisation risk assessment;
- Learner preparation sign-off;
- Agreement with the Host Organisation(s);
- Any communications during the Learner Placement; and
- Any incidents arising.

## Post-Placement review.

All records created both during and after a Work Placement must comply with Data Protection legislation.

## SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

The following procedures provide information or step-by-step instructions on how to implement the Learner Placement Policy:

- Placement Risk Assessment;
- Preparation of Learners going on Learner Placement;
- Monitoring and Communication during Learner Placement;

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including Forus Training's:

- [Risk Management Policy](#);
- [Data Protection Policy](#);
- [Control of Records Policy and Procedure](#);

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- [Information & Communication Technology \(ICT\) Acceptable Usage Policy](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#);
- [Learner Handbook](#);
- [Garda Vetting Policy](#).

This Policy supports the provision of a structure to assist in Forus Training’s discharge of its insurance and legal obligations where Forus Training Learners are on a Learner Placement. If you have any specific questions or concerns in relation to any matters pertaining to Learner Placements generally, please contact the Academic Manager.

The Policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Academic Manager in light of the requirements of Forus Training’s insurers and any legislative or other relevant developments.

Forus Training reserves the right to amend this Policy at any time in any manner in which the organisation sees fit at the absolute discretion of Forus Training or the Managing Director of Forus Training.

## RELATED POLICIES PROCEDURES AND FORMS

[P1 S1 Forus Quality Manual](#)

## REFERENCES, SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND RELATED LEGISLATION

1. Further Education & Training Act 2013
2. Qualification & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012, as amended
3. Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679

Amendment History			
Amendment summary sheet			
Revision	Date	Amendment summary	Training Requirements
	08/04/2023	Initial release	Read and Review

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## Appendix CPD for Stakeholders relevant to Professional Practice Placements

For this programme there is a particular need for CPD to occur relative to the proper operation of the Practice Placements detailed below

Stakeholder	Garda Clearance & references	Pre Placement Briefing	Child Protection	The operation of Practice Placements on the ELC Programmes.	Integration of assessment on the programme	Relationship building / networking with host organisations	Audit Skills	Work based Assessment Procedures	Running Tripartite meetings Absence Management	Local Policy - induction
Managing Director				✓						
Academic Manager				✓	✓		✓			
QA Lead				✓	✓		✓			
ELC Programme Leader	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Nominated Contacts within the ELC Setting	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓
Trainer / Monitor	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
The Supervisor	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Learners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓