

ID4001 - Selecting School Placements, Supporting Students, and Managing Risk

Module ID4001 allows fourth and fifth year honours students a placement in schools where they undertake a target of 25 hours of classroom experience. Students start by observing class teachers, move to a role similar to that of a classroom assistant, and by the end of their placement lead one or more teaching sessions, always under the direct supervision of the class teacher.

The module is based on a scheme devised by the UK Undergraduate Ambassadors Scheme, adapted to suit our local circumstances. The module handbooks provide detailed guidance for students and for teachers. The selection procedure for this module is by application and interview. Students need to progress satisfactorily through the PVG scheme, and sign child protection forms before being placed in schools. Throughout the placement-semester students have access to, and meet on a number of specified occasions with, their departmental representative in the University. The module is planned for experiential learning and reflection, rather than any form of “educational research” of the type that would require ethical clearance from the University and/or external organisations.

ID4001 University departmental representatives are responsible for securing and monitoring placements in schools for students. Although placements are often in the same discipline as the University school, there is some flexibility permitted. Placement schools may be in the state or private sector, and are normally within commutable distance from St Andrews. The departmental representative liaises with the placement school and individual students to ensure compatibility. Once placements have been decided, students are responsible for good communication with their mentor teacher. Students are reminded that they should have “professional” attitudes to their work on the module, and they have the status and responsibilities of temporary staff while on placement in schools. Students and mentor teachers are told that their University departmental representative and the module coordinator are available to answer any questions about the module, including any difficulties about the placement that may arise.

Department representatives give the module coordinator contact details for mentor teachers and students. During the summer the module coordinator sends the following information to all placement schools:

- details of the students who will be placed there
- a paper or online copy of the Module Handbook for Teachers
- contact details of the departmental representative and the module coordinator
- notification that by accepting a placement student the placement school is agreeing to work with the University in line with the principles in the handbook, including:-
 1. providing a safe working environment, covered by risk assessment policy and procedure
 2. including the student in the placement school’s public liability insurance
 3. providing suitable educational experiences for the student
 4. reporting to the University mid-semester and end-of-placement
 5. reporting to the University on any issues of concern that may arise

The module is run under the University’s regulations, including the policy on [Managing Work Placements](#), and the 2016 policy (in draft) on [Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults](#). For 2021-22 the Head of the Virtual School of ID4001 is Dr V Anne Smith as the Associate Dean Curriculum (Science). The placement and module coordinator is Dr Bruce Sinclair (Physics and Astronomy). The placement mentor for each student is their departmental representative. The work-based supervisor for each student is their mentor teacher.

The University’s public liability insurance policy is relevant to placement students, and this requires that students are supervised in placement schools at all times, and that students have gone through a selection process and through the Disclosure (PVG) process. A generic risk assessment for the University is in the module handbook; specific risk assessments may need to be written for some activities.