

London Student Training Consortium Protocol October 2011

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1 Aim of the document

1.1 The aim of this document is to provide a protocol for the development and operation of an Environmental Health Student Training Consortium. The processes will be reviewed annually, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

2 Aim and benefits of Consortium

2.1 The Consortium aims to support a programme of training for environmental health students in London, at both BSc and MSc levels, and thereby increase the pool of qualified practitioners available for recruitment to London environmental health services. It recognises that training environment has changed for local authorities and other partners, and that it is important to have flexibility around recruitment of students as well as a scheme which potential students can be directed too. Participation in the scheme will assist service managers to recruit and train EHP's.

2.2 The scheme also recognises that there are students who are currently working on an unpaid or voluntary basis so that they can complete their practical training, and that programmes such as the Consortium can enable them to access a small bursary payment which will assist them during their placement period.

2.3 The Consortium, by offering a partnership approach, enables a diverse, high quality training programme for students and a closer working connection between students and Boroughs. The Consortium provides a training environment for students that would otherwise not exist within London and it is this unique opportunity that has attracted a high calibre of student.

2.4 Participating boroughs are contributing directly to a London wide response to environmental health recruitment by taking local students and developing strong links with students through mentoring and taking part in the training programme.

2.5 Although a specific level of return cannot be guaranteed, participating boroughs are helping train environmental health practitioners for employment in the Capital and a number of students on the scheme have gone on to secure employment within London local authorities.

2.6 It should be noted that whilst this document refers to "Boroughs", private companies and individuals are strongly encouraged to join the scheme and have considerable experiences to offer which will be of benefit to students in London. References to "Boroughs" should therefore to be taken to include such companies and individuals as well.

2.7 This scheme can also run outside of London and as such, any references to London or ALEHM should to be taken to include those areas and their respective officer groups.

2.8 By working in partnership, the Consortium can offer:

- A larger power base to negotiate with educational establishments;
- The ability to take on more students as a group;
- More readily attract external finance;
- A robust comprehensive training programme that would generally be out of reach for an individual borough;
- Improvements to training through networking of training officers;
- Consistency in approach and opportunities for training.

3 Membership of the Consortium

All ALEHM members are requested to support the scheme in the spirit of co-operation and fair play.

3.1 Membership

3.1.1 Members of the consortium pay an annual subscription, which for 2011/12 is £3,350. This fee is reviewed annually by ALEHM to ensure that all financial commitments of the training programme are being met. Each Member must be prepared to offer full and active support to the initiative for a minimum of three years.

3.1.2 All Members must provide a named Student Placement Officer to act as a point of contact for students and for ALEHM co-ordination.

3.1.3 It is also recommended that each student will be provided with a mentor at the placement authority. The role of the mentor is to act to provide support to the student in an informal capacity at the authority in addition that provided by the training officer.

3.1.4 The borough should provide the student with appropriate desk space and support throughout their placement and have due regard to the aims of the placement which will be agreed prior to the student arriving.

3.1.5 It is possible that not all Members may be allocated a student at all times but should expect to be allocated a student at some point in their training programme. A schedule of student allocation needs to be agreed with the London Student Development Officer.

3.1.6 Boroughs are welcome to belong to the scheme more than once if they wish (for example, where environmental health is split into different Directorates in a borough, or where a borough wishes to take more than one student from the scheme).

3.2 Additional support

3.2.1 It is requested that boroughs who are not currently taking advantage of the scheme agree to take students where the need arises to provide support to member boroughs that may not have current capacity for a student, or where there are specific outcomes that can only be fulfilled in a limited number of boroughs. These placements should be designed to meet specific outcomes and must provide a training officer in the same role as a Member borough.

3.2.2 Practical training within local authorities is now a more flexible part of the curriculum and members are asked to recognise this when offering training opportunities within their boroughs.

3.3 Changing Membership

3.3.1 A Member must commit to support the initiative for a minimum of three years unless another new Sponsor can be found to cover the commitment to the training programme. The Consortium must review the viability of student numbers in light of changing circumstances of Sponsor Members.

3.3.2 The Consortium welcomes new members at any time to enable the initiative to be sustainable and expand.

4 Overview of the Scheme

4.1 Each year, the Consortium will provide financial support and agree a practical development programme for students undertaking a CIEH registered degree course in Environmental Health. In order to qualify for the programme, usually students must be in year two (or later) of the BSc or year one (or later) of the MSc. This is to ensure sufficient background knowledge of environmental health so that student and authority gain the maximum possible from the opportunity.

4.2 The student will be supported through the programme until they complete their BSc or MSc course (for a maximum of two years) to enable as many students as possible to benefit from the scheme. The number of students taken on will depend on the financial resources available in any given year.

4.3 This should allow sufficient time for a student to complete the Experiential Learning Portfolio and become registered with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. The responsibility for ensuring that this is completed within the time that the student is a member of the consortium rests entirely with the student.

4.4 Recruitment

4.4.1 The students will be recruited from within London and as such, will need to either live or study within London to qualify for the programme. Supporting boroughs may wish to become involved the recruitment process through advertising internally and within their borough, but are not required to as this will also be done centrally.

4.4.2 This local recruitment will usually mean that potential students already have suitable accommodation in London and relevant support networks to help them through their training. Recruitment will also primarily focus on those students who have a place at the London Universities but are not yet placed with an authority.

4.4.3 Selection and interview will be through an agreed panel which may consist of the London Student Development Officer, a representative of ALEHM and/or the CIEH, and local authorities.

4.4.4 If successful at interview, the student will be made an offer that sets out the financial arrangements, employment contract details and memorandum of support. In accordance with standard recruitment protocols, references will then be sought. Once satisfactory references are returned, the student will receive a contract which will need to be signed and returned.

4.5 Student Placement Terms and Conditions

4.5.1 The Consortium respects the rights of students to be provided with a framework to their sponsorship within the scheme. Each student will therefore sign an agreement with ALEHM, for the time they are training until their degree is complete.

4.5.2 This agreement provides the terms and conditions for both the student and the Consortium. The agreement will state conditions of the placement and bursary details. The agreement offers comprehensive employers and public liability insurance.

4.5.3 In the event of the circumstances changing for any students, new contracts may need to be issued or extended.

4.6 Student Payment Arrangements

4.6.1 Students recruited to the scheme will be paid a fixed bursary (£2,100 per annum for 2011/12) which will be adjusted pro-rata when a student is accepted onto the scheme part way through the academic year. The amount of the bursary will need to be reviewed and adjusted depending on the financial resources of the Consortium. Additional bursaries may be applied for by individuals when available from other agencies.

4.6.2 The payments will be made twice during the academic year (January and June) by the CIEH on behalf of the consortium. If applicable, National Insurance contributions and income tax will be deducted. To ensure this is done correctly, students must complete a form P46 at the start of their placement.

4.6.3 Students undertaking specialised projects or other tasks with local authorities may receive additional payments and subsistence payments subject to the arrangements within that authority. Such payments will be at the discretion of the individual local authority. Although every effort will be made to encourage consistency in such discretionary payments, students will need to acknowledge local differences and conditions of schemes.

4.6.4 It is a requirement of the scheme that a student needs to be available to undertake a placement. If a student obtains employment (either at a local authority or elsewhere) which means they are not available to do a placement which is reasonably offered, they are deemed to have removed themselves from the scheme and as such, payments will cease (and a refund may be requested). In this situation, students are requested to discuss the matter with the London Student Development Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.

4.6.5 It should be noted that this scheme may not be used to "top up" the salary of students who are already in paid employment as a student EHP's within boroughs.

4.7 Student Development Plan

4.7.1 Each student will be expected to agree a development plan that has been developed between themselves, ALEHM, the relevant educational establishment and their mentor. This plan must link in with the London wide co-ordination of the other student training plans within the London Student Development Programme. The development plan must be documented and regularly reviewed during appraisals.

4.7.2 Each student will be required to attend regular appraisals by their mentor and training officer.

4.8 Student Post Qualification Employment Commitment

4.8.1 Students recruited to the scheme do so in the knowledge that there is no offer of guaranteed employment by any Consortium Member upon qualification. However, as part of the scheme, each student has received financial assistance and a robust and comprehensive training opportunity which will assist them in seeking employment.

4.8.2 It is hoped that the students who have benefited from the scheme would look to seek employment in London and as such, would apply for suitable vacancies as they arise.

4.9 Student Discipline

4.9.1 The Consortium will make every effort to support students through their training. However, the Consortium will consider any circumstances where students fail to satisfy the minimum requirements to successfully proceed through the course, or qualify upon completion. The Consortium reserves the right to withdraw funding and the student employment contract from any student, at any stage that either voluntarily or involuntarily terminates their studies or otherwise fails to make satisfactory progress. This action would be considered as a last resort after consideration of student representations and consultation with the relevant educational establishment and member boroughs.

5 Financial arrangements for Sponsor Members

5.1 Each Sponsor Member will commit to an agreed annual contribution to support the scheme for a minimum of three years. It is vital that the minimum level of resources is maintained to ensure funding of commitments and contractual arrangements. Whilst it may be possible to adjust the number of students taken on in any one year to overcome financial difficulties, Consortium members must agree to provide minimum funding to support students already within the training programme. Therefore, any Member wishing to withdraw from the scheme must give sufficient notice to allow any student requiring their support to complete their studies. Other new sponsors may be found to cover any commitments.

5.2 ALEHM will receive annual contributions from each of the Members via invoices issued in the summer of each year. Any surplus funds will be carried forward and made available to the future financial commitment to the scheme.

5.3 ALEHM will seek other opportunities for funding from outside sources to support the training programme.

6 Administration of the Consortium

6.1 The London Student Development Co-ordinator will develop London wide promotion and marketing strategies to advertise the scheme. However, all members will be encouraged to implement local recruitment drives in their area to generate interest in environmental health careers.

6.2 The London Student Development Co-ordinator will be responsible for organising and taking minutes of all meetings (regular or ad hoc) of groups supporting the training programme. They will also organise the training placements, act as a point of liaison for the students and authority, organise the student training programme and provide any other relevant support.

6.3 The London Regional Policy Officer will support the scheme by arranging for invoicing and processing of financial contributions to the scheme. Other support such as interviewing may also be provided from time to time as time and resources permit.

6.4 The London Student Development Officer or London Regional Policy Officer will report annually to the ALEHM AGM on progress with the scheme.

7 The role of the ALEHM

7.1 ALEHM is the main co-ordinating and policy forum for the Consortium.

7.2 The ALEHM Training Co-ordination Group provides an overview to the development of the London student training programme and considers any specific issues that arise for the management of the Consortium. This group consists of representatives from ALEHM, Training Officers, educational establishments, CIEH and the Student Forum (as appropriate).

7.3 The day to day administration of the Consortium will be the responsibility of the London Student Development Officer and is funded from the financial resources within the scheme.

7.4 The Local Authority Training Officers group will work with the London Student Development Co-ordinator to be responsible for co-ordinating training opportunities across London and ensuring that the training is robust and comprehensive.

7.5 All members of the Consortium are invited to meet annually to discuss management and other development issues. Special meetings may be called to hear disciplinary/conduct matters or other relevant matters.

8 Further information and other details:

- London Region website for more information on London student schemes (www.cieh.org/members/London_students.html)
- CIEH Website (www.cieh.org) for membership, education and careers information
- London Student Development Officer- Kath Lewis (kath@crowleydesign.co.uk or 020 8777 8262)
- London Regional Policy Officer – Tay Potier (t.potier@cieh.org or 020 7827 6306)
- ELP Student Mentoring scheme – Nick Bannister (n.bannister@cieh.org)
- ALEHM – Janine Avery, Secretary (secretary@alehm.org.uk)
- Middlesex University – Ruth Plume (r.plume@mdx.ac.uk)
- Kings College University – Dr Michael Howard, Programme Co-ordinator (Michael.howard@kcl.ac.uk)