**Sandwich Placement and Applied Professional Diploma (APDip)**

**What is the Applied Professional Diploma (APDip)?**

This is a new non-credit bearing university award for all students who undertake a Sandwich placement as part of their degree which will align with the five, work experience 'settings'; Community | Industry | International | Research Consultancy | Enterprise. The Diploma will work simultaneously with a Sandwich placement and will give students further reward and recognition for the effort undertaken. It will do this through a consistent and clear structure providing an opportunity for students to expand their applied learning and articulation of success through an impactful synoptic portfolio which is designed by each course. During the year students will receive regular touch-points from Hallam and they will be able to access the online support resources through [Careers Connect](https://www.shu.ac.uk/careers) and [Careers Centre 365](https://www.abintegro.com/u/uh9yl2d2) and from their [Employability Adviser](https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/4066/SitePages/Employabilty-Adviser.aspx). Student can access up to date information on searching for and securing placements on the [Student Placement site](https://www.shu.ac.uk/student-placements), which has a specific section for the [Applied Professional Diploma (APDip).](https://www.shu.ac.uk/student-placements/applied-professional-diploma)

**The 'Settings'**

Students will choose from 5 ‘Settings’ to frame their APDip - Community | Industry | International | Research Consultancy | Enterprise. The preferred award setting should be determined by the student, based on the focus and ambition of their placement. This provides personalised recognition with a strong representation and articulation of their efforts. While there is recognition that there could be overlap in these setting, the students will choose the setting which represents the closest match to the central focus of their work placement year. For instance, this may be an Applied Professional Diploma (Enterprise) if they have looked to set up their own business or undertaken a *Freelance* Sandwich placement.

*How will a student choose their setting?*

The Work Experience Team in BESE will facilitate the collation of this choice and students will be given a set time to choose their personalised setting. If a student does not make a personalised choice, a 'default' setting will be provided which will be chosen by the course/Dept. There may be a need for a student to be guided towards making their choice and guidance is available on the [Student Placement site](https://www.shu.ac.uk/student-placements/applied-professional-diploma). Please contact [workexperience@shu.ac.uk](mailto:workexperience@shu.ac.uk) for further advice and working together to set this up for your students.

**Synoptic Portfolio**

The work a student is required to complete to be awarded the APDip should be relevant to their subject area, meaningful to their placement experience and support and develop their progress and articulation of learning. While there is a template for the Portfolio, this can be designed by each course/Dept. and should align to the following ambitions:

* Identify and review accumulated learning from the course and placement demonstrating knowledge, skills and attributes aligned to the subject area.
* Review the impact of a placement on the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the subject area.
* Recognise the interconnectivity and application of intellectual skills utilised and developed on placement which are aligned to the subject area.
* Practice and generate subject relevant skills, knowledge, and attributes within a placement setting.
* Appraise progress and learning in relation to future employability aspirations and explain how this accumulative learning can be used to support future academic and employability ambitions.

The methodology is through a *synoptic portfolio* which will encourage students to combine elements of learning from their course, co-curricular, extra curriculum experiences together with learning from their placement to show accumulated knowledge and understanding of their subject and / or the sector their placement occurred. An [exemplar](https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/highlyskilledemployment/applied-professional-diploma/) has been designed in collaboration with students, academics, and employers. Courses can use/adapt this to suit the needs of their students/employers as appropriate while ensuring the ambitions identified above are still met.

**How will a student be awarded the APDip?**

Completion of the APDip in **not** aligned to a pass/fail model, rather this is based on a ‘reasonably attempt’ being made by the student based on the synoptic portfolio set and associated guidance and completion expectations provided by the course/Dept. For that reason, it is not aligned to any associated assessment regulations. If the student completes the required number of weeks on placement for their Sandwich degree (min 24 weeks, although this is aligned to the number of weeks identified by specific course requirements) and submits a *meaningful attempt* at the synoptic portfolio then they will be awarded the Diploma alongside their Sandwich degree. A student can meet the requirements of their sandwich placement (subject to meeting the minimum 24 weeks) and not be awarded the APDip if they do not engage with this award or complete a reasonable attempt. Recognition of the APDip and completion of the sandwich degree will be noted at the usual Placement Board (or local equivalent).

**Supervising students on placement**

All students who undertake a Sandwich placement + APDip should have an academic identified as their first point of contact during the period away from Hallam. To enable consistency and for relationships to continue and grow, while providing students with a continued connection to Hallam building their sense of belonging, it is *recommended, but not mandatory* that the student's Academic Adviser becomes their academic point of contact while on placement (Placement Academic Supervisor), with associated additional AWP allocation. Where this is not possible then an alternative academic should be identified, however, the student and employer must know who the supporting academics as early as possible to support the work required for the synoptic portfolio.

**Keeping in touch with students: Student Communication - Virtual Keep in touch-points**

Hallam no longer deploys academics to visit students while on placement. This will be done through virtual touch-points to allow a consistent offer across the University for students and employers. Under exceptional circumstances there may be instances where a visit is appropriate to support your student, this will be managed locally on a case-by-case basis. Typically, but not exclusively, the touch-points will consist of the following interactions:

**1.** **WORK EXPERIENCE TEAM (BESE)** - Collate student's choice of setting. Process the placement approval documentation and risk assessment. Provide confirmation of the Placement Academic Supervisor (or equivalent) and employer.

**2. PLACEMENT ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR (or equivalent)** - Make initial contact with the student and discuss their Synoptic Portfolio and initial placement goals/ambitions/targets. These may adapt and change throughout the year and will be recorded by the students to further demonstrate their learning. Signpost student to any additional support required through Hallam Help.

**3. PLACEMENT ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR (or equivalent)** - Review progress within Synoptic Portfolio at mid-point of placement. Discuss any employer feedback received /progress made and the impact of this with student. Encourage student to complete Synoptic portfolio as appropriate. Signpost student to any additional support required through Hallam Help.

**4. PLACEMENT ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR (or equivalent)** - Support the student to complete and submit their Synoptic Portfolio and provide feedback as appropriate. Review their final submission and identify if a reasonable attempt has been made to the APDip and Sandwich placement year.

**5. WORK EXPERIENCE TEAM** - Facilitate the collation of completion rates. Support the certification on the APDip award. Collect student, employer, and academic experience feedback.

**Access to a financial support**

Students who are part of the [Student Success Scholarship](https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/student-success-scholarship) will be able to access a [Placement Bursary](https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/placement-bursary-0) to support them as they undertake their Sandwich placement. This bursary is to help them during their placement year. The amount students receive will typically be based on the amount they have previously received from the Student Success Scholarship.

Students may also be able to access funding through other [Scholarships and Bursaries](https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/student-funding/scholarships-bursaries) available including [Hallam Hardship Funding](https://students.shu.ac.uk/shuspacecontent/finance/financial-difficulties) which provides financial support to students who are experiencing unforeseen financial difficulties. Students will access this directly. Detailed information about finding is available on the [Student placement web site](https://www.shu.ac.uk/student-placements/arranging-your-placement/funding).

**Support from BESE**

The *Work Experience Team* have several systems and processes in place to support the operationalisation of the APDip to ensure academic colleagues can focus on their roles supporting the students. Please contact [workexperience@shu.ac.uk](mailto:workexperience@shu.ac.uk) for further advice.

The *Employer Partnerships Team* are continually searching for new placement opportunities for students which are advertised on Handshake.

The *Careers & Employability Team* can support in-curriculum activity to engage and upskill students in their search for, recruitment too and prepare for their placement. Please contact your College Employability Consultant directly. The team also has a significant central support offer online and through Placement Action Weeks, and Careers and Placement Fairs.

The *Enterprise Team* also offer a variety of enterprise related year placements which are a great way for students to develop the enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and attributes. Please signpost students to the [Enterprise Team site.](https://shuenterprise.co.uk/)