

Diversity Works Placement Guide

A toolkit for those setting up voluntary work
placement programmes for refugee
professionals



This guide should be read together with RAGU's reports on placements for refugee professionals in schools and local authorities also produced as part of our Equal project, PRESTO. We have also produced a report on placements in the NHS. These are listed in 'Further reading and resources' at the end of this report.

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1. Introduction

Purpose and audience

We have been supporting refugee professionals into placements at RAGU (Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit)¹ for nearly 10 years and have been working on variously funded tailored placement programmes for the last 5 under the generic title 'Diversity Works'. We have tried to transfer our learning over this period to each new programme within the context of constantly changing legislation, itself partly responding to the changing demands of the labour market.

The purpose of this guide is to pass on some of our experience with 'Diversity Works' to those who are starting placement programmes for refugees. We hope it will also be useful for organisations considering hosting refugees on placement.

We want these guidelines to be practical and easy to navigate with pages that you can adapt and use (with acknowledgement please). The focus is on the generic process, the tools and any practical tips we have found useful. This guide is primarily focused on clients who are professionals or those with high-level educational qualifications as these are the clients we work with at RAGU, but most should apply to other clients as well.

Context

A 2004 skills audit² showed that 40% of refugees arrived in the UK with qualifications. Only 5% were unemployed before coming here. However, once here the chances of being unemployed for a long time are high. Unemployment for refugees is estimated at 6 times the national rate, even though refugees, on average, have higher-level qualifications than the UK average³. Even when employed, refugees tend to be working at a lower level than their qualifications and skills would indicate. A research report from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)⁴ found that 40% of refugees had skills they did not use in the UK. 60% wanted to participate in training but only 12% had been on training courses since arriving in the UK. This is a huge waste of the contribution that skilled refugees are keen to make.

¹ RAGU (Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit) within the Department of Applied Social Sciences (DASS) at London Metropolitan University has worked with refugee professionals and those with high-level education for 12 years. Our services for refugees include advice and guidance, specialist courses (including our APEL programme) and work placement programmes. For more details see: www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu

² *The Skills Audit of Refugees*, Home Office (2004)

³ *Integration Matters*, Home Office (2005)

⁴ *Refugee's Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training*, Department for Work and Pensions (2002)

There are a number of well-documented barriers that stop refugees from accessing appropriate employment in the UK. These include:

- English language proficiency
- Gaps in knowledge and specific skills and experience relevant to particular sectors (such as the NHS)
- Limited mechanisms for recognising overseas qualifications and experience
- Unfamiliarity with job-seeking in the UK
- No experience of the UK work environment
- Lack of UK references for employers
- Anxiety from employers about employing refugees due to a negative media image and worry about the law around refugee employment and documentation
- Inflexibility in the statutory provision aimed at the unemployed that does not adequately cater for the needs of refugee professionals or graduates⁵.

A good placement at the right time can address many of these barriers and can be hugely enriching for both the refugee and the hosting organisation. It builds confidence and increases the chances of securing employment dramatically. It can bridge the divide between long-term worklessness and satisfying employment.

Background

From our experience at RAGU over the last 5 years, we have become convinced that work placement programmes are key in supporting refugee professionals into appropriate and sustainable employment.

We recognise that volunteering in a UK work environment may be useful at all stages of the route to employment for refugees (for language learning and other new skills, meeting people, becoming familiar with the work place for example). However, our programmes focus on the last stage. This is when the refugee professional finds that, despite having good English, having completed relevant training programmes and having researched the labour market and applied effectively for jobs, they are still unable to get an interview.

In this case, for most refugees, the main barrier stopping them from securing employment is the lack of relevant UK work experience and references. This is what a placement can provide, backed by preparation and 1-1 support before, during and after the placement for both the refugee and the hosting organisation.

⁵ for more information about barriers to education, training and employment, see *Refugees and Asylum Seekers – an education, training and employment guide for adviser*, produced for advice-resources by RAGU (July, 2006) regularly updated at www.advice-resources.co.uk

The aims of the Diversity Works placement programmes are:

- To create structured work experience opportunities for refugees with high level skills and professional experience to enhance their re-entry into the labour market
- To promote refugees as a skilled workforce to UK employers and raise awareness of refugees contribution to the labour market
- To raise employers awareness of Equality and Diversity issues in practice and encourage them to participate in a programme of positive action to combat social exclusion of refugees from the labour market

In the last 5 years we have put forward over 50 refugee professionals for placements through various programmes. As you can see from the list in Appendix 1, about half had placements in local authorities and over a quarter in the NHS. About 50% progressed into appropriate and sustainable employment, often soon after the placement finished. Many others progressed to further training or education and the placement assisted them in re-focusing their career plans.

2. Different models used

We have used different approaches in our work placement programmes over the last 10 years. Most recently we have been working with Models 3 and 4 below. Our approaches have been governed by practical constraints, funders' requirements and the changing labour market, but also by learning from our mistakes. Sometimes these different approaches have run simultaneously. They are summarised as follows:

Model 1

Client is supported to find own placement on ad-hoc basis (with or without follow-up support and training from RAGU)

Implications:

- Lots of 1-1 support, with client doing research and networking independently
- Requires initiative, motivation and confidence

Advantages:

- Responsibility is mainly with client
- Builds skills and confidence and can be very empowering if successful

Disadvantages:

- Client may not have the confidence, the self-advocacy skills or the tenacity needed to do this
- If unsuccessful, may become discouraged and de-motivated
- Client may arrange placement independently and not want any involvement from RAGU. This would mean that the monitoring and support mechanisms would not be there for client and placement provider if needed. Less opportunity to establish a relationship with the placement provider that could lead to further placements and more strategic work.

Model 2

Block recruitment and pre-placement training followed by 1-1 preparation with client and adviser working together to find suitable placement

Implications:

- Heavy staff involvement in selection and training
- Once selection and training completed, each adviser has a number of clients to prepare and to find placements for at the same time – not

possible to predict or to guarantee any match between clients and existing employer networks.

Advantages:

- Economies of scale and equal opportunities - Information/Selection Day(s) can be widely publicised to our networks – we can see large numbers in 1-2 days and can select the most suitable candidates.
- Training can be done in a 2-week block with involvement from most RAGU staff, employers and previous clients
- Organisations hosting the placement can be involved in the selection process (this has been useful when recruitment is for a specific sector – such as NHS).
- Assurance and evidence for placement providers that selection, training and preparation have been done very carefully.
- As the adviser is actively involved in finding the placement, this is a good opportunity to raise awareness with employers and work more strategically in opening up placement opportunities for refugee professionals.
- Automatically creates a peer group for support and advice for both the client and the placement provider

Disadvantages:

- Refugee professionals are competing against each other for a limited number of places on the programme. Those not selected feel they have failed – for the last selection, we were only able to take 1 in 4. They often feel they have been given false expectations. We have tried to avoid this by establishing very clear selection criteria and the opportunity for follow-up advice and guidance or 1-1 employment support for those who have not been selected. However, this seems to be inevitable and can result in a real sense of bitterness and feeling let down by a refugee agency who they thought was there to support them.
- There may be a long gap for the client between completing the training and 1-1 pre-placement preparation and the client going to the initial placement interview. This is because the placement has to be the right fit for the client and the hosting organisation has to be happy to work within our supervision and monitoring framework. If we can work with organisations we have already built up relationships with, this is easier. If not, it may take some time.
- Client may feel demotivated and frustrated if the wait is too long and may decide to take up another option. If this happens just at the point when the placement has finally been set up, it is very frustrating for RAGU and the placement provider who have already invested heavily
- There is no guarantee that a suitable placement will be found
- Training happens before the client goes on placement. Although they still have access to 1-1 support from their adviser, we now feel that clients benefit more from training once they are on placement as they are more motivated, clearer about what they need and can apply it immediately.

Model 3

Continual selection from existing clients for tailored placements

Implications:

- Combines some aspects of 1 and 2 above.
- Adviser makes the judgment that a client would benefit from a placement and, if the client is interested and passes the selection test, the two work together to prepare for one.
- Adviser does most of the work setting the placement up but the client will do the research and preparation.
- Any further training or support is through 1-1 sessions with the adviser once the placement has started.

Advantages:

- Adviser already knows the client and can assess their suitability for placement. The process happens more naturally and a relationship of trust has already been built up.
- Requires the client to be more active than Model 2. All the training and preparation needs to be done on a 1-1 basis and requires the client to work independently between sessions.
- 1-1 training and support is tailored to individual needs.

Disadvantages:

- Adviser has a limited number of clients to select from. If there are a specific number of placements to be filled, they may need to widen the search to find suitable candidates. We have recently done this through our PRESTO partnership organisations on a 'first come, first served' basis. We need to go through a preliminary stage of checking the client's readiness and eligibility for placement and then do a 1-1 selection procedure for each person, only moving on to the next candidate once the first has been through the process. This can be time-consuming and this is before the adviser and client even start to look for the placement. If the client is new to RAGU and has not already built up a relationship with an adviser, he/she may become impatient with the time it takes to select for, prepare for and find a tailored placement.
- Time required for 1-1 preparation and training puts more pressure on staff if funding is limited.
- There is no guarantee that a suitable placement will be found

Model 4

Recruitment for specific placement opportunities offered by organisations

Implications:

- Often happens through organisations that have already had placements with us and have had a good experience.
- Placement is already clearly defined and the organisation is ready to start. We need to recruit and prepare a client quite quickly without compromising our standards or equal opportunities.
- As with Model 3 above, the adviser and client will do the research and preparation for the placement through 1-1 sessions and independent work. Any further training or support is through 1-1 sessions with the adviser once the placement has started.

Advantages:

- Often already know the organisation and they understand the placement programme and know what to expect. They are keen to develop placements for refugees.
- If we have existing clients with the required background who are ready for placement, the match can be made quickly and the placement started.
- Requires the client to be more active than Model 2. All the training and preparation needs to be done on a 1-1 basis and requires the client to work independently between sessions.
- 1-1 training and support is tailored to individual needs.

Disadvantages:

- If we cannot find an existing client for the placement, we need to recruit externally. We have done this through a) mini-selection procedures b) on a 'first come, first served' basis.
- The mini-selection process introduces a level of competition (see Model 2 above). For the 'first come, first served' approach, we need to go through a preliminary stage of checking the client's readiness and eligibility for placement and then do a 1-1 selection procedure for each person, only moving on to the next candidate once the first has been through the process. This is time-consuming and there is the risk that the employer will lose interest in the meantime.
- Time required for 1-1 preparation and training puts more pressure on staff if funding is limited

3. Selection for placements

Making sure that the client is at the right stage to do a placement is crucial. It is also important that the placement provider knows that clients have been through a careful selection process and will be able to benefit from the placement and contribute to the organisation.

We have tried a number of approaches to recruiting and selecting clients for placement (see previous section). Currently we are considering each client individually and are not encouraging competition between clients for a limited number of placements. Clients are put forward for selection once we have received their documents and checked eligibility (funder's criteria about immigration and employment status, residence etc) for the specific programme. They must also all be refugee professionals (or similar skills level) and must have permission to work.

Our priority for selection is:

1. Existing clients who are put forward by advisers as interested in and suitable for placement
2. Clients who express an interest in specific advertised placements or in a placement programme and who have sent all their documents to RAGU to verify eligibility – these will be considered on a 'first come, first served' basis until we have reached capacity

Selection criteria

They will then be assessed individually, according to the following criteria:

1. Job readiness (assessed through our personal information form and interview) on the basis of evidence that:
 - Lack of UK experience is a barrier to finding employment (e.g. interview feedback by employers and/or had IAG/job search support and still not gaining relevant employment)
 - Client has clear career aim and relevant skills/training
 - Understanding of role that placement has in career development
 - Practical commitment to the time required for placement
2. English (assessed through written test and interview)

The current test includes:

- Speaking/listening task (interview)

- Reading task
- Written case studies (20 minutes task). This is based on a previous placement and asks the candidate to respond to a particular situation

Sometimes the client has a borderline score for the English test, but we still decide they should be considered for placement if:

- The client's career focus and subsequent type of placement request is very clear and acceptable (see 'Job readiness' above)
- The client already holds a UK Qualification of level 5 or above in the National Qualifications Framework (i.e. HND, Foundation degree or above)
or
The client already holds IELTS 6.5 in all subjects or equivalent ESOL Certificate

Follow-up for those not selected

If a client goes through the selection procedure and is not selected, we offer follow-up guidance and 1-1 employment support. The main reasons for not selecting a client and what we can do to provide follow-up support are summarised below:

Reason for not being selected	Follow-up support
Referral for ESOL courses, on-line resources for self-study and support to find volunteering opportunity if interested	Explore through 1-1 guidance and agree Action Plan
No evidence that the client has started looking for employment or understands how to start searching for a job	1-1 guidance and/or job search support (CV, applications, labour market information etc)
Already has current UK work experience and access to UK references	Support in advocacy with employer or in job search

4. Finding placements for clients

Engaging employers and convincing them to host a placement for a refugee professional is never easy. If you are contacting an organisation for the first time on behalf of a client, you and the client need to research the organisation first to understand what their ethos is and what is important to them. Organisations will need the following information but your initial contact with them needs to be brief and to the point, emphasising the benefits for them:

- Why they should do this, what the benefits are for the organisation in general and the manager/supervisor in particular (meeting diversity and equality agenda requirements, CPD for staff, for example)
- What you can offer the organisation (awareness raising about refugee issues through staff meetings or workshops, for example)
- Why the refugee professional needs a placement (see Introduction)
- What the placement involves – expectations and opportunities on both sides (this would be clear from the placement guidelines and agreement but might also include discussion of the employer's involvement in selection and preparation, for example). It is important to clarify payment of expenses and childcare (if applicable)
- What your previous experience of working with employers is
- How you have selected and prepared clients for the placement
- What support you can offer them and their staff throughout the placement

We do this initially through a short letter or a phone call. If they are interested, we then send the refugee professional's CV followed by a meeting with more information. As well as the letter, we have a generic leaflet to promote the placement programme and encourage employers to become involved (see Appendix 2). We also provide some FAQs to employers who are new to working with refugees (see Appendix 3). These questions have been asked by managers/supervisors in previous placement programmes and can help to clarify some of the facts and allay possible fears. Once the placement has been arranged, we go through the practical details and clarify expectations on both sides through the guidelines and placement agreement (see Appendix 4)

You also need to think about who to contact within the organisation. If you can find someone senior who can promote your programme to the whole organisation, this is ideal. If not, you can go through HR or you can go directly to department managers. Going through HR is the most obvious route but this means that you are relying on this person to take it to the department managers and to advocate on your behalf. It will usually be easier if you can approach managers directly.

At RAGU we have built up good contacts with individuals or with organisations interested in hosting placements for refugee professionals. These contacts, however, especially if they are with an individual, can be fragile. If the individual moves on, the placement opportunity and the knowledge and interest may disappear too. Similarly if the organisation changes focus, restructures or if the labour market demands change significantly, placements may no longer be available. There is also a question of timing. An organisation may have a placement that needs to be filled quickly and if there is not a candidate ready, this opportunity may be lost.

The lessons for us are:

- Make sure that your contacts are not just with one person or even just one department in the organisation. Your contact may move or you may find that a contact in HR, for example, is keen to promote placements but unable to convince the managers in the relevant parts of the organisation to agree to take someone on.
- Work to establish routes for refugees into placement throughout the organisation. This will be easier if there is a policy to promote equality and diversity within the organisation and refugees can be a named group in this policy or agenda.
- Try to keep your employer contacts engaged through an on-line network or a Steering Group so that they can support each other and exchange views, tips and good practice. They can also be involved through contributing to the selection and training for placements and through attending events (if they can manage the time) to promote the work their organisation has done. For our latest Diversity Works programme, we have filmed two refugees going through the placement with comments from them and also from their placement providers. This can be very useful as a point for discussion and to promote the satisfactions of a placement for both organisation and refugee to organisations that have not done this before (see Appendix 10 for a summary of what they said).
- Discuss payment of expenses (travel and lunch) as well as childcare. It is important to have funding that can cover this so that no one is excluded from placement. We ask the placement provider to cover this whenever possible as this is a good indication of their commitment and the value they put on the placement.

5. Starting the placement

Often the adviser and placement supervisor or manager will have already met to discuss setting up placement(s) within the organisation. Sometimes, however, the first contact for both adviser and client will be at the placement interview. The placement manager will have already seen the client's CV and will have an idea about what the client can offer. They may have already sent the client a description of what they would expect from the placement and what they could offer to develop the client's skills. This is likely to change in the first few weeks as they get to know each other and can be formalised at a later stage.

These activities take place during the first visit or soon after:

- Placement interview (and assessment if appropriate – this may be to assess specific IT skills, for example, and to identify training needs)
- A 3-way discussion with adviser, client and placement manager to look at the documents that will be used during the placement and practical arrangements. This includes the timetable for monitoring visits, key contact details, agreeing the support the placement provider can offer and the support they can expect from RAGU. All of this will be detailed in the placement agreement and the placement guidelines (see Appendix 4)
- Agreement on a start date. This is when the placement agreement will usually be signed (see Appendix 4)
- Placement manager arranges for induction (see Induction Checklists in Appendix 5)
- Adviser arranges the first monitoring visit

6. Support through the placement

Support comes from:

1. The placement supervisor and manager in the organisation working with the refugee professional
2. RAGU working with the client and the supervisor and/or manager. The extent of RAGU's involvement depends on how well the placement is working and on how much the client and placement supervisor feel they need, usually depending on their previous experience.

Structures for supporting the placement

1. **From the placement provider:** Induction and regular supervision meetings using the checklists provided, if helpful (see Appendix 5 for induction and Appendix 6 for supervision)
2. **From RAGU:**
 - Regular monitoring visits and feedback reports for both client and placement supervisor (see Appendix 7 for document)
 - Phone and e-mail contact with placement provider
 - Phone and e-mail contact with client
 - One-to-one coaching and/or guidance sessions with client focusing on skills, training or information needs identified during the placement and to discuss reflective experiential learning if the client is completing a reflective learning log (see Appendix 8)

Monitoring visits

The usual pattern is to set up a first monitoring visit two weeks after the placement starts. This allows for any misunderstandings or problems to be resolved immediately and gives the client, supervisor and adviser a chance to discuss how they think the placement can develop. Often this is the stage when a more accurate description of the placement and the skills development and training opportunities can be determined.

The monitoring visit usually starts with a meeting between the placement supervisor and the RAGU adviser. They go through the monitoring form (see Appendix 7) together and discuss any issues arising from this. This is then followed by a meeting between the refugee professional and the RAGU adviser who also use the monitoring form as a basis for their discussion. If there is time, there may finally be a 3-way meeting to discuss and respond to issues that have come up. The adviser then writes up the report, including any agreed actions, and copies it for both client and placement provider.

Further monitoring visits will be every three to four weeks until the end of the placement. The later monitoring visits will include discussion about how the placement provider can assist the client in progressing once the placement is completed. This can include assistance with job applications, agreed time to job search while on placement, access to internal vacancies and opportunities to network within the organisation. Between monitoring visits, the adviser will be in telephone and e-mail contact with the placement provider and the client.

One-to-one support for the refugee professional while on placement

We are focusing more on this during placement now that we are not doing block recruitment, selection and training. Previously clients returned to see their adviser throughout the placement but it was usually due to a specific issue arising from the placement or to get support with job search towards the end of the placement. We are now working on regular 1-1 sessions with an adviser to take the place of the previous two-week training programme. The individual programme is agreed with the adviser from a menu of choices based on the content of the previous training programme. The client does some research and self-access study and then they are encouraged to use their placement experience to engage in reflective experiential learning. This can be done through a generic reflective learning log (see example in Appendix 8) or through more focused tasks on the placement designed to develop and record specific skills, make observations or to collect information. This material can then be discussed in the one-to-one meetings.

The aim of these sessions and the follow-up work is:

- to encourage clients to identify skills and knowledge they need or they want to develop
- to identify or create opportunities within the placement to do this

This reflective learning and placement-based tasks also provide clients with clear examples for a competency-based interview when they are looking for jobs in their field.

If they have done a skills self-audit before starting the placement, they can build on this and add skills they want to improve as the placement and their understanding of the UK work environment develops. The kinds of skills and knowledge they would typically focus on would be:

- Team working
- Problem solving
- Written and spoken language and communication (specifically cross-cultural communication)
- Advocacy and negotiation
- Assertiveness
- Networking
- Technical skills and knowledge (IT or using new specialist equipment)

■ Understanding the organisational culture

At the end of the placement, they can review how they have developed their skills and knowledge by doing the skills audit again and evaluating how much they have improved.

For other resources to use to develop skills while on placement, see the Welcome Employability Toolkit and the Volunteer Placement Portfolio in 'Further reading and resources'.

7. Ending the placement and follow-up support

Towards the end of the placement (see discussion of the last monitoring visit in 'Support throughout the placement') it is important that the client has support from both the adviser and the placement provider in looking for suitable employment or possibly education or training if the placement has highlighted a need for this.

At this stage both placement supervisor and client may feel that it would be a good idea to extend the placement for another 3 months. This often happens when the employer feels that the refugee professional is working well in the team and that they are benefiting from his/her skills and the client feels that they need to continue to develop skills and knowledge before they will be ready to compete on the open labour market. In this case, they develop a plan for the next 3 months and sign another agreement.

At the final meeting between the adviser, client and placement provider, the supervisor or manager completes an evaluation form. The client will also fill in an evaluation form but this will be done at an exit interview at RAGU (see Appendix 9 for both forms).

Once the placement is completed, the client returns to RAGU for support from their adviser in their job search or in finding appropriate courses or training. The job search support includes mock interviews if the client has been shortlisted for a position.

Once in post, the client may return to RAGU for support in the early days of starting work and then later when they are applying for new positions as their career progresses. It is important to try to find funding to cover this, especially for the first stage of work in the UK as this is a crucial stage in the whole process of integration.

8. Conclusion

In recommending how the UK welfare policy should apply its resources to help and encourage the least advantaged into work (including those who are currently economically inactive) to achieve the Government's target employment rate of 80%, the Freud report⁶ advocates directing spending to this group in a more individualised way to respond to the complex and demanding problems presented. This is a welcome development as long as it includes the less obvious groups such as refugees with a high level of skills or a professional background.

This group has high levels of unemployment, but are unlikely to be economically inactive (see Introduction). Refugee professionals or those with higher-level education and skills face complex and demanding problems and are disadvantaged on the labour market. However, they do not fit the profile in this report or the Leitch review⁷ of the 'lost generation' of adults lacking functional literacy and numeracy skills with an inheritance of long-term dependency. On the contrary, they have the 'world class skills' and experience to meet the challenges presented by the current changes in the global economy. They are fully convinced of the beneficial effects of working.

What they often do *not* have is the sustained support they need to build a bridge between the skills and experience they bring to this country and the expectations and demands of the UK labour market. If they are supported to get recognition for existing skills and qualifications, identify gaps in their skills profiles and appropriate training to address these and to experience the UK work environment, they can make a valuable contribution to the UK economy in the global age. It is a good investment.

We hope that the Government's new focus on greater flexibility in providing individuals with tailored skills and support to get into work (and beyond) will extend to structured placements that can build confidence through re-affirming skills, identifying gaps and understanding the UK work environment. The value of placements for refugee professionals is increasingly recognised so it is important that there are no structural barriers that stop this from happening.

It is encouraging that the recent DWP and DIUS Paper, *Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work* (2007),⁸ states that personal advisers at Job Centre Plus can now use their discretion to work more flexibly within benefit rules to support clients into work. We are convinced that structured, well-supported placements (in partnership with specialist refugee agencies and employers) can be the final step for refugee professionals into appropriate sustainable employment.

⁶ *Reducing dependency, increasing opportunity: options for the future of welfare to work, an independent report for the Department for Work and Pensions* (2007)

⁷ Leitch Review of Skills, *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*, HM Treasury (2006)

⁸ *Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work*, DWP and DIUS (2007)

9. Further reading and resources

RAGU reports:

- *Delivering Placements in Schools for Refugees* (June 2007)
- *Work Placements in Local Authorities for Refugee Professionals* (November 2007)
- *Diversity Works in the NHS* (November 2006)

www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu > Publications

PRESTO briefing papers (Oct 2007):

- *Work Placements*
- *Employer Engagement*
- *Refugee Engagement*

www.equalworks.com

Refugees and asylum seekers: An education, training and employment guide for advisers, RAGU (July 2006) updated regularly

Refugees and asylum seekers: An education, training and employment guide, RAGU (July 2006) updated regularly (This is translated into 9 community languages)

All from: www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu > Publications

Welcome – Employability Toolkit (2006) – Camden RAISE project (with 2 other European Equal projects)

www.wel-com-e.com

Integration Matters, Home Office (2006)

Working to Rebuild Lives, DWP (2006)

Skills Audit of Refugees, Home Office (2004)

Alice Bloch, *Making it Work: Refugee Employment in the UK*, IPPR (2004)

All from: www.employabilityforum.co.uk

London Enriched – the Mayor’s draft strategy for refugee integration in London (2007)

www.mayor.london.gov.uk

Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work, DWP and DIUS (2007)

Reducing dependency, increasing opportunity: options for the future of welfare to work, an independent report for the Department for Work and Pensions, (2007)

www.dwp.gov.uk

Leitch Review of Skills, *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*, HM Treasury (2006)

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

Appendices

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Please note that these materials are working documents and are constantly being updated and changed. While we have carefully checked them for accuracy, RAGU cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

Appendix 1

Placements arranged by RAGU over the last 5 years

	Client profession	Date*	Placement provider	Job outcome after placement
1	HR	2002	Islington Council	HR employment at Islington Council
2	Graphic designer	2002	Selfridges Oxford Street	Graphic Design employment at Selfridges
3	IT technician	2002	GLA	
4	IT technician	2002	GLA	
5	Refugee health Worker	2002	NHS	Employed as a field research worker
6	Accountant	2002	Haringey Council	Finance employment at Haringey Council
7	Accountant	2002	Haringey Council	Finance employment in refugee organisation
8	Research for health policy	2003	GLA	Employed by GLA
9	Finance	2003	Haringey Council (Asylum Team)	
10	Refugee health worker	2003	NHS	Employed as Refugee Health Worker
11	Biomedical Scientist	2003	NHS	
12	Education adviser	2003	Praxis	Employed as Connexions Adviser
13	Accountant	2003	Merton Council	Finance employment at Merton Council
14	Housing officer	2003	Metropolitan Housing Association	
15	Finance	2003	ActionAid	
16	Social researcher	2003	London Metropolitan University	
17	Energy engineer	2003	Whitby Bird	
18	IT networker	2003	Training for Life	Self Employment via Prince's Trust grant/Islington Enterprise Agency

19	Architect	2004	Islington Council	Architecture employment at Islington Council, subsequently in private sector
20	Architect	2004	Islington Council	CAD Technician employment via agency
21	Water engineer	2004	Environment Agency	Water Engineer employment at Environment Agency
22	Accountant		Housing Association	Finance employment in Housing Association
23	Accountant	2004	Camden Council	Finance employment in private sector
24	Electronic Engineer (street lighting placement)	2004	Camden Council and Hackney Council	
25	Accountant	2004	Merton Council	
26	Accountant (Payroll placement)	2004	Merton Council	Employed at Barclays Bank
27	Retail Management	2004	John Lewis	
28	Accountant	2004	Merton Council & Waltham Forest Credit Union	
29	Finance Manager Assistant	2004	Ernst & Young	
30	Research	2004	ActionAid	
31	Accountant	2004	Camden Council	
32	Statistician	2004	London Health Observatory	Employed by NHS
33	Biomedical Scientist	2004	NHS	Employed as a Medical Laboratory Technician Assistant
34	Medical Technician Engineer	2004	NHS	Employed in Medical Engineering in NHS

35	Biomedical Scientist	2004	NHS	Employed as a trainee Biomedical Scientist in NHS and gained registration in 2007
36	Doctor	2004	NHS	Left early
37	Nurse	2004	NHS	Left early
38	General Practitioner	2004	NHS	Left early
39	Doctor	2004	NHS	Joined a medical course in Liverpool
40	Nurse	2004	NHS	Employed as Healthcare Assistant. Retraining as a nurse. Completed 2 nd year of Nursing Diploma
41	Oral Maxillo-facial surgeon	2004	NHS	
42	Statistician	2006	NHS	Employed as IT Trainer
43	Teacher	2006	Camden Council	Employment with Camden Council
44	Teacher	2006	Pooles Park Primary school	
45	Teacher	2006	Mount Carmel Secondary School	
46	Accountant	2006	Camden Council	Employment with Camden Council
47	Ophthalmic nurse	2007	NHS	Gained registration in UK through placement in 2007. Employed as Ophthalmic Nurse in NHS
48	Haematologist	2007	NHS	On placement
49	Accountant	2007	Camden Council	Employed as Accountant at Camden Council
50	Community Development Officer	2007	IRIS, Islington Council	Currently jobsearching

51	Ophthalmology Research & Development	2007	NHS	On placement
52	Housing Officer	2007	Housing Support, Islington Council	Currently jobsearching
53	Finance	2007	TUC	Currently jobsearching
54	ICT user support	2007	London Metropolitan University	On placement
55	Media Engineer	2007	London Metropolitan University	On placement
56	Family Support Worker	2007	CARIS Family Support	On placement
57	Accountant	2007	Camden Council	On placement
58	Finance and Administration	2007	CARIS Family Support	On placement
59	Accountant	2007	Moorfield NHS	Starts placement in Jan 08
60	Accountant	2007	Brianstones Accountants	Starts placement in Jan 08

*of start of placement

Appendix 2 – Leaflet to encourage employers to become involved



DIVERSITY WORKS

Provides supervised, and highly motivated refugee professionals to support your busy team.

Diversity Works provides practical support for your Equalities and Diversity Policies with free Diversity training for your staff delivered by experienced London Metropolitan University staff, while supporting skilled refugees back into their professions.

Benefits for you include:

Access to professional and skilled refugees who can make a difference to your team and improve the delivery and access of your service

Practical contribution to your Equality and Diversity strategy that is proven to work

Staff development (e.g. supervision skills, cross-cultural management skills) and raising awareness in your team about diversity issues

Benefits for refugee professionals include:

A practical opportunity to contribute their professional skills and experience to a UK employer

A practical opportunity to receive constructive supervision and learning from a UK employer

Improved self-confidence

The potential for demonstrating high quality work sufficient for requesting a work reference from a UK employer

Improved chance of appropriate employment after placement

What RAGU offers employers:

Motivated refugee professionals with high level English who have been carefully selected and prepared for this work placement programme

Regular, pre-arranged monitoring visits and ongoing support from a RAGU placement officer for you and your team throughout the placement

Free Diversity training for teams of staff

Please find below a checklist of how you may want to work with us:

Please tick the boxes that interest you. We will then contact you to answer your questions and discuss further. There is no commitment at this stage for you or for us.

- A **free consultation meeting**, at your office, with a RAGU placement officer from London Metropolitan University to receive more information on the programme, on the current individuals looking for placement, and to discuss how this programme may support your work – either at local level or at corporate level
- Receiving **free, interactive Diversity training for your staff**, focused on raising awareness on refugee employability issues. Includes placement case studies, and information about refugees and the challenges they face when seeking employment in the UK. *(Because of our limited funding, we prioritise having teams whose management can offer commitment to setting up a placement before the training takes place)*
- Setting up **structured, supervised and supported placements** with opportunities for professional development
- Participating in our **steering group** for this project – helping us to understand your needs better and helping you to learn from other employers about ways to develop practical Diversity and Equality initiatives that work
- Any other ways** you may wish to work with us for mutual benefit

- May RAGU contact you in the future?**.....

Please send this back to: ragu@londonmet.ac.uk or call us on 020 7133 2110

We look forward to receiving your reply. Thank you.

RAGU

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DIVERSITY WORKS

Placement Programme for Refugee Professionals

EMPLOYERS' FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These are real questions from employers who we have worked with on our 'Diversity Works' programme

1. What is RAGU?

- The Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) was established in 1995 as a specialist unit in London Metropolitan University.
- RAGU clients are highly qualified and professional refugees and asylum seekers.
- RAGU provides free specialist structured guidance, advice and programmes on employment and professional re-qualification and training issues.

2. What are the aims of Diversity Works (DW)?

- To develop structured and supervised work placements commensurate with the skills of the client.
- To promote highly skilled refugees as an untapped and diverse workforce to UK employers.

3. Do refugees⁹ have permission to work?

YES. All of those who have received a 'positive response' from the Home Office have permission to work and to take up voluntary work. They do not need a work visa. Permission to work gives them the same legal working rights as a UK citizen. **All RAGU placement clients have permission to work and the documents to prove it.** If they are volunteering, they are also entitled to receive reasonable costs: travel and lunch expenses, which do not affect their benefits.

Asylum seekers do not generally have permission to work (see footnote below) but they can volunteer.

4. Do RAGU clients have a National Insurance Number (NINO)?

Most of our clients have a NINO. A few are in the process of applying for one. **With or without a NINO all refugees are fully and legally entitled to undertake unpaid voluntary work.**

5. Why does a skilled refugee need a work placement?

The Skills Audit of Refugees (Home Office, 2004) showed that over 40% of refugees arrived with qualifications and only 5% were unemployed before coming here. However, a survey of 400 refugees in the UK found that labour market participation was less than half that of the BEM population (Bloch, 2002). There are several reasons for this, amongst them language. However RAGU clients on work placement programme are selected for high level English. **Many highly skilled and experienced refugees lack UK work experience.** Their overseas qualifications and experience is frequently viewed as less valuable and 'too complex' for employers to evaluate. Obtaining **work experience and references in the UK** can be a **key** for refugees to getting **a foot in the labour market.** Work placements provide valuable opportunities to familiarise with the UK work culture, skills development, confidence building

6. Why would a refugee do voluntary work that is different from or at a lower level than their former position overseas?

Many refugees address the problem of entering the labour market by taking on voluntary work in the same general field but in a different role or level in order **to gain UK experience and familiarise themselves with UK work culture.** It can be difficult to enter work at the same level as their previous

⁹ The term '**refugee**' is used to refer to all those who have refugee status, indefinite leave to remain (ILR), exceptional leave to remain or enter (ELR/ELE), humanitarian protection (HP) or discretionary leave (DL). The term '**asylum seeker**' is used for those who have not yet had a final response to their claim for asylum. Most do not have permission to work but some may because of the date they applied or because of the time they had to wait before the first response from the Home Office (if they do have permission to work, this will be on the ARC or other Home Office document). All asylum seekers, however, can volunteer.

work experience. In addition many refugees undertake valuable work within their refugee communities on a voluntary basis.

7. The client has been in the UK a long time and has qualifications – so what is the problem getting paid work?

Refugees are forced migrants, departure from their countries often unplanned in and in haste, and arrival in the UK a shock. Arriving here without knowledge of the various systems, accessing accurate information and support is a critical challenge.

Additionally refugees face numerous **obstacles** to entering paid employment: **non-recognition of overseas professional and high level qualifications, non-recognition of overseas work experience, lack of UK work experience and references, lack of knowledge of the UK labour market and networks**, cultural adaptation, coping with numerous and stressful issues simultaneous to job searching.

Refugees in general are **highly motivated and keen to contribute** meaningfully to the UK economy and labour market.

8. Why is there a 2-year gap in this person's CV?

All refugees are **forced migrants**, forced to leave their country in fear of their lives. Some have experienced detention, imprisonment and torture, for days or years. Others spend months travelling to safety. On arrival in the UK refugees find it takes considerable time to settle physically and psychologically: e.g. sorting housing, schooling health and immigration, adapting to language and culture, recovering from their loss, undertaking voluntary work. For these reasons there may be a period of time that cannot be accounted for by training or work experience on their CV. During this 'gap' the individual may have demonstrated or developed skills and resourcefulness of especial value in the work place.

9. How long is a work placement for?

Initially for **3 months**. However we have found that both employers and clients benefit from placements up to **6 months** and where possible would encourage this arrangement. The placement is subject to monitoring throughout and progress is reviewed as part of the ongoing process.

10. What happens if there are problems during the work placement?

We are here to support everyone. In our experience most issues relate directly to the employer/client expectations and cross cultural issues. These can be resolved through **discussion**.

Experienced RAGU advisers play an integral part to setting up the placement and in monitoring it. This means regular **visits and contact** throughout the duration of the placement. Both employer and client can contact the key Adviser at any time to discuss issues. The Adviser will encourage the client to feel empowered to discuss and **resolve issues directly** with their supervisor and support both in achieving this. When

necessary we will take on a more proactive mediation role to ensure a successful resolution

11. Why is the client so shy and unassertive?

Some refugees come from cultures where deference to managers is paramount and may be perceived as timidity. Being out of the work place for a while, starting a new 'job', **learning about the UK work place culture is subtle**, takes time and confidence for many refugees. Dynamics that UK employees take for granted may be experienced as novel by some refugees. Clients may be unsure how to ask for support from busy colleagues and it takes a level of confidence to say that one does not understand something. **Cross cultural issues and learning are invaluable for both client and employer** – it can provide insights into the management of diversity in the work force and enrich the work placement experience.

12. What are RAGU clients IT skills like?

This varies according to their training and work experience. Many refugees have IT skills. **If IT skills play an important aspect of the work placement, this is best assessed by employers at the start.**

13. What about your client's level of English?

RAGU clients are selected onto work placements with **upper intermediate / advanced English language skills** and are well able to communicate in the work place. Clients benefit further from exposure to work place English.

14. I am worried about your client's accent.

We all have accents! Whether our accent is from London, Scotland, Eritrea or Iran will not be an issue for employers with transparent, non-discriminatory employment practices. English language skills and communicating clearly and in appropriate work place language for the job is essential. Provided this is possible then different accents add positively to the diversity within our workforce and should be celebrated.

15. Can I pay the client on work placement?

Our LDA funding provides a small placement subsidy to the client but most of our projects do not have the funding to do this. If they want to, employers can offer a small subsidy for non-LDA placement clients, but should be aware that this may impact detrimentally on the client's JCP benefits (depending on which benefits the client is receiving). Please ask RAGU for advice on this.

Employers are only asked to pay for **travel and lunch expenses (if possible)**. **Clients do not expect payment.**

However if the client's unpaid contribution is of value the organisation may consider creating a paid vacancy for the client to apply for. The **real value** of an unpaid placement to the client will come from **good supervision, a developmental placement and opportunities to apply on a fair basis for jobs in the organisation**. Payments in kind e.g. providing clients with a computer no longer used by the organisation, sending clients on relevant training courses has of course been considerably appreciated.

If you have any questions not covered here please do not hesitate to contact us:

Diversity Works
Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit
London Metropolitan University
The Learning Centre
236-250 Holloway Road
London N7 6PP
020 7133 2110

References:

Skills Audit of Refugees, 2004
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Alice Bloch, *Making it Work*, 2002
www.ippr.org.uk

For more information:

Guide for Advisers (lots of information that is useful as general background for employers working with refugees)
www.advice-resources.co.uk

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Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU)

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT

1. The agreement will take effect from the first day of the placement.
2. **Diversity Works** contacts (key contact) at **RAGU** are:

Name:

Tel No:

Address: Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, London Metropolitan University, 236-250 Holloway Road, London N5 6PP

Email:@londonmet.ac.uk

3. **The Placement Provider is:**

Initial contact name / position:

Tel No:

The **client's supervisor** on placement will be:

Name:

Position:

Tel No:

Email:

Address:

4. **Details of client to be placed:**

Name:

Tel No:

Email:

Address:

Days of the week on placement:

Times:

Start date of placement:

Length of placement agreed:

5. Attendance:

- a) The client agrees to attend placement on the days and times as above. If the client is unable to attend placement on a particular day they will inform their supervisor in advance. Where this is not possible, the client will telephone and/or email the supervisor on the day of absence in the morning and thereafter on days they cannot attend.
- b) The client and placement provider are able to extend days of the placement by mutual agreement. The client will inform the RAGU contact of this change.
- c) If the client secures paid employment elsewhere while attending placement, they should give their supervisor two weeks notice.

6. Placement description and work plan:

- a) The placement provider agrees to provide a brief description outlining the main responsibilities the client can expect to engage in during the placement. This may be developed over time as the client and placement provider familiarise themselves with the client's aptitudes and skills.
- b) The supervisor will prepare a work plan on a weekly basis for the first two months. This is to support a process of:
 - professional development for the client and to assist in the timely integration in the team/organisation AND
 - to ensure the client is engaging in activities of value to the employer.

The work plan will be agreed between supervisor and client. This will be agreed in advance between the placement provider and the manager. The client will be advised on this prior to placement.

- c) The client keeps a regular record (suggested weekly) of work undertaken, achievements and learning outcomes. This can be reviewed and discussed by the supervisor and RAGU contact to support the professional development of the client. .

7. Supervision:

- a) During the period of the work placement the client is under the direct supervision of the supervisor/manager in the hosting organisation.
- b) The supervisor is as named above. If the supervisor changes during the work placement, the hosting organisation will inform the RAGU contact as soon as possible.
- c) Should any problems arise, the client is encouraged in the first instance to discuss solutions with their supervisor. However, RAGU contact can be contacted at any time by the client and the supervisor to support the process.
- d) The supervision arrangements as discussed with RAGU contact are as follows:

Frequency / duration:

Further comments:

- e) The supervisor has read the Supervision Checklist provided by RAGU. The supervisor will discuss these arrangements with the client during their first week of placement.

8. Monitoring:

- a) RAGU will visit the placement within three weeks of the start date to carry out a monitoring visit. This is to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the arrangements.
- b) The visit will require the RAGU contact to be able to discuss progress in confidence with the supervisor and the client in two separate interviews. A reasonably quiet space will be required.
- c) Monitoring forms will be used to record discussions and a copy retained by each party.
- d) Subsequent monitoring will be carried out on a 6-week basis either by telephone or by visits. (The client may be asked to see the RAGU contact at their offices in north London).
- e) All visits will be by previous agreement

9. The hosting organisation agrees to pay the client weekly fares and expenses of:

Fares: £ per week
(minimum fare)

Expenses: £ per week

These expenses will be paid to the client in cash by arrangements detailed below:

(No salary will be paid by the hosting organisation to the client).

10. Code of Practice on Confidentiality/Data protection: The client will abide by Code of Confidentiality: that is they will not discuss, divulge and / or record information with any other individuals and employees unless authorised by the supervisor.

11. Diversity and Equal Opportunities: The placement provider agrees to apply policies promoting the management of Diversity and Equal Opportunities to the client in the hosting organisation as discussed.

12. Health and Safety:

- a) The hosting organisation has registered with the appropriate Health and Safety Authority and agrees to abide by all relevant Health and Safety at Work legislation. The placement provider agrees to provide the client with an induction in Health and Safety and to be responsible for the health and safety of the client whilst on placement.
- b) The client and the placement provider will read and sign the Health and Safety forms provided by RAGU.
- c) The placement provider will ensure that the client is covered by policies of Employer's Liability Insurance and by Public Liability Insurance.
- d) The placement provider agrees to notify Diversity Works of any injury the client sustains.

13. Other Policies and Procedures: The supervisor will ensure that the client will receive induction and have access to relevant policies relating to their work placement (including those stated above) from the start of the placement.

14. Training

The client will attend the Diversity Works training:

Day of the week and times:

Start date of training:

Final date of training:.

15. End of Placement

The Diversity Works placement will last for a minimum of 3 months and a maximum of 6 months. This agreement is valid up to the end of the placement only. If the placement is to be extended this will be by mutual arrangement between the employer and the client. RAGU would like to be informed of placement extensions.

At the end of the placement there will be a formal evaluation carried out by the employer and the client. This will be carried out using a final evaluation form for the client and employer to complete.

All parties to inform RAGU of any job outcome.

Signed and dated by:

Diversity Works Contact at RAGU:

Date:

Placement Manager:

Date:

Client:

Date:

Signed copy to be given to all parties

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Induction Checklists for Diversity Works Placement

For use by the Client and Placement Supervisor

Name of Supervisor:

Date:

Name of Client:

<i>How is the placement going regarding the following points?</i>	Comments/Actions (with target dates)
Attendance/Timekeeping (e.g. Are they attending on the agreed days/times?)	
Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement Agreement signed and copied to all parties • Work programme agreed by supervisor and client and copies to all parties 	
Health and Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the employer and client both signed forms from RAGU? (see below) • Is there in-house H & S training? 	
Induction Was there an in-house induction to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation • The team 	
Expenses: travel and lunch When/by whom paid?	

DIVERSITY WORKS

HEALTH AND SAFETY: CLIENT INDUCTION CHECKLIST

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CLIENT: copy to sent to RAGU

Name of Client:

Placement Provider:

Start Date:

The following items should be included in your Induction into the organisation. Preferably on the first day. Check off the items below when they occur and **inform your supervisor if you have any concerns over Health and Safety matters.**

Health and Safety Issues	Date
Emergency procedures	
Safety policy received or location is known	
Location of First Aid box is known	
First Aid arrangements (including names of first aiders) is known	
Accident reporting and location of accident book	
Display screen equipment regulations / procedures	
Manual handling procedures (if relevant)	
Protective clothing arrangements (if relevant)	
Instruction in equipment client will be using	
Other issues	

Signed:

Date:

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please return a copy to RAGU.

DIVERSITY WORKS

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Placement Provider Checklist

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PLACEMENT PROVIDER: copy to sent to RAGU

Name of Organisation Hosting Placement:

Placement Supervisor:

Start Date of Placement:

Health and Safety Issues	YES	NO
Do you have a written Health and Safety policy?		
Do you have a policy regarding health and safety training for people working in your undertaking and will you provide necessary training (during induction) to the client on work placement.		
Is the organisation registered with: a) The Health and Safety Executive b) The Local Authority Environmental Health Department		
Insurance: a) Is Employer and Public Liability Insurance held? b) Will you cover any liability incurred by a client on placement as a result of his/her duties		
Risk Assessment: a) Have you carried out a risk assessment of your work practices to identify possible risks to your own employees or clients on placement? b) Are your risk assessments kept under regular review? c) Are the results of risk assessment implemented?		

Continued overpage

<p>Accident and Incidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) is there a formal procedure for reporting and recording accidents and incidents in accordance with regulations (RIDDOR)?b) Have you procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to people at work in your undertaking?c) Will you report to RAGU any recorded accidents involving clients on placement?d) Will you report to RAGU any sickness involving clients on placement that may be attributable to the work?		
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Signed:

Date:

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please return a copy to RAGU.

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Supervision Checklist for Diversity Works Placement

For use by the client's Placement Supervisor

Please feel free to use copies of this form as a guide for each of your confidential supervision meetings (approx. every two weeks).

Implicit throughout work placements for refugee professionals is how cross-cultural issues may superimpose on their experience in the UK work place. Perhaps two points to consider in supervision are:

- The level of familiarity with UK work place and culture varies considerably for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Ways of doing and being in the work place that UK employers and employees take for granted may be unfamiliar to a professional from overseas. This could relate for example to:
 - everyday communication
 - taking initiatives
 - decision processes
 - participation in meetings
 - organising workloads
 - receiving supervision itself

Supervision is an ideal time to discuss cross-cultural issues as they relate to skills development and employability issues for the client and a chance to reflect on organisational practice.

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Skills Development <i>Please refer to client's CV and Placement Description/Work Plan</i>	Comments/Actions (with target dates)
Job related skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the placement use the client's skills? • What specific skills are being used at present • How could this be developed? • Are there clear skills gaps that could be addressed by placement? • What additional support / training does client need (to be arranged by client/RAGU) 	
Time management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the attendance and punctuality of the client? • Any issues that need addressing 	
Communication skills Within the work setting how effective is the client's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral communication • Written communication • Any specific support measures suggested? 	
Interpersonal skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the client interact with team members? • Are there any assertiveness or confidence issues • To what extent does the client take initiative as a part of the placement? 	
Relevant IT skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any specific packages the client needs experience on? • Are there opportunities identified for this on work placement? 	
Information management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the client's organisational skills? • Has the client had opportunities to meet deadlines? • Do they need support developing these skills? 	
Job Search / Labour market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does their CV need updating? • Can you provide guidance to relevant publications? • Leads to where vacancies are advertised? • What type of job-search support in your view would help? • What specific factors will increase the client's employability? 	
Other issues	



Supervision Checklist for Diversity Works Placements

For use by the client prior to and during Supervision

Please use copies of this form as a guide for each of your confidential supervision meetings with your placement supervisor.

Supervision is an ideal time to discuss placement issues across several areas: for example your IT skills, your technical skills for the job etc. Supervision provides you and your supervisor time to reflect and discuss on what you have learnt and how your professional and personal development is going in relation to your placement.

Reflecting on the questions and writing notes on your supervision checklist before your meeting, may help you to have a focused and useful discussion. It could help to identify what you have achieved so far and the continuing professional support you would like on your placement.

Your supervisor has a similar checklist. They may want to complete the final version with you during the supervision meeting.

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Supervision checklist for clients	Date:
Skills Development <i>Please refer to your CV and your Placement Description/Work Plan</i>	Comments/Actions (with target dates)
Job related skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the placement use my skills? • What specific skills am I using at present? • How can I develop these skills further? • Are there clear skills gaps that the placement could help me to develop? • What additional support / training do I need (to be arranged in discussion with my adviser at RAGU)? 	
Time management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is my attendance and punctuality? • Any issues that I want to discuss? 	
Communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the work setting how effective are my skills in spoken and written communication in terms of: • Do colleagues / customers understand me most of the time? • Do I understand them most of the time? • Have I experienced any difficulties? What was the difficulty? • Any specific experience I want to get more experience of? • Any support measures to help with communication that I want? 	
Interpersonal skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I get on with team members? • Do I feel confident to express my views? • Are there any assertiveness or confidence issues? • To what extent do I take the initiative as a part of my placement? 	
Relevant IT skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific packages have I used so far? • Are there any other packages I would like experience of? • Are there any opportunities for this on my work placement 	
Information and work load management How organised am I? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did I have to meet any deadlines and how did it go? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did I need to prioritise my workload and how did this go? • How have I stored information that I am gaining on the work placement? • Do I want more experience of the above? 	
<p>Job Search / Labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my CV need updating to include the placement? • Do I know what are the main publications in my field of work - if not can my supervisor or colleagues direct me to them? • Do I feel ready to start looking at job vacancies? Have I discussed this with the supervisor to see what they think? • How do I feel about networking on the placement? (for example, asking colleagues about ideas of where and how I can apply). • Leads to where vacancies are advertised • What type of job-search support would be useful from the supervisor and from RAGU? • What specific factors would make me even more employable? 	
<p>Other issues I want to discuss in supervision or with RAGU adviser</p>	

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Appendix 7 - Monitoring Form

Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU)



DIVERSITY WORKS MONITORING FORM and ACTION PLAN

Client:

Date:

RAGU Adviser:

Supervisor:

Organisation:

Nature of Placement:

RAGU IN DISCUSSION WITH CLIENT/ SUPERVISOR

Agenda

- Time keeping and attendance
- Travel / Lunch payments
- Range of tasks undertaken / work plan
- Supervision process
- Interpersonal relationships
- Any issues or difficulties
- Development opportunities in placement
- Key learning points: technical, organisational culture and policies, team working, clients career, other
- Other
- Actions agreed

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Diversity Works Guidelines FOR WRITING A REFLECTIVE LEARNING LOG

What is a reflective learning log?

Writing a reflective learning log is a record of your experiences on placement. It is also a requirement of participating on Diversity Works. The log is an opportunity to put down in writing how you thought and felt about activities week by week. It is a record of what you enjoyed, what you learnt, what they did not enjoy, how you felt about an activity, what your thoughts were about an activity.

How will the reflective learning log be useful to me ?

There are several good reasons for keeping the log;

- To document the activities you have carried out – useful for your CV and application forms.
- To reflect on experiences that have empowered you and built you confidence. For example, this could be learning new IT software, attending team meetings, observing how colleagues convey information formally and informally, learning about an organisations culture.
- To record your learning of skills developed during the placement.
- To record observations of learning. For example you may observe practices that are helpful professionally.
- You will be able to use the information in job interviews and discussions with employers for paid or voluntary work. It is also very helpful when you have to write application forms.

The process of keeping a reflective learning log **is a professional skill and is used increasingly in organisations as part of the learning culture.**

How do I keep the reflective learning log?

Here are some suggestions for writing the learning log:

1. Write up the log weekly while you memory for your experiences are fresh.
2. Keep the writing brief: use the learning log sheets
3. When you write think about the following questions.:

- What skills or experiences have I learnt or developed? Make a list.
- How confident do I feel using these skills? Try to grade yourself:
For example – *“in attending the team meeting today I felt*

not at all confident / a little confident / fairly confident / very confident.

Can you write why you felt confident (or not confident)?
Can you write what would help you to feel more confident?

- What did I enjoy or find interesting about the experience?
- What did I not enjoy?
- What did I observe in others that I found useful?

There may be other thoughts and feelings you have not listed here – please do include them, as it will all be useful.

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Diversity Works: REFLECTIVE LEARNING LOG SHEETS

(refer to your placement description/work plan)

Placement title:	Date:
WHAT HAPPENED this week? What did I observe and what did I do? Were there any significant events?	
WHAT ARE MY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS about what has been happened: What did I enjoy, find interesting, what did I not enjoy or find challenging, how does my confidence feel etc.	

LEARNING OUTCOMES: What have been my key learning points from the last week (try to be as specific as possible)? What would I like to practice in similar situations? Refer to supervision checklist for ideas.

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**Refugee Assessment and
Guidance Unit (RAGU)**

Diversity Works End of Placement Form

This is an opportunity to hear from the placement provider about their experience of participating on the placement programme. All your answers are confidential and we will use them in to develop the programme. As a supervisor / manager your answers may or may not reflect the organisation's policies, but it will help us get a real measure of the outcome for you of your work in this project. Please do not worry if you do not know the answer to any questions.

Your name:

Job Title:

Organisation:

Nature of the Placement:

Date:

Work relationship to placementee:

1. Was the initial information you received about the project / person sufficient?
Yes / no

Additional comments (e.g. enough? relevant? comprehensive?):

2. Which other departments and individuals in your organisation were involved in Diversity Works and how?

3. Please comment on the usefulness of the following:

Signed Working Agreement: very useful / useful / not useful

Monitoring visits by RAGU staff: very useful / useful / not useful

4. How effective was supervision of the placementee in terms of

a) your time

b) the outcomes?

5. In what ways have you observed that:

a) the placementee has benefited from participating in this project ?

b) your team benefited from participating in this project ?

c) your organisation benefited from participating in this project?

6. What difficulties have you experienced and how did you work towards resolving them?

7. Are there any aspects of the placement project which you would like to change and why. Please can you suggest changes you would like to see implemented?

Add comments

8. In what ways have you / your organisation expanded your knowledge and experience of refugee employment difficulties? (please give specific examples)

Please clarify where you gained any information from (e.g. the placementee/RAGU/HR, other)

13. Would you / your organisation be prepared to offer placement opportunities again?

Thank you very much for you support throughout the programme

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End of Project Action Plan

Diversity Works

Client's name:	Date:
Profession:	
Tel no:	Email:
RAGU Adviser:	
Tel no:	Email:

1. What has worked well while you have been on the project? What progress have you made? (e.g. training sessions, advice sessions with RAGU careers advisers, CV writing, labour market research).
2. Have there been any major issues / problems while on the project? Please describe. What support and solutions have you found?
3. What are your plans after this project?
4. How will you achieve these plans?
5. What support do you need to achieve these plans?

6. Agreed Actions and times

Client signature:	
Adviser signature:	Date:
Interview length:	

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Appendix 10 – One foot on the grass



One foot on the grass: a video showing the experience of 2 refugee professionals and their placement providers

These 2 placements were part of RAGU's placement programme 'Diversity Works'

A summary of the key points made:

How the refugee professional benefited:

1) Learning from being in the UK work environment

- Dealing with people at work – 1-1 with colleagues, 1-1 supervision with manager, team meetings 'this was all different and new'
- The staff-staff and staff-patient relationship 'this was very different from at home'
- Understanding the system – you need to be in the system to understand it

2) Feeling part of a team and being supported to develop skills

- Made to feel welcome – good orientation – 'own space and new desk – made me feel part of the team'
- Colleagues were supportive and helpful
- 'They provided training that was available to other employees'
- 'He was so enthusiastic – we persuaded colleagues to invest in him'

3) Experience and practice vs. theory

- Both were well informed about their fields but welcomed the chance to experience the working environment and try out and improve skills.
- 'I started to see the difference between practice and theory – I thought I knew Excel but I didn't'
- 'I am learning and refreshing my knowledge'
- 'it has enhanced my skills'

4) Building confidence and giving networking opportunities

- 'It has given me great confidence and opportunities for jobs in the future'
- 'I knew I could do more – now I am doing a supervisory practice – it makes me very happy'

How the placement provider benefited

1) Diversity in the workplace

- '(the satisfaction) of achieving diversity within the public sector – giving opportunities to those who do not have the same chances'
- 'this was new for us – it has had a big impact on our learning. The experience has made us realise how comfortable we are and helped us to appreciate difference – we are still reeling from the benefits'

2) An untapped source of skilled and experienced employees

- '(they) need opportunities and support but the placement allows you to look that little bit further'
- 'he will be a great asset to this country'

For further information about this video, please contact RAGU on 020 7133 2110

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Appendix 11 –
Comments on Diversity Works placement programme



From placement providers:

I can see why the placements are important in as much as that one of the first thing I think a prospective employer does look at is a person's experience. It's not only the experience of actually related work, it's actually working in an environment similar to the one you are in.

It is key that managers are given a lot of information about the individuals beforehand and also the opportunity that they have had with RAGU to meet the individuals on a informal basis to make sure any placement or indeed any substantive job they are going to do is appropriate for the skills and experience they are bringing to the organisation.

It is very important that they (refugees) be shown or be told what's going to be expected of them.

I did find that knowing that you (RAGU careers adviser) were coming and were interested really in both the placementee and me, how I was finding it – that was very nice actually I must say.

...they (refugee professionals) represent their communities as well so they are able to give you a better insight into the needs of that local community and an understanding perhaps of why they are not taking up services, also to link to that local community to explain what they have available to them.

The (work placement programme) has convinced me even more that we accept refugees with skills and then prevent them exercising these skills. If we accept refugees we need to invest in them, not accept people into a culture of dependency. They will bring real benefits to the workforce.

When you bring refugee professionals into (the organisation) they are not only coming to support professional achievement but also to facilitate cultural awareness in the field.

It is not longer sufficient to sit in an office and propose strategies or schemes that seem to tick boxes you know, you have to go out and actively engage and find the people to participate in your forums and your steering groups.

I'd never met a refugee before as a professional person, as a patient yes, and it's very good to see here he is with all his skills.... he is putting them towards something he knows. I value him personally and he is valued on the ward by the staff, he's very capable and willing to help.

It's not enough just going through the process (work placement) and then not take it forward. It will be useful to know that they will be able to find a job somewhere so that they can utilise the training they have acquired and can continue to utilise their skills

We have a very diverse workforce but we don't have a diverse workforce across all strata of the organisation.

From refugee professionals:

We are refugees; we have no line to communicate in our country's training centres or universities. Our knowledge in this case are only in our mind, because we fled from our country, we are wanted people, how could you produce that paper, references, it's too difficult ... Even for simple jobs they need papers so it's difficult to reflect your profession. What we need is let employers see us, putting us somewhere and give us something to do, then they can determine what we are. Because we have got skills.

It is good to show you the place I'm working in so you can see how it is and what I am doing. I want to talk to you about the things I have done – maybe you can advise me what I can say to the manager to have more work opportunities.....

It's really multicultural and diverse backgrounds, I never work in such a multicultural team.....It was really interesting, because everybody was sharing the things about their countries, about their traditions, sometimes even in family situations....., and that has really opened my mind, I really liked the team.....

...coming from my country the manager doesn't have to come to the workshop he is just sitting in his office and giving orders. In the UK the manager is one of the team, working with you trying to fit himself with you at your level, trying to do everything with you, to be more related to you

I am making more informed choices. Having the background information that I gained from the work placement gives me more assurance what I am doing is it right.

First of all the work placement improved my English, and I got contact with English people and my work placement environment. The second was to become familiar with the ...system and to compare it with my previous experience....

The work placement was a good experience, it kept me busy every day - that helped me psychologically and rescued me from depression.

Personally it was very beneficial to me, and I'm sure it was very beneficial to them. I enjoyed it, it was really good experience for me.

Thank you for giving me chance for doing this work placement and this experience because I think not only as a professional, as you know, the personal, it's encouraged me to continue my career and my professional development, not to give up.

For further information and access to reports published by RAGU
please contact:

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www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu/ragus-publications.cfm

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