
Experiential Learning in Collaboration with UK Police Forces – The Long Game!

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HEA Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence 2017

**Experiential
Learning through
Collaborations
with UK Police
Forces**



National Undergraduate Employability Awards 2019

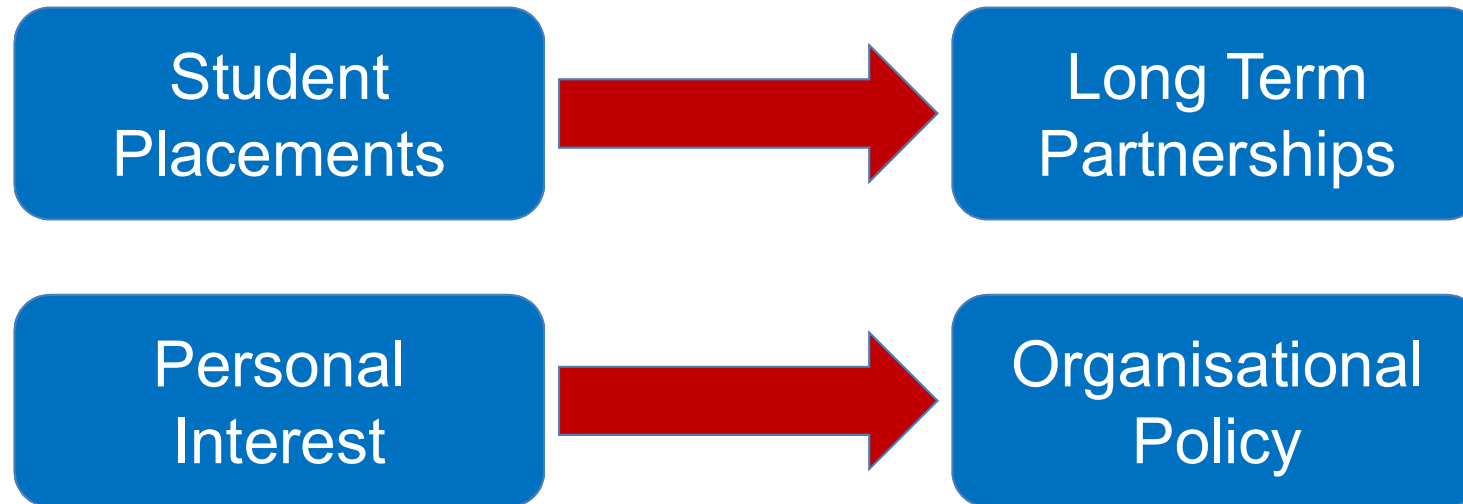
**Best
Collaboration
Between a
University and
Employer**



Learnings

Identify mutual benefits

Make use of Champions



Experiential Learning in Forensic Science and Policing....how times have changed

10 years ago

- ❖ Working in silos
- ❖ Difficult to set-up
- ❖ Low trust in undergraduate work
- ❖ Conflict between 'real-life' problems and blue-sky research

Now

- ❖ Strong relationships between academia and forensic/policing stakeholders
- ❖ Formal police force/ university partnerships
- ❖ Combined problem-solving approaches

Staffordshire Forensic Partnership



- ❖ Began in 2009 with 6-week extra-curricular placements
- ❖ Formal agreement between Staffordshire University and Staffordshire Police for joint working in forensic science launched in 2016
- ❖ Expanded to other areas of policing and other forces
- ❖ A model for HE–Police collaborative working

Staffordshire Forensic Partnership



Partnership Aims

- An **enhanced public service** – through academic input, training and development of current and future forensic and crime scene examiners
- A vehicle to propose and implement **solutions to topical problems and challenges** in forensic practice through collaborative research and development, and making our societies safer
- Student placements that **develop the education and employability** of students and make a real contribution to the success of Staffs Police
- **Value for money** through skills development and contribution in both the Police and the University

<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/staffordshireforensicpartnership/>

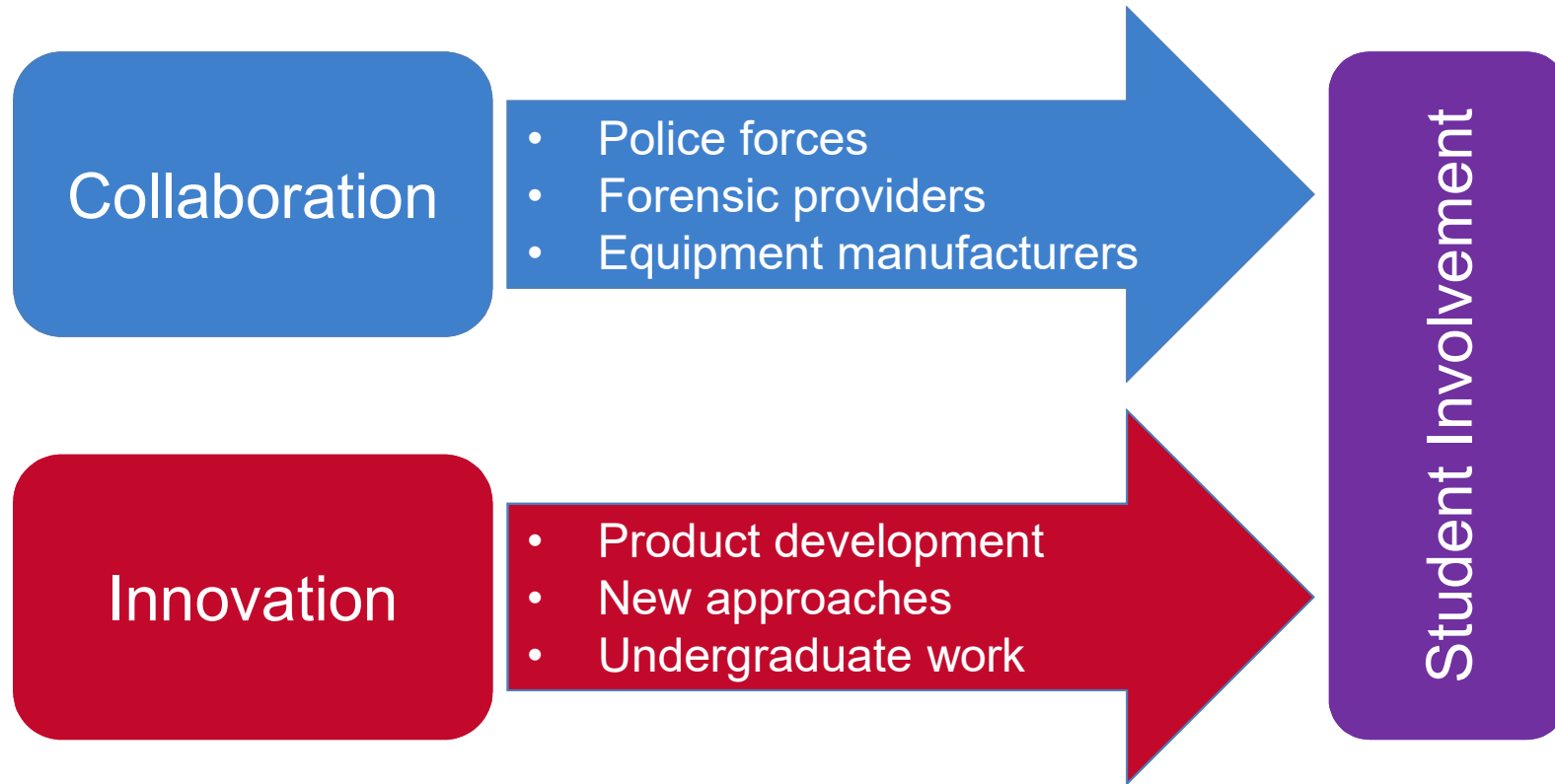
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Workstreams



Getting Students Involved in Real Police Work



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Six-week summer placements

- extra-curricula, voluntary, unpaid

MSci Placement Module (60 credit module at level 7)

- one semester on placement or at uni

Digital Forensics Module (Computing students)

- option module, one day per week at police HQ
- 20 students per year

Sandwich Placements

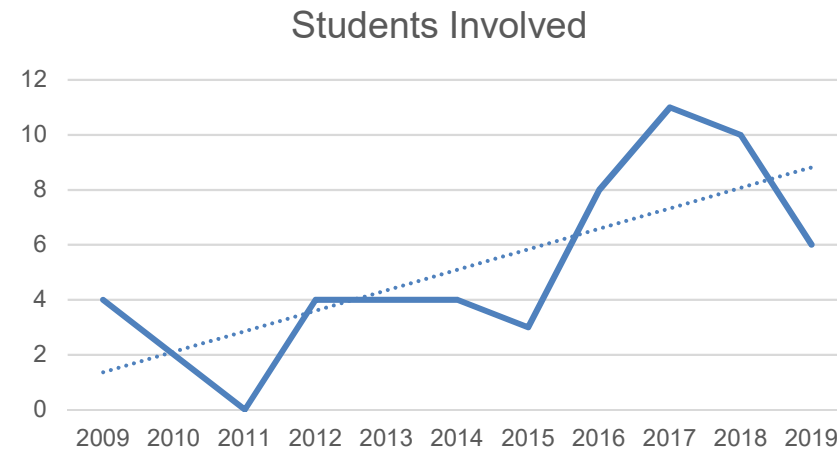
- continuing to explore possibilities

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Six-week summer placements

- Increasing numbers
- Total of 56
- 15% of cohort



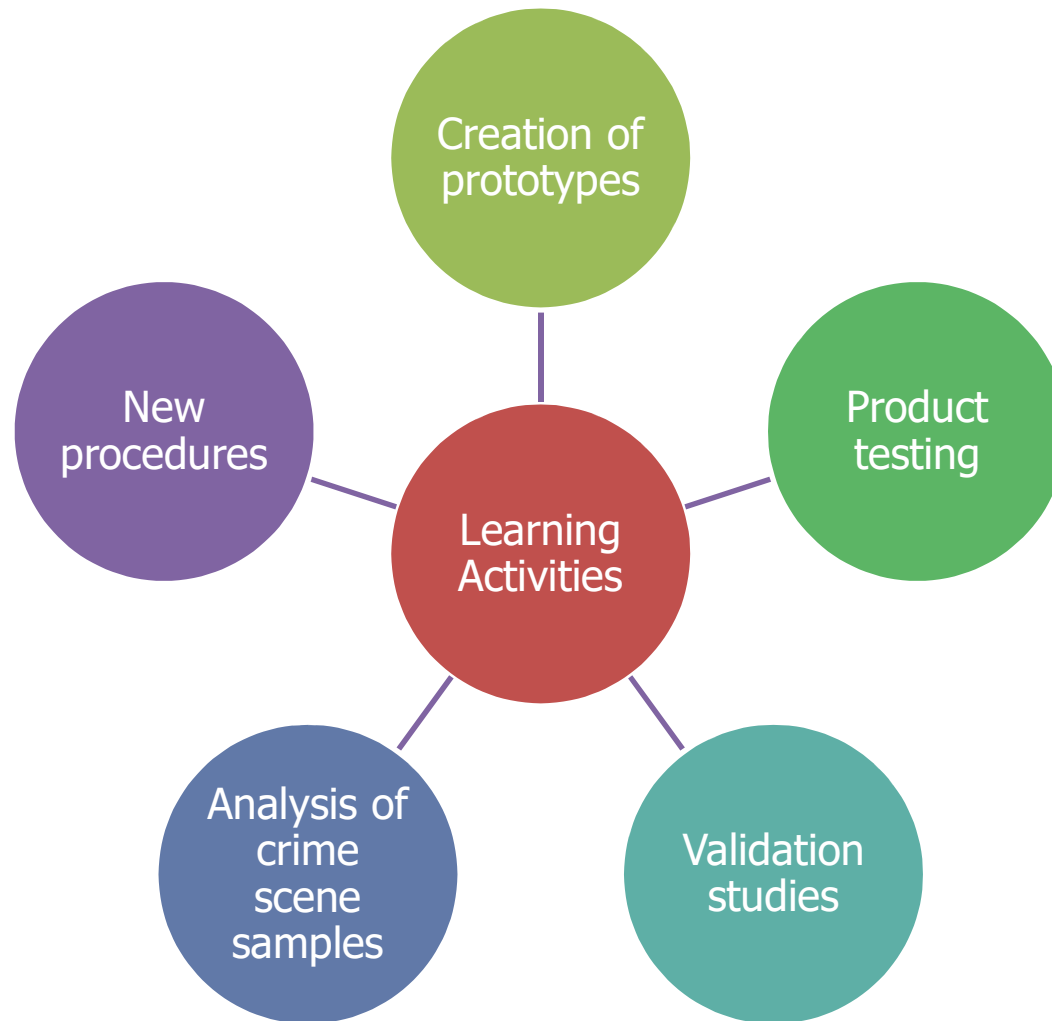
- Since 2013, employability rates for Forensic Science graduates increased from 84% to 100%, graduate employment increasing from 63% to 83%
- 83% of placement students graduated with a 'good degree' compared to 66% for the whole cohort

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<https://youtu.be/PBtHRPntFDE>

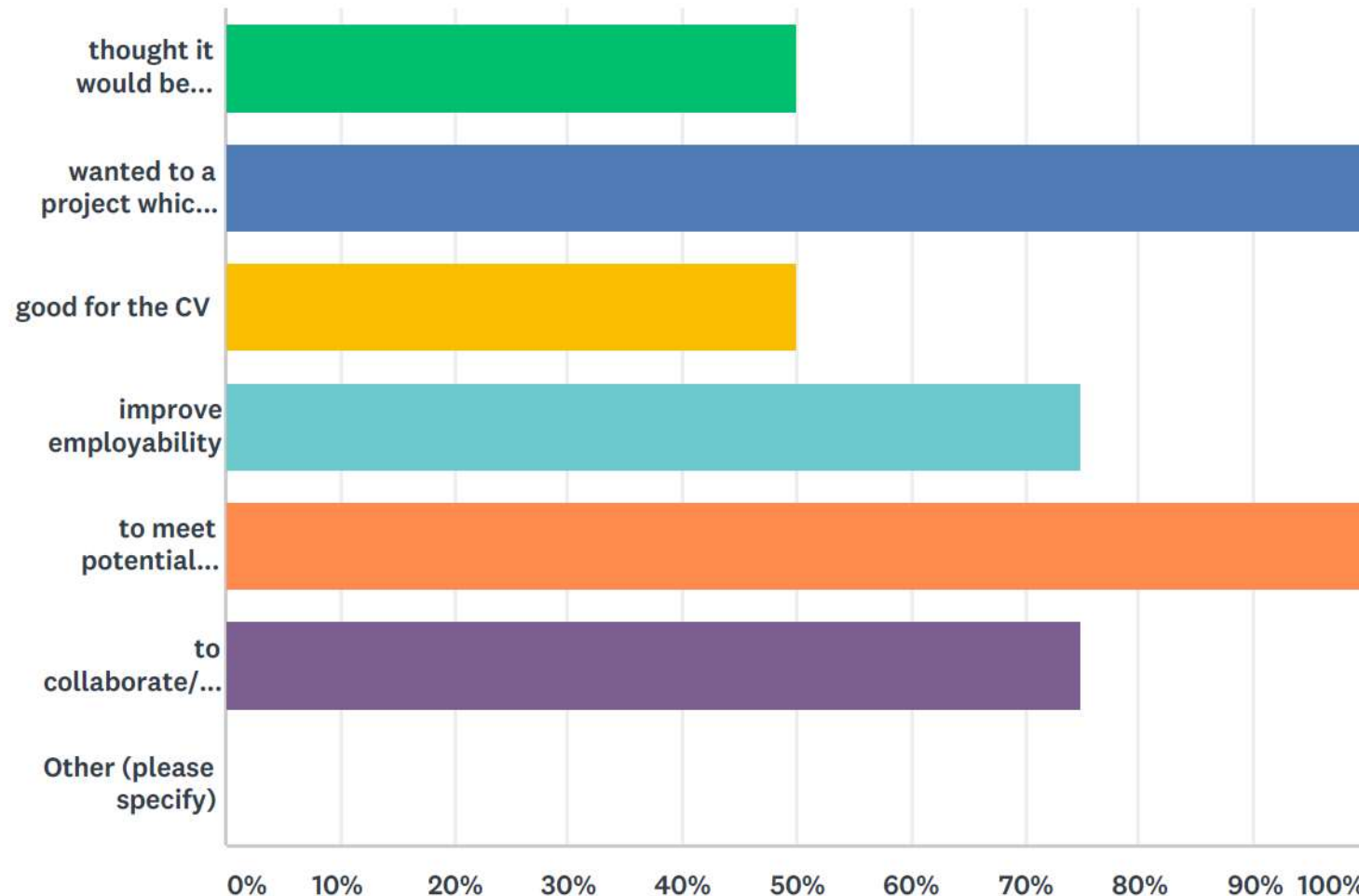
Student Learning Examples



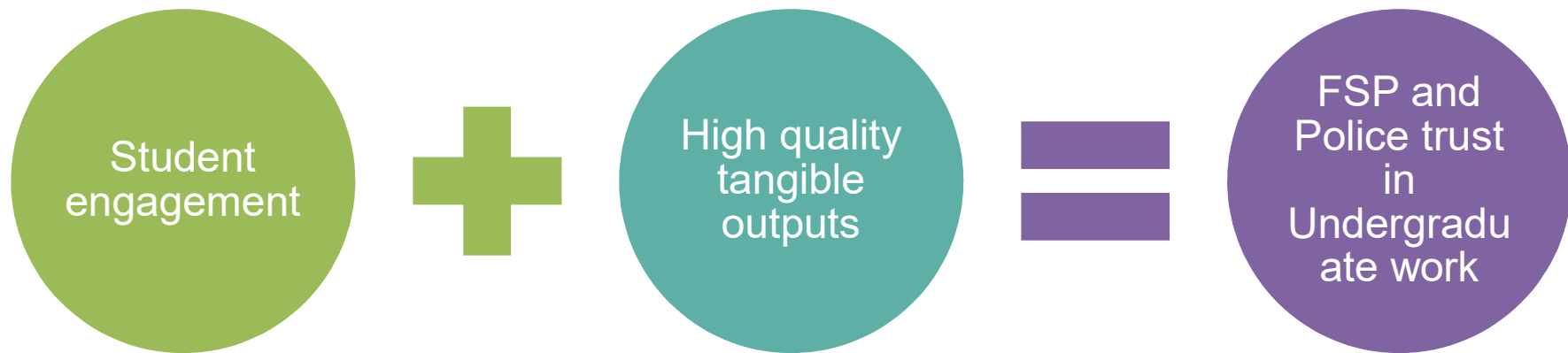
Requirements for Great Student Experience



Why Students want to do Experiential Learning....



Overall Approach....



Student Experience..... Overall



Benefits for Undergraduate Students

- ❖ Real life experience during degree programme
- ❖ Networking opportunities with Police and FSPs
- ❖ Lab skills increased
- ❖ Related modules improved, *e.g.* Investigating and reporting crime scenes
- ❖ All students graduated before 2016 now work within forensic science/police
- ❖ Improved student experience

" Pretty much the best experience I had whilst at University. I really feel lucky to have had the chance to work with real police samples. This has really helped me with my future career"

Other Feedback from Students

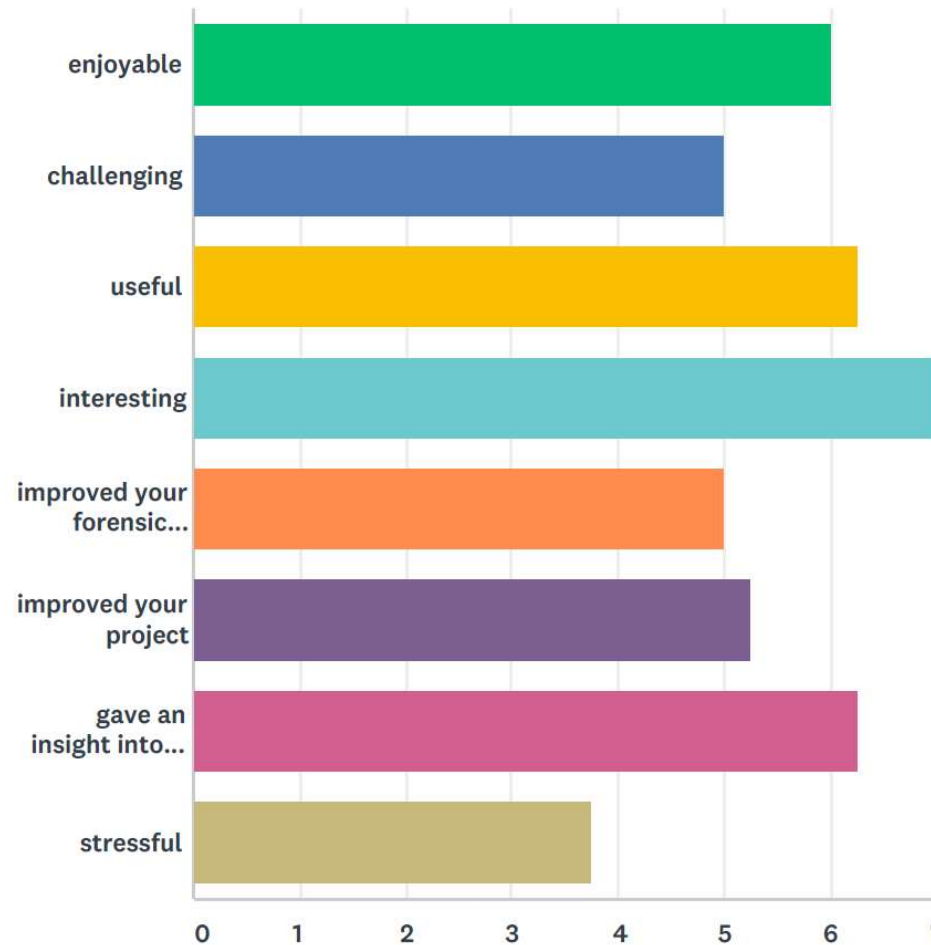
Areas they particularly enjoyed

- ❖ “meeting with the Forensic Investigators to see how they operate”
- ❖ “Enjoyed knowing that my results could have a big impact on how the police operate in the future”
- ❖ “Able to understand how the police work”

Main benefits

- ❖ “Receiving real world experience from the police”
- ❖ “Getting to meet with potential employers”
- ❖ “Opens new doors and career options”
- ❖ “Boosts confidence”
- ❖ “The police offered work experience in return”

Perceptions of Police Contact



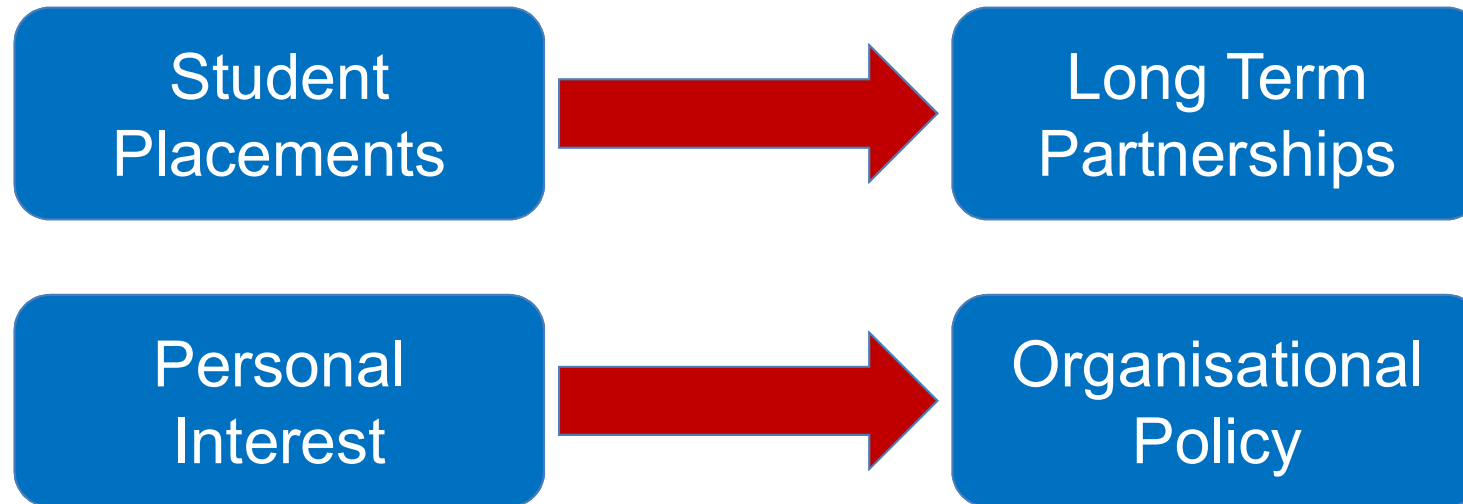
Top Tips

1. Be clear with student expectations
2. Create a strong relationship with Police and communicate regularly
3. Create strict boundaries with the project and evidence
4. Provide regular feedback with students
5. Ensure students realise the benefits of this work

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