



Communication Agencies Association

## Code of Conduct for Creative Placements

### Purpose

This Code provides guidelines and clarity of expectations for junior creative teams and agencies. It has been developed in line with global practice to ensure the industry continues to attract and develop the best creative talent.

Placements are a valuable learning experience for junior creative teams as they look to further develop the skills acquired in their tertiary education. They provide an opportunity to be immersed in an 'ideas environment' and gain unfettered access to Creative Directors and senior creatives. Placements provide a vital stepping stone between study and paid employment.

### Definition of a placement

- A hands-on 'real world' experience of working in an agency.
- An opportunity for the creative team to improve their portfolio and/or impress the agency enough to consider employing them\*.
- The team will be given briefs and expected to produce and present work against them, to deadline, and to an acceptable standard.
- Work will be reviewed on a regular basis by a Creative Director or senior creative.
- Teams may be expected to manage the production (with supervision) of any work that goes through.

\*There is no statutory expectation that a placement will lead to an offer of employment.

### Prior to Commencement of Placements

- The placement period should always be agreed by the team and agency in advance of commencing placement. Suggested time periods are a minimum of 4 weeks, with a maximum of 3 months.

The placement period depends wholly on individual agency resources.

- Teams should be told very clearly that they are strictly in the agency on a real world experience basis and they have no guarantee of any further experience if the agency has no more capacity and/or should they fail to deliver to the standard required. This will also be explained clearly by the creative advertising schools prior to the start of any work experience opportunity.
- Teams should be given clear lines of responsibility and a defined point of contact or mentor.
- Each student on placement should also sign a confidentiality form if required by the agency.

### **Reviews**

There should be regular review times where the Creative Director or a senior creative assesses all work done by the teams, ideally at fortnightly intervals. It is the team's responsibility to book review times at the beginning of their placement.

The onus is on the creative team to flag up the end of their placement and lock in a final review date and/or discussion on further placement or full-time employment opportunities.

The benefit of fortnightly reviews is that teams whose behaviour and work is proving to be of a high standard is recognised. Conversely, teams who are not performing will be encouraged to improve or they'll be shipped out.

### **Subsistence allowance**

Junior creatives have rent and transport costs to pay and need to eat. It is suggested that a minimum \$200 per week subsistence be given, per team member.

Any ordinary expenses incurred (e.g. cabs to shoots) must be reimbursed, in line with the agency's internal procedures.

Ideally, agencies will provide each team member with the following: subsistence allowance of \$200 per week, a desk, chair, PC, internet use and fixed phone for the period they are in the agency. (Most agencies have found that this is the minimum they need to contribute productively.)

### **Payment for work approved, produced and billed to the client**

When the person or team on placement produces work of significant weight (e.g. TV commercial, radio commercial, print ad, billboard, viral or campaign) especially when that work is billable to the client, the person/team should be eligible for some financial reward or reward in kind, at the agency's discretion, beyond the usual weekly subsistence allowance.

This reward can be made during the period, or deferred until exit should the student be unsuccessful in securing employment.

The team should still be paid if the work runs after their placement ends, whether they have found paid employment elsewhere or not.

### **Placement extensions and terminations**

Teams who are successful in extending their work experience further should carry on under the same conditions until:

- a) they are asked to leave, in which case they receive the same discretionary payment for creative contribution only on work that is billable to the client

or

- b) they are fortunate enough to secure a full-time position in the creative department, in which case they will have the ultimate reward for their hard work.

There should, of course, be a limitation to the number of extensions a team should be offered within one agency. If, for example, young creatives have been in the agency for nine months on placement it should trigger something more permanent.

When extending a placement period, the agency should consider offering the team an option to freelance or, at the least, an increase to their subsistence allowance.