

Secrets to successful student internships



Match funding is available from both universities to support organisations to provide quality work experience opportunities for students. Varying levels of funding are available for part- and full-time student and graduate internships, visit skillsbridge.ac.uk for details of current funding available.

Well planned internships can be invaluable for organisations by providing flexible additional support, fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Below are our top tips for ensuring your student internship provides mutual benefit to your student intern and your organisation.

1. Recruiting your intern

Setting expectations and creating rewarding internship roles

Ensuring success in your internship role starts long before the intern is recruited. The need for an intern should be based on specific time-bound tasks that are needed within a project or team. We are all more motivated in roles where the tasks provide a challenge or a chance to develop. The key to ensuring a productive internship for you and the student is to think creatively about how you can design an interesting and rewarding role around these tasks.

The objectives of the internship should be clear and concise. Discuss these at the interview to ensure your intern is happy and feels capable of achieving them and check in regularly once the intern has started.

Internship title – keep it simple to ensure it accurately reflects what the intern has achieved when they add it to their CV

Job description – this will set the intern's expectations, so clearly list tasks you will expect the intern to complete or contribute towards

Personal specification – only include essential criteria to allow for a more diverse range of applicants

2. Intern's arrival

If an intern is with you for a relatively short space of time an induction may seem time consuming, but a good induction can save a lot of time and angst further down the line – so it's worth the investment! It's important to help them feel like part of the team by treating them like a permanent member of staff so complete your organisations induction processes or use our intern induction checklist at the end of this document.

Ensure your organisation is ready for your intern's arrival and ready to welcome them to the team. Save time by ensuring that IT equipment is set-up and desk space is agreed. Organise meetings with all the key personnel that your intern will be working with, to enable your intern to feel confident when operating in their role. Introduce the intern to each member of the team and ask staff to explain their roles within the organisation and how they may work together. Include your intern in any team meetings or events to help them fully experience working life in a professional environment.

3. Work Plan

This may be the first time your intern has worked in a professional environment, so support them to manage their time and workload by organising a work plan with daily tasks and clear objectives (see example below). Check in with the intern regularly (at least weekly) to discuss their progress and any challenges they may



have. If you are concerned about the intern's wellbeing or performance, please contact the internships team for further advice and support.

4. Supervisor & mentor

For you and your intern to make the most of this opportunity, it's important they have a clear line of supervision, their line-manager or supervisor will be their first point of contact for work-related queries and be responsible for the project-planning, task-setting, monitoring and feedback.

As this may be their first experience of a professional working environment, we recommend assigning a separate staff member to act as a mentor to assist them with their integration into the organisation. This could be a good opportunity to give a junior staff member a development opportunity and will provide the intern with a friendly point of contact to introduce to the organisation, recommend the best lunch spots and look out for their wellbeing.

If the supervisor or mentor are concerned about the intern's wellbeing or performance, please contact the internships team for further advice and support.

5. Wrapping up an internship

It is important to have a final catch up with the intern to review their progress and skills development. This is a good opportunity to get their feedback on their experience and ways in which you can improve the internship experiences in future. Some organisations like to ask their intern to write a blog about their experience for their website and the Skills Bridge website.

A reference will be an extremely useful tool for your intern when they are looking for future employment. You are not required to write a reference, but if you feel your intern's work is reference worthy then include as much detail as possible. This may include comments on both the work that they undertook, the outcomes and their achievements as well as their general work ethic and demeanour.

Once the internship is completed the internships team will be in touch to gain feedback from your organisation and the intern to help improve the scheme each year.

Exit Interview Discussion Points

- What was your favourite part of the internship?
- What skills have you developed?
- What are your plans going forward?
- Would you like to keep in touch with the organisation?
- How can we keep improving internship experiences for future interns?



Induction Checklist

Activity	Staff Lead	Complete?
<i>Pre-start</i>		
Set up office access e.g. cards or key fobs		
Set up IT logins and desk space		
<i>First Day</i>		
A tour of the offices, their work station and the facilities		
Welcome by supervisor and introduction to mentor		
General information about the company including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - normal working hours - how to report sickness - how to book holiday - break times - dress code - travel arrangements - lunch facilities 		
Introduce organisation strategy and other key documents		
Full health & safety briefing, including fire procedures		
<i>First Week</i>		
A full discussion around their role, responsibilities, key dates, day-to-day duties and expectations of them as an employee		
Invite to team meetings		
Introduce work plan		
Review progress at the end of first week		

Example Work Plan

This could be a live document on Google Drive or One Drive which relevant staff can access and add to, items should be approved by the lead supervisor before being added to the document.

Task	Staff Lead	Outputs	Due Date	Priority	Comments & Resources
Research funding raising strategies of CICs in the sustainability sector	Fundraising manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Spreadsheet outlining various fundraising strategies Support translating this into a presentation for board 	1 June	Medium	Previous reports available on the drive in: fundraising>sector
Interview participants in X project to gain qualitative feedback for the final project report	Project Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 interviews with a cross-section of participants transcribed and coded thematically 	10 June	High	Project background information can be found in: projects>ProjectX Let's discuss who to interview when you are ready!
Review the social media image bank	Marketing Officer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sort through the bank and remove irrelevant images Source creative commons images to refresh the bank 	20 June	Low	Image bank is stored in: marketing>social media>imagebank



