

Information for Internship hosts

Overview

Students undertaking the Science and Technology Internship gain a genuine experience of working in a science- or technology-related workplace. It is an unpaid internship that is the core of a subject credited to their course. The students are supervised and monitored by the Science and Technology Internship subject coordinator.

Students find their own placement, using the University's online employer databases and information with support from Careers and Industry staff of the University.

Students are informed that they will need to participate in a selection process with their nominated host organisation, and that they need to plan ahead to ensure that this is completed prior to subject commencement.

What happens in the internship?

The internship involves a placement of 80-100 hours in a single organisation, working as an intern while gaining experience of the science and technology-related work conducted in that organisation. Students build on their existing skills, with guidance, and are expected to contribute productively to a project or series of activities set up by the organisation for their placement.

Participating in the internship will also enable students to observe the nature of the organisation more generally – its structure, how different components of the organisation interact, how projects and teams are organised to achieve their goals, and the different ways in which those with a science background apply this in the workplace.

What is expected of internship hosts

Internship hosts will provide a meaningful experience of their workplace for students. They will provide experienced staff to induct, supervise and mentor their intern and to provide a brief student evaluation at the conclusion of the internship. The host organisation will provide a safe working environment for the intern.

What sort of work do interns do?

The nature of the work conducted by the intern will clearly depend on the organisation. As host organisation you will provide an experience that is authentic, so the nature of the science-related work the interns do will vary from placement to placement. Interns may spend time shadowing members of staff in science-related roles, contributing in an assisting capacity to a range of activities. Interns may be asked to be a team member on a project for the duration of the internship – an ongoing project, or one that is completed during the internship. Interns may be assigned to an individual project that can be completed within the 80-100 hours of the placement. Alternatively, the placement may be a combination of these. Specific tasks may be largely office-based and include data entry, literature searches, or preparation of figures for presentation/marketing materials. Alternatively, depending upon the organisation and project, there may be opportunities for hands on laboratory or field-based activities.

What preparation can you expect of an intern?

Interns will normally be enrolled in the final year of their Bachelor degree or at any stage during their Master's program, so will bring the experience of tertiary study in science and technology subjects as well as experience in study in areas outside the sciences. Before embarking on their placement interns will participate in compulsory induction and pre-placement seminars that will prepare them for the expectations of your placement, including skill development in communication and project management.

What are the benefits for the host organisation

The internship program offers organisations the opportunity to interact with students close to graduation. Students undertaking this subject have demonstrated the initiative to explore the different career pathways that particularly interest them, and may have carried out considerable research of a number of organisations before approaching you. They are keen, motivated and are likely to be better prepared than many graduates seeking employment. Even if you are unlikely to be recruiting in the immediate future, offering internship placements provides you with an opportunity to excite the next generation in your areas of activity, increasing the likelihood that high quality employees will be available to your organisation into the future.

Commercial considerations

Agreements:

As the placement is unpaid and forms a component of study embedded in the student's curriculum, internships meet the requirements of a 'vocational placement' in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009. Nevertheless, a formal agreement will be established between the University and the host organisation. Three possible agreements are available, depending on the requirements of the host organisation to own intellectual property generated by the student during the internship.

Health and Safety

Host organisations must have a commitment to safe work practices, such as a formal Occupational Health and Safety Plan, and comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Vic) 2004. Any disagreements, incidents or near accidents must be reported promptly to the Science and Technology Internship subject co-ordinator (see below).

Worker's compensation and insurance

As the internship is unpaid, Worker's Compensation does not apply. The student is covered comprehensively against accident or injury under the University's student insurance policy. The University maintains Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance that covers any liability of the University and the student in relation to the placement, and the host organisation is expected to also maintain appropriate Public Liability insurance.

Subject enquiries

If you would like to participate in the University of Melbourne's Science and Technology Internship program, please contact:

Subject Co-ordinator: [Professor Janet Hergt](#) 8344 7678 or

Science Work-Integrated Learning Team: science-industry-internships@unimelb.edu.au