



DEAKIN
UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

BACHELOR OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

GUIDE FOR HOST ORGANISATIONS



The Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University has a strong commitment to providing students with experiential learning opportunities such as internships.

Internships broaden educational perspective and position theory in workplace contexts, creating a valuable and constructive experience for students.

Internships are also valuable for host organisations, as students provide research capabilities and offer initiative, skills, energy and commitment.

The Faculty continues to work closely with industry partners and students to ensure the internship experience is positive and beneficial for all.

Internship overview

Students enrolled in Deakin's Bachelor of International Studies (BIS) and the combined BIS/BCommerce, and BLaws/BIS are typically studying in the areas of international relations, languages, Middle East studies, community development, and politics and policy studies. In the case of the combined degrees they are also studying commerce or law. The BIS international internship program is designed to develop our students' understanding of the international forces shaping government, business and community in a practical way. It also simultaneously cultivates their appreciation of other countries and societies, at the same time strengthening their skills in intercultural communication.

The program provides opportunities for students to gain experience with a wide range of domestic and overseas institutions and organisations. These include non-government and voluntary organisations, government and diplomatic bodies, umbrella associations and think tanks.

Interns have worked on activities or projects involving:

- » environmental issues and sustainable development
- » commerce and trade
- » defence and security
- » Indigenous affairs and reconciliation
- » community development
- » law and human rights
- » migration and refugees
- » education and health
- » aid and development.

Tasks or projects are designated by the host organisation in liaison with the student and Deakin's BIS Internship Coordinator.

Interns have the opportunity to work on a task from inception to completion, or may contribute to a number of activities, gaining experience and knowledge in different areas. In this way, host organisations may initiate specific projects at no direct cost to themselves. Students are assessed on the basis of their workplace performance and through a range of formal assessment tasks to ensure their contribution is of the highest calibre.

Students who undertake an internship are expected to have well-developed interpersonal and communication skills, along with sound analytic, research and writing capabilities. Furthermore, having sufficiently progressed towards completion of their undergraduate degree, interns have a more mature outlook, and their theoretical knowledge is at a level where it can be applied effectively in a practical sense.

Angela Spicer – India



Imogen Westfield – Nepal

FROM INTERN

Imogen Westfield
Hope for Himalayan Kids, Pokhara, Nepal

'My international internship was working for an NGO that focuses on child protection in orphanages. I sought to undertake my internship in Nepal, as I wished to gain a better, first-hand understanding of development issues.

The task I was assigned at Hope for Himalayan Kids was to create sponsorship biographies for the eighty-six children in their care. Due to the recent decrease in funding, they decided to venture down the path of childhood sponsorship. It was my job to interview the children in the New Ray of Life and Sahara children's homes, in addition to the Jorge Ella and Family Group alternative care homes.

While I found the interviews emotionally draining and difficult at times, I found it rewarding work. In fact, the internship was the most rewarding aspect of my International Studies degree.'

What is a good internship?

Every internship placement is different, and benefits will vary. However, there are some common features a good internship will exhibit. These include:

- » involvement in 'pre-professional' tasks, whether on one project or several
- » effective supervision and support of the student, including provision of appropriate workplace facilities and advice (such as occupational health and safety matters)
- » a commitment on the part of the host organisation to mentoring, including career advice and constructive feedback
- » opportunities to participate in additional activities, such as staff meetings and seminars
- » ending the internship properly, which may involve, for example, the intern presenting their research findings at an agreed forum or exit interview.

To be effective the internship will show a learning progression throughout its duration. Students are aware that they will face substantial, and at times unanticipated, challenges and they expect to be learning new or different ways of working, often within very short timeframes.

A vitally important ingredient to success is the clear identification of goals associated with each internship placement. Care must be taken to ensure these goals or tasks are realistic within the timeframe of the internship.

FROM HOST ORGANISATION

on Imogen Westfield

'Imogen did an excellent job extracting the material from sources, following up on contradictions and inaccuracies, and showed outstanding determination to persevere until she had validated the data. She was also present during major turmoil and staff upheaval and handled the situation extremely well.'

Hope for Himalayan Kids, Nepal

Benefits and advantages



Benefits and advantages for host organisations

Effective internship placements are of considerable benefit to all parties involved. For host organisations, these benefits include:

- » gaining a no/low cost labour resource
- » access to the observations, research and contribution of a keen and talented senior student
- » exposure to current theory and practices through interface with the student, and also through liaison with the student's academic supervisor
- » the opportunity to have identified research needs undertaken, whether individually or team-based
- » playing a role in growing the future workforce and the professional development of graduates
- » the opportunity to influence University curricula, so that skills and knowledge important in the field may be taught
- » developing a cooperative working relationship with the University.

Please note that Deakin University provides complete insurance cover for all interns while they are on placement. Deakin University will maintain public liability insurance, professional indemnity insurance and personal accident insurance for the student in relation to the internship.

Benefits and advantages for students

Internships offer specific advantages to students. These include:

- » gaining practical knowledge and experience to complement studies and assist with career decisions
- » developing networking opportunities for employment and interaction with professionals in their field
- » further developing interpersonal and organisational skills, and the ability to adapt to new and/or unanticipated situations
- » enhancing research and analytical capacities
- » understanding the applied components and dynamics of policy development, implementation and evaluation
- » gaining first-hand appreciation of the relationship between practice, theory and ideas.



Jo Muir – Columbia

FROM HOST ORGANISATION

on Ingrid Barry

'Ingrid was able to apply her skills and knowledge effectively. Her written skills are excellent, and Ingrid impressed us with her ability to quickly and ably write across a range of styles.

Ingrid was very personable and friendly and integrated well into our office and was also a very effective communicator at our events. Although with us for a short time, Ingrid was able to speak very knowledgeably about our organisation to new people, including some very senior Australian and Chinese government officials at important events. Overall Ingrid was an impressive intern, with a very friendly and positive attitude to her work.'

Australia China Alumni Association, Beijing, China

Undertaking an internship

Students typically undertake an internship at the end of second year or during their third year of undergraduate study.

When

Year round – start and completion dates are flexible and can be negotiated.

Hours

There are two internship options available to students. The first involves a minimum duration of four weeks (20 days) full time or part time equivalent; while the second is for a minimum of eight weeks (40 days) full time or part time equivalent.

The second option carries a greater credit point load, however, it is only available to students with placements overseas. It must be emphasised that these are minimum requirements and students are at liberty to undertake placements for a greater duration.

At the discretion of the parties concerned, the practical hours may be completed in one block, or separated into allocated days over a longer period. Placements overseas are typically completed in one block.

Supervision

Deakin's BIS Internship Coordinator will liaise with the host organisation supervisor and the intern. Interns are required to maintain an online journal (using Deakin Studies Online), reporting on their internship-related activities and learning experiences.

FROM INTERN

Ian Bloomer
Uni-Capital Washington Internship Program,
Washington DC, USA

'I completed an internship placement in Washington DC with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Commission is part of the US Congress and is made up of both Senate and House of Representatives members. They mainly monitor human rights issues over in Europe.

Highlights would have to be drafting a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the issues of Iraqi refugees, and helping research, edit and combine a massive book of information for the Commission that was used as background for congressional staff while on overseas trips. These experiences highlighted how the Commission worked in relation to forming one aspect of US foreign policy.'

FROM HOST ORGANISATION

on Kate Smith

'As this was the foundation's first experience with University interns, we were a little unsure of what to expect but we were suitably impressed. Kate showed great initiative and enthusiasm. Her passion and interest in social justice and human rights is clearly evident and this came through in her research and analysis of themes. She was always eager to learn more about projects and to contribute to discussions around project and thematic areas. She wasn't afraid to ask questions, very insightful, and showed great sensitivity to sometimes complex contexts e.g. asking how to articulate issues around HIV/AIDS within the Catholic school environment.'

Lasallian Foundation, Melbourne





Paddy Tobias – East Timor

Securing an internship

1. Students contact the Bachelor of International Studies (BIS) Internship Coordinator well in advance to discuss their eligibility to enrol in an internship, their research interests and possible host organisations.
2. In liaison with the BIS Internship Coordinator, the student approaches potential host organisations. Details of the internship (duration, duties and responsibilities) are settled once a suitable host organisation has been found. This process will involve the host organisation, the student and the Internship Coordinator, and can generally be handled via email.
3. Once satisfied that relevant criteria have been met, the Internship Coordinator will approve the placement (see 'approval process').
4. A formal *Internship Agreement* is forwarded to the host organisation for signature.
5. Commencement details are agreed between the student and host organisation.

Agreeing on internship tasks

A key element in the approval process is establishing suitable activities the intern will be involved with. This is a matter for the host organisation, in discussion with the student and internship coordinator. It is important that the work involved is manageable within the agreed timeframes, and that it furthers the interests of both student and host organisation. The interests and objectives of our students are varied and we do what we can to accommodate these, along with the needs of the host organisation. Interns may be involved in one project or work on a number of substantive activities. They may work on their own or as part of a team. It is desirable for interns to have one or two core tasks, but also to be involved in more day-to-day type activities. This will ensure that they gain wider exposure to, and understanding of, the host organisation.

Approval process

Before we can approve a placement the Internship Coordinator requires an email or letter from the host organisation covering the following:

- » confirmation that the organisation can offer the student an internship placement
- » details of the planned dates, or at least approximate dates, of the internship
- » a statement of the activities and outcomes or deliverables involved
- » the contact details of the person who will be the student's supervisor
- » confirmation that there is an appropriate induction process for the intern covering relevant occupational health and safety considerations
- » if the intern will be involved in working with children, confirmation that the organisation has appropriate child protection standards in place.

FROM HOST ORGANISATION

on John Brenton

'We were very happy with his engagement with a wide variety of tasks and people. [John displayed] clarity of thought, high initiative, good capacity to work in a team, quick apprehension of complex issues and of the detailed tasks required, very adaptable to changing needs – his commitment was clear and he was able to find alternative routes around problems.'

Edmund Rice Centre, Sydney



Host organisation responsibilities

- » Ensure the intern receives meaningful, industry-based educational opportunities involving a range of relevant tasks and activities. Care must be taken to ensure these tasks are realisable within the timeframe involved. It is desirable that during the first day of the internship, the intern meets with their host supervisor to formally set out the activities to be undertaken.
- » Provide the intern with adequate induction and orientation training, including training in safe work and emergency procedures. The intern is to be provided with copies of, or access to, the rules and procedures of the host organisation that are relevant to the internship, including those relating to health and safety, security and emergency procedures.
- » Appoint a suitably qualified member of the organisation to act as supervisor and mentor, who will maintain regular contact with the intern during the placement. Even though the intern and supervisor may be working side-by-side, feedback in the form of thoughtful, focussed discussions is necessary.
- » Liaise as necessary with Deakin's BIS Internship Coordinator throughout the internship.
- » At the end of the internship complete a *Host Evaluation* form to provide formal feedback on the student's performance and accomplishments.

Student's responsibilities

- » Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the student is responsible for all costs associated with: travel to and from the organisation, passports and visas, accommodation and living expenses, travel insurance, vaccinations, health insurance, clothing and personal expenses and other incidental expenses incurred during the course of the internship. The host organisation is not obliged to pay the student while undertaking an internship.
- » To dress and behave in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.
- » To attend the placement on the agreed time basis and advise their supervisor, at the earliest opportunity, if unable to attend on any given day/days due to illness or other reasons. Any accident or injury must be reported to both the host organisation supervisor and the BIS Internship Coordinator.
- » To maintain regular contact with the BIS Internship Coordinator via a reflective online journal or other appropriate means.
- » When approaching third parties for information it is appropriate that interns explain that they are a Deakin University student completing an internship under the supervision of 'x' at 'y' organisation. It is important that interns do not convey the impression that they are employees of either the University or the host organisation.
- » Interns are bound by the rules, regulations, protocols, procedures and by-laws of the host organisation, as advised to them, and are required to maintain the confidentiality of information concerning the business affairs of the host organisation.

The responsibilities of the relevant parties – Deakin University, the intern, and the host organisation – are elaborated upon in the Internship Agreement (see 'securing an internship' on page 5). Any questions or concerns regarding respective responsibilities should be directed to the BIS Internship Coordinator.

Evaluation

The formal University assessment for each intern includes:

- » a pre-departure report profiling the organisation where the intern will be working and detailing the intern's placement goals and expectations
- » a reflective online journal which is maintained throughout the placement
- » a final report in which the intern evaluates their experience and what they have learned, personally, professionally and ethically.

As already indicated, at the end of the internship the host supervisor will be asked to complete a *Host Evaluation* form concerning the intern's performance and accomplishments. In addition, the student completes a *Student Evaluation* form to provide feedback on their internship experience. Both reports are returned to the Deakin University Experiential Learning Officer at the end of a placement and are part of the Faculty's continuous improvement practices.

FROM INTERN

Alex Donegan
Department of Planning and
Community Development, Melbourne

'I was based in the International Affairs Unit and worked on a variety of tasks with an international element to them. During my time as an intern I was exposed to both aid-based projects (such as a Tsunami reconstruction) and commercial projects (such as export development). Seeing such a wide range of projects in action really opened my eyes to the enormous possibilities that are out there.

Being an intern is completely different to work experience. The staff that I worked with really embraced what I was doing, were very helpful and took the projects that I was doing very seriously. The projects I worked on were real projects with real outcomes and implications, and the skills I learnt include communication, time management, team work, the application of knowledge and a greater understanding of the global environment.'



Alex Donegan – Australia



FURTHER INFORMATION

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