

DEVELOPING A PLACEMENT OR INTERNSHIP PROJECT BRIEF**TOP TIPS FOR ORGANISATIONS HOSTING A COURSE-BASED STUDENT INTERN****CONTENTS**

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CONTENT AND CONTEXT

The tips below are based on feedback from host organisations, University internship course coordinators, academic supervisors and students. They were designed to help make the internship or work placements rewarding for everyone involved. There are links to additional resources at the end of the document.

We recommend using this document in combination with the – ‘Managing, Mentoring and Supporting your Intern’ document and other material you have received from the University course coordinator (for

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example a negotiated learning plan or project/work plan). If you have questions or concerns, please contact the course coordinator for the internship.

THINGS TO CONSIDER FIRST:

- Do you have a meaningful project or work that is suitable for a student intern?
- Do you have people who are happy and available to supervise and support an intern?
- Does the amount of work fit within the time frame/hours of the internship? It may be helpful to create a rough calendar of tasks and project timeline to map this out.

HOW THE PROJECT BRIEF SUPPORTS YOUR INTERN

Establish good support systems for your intern: A good project brief is key for a successful internship and so is having great support systems in place. Find out more with the accompanying “Managing, Mentoring and Supporting your Intern” document.

Clear expectations: Students find it challenging when they don’t know what work is expected of them. What are the KPIs or milestones of the project or internship experience? Be as clear and simple as possible and have regular check-ins to ensure they understand what is expected of them. Encourage questions, as sometimes students are too polite or shy to say if they don’t understand something.

Encourage your student to use a project/task management tool: There are some examples in the intern student toolkit including the “Internship Project goals and project record”. You might have suggestions yourself or can adapt what your organisation already uses.

Be prepared to work with your student to review the project if need be: Life, health, and other commitments or events happen. Organisational priorities change and things may take longer than you or your intern thought. This means you may need to help your intern prioritise, as this type of work and project will likely be new to them.

SOME INSPIRATION - PAST STUDENT INTERN PROJECTS.

- Review a social media platform and create a strategy and example posts.
- Design, distribute and collate results of a feedback survey.
- Review and analyse existing online and paper resources, recommending improvements to increase engagement.
- Support the planning, organisation, and running of an annual event, including evaluations.
- Support the development of an online app for customer or stakeholders.

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*Many of these projects involve the intern producing **a final report and presentation** on key findings during their project. This is valuable experience for interns and produces a tangible and lasting resource for the organisation to use.*

SUGGESTED HEADINGS/TEMPLATE BREAKDOWN FOR THE INTERN PROJECT BRIEF

You may be asked to complete a specific form when hosting a student as part of an academic internship. This may include some of the below, or you may be asked to create your own brief. If so, we recommend using these suggested headings to structure the brief.

- Aim of project
- Background/context of project
- The team the project is part of
- Key tasks of project
- Suggested project timelines
- Key milestones
- Support – supervisors/mentors/buddies.
- Success measures

DISCUSSING THE PROJECT BRIEF WITH A POTENTIAL INTERN

A number of course-based internships involve a first meeting or interview with a prospective intern at the initial part of the process that includes discussing a project brief.

This is a chance to gauge the intern's level of experience of the key tasks, as well as their motivations and goals for doing the internship and whether the project scope is realistic. The meeting gives you an opportunity to consider if and how you may adjust the brief to capitalise on your potential intern's strengths and motivations.

Although the student should have seen the project brief before the meeting, it is a good time to discuss this further. Questions to consider and discuss could include:

- What is their level of experience in key areas related to the project brief, for example, data entry, writing, analysis and research? What training can you provide? What training is not possible to provide?
- What are their key interests and can these be supported as part of the project?
- Why is the student doing the internship? Career goals? Personal goals? Networking? Can there be a greater emphasis on these areas?
- Are you in a position to tweak the brief or accompanying tasks to suit the particular student?
- How can you as the intern host support your intern's goals during the project?
- How much experience do they have in a work environment like yours?

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- How do they like to be managed? (This is normally different from a general staff member or a graduate).
- How might this project support their career goals? Might this experience provide a pathway into a particular job?

For more tips on having an interview or first meeting with a future intern please look at the 'Managing, mentoring and supporting your intern' resource.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR INTERN HOSTS

As an intern host, your key contact is your internship course coordinator. If you have questions about developing your project or needing to adapt it, please reach out to them. They are also there for any other questions or concerns that may come up during the internship.

EXAMPLES: PAST INTERNSHIP PROJECT BRIEFS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. STUDENT WELLBEING TEAM, TE HERENGA WAKA, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Intern role title: Research Assistant: Bubble monitoring survey report. One intern required

Background/Scope: Each year Manawa Ora Student Wellbeing carries out a Bubble Monitoring Survey that supports the review of services provided in the Bubble (SU216) by Manawa Ora's Bubble Leaders. Bubble Leaders are trained in peer support and offer connection opportunities in a positive environment (The Bubble) that all students can access. They also provide warm handovers and referrals to student services. Data is collected regularly from those utilising the Bubble space by Bubble Leaders and this project would require review, analysis and reporting of this data. The report also needs to include recommendations for future practice.

Core responsibilities – including key tasks, dates and milestones.

Key tasks

- Liaising with Senior Student Wellbeing Advisor for survey briefing, scope of report, expectations
- Analysing collected data and writing up report including recommendations
- Engagement with Bubble Leaders who collect data
- Reporting to Senior Student Wellbeing Advisor

Key Dates:
Data collection recommences 5 July
Workplace induction 23 July
Survey briefing completed 30 July
Report scope completed by 6 August
Data collection ends 14 August (mid tri break)
Analyse data completed by 10 September

Prepare draft reports 24 September
Complete final report by 10 October 2021.

Milestones:
Data is collected (minimum 100 participants) 5 July
A plan is agreed for report structure and function 6

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August
Analysis is completed 10 September

Project completed 10 October.

Working timings and requirements

Starting week beginning 19 July Up to 5 hours per week within work hours

May be worked flexibly at office hot desk or remotely

Must attend weekly supervision in person, or via zoom

Key skills/requirements

Essential: report writing skills, ability to work autonomously once set up but stay connected in a team, initiative and resourcefulness, clear and open communicator, asks questions, honest, ability to work with people from equity groups

Desirable: project management skill

Mentoring/Reporting: Intern would report to the Senior Student Wellbeing Advisor, this would include general mentoring and supervision.

2. SAMARITANS NEW ZEALAND

Internship Outline:

Preparation

Overall approach: We envisage our student being able to conduct research primarily through a survey of volunteers (see below), followed by focus groups. Related research requires a literature/web site review (personal contact where possible) to compare and contrast a few similar volunteer organisations. E.g. Youthline, Anxiety.com or University counselling service. To include their training, practical and emotional support, professional development, certification. as outlined in 4) below

Apart from attendance at events such as course sessions, mentoring sessions or skills presentations, (potentially 28 hours) all work can be designed and conducted at home or via Zoom.

Proposed research focus:

1. Initial training and mentoring: through initial familiarisation of our current training and mentoring - what are the aims and objectives of these components? Are they closely aligned with the overall values and purpose of Wellington Samaritans? Does the training and mentoring succeed in achieving the stated objectives?

Training course: Saturday afternoons 1 – 4pm 10 July to 7 August.

Mentoring: observe and assess a selection of sessions 10 August – 24 August

Draft survey questions to elicit volunteer perspective on the correlation between training and practice on the phones.

Note delivery methods and content for comparative purposes

2. Post training support: Samaritans aims to provide caring and professional support to all volunteers through 24/7 availability of shift leaders and regular meetings with small Buddy Groups. How effective is that support in the view of shift leaders and volunteers?

- Attend one or two buddy group meetings via Zoom as arranged
- Draft survey to include questions to elicit volunteer perspective on:
 - Practical/emotional support and,
 - motivating/demotivating factors relating to undertaking volunteer commitments
 - How does Samaritans compare with similar organisations in this regard?

3. On-going skills development: We aim to offer 10 skills development sessions each year to ensure volunteers remain aware of the general mental health area.

- Attend any events offered during the research period. E.g. Saturday 28 August 11am – 3.30pm, possible pizza evening in July
- Draft survey to include questions to elicit volunteer perspective on interest level, variety, effectiveness, overall value etc
- How does Samaritans compare with similar organisations in this regard?

4. Literature/web site review: Benchmarking Samaritans against similar organisations

- Conduct a survey of selected voluntary organisations [2 or 3?] which provide similar training
- Compare and contrast delivery methods, course content and accreditation (where available)
- Identify the role accreditation may have in attracting volunteers to an organization
- Identify to what extent, and in what ways, their training recognises the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi?

5. Produce final written report and presentation to Operations Committee: commenting on items 1 - 4 above in a benchmarking context

- Overall findings of the survey of volunteers
- Analysis of literature/web site review
- In what ways is Samaritans succeeding in its objectives?

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- From our volunteer perspective?
- In comparison to benchmarked organisations?
- What recommendations can you offer for Samaritans to improve or introduce?

First internship project induction meeting

The purpose of the project is to carry out a reasonably in-depth benchmarking activity against organisations who offer a similar service, and to make informed recommendations for any changes Samaritans training could usefully introduce.

The project fits into work requested by the Board of Wellington Samaritans to assess and describe our level of service and how Samaritans fits in with similar organisations in the mental health scene. The Operations Committee will use the results of the intern's research as the basis for:

- strategic operations planning and policy making, and
- “telling the Samaritans’ story” relating to funding needs

Timeline

- Away 12 Aug – 26 Aug – literature review
- Literature report 6 Sept
- Half-way review Tuesday 24 Aug
- Run survey week of 13 Sept
- Focus groups following week 20th Sept
- Presentation to Ops Tuesday 12 Oct

3. CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT TEAM, TE HERENGA WAKA, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Organisation

Wellington Careers and Employment, Victoria University of Wellington

Mentors

Career Consultants Alice H and Louise T

Intern title

Resource and Engagement Assistant

Project.

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Reviewing a range of Careers and Employments resources and engagement strategies/processes with students across our various programmes and creating or improving related content to better meet the needs of the student population. Plus supporting the team with a range of work tasks. At the end of the internship this would involve producing an overall report/review on our engagement activities and ways we could improve in 2022.

Intern's key responsibilities

- Review video content, web content and print content and share a student perspective on what works well and ideas to improve content/things that are missing.
- Support the Wellington Plus Leadership programme student awards administration, review the new Wellington Plus Facebook page and create several new posts for the page and research some best practise around student volunteering engagement.
- Refresh some of our visual templates for flyers, PowerPoints and resources.
- Create a large Careers and Employment promotions board near the hub.

Specific skills that could be useful

Social media knowledge, adobe photoshop, excel, PowerPoint would all be useful.
Intern should be proactive, collaborative and a good editor.

About our team

Our team is diverse with 13 staff working across a range of programmes, we are busy, and look to provide a high level of careers and employability support to students and graduates. We do a wide range of activities related to promotion and are focusing more on increasing our online student engagement.

Task & Project Plan *(used to work on with students during placement)*

Careers and Employment Resource and Engagement Assistant Internship 2021

Part 1 Resource Reviews and Recommendations

Reviewing a range of Careers and Employment Resources both online and offline

Performing Individual analysis on resources including:

- Analysing their individual effectiveness to the general student population and other groups
- Determining parameters to analyse resources. E.g. what you think works well; things that make the access confusing; the fact that you didn't know about; it seems irrelevant; the format is unattractive or hard to use etc.
- Suggestions for each resource improving usefulness, quality, accessibility of resources to better engage with more students

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Deciding on best way to record findings for resources as you review them and creating a suitable document format – excel, word, Trello etc. (3 hours)

Creating final written report summary of findings and some overall recommendations which will likely incorporate summary of findings document.

Part 2 – Content and template plus engagement with faculties

Refreshing, re-formatting or creating some new content/templates/resources to improve several specific resources for the Careers and Employment team.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Developing an internship project brief (Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington accompanying document)

[Mentor intern checklist \(Source: Dublin University\)](#)

[Manager of intern checklist \(Source: Dublin University\)](#)

[Employers guide to building quality internships \(Source: Local Government Network, Sacramento\)](#)