

ICAS Foundation internships

Providing an internship

An internship is where an individual works to gain relevant professional experience to help them progress in their career. In this competitive job market students with relevant work experience are more employable and prepared for the workplace than those students that come straight from university. Students from disadvantaged communities often don't have the connections to get these opportunities, which is why the ICAS Foundation works with internship providers to remove these barriers and open up the profession to become more socially inclusive.

ICAS Foundation internship remuneration

We believe it is important to remunerate interns fairly for the duties/tasks they undertake. Internships must comply with all current employment legislation provisions, including National Minimum Wage (NMW) legislation. All interns should be reimbursed for any necessary work-related expenses, such as travel costs. The employer should provide interns with written information on remuneration and their expenses claims policy.

ICAS Foundation internship best practice

To ensure both employers and interns acquire the maximum benefits from an internship, we recommend that an internship should follow five principles of best practice:

- Preparation
- Induction
- Treatment
- Supervision and mentoring
- Certification, reference and feedback

Each of these principles describes core elements necessary to allow both employer and intern to benefit from the internship.

Preparation

Good preparation is important to successful internships and recruiting the right person who possess the appropriate skills, qualifications and potential. In advance of recruitment employers should:

- Prepare an induction plan
- Identify the work that the intern will be responsible for
- Establish how the internship will provide the intern with a genuine opportunity to acquire skills and experience relevant to a professional career
- Agree the skills and personal attributes that the intern needs to demonstrate in performance reviews
- Ensure that they have the capacity to provide the right level of support to an intern
- Understand the rights and responsibilities both of the employer and the intern in terms of working conditions and remuneration

Induction

Interns should receive a proper induction at the beginning of the internship. Whatever the size of the organisation, joining a new workplace can be intimidating for those entering the job market. It is therefore important to introduce an intern to their colleagues and explain the organisation's values to enable them to become a fully integrated team member.

Treatment

Interns should be treated with exactly the same degree of professionalism and duty of care as regular employees, including access to disciplinary and grievance procedures. The intern should be given as much responsibility and diversity in their work as possible. Employers should:

- Ensure that interns are made to feel welcome and part of the organisation
- Provide interns with work that develops their skills – an intern's structured work plan should contribute to their professional and learning objectives and should be open to revision
- Allow interns to attend job interviews or complete study requirements, as necessary
- Be cognizant of issues relating to insurance, health and safety, and the provisions of the Working Time Regulations (1998)
- Consider part-time internships so as to provide opportunities for those who have responsibilities as carers
- Provide interns with equal access to paid holiday, in line with the statutory minimum

Interns should know who to go to access support if they are concerned about work or with how they are being treated at work.

Supervision and mentoring

Interns tend to be inexperienced and may need regular support and supervision. Good management and supervision will help to make them more productive and develop more quickly. There should be a dedicated person(s) to act as a supervisor and mentor. The supervisor/ mentor should:

- Provide ongoing feedback and support and be able to appraise interns' performance and competencies on tasks and group exercises
- Hold regular performance reviews, based on the intern's learning objectives
- Agree and revise the learning objectives for the internship with the intern
- Conduct a formal performance review to evaluate the success of the intern's time with the organisation

Certification, reference and feedback

On completion of the internship, the employer should provide the intern with:

- A certificate or reference letter detailing the work they have undertaken, the skills and experience acquired, and the content of the formal performance review conducted at the end of the internship
- The opportunity to give feedback on their experience in an 'exit interview' – this would provide the employer with the opportunity to reflect on the quality of internship that they deliver

If you think you can support the work of the ICAS Foundation by arranging an internship for one of our students, then contact us at enquiries@icasfoundation.org.uk