

Overview

Students undertaking the Science Work Placement course gain a genuine experience of working in a science- or technology-related workplace. It is the core of a subject credited to their degree. The students are supervised and monitored by the Course Convenor.

What happens in the internship?

The internship involves a placement of a minimum of 105 hours (three weeks full-time or spread out part-time across a semester) 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 the internship host?

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 report at the conclusion of the internship, comprising 10% of the students assessment. 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. It is expected that the placement will be commensurate with the level and experience of the student and the host will provide the student with tasks, responsibilities and exposure to the business organisation directly linked to the student's chosen field.

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 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 later years of their course, and so will bring the experience of tertiary study in science and technology subjects. Before embarking on their placement interns will participate in compulsory induction online module that will prepare them for the expectations of your placement.

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. 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

If the placement is unpaid and forms a component of study embedded in the student's curriculum, it will 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.

Health and Safety

Host organisations must have a commitment to safe work practices and comply with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Any disagreements, incidents or near accidents must be reported promptly to the Course Convenor (see below).

Worker's compensation and insurance

If 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 UNSW Science Internship program, please contact: science.industry@unsw.edu.au