

IMMERSE

Summer Start-up Internship Programme

Company Handbook

21 April 2022



IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme

Host Company Handbook

Introduction

This handbook is designed to introduce you to the **IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme**. It addresses the various range of questions that you might have, identifying the potential value of interns, setting out the expectations of the intern, and outlining the process for hiring, working with, and evaluating an intern.

Content

1. Internship	page 3
1.1. What is an internship?	
1.2. Internships benefits	
1.3. Internship duration and conditions	
2. Students	page 4
2.1. Which students are involved in the internship programme?	
2.2. What type of work does an intern do?	
3. Start-up Company	page 5
3.1. Start-up enterprise eligibility requirements & responsibilities	
3.2. Role of mentor	
3.3. Role of supervisor	
3.4. Intern evaluation process requirements	
4. Best Practices	page 6
4.1. Making the most of the Internship	
4.2. Planning & preliminary organisation	
4.2.1. Onboarding	
4.2.2. Supervision & monitoring	
4.2.3. Feedback	
4.2.4. Dealing with problems	
5. Recruitment process	page 8
5.1. Interview and selection process	
Appendixes	page 10
1. Interview Scoring Sheet	
2. Internship Host Company Confirmation Details	
3. Internship Evaluation Form	

1. Internship:

1.1 What is an internship?

An internship is a period of practical training, carried out by a student within a company or organisation, or in this case a start-up enterprise.

Internships are flexible and the start-up should develop the internship around the needs of their business. For example, internships can be arranged around key tasks or projects that have to be carried during the internship period.

1.2 Internships benefits for the start-up

For a start-up enterprise, an internship can provide several benefits, including:

- High quality work product from the intern hired.
- Introduce fresh ideas and new ways of thinking.
- An opportunity to recruit a flexible resource for a specific task (e.g. product testing, market research, etc.).
- Provide resources for special projects which might not be done otherwise.
- An early start on the recruitment and training of possible future employees.
- New technology and innovative ideas that students bring from the classroom into the start-up.
- Diversity within your start-up's workforce.
- A chance to tell students what your enterprise is all about.

1.3 Internship duration and conditions

Internship appointments will be made following an advertising process through the GROWTHhub project website and email communications, the TU Dublin Careers Service, and where targeted through relevant disciplinary programmes and schools. Interviews and selection of interns will be by the start-ups alone.

- The IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme is designed to be a summer internship, meaning that the intern will only be part of the start-up team for an **8-12 week period**. The specific period will be agreed between the start-up and the intern.
- The internship is a **paid placement** with the payment to interns funded by the start-ups.
- The internship is designed as an **experiential learning experience** for the intern. For this they will need the opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback on their performance. Interns will need to be **assigned a mentor** who will be encouraged to create an open line of communication and comfortable working relationship with the intern as this will play a large role in the internship experience.
- The tasks or **projects assigned to interns will depend on each start-up**. Start-ups are encouraged to give the intern projects that tie in previous coursework or give them something physical to show at the end of their internship. The intern is participating in the internship to advance their professional skills and is capable of contributing innovative thinking based on the courses that they have taken to date.

All interns are required to participate in a pre-internship training which will prepare interns for professional and start-up context of the internship. The start-up internship will be validated as a CPD module with the student submitting a learning diary and reflective learning report. A graduation event will follow.

2. Students:

2.1 Which students are involved in the internship programme?

- Students from any school, faculty or campus are eligible to apply for the paid internships.
- Undergraduate students must have completed Year 3 of their level 7 or level 8 programme at the time of commencement of the internship.
- Postgraduate students must have completed the first two terms of their programme at the time of commencement of the internship.

2.2 What type of work does an intern do?

An essential part of a successful internship is deciding what kinds of work and projects the intern will do. To keep the intern interested and engaged, the interns should have enough work and appropriately challenging work.

In terms of day-to-day work successful internships tend to be structured as follows:

Project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be a special analysis or project that will require the intern to use and develop their accountancy skills. • This should form the major part of the intern's work, for example, the intern may assist with a system implementation project.
General work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be ad hoc work that will give the intern a better understanding of day-to-day operations in your business and in the workplace more generally. • It may involve assisting colleagues with routine tasks, which could help give the intern a better understanding of how the company operates.
Reactive work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might involve helping out with non-planned work that needs an urgent response. • Dealing with urgent issues is an important part of working life so it can be valuable experience.

3. Start-up Company

3.1 Start-up enterprise eligibility requirements & responsibilities

Participating start-ups will be required to:

1. assigned a mentor
2. provide an open line of communication, a safe work environment, challenging and meaningful work, supervision, and
3. feedback regarding the intern's performance.

3.2 Role of the Mentor:

- The role of mentor will provide meaningful guidance to the intern and to assist the intern with a task or project; and provide the student with the opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback on their performance.
- The mentor should try to create a comfortable working relationship with the intern as this will play a large role in the internship experience.
- The mentor serves as several roles:

As teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping the intern to learn about the business • Explaining projects and processes
As supporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to make the transition to workplace as easy as possible • Answering questions or concerns • Serving as a positive role model
As evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing constructive feedback to the intern on a regular basis

3.3 Role of the Supervisor:

- The role of supervisor is important as this will be the individual assigning the projects that the intern will work on and the individual who is responsible for the professional projects/situations the intern will experience.

The role of mentor and supervisor may be the same individual, but it is important that these roles are filled by someone that is experienced in the company and who is able to commit time to the intern's learning experience.

3.4 Role in the Intern Evaluation Process:

It will ultimately be useful to the intern to receive some type of evaluation of their performance. This could include;

- Information on the strengths and weaknesses of the intern that were that will need to be improved upon to assist in career advancement in this field.
- Intern progress should also be discussed periodically with the intern, and it will be a requirement for you to conduct a midpoint and final evaluation of the intern.
- At the conclusion of the internship, and as part of the student evaluation process, the mentor is required to complete an evaluation form. This is set out in Appendix 3 and guidance on its completion is also available from the IMMERSE Coordinator.

4. Best practices

4.1 Making the most of the internship

The first step is to **get a clear understanding of how an intern will fit into your business** – what will their role be and how can they contribute to your company's goals.

To help you with this you might want to **consider the following questions:**

- What does your business hope to achieve from the internship?
- Is your business looking to fill a need on a specific project or in a specific role?
- Will the internship focus on one major project/role, or cover a variety of small projects/roles?
- At the end of the internship what would you expect the intern to have achieved/delivered?

Start-up interns are seeking opportunities that stimulate their interest in entrepreneurship and provide real-world experience. A meaningful, **purposeful internship will:**

- provide challenging projects and tasks
- give interns focused, purposeful roles to keep them motivated
- give them a broad exposure to the organisation
- provide supervision and mentoring
- set clear goals and objectives for the intern to achieve.

4.2 Planning & Preliminary organisation

The basis of a successful and quality internship lies in good planning and preliminary organisation.

4.2.1 Appropriate Onboarding

Onboarding of the intern is critical. It is important that once the intern arrives, the mentor should plan to provide some type of orientation to your workplace. This should include:

- a tour of the facility,
- introduction to staff and an explanation of their roles within the company,
- a copy of company handbook or employee behaviour guidelines,
- a description of day-to-day office function.

The intern will need to know:

- typical working hours,
- when they should arrive,
- when a lunch break should be taken,
- where parking is available, and
- where the various pieces of office equipment are located and directions on using them
- work attire requirements

4.2.2 Good supervision and mentoring

One of the biggest causes of unsuccessful internships is lack of supervision or guidance and/or insufficient workloads. The best way to avoid such issues is to **encourage open dialogue** with your intern from the outset so you can address any concerns early on.

For most interns this is a new experience, and they may need support in balancing their academic work and the internship. While on internship, students are required to complete a learning log and a reflective learning report. You

will complete an evaluation. It is important for you to be aware of these requirements. Take time to understand your intern's obligations outside of the internship. A copy of the student's handbook will be provided to you.

4.2.3 Effective feedback

An internship can only be a true learning experience if constructive feedback is provided. An effective evaluation will focus on the intern's initial learning objectives identified at the start of the internship. Their mentor/supervisor should take time to evaluate both the intern's positive accomplishments and areas for improvement.

There are various reasons an intern may not be successful or fully engaged in the position. The most important advice here is to be open and honest with the intern. Be clear on your expectations (which will align to the initial advertisement and job description). Make sure the intern feels as though they can openly discuss any issues or concerns with you. In most instances open dialogue can be enough to resolve any issues around expectations and/or performance.

4.3.4 Dealing with problems

If the intern is not responsive to feedback that you provide and there is consistent underperformance or a lack of professional behaviour we ask you to contact the IMMERSE coordinator.

If the situation, or their performance does not improve, you should consider your options:

- Intervention: An intervention may mean putting special development measures in place in an attempt to turn the intern's performance around, or
- Ending the internship: You may wish to end the internship

Either way you should be open and clear on your reasons with the intern.

5. Recruitment process

Participating start-ups will be provided with support to develop a detailed description of their internship requirement to make it easier to recruit the correct candidate for their internship. This description will include:

1. information about the enterprise and/or project,
2. a description of the qualifications or skills required of the intern including preferred discipline areas,
3. compensation,
4. the number of hours of work per week, and
5. starting and ending date.

In setting out the internship opportunity and to attract applications that align to the post requirements, the following is recommended:

- Be clear on what you are looking for in terms of knowledge, academic background, experience, and skills (if you are seeking specific technical skills be clear on what you want).
- Be clear on the purpose and the desired outcomes of the internship (this can form the basis of a job description for the role).
- Provide a little information about your business such as the area of business, products and services.
- Set a deadline for applications.
- Provide contact information for any questions.

Internship opportunities will then be promoted to potential internees through GROWTHhub project communications, the TU Dublin Careers Service and where appropriate through academic programme leaders. Intern applications will be submitted to GROWTHhub, who will select the top 3/5 candidates and send them to the participating start-ups. Start-ups will conduct interviews and have final call on intern appointments.

5.1 Interns interviews and selection process

When evaluating CVs and applications candidates should be evaluated on their skills and qualifications:

- Relevant studies or experience that relate to the internship.
- Relevant extracurricular activities.
- Leadership positions/activities, for example, through community/volunteering work.

It is also important to consider:

- Specific technical skills to a standard required for the role.
- Cover letter (shows an interest in the internship).
- Specific talents indicated in the application/resume as well as observed in the interview process (such as being a self-starter, a problem solver, or easily adaptable).

Keep in mind that you are recruiting an intern so your candidates may not have all the desired qualifications or skills you seek since they may still be studying and will have little or no work experience. You should focus on selecting people who are able to demonstrate the right potential to fulfil the role.

Once you have short listed applications you can move on to the interview stage. Internship interviews will help you evaluate whether a person is a good fit for your business. It also provides applicants with valuable interview experience, whether successful or not. For some candidates this may be their first interview so you should provide an overview of the format of the interview in advance.

Some interview questions you may consider include the following.

- Why did you apply for this internship?
- What attracts you to a career in (accountancy)?
- What is your experience with (software, programmes, etc)?
- What do you hope to gain from this internship?
- When are you available to start the internship?
- How does the internship fit with your academic achievements and goals (if applicable)?

The interviews can be conducted online or at your business location. GROWTHhub will provide interview facilities if required.

GROWTHhub will provide you with an Internship Scoring Sheet (appendix 1) to rate the candidates and make additional comments. By the end of the interview process, you will hopefully have identified a top candidate and now you can make an offer directly to the student. Please advise the IMMERSE coordinator of the interview outcomes along with a copy of the Internship Scoring Sheet for each candidate.. IMMERSE coordinator will notify the unsuccessful candidates.

Once the internship has been agreed by the student and your company, and prior to starting the internship, you must complete the Internship Host Company Confirmation Details (appendix 2) and return to gloria.rull@tudublin.ie by Monday 09 May 2022.

Appendix 1 – Interview Scoring Sheet

IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme Interview Scoring Sheet

Position of: _____ Candidate name: _____
Interviewer name _____ Date: _____

Scoring

Score 1 to 5	
5 - Excellent Performance – difficult to see how it could be improved upon; a role model for others.	
4 - Above Average Performance – an area of distinctive strength.	
3 - Acceptable Standard – achieves a sufficiently high standard to work at the target job level.	
2 - Patchy Performance – significant weak areas or uneven aspects to performance.	
1 - Little evidence of competence in this area.	
Skills (to be updated with relevant internship skills)	Score 1 to 5
Relevant educational qualifications	
Relevant work experience	
Communication/interpersonal skills	
Professional/technical/expertise/knowledge	
Innovation/ideas/attitude to change & development	
Motivation for/interest for the job	
Knowledge of the company/sector	
Overall assessment for feedback purposes	
Maximum score available 50	Overall Score
Appointable (Y/N)	

Please return to gloria.rull@tudublin.ie by Monday 09 May 2022

Appendix 2 – Interview Scoring Sheet

IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme

Internship Host Company Confirmation Details

Internship Reference Number:		Student Name:	
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Contact Details

Company Name:		Who will supervise student :	
Company Address:		Supervisor's email:	
		Supervisor's direct tel.:	

Internship details

Date of commencement:		Date of completion:	
Internship length: min. 8, max 12 weeks		Weekly payment amount:	
Role and tasks student will undertake:			

Declaration & Signatures:

I confirm appropriate Health & Safety training, supervision and an Induction process will take place on starting the internship. Yes No

I confirm that the organisation has Employers and Public Liability Insurance. Yes No

I confirm that the policy/policies provide indemnity in respect of students training/working with your organisation Yes No

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

Please return to gloria.rull@tudublin.ie by Monday 09 May 2022

Appendix 3 – Internship Evaluation Form

IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme

Internship Evaluation Form - Host Start-up Company's Final Assessment of Student's Performance

Form to be filled by the company supervisor/mentor and submitted to gloria.rull@tudublin.ie by the end internship.

Internship Details

Student name		Company name	
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Internship Evaluation

What benefit has the intern been to your company to date?					
What would you describe as the student's key strength(s) while on the internship?					
Suggested areas of development for the student for the benefit of their future career					
Select intern's knowledge rate in relation to company expectations on this internship Scoring: 1 - Learning 2 - Met expectations 3 - Exceeded expectations N/A - not applicable for this role	Requirements	1	2	3	N/A
	Achievement of duties & responsibilities				
	Communication skills – verbal				
	Communication skills - written				
	Contribution to company				
	Critical Thinking				
	Disciplinary Knowledge				
	Flexibility / Adaptable				
	Integrity				
	Leadership / Self-motivated?				
	Learning from experience				
	Organisation/coordination skills				
	Problem Solving/Analytical Skills				
	Project Management				
	Punctuality/reliability				
	Reflection on own abilities				
	Relationship with customers				
	Relevant IT skills				
	Self-presentation -> Pride in the quality and presentation of work				
	Teamwork				
Willingness to learn					
Willingness to take initiative					
Work ethic					
Working Independently					
Any other comments?					

Mentor signature:

Date:

Thank you for supporting the IMMERSE Start-up Internship Programme. The information from these evaluations is used to assist the student target any areas for future development (professionally and personally) and in helping with course design.