

## **Internships for Postgraduate Study in Development Studies and Related Programmes at New Zealand Tertiary Institutions**

### **Guidelines from the Aotearoa New Zealand International Development Studies Network (Dev-Net) steering committee**

*DevNet would like to thank all the people who contributed their thoughts and suggestions to this document and, in particular, to Miranda Cahn for writing it.*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** These are guidelines only - something that students, organisations and universities may wish to make use of when considering practicum placements. They are not the final word on the matter, and individual circumstances may well mean that not all of the advice is appropriate

#### **Background**

There has been strong support from development organisations, and staff and students of development studies programmes at tertiary institutions, for internships to be formally recognised and assessed as part of tertiary development studies.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide information to students, staff of tertiary institutions and development organisations, about how internships could be organised and formalised. For an internship to benefit all parties, arrangements must be agreed by all, communication must be excellent and the organisation of the internship must be of a very high standard. Some New Zealand tertiary institutions already have mechanisms and regulations in place for internships in the form of student work placements, optional research placement subject or credits for optional internships.

In these guidelines an internship is regarded as a 'placement' with a development organisation, where students spend a specified amount of time working with the participating development organisation (either in New Zealand or overseas), while usually also completing a written assignment which would be of use to the development organisation. This written assignment could be related to project development, monitoring and/or evaluation, research or any other topic that is agreed between the student, the student's academic supervisor and the development organisation. Each tertiary institution may have additional requirements for the internship. In almost all cases the internships would be on an unpaid, voluntary basis and the student would operate under the normal ethics requirements and regulations of both the tertiary institution and the development organisation.

It is the responsibility of individual students to ascertain whether or not a development studies internship can be part of their tertiary course of study, and the requirements for that internship.

#### **Benefits of Internships**

There are many ways in which internships can benefit students, tertiary development studies programmes, participating development organisations and the wider community. Overall, internships can foster understanding, new relationships and sharing between people and organisations, both within New Zealand and between countries. There are also individual advantages for each of the parties involved.

#### *Advantages for the development organisation:*

The development organisation benefits by having a student with up-to-date theoretical development knowledge and access to information and resources, who would work as a member of the development organisation's team. The development organisation would also establish and develop valuable links with

tertiary institutions. The student would complete an assignment which is of use and value to the development organisation.

*Advantages for the student:*

Students would have exposure to the reality of development work. Practical experience would build on and enhance existing theoretical knowledge. Supervised assignment work with the participating development organisation would enhance professional skills and provide opportunities to put theory into practice. Experience with a development organisation would be valuable to students in their search for future employment. In some cases the internship could lead on to further research: a dissertation, thesis or individual research project. Where an internship ties in with subsequent research, the student may also benefit from access to research material and research subjects that would otherwise be unavailable<sup>1</sup>. Above and beyond this, the student may well ‘benefit’ from knowing that they are contributing to a project that aids the organisation they are working for.

*Advantages for the tertiary development studies programme:*

Closer working relationships with development organisations are beneficial to development studies programmes and help tertiary institutions to fulfil community obligations. Where an internship is associated with research work, the development studies programme may also benefit from access to research material and research subjects that would otherwise be unavailable.

**Responsibilities**

The internship is the joint responsibility of the student, the student’s academic supervisor (staff member of the tertiary institution involved) and the participating development organisation. The initial approach for an internship may come from any of these parties. When a student and a development organisation are identified that would form a successful and useful internship, normally a meeting between the student, supervisor and development organisation would initiate the process<sup>2</sup>. A Memorandum of Co-operation (see form later in this document), could then be drawn up and formalised to specify the details of the arrangement as agreed between the parties.

Furthermore, a contract between the internship student and the academic supervisor (Contract of Academic Requirements) is very important to specify the academic requirements of the tertiary institution, and to ensure the internship is formally recognised as part of the student’s course of study (see form later in this document).

Any difficulties with the internship should be immediately notified to all parties so that steps can be taken early to resolve any issues. If a resolution is not possible, an internship could be dissolved, and alternative arrangements made for the student.

*The student is normally responsible for:*

- Finding out about how internships fit into their programme of study at the tertiary institution they are attending.
- In some cases finding and approaching a suitable development organisation.
- Approaching the staff member of the tertiary institution responsible for the internships, and ensuring they are allocated an academic supervisor.
- Meeting with the development organisation and the academic supervisor to finalise the details of the internship.
- Writing a proposal for the internship (in consultation with the development organisation and the academic supervisor) that can be used to draw up the Memorandum of Co-operation.

<sup>1</sup> Please be aware that, if the internship forms part or all of a recognised university course and, if research with human subjects is undertaken as part of the internship, approval for this research may need to be sought from the appropriate tertiary ethics committee.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that, in some circumstances, geographical constraints may prevent a face-to-face meeting. Where this is the case, a meeting of sorts might be possible via email or phone communication.

- Fulfilling the requirements of the internship as set out in the Memorandum of Co-operation and the Contract of Academic Requirements.

*The student supervisor (staff member of tertiary institution) is normally responsible for:*

- In some cases, finding and approaching suitable development organisations.
- Initiating formal contact with the participating development organisation.
- Ensuring the Memorandum of Co-operation and Contract of Academic Requirements are drawn up and formalised.
- Overseeing the internship, and supporting the student.
- Assessing the internship as specified under the Contract of Academic Requirements.
- Ensuring the student works under all the regulations and conditions of the development organisation, as well as the tertiary institution.

*The development organisation is normally responsible for:*

- Meeting with the student and student supervisor initially, and discussing the aims, objectives and overall direction of the internship.
- Ensuring the Memorandum of Co-operation is satisfactorily drawn up and formalised.
- Informing the student and student supervisor of the development organisation's rules and regulations.
- Overseeing the internship work of the student, meeting with the student when necessary.
- Providing supervision and support to the student, as agreed in the Memorandum of Co-operation.
- Having input into the assessment student as agreed in the Memorandum of Co-operation (see form later in this document 'Assessment of Student Intern').
- The development organisation may well find it beneficial to allocate one particular person who co-ordinates interaction with the student.

### **In the Event of Changed Circumstances**

It is recommended that all parties consider, before formalising the internship, what may happen if either the student or development organisation's circumstances change in a way that renders either party unable to see out the full internship process. In the case of internships designed to earn credits for a degree, the university may wish to consider some form of dispensation for students who commence a practicum placement but are unable to conclude it due to circumstances beyond their control.

### **Some final comments:**

There are some development organisations that are unable to take student interns because of security issues and/or staffing issues. Currently NZAID is unable to take student interns although this situation may change in the future.

Most NGOs are small, very busy and have financial constraints. Some are entirely voluntary. Student interns need to be aware of the constraints of any NGO they might be assigned to, and that they may need to work relatively independently. Furthermore, interns need to be flexible, and aware that during the work placement, the needs of the development organisation may take priority over the student's needs.

While some development organisations may be prepared to pay the intern's expenses (e.g. travel), it is most unlikely, and not expected, that there would be any payment of wages to the intern.

There will be time constraints placed on the internship. In existing internship arrangements at some New Zealand tertiary institutions the internships are recommended to be 120- 200 hours. Some of this time may be spent on the work placement, and some on the assignment, depending on the arrangements of the tertiary institution. The internship needs to be set up realistically so that maximum benefits for the student and the development organisation can be gained in the limited time available.

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## Memorandum of Co-operation

Note: This Memorandum of Co-operation is for postgraduate development studies student internships. The sections are intended to be a guide, and should be adapted to suit each internship. The student intern, the academic supervisor and the development organisation should each retain a copy of the memorandum.

1. Internship subject/course code: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Student name:  
  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Academic supervisor (staff member of tertiary institution): \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Participating development organisation: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Development organisation supervisor (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Date internship commenced: \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Date internship to be completed: \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Day to be worked and hours:
  
  
9. Overall aim of the internship:

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10. Specific objectives of the internship:

11. Specific tasks and responsibilities:

Student intern (specifically set out how objectives will be achieved):

Academic supervisor:

Development organisation

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11. Timetable (include deadlines for each task listed above):

12. Budget

13. Special conditions and regulations of participating development organisation (a separate form may be included here).

14. Student assessment/evaluation arrangements (see also 'Assessment of Student Intern' form)

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15. Any other special conditions

16. Signed:

Student intern: \_\_\_\_\_ (date \_\_\_\_\_)

Academic supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ (date \_\_\_\_\_)

Development organisation: \_\_\_\_\_ (date \_\_\_\_\_)

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## Assessment of Student Intern

This form is intended for use by the participating development organisation for assessment of the student intern. The form also gives development organisations an opportunity to comment on the success and constraints of the internship.

Development organisations are encouraged to discuss this form with the student intern before returning it to the academic supervisor, to ensure the student has learned from experiences during the internship.

Student intern name: \_\_\_\_\_

Development organisation; \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor (development organisation): \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of internship: \_\_\_\_\_

## Rating guide

Please use this rating guide when completing the placement evaluation;

- 5** Exceptional, outstanding performance. Independent with initiative. Provided work of particular value to the agency.
- 4** Exceeds requirements, tasks competently undertaken. Works independently with a minimum of supervision.
- 3** Adequately meets requirements and most expectations.
- 2** Marginal, meets some requirements but needs assistance, task incomplete or of marginal quality.
- 1** Inadequate. Consistently does not meet requirements.

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## Placement Objectives

Please use the rating guide to rate the student's performance in each of the placement objectives outlined in the Memorandum of Co-operation. Write any comments in the column provided. For example, you may remark on how much progress was made towards the objective, any difficulties the student encountered, what skills were used and how these could be improved. If changes were made to placement objectives, please explain why.

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Comments</i>

## Strengths

Please identify, with examples, what you think the student's main strengths were in completing this placement

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## Areas for Improvement

Please explain what areas the student could improve and how he or she might strengthen performance. Cite examples if necessary.

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## Overall Appraisal

Please use the rating guide to rate the overall performance of the student as indicated below.

<i>Performance Criteria</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Skills and competence</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• planning, analysis, design, written and verbal communication.</li></ul>		
<i>Independence and initiative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• self motivation and creativity</li></ul>		
<i>Completion of internship tasks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use of resources, meeting deadlines, meeting requirements</li></ul>		
<i>Personal conduct and attitude</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enthusiasm, relationships with other staff, team contribution</li></ul>		
<i>Contribution to development organisation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how 'useful' was the student to your work programme?</li></ul>		

## General Comments

Please record any other comments about the student's performance or behaviour.

How do you feel the placement progressed?

What would you change if you had the chance to repeat the placement?

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions are optional, but will help us in future programme planning;

1. Would you recommend student internships to other employers?

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2. What improvements might you suggest for the internship programme?

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3. Would you be willing to host another internship student in the future?

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## Contract of Academic Requirements

This form is intended as a contract between the student and the tertiary institution to formalise the terms of the student internship as part of the overall academic programme in development studies (or related programme).

1. Student name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Student number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Academic Programme: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Internship subject/course code: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Academic internship supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Date of internship: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
7. Total hours of the internship: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Credits/points/subject equivalent: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Aim of the internship (as per Memorandum of Co-operation):
  
10. Specific objectives of the internship (as per Memorandum of Co-operation):

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11. Specific tasks to be completed by the student (as per memorandum of Co-operation):

Task	Date to be completed

10. Assessment guide (*note: assessment tasks are examples only and will be different for each internship*):

Assessment task	Date due/completed	Assessment (%)
Internship proposal		
Work placement		
Work Diary		
Assignment for development organisation		
Total		100%

11. Other special conditions