

Internships: A Guide for Non-Academic Partners

Background

The ESRC South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership (SCDTP) provides and funds high-quality training in the social sciences to Masters and PhD students, selected for their outstanding quality. A key aim is to develop future leaders with outstanding academic and transferable skills equipped to meet the business and social challenges of the UK and global economies. The ESRC-SCDTP Internship programme enables SCDTP students to undertake internships for up to 3 months during the course of their PhD to enhance

- (i) knowledge exchange;
- (ii) collaboration with civil society, third sector, industry and government partners; and
- (iii) employability skills.

The ESRC-SCDTP has allocated funding to provide at least two 3-month internships per year. This number may be increased depending on the periods of internships awarded and if any co-funding is provided by host organisations.

Why offer an internship?

For the Non-Academic Partner, offering an internship can be beneficial in:

- (i) focusing skilled resources on a project which is of interest to your organisation. Such a project may range in scope and in terms of the skillset required, for example from a critical literature review of academic and policy literature in a given topic area, to the application of highly specialised methodological skills in qualitative or quantitative analyses.
- (ii) offering opportunities for deeper collaboration with the SCDTP and specifically the Universities of Southampton, Portsmouth and Brighton, which can in turn lead to future collaboration opportunities.

For the student, there are many positive reasons to undertake internships. Whether they are aiming for a non-academic role or plan to stay in academia, employers are increasingly looking for postgraduates with well-rounded skill sets. Experience gained from an internship can provide evidence to demonstrate a broad range of skills and experiences the student's own research. An internship can be an opportunity for postgraduates to understand their research in a wider context and consider new career ideas. They can also be a chance to travel, experience different regions and cultures and trial living in new areas of the country/world.

A key component of a SCDTP funded internship is to engage in knowledge exchange. Placements are within a professional environment where doctoral students can build bridges between academia and external organisations to influence policy and practice. Ultimately an ESRC funded internship will

embody a two-way flow of information, ideas, experience and expertise that provides benefit to both parties.

Designing an internship

Internships can last from 1 to 3 months; they can be done on a full or part-time basis. It is expected that a member of your organisation will act as a key contact/ mentor for the student. If appropriate, you may also offer a desk space for the student to work at. A key component of the internship programme is knowledge sharing, so that an academic and non-academic partner learn from each other. This component means that students cannot undertake a placement within a university or research institute. However, approval may be given for internships that aim to increase the impact of research, for example through communication and policy-related activities. It is important that internships are relevant to postgraduate's subject or methodological area, so that a demonstrable level of knowledge exchange can take place.

Internship funding

For full-time internships, the student suspends their candidature on their PhD programme to work with the partner organization; this means they have an extension to their studentship for the same duration as their internship. Travel and accommodation expenses can be claimed from the SCDTP during a full-time internship, up to a maximum of £1,000 per month. All claims for expenses must be supported by appropriate documentation. Students can request an advance payment of predicted expenses if necessary. This should be discussed with the SCDTP Manager (scdtp@soton.ac.uk). If appropriate, NAPs are welcome to contribute to the cost of internships, for example by sponsoring a part of the travel expenses during the internship.

Next steps: Application and registration

We encourage you to register your interest in hosting an intern to support a match-making process. Your intern project idea may be loosely developed at this stage and developed further with the SCDTP or a particular student. The SCDTP contact for discussion at this or any stage is SCDTP Deputy Director (Training & Impact) Prof Melanie Nind M.A.Nind@soton.ac.uk

The application form for completing an internship is designed to be completed by both the Non-Academic Partner and the student. The SCDTP directors will consider applications for internships throughout the year. We recommend the submission of applications 2-3 months before the internship would be due to start. During this process it is expected that the NAP liaises with the student in order to discuss the details of the internship. The student in turn is expected to speak with their academic supervisors about suitable times to undertake an internship (confirmation of support from the supervisor is also required).

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