

INTERNSHIP

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ABSTRACT: *In many professions such as medicine, engineering and pharmacy, there exist a training period characterized by practical exposures which allow the trainees to practice the skills they have learnt in theory. This practical training of trainees or concrete work situation that leads to the creation of network of contacts between institutions is termed 'internship' in the higher level of education (Boakye, 2004). Then what is internship? This article is intended to discuss internship in higher level of education.*

KEYWORDS: internship, practical training, higher level, educational programmes,

INTRODUCTION

Internship is a practical training similar to apprenticeship which exists in various settings like medical and engineering in various countries such as Spain, France, UK and Italy (FAQs, 2010). This means, internship is a validated work experience opportunity as part of a degree programme.

According to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), student internship programme is an avenue that provides the UEW students with the opportunity for autonomy, accountability and responsibility within a safety net in a school with a mentor to combine theory and practice in real life situations (CETDAR, 2009).

The definitions above classify internship as a key component of how higher level educational programmes provide opportunities to acquire the necessary theoretical and applied knowledge which permits students to function effectively in the field. Internship is therefore a new system of qualification for trained qualified professors or workers.

Further, a field internship is the process of working or training in one's chosen profession under the guidance of an expert or a teacher. The field internship essentially puts people in "the field", meaning participants will be getting practical experience before working on their own. In a field internship, an intern has an opportunity to engage in hands on fieldwork and research, doing things like engaging in environmental activism, participating in surveys, or educating learners.

An intern is one who works in a temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than merely employment (making it similar to an apprenticeship). Interns are usually college or university students, but they can also be post graduate adults or high school students seeking skills for a new career.

The field internship is now a frequent requirement of certain disciplines before obtaining either a Bachelor's or High-Level degrees (Field, 2011). In some cases the term is synonymous with the term practicum, which basically means practical experience in one's field.

A field internship or practicum may also be required prior to achieving licensing in a particular field. For example, someone with a Bachelor's degree in social work is usually required to complete a year internship prior to being able to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Those training to be teachers complete a field internship or practicum that is both necessary for licensing and usually a part of graduating with a license to teach. This tends not to be the case with those teaching in college settings. Normally one merely needs to achieve advanced degrees, to become a professor. Ph.D. level students are usually required to teach classes or to work as teaching assistants for large classes as part of their education.

Several professions that do not require a bachelor's degree do require a field internship. Paramedics and anyone working in the emergency medical services industry must usually complete a number of hours of on-the-job training prior to obtaining licensing. Most who work in non-degreed aspects of medical field, such as in respiratory therapy or radiology must have practical experience as well.

Sometimes a field internship is not a requirement for graduation but may reflect well when one looks for jobs or is pursuing an advanced degree. For example, those who wish to become archaeologists often participates in digs over the summer months because these positions add to their chances of getting jobs once out of school.

There is no average length of a field internship, since internship requirements differ vastly. Internships can take a few days to several years depending upon the field, the licensing or certifying agency, or college requirements. Usually, time of participation in a field internship is well defined by certifying agencies or by colleges, so that one entering a programme will know just how long one must devote to gaining practical experience.

Types of Internship

Internship exists in various industries and settings. Here are two primary types of internship that exist in the United States.

1. **Work Experience Internship:** Most often this will be in the second or third year of the school period. The placement can be from two months to sometimes even one full school year. During this period, the student is supposed to use the things he/she has learned in school and put it in practice. This way the student gets work experience in his/her field of study. The gained experience will be helpful to finish up the last year of the study.
2. **Research Internship (graduation) or Dissertation Internship:** This is mostly done by students who are in their last year. With this kind of internship a student does research for a particular company. The company can have something that they feel like they need to improve, or the student can choose a topic within the company themselves. The results of the research study will be put in a report and often will have to be presented.

Further, an internship may be paid, unpaid or partially paid in the form of a stipend (take-home pay).

- A paid internship is a learning opportunity which also offers financial compensation. In a paid internship, the intern is offered compensation. Often at market value, for the hours worked. Paid internships are most common in the medical, architecture science, engineering, law, business (especially accounting and finance), technology and advertising fields. Compensation for a paid internship varies from company to company. Some organizations offer housing, food and a limited stipend, so that all of an intern's basic needs are taken care of. Others just offer a stipend or an hourly wage to their interns. As a general rule, the compensation for a paid internship is comparable with the market rate in the area where the internship is occurring. For this reason, competition for paid internships in places like New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco tends to be fierce.
- Many companies and organizations offer internships to individuals who are interested in learning more about the type of work that they do. These internships allow interns to see what it might be like to work in a particular industry, or for a particular company. In addition to being valuable educationally, internships are also very beneficial for a strong resume. Many of these internships are unpaid, which can be difficult for low income individuals who are pursuing internships. Internships in

non-profit organizations such as government schools in Ghana are often unpaid, but rather, volunteer positions.

- Often the field internship means one receives little to no pay. Some receive only college credits for participating in a field internship, and others receive a small subsistence allowance. Some field internships take so long to complete, that those participating may be paid slightly more. For example, those training to be licensed therapists usually must accumulate three thousand (3,000) hours of practical experience counseling under the guidance of a licensed therapist prior to obtaining a license.

Both paid and unpaid internships are highly competitive, but it tends to be more challenging to get a paid internship. People who are interested in paid internships can use a number of databases to research job opportunities in the area of their interest. After submitting an application, an intern may be asked to attend interview, provide references, or offer other supplementary material. A team at the company reviews applications, selecting strong interns which would benefit the company while they worked there.

The location of a paid internship varies. Many interns work in offices, pursuing internships like legal clerkships or non-profit work. Other interns take field internships, especially interns in the natural sciences. Both types of paid internships can be a great way to put classroom skills to use.

Additionally, internship may be part-time or full-time; typically they are part-time during the university year. College students are probably the largest group of people seeking internships. Many internships are designed with this in mind and are therefore arranged to coincide with summer or winter breaks. A part-time internship may be coordinated around a student schedule, allowing the intern to go to school while working. A part-time internship typically last for six to twelve weeks, but can be shorter or longer. In other instances, the internship may last a year, allowing the intern to accrue (accumulate) serious job experience. The act of job shadowing may also constitute as interning.

The way the overall internship program is structured differs in each case of profession or different settings as does the terminology used. For instance, in the Teacher Education System, internship is an intense school-based student teaching-learning experience that provides a structured, supervised and clinical experience. It does not involve just practicing teaching, but rather experiencing good practices with students or children in a variety of ways. It also involves questioning and thoughtful guidance of a mentor by means of mentoring.

Mentoring is a one-to-one learning relationship between an older or more experienced person and a younger or less experienced person that is based on modeling behavior and extended dialogue or conversation between them. It is also a form of professional socialization whereby a more experienced individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher and patron of a less experienced protégé (Levin, 1991). The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the protégé's skills, abilities and understanding to help students determine if they have an interest in a particular career. Furthermore, whereas mentoring has long been associated with the apprentice model of graduate education, it is increasingly looked to today as a retention and enrichment strategy for undergraduate education. The professional literature, popular press and students themselves seem to agree that mentoring is a critical component of effective undergraduate education.

Teacher education internship takes place in basic, secondary and other higher level institutions and lasts for a period less than one academic year (CETDAR, 2009).

Any matriculating student is eligible for an internship provided that he / she meets the criteria established by the college or university and by the departments for participation, has academic department approval and satisfactorily completed a pre-internship seminar. Since internship is a career specific, students or trainees are often allowed to choose internship based on their major at the college or university level. During internship, interns are supposed to put into practice the things they have learned at college or university.

Individual Roles in Internship

As the central administration site for the internship programme, the colleges and universities

- Before the internship;
 - maintain updated internship site resources in database and hard copy formats;
 - meet with local, regional and national organizations for internship development;
 - schedule and instruct pre-internship seminars;
 - verify all Internship Learning Contracts for accuracy and completeness;
 - seek to identify current and measurable methods to evaluate interns and the internship programme through work with experiential education professional association and faculty and student feedback.
- During the internship;

- communicate status of all interns to faculty sponsors throughout each semester and
- help faculty sponsors with problems, interns or internship upon request
- After the internship;
 - maintain records on all current and former interns and internship placements by major and semester.

The following criteria specifically address the role of faculty sponsors in the internship programme;

- Before the internship,
 - Faculty sponsors communicate with site supervisors about learning goals and objectives prior to the beginning of the internship.
 - They determine if the level of supervision and the qualifications of the supervisor are consistent with the department's internship objectives.
 - In addition, faculty sponsors meet with students to establish measurable internship outcomes, learning goals and objectives.
 - Also, they facilitate completion of the Internship Learning Contracts with students and site supervisors.
- During the internship,
 - Faculty sponsors maintain regular contact with site supervisors of student interns and meet or talk with interns a minimum of once a week.
 - They visit sites when deemed appropriate and maintain open lines of communication throughout the internship with the site supervisors.
 - They evaluate all internship experiences in consultation with site supervisors.
 - The faculty sponsors are in addition supposed to provide interns with specific final report criteria and due dates.
- After the internship,
 - Faculty sponsors schedule a minimum of one required group meeting with all interns,
 - make sure all required paperwork is submitted by the interns and site supervisors and
 - determine whether an intern has passed or failed the internship (course).

Students or trainees role in internship;

- Before the internship, students;

- Must contact the college or university to register for and successfully complete a pre-internship seminar;
- Will receive an internship learning guide upon for the pre-internship seminar course;
- Must register for the internship during the appropriate pre-registration period;
- Must make a choice of area for the internship.
- During the internship, student interns;
 - Must put into practice the things learned in theory (related to major area) at college or university;
 - Must work temporarily under the guidance of site supervisor or mentor;
 - Must provide their site supervisors with the appropriate document for evaluation to avoid incomplete grades for internship. These should be returned directly to the college or university;
 - Must complete any written reflections or other requirements (such as philosophy and project) as designated by the faculty sponsors on the internship prior to finals.
- After the internship;
 - Students will submit and / or present their final reports as designated by their faculty sponsors;
 - Students will send their internship site supervisors or mentors a thank you letter.

Why Internship

Both theoretical and pedagogical knowledge are needed in the training of qualified professional simply because, in every profession, there are theoretical and practical components. Also, it is essential for students or trainees to gain real world experience prior to graduation so that the complexity and uncertainty of work conditions and the cognitive demands of the work become plain to them after the course.

Abbat (1992), emphasizes that one of the ways of ensuring that people work effectively after training is by giving them the opportunities to practice during their training. And researches done by many educators revealed that skills and knowledge are incomplete without attending to particular qualities of life in the community.

Furthermore, it is through field-based experiences that opportunities are provided for students or trainees to enhance their ability to engage in reflective strategies and to assess

and improve their career behaviours. So in view of the fact that, it is internship that put students or trainees into real act of professional working or field-based experiences, this suggestion ‘internship is planned to provide trainees with experiences related to the practical aspects of the profession in order to enhance both the theory and practice of the profession (Boakye, 2004)’ is accepted.

The value of work-related experience has been demonstrated many times over by the successful placement of our graduates in the world of work and in graduate or professional schools (Colby-Sawyer College, 2011).

Importance of Internship

Students or trainees achieve deeper understanding of their major area when they actively participate in the profession during internship. Active participation is a key component of constructivist learning theory as students actively explore, inquire, discover and experiment (Falk, 1996). These elements of constructivism within the internship programme constitute

Internship:

- Provides opportunities for students to
 - integrate theory with practical learning.
 - enhance their academic programmes with field experience, related to their career interest, in a variety of settings.
 - gain work experience in their field of study which helps them to finish up the course study.
 - confront the challenges and issues which they will eventually encounter in their lives and careers.
 - determine if they have an interest in a particular career.
 - create a network of contacts with employers
 - acquire full-time employment at an institution or organization after their course once they have enough necessary experience.
 - gain school credit.
- Supports the mission of the Colleges and Universities to “combine the values of liberal studies in the traditional modes with those of professional preparation”.
- Reduces the work load of tutors and lecturers in the institutions and organizations responsible for the training of pre-service professors.
- Provides institutions with professors of free labour for typically low-level tasks.
- Produces professors who will require no training after completing their course.

For example, in the teacher system, internship provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to teach in partnership schools. This means internship in the teacher education system profitably opens the chance for pre-service teachers to put whatever they have learnt, both theoretically and practically, into real practice. This leads to further development and assessment of prospective teachers' level of pedagogical content knowledge in teaching and learning with respect to major area. Teacher education internship therefore is a programme that helps prospective teachers to develop appropriate teaching skills, techniques and disposition to classroom teaching.

In consistent with the UEW's Vice Chancellor's definition of student internship programme, internship in the teacher education system would be described as an avenue that provides the prospective teachers with the opportunity for autonomy, accountability and responsibility within a safety net in a school with a mentor to combine theory and practice in real life situations.

Some benefits of internship in teacher education are declared as follows'

- It puts the pre-service teacher into real act of teaching,
- It allows an individual to be the teacher of record while completing an accredited professional preparation programme.
- It creates opportunities for pre-service teachers to acquire full-time employment in organizations (predominantly, schools and colleges) once they have enough necessary experience,

Some Possible Internship Challenges

Undergraduates face different challenges than the average person looking for a career because, during the period of internship, the interns, who are college or university students, are supposed to work in just temporary positions with emphasis on job training rather than employment.

Also, since internship is career specific, students, trainees or interns should do practices based on their major at the college or university. But due to lack of institution for practice, a student may work in a condition unrelated his / her major at the college or university level.

Furthermore, during the internship, interns can be challenged to examine various perspectives and evaluate diverse points of view.

In addition, some interns may be challenged to create their own ideas when confronted with intellectual problems.

Last but not the least, accommodation problem as well as financial problem may arise, especially, in the unpaid internship.

Non visiting faculty sponsors due to financial problem.

Poor interaction between internship participants.

Internship Abroad (In Australia and New Zealand)

International internships in Australia and New Zealand provide greater professional experience than many domestic opportunities because companies are smaller and thus interns are exposed to a wider variety of job duties. Living in a foreign country and being immersed in a new culture even further strengthen your resume by giving you skills such as problem solving, independence and critical thinking.

Professional Development for Academic Credit (PDAC) internships are ten-week programmes which offer six (6) academic credits from Chapman University in California. Chapman University is an established university located in Orange, California, with a strong mission in developing global citizens. PDAC internships are currently offered four (4) times each year and placements are available in almost every field of study. This semester or summer internship programme allows students to earn academic credit and learn valuable work skills. Students who participate in this internship abroad programme will also be greeted by AustraLearn in country for a two-day group orientation.

Professional Development No Credit (PDNC) Internship Programme is designed to offer students a shorter-term internship experience without credit. This unique professional development experience is geared toward students who only have a short timeframe available to intern abroad, but still seek to gain international exposure to their field of study. During this professional development six (6) weeks internship, you (the student) should expect to be fully engaged and focused during the placement to maximize your learning experience. This 6-week pre-set internship includes AustraLearn prearranged group flight services and the AustraLearn group Bridging Culture Programme.

Custom Date Internships are available for students who cannot participate in the standard PDAC or PDNC programmes, These very independent placements do not include credit, the AustraLearn Programme Introduction or group flight arrangements. Students applying for

Custom Date Internship placements that seek academic credits must arrange credit through their home university. Academic requirements must be provided to AustraLearn with the student's application. Additional fees may apply for coordinating academic assessment.

Advantages of Doing Internship Abroad (Australia and New Zealand)

Performing an internship abroad (Australia and New Zealand) is once in a loife time opportunity for any student. Not only will it enhance your professional abilities, but students will enjoy the experience of life in another country. Our standard and summer internship programme choices allow students to intern in an English-speaking area rich in culture. They are immersed in the varied cultures and life styles of abroad (Australia and New Zealand) residents. An internship abroad in this region helps to cultivate well-rounded citizens with a solid foundation of career specific skills.

As entertaining and lively as a New Zealand or Australia internship can be, it is also a great way for a student to learn work skills. Our programmes offer top notch opportunities which ensure participating students are fully prepared when they enter the work force. Because internships are not as common in Australia and New Zealand, students are viewed more as full time employees and are not subject to much of the busy work associated with internships in the US. This offers a real opportunity for students to prepare for their future occupations while enjoying the unique experience of life as international citizens.

Summary

Because most professions have a set of criteria that the trainee must have attained by the time the pre-service training is over, institutions and organizations must prepare candidates to perceive and interpret the wide variation that typifies their career situations. In addition, they have got to release to students or trainees that the jobs for their major areas, like teaching, is not as straight forward as people initially thought but it is a series of many choices, some predictable and some pivotal.

Recommendation

Internships are recommended to be able to provide:

- An opportunity and atmosphere in which students may test theory learned in the classroom in an actual working situation and discover the value of work and the rewards of accomplishments;
- A system of accountability and encourage professionalism in training;

- An opportunity for students to develop positive work habits;
- An opportunity for students to test aptitude for or interest in a selected field.

As well, all internships should insure a natural transition to the highest level of professional preparation as a complement to the liberal education goals of the colleges and universities.

CONCLUSION

This paper encourages every student or trainee to successfully complete at least one internship and for each discipline, to provide an internship course or programme in order to enhance educational aspects of the career development process.

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