

Assessment Case Study

The phenomenon of being an internship student

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Course: M09SSL: The Postgraduate Internship

Student Level: Postgraduate (Level 7)



AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT IS...

- Authentic
- Inclusive
- Summative with feed forward feedback

OVERVIEW

Postgraduate students within the Faculty of Business and Law have an opportunity to **undertake an internship** as part of their degree programme. This is a key feature of the courses and very much sought after, especially as the majority of our student cohort are **international students**. However, being on the course does not guarantee an internship, as each student has to apply and secure their own placement.

AIMS

The key driver behind this approach is to allow students to liaise directly with industry and work on a live project, thus gaining a full **immersive experience of working in the UK**. This also provides both the student and an employer the opportunity to build up networks for the future that may enhance international presence.

ACTIONS

We as course team liaise closely with employers to secure these placements, which include working on a **project within the industry**. Students are given guidance and training to understand UK practices of recruitment and selection prior to being shortlisted for interview.

Once an internship is secured by the student, a project is negotiated between the employer, student and module leader. Support over the run of the internship and the project is offered by a workplace mentor and an academic supervisor. **Successful completion** of the project is worth 50 credits and assessed by the module leader with feedback from the workplace mentor.

IMPACT

For the students, the key impact is the opportunity to put theory into practice and gain experience of the world of work.

For us as tutors, the most important is the immersive learning experience students have, but also the lessons we learned with regards to how to help better prepare students for their internship.

SUSTAINABLE, SCALEBLE OR TRANSFERABLE?

The internship (module) has now been running for approximately 10 years, and is proving to be continuously successful, both for staff and students. As long as effective employer relations can be maintained by CU, then this practice will be sustainable. Opportunities to scale up can be considered, and will be applicable, in multiple other disciplines. Transferable skills are part of the key learning taken away by the students.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

A qualitative analysis of approximately 230 reflective accounts from students gave a clear view of the experiences of students.

They commented that the internship **built their confidence**, that theories from the classroom need to be **tailored for the more complex world of work**, and on the importance of the **workplace mentor** in providing support and direction.

The students also commented on the wide range of both **technical and interpersonal skills** that they developed. The development of their **communication skills** featured strongly within their accounts.



Image: @nesabymakers, unsplash.com

MESSAGE TO PEERS

The internship is an option to the **dissertation**. Internship students get the opportunity to work on a real project within a host organisation, and to reflect on the experience. We do not do enough to **encourage students to reflect** on what they have learnt. In this case, the reflection is just as important as the internship research report.

EXTRACT FROM ASSESSMENT BRIEF

The next page includes an extract from the assessment brief and associated criteria.

EXTRACT FROM ASSESSMENT BRIEF

The phenomenon of being an internship student

Assignment Title: Reflective Account

Assignment Number: Coursework 2 **Assignment Weighting:** 20%

NB: The other 80% (Coursework 1) is a 12000-word internship research report.

Word Count = 2500 words

This assignment is designed to assess the following learning outcome:

- Reflect on the learning from the internship to identify strengths and plan future development needs

Grading Criteria

Pass

(40 - 59%) Descriptive only with little or no evidence of reflection on events or thoughts. No attempt at discovering the meaning of, or feelings about, events, or why some events may be more important than others.

Merit

(60% - 69%) Will range from experiences that are a combination of descriptive and critical. These will reveal insights into the possible meanings of events, and the personal impact that they have on others.

Distinction

(70% - 79%) The reflection reveals a deeper level of insight and that the student has learned much from the reflective process. There should be evidence that future action will be very much influenced by reflection. References to external sources are used to make sense of experiences.

Distinction plus

(>80%) Reflections will demonstrate that the student has a sound basis for being a reflective professional in their chosen career path that will require little or no refinement except what comes naturally from experience. Real insights into themselves, their actions, events and the actions of others will permeate the work. External sources to aid understanding will be carefully and effectively employed.