

What kind of Internship?

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When considering an internship intervention, it is important to decide exactly what kind of internship your organisation is able to offer.

Always keep in mind the following:

- Interns are not a source of cheap labour who are used to do low skill jobs that no one else wants to do.
- An internship must ensure that useful work related skills are passed onto the intern so that he/she becomes marketable when looking for a permanent job.
- A good internship requires management and supervisory time. An internship is an investment in the future.
- The internship year enables the organisation to see if any of the interns are a good fit for the organisation going forward.

Think about your organisation and the products and services it offers. Decide on whether you wish to offer an internship to someone who has a matric, or whether you wish to give an opportunity to someone who has just graduated with a degree.

If your organisation warrants it, you may offer work experience to a young person who has just graduated from a SETA learnership. Training providers who offer artisan and skills programmes are always looking for best-practice companies to offer work experience to their learners.

Decide on the **duration of the internship**. Usually an internship is for a 6 or 12-month period, however, there may be good reasons for extending it for even longer.

Another point for consideration is what type of **stipend of monthly salary** should be offered to an intern. This depends on the level of the intern's qualification and what work will be allocated to him/her.

At the beginning of an internship, the intern has very little practical skill and it requires a lot of time to orientate them into the organisation and the task, but as the period progresses, the intern will acquire useful skills and should be capable of carrying out tasks with little guidance.

A stipend usually covers transport and subsistence cost. However, it is important that the amount paid is realistic. The young intern still has to live.

Unfortunately, many organisations that offer artisan work experience, do not pay stipends as they say that they are giving free work experience. This becomes very difficult for interns who have no other source of income, support or a bursary.

An intern salary would usually be on par with an entry level salary for a particular job. The intern salary for a young person with a B. Com or a professional degree will usually be higher than a person being offered an internship in an admin position.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like guidance on what type of internship to offer.

Over the last 30 years, I have had the privilege of offering internship opportunities to many young people. Today these young people are in senior positions or have opened their own companies.

They will all tell you that they were fortunate to have started their careers as an intern and the skills they acquired during their internship year, proved to be the foundation on which they built their futures.

One of the greatest gifts you can give a young person is to coach and mentor them.