



# Consultation document

## Code of Practice for Graduate Internships in the Creative Industries

The following Code of Practice has been developed to provide a guide to effective Graduate Internships in the Creative Industries and a set of best practice guidelines for employers to sign up to. The work was inspired by government initiatives to support graduates by improving their employability skills, and the representation of the Creative Industries as being notoriously hard to break in to.

The Code of Practice has been developed by Skillset, in close collaboration with Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills and Skillfast-UK.

This document is being circulated for consultation across the Sector Skills Councils, Unions, key industry employers and Trade Associations. Feedback should be sent to Juliet Russell-Roberts at Skillset. This will then be collated for distribution across the Sector Skills Councils involved.

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# Code of Practice for Graduate Internships in the Creative Industries

## Background

Work experience placements, graduate internships and traineeships provide opportunities and benefits to both individuals and employers. They are a useful way for those wishing to enter the Creative Industries to gain an insight into the industry and to make informed career choices. For employers, all three approaches are an opportunity to improve the skills of young people entering the industry, raise the profile of career opportunities available within the organisation and develop management skills for existing staff.

However, an over supply of graduates wishing to enter the industry has resulted in a culture of low or unpaid internships. Available roles often go to the few with the right connections, rather than those with the most talent and potential. Provisions should therefore be put in place for fair and equitable access to all three schemes, thereby opening them up to candidates from more economically and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

These guidelines have been developed to provide clarity over the different terms associated with work based learning programmes and specifically to improve the quality and accessibility of graduate internship schemes.

## Work Experience Placements

Work experience is usually unpaid. It is often undertaken by students as part of an FE or HE course to learn about the working environment of the Creative Industries. Students or others on work experience should be given the chance to try various tasks and develop skills that will make them more attractive to prospective employers, but they should not be relied upon to fulfill roles that are necessary for the organisation and would otherwise be undertaken by paid staff.

Placements can be unpaid provided the individual is not a 'worker,' as defined by the National Minimum Wage legislation (Appendix 1). However, work experience placements should be time limited and should not exceed 160 hours, carried out either full-time over a four week period or part-time over a three month period. If the National Minimum Wage applies, then it should be adopted throughout the duration of the placement. Reasonable and pre-agreed expenses should be reimbursed.

Further guidelines on work experience have been developed by the Department of Trade and HM Revenue and Customs, in collaboration with Skillset and are available at: [www.skillset.org/tv/jobs/article\\_5541\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/tv/jobs/article_5541_1.asp)

NB. Whilst these guidelines were developed for the TV industry the principles apply across the Creative Industries.

## **Graduate Internships**

Individuals undertaking a Graduate Internship have a duty to perform meaningful and valuable work for the organisation. Graduate internships are therefore the next level up from work experience placements. They are usually less structured than a traineeship and tend to be of shorter duration. Individuals have already gained significant knowledge in their chosen area and are being given the opportunity to apply the skills they have obtained in the working environment. The organisation equally gains from the internship in terms of business value, genuine enthusiasm from the graduate and the diversification of their workforce.

As the individual will be performing as a 'worker,' they should be paid at least the National Minimum Wage (Appendix 1) throughout the duration of their placement. This is generally less than the average starting salary and corresponds to the fact that while the internship is a learning process, there is real business gain. Graduate internships should be six months in duration, in order to get the most value for both the employer and the graduate, and the working week should not exceed 40 hours.

## **Traineeships**

Traineeships provide focused training to an individual or a number of individuals over a longer period of time, usually about 12 months full-time. Trainees are recruited according to talent and demonstrative passion for the industry displayed through extra-curricular activities, rather than through qualifications alone. Individuals should receive high quality training from industry leaders and follow a structured personal development plan with regular appraisals. At the end of the contract individuals are either offered positions within the organisation or are at least in a position to be able to compete for jobs in their chosen field. Trainees should work full-time with a 40 hour week and should be offered a starting salary of between £13,000 and £18,000 per annum.

## **Guidelines for organisations offering Graduate Internship Schemes**

Quality Assurance (policies that should be in place)

- Health and safety risk assessment.
- Insurance cover, including Employer's Liability and Public Liability insurance
- Equal opportunities policy.
- Legal guidance if it is envisaged that the intern will contribute to a piece of work that requires copyright protection.

Commitment

- The business need should be developed whilst taking in to account the skills that will be developed by the intern.
- Individuals should not be subject to the same degree of obligation as standard members of staff and should have clear learning objectives.
- Fair treatment of the graduate intern should be promoted amongst other staff.

## Recruitment

- Graduate Internship schemes should be openly advertised in order to ensure fair access and improve the quality of internship placements.
- Measures to accommodate those with a disability should be in place and clearly signposted, so as not to exclude any potential candidates.
- Applications should be considered on an equal basis without regard to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious or non-religious belief and age.
- A detailed outline of the required skills and the skills that will be developed should be provided, alongside full details of the duration of the internship, working hours, remuneration and the process for claiming expenses.

## Induction

- A detailed induction should be carried out on the first day of the placement, covering introductions to other staff, office procedures, best practice in an office environment, health and safety, details of what to do if they wish to make a complaint and company confidentiality requirements.

## Learning, assessment and support

- A responsible individual should be assigned as the intern's mentor and key point of contact throughout the placement.
- An individual learning plan (ILP) should be agreed between the mentor and the intern during the first week of the internship.
- Regular progress meetings, at least fortnightly, should take place between the two, and should be logged in a written report.

## Evaluation, monitoring and review

- In the final week of the Graduate Internship, there should be a feedback session with the intern and their mentor.
- Careers guidance should be provided covering routes in to different professions, CV advice, remuneration advice and useful resources.

## Organisations that offer support in setting up Internship Schemes

- Graduate Talent Pool [www.graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk](http://www.graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk)
- Internocracy [www.internocracy.org](http://www.internocracy.org)
- Train to Gain [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)
- The National Council for Work Experience [www.work-experience.org](http://www.work-experience.org)

## Appendix 1

### National Minimum Wage legislation

- Whether an internship is paid or not is dependent on the requirements of the role that is carried out for the organisation. If an individual is performing as a 'worker' then they must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage, currently £5.80 per hour for those aged 22 and above.
- A 'worker' is defined as someone who works under a contract of employment (written or implied) whereby there is an obligation on the individual to perform the work and an obligation on the employer to provide the work.
- The exceptions to this legislation are if the work experience placement is part of a further or higher education course and does not exceed one year, or if an individual is undertaking a placement that consists entirely of shadowing.
- If the individual is engaged as a 'volunteer' the National Minimum Wage does not apply. However, a 'volunteer' does not have any form of contract and is not under any obligation to perform work.
- Further advice can be sought from the Pay and Work Rights helpline on 0800 917 2368.