

Information for Potential Organisational Hosts of Massey University Communication Interns

How does Massey select its students for the communication internship programme?

Students in the Massey University Bachelor of Communication usually need to have a B minus average in their first- and second-year studies to be admitted to this third-year course. (Sometimes students who had a less-satisfactory first year in their degree but demonstrated excellent performance and much better grades in their second year have been admitted.)

In addition, each intending intern supplies a two-page CV and letter of application to the university that demonstrates their commitment to making the most of this valuable internship opportunity.

Is the communication internship project-based?

Some internships have involved projects, though generally they do not. Most instead feature a collection of (mainly) communication related activities that will support the work of the host organisation.

Most of the activities given to the intern to be involved with should be relevant to professional communication- or marketing-related work, given that the interns have these skills to offer. You will find that typically interns have fresh ideas and a youth audience perspective, which can deliver great insights. However, it's accepted that the intern is also on site to learn about the functioning of a busy work environment and many diverse activities can reasonably be asked of them to participate in.

Quite often a host will take advantage of a communication intern being available to get something done that it does not have the time or resources to do with existing staff.

What kind of workplace supervision is needed?

All our interns are capable of getting on with their work without close supervision. However as someone who is new to the organisation, they will need to be able to touch base with someone there who can keep an eye on them, answer their questions, give them feedback, keep them busy, etc. A staff member of this nature will usually be the intern's first source of information about the host organisation and what it is seeking.

In addition to the workplace mentor/ supervisor, each intern is also provided with a Massey University academic supervisor, a staff member from the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing who grades the intern's assignments. This academic supervisor may not normally interact directly with the workplace but keeps in regular contact with their intern to ensure that the university remains familiar with that intern's experience.

Then each of the three campuses of the School of CJM (Albany, Manawatū and Wellington) has a Communication Internship course coordinator. Their role is to work with each local intern, academic supervisor, and the workplace supervisor if needed, in the instance that any support is required to ensure that internships are a great experience for all concerned – which has virtually always been the case.

We expect our interns to be exemplary in following all policies and procedures of the host organisation and in pursuing their duties. A formal orientation for the intern is an effective way to communicate their responsibilities.

Sole practitioner organisations? Usually an organisation that has just one person on site is not a suitable internship host since that sole practitioner will typically be too busy to provide workplace feedback to a new intern.

When do interns need to be on site?

The intern's actual time on site is always negotiated between host and intern. The university just needs to be aware that the intern's 100-120 hours there have been completed.

Can interns work remotely? It is standard practice that interns should do little or none of the work that is expected of them remotely from their own personal accommodation etc. Part of the internship experience is getting familiar with normal workplace activities in that industry within an office environment. However, in the event of an emergency such as the 2020 Covid-19 crisis, interns are permitted to work off-site if this is desirable for reasons of health and safety, and if the nature of their work permits this.

What level are interns capable of working at?

Interns are capable of working at professional entry level and often they are noted for their writing skills and social media capabilities.

In smaller host organisations there have even been instances of their being asked to take on highly strategic activities such as to "design a social media strategy and implement it" which in every case they've done very well.

However host enterprises should give careful thought in advance to providing activities for the intern to undertake that do not rely on an intimate knowledge of that host enterprise.

Are hosts expected to pay interns?

In most cases the first 100-120 hours (12-15 days equivalent) have been unpaid, as this is the time when students are getting credit for the work they do as an intern and for the sense-making they undertake in their assignments.

Students pay tuition fees to be enrolled in this internship course, so you are of course welcome to make a contribution towards their tuition costs if you wish to do so.

Then if your intern is expected to undertake significant additional travel as part of their internship, normally the host organisation would expect to cover this.

If a host wants to keep an intern on after 100-120 hours, some budget should be allocated. In the US and the UK there have been many well-publicised instances of unacceptable exploitation of interns (which has not happened in NZ yet so far as we are aware). Hence for the protection of all and to ensure fair workplace practice some payment is recommended after the first 100-120 hours.

What time of the year are interns available?

The internship is offered all three semesters each year which makes their potential time with the host very flexible.

Do host organisations give feedback to the University?

Yes – hosts are asked to provide feedback about their intern via an online evaluation link, which your intern will provide towards the end of their placement. This 5-minute short survey available [here](#) helps us monitor intern performance and how well “workplace-ready” our students are. Your feedback is valuable as we seek to develop student preparedness and better understand workplace needs.

Is it expected that the internship will lead to a job?

Massey’s documentation for students specifies that:

“There is absolutely no guarantee or undertaking whatsoever, by either placement employers or Massey University, that an internship will lead to an offer of work. The purpose of undertaking an internship is to better equip you to understand the value and relevance of your academic learning to workplace situations, and to develop your abilities to adapt your academic learning to workplace realities and integrate practice and theory. All of these skills will make you more employable, but there is no expectation that the internship will necessarily lead to a job.”

What are Massey’s other expectations of the host organisation?

Both Massey and the host sign a contract covering the intern’s time in the organisation which refers to standard protections under law such as around health and safety for employee-like persons on site. This contract, once signed, ensures that Massey University’s public liability insurance covers interns while they are in your workplace.

The contract has two versions, one for a specific student and the second is a general contract that that cover a longer period, allows to add students as needed but has not obligation to accept a specific number of interns.

For further information or queries, please contact School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing Programme Support Administrator, Claudia Silva (c.silva@massey.ac.nz).