

OnCampus: 100-hour paid internship programme



The University of Sheffield provides a number of schemes to enable students to gain valuable paid work experience both within the curriculum and alongside it. One of these activities is the annual OnCampus 100-hour internship programme, which provides students with excellent opportunities to work and gain experience in one of a wide range of university departments.

Another of the programmes funds similar short internships with local SME employers and charities, providing students and new graduates with limited work experience with access to opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills and tackle real world projects working within organisations across the Sheffield City region.

Both of these schemes have been successfully operated for several years with excellent feedback from the host employers and student participants, who often cite how transformational their experience has been in developing their workplace awareness and confidence.



ACTION & APPROACH

The University's Careers Service operates an in-house student Jobshop which sources, promotes and brokers thousands of part-time and short-term work opportunities to students throughout the year.

Recruiting managers from local SMEs and across the University submit expressions of interest and outline job descriptions for the roles they wish to promote to students. Colleagues in the Careers Service review submissions against agreed criteria, and determine which of them can be allocated funding.

The selected internship opportunities are then promoted to students via Jobshop, focusing on attracting applications from those from underrepresented groups and backgrounds, and those with limited work experience.

Once appointed, students are supported with pre-internship advice and guidance and follow an introductory digital 'pathway' inviting an assessment of their skills and confidence before and after their internship experience.

At the end of each scheme an evaluation and report is generated, reflecting the experiences and outcomes of both students and employers.

IMPACT

Each year the University funds around 50 OnCampus 100-hour internships. Additional internships are sometimes funded by individual faculties. The Careers Service will also release as much additional budget as possible to add to the core-funded scheme.

The SME internship programme attracts donations from alumni of the University who wish to support underrepresented students.

At the end of the 2022 programme, 100% of students surveyed reported that they felt the internship had provided valuable career experience and the opportunity to reflect on their professional progress.

"Definitely exceeded expectations. Reliable, intelligent, keen to learn new areas of work, professional. Represented the team well at final presentation to the senior team." - Employer

"Real-life experience, the ability to work in a team and deliver on tasks that have impact" - Student

CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNT

The consistently positive feedback from host employers and students every year reinforces the value of these relatively short-term work experiences. We expect that both the OnCampus and SME internship programmes will continue to be a feature of the work experience offer for our students.

It is important that these are paid work experiences so that most students are able to prioritise taking the time, alongside their studies or during a vacation period, to apply their skills and develop their employability skills and confidence. The University will continue to support these programmes.