

Career Academy internships 2013

Career Academies takes students through a two year 'work ready' programme beginning in Transition Year. These students attend DEIS (designated disadvantaged) schools and fall into the middle ground where they are neither high nor low achievers. As a result they do not normally have the opportunity to participate in initiatives such as Career Academy. The aim of the project is to ensure these students go on to third level and have a greater degree of maturity and work readiness. They are paired with a business mentor whom they will work with throughout the two years. In conjunction with this they participate in a variety of school to work days and attend 'guru' lectures in their schools. The internship takes place during the summer after year one of the project is complete.

The internship is a crucial element of the Career Academies model; the first cohort of interns will be placed during the summer of 2013. Internships are neither the traditional 'work experience' offered to 15 and 16-year-olds, nor mini versions of undergraduate schemes. Still adolescents rather than graduates, Career Academy students (16 year-olds) may have had less opportunity to develop workplace skills and are likely to need more support and training. Yet, they can still make a real contribution to the host organisation. Employers report that working with Career Academy interns can enhance the development and boost the morale of existing staff; broaden approaches to employee diversity; and help them identify talent for the future.

Employers hosting Career Academy interns provide:

- a six-week paid work placement, minimum wage.
- staff time – a main contact and an overall supervisor per student (could be the same person) and a mentor/buddy
- a job description and list of skill requirements for the internship
- a programme for each internship, based on a standard working hour week in a real operating environment and aiming to use the skills and knowledge the student has learned in school/college
- an interview. Normally there is only one candidate for each placement, but we believe that it is important for all parties that the student undertakes a formal interview
- a suitable induction for the student on starting work

Junior Achievement provide:

- ongoing support and advice, including examples of the level of tasks and duties the students can complete plus a detailed toolkit and DVD briefing for each host employer
- a link person as the first point of contact for the employer, who will manage the intern/employer matching process, circulate job descriptions and ensure each student completes an application form
- internship preparation session for the students
- staff to visit each student during their internship to ensure all is well.

Students may be assigned to one post or rotated through different departments (eg, finance, IT, marketing). In either case, effective internships:

- enable students to learn about all aspects of the organisation. Career Academies expose students to career fields and entire industries rather than specific jobs, helping them to develop an educational and career plan for the future
- develop students' skills in generic areas, such as use of IT, giving presentations, interpersonal skills
- encourage students to problem solve via actual workplace challenges
- help students understand the importance and relevance of their academic studies
- enable teachers and employers to work together to prepare students for success in the workplace.

Key dates 2013 :

February to May	Employers confirm number of internship places they can offer
Early May	Deadline for job descriptions from employers
End May	Students matched to intern places
Early June	Student interviews at host organisations
June/July	Internships begin