



Internship Guide

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Introduction

An internship is a fantastic opportunity for a student or a fresh graduate to experience life inside a language service company. But it's also a real chance for the company to gain extra capacity during busy times or tackle a specific project, and forge relationships with tomorrow's industry professionals.

The ATC's Guide to Internships guides you through considerations and practicalities for taking on and making the most out of internships in a language service company.

The benefits of an internship

For the company

- Gain additional capacity for running tasks or a short-term project
- Aid future recruitment and reduce training burden
- Support young professionals in their early career

For the intern

- Experience hands-on the work of a language service company
- Understand the commercial realities of the language services industry
- Be better prepared for future employment within the industry

For the industry & academic world

- Forge links between the language services industry and the academic world, to ensure the education of future professionals is in tune with the evolving needs of the industry
- Improve the calibre of future job-seekers by providing them with an insight into the skills needed to make a successful transition from the academic world to the professional world
- Promote the future of the industry and encourage young graduates to enter careers within the industry

What can interns do?

An internship is an opportunity for a student or a fresh graduate to gain real-life experience in a specific industry, role or company. With support and guidance, interns can be involved in any aspect of your day-to-day business or work on a specific project.

For example, a translation or applied languages student could get involved in translation and other linguistic work, project management, or day-to-day work or a discreet project within marketing, sales, vendor management or quality management.

Equally, you may wish to host an intern studying international business or marketing, for example.

The shape and structure of an internship

Timing and duration

Internships can be offered at any time of the year, and are either done in the intern's own time during term breaks or after their studies finish, or as an internship placement which forms part of their degree.

Internships can vary in duration from a few weeks to a number of months depending on the company's needs, the intern's own preference, or the degree course's internship placement module. An internship of 3-6 months, for example, provides the intern a good opportunity to get into the full flow of the work and expectations of the environment, and the company a meaningful return for the time they spend training and supporting the intern.

In the UK, post-graduate MA courses for translation or applied languages typically have no set internship modules and thus have no room for an internship during term time. Most UK-based student interns seek internships outside of term time.

In Europe, many universities have longer MA degree courses which often include an internship module of 3-6 months during term time.

Remuneration and contracts

Remuneration and contractual elements for internships depend on whether the internship forms part of the intern's degree or not.

Internship *is not* part of the intern's degree

If the internship is not part of the intern's degree, and the intern carries out meaningful work on behalf of your business, they are classified as a 'worker' and must be employed with a formal contract in the same way as any employee, remunerated by at least the National Minimum Wage. The intern's contract can be a fixed-term employment contract limited to the duration of the internship, for example.

See more information about interns' employment rights and pay in the UK [here](#).

Internship *is* part of the intern's degree

If the internship forms part of the intern's degree studies, the intern will not be employed by you, but the intern's university may ask you to complete a learning agreement for the intern, and to assign specific tasks and a named supervisor for them. They may also ask you to provide post-internship feedback.

Interns who carry out an internship as part of their degree are not classified as a worker or employee, and they do not legally need to be paid the National Minimum Wage provided that the duration of the internship is less than 12 months. However, the intern's university will be able to specify whether the internship should be fully unpaid, or whether they recommend the intern be paid or receive other financial support such as travel or accommodation.

Other types of support

Consider other types of financial support offered to an intern carefully, for example, travel or accommodation costs. These may be construed as benefits in kind, and change an unpaid intern's status to 'worker' entitled to National Minimum Wage. See more information about intern statuses [here](#).

Contractual advice from Croner

As an ATC Member, you have access to FREE contractual, legal and HR help from ATC partner Croner, on their telephone helpline. Log in to the ATC online [Member Area](#) for more information on how to access Croner's services.

Erasmus+ funding and interns from the EU

If an EU student is required to complete an internship as part of their degree, they may be eligible to apply for Erasmus+ funding for the internship, which will require your input.

Post-Brexit, students will still be eligible to come to the UK for internships even if UK universities do not participate in the Erasmus+ scheme beyond 2021. However, you may need to apply for a visa and sponsorship for a student coming from an EU country from 2021.

Recruitment

Prospective interns may approach you directly to enquire about internship opportunities. You may also want to promote internships on your website or social media, or get in touch with UK or overseas universities to enquire about internships with their students.

It's a good idea to consider your internship needs in advance.

Think about whether a prospective intern should know specific languages for an internship in your company, or if English is sufficient. If you don't have a specific language requirement, you could start by contacting your local universities that run either BA or MA language or translation programmes, or programmes in another subject you are interested in.

If you are seeking interns with a specific language requirement, check which UK universities offer degree programmes for that language combination, as students based in the UK already may find it logistically easier to arrange a short term internship than someone based abroad. UCAS is a central organisation that lists all UK degree programmes, see <https://www.ucas.com/>.

Often, the first point of contact is the university's Careers Service.

In Europe, you could start by searching [here](#) for a list of member universities within the European Masters in Translation (EMT) network. The EMT is a network of MA programmes in translation to improve the quality of training and to help young graduates to integrate smoothly in the translation job market.

Application process

If you are actively recruiting interns, prepare an internship specification or a job advert that outlines the specifics of the internship at your business: duration, role, salary and qualification/experience/skills requirements in the same way as you would advertise and recruit for a permanent role.

Have a recruitment process that includes a CV, application form, possible test (with feedback) and an interview, to give you a clear idea of the prospective intern's skills and whether they would be a good match for your company. This will also provide the prospective intern with a good experience and preparation for future job applications.

It's good practice to have a learning agreement with clearly defined objectives and expectations for both parties: include what training, supervision and feedback you will provide and share this during the recruitment process.

Practical considerations

In-office or remote?

Traditionally, internships have taken place in the office, to provide the intern with sufficient support, training and supervision. However, nothing stops you from offering a remote internship, either in-country, or in the intern's home country.

For any remote internships, ensure that you have considered how support, training and supervision will be carried out remotely, and how you will incorporate the intern into the daily life of your business. Ensure that the intern has a safe and secure working environment which complies with your security setup.

Typical internship: translation

For hands-on translation or linguistic internships, ensure the work is of a suitable nature for someone with the intern's level of experience, knowledge and level of education.

A student or recent graduate may have some translation experience from their course, but the volume of translations completed is likely to be limited, the deadlines they worked to may have been generous, and the text types and domains they covered may be general, or only within one domain. This means they may not be equipped to tackle all project types, and the volume they can translate in a day will be less than a more experienced linguist. They may have little or no experience of using translation software.

Any work you deem suitable and appropriate should be fully and carefully checked by a competent, experienced linguist who has ample time to ensure they review and edit the work up to a full client-ready professional standard, as would be delivered by any experienced and qualified translator.

Typical internship: project management

For project management internships, ensure the work you ask the intern to complete is of an appropriate level for someone of their experience and skills within the workplace.

Students or recent graduates may have no client-facing customer service experience, and may have little experience of multitasking, working to tight deadlines, dealing with difficult situations or commercial pressures. Plan in advance what sort of tasks you'll ask them to perform, and how they will be supported and monitored.

Training

Think about what training the intern will require in the same way as you would for any new employee. For linguistic roles, test the intern's skills first with translation or revision tests, and provide them with feedback so they have a fair expectation of where their skills lie before the internship starts, and an opportunity to brush up on certain areas before they begin, if the tests reveal a gap in their knowledge of a certain part of grammar, for example.

Feedback and mentoring

Think about who will support them within each role or function they will be involved in and what sort of supervision and feedback will be needed. Ensure someone is appointed to provide them a helping hand and mentoring on a regular basis.

Plan regular reviews of their work and review meetings with the interns, to ensure both parties are finding the internship is progressing as planned.

If the internship is very short, and they are mainly observing colleagues and performing peripheral tasks, ensure the intern understand where their tasks fit within the larger scheme of the production cycle, so they see how they are meaningful within the bigger picture.

Post-internship

Review the internship with the intern and their mentors or supervisors. Check if the intern met the objectives set out in the learning agreement, and review how things may need to be adjusted for future internships, either in terms of training, expectations, tasks, supervision or output.

Follow-up with the university, ask them to share any feedback they receive from the student, and ask if the internship met their needs, and if they'd be happy to collaborate and build on the relationship in future. Maybe they'd welcome you to contribute to their course, giving some lectures on the commercial expectations of the industry, to help students know what to expect and bridge the gap between the academic and professional world.