

CAREERS



READING INTERNSHIP SCHEME

EMPLOYER HANDBOOK
2024/2025

**READING INTERNSHIP
SCHEME**



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"We had a positive experience with the Reading Internship Scheme. The student who participated in the internship was exceptional and demonstrated a high level of commitment to their work. They actively engaged with our team, embraced their responsibilities, and consistently delivered quality results. We were impressed by their professionalism, enthusiasm, and willingness to learn. The program was well-structured, and the communication and support from the Reading Internship Scheme team were excellent throughout the process. We appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with the scheme and believe it offers valuable experiences for both students and organisations."

- 2023 Employer

READING INTERNSHIP SCHEME

Looking to offer an internship to a student through our Reading Internship Scheme?



What is the Reading Internship Scheme (RIS)?

The Reading Internship Scheme connects University of Reading undergraduate students with UK based organisations through short-term, paid internships. Salary contribution grants are available to charities & SMEs through the scheme.

What RIS aims to do

The Reading Internship Scheme aims to:

- Support University of Reading undergraduates find meaningful work experience, allowing them to build their confidence and develop their employability and transferable skills.
- Support students develop and nurture a professional network.
- Enable students to explore different sectors and try out careers they may not have thought of before.
- Connect organisations with talented University of Reading undergraduates who can provide businesses with fresh ideas that can really make an impact.
- Enable organisations to access top undergraduate talent by supporting with salary costs and promoting the internship opportunity to our undergraduate community.

“I love this scheme, I think it's one of the best benefits I got from the university as a whole, the fact that we get exclusivity as students at university is a real competitive edge, and it gives us better chances to find a job! Most people want to work, all they need is the opportunity! I found mine here.” -

2023/2024 Intern

1,093

unique students applied to internships in the 23/24 scheme

135

interns placed in 2023/24 Reading Internship Scheme

1,747

applications were submitted by students in the 23/24 scheme

WHY GET INVOLVED

- **Access to high calibre UoR students:** RIS enables you to connect with our talented undergraduates who can provide you with fresh ideas.
- **Streamlined recruitment process:** we take care of the advertisement and promotion for you but allow you full control over who you take on.
- **Support UoR students:** by hosting an intern, you're helping students develop their professional skills and gain valuable work experience as well as an insight into your sector. A lot of students are unsure what they want to do or what's even out there - by offering an internship, you're enhancing a student's CV and helping them understand their long term career goals.
- **Flexible:** internships can run throughout the year, not just summer! We support part-time, full-time, remote, hybrid, and office based internships.
- **Cost Effective:** the University provides a grant towards your interns' salary - see Page 8 for details and eligibility.

100%

of employers from the 23/24 scheme would recommend RIS to other employers

100%

of students from the 23/24 scheme would recommend RIS to other students

EMPLOYER ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in the Reading Internship Scheme as an employer, you must as a minimum:

- Have Employer's & Public Liability insurance in place.
- Be able to pay your intern through your company's PAYE.
- Be a UK-based company & set up with either Companies House or the Charity Commission (or both). We can also consider councils, educational institutions, and other similar organisations.

"The overall experience was very positive, and the intern was a delight to work with and manage. They were able to fully contribute and manage the project to its successful conclusion with the minimum of supervision. The calibre of the candidates originally presented was very high which helped engender a sense that this vital project would be completed within the required constraints."

-2023 Employer

HOW IT WORKS

To start the process you will need to complete the following steps:

Step 1:

Read this handbook carefully as all important information regarding the scheme is in here. Any questions, please contact the RIS team on ris@reading.ac.uk

Step 2:

Complete our [employer application form](#). The scheme's manager will review your application and come back to you with an offer should your application be successful. Alongside the offer, you will be sent a job description template to complete.

Step 3:

Complete the job description template we send you. We will then advertise your vacancy on our jobs board and promote to students for 3 weeks.

Step 4:

Whilst your role is being advertised, we will ask you to register your company on the University's supplier portal for the salary contribution grant. If you're an existing supplier, this step is skipped.

Step 5:

After the closing date of your advert, we will send you all applications via email. It's now over to you to shortlist, interview, and select a candidate that's right for you!



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP TIMELINES

Internships run throughout the year from November to August. As students have study commitments for the majority of the year, from November to May only part-time internships are available. Then from June to August, students are able to join you on a full-time basis. See below dates and available internship options.

Semester Internships

Operating: November - May

Advertised: October - April

- Part-time only
- 140 hours minimum
- Students are with you until they complete the set hours but **must be finished by 29 August 2025**
- How many hours a student does per week is between you and the student but students **cannot work more than 20 hours per week** (but they can work less). We recommend 10 hours per week to allow students time to study.
- Must be flexible and fit around their studies – remember, sometimes student timetables change last minute so please be understanding and flexible

Summer Internships

Operating: 16 June '25 - 29 August '25

Advertised: January - June

- Part-time or full-time
- 4 - 10 weeks (140 hours minimum)
- Students are with you until they complete the set hours but **must be finished by 29 August 2025**
- How many hours a student does per week is between you and the student so they are able to work full-time or part-time if you prefer. We recommend 35 hours if full-time (above calculations are based on this). You must ensure working time regulations are adhered to and they do not work more than 48 hours in one week.



RIS PAY RATES

All interns through the scheme are paid at least the **National Living Wage** which is currently **£11.44 per hour** but likely to increase from April 2025. You are welcome to pay interns at a higher rate if you choose, but never less than the rates set out by us even if your intern is under the age of 21. You can view National Living Wage rates on the [government website](#).

SALARY CONTRIBUTION GRANTS

The University of Reading offers eligible organisations a salary contribution grant of up to £1,601.60 per intern. These grants are available to charities and SMEs.

As a salary contribution grant, the expectation is that host organisations will pay the intern through their own PAYE, topping up the salary where applicable.

Charities, Community Interest Companies, and Charitable Organisations

The current Charity Grant is **£1,601.60***. This salary contribution grant covers the salary costs of the intern for 140 hours at £11.44 per hour (or 4-weeks full-time if worked 35 hours per week). You may choose to keep the intern for the 140 hours only where their salary costs are covered by us or you may wish to keep the intern on for longer but cover the rest of the salary costs yourself at the National Living Wage (currently £11.44 per hour).

Profit Earning Organisations

The University of Reading provides a salary contribution grant of **up to £1,000** to profit earning businesses towards their intern's salaries. The expectation is that your intern works a minimum of 140 hours and you cover the rest of the salary yourself at £11.44 per hour (or whatever the current National Living Wage is).

The exact grant amount will be determined when you submit an application form - the grant is calculated based on your headcount and annual turnover to ensure we're providing fair support to our employer partners.

Larger Organisations and University Departments

We are unable to offer a salary contribution grant but would still love to work with you! Although you would not receive a grant, you would still get all the perks of RIS including advertising your internship, targeted promotion of your internship, and support along the way from the RIS team!

*The charity rate is calculated at 140 hours based on £11.44 per hour which is the current National Living Wage as of April 2024. If the National Living Wage increases, this grant will be revised and communications will be sent out. As an employer, it is your responsibility to keep up to date with National Living Wage increases and pay your interns accordingly.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

...and some frequently asked questions!

TERMS & CONDITIONS

By participating in the Reading Internship Scheme, your organisation is agreeing to the following:

- Your vacancy listed in your registration form will not be advertised elsewhere, as this is exclusive to the Reading Internship Scheme.
- You will supply us with such information as reasonably required in order to set up, promote and arrange the internship.
- You will provide your intern with an employment contract to reflect the internship.
- You will only offer the position to a student who has applied for your position through the Reading Internship Scheme.
- You agree that if you are taking on an intern during the semester, they will not work more than 20 hours per week.
- You will pay the intern at least the National Living Wage
- It is your responsibility to ensure applicants have equal opportunities in accordance with obligations under the Equalities Act 2010.
- You will notify us once you have appointed an intern but you will do this before the intern starts their internship so that we can provide appropriate support to the student.
- You will provide all applicants you have interviewed with interview feedback within 1 week.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that all applicable legislation has been complied with in connection with the internship including all employment laws and regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- You understand that the Reading Internship Scheme Agreement, Health and Safety checklist and employment contract need to be in place prior to an intern starting their internship.
- You are responsible for employing the successful applicant and paying the applicant's wages (via PAYE) and reasonable expenses, where applicable.
- If your invoice is submitted after the intern's first day, or does not include your individual purchase order number, your organisation will need to pay the intern's salary and use the grant as a reimbursement if payment is then delayed from the University due to this.
- You will ensure that the place of work complies with health and safety regulations during the internship including, but not limited to, registered office space and appropriate desk space for your intern to work.
- There will be staff available for the duration of the internship to ensure appropriate supervision and support are always available to your intern.
- The intern is your employee; it is your responsibility to pay your intern in accordance with your employment contract. The funding we provide is a contribution, not the intern's salary so it is your responsibility to pay your intern in accordance with your scheduled payroll then use the funding we provide as reimbursement (if it has not reached you in time).

If you have any questions about the terms and conditions,
please contact us on ris@reading.ac.uk

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Find below some frequently asked questions.

How long is my internship?

The minimum length of an internship is 140 hours. You will be asked to specify the length of your internship in your application form and we will confirm the agreed length in your offer from us.

What days/ hours does my intern work?

Working hours and days are between you and the student. However, please be mindful that students will have study commitments and changing timetables - a level of flexibility is required to part-take in the Reading Internship Scheme.

How many hours can a student do during term-time?

During the semester, students are not able to work more than 20 hours per week. We recommend 10 per week to fit around study commitments.

How many hours can a student do during summer?

Students are able to work full-time hours in vacation periods. Please refer to our [term dates](#). During vacation periods, students must not work more than 48 hours in one week as per [working time regulations](#). We recommend between 35 to 37 hours per week.

How much do I have to pay my intern?

All RIS internships pay the [National Living Wage](#) which is currently £11.44 per hour but may increase from April 2025. You must pay the student at least the National Living Wage as these are the set RIS rates even if the student is under 21.

How does the intern get paid?

The student will be your employee and so they must be paid through your [PAYE](#).

Do I need to draw up an employment contract?

Yes, the intern is your employee so you must provide them with an employment contract. Check [employment rights](#) and get help with [employment contracts](#).

Do interns get annual leave?

As temporary employees, interns have the right to accrue annual leave. As the employer, host organisations should make their own arrangements for annual leave, but the [gov.uk calculator](#) may help to establish the entitlement. Organisations should follow the same arrangements for absence through illness as they would for any other member of staff.

Do I have to do right to work checks?

Yes, as the intern's employer it is your responsibility to conduct right to work checks.

Can my intern work from home?

Yes, we support office based, hybrid, or fully remote internships. If your internship is fully remote, please ensure there is still sufficient support given to your intern - some students may find it more difficult to reach out to you via online methods to ask a simple question so we'd encourage you to set up regular catch-ups or think about hybrid or office based for the first part of the internship whilst the student is settling in.

Can my intern work from a different country?

No, we do not support this. Students must be based in the UK when they are undertaking their internships. We make students aware of this.

RECRUITING YOUR INTERN

You've received your offer from us and the job description template. **Now what?**

WRITING YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION

If your application is successful, we will send you an offer detailing the internship, length, and salary contribution grant available to you. You will also be sent a link to complete your internship description - we will use this to advertise your internship.

Please ensure you complete our internship template as opposed to sending your own job descriptions over as the template we send captures all necessary information to advertise your role. We will ask you the following:

- **Organisation info:** organisation name, website link, location
- **Internship Info:** length, full-time/ part-time, remote/hybrid/office, ideal start date
- **Internship occupational area** (tick box): you'll be asked to select which occupational areas your internship falls into. This allows us to target specific students that indicated they're interested in your area.
- **About your organisation:** who you are & what you do. Students want to know where they will work so it's important to get this section right. It's also a good chance for you to stand out! Other companies might be offering the same internship as you so one of the deciding factors for students will likely be the company itself.
- **What the internship involves:** information about the internship opportunity itself. What is the role and it's objectives? Include key responsibilities so students have an idea on what they will get up to. Don't leave this section vague - when applying for a job, candidates will want to know exactly what it is that they'll be doing. Vague responsibilities will just result in unsuitable applicants and we'll just end up having to re-advertise.
- **Ideal skills for internship:** mention some skills or experiences you feel the intern may need in order to successfully undertake the internship. Remember that these are undergraduate students with little or no previous experience so be realistic with what you're putting here.
- **What students will get:** why should the student join you rather than any of the other organisations currently advertising? This is your chance to stand out and tell students about all the great things on offer with you. That could be things like flexible working, casual dress code, mentoring, further employment opportunities, salary higher than the set RIS rates and so on.



130

internships advertised in the
2023/24 Reading Internship
Scheme

1,747

applications submitted
overall by students in the
2023/2024 Reading
Internship Scheme

14

average applications per
vacancy. On average, a
student applies to 2
internships

MAXIMISING ENGAGEMENT

What makes a job description appealing to students?

We conducted some research on internships from the 2022/2023 scheme that received the most and least number of applications. Below are some of the most common themes we picked up on and how to mitigate them.

Internship title: make it clear, engaging, and easy to grasp

The title is so important when it comes to advertising an internship - it's the first thing a candidate sees! The title determines whether or not someone will actually click on a job; it entices people to read the full job description. Without an engaging title, students won't give your role a second look. In the 2022/23 scheme, the least popular roles all had one thing in common: ambiguous, unclear, or complicated titles that students didn't understand.

Location: remember we're in Reading!

As a Reading based University, it's not surprising that the most popular roles tend to be located around the Reading area or areas easily accessible via public transport to and from Reading. If you're based far from Reading or are located somewhere with limited public transport, bear in mind that your applications will be limited. You may think about offering it on a fully remote basis, reimbursing students for travel expenses, or providing financial support towards a short term relocation during summer for your internship.

Being open minded: different degrees will help you diversify

Be open to a range of degree disciplines – remember that this is an interest based scheme. The skill that you're looking for may come from extracurricular activities that a student undertakes alongside their studies! The most popular internships from 2022/23 clearly stated that they were open to students from all degree programmes. If you put on your advert that you prefer a specific degree, you will immediately put off the rest of the student population and narrow your own talent pool.

Perks & Benefits: why should students apply to you?

Most of our popular internships explicitly stated benefits to students: employee benefits, mentoring, training & development, possibility of future employment, or higher hourly rates. Sometimes we will have organisations advertise similar internships at the same time with identical titles - a good way to set yourself apart is by including some perks!

Clear & Detailed Descriptions: more is more when it comes to job specs!

Students will want to know what the internship entails and what they will be doing. Do not write a vague job description - you will either end up with unsuitable candidates or not get any applicants.

Asking for too much: keep the requirements short and realistic

RIS is all about helping students who may not have any previous experience or are looking to explore something completely new. So, be open minded about the essential skills you look for and try to focus more on transferable skills. The most popular roles in the 2022/23 scheme made it clear that previous experience was not necessary, and that enthusiasm and willingness to learn were more important. Those that stipulated many requirements did not do well with applications.

OCCUPATIONAL AREA POPULARITY

Average applications breakdown

We've conducted some research on internships advertised in the 2023/2024 academic year to get an idea on the average applications per internship occupational area*. Below are some of our findings.



***Occupational area refers to internships themselves, not company sectors** - e.g. a charity advertising a marketing role would be classed as an 'Advertising & Marketing' role.

This is only a guide. Applications will vary depending on lots of things like internship title, job description, company, location and so on. These findings should help you get an idea on average applications per occupational area but you should still make your advert as engaging as possible to maximise your applications!

ADVERTISING YOUR ROLE

Once you've written your job description (using all the hints and tips from the previous pages to maximise your applications!), you must submit it to us via the online form. We will then look over it to ensure it's suitable to be advertised.

We will advertise the role on our jobs board for **3 weeks**. During these 3-weeks, you will be asked to register your organisation on our supplier portal for the salary contribution grant (if your organisation is eligible for a grant). Refer to **page 20** for more info on setting up on the supplier portal. You will only be asked to register if you do not already have an account - previous employers will likely already be set up in which case we will inform you that you have an account.

HOW DO STUDENTS APPLY?

Students apply to a RIS internship by completing an anonymous application form. This form is very simple and asks 3 questions:

1. What knowledge, skills, or experiences do you have that are relevant for this position?
2. What excites you about this internship in particular?
3. Any other relevant information you'd like to share (optional)

RIS is designed to help University of Reading students gain much needed work experience whilst also earning a competitive salary. By introducing anonymous application forms, we hope to make RIS more inclusive by levelling the playing field and not hindering students who perhaps have less to put on a CV than others.

“The recruitment process was good. I found **the required questions allowed me to talk about my experience and keen interest in the role**. Learning about the business and asking questions made an impression with the director which helped me to land the internship role.” - 2023/ 2024 Intern



SHORTLISTING STUDENTS

After the internship expires, we will send all applications to you via email. As all the applications are anonymous, you will have to communicate to us who you wish to interview. Each application will have a reference number on it – you will have to send us a list of the reference numbers you'd like to shortlist for interview. We will then release the students' contact details to you and you are free to contact them to arrange interviews. We recommend you shortlist 3 to 5 students in order to fully inform your selection - students tend to apply to more than one internship so it's good for you to have backups.

We do expect that you review and shortlist candidates in a timely manner and ask that you contact us with your chosen candidates within 1 week of receiving applications.

Shortlisted students receive a trigger email from RIS alerting them that they've been shortlisted and prompting them to keep an eye on their emails. So, please get in touch with the students as soon as possible as they'll be waiting to hear from you! Unsuccessful students also receive a trigger email to inform them that they've not been successful. **We expect all shortlisted students to be interviewed.**

INTERVIEWING STUDENTS

It is now over to you to contact the students and arrange interviews! Employers have complete control over when and how they wish to interview their candidates. If your role is fully office based, it's a good idea to also hold your interview in-person - this will give students a good idea of the commute that will be involved.

We ask employers to conduct interviews in a timely manner in order to make the process quick and effortless for both student and employer. From the time of letting us know of your shortlisted candidates, we ask that you make contact with the students within 1 week. Remember that they get notified once we send you their contact details - they'll be waiting for you to get in touch.

MAKING AN OFFER

Once you've conducted your interviews and selected a student, it's time to make an offer! Please offer the student yourself. Once the student accepts, please let us know the name of the student as well as the agreed start and end dates of the internship.

Please provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates you've interviewed. This will help them improve for their next interview.

ONBOARDING YOUR INTERN

You've offered an intern and they accepted.
Now what?

EXPECTED PAPERWORK

Once you have successfully recruited an intern and have notified the RIS Manager, you will need to complete the following paperwork to ensure all terms and conditions are agreed and all liability insurance is in place:

Reading Internship Scheme Agreement

This is a contract between the organisation and the University, whilst the intern undertakes their internship. The document outlines the organisation and student involved, start/finish dates, internship details, and confirmation of funding available. The agreement is sent to employers via Adobe Sign and needs to be signed by both organisation and University of Reading. Please note that an internship cannot take place until the University of Reading's Reading Internship Scheme agreement is signed by both parties.

Health & Safety Checklist

The checklist covers organisations' health and safety procedures, liability insurance, and whether the workplace is COVID-19 secure (If applicable). This will also be sent to employers via Adobe Sign (alongside the agreement as one document).

These must be done before the intern starts.

INTERNS ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Please remember that interns are employed by host organisations so they are your employees for the duration of their internships. This means you need to treat your interns as you would treat your other employees. Employer responsibilities:

- Provide the student with an **employment contract** which incorporates the length of internship, employment terms, remuneration, details of employment, and any other organisational terms. If you need support with a contract, [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) has some helpful resources.
- Pay national insurance towards your interns
- Complete the necessary **right to work checks** before your intern starts
- Take into account **annual leave and sick pay**. As temporary employees, interns have the right to accrue annual leave. As the employer, host organisations should make their own arrangements for annual leave, but the [gov.uk calculator](https://www.gov.uk) may help to establish the entitlement. Organisations should follow the same arrangements for absence through illness as they would for any other member of staff.

HOW TO RECEIVE YOUR GRANT

At this point, you should hopefully already be registered on our supplier portal, eMarketplace (remember, we would have already asked you to sign up when the role was being advertised).

The grant payment will be paid to host organisations through purchase orders. Once you have confirmed to us that an intern is starting, we will raise a requisition which will generate a purchase order and allow you to invoice us. We will always communicate next steps with you through email - we will alert you when you need to register to eMarketplace, when to look out for your purchase order and how to invoice us. We will also send instructions every step of the way to support you as best as we can so please do read our instructions carefully and action anything we ask you to action promptly otherwise there may be a delay with your grant payment.


As the University, together with the funding organisations, are not benefitting financially by providing these grants (we are allocating the funds to organisations that are not strictly supplying us with any goods / services), all grants are VAT exempt. This must be reflected in all invoices.

PAYING YOUR INTERN

Your intern is your employee; they are not employed by the University of Reading and do not get paid by the University. The grant is paid to host organisations directly through purchase orders.

This means the intern must be paid by your organisation directly. You must set up the intern on your company's PAYE and pay your intern in accordance with your own payroll schedule. You must pay the intern the agreed RIS rates even if your intern is under the age of 23.

If the grant we provide is delayed for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to pay your intern on time according to your own payroll schedule then use the grant we provide as reimbursement.



"The company I worked for was so attentive and helpful, everyone was invested in my development and offered me opportunities beyond what was originally covered in the internship spec. I have developed both professionally and personally and also have a better idea of what I would look for/avoid when applying for graduate jobs e.g., office environment." - 2022/2023 Student

KEEPING YOUR INTERN ENGAGED

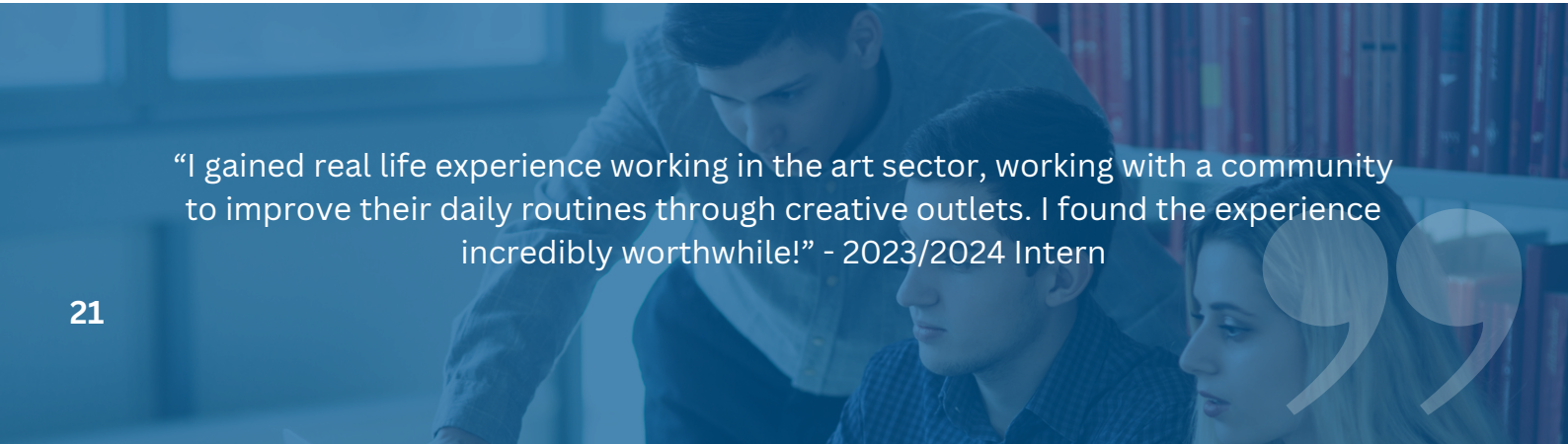
It may be that you recruit an intern months before the intern is actually due to start. This is completely fine and a good way to secure a keen student early. However, it's important to keep the communication going! Make sure you occasionally reach out to them before they start - ask them how they're doing and let them know you're excited to have them on board. This will help keep your intern engaged and enthused!

MANAGING YOUR INTERN

Internships are structured in such a way that the host organisation acts as the employer whilst the internship is taking place. Therefore, organisations are generally autonomous in how they manage their interns. We are on hand if there are any issues or if you need support in preparing to welcome your intern to your organisation.

Some top tips to help your organisation get the most out of RIS:

- Make sure you **have a clear project in mind** for your intern. The project should clearly outline your goals and objectives so your intern knows exactly what they are there to do.
- Rather than using an intern as an extra pair of hands, **think of a project** that would really add some value to your organisation!
- **Check in on your intern** at least once a day to see how they are getting on.
- Remember that for many students your internship is their first professional experience so you should **communicate your expectations clearly** (such as working hours, tasks, dress code if applicable and so on). Make sure to have an induction on your interns' first day so you can go through all of this.
- **Allow your intern some creative freedom** and ask for their input – our talented students come from a range of backgrounds and disciplines and will undoubtedly have a different perspective on things! This can not only help your business improve but it will also make your intern feel more valued.
- **Praise/ constructive criticism** - this is a learning experience for students so it's important to help them learn. Often this will be a student's first experience so praising them or providing constructive criticism will help them grow professionally.



“I gained real life experience working in the art sector, working with a community to improve their daily routines through creative outlets. I found the experience incredibly worthwhile!” - 2023/2024 Intern

THANK YOU TO OUR EMPLOYERS

We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the support of our host organisations. Your internships help students gain **skills, experience, confidence, passion, knowledge** and so much more.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Your kind donations help us continue supporting students and employers through paid internships.



HOST AN INTERN

If you'd like to host an intern through the Reading Internship Scheme this year, we'd love to hear from you!

Fill out an [application form](#) or get in touch with us on ris@reading.ac.uk

**READING INTERNSHIP
SCHEME**

BECOME A SUPPORTER

In today's increasingly competitive job market, a good degree isn't always enough to land a job.

Work experience can make all the difference.

RIS works tirelessly to provide our students with meaningful opportunities that enrich their CVs, boosts their employability skills, and gives them insight into different career pathways. Our salary contribution grants not only ensure students get paid for their hard work, but also enable organisations who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford interns to access and utilise early talent.

We wouldn't be able to do this without the support of our generous donors who make all this happen.

Our donors play a pivotal part in helping us provide invaluable work experiences to both our students and local charities and SMEs. If you'd like to make a real difference by supporting RIS, we'd love to hear from you!

[Donate Now](#)

[Find out More](#)

IMAGINE

FUNDRAISING AND
VOLUNTEERING CAMPAIGN