

Internships

SUPER DTP students are encouraged to undertake an internship during the course of their studies to support their personal and career development.



About internships

- Internships can be based in the UK or abroad and usually involve working on a defined placement project or piece of research-based work for a host organisation outside of academia. This could be with a parliamentary/government department, a non-governmental body, a learned society, the voluntary sector, a consultancy, industry, or other organisations.
- Placement opportunities can be related to a student's PhD topic, or can be completely unrelated. Both options offer the chance to broaden experiences and gain valuable transferable skills.
- Internships offer benefits to both students and host organisations in enabling a two-way exchange of information, skills and experience and a valuable means of bridging academia with policy and practice.

Internship timings

- Internships are generally 1-3 months in duration but can last between 2 weeks and 6 months.
- The placements can be undertaken on a full or part-time basis, with interns generally expected to spend between 50-100% of their time with the host organisation.
- The end of second year of a PhD tends to be good time for considering an internship, but the timing is not prescriptive and will differ according to the needs of the individual student and aspects of their studies (e.g fieldwork, lab work, teaching commitments etc).
- Students should discuss suitable timings with their academic supervisors and should bear in mind that it can take several months to set up an internship. It is therefore recommended to start planning/applying at least 6 months ahead of an anticipated start date.

Finding an internship

- SUPER will alert students to any competitive opportunities and can help to approach organisations and to advertise students' interests.
- Academic supervisors may have established contacts and ideas, but students are also encouraged to source their own internship opportunities by defining what they are looking for and making approaches to relevant organisations.
- The list of [SUPER DTP associate partners](#) is a useful reference for possible organisations to contact.
- Keep an eye on websites with listings of relevant internship opportunities, such as [MASTS](#) and [Bright Green Business](#).

Internship funding/ suspension of studies

- Students can opt to either:
 - 1) undertake an internship as part of the 3.5 years of their PhD (and continue to receive stipend/fees without suspending studies); or
 - 2) suspend PhD studies (and therefore suspend the stipend/fees) whilst completing the internship. The thesis submission date would then be extended by the same duration as the internship.
- If the internship is integral to the doctoral programme, students can remain registered on their PhD and would not need to extend their studentship. It is more usual though for an internship to be separate from the PhD itself and therefore for the studentship to be suspended. This allows time to focus on the placement and to be immersed in the work of the host organisation. Equally, if an organisation provides a salary then students should suspend their studies for the duration of the internship.
- Students who hold a Tier 4 visa may only be able to undertake a part-time internship alongside their full-time PhD studies, unless the placement forms an essential part of their research. Students should refer to guidance on the [UKCISA website](#) and check their visa circumstances.

- Students should discuss the options with their academic supervisors and HEI before making any firm commitments, taking into account the financial implications of undertaking an internship, including any terms related to additional funded time.
- SUPER DTP students can access £1,600 from centrally held funds to facilitate internships e.g. to help with travel and accommodation costs for remote working. Any additional costs associated with the internship will need to be borne from students' individual DTP training grants or external sources.

After the internship

- Students and host organisations are asked to provide feedback on the internships and to reflect on the benefits and outcomes of the experience.

Benefits of an internship

Internships undertaken as part of the SUPER DTP are intended to generate mutual benefit between students and host organisations and to enhance the quality or impact of research.

For our students:

- Internships are a fantastic learning opportunity; the chance to apply research knowledge in a working environment and to enhance professional skills.
- Undertaking an internship can provide a valuable new perspective and context for doctoral research as well as the opportunity to develop networks outside of academia and to explore potential future collaborations.
- Whether you plan to stay in academia or to seek employment elsewhere, completing an internship can help you to stand out when applying for positions. Employers are increasingly looking for a well-rounded skill set and an internship can help demonstrate skills, knowledge and experiences which extend beyond the area of doctoral research.
- The transferable skills gained through internships could include report writing, communication, time management, leadership and team working; all valuable for future career paths.
- Alongside the skills and knowledge acquired through your doctoral research, the personal and professional development achieved through internships can contribute valuable credits towards your PG Cert qualification.
- Within the MASTS/SUPER Graduate School, a number of internships have led onto further work or career opportunities with the host organisation.
- Internships offer the chance to gain useful knowledge about organisations and how they operate, to learn about a field from the inside, to explore a potential career path, to evaluate work areas of interest, or to consider new career ideas while strengthening your CV.

For host organisations:

- Our SUPER DTP students have secured highly competitive NERC studentships and have excellent research, analysis, communication, problem-solving and critical thinking skills to bring to an internship project. Student profiles and areas of research can be found here: [cohort 1](#), [cohort 2](#)
- Our students can bring a fresh perspective and new ideas to your organisation and can help to link up policy and practice with academic knowledge.
- Internships can be tailored to meet your organisational needs in terms of the subject area and placement activity.
- Students can be tasked with either delivering a specific piece of work or contributing to an ongoing project. This could involve research, policy analysis or evaluation work, report writing, or other activities.
- There is flexibility in the duration (usually 1 – 3 months) and the timing of internships during the year.

For any further information or queries on internships, please email superdtp@st-andrews.ac.uk