

# The Role of the Student Intern



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# Structure of the session:

- Definitions
- The story
- What worked and why
- Student Engagement

## **The project bid identified the role of the intern as “central”**

- To work collaboratively with peers.
- To identify and develop ways of collecting and analysing research data by means of questionnaires, interview and focus groups.
- Event planning.

# Definitions

*“a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.”*

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (2011)

## (An internship)...

- contributes to the student's personal and professional development through challenging work assignments;
- is usually completed before the student graduates from university;
- is planned and scheduled through consultation with the university so as to fit into the undergraduate experience;
- involves a supervision component that is mentoring and educational;
- includes career related experiences that complement what is learned in the classroom.

- will have a reflection and evaluation process at the conclusion of the internship;
- increases the student's skills, confidence and independence;
- is most successful when the student and the university share responsibility in making the internship a valuable experience.

# The Kingston Story....



## Activities:

2 interns 2008-10

- Data input
- Focus groups
- “Big events”
- Course rep events

5 interns 2010-11

- “Big events”
- Video conference with Appalachia State University, NC
- Conference preparation

A fresher's fair  
for finalists



## **Post-it exercise: words to describe how you feel about the final year**

- Now
- Next



# Reflective journals



*“I enjoyed having the responsibility to organise a successful event and definitely learned a lot along the way.*

*The sheer time it takes to arrange something like this was definitely a learning experience”*

**But.....**

*“My mistakes in this occasion made me understand how critical the formation of a group really is and how important the initial stages are for the correct integration of the different team members”*

*“We should have split up the roles differently so that everyone knew what to do “*

# Interviews



Interns identified development in their skills:

- Communication and networking;
- Time-management and prioritising;
- Working collaboratively and negotiating;
- Planning events
- Research skills.

# Knowledge

- insight into the way in which the university departments and faculties were run (through attendance at Steering Group, Advisory Group, Staff conference, office space)

# Student Engagement

- working with students to develop a shared vision on all matters that affect them including institutional policy and procedures, curriculum, quality and pedagogy;
- opportunities to talk to students as individuals to understand how to work with them more effectively;
- ensuring that the right conditions exist for students to engage within the institution ;
- helping students develop their personal goals, aspirations, motivation and expectations and become more autonomous, self-directed lifelong learners .

# Engagement achieved by

- Establishing a sense of community in the educational setting (Hand L and Bryson C 2008)
- Levels of development and independence of thought seemed to derive from a special sense of community (Perry 1999)

# Conclusion

*“It’s made us think outside the box “*

*“I loved being given the opportunity to think  
and to use my brain and to come up with  
ideas”*

# Outduction interns

- given an opportunity to demonstrate initiative and creativity;
- confidence was developed by having the opportunity to liaise and communicate at different levels within organisations.

# Questions

- How can we develop real work experience in the university context for our students?
- How can we support them in articulating their development?



...ends, it would  
save us £35,000 a year!"



**Pat Cash: Finance Assistant**  
Helping Kingston University reduce its carbon footprint  
Kingston University



# References

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