A conservation-restoration internship is a finite but substantial period of specialized work-based training, in which the intern works individually to achieve agreed learning goals with a tutor who is an experienced professional in the area of this learning.

In recent decades, both national and international bodies have addressed many issues related to the development of conservation education. It has now become clear that practitioners need specific opportunities to learn professional skills. These are the skills needed to use academic knowledge and practical skills learnt in a formal education programme in the real world of conservation. They are also the skills needed by those already practicing in the profession. Conservation education, therefore, is not sufficient to develop professional skills; only practical work-based training, working alongside more experienced colleagues is indeed the only way to acquire skill and knowledge to practice conservation of cultural heritage.

In the best cases, an internship can be a transformational experience, enabling the professional identity and approach of the intern for years to come. In the worst cases, an internship can result in a frustrating and expensive period of time spent drifted or feeling exploited. Each experience also leaves colleagues with a disquieting sense of a waste of time and effort for everybody.

While potential interns are usually eager to undertake an internship, institutions can be hesitant to take interns, knowing that the benefits will not justify the investment of resources required. Hence, both the interns and the institutions need to know what they can get out of an internship and what they can contribute to the development of the intern. Internships can help the conservation profession to improve. Interns need to describe their own relevant professional skills in order to be able to determine an intern's role and what they wish to achieve, as well as describing the development of their interests, expertise, and professional identity. The intern describes the relevance of their training to practice, and the ambition of their graduate.

This common understanding can be developed through community guidelines of the practice of conservation. These agreed standards may be assessed by practitioners. Be proactive in finding financial resources for internships.

INTRODUCTION

What the Conservation Profession can do to help Internships

Develop a common understanding of conservation practice so that it becomes clear when and where internships are needed; how and when they are useful, and what they have achieved. This understanding will be of interest to both professionals and institutions. The aim is to ensure that the benefits of conservation to improve. Interns need to describe their own relevant professional skills in order to be able to determine an intern's role and what they wish to achieve, as well as describing the development of their interests, expertise, and professional identity.

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THE INSTITUTION

“Internship” is a general term used here for the organisation or employer that either sends or hosts “interns.” Internships can range from large museums to research labs or private workshops. An educational programme may be a “sponsoring” institution. An institution may both send and host interns through its departments, which it organizes.

Setting up an internship programme offers both the sending and host institution an opportunity to...

- create and strengthen links between institutions,
- highlight professional development as an institutional priority,
- diversify the professionalism in the institution

What areas would we like to see strengthened?

- Assess its strengths and weaknesses: what can we offer?
- Encourage an institution to forward planning, resources, and evaluation and where improvements in the
- Ensure that interns are not just ‘free pairs of hands’
- Motivate and increase the capability of staff by encouraging them to expand in terms of developing their profession

A successful internship happens where the Intern:

- Has a participatory, creative, adaptable, professional, and co-operative approach to work, is willing to accept constructive criticism, and seek opportunities.
- Has arranged for adequate time to do this
- Has self-development at heart
- Understands that the Internship helps this development, and create a coherent programme for both hosting and sending interns
- Understands that internships need commitment, forward planning, resources, and evaluations and that interns are not just ‘free pairs of hands’
- Provides interns with appropriate opportunities, space, materials, volunteers, supervision, and personal/social care
- Supports staff in becoming tutors with management, training, and other necessary resources.

THE TUTOR

The Tutor in an Internship is the individual who teaches or mentors the intern. The Tutor is a guide, not a textbook and is the heart of a successful internship.

Tutoring offers an opportunity to...

- See your work and experience in a new light
- Gain an experience and share your own experiences
- Develop your networking, communication and teaching skills
- Share your knowledge and experience with a colleague who is genuinely interested in learning from you

A successful internship happens where the Tutor:

- Has ensured that their own current teaching and communication skills and knowledge are appropriate for successful tutoring
- Takes responsibility for introducing the intern to the work/s, and ensuring that the intern learns of his way of life and outside opportunities
- Learns from the intern what they can already do, what they are hoping to achieve and, in this light, plans and agrees a work programme of how best to begin work, and what is impossible
- Is willing to share information, experiences, work, problems, and constructive criticism and has arranged for adequate time to do this
- Offers an evaluation of the internship to the sending and host organisation, and at least some continuing contact to the intern on their return
- Provides new information and contacts with employers and sets aside a period of time to ensure that this might be possible
- Ensure adequate feedback of own professionalism as an intern (before arrival of the next intern!)

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An internship offers an opportunity to...

- Learn your professional strengths and weaknesses, and your educational interests, so you can focus on developing them.

- Intern and explore your professional skills in areas that you are interested in and are hoping to gain experience in.

- Communicate your needs as clearly as possible, so that you understand expectations.

- Understand and identify your abilities, limitations, and learning goals.

- Find out if the sending institution and tutor can offer these.

- Assess your professional strengths and weaknesses, and what financial and other resources they will provide.

A successful internship happens where the Intern:

- First assess what it is they want and plan for themselves.

- Has a participatory, creative, adaptable, problem-solving approach to their work.

- Is genuinely interested in the same things as you.

- Learns from the intern what they can already do, and what new skills they want to develop.

- Sees your work and experience in a new light.

- Provides intensive with appropriate opportunities, space, materials, assistance, supervision, personnel, and other necessary resources.

-Represents itself in a new and positive way to the world.

A successful internship happens in the TUTOR:

- Has arranged for adequate time to do this.

- Is willing to accept constructive criticism, and seek out opportunities.

- Is willing to share information, experience, and knowledge which is intrinsic to professionalism.

- Takes responsibility for introducing the intern to key work, and ensuring that the intern traces its way of life and outside opportunities.

- Learns from the intern what they can already do, and what their plans and agreements are about.

- Has a participatory, creative, adaptable, problem-solving approach to their work.

- Sees your work and experience in a new light.

- Provides effective feedback to the intern on their return.

THE INSTITUTION

A successful internship offers an opportunity for both the sending and host institution to...

- Advance staff development and help them understand their potential as tutors or encourage them to undertake further development.

- Have institutions create a coherent programme for both sending and receiving institutions.

- Highlight professional development as an institutional priority

- Focus communities and create links between colleagues, including funding agencies and professional bodies, and professional networks in their area.

- Make contacts with institutions and professionals who will form an important longer-term network.

- Understand that internships help this development, and create a coherent programme for both sending and receiving institutions.

- Act as a participatory, creative, adaptable, problem-solving approach to their work.

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- Is genuinely interested in the same things as you.

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A successful internship takes:
- A committed and experienced intern officer and manager
- A well-planned, structured programme that meets the needs of both the sending and host institution
- A clear understanding of the intern’s educational needs and aspirations
- A supportive and collaborative work environment
- A commitment to ongoing professional development

THE INTERN

An intern is:
- A dynamic process which needs careful planning, openness, and the willing collaboration of all the actors: the sending/hosting institution, the intern, and the tutor.
- A job, a “free pair of hands,” an academic course.

THE TUTOR

An internship offers an opportunity to:
- Share your knowledge and experience with colleagues and other professionals.
- Gain increased peer and institution-wide recognition.
- Build professional contacts beyond your own institution.
- Become an integral part of the professional development of the intern.
- Provide professional development opportunities for yourself.

A successful internship happens where the Intern:
- Has a genuine desire to learn and grow.
- Seeks out new challenges and opportunities.
- Has a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence.
- Is willing to work hard and take on responsibilities.
- Is willing to accept constructive criticism and seek out new opportunities.

A successful internship happens where the Tutor:
- Has a genuine desire to share your knowledge and experience.
- Has a strong commitment to professional development.
- Is willing to make time for administrative tasks.
- Is willing to provide regular and constructive feedback.
- Is willing to adapt to the needs of the intern.

Tutoring offers an opportunity to:
- Reflect on your own professional development.
- Share your knowledge and experience.
- Build professional contacts.
- Gain increased peer and institution-wide recognition.
- Become an integral part of the professional development of the intern.

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INTRODUCTION

A conservation-restoration internship is a finite but substantial period of specialized work-based training, in which the intern works individually to achieve agreed learning goals with a tutor who is an experienced professional in the area of this learning.

Internships as learning opportunities are widely used in the conservation profession, before the emergence of formal conservation programmes, working alongside more experienced colleagues was indeed the only way to acquire skills and knowledge to practice conservation of cultural heritage.

In recent decades, both national and international bodies have addressed many issues related to the development of conservation professionals. It has now become clearer that practitioners need specific opportunities to learn professional skills. These are the skills needed to use academic knowledge and practical skills learnt in a formal education programme in the real world of conservation. They are also the skills needed by those already practicing in the field to update their work or to broaden their expertise. It is now accepted that these professional skills can only be obtained effectively during planned work-based learning, that is, through internships. Internships today are undertaken either as part of a degree programme, or as a stepping stone from a graduate to a job, or as part of a conservator’s continuing professional development. Formal academic education and internships cannot be considered as alternatives; they are complementary and essential parts of the learning and development of a professional conservator.

In the best cases, an internship can be a life-transforming experience, marking the professional identity and approach of the intern for years to come; in the worst cases, an internship can result in a frustrating and expensive period of time spent drifting or feeling exploited. Such experiences also leave hosting colleagues with a dispelling sense of a waste of time and effort for everybody.

While potential interns are usually eager to undertake an internship, institutions can be hesitant to take interns, believing that the benefits will not justify the investment of resources required. Conservation staff can also be reluctant to get involved, afraid of an additional unwieldy and intimidating workload, or feeling they lack the necessary teaching skills. This leaflet aims to show how ALL those concerned with an internship can benefit, and how these benefits can be best realised. If it results in more successful internships, the whole profession and practice of conservation will benefit.