

Guidance for students

considering taking an unpaid internship

An internship is one way to get work experience that will strengthen your graduate job applications. However, some internships are unpaid, particularly in sectors such as the media or politics. So how do you decide whether an unpaid internship is a valuable opportunity or a waste of time that could be better spent earning some much-needed cash?

The following guidelines may help you decide whether an unpaid internship is valuable:

- Discuss the purpose of the internship and clarify expectations from the start.
- Think about what the placement offers – does it give insight into a particular industry? Will it improve certain skills or clarify career aspirations?
- Will there be any training or development with this opportunity? Will you have a supervisor/mentor to help you with this?
- Discuss the possibilities of any future paid work with the employer, pointing out the skills that you will have gained during the internship.
- Re-consider the value of the internship if it ceases to supply useful contacts and training opportunities.
- National minimum wage legislation states that it is unlawful to take someone on as a worker and not pay an appropriate wage. If you are being expected to work certain hours, and have a specific job role which is useful to the organisation, then you may be entitled to a wage. For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>
- Make sure you are learning, and finding the work experience useful; if the balance tips so that you are working for the company's benefit and not your own, then it may be time to reconsider

Further support

If you would like to book a careers appointment please visit:

<https://worchester.targetconnect.net>

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