

# Boosting skills in the workplace



# What is Graduate Talent Pool?

**Graduate Talent Pool is a new initiative to help employers create and offer graduate internships. A rolling programme of internships will be on offer from September for 2009 graduates – adding to the internship programmes and websites which already exist.**

**Internships are a proven way for companies to inject fresh talent into the workplace and allow graduates to kickstart their careers by gaining the skills and experience they need to get on.**

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*“We know times are tough for business, but times are tough for graduates too and internships are a great way to meet in the middle. Internships help young people gain employability skills like team working and project management that will be invaluable in their future careers. We welcome the matching service to help bring employers looking for interns together with graduates looking for work experience.”*

Jackie Orme,  
Chief Executive, Chartered  
Institute of Personnel and  
Development

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# Why is the Government introducing this programme?

This booklet focuses on the Graduate Talent Pool, the new graduate internship programme. It is part of a package of measures to support graduates to improve their employability skills and boost business at the same time.

The Government is doing everything it can to provide real help now to employers and individuals to support them through the downturn and prepare for the upturn. We are increasing the number and range of opportunities for graduates to improve their employability, including:

- Internships
- postgraduate study
- setting up their own enterprises
- volunteering
- Teach First
- short Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) projects

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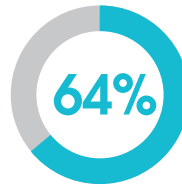
*Short KTP projects are 10 – 40 weeks long and based on a partnership between a graduate, an employer and an academic institution, aiming to address short-term business issues. They will be available from July 2009 and part-funded by Government. These shorter projects provide an excellent opportunity for organisations to engage with a university in a cost-effective way, often for the very first time*

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# What's in it for employers?

Even in these tough economic times, employers need access to talent. The Graduate Talent Pool will make it quick and simple to find the right graduate to work with your business on a placement, project or work-trial.

Our dedicated website will match your organisation with suitable graduates. You can post online details of the internships you want to offer, while graduates can register for a placement. Our matching service does the rest and our national helpline will make offering an internship as simple as possible.



64% of businesses agree that interns can make a real contribution to a business.<sup>2</sup>



70% of businesses agree that internships offer businesses the chance to assess the skills of potential employees.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The Continental Research business omnibus service, February 2009

# Why should your organisation offer internships?

Internships have already been working well in a number of sectors for many years and have proved they offer real benefits to employers.

- You will get access to a talented, diverse, intelligent, dynamic and ambitious workforce. Your intern could be a future leader of your organisation. Graduates are already well prepared for work – 84% of employers say so.<sup>1</sup>
- You will be able to build your business by bringing new skills and flexible resource into your company for a fixed period to complete time-limited projects. 64% of businesses agree that interns can make a real contribution to a business.<sup>2</sup>
- Your organisation will have the opportunity to promote itself as an employer of choice with a diverse talent pool, as leading employers testify.

<sup>1</sup> National Employers Skills Survey 2007

<sup>2</sup> The Continental Research business omnibus service, February 2009



*"Internships are an excellent way for companies to access graduate talent and provide graduates with vital skills and experiences to support their future employment."*

*Microsoft is extending its internship programme in 2009 to engage the graduate talent that is essential for our long-term success."*

Stephen Uden,  
Head of Skills & Economic Affairs,  
Microsoft Ltd

- You could benefit from reduced recruitment costs and higher retention rates if your interns become permanent employees. *70% of businesses agree that internships offer businesses the chance to assess the skills of potential employees.*<sup>2</sup>
- You will get the opportunity to experience, perhaps for the first time, the advantages of having graduates in the workforce. *Small businesses are almost half as likely to recruit a graduate intern as medium and large businesses.*<sup>2</sup>
- You will get all the help and support you need through our matching service and advice helpline.
- You will be making an important contribution to your corporate social responsibility strategy. *66% of businesses that intend to recruit interns this year agree that this demonstrates a company's corporate social responsibility.*<sup>2</sup>



*"In the current economic climate, graduates now more than ever need to be equipped with the right skills to succeed in the workplace. Graduate internships offer the opportunity for students to build and refine their skills. As UK plc prepares for the upturn, internships ensure we are producing graduates with the relevant skills to meet the needs of business and the wider community. Responsible businesses, both large and small, are being urged by Business in the Community to take up this unique offer."*

Stephen Howard,  
Chief Executive, Business in  
the Community

<sup>2</sup>The Continental Research business omnibus service, February 2009

## And you will be helping graduates to:–

- get real-life work experience soon after graduating
- gain vital transferable work experience and soft skills
- try their hand at a profession or career path, helping them to make informed choices about their futures
- prove themselves to an employer and perhaps get a permanent job.

In a recent survey<sup>3</sup> 30% of recruiters said that graduates should be willing to do an industrial placement. But they need to be given that opportunity. So we call on employers to offer more internships. The CBI gave out a similar message at the recent launch of *Future fit: preparing graduates for the world of work*.

<sup>3</sup> AGR Graduate Recruitment Survey 2009, Winter Review

*Accenture's internship scheme, The Navigator, enables graduates and post-graduates to gain real-life experience of the world of consultancy and make an informed choice about whether it's the right career choice.*

*The nine-week programme commences with a week of induction training that provides grounding in business and technology consultancy*

*techniques, plus several core business skills. Participants receive technical training before learning about the project they will be involved in, which could be in any industry area, anywhere in the UK. Everyone on the programme receives a 'buddy' who acts as a valuable source of advice and guidance and receives regular feedback on performance from a supervisor.*

# What will Graduate Talent Pool internships look like?



*"Work experience helps you develop vital employability skills, which employers value very highly, such as business awareness, teamwork and communications. This scheme should help graduates compete when they reach today's extremely tough jobs market. Having an internship under your belt is a good advantage."*

John Cridland,  
Deputy Director-General,  
the CBI

We know that all organisations are different and employers have different needs. So the Graduate Talent Pool will offer maximum flexibility to ensure that your particular approach to internships will contribute to your organisation. Internships are not a substitute for existing jobs.

We expect that internships will typically last around three months but could be shorter or longer depending upon your needs.

There will be different models for internships. They can:

- be in the private, public or third sectors
- be part or full-time
- include a range of activities, including time-limited projects or a varied programme of work experience.

We expect that most employers will want to offer a wage which recognises the balance between the benefits which the graduate brings to the business and the additional



experience and skills which the graduate acquires. But there may be situations where that is not the case:

- Unpaid placements. In some situations, graduates may agree to take up unpaid placements where the position is attractive and will benefit their skills development and employability.
- Graduates already receiving Jobseekers Allowance for six months or more will be able to do an internship for up to 13 weeks alongside claiming an allowance and looking for work. This means unpaid internships will be open to graduates irrespective of whether they or their families can support them.

And where an employer has a specific job vacancy, work-trials for a maximum of 30 days will also be available for graduates unemployed for six months or more and recruited through Jobcentre Plus.



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*"Our internship programmes are an established and integral part of our talent pipelines at PricewaterhouseCooper. Typically 92% of our interns convert to full time positions. By providing real opportunities and insights into our organisations, students enhance both their employability skills and business awareness while delivering value."*

James Chalmers,  
Head of Strategy and Talent,  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers

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**In the public sector**, the Civil Service is developing a graduate programme, modelled on its successful Summer internships. It is placing great importance on attracting under-represented talent into its programmes.



*"The Civil Service is strongly committed to providing work placement opportunities for students, undergraduates and graduates to develop their employability skills and give them an insight into the wide ranging opportunities across the Civil Service. The Summer Diversity Internship Programme provides a unique opportunity to attract diverse talent, who are currently under-represented across the Civil Service, with enormous potential to succeed in the Civil Service. The Summer Diversity Internship Programme enables interns to build professional networking contacts and mentoring relationships."*

Rhonda Calder,  
Civil Service Capability Group,  
Cabinet Office

More widely across the public sector, there is strong support for the initiative.



*"The police service is a graduate employer of choice, in the top 30 of The Times 2008/09 Top 100 Graduate Employers. Because we want to continue to attract the best people to the many varied roles in the police, as police officers, Police Community Support Officers, and support staff, the National Policing Improvement*

*Agency is offering its support to the Graduate Talent Pool and taking the lead to create a new graduate internship programme for UK police forces. These graduates are our leaders of the future, and an internship is an excellent opportunity for them to see what an exciting and fulfilling career they can have in the police service."*

Constable Peter Neyroud,  
Chief Executive of the National  
Policing Improvement Agency

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**In the Higher Education sector,** over 2,000 new internship places will be offered in institutions and local businesses, with support from HEFCE's Economic Challenges Investment Fund.



*"The University of Worcester's graduate internship scheme will run for 12 months from July 2009. Graduates of all universities will be eligible to apply join the scheme. Interns will receive a salary at a level agreed with the supporting organisation. They will spend four days a week in the workplace, and one day a week studying on a postgraduate certificate in management programme. The University will waive the fee for this programme, and provide the intern with the full range of support services as well as a mentor from the supporting organisation.*

*The University is committed to doing all it can to help the people and businesses of our region survive this very difficult economic recession as well as possible.*

*This year's record number of university graduates will find themselves seeking employment in an ever-more competitive jobs market and these internships will help to avoid their potential going to waste."*

Professor David Green,  
Vice Chancellor, University  
of Worcester

**Third Sector** organisations also offer internships. They range from paid internships to voluntary placements. There is a tradition of volunteer opportunities in the Third Sector – but also in some professions

where they may not be openly advertised and we would like such opportunities to be opened up to a wider group of graduates.



*"Barnardo's has offered both a graduate management scheme and volunteer internships for the past few years. The volunteer internships, in particular, supported by the charity and the corporate sector, offer planned, focused placements over a three month period.*

*As one of the UK's leading children's charities, Barnardo's believes in investing in young people. Our volunteer intern scheme has offered quality project based opportunities to over one hundred young people over the last 18 months – twenty of them have gone on to employment with Barnardo's and within the sector. Barnardo's is pleased to pledge support to this initiative."*

Martin Narey,  
Chief Executive, Barnardo's



*"There are well over 600,000 paid jobs in the third sector workforce as well as literally millions of volunteering opportunities. We need to offer new graduates the chance to experience working in this sector, help them to develop their employability skills and encourage them to forge careers with us in the longer term."*

Stuart Etherington,  
Chief Executive NCVO  
(National Council for Voluntary Organisations)

# How will Graduate Talent Pool operate?

The Graduate Talent Pool website will offer a service to graduates seeking quality internships and work experience placements as well as employers offering opportunities.

A 'register your interest' page for employers is live from today.

As an employer, you can:

- **post your vacancies** on the website by registering online. Your vacancy will then be searchable by all graduates visiting The Graduate Talent Pool. We may enhance the website with additional features over time.
- **build a company profile** so graduates can learn about you and all of the internship opportunities you have to offer.
- **get advice and guidance** – through the website, we will offer detailed advice and guidance on internships for employers. This will be available from the 13th May 2009.

*"As the UK's leading work experience provider for students and graduates, SHELL Step is delighted to support the Government's efforts to encourage more opportunities for meaningful internships and look forward to assisting more small businesses to gain maximum value from taking part.*

*Every summer we place over 600 undergraduates with small and medium-sized firms to run business development projects tailored to their individual skills and career ambitions. This year, we are extending the programme to recent graduates to enable them to gain the experience which could be vital to landing a job.*

*Small businesses, which may find themselves stretched in the current economic climate, also benefit from the projects, which can deliver substantial financial rewards. In 2008, almost half (48%) of Step students added more than £5,000 worth of value to their host business, while 17% have added more than £30,000."*

Philip Donnelly,  
Managing Director, Step Enterprise

# What additional support is available for employers?

Employers will be encouraged to provide induction, training and support to their graduate interns. Employers will also be responsible for ensuring that their programmes conform to legal requirements.

We are putting in place a package of support to help employers.

- Our website will have links to all the sources of information you need:  
[www.dius.gov.uk/graduatetalentpool](http://www.dius.gov.uk/graduatetalentpool) will launch on 13th May 2009.
- Our phone line will launch on 13th May 2009.
- We will also enable large organisations which have expertise in offering internships to provide advice and support to smaller companies with less experience.

In addition:

- Businesslink provides advice on public funding support for businesses – it is a free service, open to all by phone (0845 600 9006), online at [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) or face-to-face at local branches.
- Support for employers and graduates will continue to be

available through university careers services. Visit: [www.agcas.org.uk/pages/information-for-recruiters](http://www.agcas.org.uk/pages/information-for-recruiters)

- Advice is also available from the TUC. Visit: [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)
- There are regional graduate recruitment systems or networks supported by Regional Development Agencies.

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*Advantage West Midlands: Graduate Advantage, operated by Aston University on behalf of all the universities in the region, offers employers graduate or undergraduate placements to help bring new skills into their business. A placement is available for any length of time between four weeks and 12 months. It will now be extended to offer more placements/internships. Visit: [www.graduateadvantage.co.uk](http://www.graduateadvantage.co.uk)*

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*First Move West Midlands, a directory of graduate jobs in the region, will also be extended to include smaller businesses which would consider offering placements/internships.*

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# What happens next?

**Employers will be able to register an interest online from today at [www.dius.gov.uk/graduatetalentpool](http://www.dius.gov.uk/graduatetalentpool)**

**Any enquiries made will be answered by a dedicated advice team in the next two weeks.**

**The full employer section of the website and dedicated phone line will go live from 13th May 2009 following a business conference hosted by Secretary of State John Denham.**

**The complete website with both graduate and employer sections as well as the matching service, allowing graduates to apply for positions online, will go live during July 2009.**

**In addition, over coming months we will be organising a national employers event and regional workshops.**

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