

# Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

A Practical Guide for Host Employers



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Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

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# Background and Orientation



Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

This resource was developed for the GreenMatter Skills Development Partnership implementing the Biodiversity Human Capital Development Strategy, to support the quality of work integrated learning.

## The GreenMatter Skills Development Partnership

GreenMatter, implementing the Biodiversity Human Capital Development Strategy (2010 to 2030), is a skills development partnership, led by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Lewis Foundation.

The National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act of 2004 mandates SANBI with conserving South Africa's biodiversity. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the National Biodiversity Framework (NBF) of 2015 outline the strategic role of SANBI and associate organisations to manage biodiversity in South Africa. Two key objectives of this strategy and framework are focused on building skills for biodiversity.

### Strategic Objective 2.1

To ensure a transformed biodiversity sector, representative of South African society.

### Strategic Objective 2.2

To ensure that organisations for biodiversity are effectively and adequately capacitated to mitigate against the threats and challenges to our rich, natural heritage.

In 2008, SANBI and the Lewis Foundation spearheaded the development of a strategy to address skills shortages for biodiversity. The Biodiversity Human Capital Development Strategy (SANBI & The Lewis Foundation, 2010) was launched in November 2009, to support transformation and leadership development for biodiversity, focusing on graduate level skills. Underpinned by a systems approach, this strategy aims to address challenges in all subsystems of learning and work for biodiversity, and draws on contributions from multiple partners.

## Bridging into Work through Work Integrated Learning

The World Wide Fund for Nature – South Africa (WWF-SA) contributes to the GreenMatter partnership through leading and co-ordinating the Bridging into Work Cluster. This cluster of programmes aims to attract, enable access to and support the development and retention of graduates for biodiversity. One of the key programmes involves supporting quality work integrated learning for the student intern.

The Work Integrated Learning Programme was initiated through a process of stakeholder consultation. Various university and employer organisations participated in discussions between 2011 and 2013 to map out the key challenges associated with the placement of student interns for biodiversity and to contribute to a programme of action to address these. The aim of the programme was to:

*Increase the scope of and improve the quality of work integrated learning*

The programme supports student interns working towards the national diploma qualification for biodiversity.

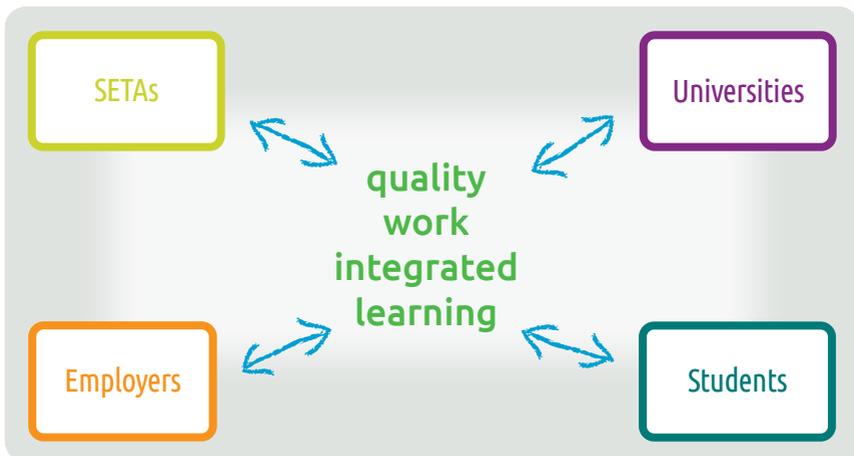
This aim was advanced through three key objectives:

1. Aligning demand and supply to increase placement opportunities for student interns studying towards national diplomas for biodiversity;
2. Improving the quality of the work integrated learning experience through strengthening host organisations to receive and mentor student interns; and
3. Increasing funding to place students and quality assure the work integrated learning experience.



**Diagram 1:** The Objectives of the Work Integrated Learning Programme

Addressing the challenges of quality work integrated learning requires collaborative responses between all stakeholders, including SETAs, universities, employers and students.



**Diagram 2:** Key stakeholders in quality work integrated learning

## An Orientation to the Resource

This resource, referred to as Quality Assurance Guidelines, draws on a number of existing guidelines, as referenced below. It was developed specifically for host employers and provides practical guidance for organisations, managers and mentors on preparing for and mentoring student interns. For more conceptual insights on work integrated learning, refer to the following and other existing guidelines:

1. Work Integrated Learning Good Practice Guide (Council on Higher Education, 2011)
2. Work Integrated Learning Criterion Guidelines (CATHSSETA, date unknown)
3. Work Integrated Learning Implementation (Public Services SETA, date unknown)
4. The Public Service Internship Programme (Department of Public Service Administration, 2006)
5. Experiential Training Guide for Game Ranch Management (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, 2014)
6. Experiential Training Guide for Nature Conservation (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, 2014)
7. Experiential Training Mentors Guide for ND Nature Conservation (UNISA, 2004)
8. A Quality Assurance Model for Assessment of Work Integrated Learning at Higher Education Institutions (Cape Technikon, 2003)
9. Policy and Procedure for Experiential Learning (Durban University of Technology, 2006)
10. Co-operative Education Policy for Work-integrated Experiential Learning Programmes Revision of Policy Draft 1 (Durban University of Technology, 2009)
11. Durban University of Technology Experiential Learning Principles, Practice and Procedures National Diploma Horticulture (Jonathan Foley, date unknown)

In this resource, various aspects of work integrated learning are identified, with practical guidelines for employer organisations provided in seven booklets:

**Booklet 1:** Quality Work Integrated Learning ... what does this mean?

**Booklet 2:** Preparing for Quality Work Integrated Learning

**Booklet 3:** Recruitment, Selection and Placement

**Booklet 4:** Induction into the Workplace

**Booklet 5:** Mentoring the Student Intern

**Booklet 6:** Assessing Work Integrated Learning

**Booklet 7:** Monitoring and Evaluation

The separate booklets were developed for easy access and use by various departments and professionals in your organisation. Booklet 3: Recruitment, Selection and Placement might be useful to human resource managers involved in the recruitment, selection and placement of student interns. Booklet 5: Mentoring the Student Intern might be useful to mentors. Booklet 7: Monitoring and Evaluation might be useful to the operations directorate. This resource could also be a useful guide for co-ordinating an internship programme, within or across multiple organisations. Please share the different booklets as they might be useful to colleagues involved in various aspects of work integrated learning.

We wish you well in hosting student interns and would value your feedback on this resource as a supporting guideline to quality work integrated learning for the student intern.

Send any comments on the resource to [info@greenmatter.co.za](mailto:info@greenmatter.co.za).

# 1

## Quality Work Integrated Learning ... what does this mean?



Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

## Quality Work Integrated Learning ... what does this mean?

There are probably many different responses to this question, depending on who you are and where you find yourself.

*Write down some words that reflect quality work integrated learning. Keep this as a reference for what you mean by quality work integrated learning.*

Quality work integrated learning is ...

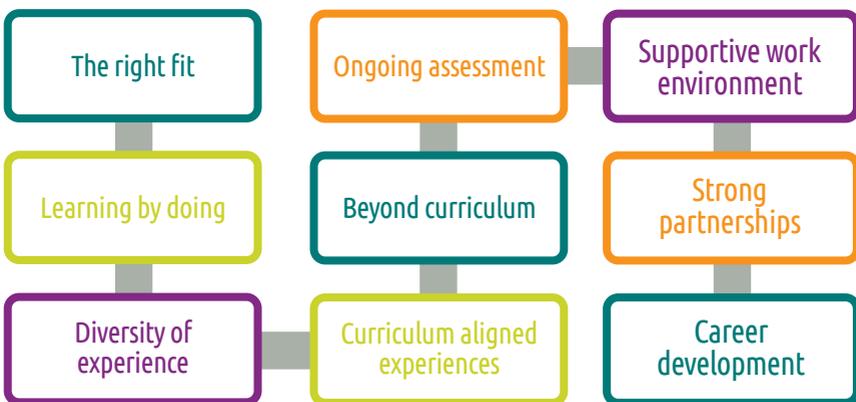
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In conversation with others you might find that there are different perspectives on the quality of work integrated learning. We think there are some common quality indicators as below.

*In the diagram below, shade those blocks which indicate the quality indicators in your work integrated learning experience.*



**Diagram 1.1:** Quality indicators for work integrated learning

## 1.1 The right fit

Workplace-based learning should add to the academic experience and qualification of the student. The host employer should provide work experience that complements the student's academic learning and allows the student to complete workplace-based tasks set by the university as part of the curriculum.

### Examples:

Nature Conservation students placed with local government, provincial and national parks are exposed to managing a protected area, a key part of their curriculum.

Environmental Management students placed with provincial environment departments, such as the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism have opportunities to work with processing development applications and are thus exposed to environmental management where the rubber hits the road.

The right fit also means student interns with the right background for a particular work context. For example, CapeNature often requires students with a background in Fynbos and Succulent Karoo ecology, given its geographic focus in the Western Cape. Students from Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Nelson Mandela University are often most suited to this organisation and students from Tshwane University of Technology are better suited to the Grasslands biome in the north of the country.

During work integrated learning placements, students are being primed for work in the sector and need to get their teeth into the 'real work'. We all sometimes have to do menial tasks, such as filing, photocopying and logistics planning. These are good work experiences, but cannot be the only exposure that the student intern gets during workplace-based placements. These less

stimulating tasks need to be interspersed with the 'real work' related to the student's academic background and career vision. A good benchmark is perhaps 25% allocated to support tasks (eg. administration) and 75% related to the curriculum and functional area in which the student intern is placed.

## 1.2 Learning by doing

Work placements are meant as further vocational training for the student intern in the real world of work. These should provide opportunities to apply academic learning. For this, the student needs to be immersed in work opportunities related to their study field.

### Examples:

Students in Nature Conservation need to do a bush burn as part of their field training.

Students in Environmental Management need to write reports on development applications.

Game Ranch Management students should do administrative and financial management duties in a lodge or tourism centre.

Horticulture students need to select and identify suitable plants for parks and municipal greening projects. They also need to do cost estimates for a working budget for the project.

## 1.3 Diversity of work experiences

The student intern requires opportunities to develop the full suite of competences needed to do the job effectively. This requires diverse work experiences.

### Example:

Game Ranch Management students at NMU should be exposed to opportunities that vary from human resource management to marketing, game sales and environmental education.

Networking and partnerships with other organisations are important for those organisations unable to provide the full range of experiences required for students to complete their curriculum requirements. It may be necessary to collaborate with other organisations; students could be offered a rotation placement for one or two months with another organisation.

## 1.4 Curriculum aligned experiences

The work integrated learning experience is an integral part of the student's national diploma qualification. It is the part that sits between academic learning at the university and award of the qualification. This experience must provide opportunities for the student to take learning forward to meet the full requirements of the curriculum.

Most universities provide employer organisations with guidelines of what is required for work integrated learning. If not, you may need to request this from the university. You might also want to request an outline of the curriculum, so that you can support the student intern to contextualise the workplace learning in the curriculum framework.

## 1.5 Beyond the curriculum

Work integrated learning is meant to prepare the student for employment when they are qualified. This means that it should also provide opportunities for developing competences outside of the curriculum framework and that contribute to shaping a well-rounded professional.

This would include, for example, presentation skills, managing a small budget or participating in developing a funding proposal.

## 1.6 Ongoing assessment

Besides the formal assessment of the student for qualification, ongoing assessment is useful to provide the student with feedback on progress. It also provides the mentor with an assessment of the return on time invested in mentoring. This regular ongoing assessment could further provide the university with a good sense of how the student is progressing in the workplace.

Centurion Academy proposes a structured quarterly assessment of the development of the student. The student is ultimately responsible for initiating this assessment with the mentor and submitting it to the university. Centurion Academy believes these quarterly assessments will illuminate any challenges in time for remedial action before the placement period is complete. Most universities offer a form of assessment feedback and you might be able to use this or adapt it according to your needs and context.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) does biannual assessments as part of a performance review process. Delta Environmental Centre supports students to compile a professional development portfolio which provides a regular assessment opportunity for the student and mentor.

Common practice in work integrated learning is to meet with the student intern initially on a weekly basis to assess progress and provide feedback. After a sufficient period of orientation (usually three months), these meetings can be

decreased to once a month, interspersed with informal assessments, culminating in a quarterly structured assessment.

In the absence of a structured process for assessment, Module 3 of the *Mentors for the Environment: Train the Trainer Course 2014* provides some guidelines for providing constructive feedback to the student intern. See section 3.5, pages 30 to 32 in the references provided.

## 1.7 Supportive work environment

Though the student is placed with a dedicated mentor, the complete work environment is needed to support growth and development. Being exposed to the work of others in the organisation, helps students to develop a broader organisational perspective on the work. It also helps to develop useful professional networks that in turn support professional growth and development. This could also take the pressure off the mentor from time to time, giving the student the space to interact with others in the organisation around other areas of work. Consider the areas in your organisation that reflect this supportive work environment and connect the student to these opportunities.

The work environment is not only about the people who work in an organisation. It also involves providing the student with the necessary tools and access to resources to do the job efficiently and effectively. Key resources such as a computer with appropriate software, access to data, a well-equipped desk space, and necessary protective clothing, for example, help to shape a supportive work environment and a quality work integrated learning experience.

## 1.8 Strong partnerships

Work integrated learning benefits the individual student intern initially, and ultimately the organisation and the sector in the longer term. We all have some

responsibility in supporting the student through this process. A positive work integrated learning experience is shaped by strong partnerships between the key role players, the student, the university and the host employer.

The GreenMatter Work Integrated Learning Programme (see section 1.2) provides an opportunity for you to connect to the key stakeholders for work integrated learning through national and biannual regional forums. To connect to your closest regional forum, visit [www.greenmatter.co.za](http://www.greenmatter.co.za) and navigate to the Work Integrated Learning community page for information on the Regional Biodiversity Work Integrated Learning Forum.

How would you rate your partnerships with other key stakeholders for quality work integrated learning? *Make a circle around the appropriate icon. If your circles are in the middle or to the right of the table, write up some key actions which could move these circles to the left.*

Student			Universities		
					
To move closer to the left, I need to ...			To move closer to the left, I need to ...		

## 1.9 Career development

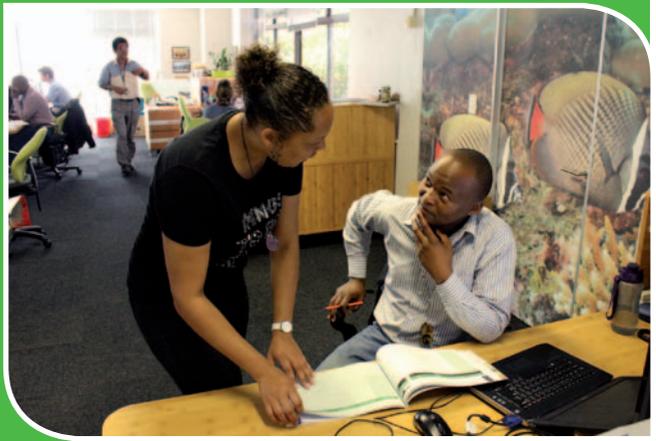
As explained above, work integrated learning is about more than the curriculum and involves supporting the overall professional development of the student intern. WWF-SA encourages interns to think about and revisit their career vision through updating the career map, as below, at interim periods. This can help to keep the student focused on where they are headed and might provide you with some guidance on development opportunities for the student.



Diagram 1.2: Career Development Map (WWF-SA, 2017)

# 2

## Preparing for Quality Work Integrated Learning



Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

Many resources – human, physical and financial – need to be considered to provide a quality work integrated learning experience.

- Do you have the appropriate mentoring capacity in both numbers and experience to do justice to this work placement?
- Do you have office space available?
- What will this placement cost, in real and hidden costs?
- On a remote reserve, is there appropriate accommodation?
- Would the organisational environment be receptive to hosting an intern?
- What will you pay the intern and from what source?
- What else would you have to budget for?

These are some of the many considerations that might encourage or discourage the placement of interns.

This section has a list of factors to consider when assessing whether your organisation is ready to take on the important responsibility of hosting a student intern.

Are you ready as an employer to host a student intern?		✓/✗
1	Can your organisation accommodate student interns?	
2	Can your organisation respond to the specific curriculum requirements of the student interns?	
3	Do you have enough mentors for these student interns?	
4	Do these mentors have the necessary technical experience?	
5	Do these mentors have the necessary mentoring experience?	
6	Could you provide training for these mentors?	
7	Do the mentors have access to tools for mentoring to make the job easier and less time intensive? See below for more suggestions.	
8	Do you have the necessary equipment to effectively host the student intern, such as desk space, computer, safety equipment, etc.?	
9	Where will the student intern be based?	
10	Will the student intern need to relocate and be accommodated where they are based?	
11	Do you offer any support for relocation?	
12	Do you have funding for paying stipends and operational costs related to the student intern's activities?	
13	Do you have the capacity to provide feedback to the student and the university?	
14	Are there other people or departments in the organisation who might add support to hosting these student interns and what can they offer?	
15	Do you have the administrative support for hosting student interns?	

If you've scored more than 10, then you are perhaps ready to host a student and can work towards putting the other measures in place. These questions provide some guidance on the various aspects to consider when making the decision to host student interns.

Various resources have been developed to support mentoring in the environment and biodiversity sector that could guide you. These include:

- The GreenMatter Fellowship Learning Portfolio: Powerful Conversations. PureCoach, 2012/2013. GreenMatter, Cape Town.
- Mentoring to Support Work Integrated Learning: A Source Book for Strengthening Conservation Professionals, Practice and Organisations. Glenda Raven, 2011. C.A.P.E Capacity Development Programme, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Cape Town.
- Mentoring for the Environment: Train the Trainer, Module 3: Tools for Mentoring. GreenMatter, 2014.

# 3

## Recruitment, Selection and Placement



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The placement of student interns starts with recruitment and selection. Your human resources department would have extensive experience and could guide this process. Below are some additional suggestions.

### 3.1 Recruitment

Organisations use diverse methods to recruit student interns, including:

- Direct engagement with the university who identifies students for placement. For example, Cape Peninsula University of Technology hosts employers for a one-day workshop to explore placement opportunities. *Do you know of any such forums in your vicinity to explore the recruitment of student interns?*
- Direct engagement with the university's work integrated learning department or coordinator. Host employers often advise universities of placement opportunities, through established relationships between the university and host employer. *How can you initiate the development of a constructive working relationship with the co-ordinator of the Work Integrated Learning department at the university close to you?*
- Recruitment through print media. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries advertises internship placements in the print media and calls for expressions of interest from student interns in this way. *What would be the best print media if you chose this option?*
- Recruitment through the web. The GreenMatter website hosts an online platform for host employers to advertise placement opportunities. Students and lecturers are invited to explore these opportunities and apply directly to the host employer. *Can you think of any other websites through which you could advertise placement opportunities?*
- E-mail dissemination of adverts through various mailing lists. The secretariat for the Arid Zone Ecology Forum circulates notices of placement amongst the members of this forum who ultimately pass these on to student interns.

*Do you know of any other mailing lists that you could use to advertise your placement opportunities?*

It is good to have a clearly structured advertisement that guides the potential applicant. It is useful to outline the purpose of the placement and some of the higher level criteria for placement. For example, the Groen Sebenza Programme recruited rural, unemployed youth with an expressed interest in ecosystem management. These short clear criteria were specified in the advertisement. The programme used the attached application form in Annexure A to define these criteria, which also supported the first round of shortlisting (see below).



**Diagram 3.1:** Selection criteria used in the Groen Sebenza Programme

Internship placements are in high demand. For example, in recruiting for the Groen Sebenza placements in 2013, WWF-SA received approximately 1 600 applicants. Placements advertised in the public media are likely to attract many applications.

## 3.2 Selection

Selection is a critical link between recruitment and appropriate placement. Effective selection requires very specific criteria against which to review applications and select the best suited student intern(s). When selecting students, it might be worth involving a selection committee which could include a representative from Human Resources and an individual experienced in the student's academic background. Keep the selection panel small as a larger panel might otherwise intimidate the applicant.

Depending on the scope of applications received, there may need to be more than one round of shortlisting. This will require defining specific selection criteria for each round of shortlisting.

**First round shortlisting:** This could be based on the advert for the position and a few high level criteria, as in the Groen Sebenza Programme:

- Youth, so applications received from individuals between 15 and 35 years were shortlisted.
- Unemployed was defined as graduates trained for biodiversity and not able to find related employment, such as the nature conservation graduate working in a fast food outlet. So any applicant who was employed at the time of application, in a job unrelated to ecosystems management was shortlisted. But those employed, even in short term contracts related to the field were not shortlisted, as they were considered employed.
- Priority skills were another key objective of the Groen Sebenza Programme, aimed at supporting unemployed youth to access these vacancies in the sector.
- Unemployed youth from rural areas and also from distressed urban centres, such as disadvantaged socio-economic areas and townships, were considered eligible for these placements and so shortlisted.

First round shortlisting requires only a few high level criteria to sort out the potential placements from those who don't qualify at all. These can generally be drawn from the advertisement and/or key aim of the programme.

*What are some of the first round shortlisting criteria that you can draw from your advertisement?*

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**Second round shortlisting:** The second round of shortlisting could focus on the specific placement opportunity. Some guiding criteria might include:

- **Placement fit:** For example, if you have a placement in your Environmental Education Programme, you might shortlist a Nature Conservation student with this career interest. This kind of detail could be elicited through the use of the Groen Sebenza application form, as in Annexure A.
- **Required proficiencies:** For example, the City of Cape Town requires students to have a driver's licence as well as a certain level of driving experience. You might want to ask this question directly in the application or draw this from the student's curriculum vitae.
- There may be specific physical requirements for the job which you may need to assess. For example, Cape Nature requires a certain level of fitness for students to undertake field work. Bayworld Centre for Research and Education may need to know if the student is prone to sea sickness in order to do work at sea. This second round of shortlisting could generate your interview list, with between four and six candidates that are best suited for placement.

**Third round shortlisting through interviews:** Third round shortlisting could be done through interviewing and should generate a list of possible appointees drawn from the previous shortlist. Include two possible candidates so there is an alternative if the first choice is not available.

The application processes tell you a bit more about potential candidates. The interview process personalises the application and could give you more insight into the person applying for the placement.

It is often useful to have a standardised list of interview questions for all candidates that might include:

- Some generic questions on the placement, such as:
  - What is your interest in being placed with the organisation?
  - How do you see your career for biodiversity growing from here?
  - Why this particular focus area for which you have applied?
  
- Some more specific questions related to the placement, drawing on an example of perhaps an Oceanography student placed with Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:
  - What do you know about the small scale fisheries policy?
  - What do you think this means for the small scale fisher?
  - What is your view on marine protected areas?
  - How can we balance marine conservation without compromising livelihoods of fishing communities?
  
- Some questions to assess personal characteristics, for example:
  - What is the most diverse team you have been part of?
  - What was the nature of this diversity?
  - What benefit did you derive from being a part of this team?
  - What has been your biggest challenge in life?
  - How did you deal with this?
  - How would you describe a job well done?
  - Your mentor gives you some feedback on a job that might have been done better. How do you respond to him/her?

- Some questions around workplace-based competences, for example:
  - Give an example of how you have managed multiple priorities.
  - Your public transport is late on a morning. How do you deal with this?
  - What role do you typically play in a team?
  - You arrive at work with a list of things to do for the day. A crisis happens that needs your participation in resolving. How do you manage this situation?

The interview process should allow you to list the potential candidates for placement. You might want to use a rating scale in order of preference, for example Student X – 5, Student E – 4 and Student C – 2, with Student X being the first preference and Student C the last.

### 3.3 Placement

The final and most critical step in this process is the appropriate and relevant placement of the student. Booklet 1 provides some guidelines to assist with appropriate placement. A relevant placement is one that offers the student the necessary development opportunities to complement academic learning, allow for further growth and development and prepare the student for a future career in this field. Below are some examples of relevant placements for student interns in different learning fields.

Learning Programme	Occupation or work area
Nature Conservation	Nature Conservator Biodiversity Monitoring Research Technician Environmental Education Field Ecology Stewardship Extension Field Ranger

Learning Programme	Occupation or work area
<b>Game Ranch Management</b>	Game Ranger Game Capture Field Guide Professional Hunting Intensive Breeding Game Counting Anti-Poaching
<b>Environmental Management</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment Practitioner Environmental Officer Park Planners GIS Technicians
<b>Marine Science</b>	Oceanography Technicians Research Assistants Fisheries Administration Laboratory Technician Oceanography Operator
<b>Horticulture</b>	Landscape Technician Horticulturist Grounds and Estate Managers Green Keeper Nursery Manager Retail Garden Centre Manager Floricultural Production and Farming Amenity Horticulturist Landscape Designer and Contractor

Contractual agreements are often required for the placement of the student interns that adhere to the minimum labour requirements in an organisation. Clarify with the student what is being offered using a mentoring agreement, for example with regard to housing, uniform, equipment, computer, office, stipend or salary. Module 2 of the Mentors for the Environment Train the Trainer Course provides a mentoring agreement that could be used as is or adapted.

# Annexure A

## Groen Sebenza Application Form



### 1. PERSONAL DETAILS

– please include a certified copy of your identity document and proof of residence

Family Name					
First Name					
Middle Name					
Identity Number					
Residential Address					
Postal Address					
Place of Birth					
Place of residence for last 5 years					
Place of residence before the last 5 years					
Telephone number					
Cell phone number					
E-mail address					
Gender (mark appropriate block)	Designated Equity Group (mark appropriate block)				
Male	Female	African	Indian	Coloured	White

## 2. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS – please include current if applicable

Level	Institution	Qualification	Year completed	Main subjects
<b>Primary Schooling</b>	(Include area & province)			
<b>High Schooling</b>	(Include area & province)			
<b>Tertiary (1st degree or National Diploma)</b>				
<b>Tertiary (Honours)</b>				Mini thesis title:
<b>Tertiary (Masters)</b>				Thesis title:

## 3. RECORD OF EMPLOYMENT – if applicable

Employer	Position held	Period of employment	Reasons for leaving

If applicant studied in Environmental sector but employed in different sector, please state, and reasons why.

**4. COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT** – Briefly describe your interest in the environment and whether you been active in the environmental field, through projects, study etc. Maximum one page.

**5. CAREER PLANS** – What is your ideal career in the environment sector? Write a short description of your career plans to get to this ideal. Maximum half a page.

**6. MOTIVATION FOR PLACEMENT** – Why do you think you are ideal for this placement opportunity? Write a short motivation. Maximum half a page.

## 7. REFERENCE

Contact Person	Designation	Association	Contact details

# 4

## Induction into the Workplace



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Induction is an important aspect of the work based placement. The university from which your student has been recruited is likely to have provided some induction and orientation to work integrated learning.

### Examples:

Nature conservation students at Nelson Mandela University undertake a module in the first year with guidance for specific training in the workplace, for example, the use of a firearm, appropriate behaviour in the workplace and understanding the difference between theory and practice in the workplace.

UNISA's Horticulture students gain specific experience to apply in the workplace through modules like carrying out a plant propagation project or constructing a real life landscape design. Another module allows students to advise on plant establishment and maintenance in a real work situation. They have to show that they can apply general management principles, including project management and human resources management principles in a variety of horticultural contexts as part of the learning outcomes.

At Durban University of Technology, students receive instruction to prepare for the world of work. Students receive skills training in job-seeking such as CV writing, application procedures, interview and presentation skills. Other life skills such as time management, team building and communication are some of the learning outcomes of the work-preparedness programme. The School of Horticulture provides rules and requirements for students doing work integrated learning which includes work hours, expectations of time management, work performance and evaluation.

From these examples, you can see that whereas the university tries to best prepare the student for taking up the work placement, it is useful for the host employer to follow through with an induction programme, more specific to the particular host employer, that could include:

- Induction into the placement
- Induction into the work function
- Induction into the unit/programme/directorate;
- Induction into the organisation; and
- Induction into working for biodiversity.

## 4.1 Induction into the specific placement

Most universities offer some sort of orientation for students ahead of the work-based placement and entry into the workplace. It might be useful to contact the student's university to gain insight into the level of orientation the student might have received, and follow on from there.

Often termed the 'first meeting', this could assist in providing the necessary background to the organisation and the work that the intern will be involved with. It could also clarify the kind of projects and experiences the student will be exposed to. Together with the student intern, agree on what would be relevant to his/her work integrated learning experience and academic learning programme.

This first meeting can also be used to clarify expectations of all involved, including the organisation's expectations of the student, the mentor's expectations as well as the student's expectations of the mentor and organisation. Many challenges emerge for the student and mentor in the workplace as a result of unclear expectations on both sides. Some organisations suggest documenting expectations as a point of reference. This could also be done as part of the organisation's performance agreement and management process. Durban University of Technology provides students and employers with a declaration of roles and responsibilities that is then signed by both parties.

## 4.2 Induction into the work function

Students coming into the workplace for the first time often have a theoretical perspective of work. The first work experience could be overwhelming when the theoretical and often idealistic bubble bursts. It is useful to provide the student with a brief orientation to the work. This provides clarity on what will be expected in the workplace from both student and organisation.

Approaching these placements from a career development point of view (as suggested in Booklet 1) would also mean guiding the student through all possible aspects of the job. A highly experienced mentor in the conservation sector remembers the expression on his female Nature Conservation student's face when he taught her how to use a chain saw. The City of Cape Town provides students with training for stakeholder engagement as a critical part of work in conservation. In addition to providing useful development opportunities for students, these experiences can also provide good memories and fireside stories later on in their careers.

## 4.3 Induction into the unit/programme/directorate

In preparing the student for a career in biodiversity, it is useful to provide a work orientation beyond the functional area within which they are placed. This helps the student to understand the bigger picture. It also exposes the student to other related areas as career options.

Some detail that might be included in this induction could be:

- The goals and objectives of the unit/programme/directorate
- Its contribution to achieving the objectives of the organisation
- The longer term vision of this unit/programme/directorate
- Work organisation around these goals and objectives
- The staff who deal with and support the work of the unit/programme/directorate

- Partnerships and projects that support the work of the unit/programme/directorate.

These are only some of the aspects of the unit/programme/directorate that could be included. There might be others that could replace some of these or complement them.

You could do this induction through an introduction to the various team members with an overview of what each one does and contributes to the unit or programme or directorate. The student could be given an assignment to follow up with each of these staff members and to assimilate information gathered through informal interviews into a summary of what the unit/programme/directorate is involved with.

#### Examples:

Experts at CapeNature introduce students to their work for the year and provide the necessary background so that students understand all areas of work in relation to the organisation's structure.

SANParks includes in their induction different specialists who present what they do and outline the different experiences available at the organisation.

When the website of one of the WWF-SA programmes needed revision, its new intern was assigned the task of developing the necessary content and identifying suitable images for this update. The intern had to investigate the aims and objectives of the programme, read various documents, talk to the team and so develop a better understanding of the programme and the work she would contribute to.

## 4.4 Induction into the organisation

Many organisations have standard programmes of induction to provide all new staff with an orientation to the organisation. These induction programmes can be scheduled at particular times, for example quarterly, to provide induction for all who have joined the organisation during the preceding quarter. Others plan group inductions when new staff come into the organisation. Some smaller organisations arrange for a one-on-one programme of organisational induction for each new entrant.

The National Zoological Gardens provides an organisational induction for student interns together with the induction for all new staff. This supports the integration of the student intern into the staff complement they will work with.

If the organisation is small and does not have a structured induction programme, you might want to include the following details in your organisational induction for the student intern:

- The organisation's vision and mission.
- The organisational structure: how the organisation is organised around different areas of work – an organisational organogram is useful for this purpose.
- The work of the various units/divisions/programmes/directorates, the interactions and relation to each other.
- The people who staff these units/divisions/programmes/directorates and each of the respective focus areas.
- Organisational policies that have some bearing on the student intern, for example, working hours, leave, performance management, disciplinary procedures, etc. If you have these saved in a particular file, you could simply point student interns to the file to explore it in their own time.
- Organisational processes that the student needs to know.

## 4.5 Induction into working for biodiversity

Various resources have been developed for an induction of new entrants into working for the environment.

The *Induction Workbook* (Rosenberg & Raven, 2012), available at [www.greenmatter.co.za](http://www.greenmatter.co.za), provides a useful framework for induction of new student interns into working for biodiversity. It deals with various aspects of the nature and scope of work for biodiversity as well as some key workplace-based competences.

- *Part 1* of the *Induction Workbook* deals with *Who am I and where do I fit in*. It supports interns to reflect on their academic background and to develop a preliminary career development road map, as in Booklet 1. It also provides some guidance on induction into a particular work organisation and encourages interns to reflect on and understand the work they do in relation to the organisation's mandate. This part of the *Induction Workbook* introduces the intern to the environment sector, all the different players and the respective organisational mandates.
- *Part 2: Finding your Feet in the Policy Landscape* supports the intern to explore the work they do in relation to the broader environment and socio-environment policy framework at a national, regional and global scale.
- *Part 3: Rising to the Occasion – Getting the Basics Right* starts to explore some useful workplace skills, such as managing your work, communications in the workplace, relationships in the workplace and ethics in the workplace.
- *Part 4: How to Learn and Advance* supports interns with exploring rights and responsibilities in an internship, deals with performance appraisals with some examples of performance planning and prepares them for taking the next step into the world of work with some guidance on exploring the job market, making applications and preparing for interviews.

The *Induction Workbook* is written as a stand-alone resource for use by interns and mentors. It has various activities and tasks for the intern during the

induction process. The *Induction Workbook* can also be used in a structured programme with a bigger group of interns. Through a pilot programme at WWF-SA, induction of interns was facilitated through a series of four workshops. Each one dealt with various sections of the workbook, not necessarily sequentially. For example, the section *where have I come from? what do I do in my organisation?* and developing a road map for career development was dealt with in a first workshop together with the rights and responsibilities of the intern. The second workshop dealt with role players in the environment sector, managing work, communication and relationships in the workplace. The third workshop dealt with the policy landscape and ethics in the workplace and the final one dealt with *Preparing for your Next Job in the Sector*.

# 5

## Mentoring the Student Intern



Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

Mentoring is the foundation of workplace-based learning. A few years ago, the Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.) Bioregional Programme of SANBI developed a resource to support mentoring in the workplace, *Mentoring to Support Work Integrated Learning: A Source Book for Strengthening Conservation Professionals, Practice and Organisations* (Raven, 2011). This resource, available at [www.wwf.org.za](http://www.wwf.org.za) on the Work Integrated Learning Community page, provides some guidelines for mentoring in the workplace.

Adapted from this Mentors' Sourcebook:

### **Mentoring is ...**

... a developmental relationship, focused on professional practice to develop the necessary workplace-based competence through support, guidance and opportunity for personal, professional and career growth and development

### **... and includes**



A mentor plays a different role to a manager, even though they are usually the same person. Mentors are focused on development and growth. Managers are focused on outcomes, outputs and doing the job. Many mentors often have to balance between being a mentor and manager at different times.

Mentoring can take on many forms. The preferred and most common form is one-on-one mentoring, but there can also be group mentoring, peer mentoring, distance mentoring, amongst others, depending on the context.

## 5.1 Consider the most appropriate form of mentoring for your context

Does your organisation have the capacity to assign a mentor to each individual student intern? If so, then you could implement the one-on-one mentoring model. Student interns in a one-on-one mentoring relationship enjoy the luxury of individual focus; this is not always possible in our busy organisations and work schedules.

If your organisation takes on a group of student interns without the capacity to assign one mentor to each individual, you might have to consider group mentoring. Group mentoring links one mentor to a group of student interns. This does not allow the individual focus as in one-on-one mentoring, but has the added advantage of peer mentoring. Each student intern as part of the group is also supported and mentored by his/her peer or fellow interns. The mentor guides the whole group and the learning process is ultimately supported by the group.

Sometimes in both one-on-one mentoring and group mentoring, one mentor might not have time for all the development needs of the student intern. This might require working with other mentors in a network of mentors, either all in one organisation or at times outside of the organisation. This arrangement could be mutually beneficial: for the interns who have the benefit of a broader scope of experience and for the mentors in sharing the responsibility.

Having multiple mentors can be overwhelming for the intern. The student should have a main mentor, a 'go-to' person or coordinator of the overall mentoring experience.

## 5.2 Key attributes of effective mentoring

These include:

- Mentoring based on sound expertise and experience of the mentor
- Availability of mentors to guide, comment on and support the ideas and actions of the students
- Allowing the independence and space to innovate in a supportive environment that offers constructive and affirming feedback
- Providing for reflection with the aim of exploring new ways of thinking and doing
- Listening (really actively listening) to the needs, ideas and experiences of the student
- Providing support and exposure to new and exciting opportunities to learn
- Flexibility to meet the development needs of the student

Mentoring is based on relationships and interactions between the student, fellow students in a group mentoring arrangement and the mentor. It is often useful to spend some time establishing these relationships for a constructive mentoring experience for both the student and the mentor. Module 3 of the *Mentors for the Environment Train the Trainer Course* offers some guidelines to establishing rapport and building mentoring relationships.

# 6

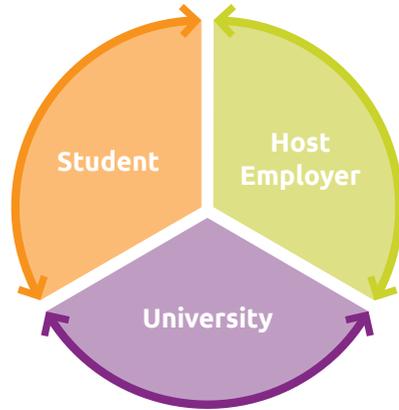
## Assessing Work Integrated Learning



Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

Assessing work integrated learning is the responsibility of the student's university. This generally happens at the end of the placement when the student returns to his/her institution for assessment.

Even though assessment is the ultimate responsibility of the university, the mentor of the student in the host organisation also has a role to play, as does the student. A three-pronged approach is useful for assessing work integrated learning, with various roles and responsibilities for each party.



**Diagram 6.1:** Three interacting parties for assessing work integrated learning

## 6.1 The university should:

- Prepare the assessment framework aligned to the learning outcomes
- Ensure the student understands the assessment requirements
- Communicate this framework to both the student and the host employer
- Visit the host employer to assess the student
- Review all records of evidence and assess the development of the student during the work based placement
- Provide the student with assessment feedback
- Manage all administration associated with assessment

## 6.2 The student should:

- Understand the assessment criteria
- Use the development opportunities to prepare for the assessment

- Document and prepare all necessary evidence of learning for the assessment
- Feed final results and assessment back to the mentor

### 6.3 The host employer should:

- Understand the assessment criteria for which they are preparing the student
- Provide development and learning opportunities for the student linked to this assessment
- Monitor, supervise and provide feedback to the students

The student and the mentor will be involved in the assessment during the work integrated learning placement, called formative assessment. The university is mostly involved in the summative assessment, at the end of the work integrated learning period. Most universities provide host employers with guidelines for assessing and providing feedback on the student's progress. They require regular feedback from employers on the student's performance in the workplace. Are you aware of the assessment and feedback expectations of the university with which your student intern is registered? How are you able to schedule regular points of feedback to both the student and the university?

#### Example:

Delta Environmental Centre uses a portfolio of evidence and reflection to support its student interns to collate evidence of learning in the workplace. They call this a Professional Development Portfolio that includes a brief narrative report from the student on his/her development experience, with a short reflection on what they have learnt, followed by a set of documentary and/or photographic evidence that shows engagement in the development opportunities offered by the host employer.

### Examples:

NCC Environmental Services provides students with written assignments for reflecting on learning in the workplace, with feedback from the host employer. NCC has a training division that takes on this role on behalf of the organisation. Some organisations might find this too time consuming and resource intensive. You might consider this as part of the mentoring process.

Centurion Academy places the onus of assessment on the student through quarterly reports, signed by the mentor, on learning activities in the workplace.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries uses a performance appraisal process to provide interns with a structured programme for development and biannual assessments to provide feedback. At the start of the internship, they develop with the interns a work plan for the period, and assess students against this work plan at interim periods, such as monthly or quarterly, and provide feedback accordingly.

WWF-SA runs a similar performance appraisal process, supporting interns to develop quarterly work plans, with specific development objectives for the period. At the end of the quarter, the student and mentor do a collective assessment relative to the development objectives. The Induction Workbook has some examples of this process of development planning and assessment.

## 6.4 Portfolios of evidence

What could be included in the portfolio of evidence to provide evidence of growth and development? *Tick the suggestions that you think are relevant to your organisation and add as many as you think are useful examples in your own context.*

- A log book showing a record of all daily or weekly activities. You could add an evaluation column for reflections on the learning activities. A second column could provide the mentor with a space for comment. This provides the mentor and university with insights into and feedback on the student's growth and development.
- A daily or weekly journal with opportunities to describe and reflect on the work they are doing from day to day. A summary of the journal could be used to provide feedback to the mentor and university.
- Photos that show the student working in different work contexts. This could provide good evidence of what the student has done and how they have engaged with developmental opportunities in the workplace.
- Site visit reports also provide the student with an opportunity to reflect on what they are doing and learning. They might need some guidance in developing these reports.
- Power point presentations in the workplace that provide the mentor with insights into how the student is understanding and internalising the work integrated learning experience.
- Though time and resource intensive, you could provide the student with a short practical examination in the field to show their learning and development.

Durban University of Technology's Horticulture Department shares a template to guide quarterly assessment of students for work integrated learning in Annexure B.

What other ideas do you have through which the student could collect evidence of learning in the workplace?

## Annexure B

# DUT: Horticulture Quarterly Assessment Plan



### Department of Horticulture Quarterly Student Evaluation Work Integrated Learning

Employer /WIL Trainer Details	Student Details
	Name
	Student number
	Identity umber
	Experiential training period
Telephone Landline	From:
Fax/Email	To:
Contact person	

#### Brief description of tasks carried out

As per log book/study guide and listed outcomes

## Performance appraisal scale (1-7)

Criteria described on following page. To be completed by supervisor or employer

Performance appraisal criteria	Rating	Comments if required
1 Interest in Work /Motivation		
2 Ability to learn		
3 Quality of Work (Academic)		
4 Quality of Work (Practical)		
5 Productivity (Practical)		
6 Team player		
7 Dependability /reliability		
8 Punctuality /Attendance		<b>No of days missed</b> Stipulate Sick (S), Excused for valid reasons (E), AWOL Absent without official leave (A), Leave granted (L) <b>No of days late</b>
9 Oral Communication skills – Speaking		
10 Communication skills – Listening and implementing instructions		
11 Communication skills – Written ability		
12 Resourcefulness /Problem solving		
13 Response to supervision		

Overall evaluation score based on attached criteria from 1-7

### Supervisor's Comments

Please comment on the student's overall job performance:

### Student's Comments

Please comment briefly on your overall performance including your ability to achieve learning objectives and your future employment expectations:

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

DUT Departmental stamp
------------------------

Employer / WIL Trainer stamp
------------------------------

## Overall Performance Rating

### [7] Outstanding Performance

- The student has significantly exceeded all behavioural and developmental performance expectations in respect to output, quality standards, delivery of goals and assignments
- This rating is reserved for only those few students who have distinguished themselves by their unique contribution or exceptional performance

### [6] Excellent Performance

- The student has exceeded all performance expectations in respect to output, quality standards, delivery of goals and assignments
- Receiving this rating means the manager is delighted with this student's performance

### [5] Very Good Performance

- The student has met all and exceeded some performance expectations in respect to output, quality standards, delivery of goals and assignments
- Receiving this rating means the manager is very pleased with this student's performance

### [4] Good Performance

- The student meets performance expectations in respect to output, quality standards, delivery of goals and assignments
- Receiving this rating means the manager is generally pleased with the student's overall performance

### [3] Satisfactory Performance

- The student has met the performance expectations in respect to output, quality standards, delivery of goals and assignments
- Receiving this rating means the manager is mostly satisfied with the student's performance

### [2] Marginal Performance

- Overall performance requires improvement and/or certain key aspects of performance require improvement while other aspects may be satisfactory.
- Receiving this rating means the manager is not entirely satisfied with this student's performance

### [1] Unsatisfactory Performance

- The student did not meet performance requirements and needs to be interviewed by the SOH/WIL facilitator and HOD with a view to punitive/ corrective action

# 7

## Monitoring and Evaluation



Quality Assuring Work Integrated Learning

Hosting and mentoring the student intern for work integrated learning is a big investment, in time as well as financial and physical resources. You might want to evaluate this experience for the student intern, the mentor, the organisation and the sector. You may also want to find out if the student has found employment once qualified and how the work integrated learning experience supported their employability. You may want to motivate for the placement of more students in future. Monitoring and evaluation can assist in developing these insights and arguments.

A simple framework is offered to assist monitoring and evaluating the work integrated learning experience, through this step by step process. Monitoring and evaluation can also provide good insights for reporting on this experience for the student, the university or your organisation.

## 7.1 What question do you want to answer?

Monitoring and evaluation is often seen as an onerous task, but framed around a few simple questions, it can be fairly simple. Think about what you would like to know about the work integrated learning experience and frame this as a broad question for monitoring and evaluation. For example, what worked well for the student, what was the quality of my mentoring or how did the organisation benefit from having student interns?

## 7.2 How will you answer this question?

After framing this broad question, think of smaller questions that might help you to answer this. For example:

Broad evaluation focus	Questions that will help you answer this broader evaluation focus
<p><b>What activities worked well for the development of the student?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the academic background of the student?</li> <li>■ With which activities was the student involved?</li> <li>■ What opportunities did the student have to build the skills needed for this area of work?</li> <li>■ What work related experience did the student gain from these activities?</li> <li>■ How did these activities contribute to the curriculum requirements?</li> </ul>
<p><b>What was the quality of my mentoring?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How many mentoring meetings were convened during the placement?</li> <li>■ Were these enough or could more have been convened?</li> <li>■ What was the nature of these interactions?</li> <li>■ How did these provide guidance for the student?</li> <li>■ Did these facilitate feedback to the student?</li> <li>■ How was the feedback offered?</li> <li>■ How was the feedback received?</li> <li>■ What can I do differently?</li> </ul>
<p><b>How did my organisation benefit from hosting the student interns?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What did the student contribute to the work of the organisation?</li> <li>■ What was the quality of this contribution?</li> <li>■ How did the staff in the unit experience the placement of the intern?</li> <li>■ How did they experience the contribution of the intern?</li> <li>■ Would they recommend another placement?</li> <li>■ Why?</li> </ul>

### 7.3 Who can help you answer these questions, when and how?

The next step in developing a monitoring and evaluation framework is to decide who could help you to answer the specific questions, when is the best time to answer this question and how can you guide or support the answering, for example, through e-mail questionnaires, surveys, interviews etc. For further details on what this monitoring and evaluation framework might look like, see Annexure C.

## Annexure C

### Example of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Broad evaluation focus	Questions that will help you answer this broader evaluation focus	Who will help you answer this question?	When is best to ask this question?	How can you ask this question?
<p><b>What activities worked well for the development of the student?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the academic background of the student?</li> <li>■ Which activities was the student involved with?</li> <li>■ What experiences did the student gain from these activities?</li> <li>■ How did these activities contribute to the curriculum requirements?</li> <li>■ What opportunities did the student have to build the skills needed for this area of work?</li> <li>■ What skills did the student develop during his / her involvement in these activities?</li> </ul>	<p>The student / the lecturer / your own observation</p>	<p>After each activity and at the end of the placement</p>	<p>Interviews / e-mail questionnaire</p>
<p><b>What was the quality of my mentoring?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How many mentoring interactions were convened during the placement?</li> <li>■ Were these interactions sufficient or could more have been convened?</li> </ul>	<p>Your own observations / the student</p>	<p>At quarterly development meetings and at the end of the placement</p>	<p>Mentoring discussions</p>

<p><b>How did my organisation benefit from hosting the student interns?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What was the nature of these interactions?</li> <li>■ How did these provide guidance for the student?</li> <li>■ Did these facilitate feedback to the student?</li> <li>■ How was the feedback offered?</li> <li>■ How was the feedback received?</li> <li>■ What can I do differently?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>How did the student intern contribute to the work of the organisation?</b></p> <p><b>How did the staff in the unit experience the placement of the intern?</b></p> <p><b>How did they experience the contribution of the intern?</b></p> <p><b>Would they recommend another placement?</b></p> <p><b>Why?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How did the student intern contribute to the work of the organisation?</li> <li>■ How did the staff in the unit experience the placement of the intern?</li> <li>■ How did they experience the contribution of the intern?</li> <li>■ Would they recommend another placement?</li> <li>■ Why?</li> </ul>	<p>Colleagues in the unit where the student was placed</p>	<p>At the end of the placement</p>	<p>Group discussions</p>

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people in the public sector who are employed in health care has increased from 2.5 million to 3.5 million (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is increasing, and the number of people who are aged 65 and over is increasing rapidly. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are in need of health care services, particularly in the areas of long-term care and mental health services.

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