



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**



# Your Research Internship: A Guide to Getting Started

[study.uwa.edu/](https://study.uwa.edu/)

## What is a HDR Research internship?

A HDR Research internship is a structured, short-term research experience that connects you with an external industry partner- government, business or not-for-profit to solve real-world problems using your research skills.

*Think:* analysing large datasets for environmental sustainability projects, contributing to curatorial research for galleries or museums, co-designing health programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, developing machine learning models, evaluating public policy impacts, strategy reviews or prototype developments; all while making industry connections and building your future career path.

Internships can be:

- Paid or unpaid
- Full-time or part-time
- In-person, hybrid, or remote
- Aligned with your research
- Between 60–180 days (minimum 3 months)

## Why do a HDR Research internship?

PhD students report a range of personal and professional benefits, including:

- Gaining fresh perspectives and insights into their research
- Applying research skills in real-world, high-impact settings
- Building confidence and valuable workplace experience
- Expanding professional networks and career opportunities
- Exploring career pathways beyond academia
- Stepping outside their usual research environment to re-energise and connect with industry professionals

## Eligibility:

You are a currently enrolled PhD candidate at UWA
Complete a minimum of 60 FTE days over at least 3 months, scheduled to suit you and the host organisation
Submit written documentation within 18 months of starting your PhD (or part-time equivalent)- refer to below for more information
Partner with an eligible research end-user
The internship is related to your PhD- directly, broadly or tangentially
The internship will be conducted within your candidature period
You have supervisor approval to apply for, and undertake, the internship

If you don't meet these criteria, please contact the Research Internships team or your supervisor to discuss alternative opportunities for industry engagement



## HDR Internship Application Process – What to Do and When

Not sure which internship steps apply to your stage of candidature? Here's a quick guide:

### • Before Confirmation of Candidature (CoC)

Internship dates confirmed?

→ Yes: Use the [Internship Agreement](#)

→ No: Use a [Letter of Intent](#)

→ Apply for REUE engagement via HDRhub

Note: A waiver is required only if commencing an internship before CoC

### • After CoC or within 18 months of enrolment

→ Apply for REUE engagement via HDRhub

### • Beyond 18 months or reporting an internship

Letter of Intent or Internship Agreement signed?

→ Yes: Apply for REUE engagement via HDRhub

→ No: Contact the Research Internships team for support

## Internship types

### EMBEDDED

- *What they are:* Embedded internships form an automatic part of your PhD candidature. These are typically linked to large research programs, such as those within Industrial Transformation Training Centres (ITTCs), Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs), grants, data agreement or scholarships
- *How they work:* The research and development (R&D) internship or placement is arranged as part of your program, no separate application is required
- *Key feature:* These internships are integrated into your PhD and are considered a placement component of your degree

### BESPOKE AND ADVERTISED

- *What they are:* These internships are optional and linked to your core research project. They are student-driven and designed to provide additional industry experience. You can organise and design your own internship, including with community organisations. Participation is not automatic and requires initiative from the student
- *How they work:* Opportunities are advertised through channels such as the [UWA Graduate Research School \(GRS\)](#), [iPREP](#), [APR.Intern](#), [LinkedIn](#) and other online platforms. You can apply for these internships directly
- *Key feature:* These internships are flexible and provide valuable professional experience beyond your specific PhD research

## Inside Industry: Stories from UWA PhD Interns

### Real-World Impact of Research



**Student:** Naomi Preston

**Research Focus:** Interpretation of incarceration, punishment, and Aboriginal heritage at Fremantle Prison

**Host Organisation:** Fremantle Prison

**Highlight:** Contributed research and co-wrote an interpretation plan supporting Fremantle Prison's first Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan, connecting academic research with real-world heritage practice



**Student:** Brian McFadden

**Research Focus:** Towards Trustworthy Machine Learning Systems for Infection Science

**Host Organisation:** North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS)

**Highlight:** Successfully developed a machine learning solution to predict hospital-acquired complications across NMHS sites, now employed within NMHS following the internship - *Stock image used*



**Student:** Zuhra Qayyum

**Research Focus:** Gene editing techniques in plants using CRISPR/Cas9 technology

**Host Organisation:** AgriBio at Agricultural Research Services, Victoria

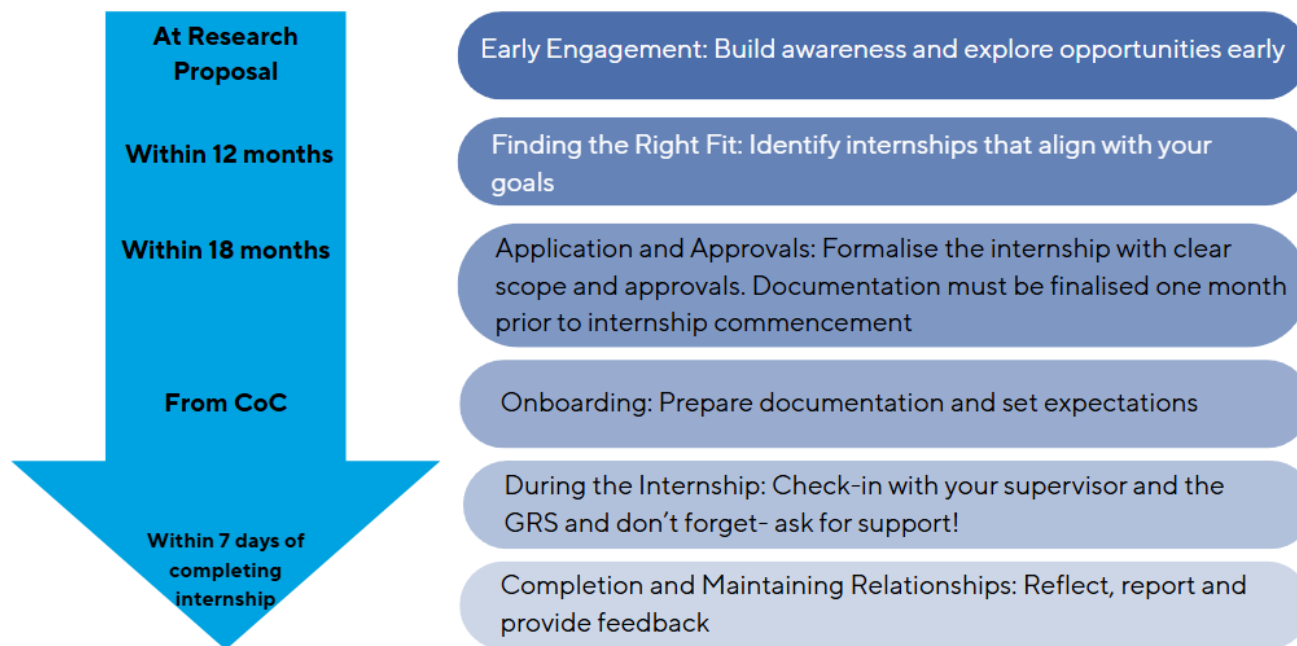
**Highlight:** Contributed to establishing genome editing techniques in grain legumes, gaining valuable hands-on experience and strong mentorship

**This guide focuses on the process for bespoke and advertised internships**

If you are undertaking an embedded internship as part of your PhD program (for example, through an ITTC or CRC) and require further assistance, please contact your Graduate Research Coordinator or the Graduate Research School (GRS) for guidance



# PhD Internship Timeline Overview



## Your Internship Journey

Here's how to navigate the PhD Internship process- with tips to keep you on track.

### Step 1. Awareness: Know what's available

How to start:

- Subscribe to the GRS newsletter [here](#)
- Attend briefings and induction sessions. Check [HDRhub](#) for details
- Talk to current interns, alumni or your supervisor
- Follow LinkedIn and research career sites. Follow UWA HDR LinkedIn [here](#)

#### Tip #1

Start exploring your opportunities within the first 6–12 months of your candidature

### Step 2. Finding the opportunity

How to source internships:

- Through your supervisor or lab networks
- Via university programs ([APR.Intern](#), [iPREP](#), [CEED](#), [CSIRO](#), etc.)
- [UWA GRS newsletter](#) or [LinkedIn](#)
- Professional associations or direct contact
- LinkedIn, Seek, community groups, volunteer organisations or cold outreach
- Consider what organisation you'd like to work with to make your research have impact. Internships can be designed by you and may include community organisations or other partners aligned with your research goals

#### Tip #2

Add a goal in HDRhub as a reminder to submit your internship agreement- you can't start without it!



### Step 3: Application and approvals

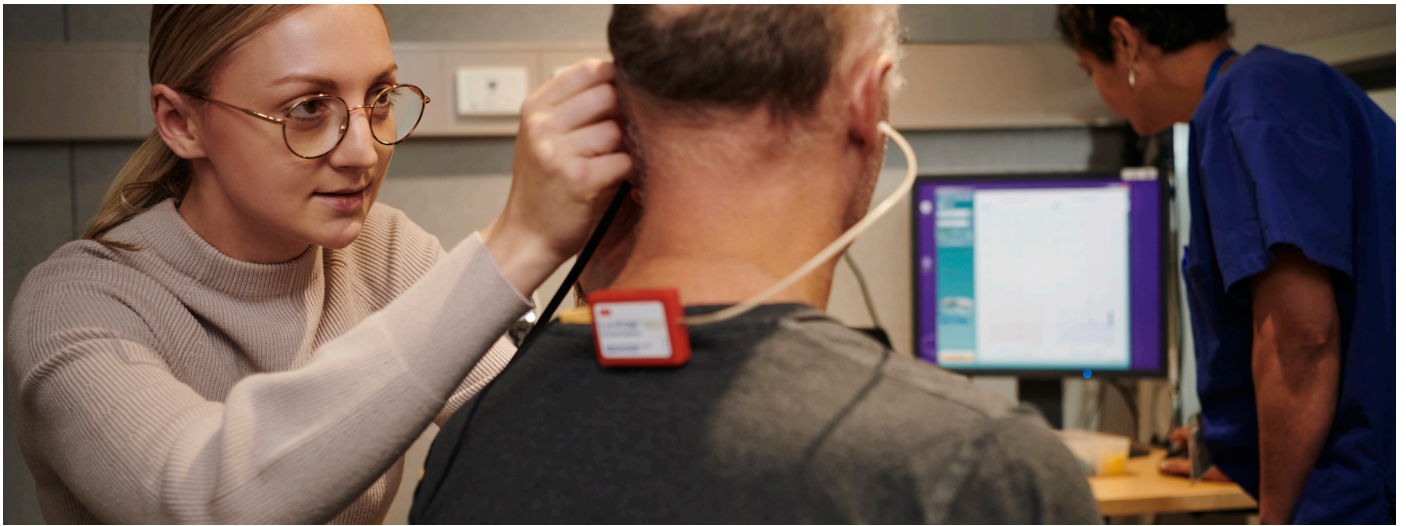
This stage formalises the internship

*What you need:*

- 1- Confirm you're eligible (refer to page one)
- 2- Set your goals and milestones within HDRhub
- 3- Get support and discuss with your supervisor
- 4- Prepare the outline of the internship scope, dates and how it fits your PhD
- 5- Sign and return your completed documentation (refer to page one for clarification on required document) via HDRhub

*Eligibility criteria:*

- Internship must align with your research either directly, broadly or tangentially. *Contact GRS for further clarification if needed*
- External to academia (i.e. [an eligible research end-user](#))
- Minimum of 60 full-time equivalent days over 3 months
- Conducted within your candidature



#### Step 4: Onboarding and agreements

Next steps:

- Finalise your internship with your host organisation and confirm your project scope
- Use the [GRS templates](#) to draft your internship agreement
- Submit your signed and approved documents to HDRhub at least one month before commencement of internship
- Prepare for the workplace: plan your commute, schedule, attire and onboarding meetings

#### TIP #3

Attend a pre-internship preparation session or workshop.

Find the next available time on [HDRhub](#)

#### Step 5. Internship and student support

During your internship:

- Start strong: meet with your supervisor and host early
- Track your time with a timesheet, or other record keeping tool
- Reach out to your university supervisor or GRS regularly
- Maintain progress on both internship and HDR milestones
- Flag issues early with your supervisor or the GRS (e.g. workload, supervision gaps, wellbeing)

#### Step 6: Completion and feedback

The end of the internship is an opportunity for reflection and growth

- Submit your final report and reflection in HDRhub
- Make sure your timesheet is complete
- [Close out the internship in HDRhub](#)
- Continue your PhD work with a fresh perspective
- Celebrate your achievement (yes, it's a big deal!)

Support is available: reach out, we're here to help

#### Final Checklist (Before You Submit)

- My internship meets all eligibility requirements
- I have obtained written supervisor approval
- The internship scope, dates and alignment with my PhD are clearly defined
- I have prepared and reviewed the internship agreement or letter of intent using the correct template
- The industry host agreement will be signed within the required timeline
- I have entered my goals and milestones in HDRhub
- All required documentation is complete and ready for submission via HDRhub

If you answered yes to all of the above, you're ready to apply!



#### Want to inspire others?

Contact the Research Internships team to volunteer for a student spotlight or write a blog about your experience

#### GET IN TOUCH

##### CALL US

131 UWA (131 892)

##### FAQs

[ask.uwa.edu.au](#)

##### EMAIL US

[internships-grs@uwa.edu.au](mailto:internships-grs@uwa.edu.au)

##### VISIT US

Level 3 E-Zone, Perth campus

