

Examples of transition work at Queen Margaret University

Title: *Third Sector Internships Scotland (TSIS)*

Internships that make a difference

Transition(s) the practice supports: Transition out of university and into employment.

Abstract: Third Sector Internships Scotland provides an example of collaboration between higher education institutions and third sector groups to support student employability through paid internships open to students at all Scottish Universities.

Description: The initiative is led by Queen Margaret University, The Open University in Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, with representation on the Steering Group from across the Scottish HE sector. TSIS provides the opportunity to apply for internships to all students from first year to PhD, and is relevant not only to 'young' students, but also those retraining and considering a career change or re-entering the job market after a career break.

Established in 2010, TSIS has to date had 7,383 applications and supported students through 1,164 interviews and 319 internships. Of the organisations providing internship positions, 93% are small/medium-sized enterprises, all drawn from the Third Sector.

A key focus of the initiative is to provide students with experience of the recruitment and selection process, and where students are successful in their applications, also to provide experience of focused and supported employment. In addition, the initiative raises the profile of the Third Sector as employers to students and university careers services, and as providers of a viable career path. Job descriptions are drawn up with the Third Sector organisation and advertised through the TSIS website, university careers services and social media. After submitting an on-line application, short-listed candidates attend a panel interview (which can often be a student's first experience of a formal interview). No matter what the outcome of the interview, all applicants are provided with individual feedback. During their internship (which usually comprises 350 paid hours, either part-time while studying or 10 weeks' full-time in the summer) students are provided with support as well as personal development workshops, dealing with topics such as communications, reflective practice, and careers.

All students who have undertaken internships are asked to complete a one-year follow-up survey, thus TSIS is adding to our understanding of the value of the internship experience, the ways in which students engage with and use the experience, and the benefits to employers and institutions of paid internships.

For further details of TSIS research and evaluation please see <https://www.3rdsectorintern.com/research/>.

The initiative provides an example of a successful model of engagement which has the potential to make a considerable difference to the student experience as well as workforce development and support for the Third Sector.

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