



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

# VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME



**MENTOR MANUAL**

Dear Mentors,

This manual will serve as a resource guide to provide you with relevant information and resources you can refer to throughout your time as a mentor during the Virtual Internship Programme. We encourage you to review this manual carefully, in advance of the start of internships. Most of the relevant information is covered in this manual, however, should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the programme team. As this programme is constantly evolving, so is this manual. Your feedback and input are always appreciated.

—AKU University Partnerships Team

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## INTRODUCTION: INTERNATIONAL & VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

The University Partnerships Office (UPO) has established partnerships and linkages with various academic institutions that have contributed to AKU's growth and development. In discussions with our academic partners in various parts of the world, it is evident that AKU is responding to a growing niche of universities globally who are moving towards establishing a strong internationalization dimension to their programmes.

UPO established its first International Internship Programme in 2008 and has offered unique and interesting opportunities to more than 300 students from 18 partner universities to 8 countries and 7 AKDN agencies. The programme aims to provide a critical learning opportunity that goes beyond a simple work experience and instead focuses on creative thinking, developing strong leadership skills, being critically reflexive, and learning new ways of doing things in new environments.

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, AKU is pleased to announce a new programme that addresses the current situation affecting thousands of students globally. AKU's Virtual Internship Programme launched in May 2020 will connect students from around the world to achieve their educational potential through a virtual placement. The programme aims to provide meaningful, relevant, and practical work experience that will complement a student's online classroom learning and career interests.

## WHY HIRE A VIRTUAL INTERN?

- Completion of designated project(s) or "deliverables"
- Encouraging student's interest in a particular field among future generations of employees
- Development of a potential pipeline of candidates from qualified applicants
- AKU's recognition among global universities
- An opportunity to collect new perspectives and ideas from students regarding processes, organizational branding, and more
- An opportunity to obtain needed support in a flexible, virtual manner which does not require physical facilities, equipment, or on-site supervision

In return, we expect interns to be able to:

- Explore a particular industry or career path
- Gather information on AKU/AKDN's culture, norms, and expectations
- Resume development
- Professional development
- Networking with an employer

- Expert insights regarding strengths, challenges, and potential career trajectories in a particular field
- Opportunity to work in a remote manner which offers flexibility and accommodates a student's other responsibilities

## PROGRAMME FEATURES

- Assignments: Project-based work that is manageable, well thought out and can be accomplished off-site by the recruited intern.
- Duration: 12 weeks, with potential to be shorter or longer upon discussion with the intern
- Time commitment: 15 hours / week, with the ability to add additional hours upon discussion with the intern
- Tech platform: Face-time and weekly meetings on Zoom. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the internship experience through AKU Internship Portal
- Compensation: This is an unpaid internship and interns will not be financially compensated, however, students may earn internship credits (subject to Partner University's criteria and guidelines) and/or a scholarship through their university.

## MENTOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

While interns bring a lot of fresh ideas and technical expertise in the relevant field, mentors are expected to promote learning on the job, which could be the best way of acquiring particular skills and knowledge the job requires. Mentors are required to provide ongoing professional learning to enable interns to gain a deeper understanding of their role and be recognized and valued as a part of the team. As a mentor, you are expected to:

- Identify clear project goals and set weekly deadlines
- Work with intern to help them develop their personal and professional development goals
- Provide departmental orientation to help interns integrate within your team
- Continuous feedback to the interns on their tasks
- Weekly face-time calls over zoom (arranged by the programme) to review expectations for development
- Evaluate interns on an ongoing basis and provide feedback to the AKU-IIP office.
- Provide coaching and mentorship to the student in order for him/her to develop not only professionally, but also personally
- Proper handover from the intern and a debrief on their performance

## INTERNSHIP MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E):

To ensure that the virtual internship placement is continuing to meet your departmental objectives and the intern's expectations, the programme will have various mandatory monitoring and evaluation exercises for both mentor and intern throughout the placement.

M&E is conducted so that the AKU Virtual Internship Programme team, as well as the mentors, can identify any issues that may arise during the virtual internship placement and address them on an ongoing basis. The **intern** is expected to be completing the following monitoring and evaluation reports which will be shared with the mentors for their information:

- Weekly Check-in form
- Monthly reflection report
- End-term Supervisor evaluation
- End-term Programme evaluation

As **mentors**, you are expected to complete the following M&E documents:

- Mid-term Intern evaluation
- End-term Intern evaluation
- End-term Programme evaluation

## FINAL DEBRIEF SESSION WITH VIRTUAL INTERN:

At the end of the placement, mentors are expected to conduct a proper debrief session with the intern. Your final meeting discussion can be dedicated to the following:

- Reflecting on accomplishments, challenges, and progress towards goals that were initially set during placement commencement
- Discussing on the successes of the placement and the areas that may need improvement
- Exploring other types of support, he or she may still need
- Possible ways of staying connected

## BUILDING A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR VIRTUAL INTERN:

- Develop a mentoring and guidance-based atmosphere
- Give individualized feedback so that interns know how he/she is doing

- Clearly state or demonstrate the benefits that will be gained from this internship
- It is critical to take deliberate measures to set a motivating environment by establishing an open, honest and sincere interest in the interns
- Setup frequent participative group or team meetings
- Give your intern the resources he or she needs to do the job
- Please be mindful of the different time zone that interns are working from and create a mutual understanding of expectations and preferred mode of communication

## HOW THE PROGRAMME CAN FACILITATE TRANSITION AND COMMUNICATION:

The Virtual Internship Programme team will:

- Provide all technological assistance to run this internship remotely including weekly face-time with interns via Zoom and assistance with the internship portal for recruitment, onboarding and an exit evaluation of interns and the programme.
- Provide comprehensive orientation to interns and ensure onboarding formalities are carried out as per AKU's Human Resources Policy.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the intern's experience through weekly check-ins and monthly reflection reports.
- Schedule weekly professional development seminars and networking sessions that aim to build the interns capacity professionally & personally and also to give them a better understanding of the work they are doing and how it fits into the larger context of AKU and AKDN.

In the event that you face any challenges or difficulties mentoring your virtual intern, please feel free to contact us on [aku.iip@aku.edu](mailto:aku.iip@aku.edu) or call the following team members anytime:

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