

SQA Internship Program FAQs

Why should I do an internship (i.e. what are the benefits)?

Internships can provide students and employers with a range of benefits. Generally, it will strengthen your interdisciplinary, interpersonal and work-ready skills which can translate to any workplace of the future. This improves your attractiveness to potential employers. Many companies that offer internships want to identify talented students for future employment.

Whether you are looking for employment within industry, or collaborations during an academic career, industry links can be key for future success. An internship can build industry links and networks, improving your understanding of the commercial sector and real-world quantum applications. It can also strengthen your ability to communicate with industry for future funding applications or collaborations.

Why would I do an SQA internship rather than just applying for a job?

The main reason we recommend an internship over just taking a job is for your protection. SQA will review the role, supervision provisions and proposed payments to ensure that you are being treated fairly in the workplace.

If you are a research student intellectual property (IP) is important. You may make a discovery that could have excellent commercial promise. You want to ensure that you are protected; any IP rights of the organisation you have been working in have been disentangled from your PhD research. SQA will work with your home university to assist in getting the right paperwork in place to protect you.

Some universities allow course credit for internships. E.g undergraduate engineering students or University of Sydney PhD students can count an internship towards their course requirements.

I want to be an academic. Why would I do an internship at all?

There is a large focus on translational research, including a range of funding and support schemes through universities and the government. Having industry links will put you ahead of other academics. These links not only provide funding opportunities but also opportunities for research translation and real-world application.

Will I get course credit towards my degree?

That will depend on your course and home university. Some courses, like undergraduate engineering, require an industry placement. The University of Sydney has coursework requirements for PhD students, an internship can count towards one or two units. Other universities have elective courses or PACE

courses that can count. Students must enrol appropriately to ensure it counts. SQA recommends that you talk to your course coordinator to discuss options, we can connect you with the appropriate people/departments in your university.

Will I be able to do this on a student visa?

As an international student, you will need to adhere to your visa conditions which usually means staying enrolled. If the internship counts towards your course credit then usually it is within your visa conditions. SQA recommends speaking to your student office to confirm. If you must stay enrolled in your course then you might want to look at part-time options or have it organised during the university break. The ideal time is between thesis submission and assessment.

Will I get paid?

If the role is productively working with outcomes then according to Fair Work Australia you must be paid. If the experience is purely educational, such as shadowing an employee, then the role may qualify for being non-paid. Most roles through the SQA program will be paid roles. Usually, the organisation would employ you on either a short term or casual contract. There may be roles that are paid through your university, such as overseas roles, SQA will work with your university to facilitate this.

How long are the internships?

Both students and companies have different needs so we will try to match the organisation's needs with your circumstances. You can let us know your preferences in the Expression of Interest (EOI). We expect most roles will be between 3-6 months.

Can I do a part-time internship?

Some organisations will allow part-time. If you require part-time then we will endeavour to match you appropriately.

Are all internships based in Sydney?

No, SQA has relationships with organisations across Australia and the globe. We have also advertised roles so far in the UK, USA and Canada. Some of these roles may be offered virtually but for others, you'll need to travel. We expect more and more NSW based roles to become available over the coming 1-2 years.



What happens if I can't afford to do the internship - travel, child care etc?

If you have a barrier to undertaking an internship please let us know (info@sydneyquantum.org) and we'll try to work through the issues to provide the best possible opportunities.

What kinds of organisations can I work with (e.g. start-up vs big tech)?

SQA has relationships with a broad range of quantum focused and quantum aware organisations, from small Sydney based start-up companies to multinational tech giants, and even some government departments. We'll endeavour to match you with a role that meets your skills, experience and interest. If you have a specific organisation in mind you can include that in your Expression of Interest (EOI) and we'll be able to approach them on your behalf.

What type of students/backgrounds/skills are you looking for?

SQA's focus is on building the local quantum ecosystem but that is very broad. We are looking for roles with quantum expertise in both quantum focused and quantum aware organisations. We are also looking to assist quantum companies with non-quantum skills such as engineering, programming, product development, marketing and other business management skills. We will match up the skills, experience and interest as per your Expression of Interest (EOI) registration with the organisation's needs.

Why should I fill out an Expression of Interest (EOI)?

SQA can't help you if we don't know that you are interested. Filling out an EOI gives SQA the information required to suitably match you to opportunities. There are three ways SQA uses the EOI information:

- Assisting organisations to shortlist students for a role
- For external applications, often required for large established internship programs, SQA will identify suitable students and recommend they apply
- SQA will also proactively contact companies to seek out roles based on the responses

What happens once I have submitted my EOI?

There are a couple of pathways to be matched to an internship once you have submitted your EOI.

1/ If an organisation contacts SQA for roles within their existing program usually there will be an external application program. SQA will search the EOI registrants for suitable students, contacting them to recommend they apply through the external mechanisms.

2/ If an organisation contacts SQA for a role/ roles that are outside of an existing program (more likely to be small organisations and start-ups) SQA will shortlist appropriate students for consideration and assist the organisation with further information, setting up interviews etc. It is important to ensure you have



completed the answer on your EOI about which permission SQA can have to provide information to organisations.

3/ SQA will periodically contact organisations to proactively seek out opportunities on your behalf. If we believe we have a good match for the company or you have listed a certain company on the EOI SQA can notify the company of your interest. If there is a placement available we would assist in setting up interviews etc.

What's the time frame from submitting application, to being accepted/ doing the internship?

That will depend on a suitable internship role being available. It may be a few weeks or months but unfortunately, we cannot guarantee an internship role for every student that submits an EOI. The quantum industry is in high growth so we do expect that internship roles will become more abundant than currently available.

Do I have to do a cover letter and/or CV? What's the format?

We have asked that students attach a CV to the EOI, this is in case SQA or the organisation needs more information for appropriate matching.

If an external application is required SQA may be able to assist with understanding what skills and experience each organisation is looking to highlight in your application.

For general CV and cover writing skills, we recommend you seek assistance from your university.

For further CV tips see below from our partner universities:

[Macquarie University](#)

[UNSW Sydney](#)

[The University of Sydney](#)

[University of Technology, Sydney \(UTS\)](#) *(CV template)*

[Seek.com](#) also has some great advice on improving your resume.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

form: https://sydney.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3wyaa0HGEovZgEe

