

## 1. What is the JobBridge the National Internship Scheme?

JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme (NIS) is a Government initiative designed to offer jobseekers who are unemployed and have been in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance/Benefit or signing on for credits for at least 3 months, the opportunity to enhance their current skills and develop new ones. The duration of individual internship positions will be a 6 month or a 9 month placement. It will be a time-limited scheme for a maximum of 2 years.

## 2. What is a Host Organisation and an Intern?

**Host Organisation** – Organisations providing internship opportunities and participating in the scheme are referred to as ‘Host Organisations’ (HO).

**Intern** - A person who is engaged by another person to carry out work or perform any duty or service pursuant to a placement under the JobBridge, National Internship Scheme shall, for the purposes of any enactment or rule of law (other than the Tax Acts and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005), be deemed not to be an employee of the other person or to carry out such work or perform such duties pursuant to a contract of service.

## 3. Am I eligible?

To be eligible for a place as an intern you must be unemployed and in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance or signing for Social Insurance Contribution Credits for 3 months or more (at commencement of your internship placement).

Periods spent on FÁS training programmes and WPP will be included in 3 month count.

Commencement on the internship is dependant on DSP confirming the individual’s eligibility

## 4. How do I know if I can retain my social welfare allowance?

If you are unemployed for 3 months or more and in receipt of any of the following payments:

- ✓ Job Seeker’s Allowance
- ✓ Job Seeker’s Benefit
- ✓ Signing for Credits

You will retain your current social welfare allowance **plus** an additional €50 per week top-up which will be paid by the Department Social Protection (DSP). This top-up will be paid for the duration of the internship.

**5. Will I get paid?**

You will receive an internship allowance that is equal to your current social welfare allowance (at time of commencement on the scheme) **plus** an additional €50 per week top-up which will be paid by the Department Social Protection (DSP). This top-up will be paid for the duration of the internship.

**6. Will I get any top up contributions from the company?**

There is no employer top up contribution. However, there is nothing to prevent a HO reimbursing an intern for expenses incurred as part of the internship.

**7. Where do I go to find an internship?**

The internships will be advertised at [www.JobBridge.ie](http://www.JobBridge.ie), Jobs Ireland website, FÁS WATIS machines and in Local FÁS offices. Host Organisations can advertise their placements once they meet eligibility criteria and have been approved. Alternatively, if you wish to acquire an internship within a specific organisation you can approach them yourself informing them of the National Internship Scheme (NIS) and direct them to the website to apply as a HO.

**8. What type of placements will be on offer?**

Placements may be offered across a wide range of sectors and occupation areas.

**9. I'm under 25, am I entitled to the SW higher rate?**

Individuals will be entitled to their base rate of social welfare plus the weekly top-up of €50.

**10. How long can I participate on an internship for?**

A participant can avail of a placement on an internship work experience opportunity delivered under the National Internship Scheme (NIS) for a 6 month (26 weeks) period or a 9 month (39 weeks) period. It will be the Host Organisations who will advertise for either a 6 month or a 9 month placement.

**11. How many hours do I have to work?**

A standard Internship working week will range from 30 -40 hours per week. Therefore an intern will be required to participate on the scheme for a minimum of 30 hours and a maximum of 40 hours per week. Failure to do so may result in a reduction of the internship allowance.

**12. What if I start an internship and I realise this placement is not for me, can I do another?**

One week's notice must be given by either party. Then HO will notify FÁS of early completion and the intern must notify DSP immediately. You may avail of more than one placement on the National Internship Scheme. However the total cumulative time cannot exceed 9 months (39 weeks) over the two year period. The scheme will run from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Therefore, if an individual commences on a scheme on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2013 for 6 months they will be allowed finish up to the expiry date 28<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

**13. How do I apply for internship placement?**

Go to [www.jobbridge.ie](http://www.jobbridge.ie) and click on current internship opportunities to see what internships are on offer. And, if interested **apply directly** to the Host Organisation by the method they specify in the advertisement.

**14. How will I be selected?**

Each Host Organisation will decide how they select the person for the placement. For example they may ask you to forward a CV and call you for an interview. When you make contact with the HO about the placement they will tell you more about their selection process. If selected, the HO will be give you an eligibility form to bring to your local Social Welfare office to be completed and stamped. Once eligibility is confirmed, you should return the completed form to:

JobBridge  
National Contact Centre  
IDA Industrial Estate  
Carrick Road,  
Edenderry  
Co. Offaly

**FAX** 046-973808

**Email:** [jobbridgeapp@fas.ie](mailto:jobbridgeapp@fas.ie) or

Your local FÁS /LES office

**Commencement on the internship is dependant on DSP confirming the individual's eligibility.**

**15. Should I inform DSP that I have started an Internship?**

Yes, individuals must notify DSP when there is any change in their status. Commencing an internship is a change in status.

**16. What will I be doing on my placement?**

When a Host Organisation selects a potential intern, they complete a Standard Agreement to include details of the skills you will have the opportunity to learn and/or apply during the internship. The HO will give you a copy of this agreement that will be signed by both you and the HO.

**17. Who will look after me during my placement?**

The Host Organisation will nominate an individual to support and/or mentor you during your placement. This person will have responsibility to ensure that you receive a proper induction, ensure that your work experience as described in the standard agreement is progressing and that monthly compliance checks are being completed (to ensure your internship allowance continues to be paid by DSP). If an organisation has a formal mentoring programme, they should include you in this programme.

**18. Will my placement be checked?**

Yes, there will be a monthly compliance check that the Host Organisation will return each month. The purpose is to confirm your attendance and that the work experience described in the Standard Agreement is progressing. This return must be made each month in order to ensure the payment of your internship allowance.

**19. Will I receive a Reference at the end of the Internship?**

Yes, when the placement is finished the HO must supply you with a reference that will detail the professional development/learning outcomes you have acquired over the course of the placement

**20. Do I get time off during an Internship?**

Although you are not an employee of the company you should still be given adequate time off for attending job interviews during the placement visit your local SW office and FÁS in **order to facilitate your job seeking activities.**

**21. Am I entitled to any leave during my time on the placement?**

Yes, you are entitled to the following leave:

- **Sick Leave** - Over the course of an internship an individual will be allowed to take a maximum 10 sick days without impacting on their internship allowance. Where the number of sick days exceeds 10 sick days, this will result in the intern having to apply for illness benefit. This will result in the loss of the €50 top up for the length of time they are sick. However, interns will retain their basic allowance during this time. It should be noted that periods of sickness will not extend the end date of the internship.
- **Annual Leave** – Interns are entitled to all the Public holidays and 1.75 annual leave days per month of internship.

**22. What if the Internship is not working out as I expected?**

Workplace issues should be resolved with the host organisation.

If the internship is not working out as expected you should discuss this with the person that is supervising/mentoring your internship. If this does not resolve the issue you can contact us by sending an email to [jobbridge@fas.ie](mailto:jobbridge@fas.ie) providing the following: Your name, contact details, the host organisation name, internship title and brief outline of the issue.

Or alternatively you can telephone 01-6070596

Should you wish to leave the placement you have the option to leave on foot of one weeks' notice unless both the Host Organisation and the intern agree in which case termination of the placement can be immediate. All Early Terminations must be notified to DSP/FÁS/LES.

**23. What if I get a job?**

If you get paid work that is great! If you get a job during the placement you are under no obligation to stay, again you should give the HO, DSP and FÁS one weeks' notice that you are leaving. In June 2010 the government announced a new Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) exemption scheme. The Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme means that when an employer employs additional eligible workers, they will not have to pay employer's PRSI in respect of their employment for twelve months (refer to [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) for further information). After completing three months on an Internship, a participant may qualify as an 'eligible worker' under this scheme.

**24. Can Adult Dependents avail of an Internship?**

A person that is not in receipt of any social welfare payment or signing for credits cannot **apply for positions on an Internship Scheme.**

**25. When I finish an internship, can I apply for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance?**

Yes, provided you meet the eligibility criteria. See [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

**26. Is there any reduced rate childcare if I take up this scheme?**

No, but a host organisation may have childcare facilities available.

**27. If I'm signing for credits and my stamps run out during the internship, what happens?**

You can continue to sign for credits for as long as you meet the underlying jobseeker scheme criteria. Participation on the internship does not affect this.

**28. Can I convert from WPP to NIS?**

Yes. For current WPP places a Host Organisation can apply to convert a WPP placement to an internship, if the HO is eligible and the participant are eligible. Go to [www.jobbridge.ie](http://www.jobbridge.ie) for full details on how a HO can apply. The following conversions apply:

<b>ON WPP For:</b>	<b>Can convert to a JobBridge internship For:</b>
≤ 4 months	6 months
≥ 4 months	can do 3 months
8 months	<b>CANNOT</b> convert to an internship

Individuals on a Jobseekers Allowance will switch to their age related Job Seekers rate but will be paid an additional top-up of €50 per week.

**Please Note:** Closing date for receipt of applications for transfer from WPP to NIS is Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011. After this date no more transfers will be permitted.