INTERNSHIPS IN MARKETING: GOALS, STRUCTURES AND ASSESSMENT - STUDENT, COMPANY AND ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Work-integrated learning in the form of internships is increasingly important for universities as they seek to compete for students and seek links with industry. Yet, there is surprisingly little empirical research on the details of internships: what they should accomplish, how they should be structured and how student performance should be assessed. There is also surprisingly little conceptual analysis of these key issues, either for business internships in general, or marketing internships in particular. Furthermore, the "answers" on these issues may differ depending upon the perspective of the three stakeholders: students, business managers and university academics. There is no study in the marketing literature that surveys all three groups on these important aspects of internships. To fill these gaps, this paper discusses and analyses internship goals, internship structure, and internship assessment for undergraduate marketing internships, and then reports on a survey of the views of all three stakeholder groups on these issues. There is considerable variety of approaches for internships, but generally there is consensus among the stakeholder groups, with some notable differences. Managerial implications include recognition of the importance of having an academic aspect in internships; mutual understanding concerning needs and constraints; and the requirement that companies, students, and academics take a long-term view of internship programs to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Keywords: Internships, Marketing education, Survey research

Introduction

Relevant employment experience is a valuable attribute for successfully gaining an entry-level position; in Australia, it remains a key criterion for recruiting applicants (Carless, 2007; Patton, 1999). In today's changing business landscape, employers are seeking university graduates who can demonstrate creativity, critical and future-oriented thinking, technical expertise and the ability to adapt to change (Ackerman, Gross and Perner, 2003; Kerr and Proud, 2005). Universities have been criticised, however, for providing students with merely a credential, which may be increasingly losing its potency as more and more graduates enter the workforce. Research has found that employers believe students lack the necessary practical and negotiation skills, tolerance for ambiguity (Chonko, 1993; Kelly and Bridges, 2005), maturity, experience (Davison, Brown and Davison, 1993) and ultimately real-world preparation (Kelley and Gaedeke, 1990), criticising universities for an overemphasis on theory, strategy and the glamorous side of marketing in business education (O'Brien and Deans, 1995). In fact, Edelman, Manolova and Brush (2008) discovered, through analysing textbooks used in business entrepreneurship, that there was little correlation between entrepreneurship education and what was actually required by individuals when actually starting a new business.

In response, there is increasing consideration of new approaches to curriculum and pedagogy in our universities, particularly in the form of work-integrated learning opportunities that aim to incorporate the workplace setting as a component of higher education. In Australia the interest in internships intensified to a point that Universities Australia was investigating a national internship scheme across a broad variety of disciplines (Universities Australia, 2007). "A national internship scheme would have multiple benefits in line with the new Government's agendas, including to help address the skills shortage, improve productivity and social inclusion," Universities Australia chief executive Glenn Withers said (Healy, 2008). The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Australian Industry Group have come out in support of internships (Healy, 2008). This is congruent with what has been found by Barr and McNeilly (2002) in a survey of US corporate recruiters that internships are viewed as a better indicator of employability and hence real world preparation than are classroom experiences.

Despite the growing interest in internships by business and government and universities, surprisingly little scholarly research has been dedicated to the subject of internships, particularly in the field of marketing. More specifically, there has been little research on the

details of the fundamental components of internships: 1) what an internship should achieve (goals), 2) how it should work (structure), and 3) how student performance can be graded (assessment). Also, the empirical investigations which have been conducted generally do not take into account the potentially different perspectives of *all* key stakeholders. Prior empirical studies of internships have assessed the perspective of only one stakeholder group in isolation, or perhaps two groups (usually students and academics). Aistrich, Saghafi and Sciglimpaglia (2006) concluded, however, that academics and industry do have somewhat different perspectives, and that experiential learning not only educates students, but may also educate educators as to what industry sees as important. This paper aims to fill the gap in the literature by comparing the perspectives of all internship stakeholders − students, academics and company personnel − on the goals, structure and assessment of marketing internships. Our research reviews the existing literature on internship goals, structure, and assessment, identifies key issues for each area and operationalises them into a small set of statements, which are then tested in a survey of students, academics, and industry in our region.

Internship Goals

The many benefits of internships have been well documented in several studies (Ciofalo, 1989; English and Lewison, 1979; Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000; Parilla and Hesser, 1998; Toncar and Cudmore, 2000). For *students*, an internship provides an experience of "learning by doing" in a real business situation, but with guidance and support. Internships bridge the gap between theory and practice (Mihail, 2006; Nevett, 1985) and between classroom education and real industry life (Meredith and Burkle, 2008); provide a more valuable learning experience (Hite and Bellizzi, 1986; Karns, 2005; Wasonga and Murphy, 2006; Watson, 1992); enhance meaning of the academic program (Thiel and Hartley, 1997); and create feelings of personal and social efficacy (Bernstein, 1976). Students with internship experience can also gain career advantages in the form of more job offers (Pianko, 1996), less time to get the right job after graduation and increased monetary compensation (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000). Interns believe these programs crystallise their job interests and abilities; facilitate a greater sense of career development and responsibility (Eyler, 1993; Hursch and Borzak, 1979; Williams, 1990); enhance professional development with the provision of business contacts, better knowledge of the job market (Groves et al., 1977) and improved job satisfaction (Bales, 1979); and aid in the development of more realistic career expectations overall (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000). Students have also reported

enhanced personal skills as a result of participation, such as improved self-confidence, time management and verbal communication (Ellis, 2000): the same skills employers seek (Barr and McNeilly, 2002; Davison, Brown and Davison, 1993; O'Brien and Deans, 1995). There is evidence that interns are better prepared to enter the job market than non-interns (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000; Groves et al., 1977; Hite and Bellizzi, 1986) and that completing an internship provides a competitive edge (Coates and Koerner, 1996).

It is claimed that for *business*, internships represent a valuable recruiting tool (DiLorenzo-Aiss and Mathisen, 1996), as businesses are hiring a "known quantity" who needs less training on the job (Divine, Linrud, Miller, and Wilson, 2007). Internships provide host organisations pre-selected graduate recruits (Ellis, 2000), which can reduce hiring (Pianko, 1996) and training costs (Maslen, 1996). Further, organisations are provided a link with universities and a heightened profile in the graduate recruitment marketplace (Ellis, 2000), which can be particularly beneficial during periods of limited hiring (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000). In the short-term, internships provide access to enthusiastic, knowledgeable and inexpensive workers (Brightman, 1989; Watson, 1992) who can bring new ideas to the workplace and satisfy seasonal needs as well as other staffing requirements. A study by Brooks and Greene (1998), for example, found non-profit organisations might offer internships to obtain a cost effective method for completing special projects. The development of existing staff may also be enhanced, as they reflect on their own duties and actions as part of their supervisory role, which can lead to improvements in operations and procedures (Crumbley and Sumners, 1998). Organisations may also participate in internships to give something back to students and the community (Brooks and Greene, 1998) and demonstrate their commitment to improving the quality of the profession (Crumbley and Sumners, 1998). Public relations benefits can accrue, particularly as a result of positive word-of-mouth from interns (Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne, 1991; Pianko, 1996).

Goals for internships from the *university* perspective are various. Often universities seek many of the same benefits as students, such as practice in theory application, enhanced job readiness, and improved employment prospects. There are additional goals though, distinct to the university perspective. Internships potentially represent a recruiting tool for universities to assist them in attracting and retaining new students (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000), particularly those of a higher calibre (Toncar and Cudmore, 2000). Internship programs can generate publicity (Toncar and Cudmore, 2000) and positive word-of-mouth. They also provide a means of creating stronger ties with industry and government (Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole, 1987), which may assist institutions in seeking funding for research and other

activities (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000). Further, academic supervisors can benefit from participation, as they gain enhanced understanding of different corporate environments. Academics learn the expectations of the companies hiring their students, which allows them to more effectively counsel students in their class and career decisions (Tovey, 2001). Academics and practitioners have been found to disagree somewhat on the graduate skills required in the workplace, with disparity often found between the skills marketing practitioners consider important and what is actually taught in marketing courses (Aistrich, Saghafi and Sciglimpaglia, 2006; Messina, Guiffrida and Wood, 1991). Employers' beliefs are often more closely aligned with those of students (Ackerman, Gross and Perner, 2003). Internships, however, are a source of practitioner input into curriculum development and a forum for student and curriculum assessment (Thiel and Hartley, 1997).

Disadvantages

Despite all their potential benefits, internships also have their shortcomings. They have come under criticism for a lack of careful planning, adequate supervision, uniform requirements and application of theory: problems which have brought into question the internships' academic legitimacy (Hanson, 1984). Since internships are predominantly conducted off-campus, their full educational benefit may not be realised (Alm, 1996). Sometimes host organisation supervisors are unable to develop suitable projects, interns may not feel a part of the team, and a poor match between the intern and sponsor may diminish the internship experience (Toncar and Cudmore, 2000). Barriers to success are created if students perceive they are not engaged in meaningful work (the "intern making photocopies" syndrome), employers do not consider the internship a serious part of the business, and faculty does not view internships as part of the educational program (Thiel and Hartley, 1997) due to a lack of rigour and academic content (the "why should they get academic credit for this" syndrome).

Within stated objectives, internship program structure and administration influences a program's effectiveness (Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole, 1987). Scott, Ray and Warberg (1990) warn that to avoid any negative outcomes, internships should be developed with clear educational objectives, a structure to deliver those objectives, and standardised methods of evaluation. Our questionnaire identified eleven key goals for internships (presented under Results). We turn now to a discussion of the structural elements of an internship program.

Internship Structural Elements and Issues

How might we describe the structural elements of internships? Beard and Morton (1999) identified six predictors of internship success: the student's academic preparedness, initiative and attitude, quality of workplace supervision, the host company's practices and policies, and compensation. Goad (1998) identified five internship aspects critical for a program's success, including program goals, intern preparation, site identification, evaluation of the intern, and evaluation of the internship program. Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole (1987) identified four key dimensions of internship program operations: structural aspects of internships, curricular issues, grading practices and the role of the internship director.

All internship stakeholders have different concerns about program administration. *Students* have, above all, highlighted a need for meaningful work (Ryan and Krapels, 1997) as this enhances their training, increases motivation and improves job performance (Tovey, 2001). To gain a "valuable" experience, students need to work in a challenging and nurturing environment where they can engage in activities for a legitimate project that can be completed in its entirety (Rothman, 2007; Ryan and Krapels, 1997). By its very nature, an internship requires that interns receive significant work for their professional and educational development. At the same time, however, reasonable expectations about what can be accomplished during the internship are required.

The amount of time interns are required to spend at their host organisation can vary greatly depending on the program. Students may not want too much time on the internship, as they may have to balance this with other responsibilities (including other classes or a paid part-time job), but nor do they want too little time, as this may result in a less meaningful project.

Students have identified direct, on-the-job supervision as another important component of a successful internship (Hite and Bellizzi, 1986). It is much easier for interns with mentors to adjust to the demands and requirements of the workplace (Tovey, 2001). Plus, with coaching, careful monitoring and sufficient thought regarding professional development, student learning outcomes are maximised (Ellis, 2000; Schaafsma, 1996). Training and managing interns with a similar orientation to that for other employees is, therefore, important to enhance the potential for program success (Ryan and Krapels, 1997). Internships, however, are time consuming for *company supervisors*, who often want motivated interns capable of working independently with minimal supervision (Watson, 1992). As a result, interns may

not have access to a formal orientation program, making their transition more difficult and potentially reducing their performance (Tovey, 2001).

Academic supervisors too are concerned about the time required for coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating internships (Ackerman, Gross and Perner, 2003; Watson, 1992). Overall, from the university perspective, administering an internship program is not easy. Eight separate processes have been identified that are required to maintain an internship program (Thiel and Hartley, 1997): student recruitment; academic preparation and application to the internship; site identification; student and host organisation matching; internship and academic record/program matching; intern orientation; academic assignments and appraisal; and finally, program results. In most cases, primary management of an internship rests with faculty (Coco, 2000), hence it is up to academics to find a balance by structuring a program that satisfies the needs of all parties. However, a survey of members from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs revealed 28% of academic faculty do not believe they receive any form of reward for overseeing these programs (Coco, 2000).

Another issue on which practices vary is with regards to host company selection and student matching. In some cases, students may initiate the internship activity and find a suitable host, in others it may be the academic supervisor or the two parties jointly. Most often, the academic supervisor is responsible for coordinating and securing the internship, not the student (Coco, 2000). Companies may also screen intern candidates.

The degree of academic supervisor participation is another critical internship issue (Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001). Informal meetings between the student and academic supervisor and/or formal seminars with the academic supervisor and other interns are valuable, as they allow students to gain feedback and share experiences (Englander et al., 2000). To monitor activities at the workplace, scheduled periodic reports from the intern and occasional phone calls and visits by the academic supervisor may also be used (Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001). Overall, to maximise workplace learning, close collaboration between the academic institution and the employer is required (Ellis, 2000), but the level of contact between academic and company supervisors can vary. Where such communication is limited, research articles surveying general opinions of academics and supervisors can be very useful.

One of the most important concerns of universities and faculty is whether students achieve desired learning outcomes (Elkins, 2002). University personnel want to maintain high academic standards (Hanson, 1984), consistency, and the application of theory as part of the

internship experience (Watson, 1992). Without strict university supervision, there is concern about the potential for a lack of guidance and meaningful assignments from host supervisors, and a diminished scholarly experience for participating students (Watson, 1992). Some faculty have been critical of providing course credit for internships if they do not provide sufficient academic value (Ciofalo, 1989). Most programs though offer academic credit in lieu of payment (Coco, 2000).

Internship Assessment

Internship assessment (grading) is perhaps the toughest and least researched issue. To satisfy the needs of all parties, it is necessary to strike a balance between academic standards and the integration of theoretical principles, with practical work experience. Internship program content must be properly integrated with formal methods of assessment and evaluation to encourage positive perceptions of the institution (Gault, Redington and Schlager, 2000), as well as to provide students guidance and continuity.

Assessment practices vary considerably. A range of items have been used to evaluate student interns: portfolios of work; activity logs; weekly journals/reports; literature reviews and article analyses; oral presentations, including class briefings; and final papers (often a retrospective or reflection on the internship) (Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001; Thiel and Hartley, 1997; Toncar and Cudmore, 2000; Tovey, 2001; Watson, 1992). Most programs require some form of written work from interns, with smaller institutions more likely than larger ones to require journals and experience reports, rather than research, theory or practice reports (Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole, 1987). All can present problems in an internship situation.

The use of journals in particular is common. Students who keep journals have been found to view university curriculum as more relevant to organisational contexts and have demonstrated the ability to transfer classroom knowledge to real world situations (Eyler, 1993). Perhaps this is because a journal analysis allows the student to perform his or her own self-evaluation (Watson, 1992). But for journals to be of benefit, they must be graded with sufficient weighting to encourage students to complete them. Yet, it can be hard to specify what journal content/quality is necessary to achieve each grade level (i.e. what is necessary to earn a "Distinction"). Evaluation can be highly subjective, so many *academics* may be uncomfortable with this assessment item. Traditional academic assignments however, such as a major academic paper, may also pose challenges, because they can take considerable time

and emphasis away from the work performance itself. Trying to determine the appropriate assessment structure is therefore a difficult task.

Grading, and maintaining the integrity of the grading process, also represents a special challenge for internships. Empirical research has shown that employers often demonstrate different attitudes towards internships and their assessment. For example, some welcome university input and advice regarding internship management, while others do not (Ellis, 2000). Some want information supplied and problems managed by the institution, while others prefer to manage this in-house (Ellis, 2000). Still other managers want creative assignments that develop critical thinking skills (Ackerman, Gross and Perner, 2003), whereas others prefer minimal involvement in academic assessment activities (Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001). A signed learning agreement (contract), outlining the project, is a vital tool for clarifying such expectations for all stakeholders (Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001; Melton, 1989). Ultimately, however, all parties can play a role in internship evaluation. While academic supervisors often prefer to retain responsibility for assigning final grades (Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole, 1987; Tovey, 2001), company supervisors can provide valuable feedback as part of this process. In fact, involvement by the host supervisor in student evaluation, as a university requirement, may even help open the dialogue between supervisors and interns on the job. Also, it helps ensure interns receive feedback not just on their technical output, but also on their personal characteristics.

Company supervisors often provide feedback on student job performance and conduct (Toncar and Cudmore, 2000; Tovey, 2001). This may range from a general evaluation of the intern via telephone or a letter of reference, to detailed written reports, a company performance appraisal, or the use of standard evaluation forms (Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole, 1987; Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001; Tovey, 2001; Watson, 1992). Objectives established by the student with the company supervisor, and approved by the academic supervisor, may also be evaluated jointly at the end of the internship (Watson, 1992) as a debriefing activity (McGaughey, 1987). This feedback can then be considered as part of a student's final grade. However, evaluations from workplace supervisors who may not understand the academic grading system (or may not put much effort into grading) can pose difficulties. Company supervisors with limited investment in the intern's final grade have been found to consider such academic elements less important (Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard, 2001). Heavy workloads, scheduling complications and firm size can also negatively impact the amount of feedback an intern receives (Beard, 1997). Students often complain about the level and quality of performance appraisal feedback (Beard, 1997). On

the other hand, some employers rate student-focused internship issues as even more important than corporate-focused issues (Knemeyer and Murphy, 2001). It would be interesting to see how widespread this perspective is, and how it translates into structure and assessment issues.

In sum, we have identified key issues regarding internship goals, structure, and assessment from a literature review; exploratory interviews with students, business people and academics; and from independent analysis of internships, drawing from our experience in designing and operating such programs. The lists of key issues, which we believe are a contribution to the literature, were made into measurable statements and incorporated into a survey instrument for testing. These are available in the Results section. Section II of the questionnaire on Assessment had to include somewhat lengthy assessment item descriptions to ensure comprehension of the terms used. The complete Section II is presented in an Appendix. Operational forms of key issues may also be a contribution, as other researchers may take those statements and apply them to other target populations.

Methodology

Sampling Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to three segments in a mid-size, state, capital city where the authors work. 1) *Student sample:* Questionnaires were mailed to all students enrolled in the Bachelor of Marketing program at our university. These are students keenly interested in marketing and therefore have chosen a specialised marketing degree. This degree program features a capstone internship, but only students enrolled in the 1st and 2nd year of the program were surveyed in order to measure general expectations. This is an interesting population group to study, as they are the ones most likely to be interested in a marketing internship. To encourage candour, and as a matter of research ethics, the questionnaire cover letter indicated the questionnaire was completely voluntary and anonymous. 2) *Academic staff sample:* Questionnaires were distributed to the mailboxes of all marketing academics at three local universities. Again, to encourage candour, the questionnaire cover letter indicated the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous. 3) *Business sample:* Questionnaires were made available to marketing practitioners in the local community. Business responses are not easy to obtain, as managers with no interest at all in internships would probably have little interest in completing the questionnaire. Multiple methods were therefore used to obtain practitioner responses. The president of the local chapter of the marketing professionals' organisation was asked to sponsor the study, and he agreed, mentioning the research in their newsletter and

urging members to respond. In addition, questionnaires were distributed to each company currently participating in the small preliminary launch of our internship program. While these approaches would probably not generate a representative sample of all business, it would be a sample of businesses with some degree of interest in internships.

A total of thirty-five student responses were obtained for a response rate of 28%. Fifty-two questionnaires were distributed to academics in three universities and twenty-three were returned, making this a 44.2 % rate of return. For business, the combined total was twenty different business responses. As key informants for internships were targeted, all respondents were from different companies.

The original motivation for this study was to help us better understand internships for an internship program in marketing that we were developing at our Australian university. One of the authors became convenor (director) of the new program, after having coordinated internships at prior universities, including an American institution. Another author was involved with the industry-linked programs of a different department at our university for several years, working closely with the recently appointed Head of Work-Integrated Learning. Together, we were tasked to design and develop the new marketing internship program. Therefore, the study focused on data from our locality. This provided a consistent and coherent data set that was useful for our purposes. Though the samples sizes are not large from a national perspective, based on our collective experience at many different universities and many localities across several different countries, we have no reason to believe our situation is seriously atypical for the average university and the average company interested in marketing interns. However, different types of universities may experience somewhat different internal and external environments, such as elite universities (e.g., Harvard), specialised universities (e.g., technology universities), or specialised programs aimed at specific industries (e.g., advertising agencies only).

Measurement

There were three main sections to the questionnaire: a) Goals of the Internship programs, b) Assessment of the Internships, and c) Structural Aspects of the Internship program. These three areas embody all the key components of an internship program identified by Beard and Morton (1999), Goad (1998), and Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole (1987). All three sections were *exactly the same* for each of the three groups of respondents in order to allow comparisons. A fourth part, background, was adapted to fit each group (e.g., students were asked their year of university study, for academics their academic rank and for

business, company size). Questions in the Goals and Structural Aspects sections were presented using seven point semantic differential scales, anchored by the descriptors -3 Strongly Disagree and +3 Strongly Agree. A consistent format and easy to interpret answer scale were employed to make the questionnaire more straightforward for respondents.

Relevant questions for the Goals section were drawn from the existing literature (see, for example, Beard, 1998; Crumbley and Sumners, 1998; Knemeyer and Murphy, 2001), from a small set of exploratory interviews, and from our own analysis. For the Assessment section, questions were again developed as a result of a small set of exploratory interviews, from our own analysis, and a review of the literature (see, for example, Gryski, Johnson and O'Toole, 1987; Toncar and Cudmore, 2000; Watson, 1992). As we could find nothing similar to the Structural Aspects section, all questions were devised by the authors after a review of the literature to identify key themes regarding structural elements.

Results

Goals of the Internship Program

Comparing opinions between students, academics and industry about what the internship programs should be achieving reveals some interesting results. Means of the survey and between-group analyses are shown in Table 1. A MANOVA of subject group on the dependent measures found overall differences (Wilks' Lambda 0.000) and results by question found significant ($p<.05$) or near significant ($p<.10$) differences for eight of the eleven items. The only questions on which there is clear consensus is a very strong agreement that a purpose of internships is to enhance students' placement opportunities (Question 2), a relatively strong perception that internship programs are a way to develop and maintain relationships between business and universities (Question 5), and the perception that final semester students are almost as ready as new graduates to take on work (Question 7). Overall though, Table 1 shows considerable differences of opinion on internship goals.

-- Insert Table 1 about here --

Post hoc Tukey HSD tests found major differences between specific groups (see Table 1). Although all three groups strongly agreed that a purpose of internships is to aid firms in recruiting and selecting new full-time employees (Question 3), students were more keen than industry ($p<.05$). This reflects a strong "employment" focus by students, who agreed very strongly with both employment related questions (Questions 2 and 3). These were among the questions that attracted students' very highest levels of agreement (see rankings in Table 1).

Academics also showed a focus on employment, with the same two questions receiving academics' first and third highest level of agreement. In relation to whether internships provide "bargain rate personnel for business" (Question 6), this statement provoked the strongest disagreement of all questions in this section (giving it the bottom ranking of 11th out of 11 questions). Academics were significantly the most, shall we say, contemptuous of this view, whereas students by a significant margin gave it more credibility, apparently as something they are prepared to accept. Interestingly, academics and students also significantly differed on whether interns should be treated the same as professional staff in the company (Question 8). Students, perhaps as an important part of their goal of obtaining job experience, believed most strongly in this (tied for first), while academics, perhaps as part of seeing students as students and not employees, agreed, but not quite as strongly. Students also agreed that internships should allow them to earn money (Question 9), whereas academics, in contrast, actually disagreed. Academics are perhaps focused on the educational benefit and see an internship as different from just another job.

All three groups strongly agreed that internships should guide students in applying textbook theory and academic research directly to work experience (Question 1). They also strongly agreed that internship programs should benefit all three parties equally (Question 10), and not benefit just one party. Finally, on the issue of whether internships should be compulsory for students (Question 11), industry agreed, students agreed less strongly, and academics disagreed slightly. This may reflect a view by academics that internships are not central to business education, in contrast to a view by business that they are. These views may be coloured by academics' perceptions of the huge change and logistical costs involved if every student was to complete an internship, whereas business may be unaware of such costs to universities (or perhaps not concerned about those transition costs).

Table 1 shows the overall means for each question, the average of the three group means, and the ranking of items. Note that rankings need to be interpreted carefully, as some differences in ranking are based on small differences in means. "Enhancing placement opportunities" has the highest overall ranking (rank of 1 in overall means column), and providing "bargain rate personnel" has the lowest overall ranking.

Assessment of Internships

Respondents were asked how interns should be assessed for their internship. As a way to force them to allocate weights to the different assessment components that could make up a student's grade, respondents were asked to allocate a percentage to each of the eleven

potential assessment items, as though they were determining the assessment structure. Table 2 shows the mean percentage for each item. For example, academic respondents allocated an average of 5.7% for a "Draft of the internship project proposal" (Item 1). A MANOVA of subject group on the dependent measure found a significant difference for responses across all groups (Wilks' Lambda 0.055; Roy's Largest Root 0.044), but only for one specific item. Post hoc Tukey HSD tests found that the industry respondents allocated a much lower percentage for the assessment item "Weekly student reflective journal" (Question 7), as compared to academics. Perhaps a weekly student journal seemed too unusual to managers for it to be used in performance evaluation.

-- Insert Table 2 about here --

While statistical test results show only the one statistically significant difference, the statistical power of those tests may be constrained by the percentage and allocated (interdependent) nature of the data, as well as its skewness. Visual inspection of the means suggests that both academics and managers weight a major written report (Item 3) by far the most heavily, whereas students wanted to weight an evaluation by the company supervisor (Item 8) most highly. The pattern of student results suggests they want business style evaluations (similar to real employees) to be a major part of internship assessment, more so than do managers or academics (see in particular Items 8 and 9). This suggests an enthusiasm to be as close to real employees as possible. Managers also considered a business-style performance evaluation conducted by the company to be important, but less so if they had to translate it into a university-style grade (Item 9 versus 8). All groups weighted the company supervisor also evaluating the major report (Item 4) at one-third to one-fourth the weight of the academic internship convenor grading the report (Item 3). Interestingly, academics appeared most enthusiastic about managers sharing in the marking, whereas managers were least welcoming of sharing in that effort.

We see also that students did not like oral reports (Items 5, 6 and 10), regardless of who graded them, as these items were allocated the lowest weightings. This suggests that oral reports are seen as the most stressful assessment item by students. Academics are also less enthusiastic about oral presentations, perhaps due to the subjectivity of grading, but interestingly, industry seems to weight oral presentations the most highly, perhaps because oral communication and reporting are highly valued in business organisations. All parties agreed that a draft internship proposal (Item 1) and a mid-semester report (Item 2) should have only minor weighting, perhaps as those seem like paperwork not representing core internship goals.

In sum, academics weighted the major written report and the written reflective journal highest (see rankings in Table 2), both of which apply theory to practice in a written form. Managers also weighted most highly the major written report, with second the company supervisor-conducted performance evaluation. Finally, students weighted most highly the evaluation by a company supervisor and second the written major report. Students and academics both seemed to allocate low weight to any form of oral communication (class participation and oral presentation to company supervisor/ academic internship convenor/ or the class). Business gave its lowest rating to the reflective journal. Looking at the overall means for the three groups, the major report evaluated by an academic internship convenor had the highest allocation (overall rank of 1), and evaluation of work performance by a company supervisor the second highest.

Structural Aspects of Internship Programs

In the nine interval scaled items concerning structural aspects of the internship, some differences between groups were found, but mostly their views were the same. Mean responses on these questions are shown in Table 3. A MANOVA of subject group on the dependent measures found significant overall differences (Wilks' Lambda 0.000), with specific significant differences to responses on two questions ($p<.05$). Post hoc Tukey HSD tests found that students differed from academic and industry respondents, whereby the student respondents perceived a higher minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) was needed to take part in internships (Question 4). These students appear to believe that internships should only be for elite students and not open to all. Perhaps they see internships as very demanding and perceive lower GPA students as potentially incapable of making a good impression. Industry and academics, on the other hand, wanted internships to be available to students from a broader range of abilities. Most interesting is that industry clearly did not believe that a high GPA was required for internships. The student respondents also differed from industry and academic participants in that they believed a higher number of interns, two, should be allowed to work on an internship project (Question 5). Students seem to find comfort and support from teams, particularly when working in a new environment, whereas perhaps industry prefer to work one-on-one with a single student for each project.

-- Insert Table 3 about here --

All groups felt that interns should work at the company for more than half the week i.e., an average of >2.5 days per week (Question 1). This suggests considerably less enthusiasm for "take away project" internships, in which the company assigns a project to students, who

then research it at the university and return to deliver the final report. The three groups generally thought the academic internship convenor only needed to visit the company monthly (with academics seemingly least keen on visits), though students were expected to "check in" with the convenor at the university biweekly to monthly (Questions 2 and 3). This would seem to be a view for moderate academic oversight − not too frequent to micromanage the internship, yet not too infrequent to neglect program oversight. Finally, all three groups strongly agreed with explicit policies to enhance internships. These included companies screening potential interns, formalising internship policies, appointing an internship coordinator within the company and, for the university, appointing an "assistant convenor" to help students with administrative issues (Questions 6 to 9). Respondents clearly indicated that unplanned and unstructured internships are not desirable.

For the nominal scaled items on structural issues, reported in Table 4, Chi-Square analyses found no significant differences between the three groups. Respondents almost unanimously agreed that a formal internship plan should be completed and signed by all parties (Question 1). All groups felt that once the internship started, the responsibility to identify problems rests with the two closely involved parties of students and their company supervisors, much more so than with the academic who is somewhat at a distance (Question 2). A slight majority of all groups believed a monthly report co-signed by the student and company supervisor was necessary (slightly more than 50%). Still, a large cohort (more than 40%) saw monthly reports as intrusive or bureaucratic and unnecessary. This is a classic trade-off (and one that must be confronted) between ongoing formal controls, versus the additional paperwork and intrusiveness. Finally, all groups assigned primary responsibility for finding student internships to the university, rather than the students finding these themselves, though universities were less enthusiastic about this responsibility (Question 4).

-- Insert Table 4 about here --

No effects of gender. We wondered if men and women might have different responses about the nature of internships. However, tests of between group differences based on gender found no differences for Goals of Internship Programs (Wilks' Lambda 0.530), Assessment of the Internship (Wilks' Lambda 0.523), and Structural Aspects of Internship Programs (Wilks' Lambda 0.436).

Implications and Conclusions

Unlike much of the empirical and particularly anecdotal work in the literature, this empirical study did not investigate perceptions of a specific, established internship, nor did we sample respondents who have a vested interest in a program (such as past participants or academics currently convening the course). In the pursuit of establishing a marketing internship designed to satisfy the needs of all constituencies, we drew a general sample of respondents coherent for our purposes. Like all samples, it would benefit from replication and direct assessment of generalisability in future research.

This paper identifies key issues relating to the fundamental internship elements of goals, assessment, and structure. These are important areas that need to be addressed in internship program design. Our research is the first to survey all three participant groups (academics, students, industry) on these critical internship aspects. The issues are contained in the Appendix and in Tables 1 to 4. We found both differences and similarities in views among the three groups. This presents a complex picture that requires a close look at each Table by those who wish to enrich their understanding of internships and achieve maximum appeal to all stakeholders through the design, review or revision of such programs.

We would highlight that to academics, the academic integrity of the internship is very important. To avoid misunderstandings it would be prudent to communicate to students that the internship provides "links" to industry, but is not in itself employment. Also, academics must foster and motivate a conceptual and theoretical learning aspect into the internships, as opposed to a purely practical internship. It is probably for this reason that academics place greater emphasis on such assessment tasks as reflective journals, because they foster deep learning.

For students, the core focus is on gaining employment experience and they believe that earning money is appropriate, but it is the educational benefit that must be realised. It would appear surprising for students that this is an educational benefit that can be gained by a larger cohort. Companies appear willing to accept a more diverse range of student interns, placing less emphasis on academic achievement as a criterion for acceptance. Perhaps this shows a perception of a lack of breadth in the education system, but it is this breadth of evaluation that is being used by industries when choosing future employees. Companies value the whole "package" students have to offer, and this includes the individual's personal skills, as well as their academic record. Academics and students will do well to remember that internships are a long-term investment for a company, and should ask companies what characteristics they

value in a future employee. It seems that communication skills are very important, suggesting an increased role for oral presentations in internship assessment (much to the dismay of students).

For industry and those companies that may host internships, the current research provides meaningful insights into the institutional perspective. Perhaps most importantly is with regards to the increased resource constraints faced by universities. While companies see a larger role for internships, believing they should be compulsory for more students, the logistical and administration costs, as well as staffing issues, may be higher than some institutions can bear. It is probably for this reason that academics would like companies to play a greater role in managing on-site activities, as well as assessment marking and student grading. The research also highlights for industry the importance students place on gaining "real" experience and feedback. To get the most from student interns, company supervisors must treat them in a similar way to employees.

In sum, the three key participants of the industry, academic and student in an internship relationship for the most part work well together. Our research reveals much common ground between the parties that will serve to enhance the potential for success. Internships, however, involve a constant check-and-balance between the three parties to ensure the main aspects of the internship continue to be built upon, while still fulfilling the overlapping and evolving needs of the three groups.

APPENDIX
INTERNSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION II

ASSESSMENT OF INTERNSHIPS

How should the student intern's grade for the internship be determined? Please allocate a certain percentage to each type of assessment until the total reaches 100%. You may allocate 0% to an assessment item if you feel it appropriate. Take your time, as this task may stimulate some interesting thinking.

1. The student's draft of internship project proposal at the start of the internships (comprises problem/project definition, background, methodology to be used to address a problem at the company). About 500 words in length.
   _____ %

2. Interim report discussing what has been covered by mid-semester, such as review of literature relevant to addressing above company problem. About 1000 words.
   _____ %

3. A major report applying textbook principles to help analyse a practical problem facing the company, as evaluated by the internship academic convenor. About 10,000 words.
   _____ %

4. A major paper applying textbook principles to help analyse a practical problem facing the company, same paper as above, company supervisor's evaluation
   _____ %

5. Oral presentation of major report to the academic convenor and the company, graded by the academic convenor.
   _____ %

6. Oral presentation of major report to the academic convenor and the company, graded jointly (50-50) by the academic convenor and company supervisor
   _____ %

7. A weekly reflective journal seeking lessons from the student's experiences that week
   _____ %

8. The evaluation of the student's supervisor at the company based on the normal performance appraisal criteria/process used by the company (e.g., goal achievement, human relations)
   _____ %

9. The evaluation of the student's supervisor at the company based on a form provided by the university, culminating in the questions "Overall performance/competence" on a 1 to 5 scale and "What final grade would you give the intern?" on the normal university grading scale
   _____ %

10. Student's oral presentation at the university at the end of the semester of the student's internship lessons to other interns
    _____ %

11. Class participation in monthly seminars on relevant internship issues held by the academic convenor
    _____ %

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Table 1
Internship Goals: Means, Rank, and Between Group Differences

	Industry Mean (rank)	**Academic** Mean (rank)	**Student** Mean (rank)	**Overall** Mean (rank)	**p value** for difference in means
1. Internships should guide students in applying textbook theory and academic research directly to work experiences	6.55 (1)	5.7 (4)	5.74 (7)	5.99 (4)	0.068
2. Internships should enhance placement opportunities of interning students	6.25 (2)	6.04 (1)	6.49 (1)	6.26 (1)	0.348
3. Internships should aid firms in recruiting and selecting new full-time employees	5.45[a] (7)	5.83 (3)	6.29[b] (4)	5.85 (5)	0.040
4. Participation in an internship program demonstrates an organisation's commitment to improving the quality of the profession	6.00 (4)	5.22 (6)	6.03 (6)	5.75 (7)	0.065
5. The internship program is an opportunity for organisations to develop and maintain relationships with universities	6.15 (3)	5.91 (2)	6.14 (5)	6.06 (2)	0.638
6. Internships provide bargain rate personnel for getting tasks done	3.80 (11)	2.7[a] (11)	4.74[c] (11)	3.74 (11)	0.000
7. Final semester interns can do almost the same work as entry-level college graduates	4.79 (9)	4.52 (8)	5.15 (9)	4.82 (8)	0.435
8. Interns should be treated as professional staff personnel (eg, participate in staff meetings, receive administrative support on tasks as would other junior professional staff)	5.70 (6)	5.22[a] (6)	6.40[c] (2)	5.77 (6)	0.004
9. Internships should allow students to earn money	4.68 (10)	3.87[a] (10)	5.31[c] (8)	4.62 (10)	0.001
10. Internships should benefit the company, students, and the university equally	6.00 (4)	5.7 (4)	6.34 (3)	6.01 (3)	0.155
11. Internships should be compulsory for marketing students	5.25 (8)	3.96 (9)	4.94 (10)	4.71 (9)	0.081

Notes:
For analysis scales are numbered 1 for Strongly Disagree up to 7 for a Strongly Agree
Overall is the mean of the three group means
Rank is from highest mean to lowest mean
[a] Significant difference from students ($p < 0.05$)
[b] Significant difference from industry ($p < 0.05$)
[c] Significant difference from academics ($p < 0.05$)

Table 2
Assessment Options for an Internship Program:
Allocated Percentage to Each Option by Group

	Industry Mean (rank)	**Academic** Mean (rank)	**Student** Mean (rank)	**Overall** Mean (rank)	**p value**
1. Draft of the internship project proposal	8.25 (6)	5.65 (8)	7.77 (6)	7.2 (6)	0.477
2. Interim report by mid-semester	6.75 (7)	8.04 (5)	10.66 (4)	8.48 (5)	0.332
3. Major report applying textbook principles, evaluated by internship academic convenor	21.75 (1)	25.22 (1)	14.29 (2)	20.42 (1)	0.440
4. Major report applying textbook principles, evaluated by company supervisor	5.75 (9)	8.70 (3)	5.86 (8)	6.77 (8)	0.585
5. Oral presentation evaluated by internship academic convenor	10.25 (3)	5.65 (8)	3.71 (11)	6.53 (9)	0.068
6. Oral presentation evaluated by internship academic convenor and company supervisor	8.50 (5)	8.48 (4)	4.00 (10)	6.99 (7)	0.110
7. Weekly student reflective journal	4.75[c] (11)	12.39[b] (2)	10.29 (5)	9.14 (4)	0.028
8. Evaluation from company supervisor based on work performance	13.75 (2)	8.04 (5)	16.86 (1)	12.88 (2)	0.149
9. Evaluation from company supervisor based on work performance and university grading scale	9 (4)	8.04 (5)	12.57 (3)	9.87 (3)	0.463
10. Oral presentation of the interns' lesson to other interns	6 (8)	4.57 (11)	5.14 (9)	5.23 (11)	0.860
11. Class participation	5.25 (10)	5.22 (10)	6 (7)	5.49 (10)	0.901

Notes:
Overall is the mean of the three group means
Rank is from highest mean to lowest mean
Each respondent was asked to allocate 100% across the assessment types
See Appendix for full length version of questions and instructions to respondents
[a] Significant difference from students ($p < 0.05$)
[b] Significant difference from industry ($p < 0.05$)
[c] Significant difference from academics ($p < 0.05$)

Table 3
Structural Aspects of Internship Programs:
Means and Between Group Analyses for Interval Scaled Items

	Industry	Academic	Student	p value
1. How many days per week should the student be at the company during the semester for a 20-credit point internship (equivalent to 2 standard university courses)	3	3.22	3.13	0.689
2. How often internship academic convenor should be at site to meet with company supervisor	2.94	3.32	2.64	0.123
3. How often student should check in with internship academic convenor	2.67	2.24	2.35	0.219
4. What should be the minimum GPA (out of 5) for students to be allowed to take part in internships	3.05[a]	3.09[a]	4.09[b,c]	0.000
5. How many interns should work per project in a company	1.26[a]	1.67	1.9[b]	0.006
6. Companies should be able to screen potential interns to their companies	6.15	6.17	5.77	0.332
7. Companies should appoint a co-ordinator for internship programs, who is responsible for administrative duties, such as orientation and paperwork	5.79	5.25	5.31	0.577
8. Before the intern arrives, the company should develop goals and objectives for the program and establish policies and procedures to address the needs and roles of all relevant parties	5.74	5.67	5.94	0.908
9. There should be an "internship coordinator" assisting the academic convenor of the program, who researches the companies, contacts the companies and provides the point of contact between the companies and the school	6.05	5.45	6.14	0.784

Notes:
Item 1: 1= less than 1 day, 2=1 day, 3=2 days, 4=3 days, 5= 4 days, 6=5 days
Item 2: 1= weekly, 2=biweekly, 3=monthly, 4=once a semester
Item 3: 1= weekly, 2=biweekly, 3=monthly, 4=once a semester
Item 4: 1= GPA does not matter, 2=minimum pass, up to 5=maximum possible GPA
Item 5: 1= 1 student per project, 2= 2, 3= 3 or more
Item 6 - 9: Scales are anchored 1 for Strongly Disagree up to 7 for a Strongly Agree
[a] Significant difference from students ($p < 0.05$); [b] Significant difference from industry ($p < 0.05$); [c] Significant difference from academics ($p < 0.05$)

Table 4
Structural Aspects of the Internship Program:
Means of Nominal Items by Group

	Academics	**%**	**Students**	**%**	**Industry**	**%**
1. Should an internship plan be completed and signed by all parties (academic convenor, company supervisor, and student) before the internship starts?	Yes	91.3	Yes	88.6	Yes	95.0
2. Who is responsible for identifying a problem with the internship that needs to be solved?	a) Company supervisor b) Student c) Academic supervisor d) Company HR	87 78.3 73.9 43.5	a) Company supervisor b) Student c) Academic supervisor d) Company HR	88.6 88.6 60 37.1	a) Company supervisor b) Student c) Academic supervisor d) Company HR	90.0 85.0 60 20
3. Should a monthly report (co-signed by both the intern and the company) be required?	Yes	57.1	Yes	54.3	Yes	55.0
4. Should the University or the students find the internship opportunities?	University	40.9	University	57.1	University	55.0