



Queensland Parliament Research Internship

Introduction

The Queensland Parliament Research Internship program provides students from selected universities with the opportunity to work with a Member of Parliament, or a Senior Officer of the Parliament, to undertake a mutually agreed research project.

The program gives university students first-hand experience of the relationship between political practice and theory, an in depth understanding of the political processes and the role of Parliament, and the opportunity to obtain relevant research experience in a new environment.

The objectives of the program are to:

- enable interns to acquire knowledge and a greater understanding of the functions and roles of the Queensland Parliament through the application of theoretical political knowledge to first-hand experience
- enhance interns' research, analytical capabilities and communication skills
- develop interns' observational and evaluative skills, and
- enhance interns' ability to acquire practical knowledge and develop a professional orientation towards politics.

What is an internship?

The parliamentary internship is based on a mutually agreed partnership between the intern and his/ her Parliamentary Supervisor (eg a Member of Parliament).

The intern agrees to carry out a research project on a topic/issue of direct interest to the Parliamentary Supervisor. In return, the Parliamentary Supervisor agrees to provide the support necessary for the project to be completed within a set timeframe.

The partnership operates under a set of conditions mutually agreed to and ratified by the relevant university and the Parliament. Each intern has an Academic Supervisor appointed by the university where they are enrolled.

Duration

The internship program is usually offered by the universities in second semester. However, exceptions may be made, if required, to offer the program within an alternative timeframe.

Selection and internship agreement process

Selection of students

Each participating university is responsible for its own process for selecting students to recommend to participate in the program. However, students are asked to complete an application form in which they are asked to indicate the research areas they wish to pursue.

The program caters for third or fourth year undergraduate students or post-graduate students, studying in areas such as politics, public policy, law, economics, commerce, urban development, journalism and communications. However, other areas of tertiary study are considered for the program. Each University Program Coordinator submits to the Parliamentary Manager a list of recommended student candidates together with each student's preferred research area/topic.

Matching students with Parliamentary Supervisors

Initial topic selection

Potential candidates advise the Academic Supervisors at participating universities of their area(s) of interest. In liaison with the lecturers, the Parliamentary Manager matches candidates with individual Members/Senior Officers according to research topics.

Meetings with Members of Parliament/Senior Officers

Initial meetings are then arranged between student candidates, Members/Senior Officers and Academic Supervisors to discuss a proposed project in the area of interest of the Member/Senior Officer. The actual topic/issue for the research project may evolve from these discussions, or may be put forward initially by the student or may be a specific topic/issue the Member/Senior Officer wishes to be researched.

Internship Agreement

If agreement is reached on a research project, then an agreement is drawn up outlining the aim of the project, the methodology of research, a timeline for the project and the reporting system. The agreement also outlines undertakings by the student candidate, the Member/Senior Officer and the Academic Supervisor. The agreement is signed by the student, Parliamentary Supervisor and Academic Supervisor.

Clauses designed to protect the interests of all parties are included in the agreement.

Research project and assessment

Research project

Students are required to undertake a major research project for the Parliamentary Supervisor. The topic and format of the research paper is determined at the commencement of the internship by all parties concerned.

As the project is assessed for academic accreditation, responsibility for assessment procedures and outcomes lie with the relevant university. The research project is equal to 80% of the final mark.

Parliamentary procedures assignment

As part of the program, interns are required to complete a 2000 word assignment on a topic related to the functions and activities of Parliament. Depending on the requirements of each educational institution, the parliamentary procedures assignment is up to 20% of the final assessment. It is assessed by the Parliamentary Manager or a nominated senior parliamentary officer.

Assessment

The research project is formally assessed with the evaluation forming part of the student's academic achievements for the semester/semesters. The Academic Supervisor of the student is responsible for the assessment process.

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More information can be found at: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/education