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# UWA Research Internships: A Guide for Industry Partners

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# Welcome to the UWA HDR Research Internships Program

The University of Western Australia (UWA) partners with industry to deliver research-driven solutions with real-world impact. Our HDR (Higher Degree by Research) Internships connect PhD candidates with organisations to undertake short-term, focused research projects

Internships offer a strategic, cost-effective way to tackle R&D challenges, foster innovation, and provide students with valuable industry experience

## Why host a UWA HDR Research Intern?

*A strategic opportunity to innovate, solve problems and shape the future workforce*

Organisations of all sizes, from government and tech, to arts and social services, benefit from hosting HDR interns. Whether you're tackling policy reform, product development or community engagement, HDR interns bring advanced research skills and fresh perspectives

## Why industry partner organisations choose to work with us:

Access world class talent	PhD candidates offer technical expertise, critical thinking, and academic rigour
Build strategic relationships	Strengthen links with UWA and explore long-term collaborations and co-supervision
Grow your talent pipeline	Internships offer a low-risk way to identify future hires and support workforce development
Accelerate innovation	Address real challenges with tailored, time-bound (R&D) projects
Enhance your reputation and impact	Showcase commitment to research, innovation and skills development



## What is a UWA HDR Internship?

A UWA HDR internship is a structured research project co-designed with a partner organisation. It delivers mutual benefit: students gain industry experience and partners gain applied research expertise

## Who are HDR interns?

They are current PhD candidates undertaking advanced, original research across a wide range of disciplines from science, engineering and business, to education, law, social sciences and the arts

As emerging research leaders they bring more than just academic knowledge to your organisation

## How does a HDR Internship work?

A UWA HDR internship is a structured, short-term research project undertaken by a HDR student in collaboration with a partner organisation. The internship provides mutual benefit, providing students with valuable industry experience while helping partners address real-world challenges through applied research expertise

### Structure

- Internships run for a minimum of 60 full-time equivalent (FTE) days, typically completed over 3–6 months
- Projects can be structured as full-time or part-time
- Internships may be delivered on-site, remotely or in a hybrid format
- Internships can be based in Australia or internationally

### Funding model

- A tax-free stipend is paid to the student for the duration of the internship
- Funding is generally provided by the host organisation, either directly through UWA or via internship program providers such as APR.Intern or iPREP
- Cost-sharing options may be available depending on the project structure and partner type

### Administrative support

The UWA Graduate Research School provides end-to-end support, including:

- Project promotion to relevant UWA HDR students
- Assistance with templates and agreements
- Administrative onboarding and coordination throughout the internship period

This ensures a streamlined and simplified experience for host organisations

## Examples of Internship Projects

Projects are diverse and can be technical, analytical, creative or policy-focused, tailored to meet industry needs. Some examples include:

- Analysing large datasets for environmental sustainability projects
- Contributing to curatorial research for galleries or museums
- Co-designing health programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Developing machine learning models
- Evaluating public policy impacts
- Strategy reviews or prototype developments



## Real Experience : Zhanh Jo | Dolby Australia



### Challenge:

Zhanh's internship at Dolby involved developing an AI-powered music generation system to modify MIDI files. The challenge was to enhance MIDI velocity (loudness of notes) in a way that would allow music producers to create more expressive compositions, using AI to automatically adjust the loudness of each note

### Resolution:

To tackle this challenge, Zhanh converted MIDI files into images and applied image colorization techniques. After testing various approaches, he chose the Variational Autoencoder (VAE) architecture. Despite encountering technical difficulties like "posterior collapse," Zhanh developed a custom loss function with a warm-up strategy to overcome these issues and create a successful model

### Outcome:

The result was a system capable of generating human-like loudness variations, similar to those played by a master pianist, which significantly simplified the workload for music producers. Zhanh's research will be published in an upcoming conference paper

## Your role as a host organisation

### 1. Defining the project scope

Work with our team to clearly articulate the research question, challenge or area of investigation your organisation would like to address

### 2. Appointing an industry supervisor or mentor

Nominate a staff member to oversee and support the intern during the project. This person will serve as the key point of contact and help guide the intern's work

### 3. Providing access to resources

Ensure the intern has access to any systems, data, tools or facilities required to complete the project successfully, whether on-site, remote or hybrid

### 4. Engaging in contracting and funding processes

Collaborate with UWA or internship providers to finalise the internship agreement and arrange internship stipend funding as required

### 5. Offering Feedback and a Professional Experience

Create a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment for the intern. We also encourage hosts to provide feedback at the end of the project to support continuous improvement

## HDR Internship Process Overview

Hosting a UWA HDR intern is a collaborative and supported experience. The following infographic outlines each step of the process, from early planning and submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI), through to student selection and agreement

(Recommended) Early project planning and scoping	We can partner with your organisation to plan and scope projects early, ensuring they align with student timelines, research goals, and your business needs
Submit Expression of interest (EOI)	Host organisation submits an EOI, ideally 6+ weeks before the proposed start date to allow time for: + 2 weeks: Promotion and student applications + 1 week: Eligibility checks + 1 week: Review and selection Finalising the internship agreement
Promote opportunity	We promote your project across UWA channels to attract suitable HDR candidates
Student applications	Students submit an expression of interest by the specified closing date
Eligibility review	UWA assesses applications for eligibility, including supervisor approval
Forward candidates	Eligible applications are forwarded to the host for consideration
Interviews (Recommended)	We encourage host organisations to interview shortlisted candidates
Selection and agreement	Once a student is selected, all parties sign the relevant internship documents



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How much does it cost to host an intern?

Payment varies depending on the internship model:

- *Partner programs e.g. APR.Intern, CEED or iPREP:* Payment is set by the program and may be negotiable based on project scope or duration
- *Bespoke UWA direct internships:* Payment is negotiated between the host and student, and formalised in the Internship Agreement
- *Unpaid internships:* May be considered with approval from the UWA HDR Research Internships team

### What support will I receive during the internship?

The UWA Graduate Research School provides support at every stage. From project scoping and candidate matching to agreement facilitation and ongoing check-ins during the placement

### What if the project is sensitive or involves confidential information?

We understand the importance of protecting intellectual property and commercial-in-confidence material. All internship agreements include confidentiality clauses, and we can work with you to tailor terms that align with your organisation's requirements



### What if the research project runs longer than three months?

While internships must meet a minimum of 60 full-time equivalent (FTE) days over at least three months, there are several options for longer or more complex research projects:

- *Internship extensions:* Existing internships may be extended beyond the initial duration in consultation with the HDR Internships Team
- *Larger projects:* For longer-term R&D needs, consider hosting multiple back-to-back internships or scoping a discrete project and funding a full PhD through a scholarship model
- *Complex collaborations:* If your project spans multiple disciplines or involves deeper engagement (e.g. for cross-sector partnerships or advanced innovation), we recommend contacting [UWA's Research Development](#) team to explore tailored collaboration pathways

### Do I need to have experience supervising research or working with universities?

Not at all. Many of our industry partners are engaging with university research for the first time

Our team provides full support, guidance, and resources to make the process smooth and rewarding, regardless of your prior experience with academia

### What insurance coverage is provided during the internship?

HDR students are covered by UWA's insurance when undertaking an approved research internship that is formally recognised by the UWA Graduate Research School and forms part of their course-related activities

If the internship is offered under an employment contract with the host organisation, the employer is responsible for providing insurance coverage. Please note that such arrangements must meet specific criteria to be recognised as a formal research internship, as UWA HDR students generally cannot suspend their studies to take up employment

If you're unsure which model applies, our team will guide you through the appropriate process

### Can a research internship be offered under an employment contract?

Yes, in some cases a UWA HDR student may undertake a research internship under an employment contract with the host organisation, particularly where they are working on a discrete R&D project. In these instances:

- The student is entitled to employment conditions under the Fair Work Act
- The host organisation is responsible for providing insurance coverage
- UWA is not a signatory to the employment contract

To ensure the arrangement is formally recognised as a research internship, the project must meet UWA's internship criteria and be approved in writing by the Graduate Research School. Start and end dates, as well as days of engagement, must also be reported to the Graduate Research School

If you're considering this model, we encourage you to contact our team to discuss requirements and suitability

### What is a Partner Organisation (Research End-User)?

A Partner Organisation, also referred to as a Research End-User, is an individual, employer, business, or community organisation outside the academic sector that will directly benefit from the results, outcomes, or impact of the research

Examples of research end-users include:

- Private companies and industry bodies
- Start-up companies
- Government departments and agencies
- Non-government organisations (NGOs)
- Community groups and not-for-profit organisations

Universities and their affiliates, such as research institutes, controlled entities or subsidiaries, are not considered research end-users for internship purposes

## How to get started

Reach out to our team at [internships-grs@uwa.edu.au](mailto:internships-grs@uwa.edu.au) or head to the HDR Internship [GRS website](#). After receiving your email, we will arrange a time to discuss your organisation's goals, challenges and the type of research support you're looking for

We will then provide you with an 'Expression of interest' form where we will confirm more details and begin the process



Partnering with UWA through a HDR research internship is more than just accessing talent; it's an opportunity to drive innovation, solve real-world challenges and shape the future of research in Australia

If you're interested in partnering with UWA in other ways, like co-developing an Industry PhD, upskilling your workforce through embedded research programs, or collaborating on cutting-edge research; we'd love to hear from you

Whether you're a first-time host or an experienced collaborator, we're here to make the process seamless and rewarding

### Ready to explore what's possible?

Get in touch with our team today and take the first step toward a high-impact research partnership

Contact us: [internships-grs@uwa.edu.au](mailto:internships-grs@uwa.edu.au)

Follow us on LinkedIn [here](#)

## GET IN TOUCH

### CALL US

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### FAQs

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### VISIT US

Level 3 E-Zone, Perth campus

