

NEH Internship Guidelines

OVERVIEW OF MODEL

The purpose of the model is to provide a hands-on guide and support for startups when working with interns.

The three main topics are: expectations, leadership and administration.

View the model as support when working with interns, and a model that is to be adapted based on your needs and conditions.





EXPECTATIONS

This topic touches upon both expectations within the core team as well as in the exchange between startup and intern. The purpose of discussing expectations within the team, as well as with a potential intern, is to figure out *why* you as a team want and/or need an intern, and *what* you can offer in exchange. See the following discussion topics of what to talk about when considering taking in an intern.

Expectations within the team

Expectations within the team are to be discussed prior to taking in an intern.

- Why do you want an intern?
- What tasks do you want the intern to do, and how many hours per week/month do you expect the intern to work at the startup?
- What competencies are you looking for in an intern?
- What can you offer the intern?
- Are you considering looking for an intern that potentially can become a part of the team in the future?

The intern's expectations

An internship should be a win-win situation: a valuable exchange for both the startup and intern. It is therefore important to gain an understanding whether your expectations as a startup align with those of the intern, and if you can meet those expectations. Due to this, it can be beneficial to have the following discussion points in mind when interviewing interns.

- Does the intern show interest in your startup's vision and values (and is it important for you as a startup)?
- What does the intern wish to achieve during the internship?
- What kind of support does the intern expect the startup to provide (e.g. guidance, regular check-ins, structure of tasks)? Are you as a team able to meet those expectations?

More on Expectations

The first question you need to ask yourselves is why you want an intern and what you would like to have done, that you can't do on your own. Is it simply to delegate tasks you can't do yourselves, or is it to gain an outside perspective on your business, or perhaps to learn about leading someone that is not part of the founding team?

When discussing tasks of the intern, keep in mind if the tasks are realistic for an intern to do, or if you might actually be looking for someone with more expert knowledge and experience (e.g. a consultant) instead? This also requires that you think ahead what competencies, qualifications and/or skill-set the intern should have. For example, do you value a person that has a high drive and interest in your startup, or a person with the right skill-set but that might not be into your idea?

One of the most important things to consider is: what can you offer the intern in exchange for joining your startup? Is it a salary (and how much?), is it valuable experience that can't be gained elsewhere, or perhaps a chance to become a part of the startup in the future?

These expectations need to be aligned within the team, and also match what the intern is looking for. It is therefore important to get answers to your questions: What does the intern expect of you as a startup, and do you have the time and resources to meet them? Keep in mind that the internship should be a win-win situation: a valuable exchange for both parties.

LEADERSHIP

Having an intern is of course additional workforce in the startup, but it is also an opportunity to practice and develop your leadership skills when being responsible for an intern. Therefore, you need to reflect on how you can become committed and responsible leaders, and what this means to you. Have in mind that an internship is about win-win situations for both the startup and intern.

- How much time can you spare to guide the intern?
- How will you divide the responsibility within the core team?
- Do you want to set up a program and/or a structure for the intern? And how do you do that?
- Do you have all competencies you need to manage the internship? If not, how can you acquire them?

More on Leadership

Within the topic of leadership, it is important to figure out how much time, effort, and resources you have to being a leader for a person that is new to the organization. A common challenge when taking in an intern is estimating how much time it will take to guide and support the intern throughout the internship. Thus, discussing the topic of leadership and responsibility is vital to set off the internship on a good start.

Do not forget to consider whether there are any formal demands from a potential internship mediator (e.g. mentoring hours, time period).

ADMINISTRATION

The topic of administration covers the practical aspects in finding and recruiting an intern. In a recruitment process, it's important to think about employer branding - how you want others to perceive your startup, and how to convey your startup's vision, values and cultures to external viewers.

This topic also includes a legal package consisting of templates of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), Internship agreement, and a project collaboration agreement, which can be used throughout the program. More information can be found in the legal package.

The internship ad

- When writing an ad, make sure to consider whether or not you are clear with what you are looking for.
- It is important how you frame things and what kind of language/words you use. What do you need to have in mind when including a perspective of equality and inclusivity when writing the ad?
- Where do you want to post your ad? And are there any web portals or organisation that can help you finding an intern?
- Are there any aspects of GDPR you need to consider during the recruitment process?

Not sure about
GDPR? Look at [this page](#) for more
information.

How do you choose?

Start from the dialogue you had about your expectations on the intern and take the discussion further.

- What is important for you as a team when choosing an intern?
 - Make sure there is consensus within the team.
 - Do not be afraid to say no if it does not feel 'right'.
 - How to prioritise: Do you want an intern with excellent qualifications, or perhaps someone that is more passionate about our idea?

The legal aspects of it

You might need to sign an agreement or contract with your intern. It is also for you to discuss in the team and have a mutual understanding of.

- Do you want to offer the intern some sort of monetary compensation?
- Is the intern covered by an insurance?
- What kind of contract shall you sign with the intern?
- Are you up to date with labour laws, or do you need to learn more about it?

Your NEH coaches have access to a legal package with templates of contracts and agreements that you can use.

More on Administration

During a recruitment process it is important to think about what message you want to convey and how you want your startup to be perceived, both through job ads as well as during interviews. Bear in mind that a recruitment process is a way to spread the message about your startup. That is why it is important to reflect upon your startup's vision, values, and culture, and how you can make sure the message you send out aligns with those.

Additionally, you need to consider the legal aspects of taking in an intern, for instance when writing contracts. To assist you in this, a basic legal package has been developed within the NEH program. Ask your coach for more information.

Furthermore, consider how you collect data in the recruitment process, as well as if you need to have an insurance. Rules and regulations regarding insurance differ between countries and needs to be considered in each individual case.
