

# Internships: The start of a journey!

## First hand experience

*Internships are often associated with creative industries such as fashion and media, and have recently been infamous in terms of the financial sector and in politics, but their influence in other sectors is growing year on year, including in the Planning sector. Ryan Dyson, a 2010 planning graduate explains more about the concept and his direct involvement in the scheme.*

### Background

I completed the 4 year Master of Planning at University of Liverpool late last summer, obtaining a First Class degree. At the time of entering university in 2006 much of the discussion centred on shortages of planning graduates, today the situation could barely be more different. With the reduction in recruitment and limited opportunities for planning graduates I believe internships are a vital link in the journey from graduate planner into the profession and feel they offer multiple benefits not just to the individual but equally for the employer.

### My Internship

In February 2011 I started an internship, working for Local Transport Projects Ltd, an independent traffic engineering and transport planning consultancy based in Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire. I saw the opportunity advertised online and within a couple of weeks I had attended an interview, had my induction and was at my desk working on my first project.

Working closely with the two company directors (Tony Kirby and Andy Mayo), and within a team of experienced colleagues with a wide range of backgrounds and skills on a variety of projects, I have been able to gain

hands on, invaluable experience. For example, I have been heavily involved in the process of putting together Travel Plans for a range of mixed use developments including new schools, health centre, a factory site and even for a country estate! I have also been involved with the renewables sector, helping to determine the feasibility of getting large wind turbines to remote rural locations, which the company have a lot of experience in.

The first major project I was tasked with on Day One was helping with a feasibility study for a cycle route between Cardiff and Newport (Wales). I think this represents and shows the wide, varied and interesting projects that Planning as a career can open up; I honestly believe there are very few professions which provide this to such an extent. This project involved considerable Planning History and Forward Planning research as well as some interesting site work, and I believe the skills I brought from my background added to the skills of the company.

A number of the projects I have worked on have been directly involved in the planning process, and emphasised to me the importance of transport, travel and highways considerations in development proposals. Whilst progressing with my RTPI APC I have also become a graduate member of the Institute of Highway Engineers and I have worked with developers and architects amongst other professionals.

From the employers perspective, Local Transport Projects Ltd have been extremely pleased with the internship programme "This is the first time that we have made

use of the internship programme and we have been really pleased with the ability and enthusiasm that Ryan has brought to the company. There are many synergies between the Planning and Transport professions and Ryan's background has bought a new dimension to our existing skills".

### The Internship Programme

The internship scheme was managed by the University of Hull, and there are similar schemes run by the Careers services at universities across Yorkshire including the University of Leeds and the University of Sheffield. Most of the internships are carried out over 3 or 6 month timescales depending on the requirements of the host, offering flexibility to both sides. The retention rate of interns across all sectors continuing further employment with the host company is extremely high.

Much of the media reporting on internships have centred on the paid/unpaid debate. The internship I carried out was fortunately a paid internship with my employees providing a salary incorporating a contribution from the University of Hull's scheme.

Whilst these are based on shorter lengths, the RTPI Wales region are currently involved in a scheme in order to promote work-based experience for Graduates, promoting a partnership between Planning Schools, graduates and employers.

I have been extremely fortunate over the years to have gained insightful, interesting and useful work experience during my 4 years of study including at my Local Planning Authority and at a local planning consultancy, where I was able to combine academic background with hands on professional practice. Internships are often the next stage to this, enabling the first step into a profession.

As of May 2011, I have transitioned from the internship scheme to further employment with Local Transport Projects Ltd and my first hand experience of internships and the programmes operated through the local universities have resulted in nothing but praise for them.

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For more information visit:

[www.local-transport-projects.co.uk](http://www.local-transport-projects.co.uk)  
[www.graduatesyorkshire.co.uk/yorkshireinternships](http://www.graduatesyorkshire.co.uk/yorkshireinternships)



The class of 2010—The University of Liverpool