

# Inclusive Internship Programme

Application  
Guidebook 23/24

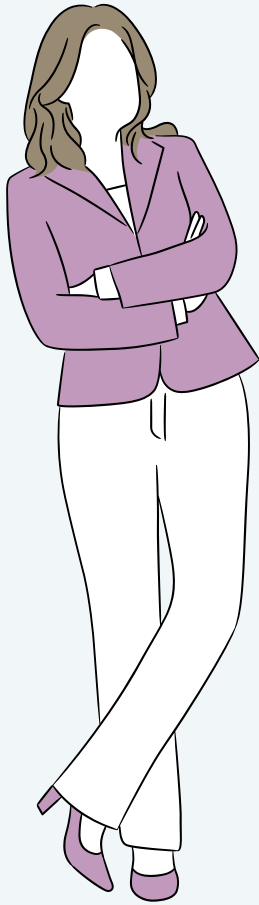


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# Welcome Message



## Eithne Coleman

SENIOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST & TEAM LEAD

The Disability Service are launching the Trinity Internship Application Guide for student interns connected with the disability service, to assist them in applying for a paid internship role. We are here to support you every step of the way!

Within the disability service we have had a long history of employing our students within summer and graduate roles with hugely positive results. Providing a variety of internship opportunities however throughout the services in Trinity will allow students to select an employment opportunity which may be related to a career path they wish to pursue, while also ensuring that they have a safe, and enjoyable, supportive community here within the disability service.



## Jen O'Connor

INCLUSIVE INTERNSHIP OFFICER

*This may be your first experience in employment, and we want to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive for you. We also want to ensure that you feel confident and supported when applying for any of the available roles. Most importantly, we hope to help you develop the necessary skills to allow you to continue your prosperous career journey beyond the internship and post-graduation.*

*You won't be alone. We will guide you through every step of the application, along with and continued support throughout the internship itself.*

# Disability in the Workplace

The average employment rate for disabled people in...  
Ireland The EU  
26.2% VS 48.1%  
According to the European  
Commission Country Report, 2019.

## Employment Equality Act 1998 & 2004

Their main aim is to promote equality by forbidding discrimination within employment.

## Equal Status Act 2000 & 2004

Their main aim is to promote equality by forbidding discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements and the provision of goods and services.

## Disability Act 2005

In short, the Disability Act 2005 places a statutory obligation on public service providers to support access to services



# Checklist for summer interns prior to applying:

Check off this list prior to completing and submitting your application:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Up-to-date CV/Resume complete with relevant details</b>  |  |
| <b>Fully drafted cover letter</b>                           |  |
| <b>Answers to any questions from the Disability Service</b> |  |
| <b>A clear understanding of the recruitment process</b>     |  |



# Analysing a Job Specification/Description

A job specification is the section of information in a job listing that explains the qualifications required for the job. This is slightly different from a job description, which is the section that defines the typical tasks of the role itself. Specifications, on the other hand, refers to aspects such as hours, salary, job title etc.

When reviewing a job specification and description, it is important that you analyse how this role might serve you and your career goals. You can do this by asking yourself a series of informative questions to help you decide whether or not to apply.

It is important for you to know that each of the services offering internships this year has received information regarding creating accessible job descriptions and specifications. If you feel that your accessibility needs were not met, we ask you to please contact us at [askds@tcd.ie](mailto:askds@tcd.ie).

## Questions to consider when reading a job description:

- What are my current employment goals?
- How does this description make me feel and why?
- What could I gain from this position? Would I enjoy it?
- What are my immediate doubts and reservations?
- Am I appropriately qualified?

**“If this is your first experience of employment, it is entirely understandable if you do not have any clear answers regarding your current or long-term career goals. There is a strong likelihood that this very question might cause you anxiety. We suggest beginning slowly and combatting this uncertainty by focusing on what you do know about yourself. What are your passions, strengths, and joys? Do you have any potential weakness or sources of doubt? By raising your awareness of what you have to offer the working world, you can clearly identify if a role is suitable for you to apply to.”**



# Exercises to consider your skills and strengths:



## 1 Opportunities?

- Does this job seem like an opportunity that you would enjoy?
- Can you identify what you might learn and gain from this opportunity?

## 2 Doubts?

- Do you have any doubts that are holding you back from applying?
- Are your doubts informed by past experiences?

## 3 Strengths?

- What do you do well?
- What unique skills can you draw on?
- What do others see as your strengths?

## 4 Challenges?

- What could you improve?
- Do you face any additional challenges?
- How do you feel in relation to these challenges?

# When you have decided to apply:

It can be tempting to immediately begin drafting your CV and cover letter now that you are sure you want to reply to the internship. However, we advise reviewing the job specification more closely and highlighting key aspects of the roles that the hiring department chose to emphasize. As you highlight these key aspects and attributes (hardworking, independent, etc., for example) that the department or service is looking for, you can refer to your list of skills and strengths and identify areas of your experience which you would like to highlight in your CV and cover letter.



## Tips

- Keep an eye out for all 'action' words and verbs used in the job description.
- Take note of any aspects of the job description that the hiring department has chosen to emphasize more than once – this might be a considerably important factor in the hiring process.
- Link any aspects of the job description that mention attributes of the ideal candidate to the morals and ethos of the department or service. You might benefit from highlight how you fit these attributes in your application.
- Perhaps most importantly, as you read continue to do regular 'gut checks' – does applying for this internship still align with your goals?
- Take note of the order in which the information is listed as tasks listed closer to the top of the description might make up a more significant portion of the job's task list.





# Job Spec Template

Used by employers taking part in the internship

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Post Title</b>     |  |
| <b>Post Status</b>    |  |
| <b>Department</b>     |  |
| <b>Location</b>       |  |
| <b>Reports to</b>     |  |
| <b>Salary</b>         |  |
| <b>Hours of Work</b>  |  |
| <b>Closing Date</b>   |  |
| <b>Interview date</b> |  |

# Job Specifications Continued:

Review the job specification and ensure that you will be available for the entire duration of the internship. Identify any areas you might have questions about which you would like to raise at the interview stage.

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You should also use this information to do some research on the department or service that is offering the internship. What are their goals, recent campaigns, and priorities? Ask yourself if these goals align with your own and demonstrate this knowledge and that you carried out an appropriate level of research at the interview stage.



**How many internships can I apply for?**

You are welcome to apply for as many internships as take your interest.



**Do I have to be studying/have studied a degree related to the internship?**

No! You are welcome to apply for any internship that takes your interest. We encourage all applicants to be guided by their interests, and what role is most like to bring them the experience they desire.



# Disclosing Your Disability

Disclosure means informing someone or making the information known, in this case to the employer or your college, about your disability, specific learning difficulty, or mental health difficulty.

Although you might choose to apply for an internship that is specifically allocated for members of the student body registered with the Disability Service, this does not mean that the department or service has access to your medical evidence, files, or any additional information regarding your experiences of your disability that you might have disclosed to the disability service at any stage. Therefore, you can choose what you would like to share – this is **entirely** your choice.

## What to consider if you do not know if you should disclose your disability:

- Why do you want to disclose your disability?
  - What are you disclosing and why is it important to do so?
  - Who will you be disclosing to?
  - When will you disclose?
  - How are you going to disclose to them?
  - Would you benefit from additional support during this process?
-

# Additional Disclosure Information

After answering these questions, you may feel more ready to make a choice. The reasoning behind disclosure varies from person to person. You may not feel comfortable to share additional information at the beginning of your internship journey, but you may at a later stage. Again, prioritise whatever makes you feel the most comfortable and empowered. If you have a visible disability, it is still up to you if you choose to give anyone any extra information about your disability or experience.

AHEAD Disclosure Guide: [A guide to Disclosure 2013.pdf \(ahead.ie\)](#)

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission: [Disability and Reasonable Accommodation - IHREC - Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#)

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# Building a CV

A CV is a concise summary of your work experience, education, and skills provided in a written document. A CV's primary goal is to display information about you in a professional manner and to demonstrate an ability to communicate professionally.

Whilst it can be tempting to have a static CV that you use to apply for numerous roles, it is always advisable to take the knowledge you have gleaned from assessing the job description and to see if there are any changes you can make to your CV to emphasise your suitability for this specific role.

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**Your CV is the first chance that recruiters will have to get to know you. It should cover:**

- Your interests and key past activities
- Your education and employment history
- The core skills that you will bring to the workplace
- References available

It may seem daunting to write about yourself at first, but these steps will help you to present yourself in the best possible light. It's standard to use word processing software such as Microsoft Word and to save in the .doc format.

When titling your CV, if you're using a Windows PC, select 'save as...' from the 'file' menu at the top. Call the file something like 'CV\_Your Name'.

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# Building a CV Continued

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## What not to include:

- A photograph
- Your address
- Your phone number
- Your disability/diagnosis

## Please note:

You are welcome to state your communication preferences, at the top of your CV. This may be especially relevant if you prefer not to be contacted by telephone.

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# Step-by-Step Building a CV

## 1. Personal Profile

This should go at the top of your CV. Include your name and contact details such as a professional email address with your name.

Make your personal statement positive and engaging. You should write this section in about 5 or 6 sentences. Your personal statement should show how your experiences and skills relate to the role you are applying for.

## 2. Skills & Attributes

Make a list of bullet points covering what you see as your most important skills. Be concise, specific and refer to the role that you are applying for. Examples include excellent communicator with experience in email communication, exceptional IT skills (name relevant programmes), experienced customer service worker.

## 3. Employment History

Include your employment history for the past few years or more if it's relevant. Begin with your current or most recent job and work backwards. For each entry you should include:

- The name of the company or organisation you worked for
- Your job title
- The dates of when you started ('from') and finished ('to')
- Short description of your role, main duties, and responsibilities

Please note: if this is your first employment opportunity, you can name all forms of experience (work experience, for example) and title this section 'Experience'.



# Step-by-Step Building a CV

## 4. Hobbies & Interests

It is best to format this section in bullet points. Include between 4 and 5 bullet points of your interests and hobbies. These do not all have to be specifically related to the job description. What you are aiming to provide the recruiter with is a broader sense of who you are as a person.

## 5. References

You do not have to provide references on a CV. You are welcome to end your CV by writing 'References available upon request.' However, it is essential to have between 2-3 available references, should you be asked for their contact information. Ensure that you never use family members or friends in this capacity.



# Tailoring Your CV to a Specific Role

You must tailor your CV for each role that you apply for. Matching up your skills and experience with those listed in the job description will increase your chances of getting the job.

This is your opportunity to present yourself as someone who closely matches the employer's requirements.

It's helpful to have your CV and the job description alongside each other so that you can go through point by point. Identify which of your skills match up with those in the description and consider anything that you can add in or make more prominent.

Any changes you make to your CV must be true. If not, this will seriously harm your chances.

## Writing a Cover Letter

### Greetings & Salutation

Start with "Dear," never "Hi" or "Hello" or "Good morning."

Address your letter to a specific person (if indicated in the job listing) or "hiring manager." If a job posting mentions the potential direct report by name, research the person as you may find that you have something in common, such as where you have studied. In the future, you will address the letter to either (1) a specific person if someone else gives you a lead or to "hiring manager" if you are applying through an HR portal.

Do not "guess" who the direct report might be. Use the titles "Mr." or "Ms." or "Mrs.," assuming you know the marital status. If, after researching the recipient, you do not know the person's gender, use both the first and last name in your salutation (e.g., "Dear Dale Smith").

Make sure you have the correct spelling of the recipient's name, preferably from the company's own website.

Follow the recipient's name with a comma rather than a colon.



# Cover Letter Breakdown

## Opening Paragraph

Mention how you heard about the opening and the specific position for which you are applying.

Explain why you want to work at that organisation as opposed to any other company. Personalising your cover letter to the specific imprint and position is the most important part of the document. Keep this explanation brief.

You do not have to tell the organisation how good it is but rather show how what it does aligns with your interests and values.

## Second and/or Third Paragraph

Do not repeat your CV word for word. Rather, paraphrase or rephrase your experience and include details that you might not have had room for on your CV.

Emphasise your responsibilities rather than your characteristics. Tell the recipient what you did rather than who you are.

Avoid tooting your own horn. If a supervisor praised you for something, mention it, but otherwise avoid telling the recipient that you were good at something or that you performed your tasks efficiently or well.

Avoid the word “utilise”; write “use” instead. Also avoid the word “additionally”; write “in addition” instead.

Do not employ generalities about your passion for the industry. Rather, be specific about your past responsibilities and accomplishments that are relevant.

Do not overuse the personal pronoun “I.”

Avoid humor. Like your bio, your cover letter should be serious but not solemn.

Do not sell the company back to itself; the person who is hiring already knows its strengths.

## Final Paragraph

State your desire to interview for the position and to meet the recipient in person.

Do not say that you hope to hear from the recipient at their “earliest convenience”; that may sound impatient.

Be sure to thank the recipient for their consideration in the last paragraph.

## Closing

Sign off with the words “Yours sincerely” or simply “Sincerely.” The words “Best”, “All best”, and “Cheers” are too informal. Remember to use “Yours sincerely” when you know the name of the individual you are writing to, and “Yours faithfully” when you do not.

## Who are you?

Self-branding can sound like a daunting topic or even a confusing one, but in truth, it is just about learning how to represent who you know to be i.e., emphasising your strengths either in conversation or any other form of communication.

These guidelines can be useful to know whether you are currently seeking employment or are seeking progression within your current employment. There are numerous times when, as employees, we will be expected to represent ourselves accurately and positively to customers, employers, stakeholders, etc.

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### Know Your Strengths:

Identify your key strengths, skills, and unique qualities. Consider both technical skills and soft skills that set you apart. By raising your awareness to your strengths, you can learn what to emphasise when speaking with potential employers. This skill spills over into other areas of your life, where you can learn to speak confidently about your skills and passions. In turn, learning to acknowledge your strengths can build your sense of self positively.

### Practice Describing Yourself:

Develop a brief means of describing yourself, your area of study/interest and your goals. Ideally, you will communicate your passion for your field. If you feel comfortable to and if it feels true for you, you can address your disability, focusing on how your disability has shaped who you are today.



## **Highlight Your Achievements:**

Showcase your accomplishments in previous roles or projects, or throughout your studies. This can go beyond simply listing your achievements. Where possible, give concrete examples of aspects of your life that you excel in. These do not necessarily have to be professional or academic examples, particularly if this is your first engagement with employment. Perhaps you took up some voluntary work in the past or contribute meaningfully to the life of a family member or friend in need. Try to cast your thoughts beyond solely educational or professional pursuits and consider your passions. When you feel joy in doing a task, the likelihood is that it holds exceptional meaning for you.

## **Explore Your Unique Perspective:**

Living as a disabled person, navigating higher education and all the experiences that come with it, often means that as disabled people, our perspectives of the world are unique. This can be a skill that is worth expressing, should you feel comfortable to. Perhaps living as a disabled person has meant that you have developed creative solutions to past problems or challenges. By explaining such instances, you display creative thinking, innovation, resilience, and adaptability.

## **Acknowledge the Benefit of Reasonable Accommodations:**

If comfortable, be transparent about any accommodations you might need during the application process or in the workplace. You can do this by acknowledging the benefit they offer to all individuals' productivity as well as contributing to a positive workplace culture. In expressing this, you may learn of the accommodations that are or are not available to you, and if the role you are applying for is suitable for you.



# Self-Branding

## Advocate for Yourself:

Advocate for your needs in the workplace, ensuring that you have the necessary resources and accommodations to thrive.

Communicate openly with your team about how they can support your success.

Remember, your personal brand is a dynamic and evolving representation of who you are professionally. Regularly update and refine your brand as your skills and experiences grow. Embrace your uniqueness, and let your personal brand authentically reflect your value in the workplace.

## Why does self-branding matter?

Self-branding is a structured means of practicing how to consolidate all of the various parts of yourself and showcase this variety at key times in your life. This information is useful in a variety of settings:

- Job Interviews
- Networking opportunities
- Crafting an online presence

# Preparing for an Interview

No one enjoys attending and completing job interviews - they tend to be nerve-wracking experiences for everyone! Below you will find some tips and considerations to make before attending any future job interview you may have.

## Research the company/service/department

- Learn about the company's history, mission, values, products, services, and recent news.

## Ensure you understand the role you are applying

- Review the job description thoroughly to understand the requirements and responsibilities.
- Identify key skills, qualifications, and experiences the employer is seeking.

## Practice common interview questions

- Anticipate questions about your strengths, weaknesses, experiences, and why you want the job.
- Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your responses to behavioral questions.

# Preparing for an Interview

## Prepare questions for the interviewer

- Prepare insightful questions to ask the interviewer about the company culture, team dynamics, and the role itself.
- Avoid questions that can be easily answered through basic research.

## Plan your journey

- Research the interview location and plan your route in advance.
- Aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early to account for any unexpected delays.

## Bring necessary documents

- Carry extra copies of your resume, cover letter, and any other relevant documents.
- Bring a pen and notebook to jot down any important information.

# Preparing for an Interview

## Practice non-verbal communication

- Maintain good eye contact and a confident posture during the interview.
- Practice a firm handshake (if appropriate) and friendly demeanor.

## Follow up after the interview

- Send a thank-you email within 24 hours expressing your gratitude for the opportunity.
- Use this opportunity to reiterate your interest in the position and highlight key points from the interview.

## Reflect and learn


- Reflect on your performance after the interview.
- Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement to enhance your future interview skills.



# Supports available for interns

You may be concerned that if you are offered a position as an intern, you will receive minimal supports through the summer months. The Disability Service will be with you every step of the way, checking in, providing training and welcoming feedback.

- Continuous mentorship from Trinity Development and Alumni
- Ongoing training sessions with the Disability Service
- 1:1 Employment Support
- 1:1 Occupational Therapy
- Social outings with fellow interns
- Site visits to employment sites that are external to TCD



**Our primary concern throughout the summer will be to communicate with you fully and regularly to ensure that you are supported and your individual needs are being met.**



# Contact Us

You are welcome to contact us by whatever medium suits you. We recognise that everyone's communication preferences are likely to vary.

Email [askds@tcd.ie](mailto:askds@tcd.ie) if you would like to schedule an in-person meeting, or find out individual emails below.

| Description  | Phone           | Email  |
|--|-----------------|--|
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