



Helpful tips for supervising Aurora interns

Supervisors play an integral role in the overall success of the Aurora Native Title Internship Program and the Program benefits enormously from their support. We trust that the benefits of supervising Aurora interns will result in your organisation having access to enthusiastic and motivated workers who have the potential to become employees. Interns who have a positive and rewarding experience will leave having had an opportunity to “test drive” a career in the Indigenous area.

The following tips for supervising Aurora interns are based on the feedback given to the Placements team over the past six and a half years from both supervisors and interns. Given the diversity of potential internship experiences within host organisations and the heavy workload of supervisors, these tips are not intended to be overly prescriptive. Rather, they are suggestions of what is (where possible) preferable. We hope that supervisors will find them helpful.

- Interns should have a designated supervisor who is available to the intern on a regular basis and is the first point of contact if there are any concerns about their day-to-day work.
- Past interns regularly mention how important the intern/supervisor relationship has been for them. An intern’s perception of a supervisor as a positive role model can be an important factor when the intern is considering any possible future employment opportunities in the area of native title or Indigenous affairs more generally.
- We have found that the most successful internships are those where the host organisation and the supervisors have considered the tasks to be carried out prior to the arrival of the intern. We would encourage you to give some thought to this and ask that you brief your intern via email or phone before he/she commences the placement, so that preliminary research can be done by the intern in preparation.
- Interns benefit greatly from a brief induction into the host organisation at the commencement of the internship, along with access to an in-house Induction Manual (where available) to enhance their understanding of the organisation. We would suggest interns be given general information about the structure and mission of the organisation; be introduced to members of the team and other key staff; be provided with access to the library and other resources commonly used by the host organisation; and, if possible, be provided with some cross-cultural training or a briefing from afield/community liaison officer.
- Interns have also commented on the value they derive from regular feedback sessions. These can be very brief but should occur at least once a week. Such feedback allows interns to measure progress and build confidence. It also encourages them to ask questions when they need clarification, in turn minimising the likelihood of miscommunication and misunderstanding of what is expected of them.



Helpful tips for supervising Aurora interns (continued)

- We encourage supervisors to provide interns with an opportunity to attend in-house and/or 'on Country' meetings and/or teleconferences where a native title claim or agreement is being discussed with consultants, lawyers and clients. Such an opportunity has often been described by past interns as having been a "life changing experience" for them and has greatly influenced their thinking about working in the area in the future.
- We understand that sensitive and confidential information will be shared with Aurora interns in order to facilitate their understanding of the work that you do, and to enable them to contribute in a meaningful way. With this in mind, we ask that supervisors take care not to draw interns into the internal politics of the organisation as it is often difficult for interns to assess differences of opinion between work colleagues and/or clients, and this can cause undue stress and confusion in their efforts to please and assist. This sort of scenario would be of little benefit to both the intern and your organisation. Supervisors are reminded that they have a duty of care to ensure that interns are able to learn about and contribute to host organisations in a healthy environment.
- Interns have also indicated that they value a discussion with their supervisor at the end of their internship to allow for closure and reflection on their overall internship experience.

Any concerns?

As you know, as one of their Aurora obligations, all interns must keep in touch with the Placements team by way of weekly reports (which supervisors are copied in to) in order for the team to monitor how their placement is going.

Interns are also encouraged to contact the Placements team if they have concerns that are not able to be resolved with their supervisor or relevant HR support staff at the host organisation.

We try to ensure that interns will fit into the host organisation seamlessly, providing assistance and support where needed without an expectation of too much supervision. If supervisors have concerns about the work, behaviour or attendance of the intern, these should ideally be raised directly with the intern.

If concerns continue, the supervisor is encouraged to discuss the issues with the Manager of the Internship Program, Kim Barlin on (02)9310 8413 or at kim.barlin@auroraproject.com.au. Kim is always available to assist in resolving a problem.