

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland Internship Training and Work Experience Programme

1. Introduction

MRCI has operated an Internship Programme in its Drop in Centre for ten years. Over 60 interns have participated in this programme. The programme facilitates the recruitment of interns who want to learn new skills and knowledge and gain valuable practical work experience to enhance their job prospects and gain a foot hold in this sector of employment.

In order to develop the programme and keep pace with changing needs, MRCI conducted a review and survey of past interns in 2014. The survey found that 45% percent who have completed the programme are now employed in the policy, advocacy and casework in a human rights setting. Generally interns felt the programme was positive and enhanced their skills and knowledge of advocacy, case management, data collection and migrant issues. It also exposed them to broader human rights and equality issues. As a result of the experience gained during their internship their employment prospects were enhanced and many were successful in securing employment in policy, advocacy and service organisations. 80% of MRCI's current employees began on either an internship or volunteer programme.

In terms of improving the programme there was a consensus that more bespoke training could be provided at different points in the programme tailored to the needs of the individual intern. MRCI have taken this key recommendation on board and had revised the programme to ensure, where possible, that ongoing training and development needs can be met.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the main elements of the programme and provide clarity of what can be expected both from MRCI and the programme participants.

2. The Internship Training and Work Experience Programme

MRCI values all participants for their individual contributions, enthusiasm and commitment, as well as for the experience, skills, views and new perspectives they bring to the organisation.

The Aim of the Programme

This is a learning centred programme which provides opportunities for participants to gain training and work experience in the area of migration, employment, immigration policy, law and practice. MRCI has a commitment to supporting external networking and training opportunities to enhance participants' knowledge and practical experience of the impact of policies and laws to improve the lives of migrants.

Values Underpinning the Programme

To ensure that the experience of every participant is worthwhile and valuable to them, this programme is underpinned by the following set of values; mutual respect, diversity, equality, inclusion, participation and anti-discrimination

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

- Practice related knowledge of the Irish Immigration system
- Practice related knowledge of employment permit system in Ireland
- Practice related knowledge of impact of social policy on migrant communities
- Knowledge of evidence based policy development
- Increased understanding of employment law and non-compliance
- Basic understanding of the impact of EU migration policy in Irish policy formation
- Working knowledge of indicators and responses to trafficking for forced labour
- Increased knowledge of politics and current affairs
- Knowledge of campaign planning, tactics and strategy
- Enhanced knowledge of community work methods, practice and values

Values

- Be able to make the links between power and multiple forms of oppression
- Understand the intersection of racism and discrimination on migrants
- Increased ability to engage with equality issues such as economic and gender
- Understand the importance of creating the conditions for the participation of vulnerable groups
- Understand the value and practice of collective action for change
- Understand the process of empowerment and its values from a policy and practice perspective

Skills

- Ability to manage case work
- Data analysis
- Representation and networking skills
- Extensive experience of advocacy
- Presentation skills
- Problem solving and decision making skills
- Communication skills
- Time management
- Policy development
- Research and writing skills

Three Phases of the Programme

Phase I: Intensive Training (Month 1 & 2)

Internships are for a maximum of six months and include three two month phases. In phase one programme participants are provided with intensive training through bespoke training sessions and work experience training and support. The training sessions provided include:

- Introduction to MRCI
- Internal and external referral policies
- Introduction to MRCI's case management system and case criteria
- Induction to participants' area of work experience (an induction/information folder and casework manual will also be made available)
- Introduction to Community Work
- Employment law and practical application to migrant issues
- Work Permit legislation and common issues
- Immigration Law and common issues
- Issues facing undocumented workers
- Forced labour and human trafficking
- Further training as identified

MRCI will ensure that interns are properly integrated into the organisational structure and are part of the team. This will occur through:

- Introductions to the staff and the roles
- Attendance at team meeting
- Attending case coordination meetings
- Attendance at other meeting such a campaign meetings based on the interests expressed by the interns.
- Attendance at team building events

Outcome of Phase I

It is expected that the programme participant would have sufficient training and support to have developed the confidence, knowledge, skills and ability to assist with casework and other activities.

Phase II: Work experience, skills audit, external representation (Month 3 & 4)

The second stage of the programme will involve a review with the programme participant and their supervisor to assess progress and areas of knowledge and skills that they would like to develop further. The supervisor will develop a learning plan with the intern to ensure that opportunities are created for them to contribute to MRCI's work and participate in external networking and training events.

Outcome of Phase II

Participants will have increased training and development options, be supported to engage in other area of MRCI's work such as campaigns and actions. The participant will have

increased confidence and knowledge to gain practical work experience by engaging in external opportunities for example attending launches, seminars and events and taking on representational roles at same. The participant will have increased confidence and knowledge to engage in external opportunities and take on representational roles.

Phase III: Review and Acceleration of external training opportunities (Month 5 & 6)

The final phase of the programme is a preparation for work phase post the internship. A review will be conducted with the intern and the supervisor to assess ongoing learning and identify any gaps that can be addressed in this final phase. A mock interview will be held and CV and cover letters finalised. Participants will be supported to identify potential areas for employment. An exit interview will be conducted with the intern at the end of the placement to identify individual learning outcomes and gaps in the programme.

Outcome of Phase III

Participants will have outcomes as detailed in section 2 at the end of the programme.

3. What Programme Participants can expect from MRCI

Inclusion of Interns

- MRCI will ensure that interns are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to MRCI's work
- Have access to their own desk, computer etc
- Be provided with support and supervision
- Interns will be considered as members of MRCI's team and will included in team events
- Interns are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning MRCI and its work.
- Interns will be involved in team meetings and other events where they can voice their ideas or concerns
- MRCI expects that staff at all levels will work positively with interns and where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work

MRCI recognises that interns require a satisfying learning experience and will seek to help interns meet these needs,

Guidelines for taking on interns

MRCI:

- Actively seeks interns based on an equal opportunities basis
- Actively seeks interns for specific, explicitly described activities
- Actively seeks interns on the basis of their commitment to the ethos of MRCI, their experience and potential
- Actively seeks participants from a migrant background

- Actively seeks interns irrespective of their age, gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community
- Structures its application process as follows: Call for CVs, short listing, interview with suitable candidates, signing of internship agreement, probation period of one month, regular support/supervision with line manager, quarterly review meeting with Intern Coordinator, exit interview with supervisor
- Pre-decides all dates in the recruitment process before publically advertising
- Ensures there is an minimum of over-lap period of a week for outgoing and incoming interns

Management

Interns report to Drop in Centre Coordinator

Internship Training and Work Experience Coordinator is responsible for the overall management of the programme and welfare of the interns

Support, supervision and training

- All interns will have a named supervisor as their main point of contact
- Structured supervision: Interns will be provided with regular supervision with their line manager every 6 weeks
- Daily supervision: Training will be provided directly to interns by the Drop in Centre Coordinator and the Legal Officer on a daily basis to enable the intern assist Drop in Centre staff with the management of cases as they emerge and other activities.
- Every two months the intern will have a review meeting with their supervisor to assess progress, skill development and opportunities for involvement in campaigns, training and networking
- Interns will have a quarterly review meeting with the Intern Coordinator to discuss general matters relevant to the MRCI Internship Programme.
- Interns will have an internship agreement and description establishing their work experience and position in MRCI
- Interns will receive an induction into the work of MRCI and the division they will be interning in. An induction/information folder will be made available
- MRCI will provide interns with all the appropriate and up-to-date information they need to carry out their work experience
- The intern's supervisor will complete an exit interview and report at the end of the interns time with MRCI
- Volunteering hours are generally 25 hours per week. Where hours of volunteering exceed the agreed number of 25 hours per week , time off will be facilitated

Expenses

- All interns will have their agreed travel and other expenses incurred as part of their participation in the MRCI Internship Programme reimbursed. Interns can claim expenses for lunch (of up to €8 per day). In addition any travel costs incurred as part of their work at MRCI as well as travel to and from work (of up to €10 per day).

- Receipts must be produced as evidence of all expenditure.

Insurance

All interns are covered by MRCI's public liability insurance.

Records

Records will be maintained on all interns. These will be kept confidentially in line with MRCI's data protection policy. The records will include documents such as:

- Covering letter and CV
- Record of interview
- Work Experience description
- Letters of reference
- Record of supervision and support meetings

Grievance Procedures

If an intern has a grievance the following procedure should be observed:

- The grievance should be raised verbally in the first instance with their supervisor or Internship Training and Work Experience Coordinator
- If not resolved satisfactorily it can be put in writing to the Director, who will endeavour to resolve the problem
- If the grievance continues it will be brought to the Employment Sub-group of the Board of Directors whose decision will be final.

Removal from the Internship

Reasons for removal from the position can include but are not limited to:

- repeated absence without due cause
- repeated failure to complete agreed work experience to satisfactory standard
- failure to abide and support MRCI policies and procedures
- abuse of clients and co-workers
- being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- theft and/or misuse of equipment and materials

Procedure for Removal

- The grievance/misconduct should be raised verbally in the first instance with the intern and with their supervisor who will endeavour to resolve the problem
- If not resolved satisfactorily it can be put in writing to the intern
- If the grievance/misconduct continues it will be brought to the Director
- In the event of removal it will be discussed with Employment Sub-group of the Board of Directors in advance of any final decision

Please see below Intern Agreement:

MRCI Internship Agreement

_____ will undertake training and work experience under MRCI's Internship Programme located at MRCI offices, 37 Dame Street, Dublin 2 working under the direct supervision of _____

MRCI agrees to provide work experience as detailed in the attached work experience description for the period _____. MRCI requires a minimum commitment of six months on a full time basis from all interns unless otherwise agreed.

In addition MRCI agrees to:

1. Provide reasonable desk and computer facilities
2. Provide a named supervisor as their main point of contact
3. Provide regular supervision with their line manager every 6-8 weeks
4. Provide induction, information, training and assistance
5. Review with the interns experience of the programme and identify opportunities for progression at key stages
6. Ensure satisfactory supervisory support and to provide feedback on performance
7. Be receptive to any comment and feedback regarding ways in which we might mutually better accomplish our respective tasks
8. Treat all interns in the programme as team members, jointly responsible for the completion of the organisation's goals and the fulfilment of its mission
9. Cover basic out of pocket expenses i.e. travel to and from work and lunch expenses. All interns will have their agreed travel and other expenses incurred as part of participation in the MRCI Internship Programme reimbursed. Interns can claim expenses for lunch (of up to €8 per day). In addition any travel costs incurred as part of their work at MRCI as well as travel to and from work (of up to €10 per day). Receipts must be produced as evidence of all expenditure.
10. Where hours of participation in the MRCI Internship Programme exceed the agreed number, time off will be facilitated
11. Provide a reference at the end of the programme
12. Ensure whenever possible that interns do not work over and beyond their agreed commitment of 25 hours per week
13. In addition to all public holidays, interns are entitled to 12.5 days of holidays.

_____ agrees to serve _____ for a **X** period and commits to the following:

1. To perform my work experience to the best of my ability and in line with the work experience description
2. Become familiar with and agree with MRCI's Work within the policy and procedures of Migrant Rights Centre Ireland

3. Understand that it is against MRCI ethos for a participant to use their position in the organisation or contact with an individual to promote their political or religious beliefs
4. Raise issues and concerns with the line manager
5. To adhere to MRCI's policies and procedures, including record-keeping requirements and confidentiality of the organisation's information.
6. To participate in MRCI events, training and organisational meetings
7. To meet time and work experience commitments, except in exceptional circumstances, or to provide adequate notice of time away so that alternative arrangements can be made.
8. To maintain strict confidentiality in relation to their work experience , the work of their colleagues, and in relation to matters pertaining to the organisation generally, including when they cease to a participant in the programme
9. To adhere to MRCI's data protection policy

Signed

Direct Supervisor

Intern

Date _____