

PRCA Africa

CHARTER

for PR Industry
Internship Programmes

Public Relations & Communications Association

PRCA
Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) Africa recognises internships and graduate learnerships as essential for shaping the future of the PR industry across our continent. This charter establishes a structured framework to foster mutually beneficial relationships between PR agencies, corporate teams and interns – emphasising continuous learning, professional growth, and professionalism in a relationship of shared value.

Conducting fair and transparent selection processes based on merit and potential. Internships are a great way to widen the talent pool.

INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN

This Charter champions inclusivity and diversity as fundamental pillars of the PR industry's future. PR agencies and corporate teams commit to embracing diversity in internship recruitment, ensuring equal access to opportunities for candidates from all backgrounds (beyond just race or gender). Moreover, interns are encouraged to actively contribute to a culture of inclusivity within agencies and corporate teams, valuing diverse perspectives and advocating for equity and representation.

ETHICAL STANDARDS AND INTEGRITY

Ethical conduct lies at the heart of this Charter. PR agencies and corporate teams pledge to uphold the highest ethical standards across all facets of their operations, adhering to industry codes of conduct and professional guidelines. Interns, in turn, are expected to uphold these same principles, conducting themselves with integrity and transparency in their day-to-day activities, and seeking guidance when confronted with ethical dilemmas. Key to this shared relationship is appreciation that agencies and corporate teams have a ethical responsibility to ensure the following guidelines are actively implemented in their intern programmes:

- Fair and responsible payment for services rendered. The PRCA Africa does not condone any internship or learnership based on "experience" as a replacement for fair remuneration. Interns asked to work "for free" are asked to reach out to the PRCA reporting line.
- Internship contracts will be in line with the requirements of the Labour Relations Act (or any such governing legislation depending on markets) including the provision of minimum leave, sick leave and operational conduct requirements.
- Clear codes of conduct and policies that allow interns to understand their own role in the workplace and the standards expected by ethical agencies and corporate teams.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recognising the importance of continuous learning and growth, PR agencies and corporate teams commit to providing interns with ample opportunities for professional development.

Examples can include structured mentorship programs with various people from within the workplace. Interns should be provided with access to industry resources that will empower them to expand their skills and knowledge beyond their day to day responsibilities. Interns are encouraged to take ownership of their professional development journey, actively seeking out opportunities to enhance their capabilities and contribute meaningfully to their teams.

INDUSTRY AWARENESS

The Charter emphasises the importance of industry awareness and staying abreast of local and global emerging trends and innovations. PR agencies and corporate teams are tasked with exposing interns to the broader landscape of the PR industry, facilitating engagement with thought leaders and participation in relevant professional networks. Interns, in turn, are expected to demonstrate a proactive and keen interest in industry developments, actively seeking opportunities to deepen their understanding and contribute insights to their respective teams.

By adhering to the principles outlined in this Charter, both PR agencies/corporate teams and interns can cultivate a culture of professionalism, integrity, and excellence. Together, they contribute to the advancement and sustainability of the PR industry, shaping its future trajectory and fostering a community characterised by collaboration, innovation, and mutual respect.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES for PR internship programmes

IN SUMMARY

The PRCA recognises internships' vital role in shaping the future of PR.

- The PRCA recognises ethical conduct as paramount, with agencies and corporate teams upholding industry standards, and interns expected to maintain integrity and seek guidance when faced with ethical challenges. There are minimum contractual provisions agencies or corporate teams will provide.
- The PRCA recognises professional development as a priority, with agencies and corporate teams offering structured mentorship and resources, while interns are encouraged to take ownership of their growth.
- The PRCA recognises the importance of promoting industry awareness within agencies and corporate teams will provide exposure to industry trends and networks while interns are expected to actively engage in learning about and contributing towards these insights.



Highlight and address the rapid evolution of the PR industry and the need for adaptation and innovation.



Commit to diversity and inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals regardless of background.



Mention the significance of clear learning objectives aligned with program goals for interns' professional development.



Stress the importance of a fair recruitment process, ensuring merit-based selection criteria.



Note the flexibility in internship durations to accommodate individual circumstances and program requirements.



Underline the value of fair and competitive compensation packages for interns, in compliance with employment laws and regulations.



Reiterate the mutual commitment to fostering a culture of professionalism, integrity, and excellence in the PR industry.

This 8-Point Charter is intended to help public relations consultancies, corporate teams and interns to work together as effectively and as productively as possible.

1. SETTING OBJECTIVES

Agency and Corporate team Commitment

- Define clear learning objectives for interns, aligning with the goals of the internship program.
- Provide opportunities for interns to gain practical experience in various aspects of public relations, including day-to-day administrative tasks like status, weekly, monthly, coverage and event reports, media relations, content creation, event planning, and social media management.
- Assign the intern a main point of contact (mentor, account manager, or team/s) to work with for the duration of the internship.
- Agree reasonable payment for services provided, and sign a contract of employment that aligns with Labour Relations legislation.

Intern Commitment:

- Demonstrate willingness to learn and actively participate in achieving set objectives.
- Seek guidance and feedback from mentors' assigned manager/mentor or team to ensure progress towards stated objectives.

Interns will be asked to sign a code of conduct which includes a commitment to ethical conduct and behavior as well as a commitment to deliver work which includes mis/disinformation requests, and work which cross ethical and moral barriers.

2. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- Work with institutions of learning (Universities, Technikons, Colleges) as a first point of entry to advertise for the position. Use agency or corporate team social media channels if appropriate to further advertise the opportunity.
- Conduct fair and transparent selection processes based on merit and potential. Be clear about selection criteria.

Intern Commitment:

- Submit applications with a professional CV that is error free, stands out, and tells us why we should choose you over other applicants.
- Participate in interviews and assessments with professionalism and honesty.



3. LENGTH OF INTERNSHIP

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- Offer internship durations that provide meaningful learning experiences, typically ranging from three to six months – noting that some agencies and corporate teams offer 12 month programmes at their discretion.
- Consider flexibility in internship lengths based on individual circumstances and program requirements.
- To pay fairly and equally for services provided. To work within labour relations legislation and to act professionally and fairly at all times.

Intern Commitment:

- Commit to the full duration of the internship program, adhering to agreed-upon start and end dates.
- Communicate any potential issues or constraints regarding the internship duration promptly and professionally.
- To follow the agreed code of conduct.



4. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- Design structured training sessions and mentorship programs to enhance interns' skills in PR-related tasks.
- Provide opportunities for hands-on experience and exposure to real-world PR projects.

Intern Commitment:

- Actively engage in skills development activities and seek opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge.
- Take initiative to expand skill sets beyond assigned tasks, demonstrating eagerness to learn and grow.



5. COMPENSATION

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- Offer fair and competitive compensation packages, which may include a monthly salary, stipends, travel allowances, or other benefits. Without payment, some candidates may not be able to afford to be interns.
- Offering compensation enhances the agency's and corporate teams ability to attract the best and brightest candidates, ensuring a competitive edge in the industry.
- Interns who are compensated tend to be more motivated and dedicated to their roles. They are likely to invest more effort and time into their tasks, leading to higher productivity and quality of work.
- A PR agency or corporate team that compensates its interns well sends a positive message about its commitment to fair treatment and professional development. This can enhance their reputation both within the industry and among potential future interns.

Intern Commitment:

- Acknowledge and appreciate the compensation provided by the agency or corporate team, understanding its value as recognition of interns' contributions.
- Fulfil responsibilities and meet performance expectations outlined in the internship agreement to the best of their abilities.



6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- Implement a structured monitoring and evaluation system for the internship program to track progress and effectiveness.
- Define performance indicators and evaluation criteria to assess interns' performance and contributions.
- Establish mechanisms for regular feedback sessions between interns and supervisors to identify areas of improvement and provide support as needed.

Intern Commitment:

- Participate actively in the monitoring and evaluation process by providing honest feedback and self-assessment of their performance.
- Take constructive criticism positively and use it as an opportunity for personal and professional growth.
- Commit to continuous improvement by implementing feedback received and striving to meet or exceed performance expectations.



7. REVIEW AND REVISION

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- Establish a review process for the internship program charter at regular intervals, considering feedback from both interns and agency or corporate team stakeholders.
- Remain open to revising the charter as needed to adapt to changing circumstances, improve effectiveness, and align with industry best practices.

Intern Commitment:

- Engage in the review process by providing feedback on their internship experience and suggesting areas for improvement in the program charter.
- Embrace changes and revisions to the charter, understanding that they are aimed at enhancing the overall internship experience and aligning it with evolving industry standards.
- Stay informed about any updates or revisions to the charter and adhere to the updated guidelines and expectations.



8. OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYMENT

Agency and Corporate team Commitment:

- While permanent employment is not guaranteed post-internship, the agency or corporate team will actively support interns in their career advancement endeavours within or beyond the agency or company.
- The agency or corporate team will provide resources and guidance to help interns navigate the job market, including assistance with resume building, interview preparation, and networking opportunities.
- Furthermore, the agency or corporate team will maintain open communication with interns regarding potential employment opportunities within the organisation, offering transparency throughout the process.

Intern Commitment:

- While understanding that permanent employment is not assured, the intern is committed to fully engaging in assigned tasks, projects, and learning opportunities during the internship period.
- The intern will actively seek feedback, mentorship, and opportunities for growth within the agency or corporate team, demonstrating a proactive approach to skill development and career advancement.
- In addition, the intern will utilise resources provided by the agency or corporate team to enhance their marketability and employability, taking ownership of their career trajectory beyond the internship tenure.



PRCA Africa Membership and Industry Promotion Network

NETWORK CHAIR

Tracy Jones
Founder and Managing Director at Dialogue

NETWORK MEMBERS

Claire Williams
Business Unit Director at Accenture Song

Ima Peter
Head of Corporate: Business Director at Razor PR

Nicky James
Managing Director at Tribeca Public Relations

Lerato Mpholo
Managing Director at Opinion and Public



For more information please visit:
<https://www.prca.org.uk/node/2715>

We hope this charter is a useful framework for creating an internship program that prioritises professionalism, inclusivity, ethical conduct, skills development, and fair treatment to the benefit of both the agency or corporate teams and the intern.

Jo Brophy MPRCA

International Engagement Manager, PRCA
jo.brophy@prca.global

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