

## WestLink Internship Program Frequently Asked Questions



### 1. What is the WestLink Internship Program?

The WestLink Internship Program is a two-year internship program sponsored by various levels of government, academic institutions and industry. The purpose of the program is to develop individuals who understand early-stage technology development and business in order to move innovations from research labs to the market place. The WestLink Internship Program provides the opportunity for individuals to expand their skills and gain an understanding of this field from business leaders in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

### 2. How is the program structured?

Over a two-year period, successful applicants will engage in three consecutive eight-month placements. The order of placements may vary.

#### *Technology Transfer Placement*

Individuals will learn about technology transfer in a university, college, hospital or government institution. Focus will be placed on: technology transfer operations, sponsored research, technology evaluation, intellectual property protection and licensing and spin-off company formation.

#### *Company Placement*

Individuals will understand how a technology is developed into a business opportunity in a corporate environment. Focus will be placed on: business planning, financing operations, product, service and business development, project management, marketing and operational issues.

#### *Finance Placement*

Individuals will experience the world of technology finance and venture capital. Focus will be placed on: business opportunity evaluation, management capability, technology assessment, financial statements, risk assessment, market opportunity and business modeling.

### **3. What qualifications do I need to be to become a WestLink intern?**

WestLink seeks high-quality individuals for this intense two-year program. Preference will be given to candidates who have education and/or comparable skills, knowledge and experience in both business and science. An aptitude for technology business development and an entrepreneurial spirit are also assets.

Candidates must:

- Have an aptitude for technology business development and an entrepreneurial spirit
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Be willing and able to relocate in western Canada for any or all of the three placements (attempts are made to accommodate interns by placing them in their “home towns” when possible and appropriate)

Successful applicants are asked to attend an interview in front of individuals from western Canada’s commercialization system. Once the interviews have taken place, the results of the interview are sent to the Selection and Advisory Committee who makes the final decision of who is accepted into the Internship Program.

### **4. What does the application process involve?**

Interested applicants must complete the online application form. In addition to the application form, applicants must attach the following:

#### *Resume*

- Maximum two pages outlining relevant education and work experience.

#### *Letter of Interest*

- Maximum 500 words answering the following questions:
  1. Why does the internship program interest you?
  2. How will participation in the program meet your personal objectives?
  3. What technology commercialization experience do you have?
  4. How do you see yourself contributing to technology commercialization in Western Canada?

### **5. What does the selection process involve?**

WestLink reviews all Internship Program applications. Successful applicants will be asked to attend a panel interview. The panel then sends its recommendations to the Selection and Advisory Committee who makes the final selection of who is accepted into the program.

### **6. When will I graduate from the WestLink Internship Program?**

WestLink interns will complete the program two years after they start.

## **7. Will I have a job at the end of this program?**

The Internship Program is not designed to be an employment program. Rather, it is a two-year skills and leadership development program. The reality is that there is the opportunity to showcase yourself while building your network throughout each of the three placements. Interns have the potential to meet hundreds of people working in the technology commercialization community, all of whom will need new employees at some point. It's up to interns to identify the area of technology commercialization that best suits them and which companies to target for employment at the end of the program.

By dedicating themselves to each of the three placements, interns have the opportunity to learn from and make contacts with future employers and associates. Like all opportunities, the outcome is up to the intern and his/her positive attitude.

## **8. What will I do during the placements?**

WestLink provides each placement host with general guidelines and expected outcomes. Although the work assigned to each intern will vary somewhat, the end knowledge and experience will be relatively consistent across the program. The work completed during each placement will be relative to the area of each host placement.

Similar to any job, interns should be aware that the level of responsibility and trust gained during each placement is related to the intern's aptitude and overall attitude.

## **9. Do I need to find my own placements?**

No. WestLink arranges all placements with academic and research organizations, financial organizations and a wide range of companies that participate in the program as placement hosts. Because the Internship Program relies on mentorship, WestLink strives to ensure the best match possible is found for each intern.

## **10. Does the Internship Program have International placements? When would I go?**

Due to the success and reputation of WestLink's Internship Program, we're in collaboration with organizations in the United Kingdom, the United States and Asia for possible international placements. An international internship usually takes place during the second placement.

WestLink has developed international placements in response to requests from industry who've indicated they need commercialization leaders who understand international business.

## **11. What training is required prior to starting Internship Program?**

Prior to the start of the first placement, interns attend the WestLink Leadership Series Technology Commercialization Boot Camp. This event is a four-day training session introducing interns to the complex world of technology commercialization. Interns will also be asked to attend between four and six additional training sessions through the Internship Program, including the Basic Licensing Course sponsored by the Alliance for Commercialization of Canadian Technology (ACCT). All other training sessions will focus on developing leadership and business skills.

The Internship Manager also provides constant coaching, advice and guidance as needed throughout and after program completion.

## **12. Do I pay for the training sessions?**

No. The WestLink Leadership Series Technology Commercialization Boot Camp and other training sessions have a market value of over \$2,000 per person. WestLink provides this training free-of-charge to all interns because it's a mandatory requirement for participation in the program.

In addition, all of the other training sessions, all intern travel expenses, meals and accommodation are covered by WestLink.

## **13. Will I have to relocate?**

All interns MUST be prepared to move to another city for at least one of their three placements. In some cases, interns may have to relocate for all three placements.

WestLink attempts to locate interns to their city of choice for the last placement.

## **14. Does WestLink pay for my relocation?**

WestLink provides a moving subsidy dependent on the location and distance of the move. It's the responsibility of each intern to manage his/her move in a cost-effective manner.

## **15. Why is it important for interns to be willing to move to various locations for each placement?**

The technology commercialization community is a small and highly integrated environment consisting of universities, technical institutes, hospitals, start-up companies and financiers. Within this community there are regional differences in the economic models, sector focuses and available resources. It is important that interns learn first-hand about these differences and how to adapt to them.

There are significant benefits to building a network in different geographic regions. As a graduate of the program and eventually as a technology leader, an intern's ability to leverage other pools of expertise, models for commercialization, outside resources, partnering and business opportunities will be entirely based on personal networks and reputation.

Finally, the best teachers in this field are strong leaders. Because the Internship Program's main objective is to develop technology commercialization leaders, the flexibility to move interns around to ensure the best match possible with a mentor is one of the program's strengths.

## **16. Do I get paid to be an intern?**

Yes. Unlike many training programs where you pay to learn, internships pay you to gain hands-on experience. Because interns are being paid to learn, the compensation received shouldn't be viewed as a salary, but as a training or living allowance. The amount paid is \$40,000 per annum. An extended health and dental benefits program is also provided by WestLink to each intern.

Upon successful graduation of the Internship Program, a \$10,000 bonus is paid to each intern.

**17. Will I have vacation time during my internship?**

To ensure a work-life balance, interns receive twenty-one paid vacation days over the two-year program.

**18. Is there flexibility in when I can complete my placements?**

No. Interns progress through the program as a group. This helps to build relationships with the other interns, to organize training sessions, to plan operational logistics and to complete financial reporting. All interns are required to sign a contract with WestLink committing to completing all three consecutive terms.

For further information regarding the WestLink Internship Program contact:

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Please e-mail questions with 'Question' in the subject field.