

Theological college intern programmes

Placements should be carefully selected and matched to each student

Sometimes students lack appropriate skills for working with the organisation they are placed with. For the placement to work to the advantage of both the student and host organisation, there should be thorough consultation with students and host organisations before students are allocated placements. Before the placement, orientation should be given to the student by the college and the host organisation.

The role of the mentor is vital

Some mentors want to do too much teaching in their mentoring sessions. Students need good support and space to raise personal concerns and identify key issues that will need exploring on return to the college.

The placement should be structured to enable both the student and the host to gain benefit from the programme

For example, at the beginning of the placement the host organisation should develop with the student a set of goals and a timetable of activities. They should provide supervision through regular review meetings to assess progress and reflect on learning. The host organisation could ask the student to carry out a small piece of applied research that can benefit the work of the organisation.

Formal assessment of the placement should be an important aspect of the programme

Both the student and the host organisation should produce a written report after the placement. This encourages both personal and organisational learning that can shape the future development of the programme.

Staff should be given opportunities to gain experience of working with poor people themselves

This could be through working alongside the students in their placements for a week or two. This can greatly increase the ability of staff to support the students before, during and after the placements.

These lessons are based on the experience of Union Biblical Seminary, India. [Click here](#) for a case study on their work.

Source: *ROOTS 11: Partnering with the local church*, Tearfund 2007, pages 63-64