

Religious Education in Schools (REIS)

Internship - Overview

Vision

To see SU Australia, REIS boards and local churches partnering together to raise up a new generation of REIS teachers/instructors equipped and experienced in teaching REIS in public schools.

What is a REIS internship?

A REIS internship is a year-long, part-time (generally one day per week) paid ministry apprenticeship. Interns will have the opportunity to experience the ministry of REIS in a variety of settings under the guidance of an experienced Supervising REIS teacher/instructor. The intern will engage in private theological studies, explore their calling, be trained and involved in helping young people explore, question, and discover the Christian faith in local public schools.

What should a REIS intern expect to experience?

A REIS Intern should expect an immersive schools-based ministry experience accompanied by intentional mentoring, training, private study, and pastoral care to develop and hone ministry skills. Throughout the year this will happen in four key contexts:

i) *On-the-ground*

The best learning often happens in the context of 'doing'. The internship has been designed with this in mind. Following the 5 Steps of Leadership Development framework (see below) the expectation is that an intern will be learning and developing in a staged manner as they experience first observing, then helping, and then leading in various REIS contexts under the guidance of an experienced supervising REIS teacher/instructor. They will teach REIS classes, lead small groups and other aspects of REIS lessons, and possibly assist with other ministries (e.g. breakfast club, lunchtime groups) all under a reflective practice model involving things like journaling and reflection questions.

ii) *In team*

An intern will have the chance to work in team environments, such as with local networks of REIS teachers/instructors. They will also be exposed to various regional, statewide, and national networking and training opportunities. These are valuable ways to experience the camaraderie that comes from serving with

and alongside others in ministry; to learn how to minister with others with differing gifts and personalities; and, to get a sense of the vocational opportunity of schools-based ministry.

iii) One-on-one

An intern will have a designated supervising REIS teacher/instructor as well as a designated pastoral carer from their sub-committee or board who will mentor them throughout the year. The supervising REIS teacher/instructor will have a professional focus, regularly meeting up for debriefs, mentoring, training, and reflection on practice and study. The pastoral carer will have a pastoral focus, regularly meeting up for prayer and support in ministry and life, and discernment of God's calling to ministry.

iv) Private study

An intern will engage in study towards the minimum qualifications to become a SU Australia REIS teacher/instructor (Diploma of Theology/Ministries or equivalent) at a reputable theological institution. The expectation is that they will complete a minimum of one subject per semester over the year. Given the nature of schools ministry it may be prudent for interns to explore intensive subjects taught in the school holidays. Where an intern already has such qualifications an alternative course of study may be undertaken in consultation with SU Australia.

Roles and responsibilities

Intern

In addition to the above, an intern is expected to:

- Fulfill all approved provider (NSW), church and/or denomination, SU Australia, school/s and REIS board/s administrative and compliance requirements that come with teaching/instructing REIS.
- Attend REIS board meetings once per semester and commit to supporting the fundraising and supporter communication efforts of their board/sub-committee.
- Attend two-day SU Australia Induction and networking/professional development opportunities throughout the year.

SU Australia Head Office

- Provide recruitment, employment, insurance, and support framework for interns as we do for all REIS workers under our care.
- Provide intern with two-day induction as well as regional, statewide and national training opportunities as they arise.
- Oversee the private study aspect of the internship in consultation with the intern.

- Effect termination of intern within a six-month probationary time frame if it is determined that they are unsuitable for the role.
- Manage any complaints, grievances and/or conflict resolution relating to the internship program using SU Australia's Complaints, Grievances and Resolution Policy.

SU Australia Field Development Manager (FDM)

- Facilitate intern recruitment process in consultation with the local REIS board/sub-committee.
- Meet with the supervising REIS teacher/instructor once per term to provide oversight and professional support in their development of a bespoke internship program following the 5 Steps of Leadership Development framework.
- Facilitate probationary review process for the intern to assess their ongoing fit for the role within the six-month probationary period, in partnership with supervising REIS teacher/instructor and board/sub-committee.
- Provide regional networking opportunities for interns to ensure their engagement in and visibility of opportunities for further schools-based ministry after internship.

Supervising REIS teacher/instructor

While the intern should be connected with REIS teachers/instructors across all boards involved, it is important to identify one supervising REIS teacher/instructor for the sake of continuity of support, efficiency, and simplicity. The supervising teacher/instructor should have at least three years' experience teaching/instructing REIS and a track record of leadership development. The supervising teacher/instructor will:

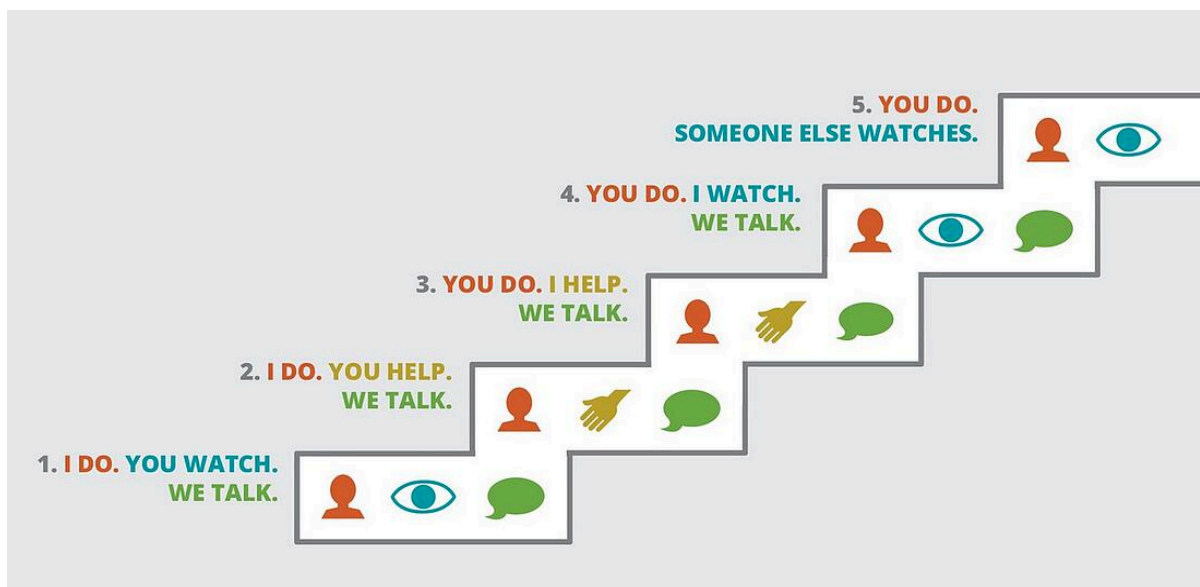
- Develop and oversee a bespoke one-year internship program using the 5 Steps of Leadership Development framework in consultation with the SU Australia FDM.
- Liaise with the REIS board/s and local REIS teachers/instructors so that interns are exposed to a variety of REIS ministry contexts and possibly other schools-based ministries (e.g. breakfast club, lunchtime group, student mentoring).
- Involve intern in local networking opportunities with REIS teachers/instructors and possibly other schools ministry workers.
- Meet fortnightly with intern for professional supervision, including debrief, mentoring, prayer, training, and reflection on practice and studies.
- Be involved with SU Australia FDM in the probationary review process for intern and any subsequent annual reviews.
- Undertake one lesson observation towards the end of the first year of the program to assess intern development in the role.

REIS board/sub-committee

- Partner with SU Australia FDM in the intern recruitment process by promoting/advertising the intern position initially within their local network of supporting churches using SU Australia advertising templates, and by participating in the interview panel process.
- Support the intern by providing financial, prayer, and pastoral support that would seek to see them thrive in the role.
- Appoint a pastoral carer (ideally the same gender as the intern) to meet with the intern monthly for prayer and support in ministry and life, and discernment of God's calling to ministry.
- Engage in the six-month probationary review and any subsequent annual review processes with SU Australia FDM by providing feedback on fit for the role.
- Act as ambassadors for the intern program by promoting its worth to other boards as we consider future expansion opportunities.

The 5 Step Leadership Development Framework

This framework lends an appropriate scaffold by which to develop a bespoke contextual REIS internship program. The framework follows a simple pattern of leadership development which undergirds numerous internship programs in SU Australia.



<https://www.aspengroup.com/blog/five-steps-of-leadership-development>

This framework can be adapted for any context of REIS internship using the following pattern:

Term 1 - I do. You watch. We talk.

The Supervising REIS teacher/instructor or regular REIS teacher/instructor conducts the REIS lessons and other schools-based ministry activities as usual. The intern observes and reflects. In their fortnightly meetings the intern and supervising REIS teacher/instructor debrief and reflect on the supervising REIS teacher/instructor or regular REIS teacher/instructor's practice using journaling, reflective questions, and discussion techniques.

Term 2 - I do. You help. We talk.

The supervising REIS teacher/instructor or regular REIS Teacher/Instructor continues to lead the REIS lessons and other schools-based ministry activities but looks for opportunities to give responsibility for different aspects of the lesson/activity to the REIS intern, e.g. run an interactive game, dramatic bible reading, teach a segment of the lesson, deliver a short testimony, assist with classroom management. In their fortnightly meetings the intern and supervising REIS teacher/instructor debrief and reflect on the supervising REIS teacher/instructor or regular REIS teacher/instructor's practice and the intern's involvement using journaling, reflective questions, and discussion techniques.

Term 3 - You do. I help. We talk.

The intern leads the REIS lessons and other schools-based ministry activities with opportunities given for the supervising REIS teacher/instructor or regular REIS teacher/instructor to lead different aspects of the lesson/activity, e.g. run an interactive game, dramatic bible reading, teach a segment of the lesson, deliver a short testimony, assist with classroom management. In their fortnightly meetings the intern and supervising REIS teacher/instructor debrief and reflect on the intern's practice using journaling, reflective questions, and discussion techniques.

Term 4 - You do. I watch. We talk.

The intern leads all aspects of REIS lessons and other schools-based ministry activities. The supervising REIS teacher/instructor observes and reflects, including conducting a thorough lesson observation using the SU Australia template. In their fortnightly meetings the intern and supervising REIS teacher/instructor debrief and reflect on the intern's practice using journaling, reflective questions, and discussion techniques.