



HDR Internships

Connecting research talent with real-world challenges



Access specialist research expertise through flexible HDR internships. University of Sydney PhD students work with organisations on focused projects that deliver practical insights, analytical capability, and fresh perspectives on complex problems.

Why host an HDR student?

HDR internships offer organisations a low-risk way to access research expertise and support innovation without long-term R&D hiring commitments. HDR students are highly skilled in defining problems in ambiguous contexts, designing and delivering independent analytical work, and applying strong data literacy and disciplinary expertise to generate evidence-based solutions.

Examples of internship projects include:

- Investigating emerging issues or opportunities
- Analysing complex datasets to identify trends
- Evaluating programs, policies, or products
- Conducting stakeholder and user research
- Supporting AI and digital innovation projects
- Testing concepts through pilot or feasibility studies
- Translating abstract research into practical recommendations
- Developing tools, prototypes, frameworks and models

Successful HDR internships can also help build a pipeline of future research talent. They may lead to deeper collaboration with the University, including industry-designed PhD projects or ongoing research partnerships with our academics.

HDR Internships at a glance

- 3–6 month projects
- Flexible formats
- End to end support from the Graduate Research School
- Industry supervision & academic guidance
- Available across all disciplines
- \$10k minimum scholarship contribution

What is an HDR Internship?

HDR (Higher Degree by Research) internships are short-term, project-based collaborations between your organisation and a PhD student with relevant expertise. Internships typically run for 3–6 months, either part-time or full-time, and are designed around a clearly defined business need. They also support structured student learning, with supervision from industry partners, and academic oversight to ensure research quality and graduate capability development. Our students have completed successful internships during their PhD across a wide range of sectors, including health, defence, engineering, arts, technology, government, and business.

How it works



Identify a challenge or project opportunity



Confirm the internship goals, timing, structure, IP and contribution



Connect with suitable HDR candidates



Sign the internship agreement



Supervise and support the student through the project



Receive project outputs and recommendations

Case study



Sara Haider's defence-related internship with Australian startup FortifyEdge AI focused on co-designing software for the Singapore Government. The University of Sydney Business School PhD candidate worked alongside industry experts in a fast-paced startup environment, applying her research skills to a real-world international project.

"I was only a month into the internship when I presented a dashboard I created to predict stress and imminent risk to the Singapore Government. I was so honoured to have the opportunity. The process of collaboration with an international client in person, in Singapore, I will never forget it."

— Sara Haider

"Engaging Sara as an HDR-level researcher has been highly valuable for Fortifiedge.ai. Her research capability helped us explore complex human-centred AI challenges with greater depth and rigour, while bringing emerging academic thinking directly into our work on frontline worker safety, performance, and training."

— Peter Padd, Founder & CEO, Fortifiedge.ai

Get started

We welcome conversations with organisations at any stage - whether you have a clearly defined project or are looking to explore potential opportunities.

Contact us to discuss your needs

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