# Proposed Quality Internship Framework for Host Training Establishments (HTEs)
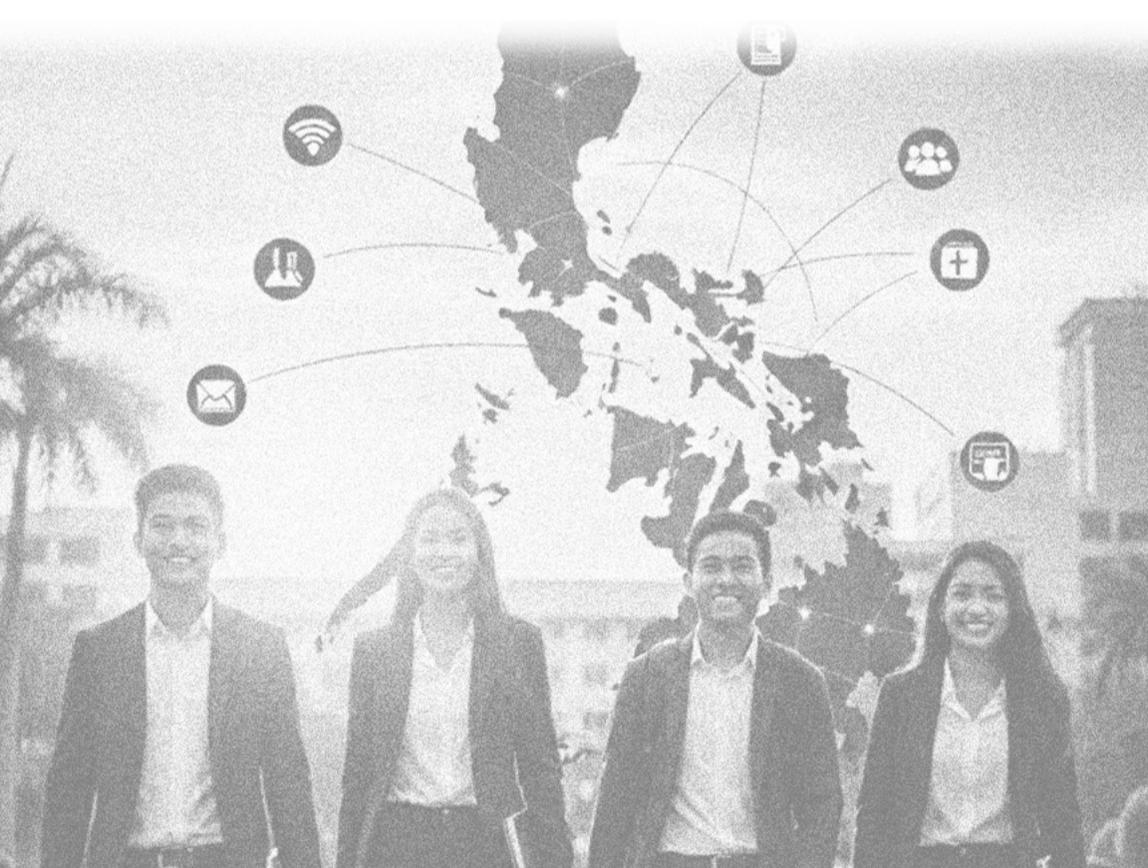
*Priscilla Mizpah P. Santillana*

Higher Education Research and Policy Reform Program

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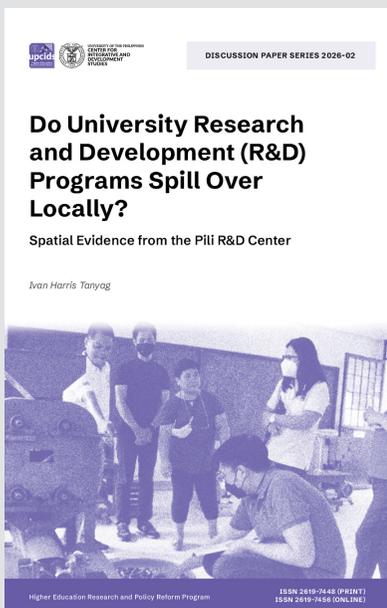


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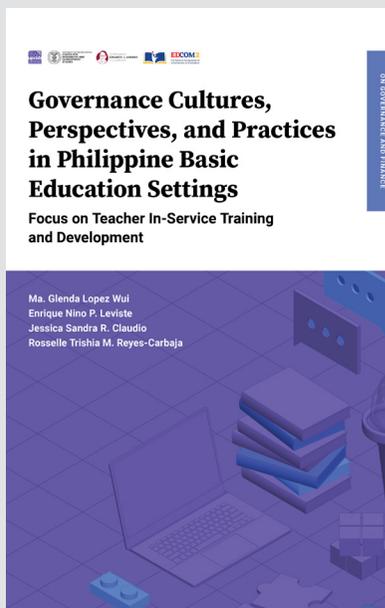


## MONOGRAPH

Governance Cultures, Perspectives, and Practices in Philippine Basic Education Settings: Focus on Teacher In-Service Training and Development

# Proposed Quality Internship Framework for Host Training Establishments (HTEs)

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# Key Points

- Internship programs implementation protocols often prioritize administrative compliance over pedagogical effectiveness.

- This study evaluates the existing landscape of academe-industry linkages, revealing that partnerships are frequently transactional and lack the strategic alignment necessary to bridge the gap between academic objectives and workplace realities.

- Findings indicate that the absence of specific, measurable quality indicators leads to subjective student evaluations and variable training standards.

- The Quality Internship Framework, grounded in Stufflebeam's context, input, process, and product (CIPP) model, establishes criteria for assessing host training establishments (HTEs), transforming them from mere training venues into certified pedagogical partners.

- The study concludes that institutionalizing these quality indicators is essential for ensuring that internships provide genuine educational value and successfully implement outcomes-based education (OBE).

# Introduction

Authentic and experiential learning experiences are indispensable elements of higher education. Beyond being an academic requirement, an internship serves as a rich source of information for curriculum updating and enhancement. As the bridge connecting students to the world of work, internships provide a vital continuum between the academe and industry. Worldwide, education sectors have recognized the immense benefits of work immersion and its contribution to a student's total learning experience. This type of learning is variously referred to as work-integrated learning (WIL), apprenticeship, on-the-job training (OJT), or internship.

Studies conducted over the years have highlighted the role of internships in enhancing graduate employability (Silva et al. 2016), developing practical skills (Calis et al. 2019), promoting adaptability, facilitating experiential learning (Ndamase and Lukman 2024), and fostering academe-industry linkages (Sison et al. 2024). Most research on internships has focused on the experiences of interns (Marinas et al. 2018; Di Pietro 2022), the satisfaction of interns and host sites (Rose 2023 ), the evaluation of interns' work performance (Ajjawi and Johnson 2021; Haddad-Adaimi et al. 2022), improvements in work competencies (McRae and Ramji 2017; Musa and Boriboon 2025), and internship programs of higher education institutions (HEIs) and host training establishments (HTEs) (Henderson and Trede 2017; Kiriri 2019; Nyanjom and Yang 2023), as well as the impact or outcome of internships (Smith and Worsfold 2013; Salnet et al. 2009).

For an internship to be successful and effective, primary stakeholders must take active roles and act with complementarity. Among the parties involved, the HTE bears the primary responsibility for developing and providing internship activities for students. An HTE—referring to any company or organization willing to deliver internship activities—is responsible for designing and implementing the internship plan in coordination with the HEI. In the Philippines, the Revised Guidelines for Student Internship Program in the Philippines (CHED Memorandum Order [CMO] No. 104, s. 2017) regulates student internships for all programs. It specifically highlights the obligations, responsibilities, and requirements of all involved parties, including the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the HEI, the HTE, the student interns, and their parents.

Although HTEs are key players in the internship process, most schools and universities lack intentionality in ensuring that the internship plan contributes to the attainment of program and institutional objectives. While expected to be a strong manifestation of collaboration between academe and industry, the course often becomes merely a common denominator in memoranda of agreement (MOAs), rather than an actual product of synergy between the HEI and HTE. Because requirements for approval are often vague and subjective, learning is not guaranteed, and interns are placed at risk. For instance, in 2016, an intern experienced severe respiratory problems after being assigned as a stock person and feeder in a pharmaceutical company. A doctor confirmed his lungs collapsed, likely due to exposure to drugs and equipment in his assigned area. The OJT Coordinator reportedly stated that his role was limited to endorsing local employment agencies and partners, claiming that student activities during deployment were beyond his control (Inquirer.net 2016). Alongside other cases of exploitation and challenges faced by interns, both Senator Risa Hontiveros (in 2019) and Representative Chel Diokno (in 2025) filed relevant legislation advancing the safety and welfare of interns.

Given the complexity of the HTEs' task and the vulnerability of interns, HEIs must adopt more systematic and measurable means of assessing both the readiness and effectiveness of organizations providing student internships. Establishing specific attributes and indicators to assess the capacity of HTEs will clarify the strategic direction for both parties. Clear guidelines and measurable outcomes will empower HEIs and HTEs to make informed decisions, strengthening their partnership toward the common goal of producing a future workforce that fits the industry's dynamic and evolving needs.

Ensuring that students are placed in reputable, structured, and industry-relevant training environments is crucial, as internships serve as the training ground for students transitioning into professionals. Without a clear benchmark for assessing the suitability of HTEs, schools risk deploying interns to workplaces that fail to provide adequate mentorship, skill development, or alignment with academic learning outcomes. Elov and Yangiboyeva (2024) emphasized the importance of indicators in improving effectiveness and ensuring the development of the educational process by enabling analytical work and efficient resource allocation. The output of this research, the Internship Quality Indicators, may allow students and educational institutions to make informed decisions regarding internships. It may clarify roles and further strengthen the partnership between academe and industry toward a

more inclusive, unified, and complementary education for learners and the workforce alike.

Ultimately, this framework can help HEIs establish stronger partnerships with quality-driven internship providers by offering an objective evaluation system. Doing so will promote accountability among HTEs, encourage continuous improvement in internship programs, and enhance the overall effectiveness of student internships. With a specific assessment tool, HEIs can ensure students gain meaningful, career-relevant experiences that truly prepare them for professional success.

## *Statement of the Argument/Research Questions*

The primary objective of this study is to develop a quality internship framework for HTEs. Specifically, the study aims to:

1.  Examine the current protocols employed by HEIs in establishing partnerships with HTEs.

2.  Identify the challenges and operational gaps resulting from these current protocols.

3.  Develop a comprehensive quality internship framework based on the findings of the study.

# Literature Review

Internship is an integral part of formal education programs. Its history traces back to the Middle Ages, when learning occurred under the direct supervision of a master craftsman. During this period, most training was conducted on the job with minimal formal theoretical education. By the 1960s, colleges and universities began supporting the expansion of these opportunities, incorporating them into institutional curricula. Students have found internships valuable as they link theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to real-time industry applications. Furthermore, they provide preparation for the entry-level job market, opportunities for shadowing mentors, career preparation, and increased job offers (Radigan 2009).

As an integral component of the learning process, internship is anchored in David Kolb's experiential learning theory (ELT). In the 1980s, Kolb developed a framework describing the critical role of experience in learning. Drawing heavily on other significant educational philosophies, Kolb emphasized the value of active engagement through the interaction between thinking and doing. He posited that experiences pave the way for idea generation and knowledge creation. Kolb explained the learning cycle through four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

In the concrete experience stage, learners are placed in situations where they encounter a new experience or a reinterpretation of an existing one. They then attempt to make sense of this experience through reflective observation, drawing relationships and meanings between their understanding and the event. Abstract conceptualization follows, where new learning arises from the analysis of the experience. Finally, during active experimentation, learners test the meanings they have drawn in the world around them. Described as a continuous loop, the cycle can be entered by learners at any stage; however, effective learning takes place only when learners successfully pass through all stages. Although Kolb's theory was widely celebrated, it faced critique for its assumption that learning is simple and fixed into predictable stages or cycles.

Kolb (2015) published a second edition providing updates and reflections on his initial explanation of Experiential Learning Theory. In addition to the influences of William James, Kurt Lewin, Carl Rogers, Carl Jung, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Paulo Freire, Kolb incorporated Mary Parker Follett's theories on learning relationships and creative experience. He drew significantly on Follett's explanation of how experiences lay the foundation for creativity, will, and power, and how human interaction aids in the creation of meaning and the reinterpretation of experiences. This edition also explained the parallelism between life and learning, the role of the brain in the learning cycle, and reexamined different learning styles in the context of individuality. Furthermore, focus was given to learning spaces, experiential learning in the context of adult development, and lifelong learning.

Contemporary applications of ELT extensions of Kolb's experiential learning theory are evident in its application as a research theory and a framework for proposed educational improvements. For instance, Wijner-Meijer et al. (2022) utilized Kolb's experiential learning cycle as a framework to develop a course design for medical students that integrates experience, theory, and simulation.

In 2023, Erbas found that internships improved learners' comprehension of the construction site manager (CSM) role in architecture education. Similarly, a study by McBride (2025) used ELT as a blueprint for incorporating simulation into practice curricula, finding it particularly useful and relevant for learning continuity plans.

Mechouat (2024) also demonstrated the effectiveness of ELT in developing learner confidence and serving as the basis for a comprehensive model for teacher education. Nurunnabi et al. (2022) further examined the application of ELT throughout the educational environment. Although their focus was on medical education, their findings—particularly regarding longitudinal outcome assessment, curriculum development, and student and faculty development—are relevant to other fields. Their research emphasized the role of reflection on direct experience as instrumental in helping students develop relevant skills and competencies.

# Methodology

This study employed a developmental research design aligned with the primary objective of creating a quality internship framework. To guide the development of this framework, the researcher selected Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP (context, input, process, and product) model as the most effective evaluative approach. The CIPP model was originally developed to evaluate the effectiveness of grants given to schools, operating on the assumption that the purpose of evaluation is "not to prove but to improve" (Stufflebeam 1983, 118). The model emphasizes two critical components: evaluation and standards. Evaluation refers to the process of using descriptive and judgmental information to make effective, informed, and justifiable decisions in education. Standards pertain to the principles and best practices in the areas being evaluated. Therefore, the CIPP model necessitates the use of appropriate and rigorous criteria.

A distinct advantage of this model is the concept of meta-evaluation, where the evaluation tool itself is measured against standards for further enhancement (Stufflebeam 2000). Recent applications of this model demonstrate its versatility, including its use in ensuring quality education (Aziz et al. 2018), enhancing teaching skills (Suharman and Rohman 2022), evaluating vocational education (Ratnay et al. 2022), course evaluation (Rejina and Baral 2023), curriculum development (Musolin et al. 2023), and assessing graduate readiness (Meiklejohn et al. 2023).

Data were gathered using three primary instruments: systematic review, documentary analysis, and interviews. Rigor was ensured through the triangulation of data obtained from these sources. To select studies for the review, specific Boolean search strings were utilized to identify relevant literature. A total of 32 studies published between 2009 and 2025 were selected to represent the current state of internship research. A data extraction table was prepared, employing coding and thematic analysis to derive meaning based on identified codes and categories.

The study analyzed official issuances from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), relevant legislative bills, and publicly available internship manuals. Specifically, five internship manuals were subjected to content analysis to determine the prevailing requirements and obligations for host training establishments (HTEs).

Interviews were conducted with two internship supervisors and one human resource director, all of whom possess direct experience in managing and supervising interns.

Ethical standards were strictly observed, particularly regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of personal information. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to the conduct of interviews. All sources were properly cited and attributed to ensure academic integrity.

# Discussion

This section presents the data gathered and analyzed from the systematic review, documentary analysis, and interviews.

## Current Protocols of HEIs in Partnering with HTEs

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a pivotal role in ensuring that student internships are effective and appropriate, as they bear the responsibility for approving host organizations. In this section, "current protocols" refer to the requirements, obligations, and procedures HEIs adopt when entering into a partnership with a host company or organization. Data regarding the status quo were derived from official issuances by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), publicly accessible internship manuals, and structured interviews.

## 1. Regulatory Requirements (CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, s. 2017)

The Revised Guidelines for Student Internship Program in the Philippines (CMO No. 104, s. 2017) establishes the policies and standards for conducting internships across all programs requiring practicum subjects. Article 7, Section 17 outlines the following specific requirements for host training Establishments (HTEs):

- Government recognition: Possession of relevant government recognition and permits.

- Program capability: The capacity to provide an appropriate internship program and codevelop it alongside the HEI.

- Mentorship and training: The capacity to facilitate technical training and provide mentorship to student interns.

- Evaluation compliance: The ability to adhere to the student performance evaluation system provided by the HEI.

These requirements qualify an HTE to become an internship provider. Primarily, they ensure the legitimacy of the company, requiring it to be duly regulated and certified by relevant government agencies. This prerequisite safeguards the professionalization of the internship site. Notably, the majority of these provisions highlight the educational obligations of HTEs, specifically the focus on developing internship programs, providing mentorship, and implementing evaluation systems. Hence, an internship demands an active partnership between the HEI and the HTE. Ideally, the internship site should not merely serve as a venue for work exposure but must actively participate in teaching and learning. This role aligns with the concept of partnership pedagogy introduced by Richards and Spanjaard (2025), which emphasizes collaboration between academe, students, and industry partners in bridging theory and practice.

## 2. Program-Specific Guidelines

The policies, standards, and guidelines (PSG) of selected academic programs were also reviewed to identify specific internship provisions:

- Business Administration (CMO No. 17, s. 2017): The selection of the internship site relies on the collective decision of school administrators, faculty, and students.

- Criminology (CMO No. 37, s. 2010): Students are guided by the Guidelines in the Conduct of Practicum Requirement for BS Criminology Students.

- Hotel and Restaurant Management (CMO No. 62, s. 2017): A fundamental requirement is for the host establishment to be registered with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

- Information Technology (CMO No. 25, s. 2015): Students must apply to IT-related companies. Furthermore, 70 percent of the total curriculum units must be completed prior to the internship.

## 3. Analysis of Internship Manuals

A review of five publicly available internship manuals was conducted to determine baseline requirements for HTEs. All five manuals expressed compliance with CMO No. 104, s. 2017. Common requirements included:

- Legitimacy: HTEs must be duly registered and certified by the corresponding government agency.

- Structure: The necessity of a training plan and an assigned supervisor.

- Collaboration: A readiness to coordinate with the sending HEI and execute a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Understanding (MOU).

Beyond these standard provisions, specific HEIs emphasized distinct guidelines:

- HEI 1 emphasized the host's role in the teaching process, requiring discipline-related activities and explicitly excluding clerical or menial tasks.

- HEI 2 focused on intern welfare and safety, highlighting the need for feedback mechanisms regarding misconduct, safety incidents, and grievances.

- HEI 3 required a safe, ethical, and conducive learning environment.

- HEI 4 expected hosts to facilitate skill development, professional discipline, work ethics, and human relations.

- HEI 5 advocated for employability and the development of ethical, responsible citizenship.

## 4.  Interview Findings

Partnership initiation and execution interview data revealed two primary methods for establishing partnerships. As HTE 1 noted, "The internship office of a university approaches us and asks if we are willing to accept interns." If the company expresses intent, the school sends an MOA for review. Once conditions are agreed upon, the MOA is signed by representatives of both parties. The MOA typically emphasizes the conduct of orientation, student safety, and HTE participation in evaluation. HTE 2 added, "The MOA specifies the duty schedule to ensure no conflicts; fees and other expectations are also included." HTE 3 emphasized the necessity of school endorsement, confidentiality clauses, timelines, safety protocols, and liability limitations in case of accidents.

## 5.  Findings on Training Plan Collaboration

A critical finding regarding the internship training plan, which dictates the learning activities, is the lack of collaboration. All interviewees stated there were no formal meetings between them and the HEI to codevelop this plan. HTEs are generally given the liberty to design and implement the plan based on their organizational needs.

As noted by HTE 1, "There is actually no meeting; they [the HEI] only assume that the training plan we prepare is appropriate to the needs of the students." He further stated that HTEs often only gauge HEI satisfaction through post-internship feedback or the renewal of partnerships. Occasionally, intern supervisors may indirectly explain requirements to the adviser or staff during monitoring visits. HTE 3 noted that open discussion typically occurs only during surprise monitoring visits.

Regarding the content of the plan, all interviewees agreed that duties assigned to interns are distinct from the actual jobs of regular employees, as tasks are specifically designed for trainees. The limitations of tasks and duties are well-explained. Finally, in terms of evaluation, HTEs are responsible for conducting monitoring, providing feedback, and accomplishing performance evaluation reports.

## *Challenges and Gaps Arising from Current Protocols*

The HTE should not merely serve as a venue for exposure or educational trips; rather, it must function as a capable and pedagogical partner of the HEI in facilitating experiential learning. Consequently, there must be more strategic and intentional planning in the delivery of internships. This section highlights the existing challenges (pain points) and gaps (deficiencies) within the current system.

**Table 1. Challenges and Gaps Arising from Current Protocols**

| Current Protocol | Challenges | Gaps |
|---|---|---|
| HTE Requirements based on CHED CMO No. 104, s. 2017 | ■ Subjective interpretation of the requirements<br>■ Only sets the absence or presence of the requirements | ■ Lack of specific indicators that will help HEIs assess the extent of the ability and capacity of HTEs to engage in partnership and implement an internship program |
| PSG internship provisions | ■ Very limited requirement set for internship | ■ Lack of Program-specific internship requirements in PSGs |
| Standards of quality internship | ■ Indicators of HTE quality differ | ■ No holistic standards for quality internship |
| Academe and industry partnership | ■ HTEs are left alone to design the training plan or internship activities<br>■ There is a disconnect between the program objectives and HTEs' internship plans | ■ Lack of constructive alignment between the program study and internship<br>■ Lack of formal and strategic collaboration between HEI and HTE |
| Evaluation and Assessment | ■ Indirect feedback regarding HTE is insufficient.<br>■ Data from evaluations is rarely utilized for curriculum improvement. | ■ Lack of formal and direct feedback/ evaluation to assess HTE and inform them about the results<br>■ Lack of pathways to utilize internship data for curriculum enhancement. |

able 1 presents the challenges and gaps in internship implementation. In terms of compliance with CMO No. 104, s. 2017, the primary challenges lie in the subjectivity and the minimum-compliance nature of the requirements. Terms such as "capability to provide appropriate internship," "capacity to mentor," and "ability to follow the evaluation system" often function as a binary checklist, confirming only the presence or absence of such capacity, rather than determining the extent or quality of that capacity. Without specific indicators to measure the HTE's actual proficiency, HEIs are forced to rely on subjective assumptions regarding the effectiveness of the training. As noted by HTE 1, "We just assume that what we are doing is right when the schools send interns again the next time, or they offer a continuous MOA."

Furthermore, the CMO primarily requires HTEs to provide "technical training," whereas reviewed studies indicate that both hard and soft skills are equally relevant. Musa, Nurhayati, and Boriboon (2025) emphasized the necessity of soft skills, affective and interpersonal skills, professional confidence, and career orientation. Similarly, Satulan, Alovera, and Malangen (2025) focused on the development of communication skills, professional behavior, job readiness, and employability skills.

The policies, standards, and guidelines (PSGs) provide very limited provisions regarding internship requirements. Not all PSGs offer specific guidelines for the conduct of internships; those that do often focus only on minimum hours, government recognition, and a general reminder that the host company must provide work related to the field of study. The necessity of aligning learning outcomes, activities, and assessment has been emphasized by Solnet et al. (2009), Smith and Worsfold (2013), Kiriri (2019), and Ajjawi et al. (2020). Without clear provisions in the PSG, the constructive alignment of internship activities to intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and program objectives is not guaranteed. Consequently, the internship risks becoming a learning activity that is independent, or even isolated, from the core curriculum.

In terms of defining quality, HEIs exhibit differing priorities that imply varying standards for effective internships. While all comply with minimum CMO requirements, priorities diverge significantly: some HEIs prioritize intern safety and welfare, others focus on soft skills and work ethics, while others emphasize the technical quality of assignments or employability. This heterogeneity demonstrates a lack of focus and consistency. Without a specific, common basis, HTEs are evaluated subjectively by different HEIs. Conversely, HTEs must navigate the administrative burden of adjusting to different partner schools' disparate requirements. The critical gap is the lack of holistic

standards—specifically, a comprehensive set of indicators, to guide HEIs in evaluating an HTE's readiness and effectiveness in delivering the internship program.

Based on current protocols, the partnership between academic institutions and industry often remains at a surface level. Although linkages are formalized via memoranda of agreement (MOA), there is frequently a lack of strategic collaboration guided by program objectives. For instance, HTEs are often granted independence to prepare training plans in the absence of an orientation regarding the specific competencies set forth by the academic program. This disconnect results in a lack of constructive alignment between program objectives and internship goals. While an internship may be operationally effective, without intentional consideration of program objectives, the HEI and HTE maintain a parallel rather than a collaborative relationship.

Finally, there is a distinct lack of structure in evaluation and assessment processes. Interviewees indicated they are rarely provided with feedback regarding their strengths and weaknesses in implementing the internship plan. Feedback is typically limited to serious complaints; HTEs are rarely informed of performance metrics that would help them identify areas for development. Furthermore, schools are inconsistent in their monitoring and evaluation requirements—varying from daily reports to simple pre- and post-internship evaluations. These inconsistent requirements complicate the tasks of internship supervisors, particularly those handling interns from multiple schools.

Crucially, there is a lack of utilization pathways for data derived from internship evaluations. Information gathered is rarely fed back into the curriculum to make it more industry-relevant. This disconnect is inconsistent with the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) as mandated by CMO No. 46, s. 2012, or the Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance in Philippine Higher Education through an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based QA. CMO No. 46 explicitly emphasizes the need for student-centered learning and the continuous quality improvement (CQI) derived from the constructive alignment of outcomes and activities.

## *Quality Internship Framework*

Table 2 presents the thematic analysis of the reviewed studies, which served as the empirical basis for the proposed Quality Internship Framework. Grounded in Stufflebeam's CIPP (context, input, process, product) model, the analysis

systematically categorizes data extracted from the literature. The table details the study authors, the codes derived from the full texts, the classification of these codes within the CIPP domains, and the major themes that emerged from the analyzed data.

**Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Reviewed Studies**

| ID | Source | Specific Code | CIPP Mapping (Code) | Major Theme (Category) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Smith and Worsfold (2013) | Learning outcomes, Authenticity, Alignment of learning activities and assessments | Input | Internship curriculum |
| 2 | Solnet et al. (2009) | Leadership and Interpersonal skills | Input | Internship curriculum |
| 3 | Haddad-Adaimi, Zeid-Daou and Ducq (2022) | Assessment and evaluation | Process | Internship curriculum |
| 4 | Henderson and Trede (2017) | Partnerships between industry and student, Collaborative governance | Context | Academe and industry linkage/ collaboration |
| 5 | Thi Ngoc Ha and Dakich (2022) | Internship learning outcomes, Internship support, Internship assessment | Input | Internship curriculum |
| 6 | Kiriri (2019) | Supervisor access, authenticity, Integrated learning support, Alignment of teaching and learning activities | Input | Internship curriculum |
| 7 | Musa, Nurhayati, and Boriboon (2025) | Role clarity and career orientation, Affective interpersonal skill, Growth, Digital system Navigation, Mentorship, Contextualize tasks and embed reflective components | Input | Internship curriculum |

| ID | Source | Specific Code | CIPP Mapping (Code) | Major Theme (Category) |
|----|--------|---------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 8 | Marinaș et al. (2018) | Learning supporting environment, Task assignments, Performance assessment, Quality feedback, Host organization mentorship | Context Process | Support and resources |
| 9 | Nyanjom, Goh, and Yang (2023) | Authenticity of assessment design, Work-study-life balance, Level of industry involvement in assessment | Process | Internship plan Academic and industry linkage/collaboration |
| 10 | Rose (2023) | Orientation for learning, Internship satisfaction, Experiential learning | Input Output | Internship curriculum |
| 11 | McRae and Ramji (2017) | Cultural intelligence, Intercultural competencies | Context | Personal and professional development |
| 12 | Jackson et al. (2015) | Student evaluation, Employer evaluation | Output | Academe and industry linkage |
| 13 | Janssens et al. (2024) | Competency frameworks, Reflection and feedback, Assessment the continuity of competency, Development, Mentor involvement ePortfolios, Competency development visualizations, Competency development after graduation | Input Process Output | Internship curriculum, Personal and professional development, Support and resources |
| 14 | Ajjawi et al. (2020) | Authenticity of assessment, Alignment of assessment | Process | Internship curriculum |
| 15 | Bayerlein, L., et al. (2021) | Technology-based, Digital service learning, Simulated work placements | Input | Internship curriculum |
| 16 | Boud et al. (2023) | Assessment, Role of university and workplace staff in assessment | Context Process | Academic and industry linkage, Internship curriculum |

| ID | Source | Specific Code | CIPP Mapping (Code) | Major Theme (Category) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Lasen et al. (2018) | Regulatory environment requiring development and assurance of higher-order learning outcomes, High quality assessment design, Greater involvement of industry/professional partners in assessment practices and stronger alignment between reflective assessment tasks and students' WIL experiences | Context | Academe and industry linkage |
| 18 | Fenton (2025) | Context, Leadership, Skills development, Learning outcomes, Curriculum design, Experience, Inclusivity, Equity and access, Stakeholder relationship management, and evaluation, and Assessment | Context Output | Academe and industry, Curriculum |
| 19 | Di Pietro (2022) | Intrapersonal skills, Practical knowledge and language proficiency | Output | Personal and professional development |
| 20 | Bawica (2021) | Academic internship programs and internship placement, Challenging job, Effective supervision, Task clarity and compensation, Academic preparedness, Positive attitude, and Self-initiative | Input Context | Curriculum, Personal and professional development |
| 21 | Malbuyo et al. (2024). | Developing practical skills, Career preparation, Partnering with industries for diverse placements, and providing mentorship and workshops during internships will maximize learning, Regular evaluation ensures programs stay relevant to student and employer needs | Input Process Output | Curriculum, Academic and industry, Personal and professional development |

| ID | Source | Specific Code | CIPP Mapping (Code) | Major Theme (Category) |
|----|--------|---------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 22 | Laguador, Chavez-Prinsipe, and De Castro (2020). | System thinking skill, Employability skills along with critical thinking and interpersonal skill, Literacy and numeracy as well as work ethics and management skills | Input Process Output | Internship curriculum, Personal and professional development |
| 23 | Cadosales et al. (2021) | Mentor, Coaching and feedbacking, Evaluation and reflections, Training, Field experiences, International participation/Intercultural experiences, Working environment, Stakeholders' involvement, Qualities of a teaching intern | Context Input Process | Curriculum, Personal and professional development, Support and resources |
| 24 | Celestial-Valderama (2023) | Continuing personal and professional development | Output | Personal and professional development |
| 25 | Halog and Limos-Galay (2024) | Learning outcomes, Proficiency in using Microsoft Office Suite and Google Workspaces, Specialized workshops, New technologies | Input | Personal and professional development, Support and resources |
| 26 | Clores and Manalo (2025) | Enhancing administrative and technical support, Refining online assessment methods, and integrating more opportunities for direct interaction between preservice teachers and their mentors | Input Process | Curriculum, Support and resources |
| 27 | Satulan, Alovera, and Malangen (2025) | High satisfaction with mentorship and real job experience, Alignment with students' academic and career goals through close school-industry collaboration | Context Input Process Output | Curriculum plan |
| 28 | Micabalo, Montilla, and Cano (2020) | Personality development seminar, Work ethics, Sexual harassment and pre-internship seminar and orientation | Context | Safety and welfare |

| ID | Source | Specific Code | CIPP Mapping (Code) | Major Theme (Category) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | Casugay et al. (2024) | Discipline-specific competencies, Communication skills, Interpersonal skills, Photography skills, Minor subjects (oral communication and fundamentals of grammar), OJT Manual | Input Output | Personal and professional development |
| 30 | Schneider et al. (2024) | Internship as situated learning, Communication gaps, Mentoring relationship, Too much reliance on the internship host, Lack of guidance from the institution | Context Process Output | Curriculum plan, Academic and industry collaboration |
| 31 | Pascua, Corpuz, and Sadang (2022) | Soft skills, Right industry partner | Input Output | Academe and industry linkage, Personal and professional development |

Drawing upon the analysis of challenges, operational gaps, interview data, and the systematic literature review, the researcher developed the Quality Internship Framework. The primary goal of this framework is to establish specific indicators for assessing both the readiness and effectiveness of any public or private company, institution, or organization seeking to become a host training establishment (HTE).

In this study, the term "quality" adopts the definition provided by CMO No. 46, s. 2012. This order defines quality as the "alignment and consistency of the learning environment with the institution's vision, mission, and goals," "fitness for purpose," and "exceptionality."

These quality indicators were synthesized from reviewed studies, documentary analysis, and interviews. Stufflebeam's CIPP model was utilized to organize these indicators into a usable and replicable evaluation tool. By integrating all critical domains, from context to product, this model ensures that an HTE's capacity to provide internships is comprehensively observed from start to finish.

## Components of the Quality Internship Framework

1.  **Context: Defining Quality Internship**

    A quality internship is the product of active collaboration and continuous partnership between the HEI and the HTE. It is grounded in a shared vision where the host organization is not merely a venue, but a partner in education. To facilitate a successful internship, the HTE should possess the following attributes:

    ■   Accreditation and recognition: Possession of relevant industry accreditation, awards, or citations beyond baseline government regulatory requirements.

    ■   Proven credibility: A positive industry reputation evidenced by a high ratio of commendations to complaints/grievances.

    ■   Strategic alignment: Clear alignment of organizational objectives with the goals of the HEI and the students.

    ■   Dedicated representation: The designation of an industry partner/ representative who officially coordinates with the HEI.

2.  **Input: The Quality Internship Plan**

    The quality internship plan adopts an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach through constructive alignment. It is the product of a careful synthesis of program objectives, institutional goals, and intended learning outcomes, ensuring they are directly mapped to learning activities and assessments. The plan must address both the hard (discipline-based) and soft skills required for employment or entrepreneurship. Key indicators include:

    ■   Collaborative curriculum map: A mapping of activities co-developed by the HEI and HTE.

    ■   Collaborative internship syllabus: A syllabus designed jointly to ensure academic rigor and industry relevance.

    ■   Discipline-based learning activities: Specific tasks that apply theoretical knowledge to practice.

■    Mentorship and supervision provisions: Structured guidelines for coaching, mentoring, and monitoring student progress.

3.    **Process: The Quality Internship Implementation**

The quality internship process is multidimensional and participatory. It is characterized by shared responsibility, where planning, implementation, and assessment are not the burden of a single stakeholder. This process explicitly prioritizes the safety, welfare, and holistic development of learners. Key indicators include:

■    Skills development training: Active training and development focused on relevant soft skills and employability competencies.

■    Safety and welfare mechanisms: Established protocols for student safety, including insurance, anti-harassment policies, and hazard orientation.

■    Integration and reintegration plans: Structured activities for onboarding interns into the company culture and debriefing them upon return to the HEI.

■    Participatory assessment: Periodic evaluation involving inputs from the student, the HTE supervisor, and the HEI coordinator.

4.    **Product: The Quality Internship Outcome**

The quality internship outcome is defined by rigorous analysis, the usability of results, and the closure of the feedback loop. It moves beyond simple grading to focus on continuous quality improvement. Key indicators include:

■    Data Analysis and Reporting: The production of reports or research analyzing internship performance data.

■    Communication of results: Formal mechanisms for reporting findings to both the HEI and HTE to drive appropriate actions.

■    Strategic utilization of data: The use of internship data for curriculum enhancement, policy formulation, and strengthening linkage activities.

# Conclusion

While internships are a cornerstone of experiential learning in higher education, the current protocols governing partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and host training establishments (HTEs) are often limited to regulatory compliance rather than quality assurance. The findings reveal that existing guidelines, specifically CMO No. 104, s. 2017, serve primarily as a checklist for legitimacy rather than a roadmap for pedagogical effectiveness. Consequently, partnerships often remain transactional and parallel, lacking the strategic collaboration necessary to ensure constructive alignment between academic program objectives and workplace realities.

The gaps identified, ranging from subjective evaluation criteria to the absence of formal feedback loops, underscore the necessity for a paradigm shift. The reliance on assumptions regarding an HTE's capacity to mentor limits the potential of internships to bridge the skills gap. Without specific, measurable quality indicators, HEIs risk deploying students to environments that offer exposure but lack educational value.

The proposed Quality Internship Framework, grounded in the CIPP (context, input, process, product) model, addresses these deficiencies by offering a holistic approach to partnership. By defining quality through specific indicators—such as collaborative curriculum mapping, safety mechanisms, and data-driven curriculum enhancement—the framework transforms the internship from a mere graduation requirement into a robust, outcomes-based educational experience. Ultimately, ensuring quality in internships requires moving beyond signed MOAs; it demands a shared commitment to a unified teaching and learning process where the industry serves not just as a host, but as a true partner in education.

# Policy Recommendation

The following policy recommendations are submitted for consideration by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and relevant legislative bodies. These recommendations utilize the proposed Quality Internship Framework as a foundational tool to strengthen academe-industry linkages and establish specific benchmarks for ensuring that internships are a vital component of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE).

1.  **Adoption of the Framework as a National Benchmark for Accreditation**

    CHED may consider adopting the Quality Internship Framework as a national benchmark. This framework can serve as the basis for developing a standardized rubric used in updating current CMOs or relevant manuals governing student internship programs. Furthermore, CHED may utilize this framework to design a tiered accreditation or certification process for HTEs. This certification would validate an HTE's capacity to act not merely as a workplace, but as a certified "pedagogical partner."

2.  **Integration into Program-Specific Guidelines (PSGs)**

    It is recommended that CHED integrate the components of the framework into the PSGs of specific academic programs. Rather than generic provisions, PSGs should include internship requirements that are distinct and customized to the program of study. Additionally, the monitoring of OBE implementation should explicitly include the evaluation of internship quality, ensuring that learning outcomes are achieved during the practicum phase.

3.  **Institutionalization of Collaborative Governance in HEIs**

    HEIs must mandate that Internship Supervisors and Industry Representatives are actively involved throughout the entire internship lifecycle, from the planning and curriculum mapping stages to implementation and assessment. The policy should require that the training plan be a coauthored document, ensuring that the industry partner is "onboard" and aligned with the university's academic objectives before the student deployment begins.

4.  **Incentivization of Quality HTEs**

    To encourage private companies to take an active, pedagogical role in academe-industry linkages, the government should explore policy mechanisms that provide incentives to accredited HTEs. Specifically, tax exemptions or fiscal incentives could be granted to HTEs that meet the "Quality Internship" standards (e.g., those that provide structured mentorship and skills training), thereby reducing the cost of training and encouraging more companies to participate in high-quality internship programs.

## AI Statement

Gemini was used in generating the Boolean String Code used in searching for related studies. It was also used to improve the readability and language of the text.

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