

Rural Arts

Internship experience through The Student Internship Bureau, University of York

Rural Arts is a charity that delivers inspiring and inclusive creative opportunities that enrich lives and connect communities across Yorkshire. They programme 70 professional performances per year in rural venues; lead a range of wellbeing and employment programmes to support vulnerable people; and provide over 400 events and activities each year at The Courthouse, North Yorkshire's only professionally-run cross-discipline arts centre.

What the project entailed:

The pandemic had a huge impact on arts organisations like Rural Arts, as we had always delivered our services face-to-face. It also really impacted the income that charities like us generated. We saw the opportunity to tackle both problems in one - to develop new ways of reaching people, and new ways of securing financial support. As a result, we wanted an ambitious, creative intern to support the research, design and delivery of a brand new product.

Why you chose to recruit an intern for the project:

Rural Arts' success is built on the value of interns - on giving people new to the workforce the opportunity to generate new ideas, and have them taken seriously. Our current CEO, Max May, started his career as an intern, right here at Rural Arts. Eve Sheridan, the internship Project Manager, also originally joined Rural Arts as an intern from the University of York in 2019, before securing a full-time role at the organisation. During Mary's time with us, over 50% of our entire workforce had joined Rural Arts as an intern, apprenticeship or placement.



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How has the intern contributed to the development and/or growth of your organisation/department?

Mary was a massive asset to Rural Arts - seen in her securing full-time employment elsewhere before the internship even ended! She supported us to develop a highly successful new product to engage people from our local community and beyond, and that enabled us to generate new income to support our charity. Mary brought a fresh new perspective, a willingness to get stuck in, and a passion for the work we did.

How did you find the process of recruiting an intern through the Student Internship Bureau?

We're lucky to have benefitted from a number of interns from the University of York and have always found the process so smooth and successful. We've had top quality candidates who have gone on to make a significant impact on our organisation and have exciting future careers, both at Rural Arts and beyond.