

# An Evaluation of the Reading Internship Scheme (RIS): 2019-2022

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## Contextual statement

This report was written to reflect upon and review the Reading Internship Scheme, to note changes that have already been made and what trends the extant data shows. It has been used to inform planning for the Access & Participation Plan (APP) 2024-2028. As part of the new APP, RIS will undergo a full evaluation, with a more detailed evaluation report to follow in due course.

## Introduction

### What is the Reading Internship Scheme (RIS)?

The Reading Internship Scheme (RIS) offers University of Reading undergraduate students the opportunity to undertake 4 – 8 week paid internships with professionals. It allows organisations to connect with students who are motivated, proactive, and keen to experience the working world. Organisations receive support towards their interns' salaries – we provide 100% salary contribution for charities, and 50% for profit earning small to medium sized enterprises (with the host organisation matching the other 50%).

### What does RIS aim to do?

The Reading Internship Scheme aims to support students with finding meaningful work experience, allowing them to develop their employability and transferable skills. This helps equip students with valuable skills needed in order to compete in the graduate labour market.

A lot of extracurricular work experience is unpaid, which many students are unable to undertake due to the financial burdens. The Reading Internship Scheme uses its funds to contribute towards interns' salaries, meaning students are able to undertake paid, meaningful work experiences.

Many organisations are unable to facilitate paid internships due to the financial aspects but the Reading Internship Scheme allows charities and profit earning small to medium sized enterprises access to talented undergraduates who can make a real impact on the businesses.

There is some evidence that work experience can help with securing good graduate outcomes. As students from IMDQ1&2 may be less able to take on unpaid work experience, RIS aims to level the playing field for work experience. In this way, RIS aims to contribute to reducing progression gaps between IMDQ1&2 students and other students.

### Link to Access & Participation Plan (APP)

This report has been used to inform the development of the APP 2024-28.

## Scope of this report

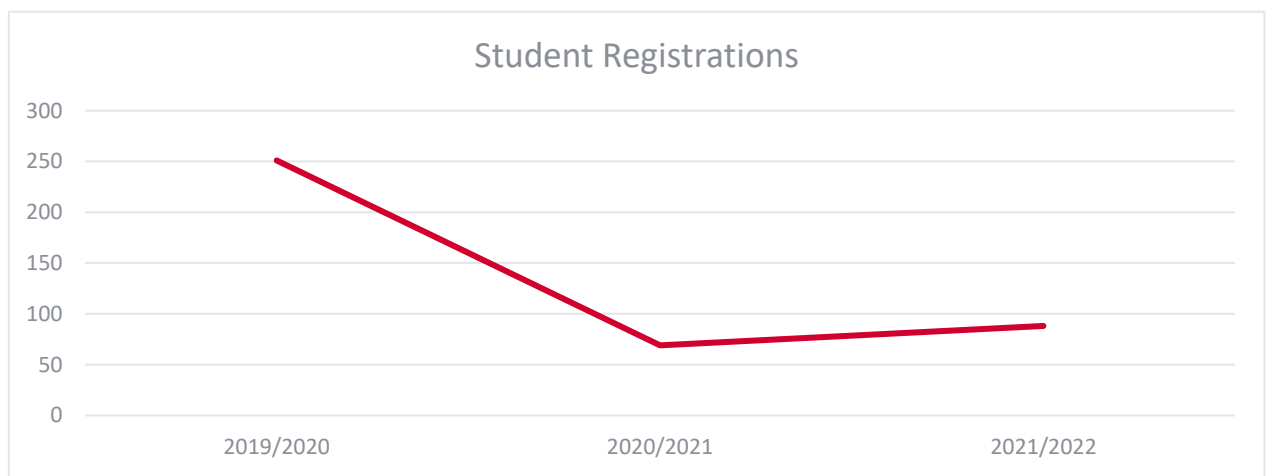
This report looks back at RIS for the previous three academic years, going back from 2021/2022 to the 2019/20 Academic Year. It includes items such as registration and placement statistics, testimonials and survey results. The aim of this report is to show the impact of RIS and its growth over the years.

## Results

### Student registrations of interest

Student registrations of interest are expressed via an online form. Students then receive updates throughout the year when advertisements are put out. Note, students do not need to have completed a registration of interest in order to apply for an internship opportunity.

- 2019/2020 Academic Year: 251
- 2020/2021 Academic Year: 69
- 2021/2022 Academic Year: 88



Interest from students dropped in the years 20/21 & 21/22, likely due to Covid as the scheme was promoted remotely. The return of face-to-face events such as careers fairs, lecture shout outs, and in-person information sessions means we are able to promote RIS on a more personal level. Although we are not reporting on 2022/23 in detail in this report, engagement has drastically increased since last year.

### Employer registrations

- 2019/2020 Academic Year: 181
- 2020/2021 Academic Year: 131

## APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS

- 2021/2022 Academic Year: 159



Employer registration dropped in the 2020/21 academic year to 131 from the previous academic year's 181. This is likely due to the uncertainty brought about by Covid19 – employers were cautious about bringing on new staff due to financial difficulties. Registrations increased in the following year.

### Internships advertised

- 2019/2020 Academic Year: 118
- 2020/2021 Academic Year: 99
- 2021/2022 Academic Year: 122



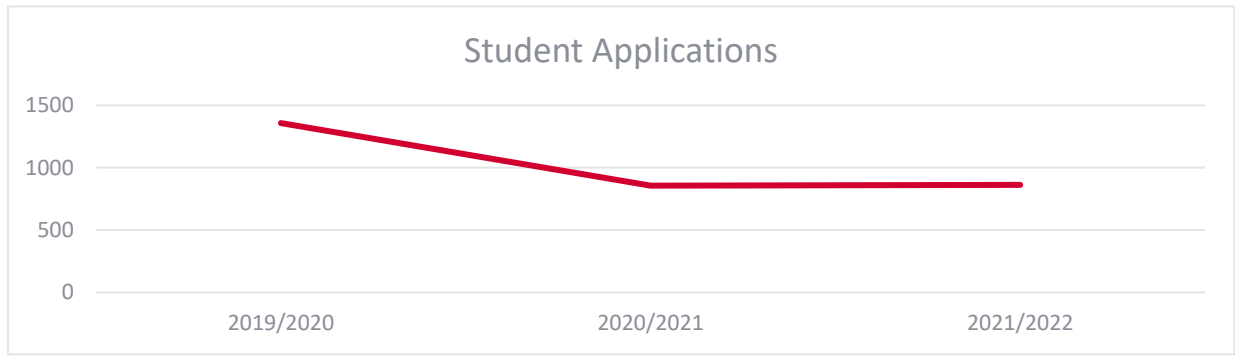
Similarly to employer registrations, advertisements dropped in the 2020/21 academic year to 99 from the previous academic year's 118. This is likely due to the uncertainty brought about by Covid19 – employers were cautious about bringing on new staff due to financial difficulties. Internships advertised increased in the 2021/2022 academic year and are on track to increase again in the current academic year.

### Student applications

Students can apply to as many internship opportunities as they like.

### APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS

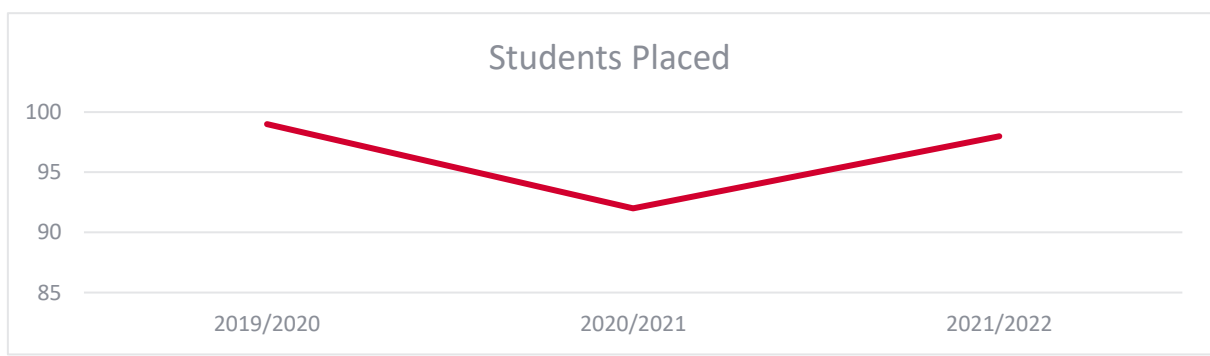
- 2019/2020 Academic Year: 1358
- 2020/2021 Academic Year: 856
- 2021/2022 Academic Year: 862



Applications dropped in the 2020/21 academic year as there were fewer roles advertised for students to apply for. However, applications are picking up and increasing year by year demonstrating that there is an appetite from students for paid internships.

### Students placed

- 2019/2020 Academic Year: 99
- 2020/2021 Academic Year: 92
- 2021/2022 Academic Year: 98

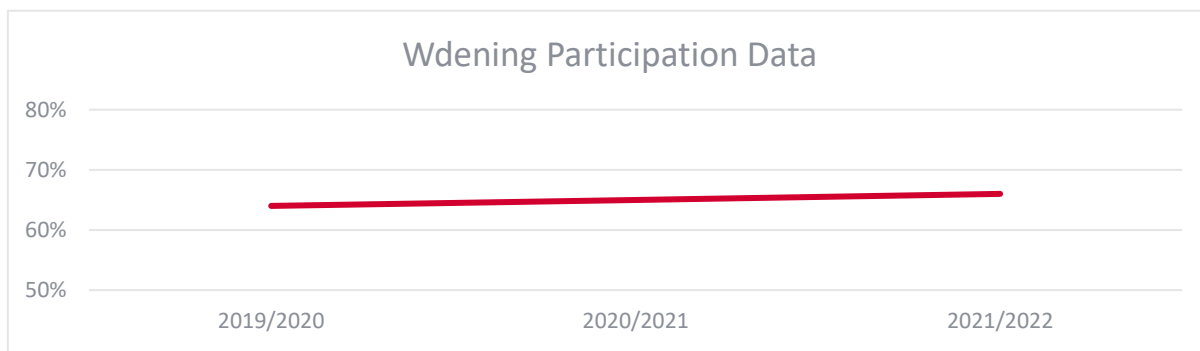


Placements inevitably dropped in the 2020/21 Academic Year due to less available vacancies as a result of Covid19. However, placements have increased in the 2021/22 academic year and continue to do so in the current academic year.

## Widening participation figures

We are committed to supporting students from widening participation (WP) backgrounds. Below are the percentage of students placed, in each year, that have at least one WP marker<sup>1</sup>.

- 2019/2020 Academic Year: 64%
- 2020/2021 Academic Year: 65%
- 2021/2022 Academic Year: 66%



In Academic Year 2019/2020, 64% of placed students had at least one WP marker. In the 2020/21 Academic Year, this increased to 65%. In the 2021/2022 Academic Year, this further increased to 66%. Therefore, more than half of students participating in RIS are from WP backgrounds, which supports the aim of RIS to make work experience more accessible and potentially reduce progression gaps.

## Survey analysis

Every year, we ask students to complete a 'Before' and 'After' survey –the 'Before' survey once they have secured an internship (before starting) and the 'After' survey once they have completed the internship.

In these surveys, we ask students to rate themselves on a scale of 1-10 in relation to the following skills (1 being 'not well developed' and 10 being 'well developed'):

Your exposure to graduate level work
The clarity of your career decision
Your belief in your ability to secure graduate level work for after your degree
Your sector, job and organisational knowledge

<sup>1</sup> WP criteria: BAME students, disabled students, POLARQ1&2, IMDQ1&2 students

**APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS**

The ease with which you interact with professionals
Your likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)

We compare the mean score of each skill before and after an internship to get an idea on how students who have participated in the scheme feel they have developed.

Below is the data from the 2019/20 and 2021/22 academic years. This data comes from students who completed both surveys so a true pre-post comparison could be made; those who only completed one survey were removed from this part of the analysis. For students who completed more than one of the same survey, the duplicate response was removed. In the 2020/21 academic year, participants were given the 'before' survey on a 5-point scale, meaning the responses are not comparable with the 'after' scores, so data from that year has been omitted from analysis.

**APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS**

	<b>2019/20 before Mean (SD)</b>	<b>2019/20 after Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Statistical test</b>	<b>Effect size</b>	<b>2021/22 before Mean (SD)</b>	<b>2021/22 after Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Statistical test</b>	<b>Effect size</b>
<b>Your exposure to graduate level work</b>	4.00 (2.80)	7.36 (1.52)	$Z = 35.5,$ $p < .05$	$d = 1.20^*$	3.65 (2.13)	6.23 (2.83)	$Z = 36.5,$ $p < .05$	$d = 1.21^*$
<b>The clarity of your career decision</b>	5.96 (2.18)	7.43 (1.53)	$t(52) = -5.34,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.67$	5.31 (2.05)	7.12 (1.58)	$t(25) = -4.14,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.88$
<b>Your belief in your ability to secure graduate level work for after your degree</b>	5.60 (2.56)	7.23 (1.91)	$t(52) = -4.80,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.63$	5.65 (2.19)	6.70 (2.62)	$t(25) = -2.07,$ $p < .05$	$d = 0.48$
<b>Your sector, job and organisational knowledge</b>	5.83 (2.01)	7.23 (1.64)	$t(52) = -5.68,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.70$	5.27 (1.89)	6.92 (1.67)	$t(25) = -5.19,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.88$
<b>The ease with which you interact with professionals</b>	6.40 (2.21)	8.20 (1.40)	$t(52) = -7.33,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.81$	5.73 (2.09)	7.42 (1.98)	$t(25) = -3.48,$ $p < .001$	$d = 0.81$



**APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS**

<b>Your likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)</b>	6.38 (2.32)	7.72 (1.92)	t(52) = -4.33, p<.001	d = 0.58	5.69 (2.60)	7.62 (2.04)	Z = 47.5, p<.05	d = 0.74*
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\* we acknowledge the debates around the use of Cohen’s d for non-normally distributed data, however we have chosen here to use it as an indicative guide of effect size.

The table shows that, for both years, mean responses were significantly higher for each item in the ‘After’ survey than the ‘Before’ survey. The results are all statistically significant at the 5% level. The effect sizes are, on the whole, at least moderate (0.5 and above), with some large effect sizes (0.8 and above). Together, this suggests that RIS is having a significant impact on each of these factors, although the association is not causal.

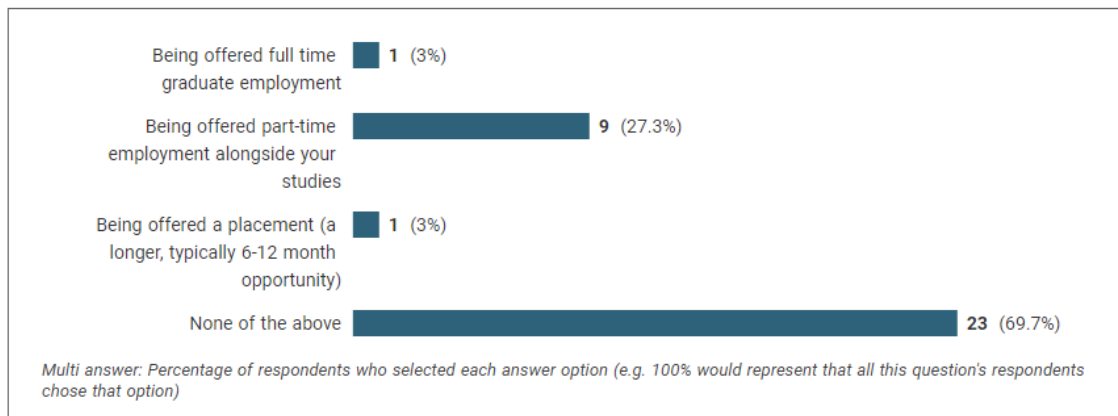
### Additional questions

Participants were asked additional questions in the ‘After’ survey about employment opportunities. All responses are included here, regardless of whether the student completed a ‘Before’ survey.

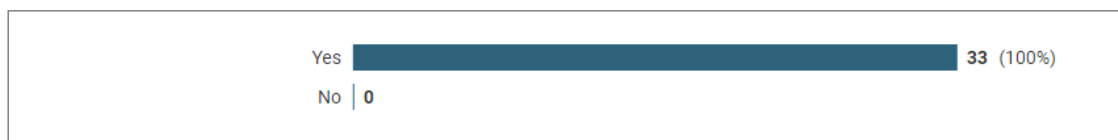
#### 2021/22:

33.3% of students (11 out of 33) that completed the ‘After Survey’ have reported that they’ve been offered further employment after their RIS internship (see chart below) and 100% of students would recommend the scheme to other students.

Have you experienced any of the following after your Reading Internship Scheme internship? Pick all that apply.



Would you recommend the Reading Internship Scheme to other students?

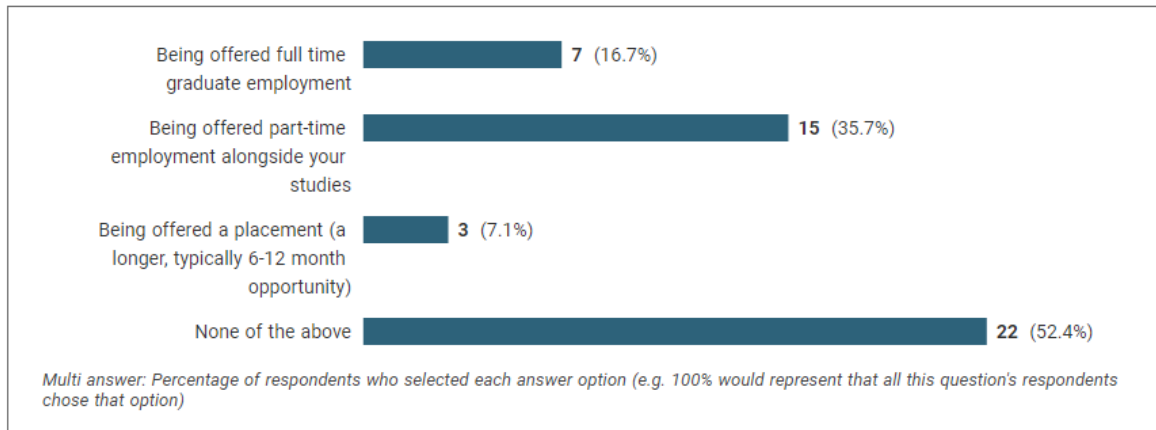


#### 2020/21:

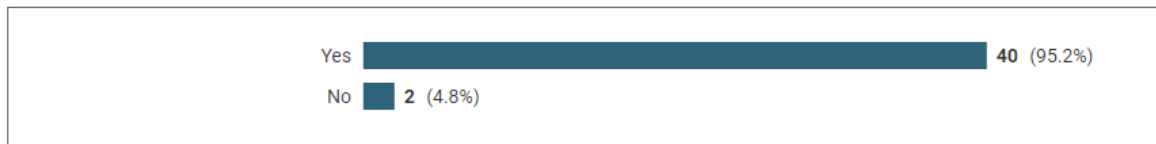
47.6% of students (25 out of 42) that completed the ‘After Survey’ have reported that they’ve been offered further employment after their RIS internship (see chart below) and 95% of students would recommend the scheme to other students.

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Have you experienced any of the following after your Reading Internship Scheme internship? Pick all that apply.



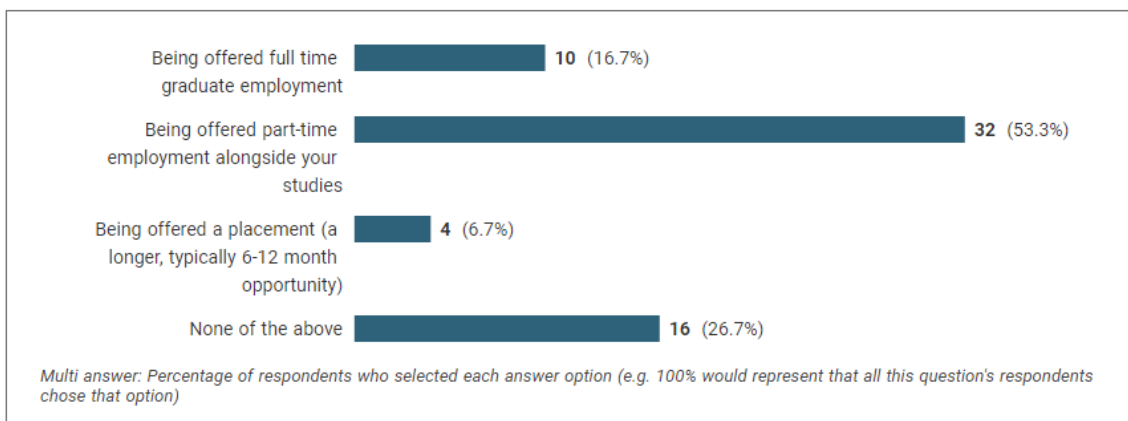
Would you recommend the Reading Internship Scheme to other students?



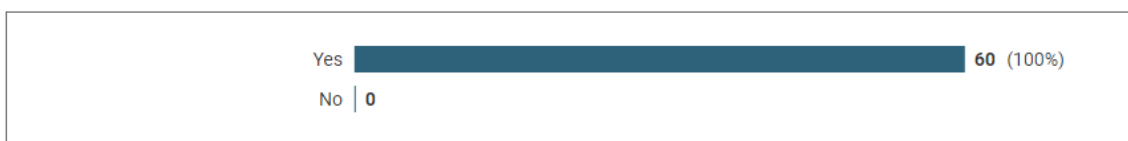
### 2019/20:

73.3% of students (46 out of 60) that completed the 'After Survey' have reported that they've been offered further employment after their RIS internship (see chart below) and 100% of students would recommend the scheme to other students.

Have you experienced any of the following after your Reading Internship Scheme internship? Pick all that apply.



Would you recommend the Reading Internship Scheme to other students?



## Key themes emerging from the ‘After’ surveys

Students also provided testimonials in the ‘After’ surveys, from which the following themes emerged:

### 1. Valuable Learning Experience:

Internships provide a chance to learn a variety of new skills, work with colleagues and volunteers, and gain confidence for future career progression

*“I had an amazing experience at the heart of a wonderful charity and I learnt a huge variety of new skills while also meeting and working with some fantastic colleagues and volunteers. Definitely a hugely beneficial and rewarding experience.” – 2021/2022 Student*

### 2. Working for small companies

The scheme offers opportunities to work with boutique and fast-growing organisations, allowing involvement in various areas.

*“Reading Internship Scheme gave me the opportunity to work with a boutique and fast growing organisation - which meant that I get to be involved in various areas in the department as long as I am motivated to learn. Overall I am so glad to have grasp so many new ideas in a short period of time.” – 2021/2022 Student*

### 3. Remote Work and Personal Connections:

Fully remote internships eliminate commuting concerns and provide flexibility. Internships offer networking opportunities and enhance confidence when applying for graduate roles.

*“The best part for me was the fact that my internship was fully remote as I did not have to worry about commuting. I also enjoyed working for a small business as I really got to know every member of the team on a personal level. I have been exposed to various networking opportunities and I now feel more confident about applying for graduate roles.” – 2021/22 Student*

*“This has been a very valuable experience. I have really developed my networking ability and expanded my list of contacts particularly on LinkedIn. My knowledge of the sector that I want to has also greatly improved. The experience has been well rounded and let me venture into a broad range of roles.” – 2019/ 2020 Student*

### 4. Career Progression:

The Reading Internship Scheme is a beneficial alternative to traditional summer jobs, contributing to career progression.

*“It is a great alternative to a normal summer job, and is really beneficial to career progression.” - 2021/2022 Student*

### **5. Confidence Building:**

Positive feedback from supervisors and colleagues during the internship boosts confidence for securing full-time employment after graduation.

*“Now that I have just graduated, I was worried about being able to secure a full time job but the positive comments on my work from supervisors and others I met on the internship has boosted my confidence for the future.” – 2020/2021 Student*

### **6. Platform for Diverse Internship Opportunities:**

The Reading Internship Scheme offers a helpful platform with a wide range of internships that may not be available through mainstream job platforms. The Reading Internship Scheme provides key information about available internships, companies, and application processes, enabling students to carry out thorough research.

*“I would definitely recommend the Reading Internship Scheme to other students. I believe that it is a helpful platform where students can find various internships that might not be available on external mainstream job platforms.” – 2020/2021 Student*

*“The Reading Internship Scheme helped me tremendously as it allows students to see all the internships that are available, about the company, what the internship would intel and how to apply. I found this extremely helpful as it gave me all the key information I needed therefore I was able to carry out more research into the companies I applied to for an internship.” – 2021/2022 Student*

### **Views from RIS alumni**

A survey was sent out to past RIS interns from the following academic years: 2018 to 2019; 2019 to 2020; and 2020 to 2021.

The aim of the survey was to gather feedback on how the students' internship experiences impacted them on a long term basis. The survey was sent out to 116 previous interns that have consented to being contacted post-graduation.

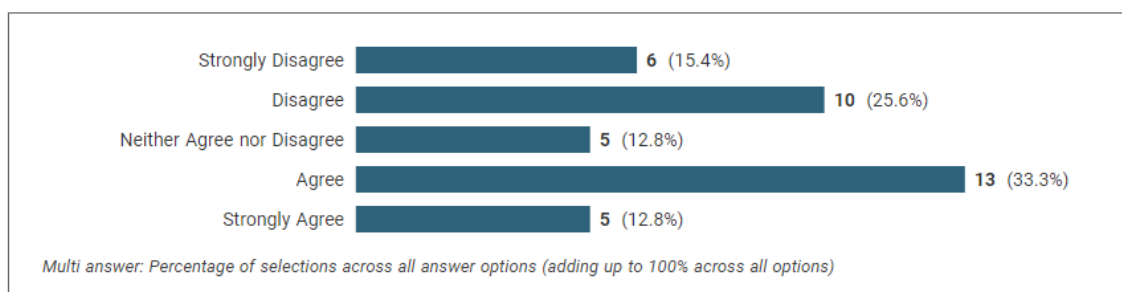
40 past students have responded, giving us a 34% response rate. Of the 40 students, 38 are in jobs and 2 remain in education. In this survey, we asked students to look back at their experiences, tell us about their internship stories, give advice to current students thinking of applying for an internship and rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 on how much they agree/ disagree with the following statements:

**APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS**

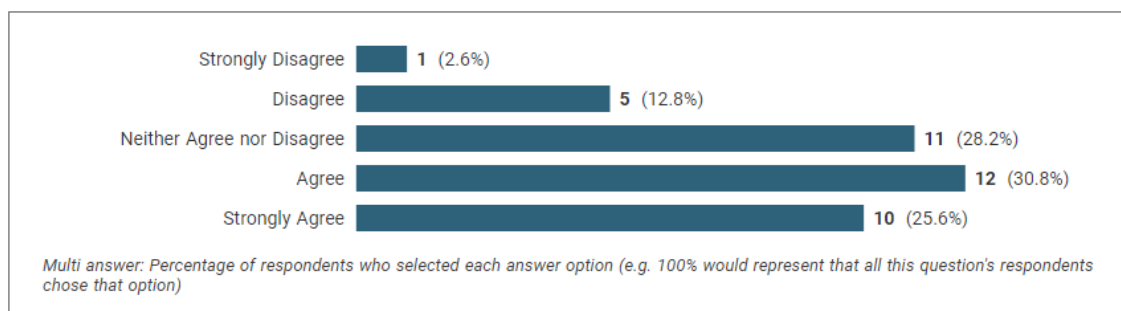
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before undertaking an internship I had a clear idea of what I wanted to do as a career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship helped me to decide on the career direction I wanted to pursue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship helped me develop my sector, job, and/ or organizational knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship helped me develop my confidence in a professional setting/ workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship helped me build a professional network.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship scheme helped me practise for future applications and interviews.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship allowed me to apply skills/ knowledge I've learnt from my degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship helped me develop my transferable skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship helped me develop my awareness of opportunities available to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that overall the Reading Internship Scheme is a worthwhile scheme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The raw data for the responses can be found below along with the testimonials and advice for current students.

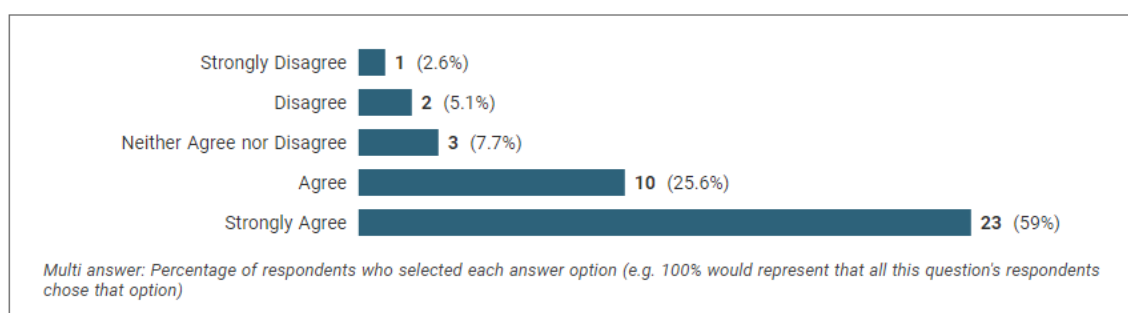
*Before undertaking an internship I had a clear idea of what I wanted to do as a career.*



*The internship helped me to decide on the career direction I wanted to pursue.*

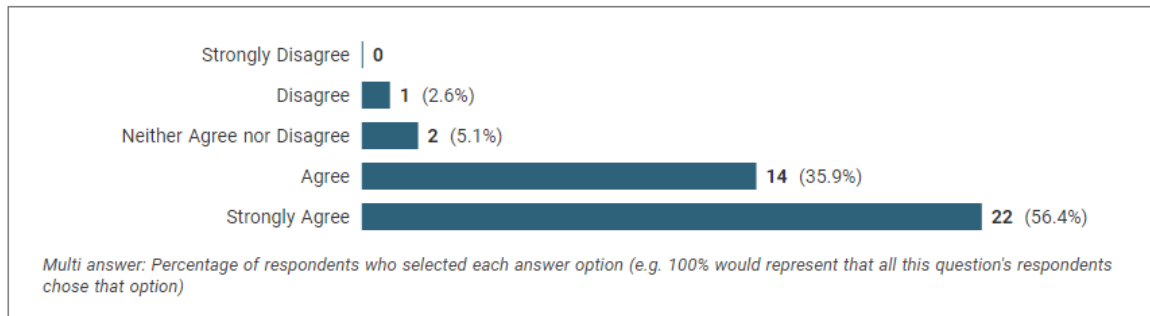


*The internship helped me develop my sector, job, and/ or organizational knowledge.*

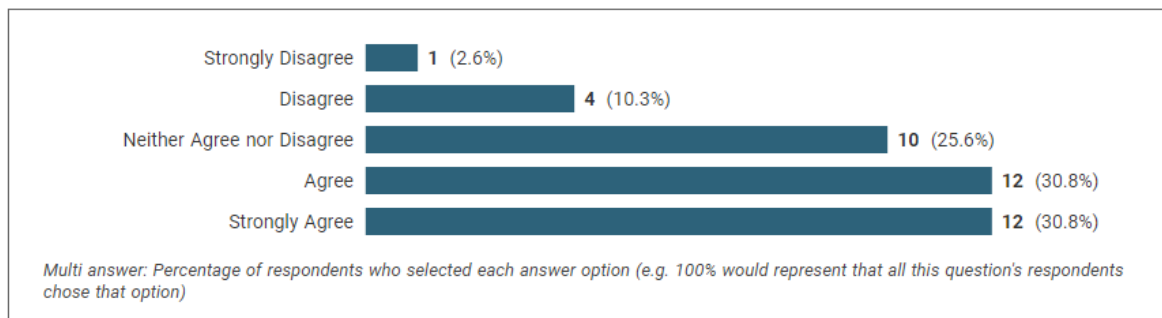


*The internship helped me develop my confidence in a professional setting/ workplace.*

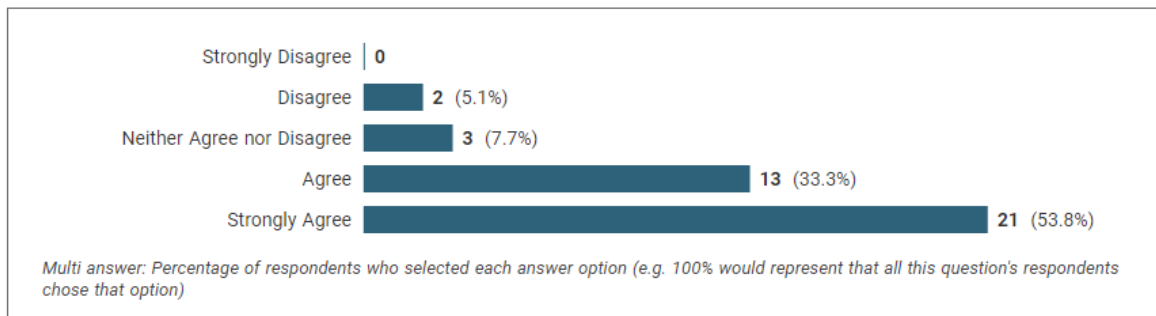
## APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS



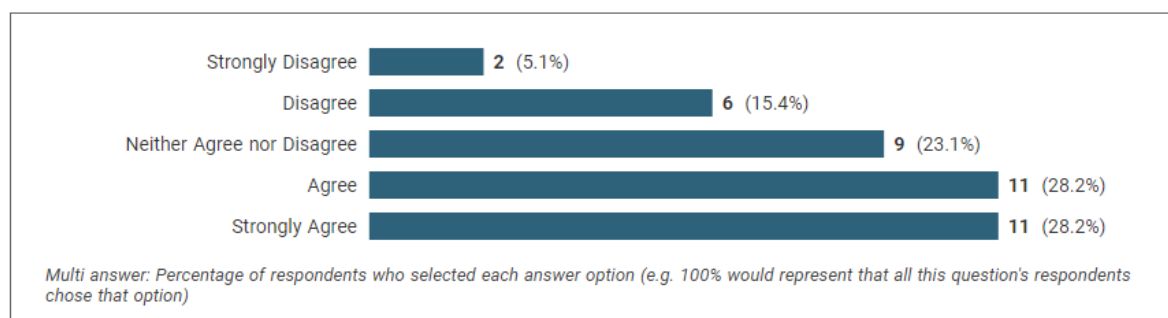
*The internship helped me build a professional network.*



*The internship scheme helped me practise for future applications and interviews.*

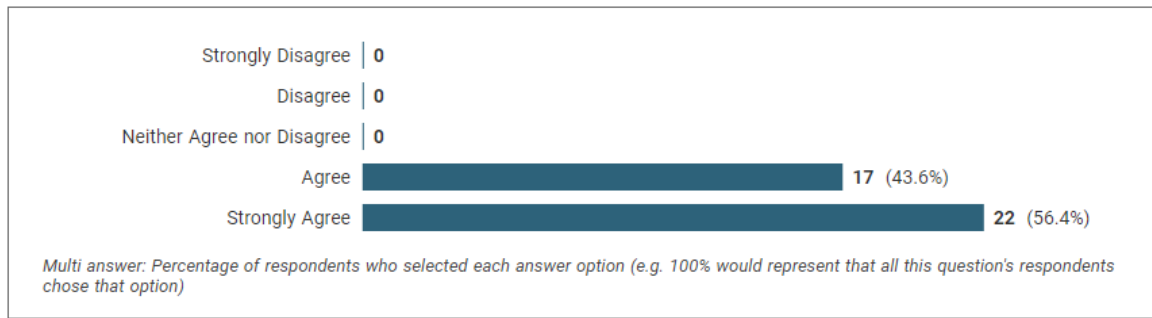


*The internship allowed me to apply skills/ knowledge I've learnt from my degree.*

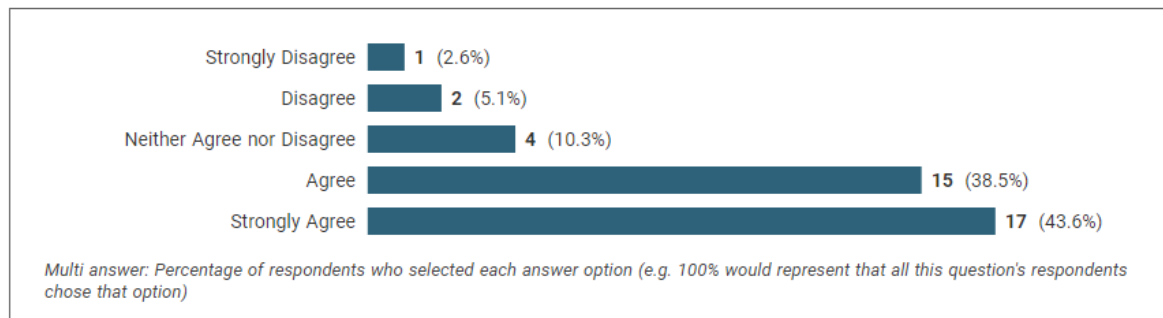


*The internship helped me develop my transferable skills.*

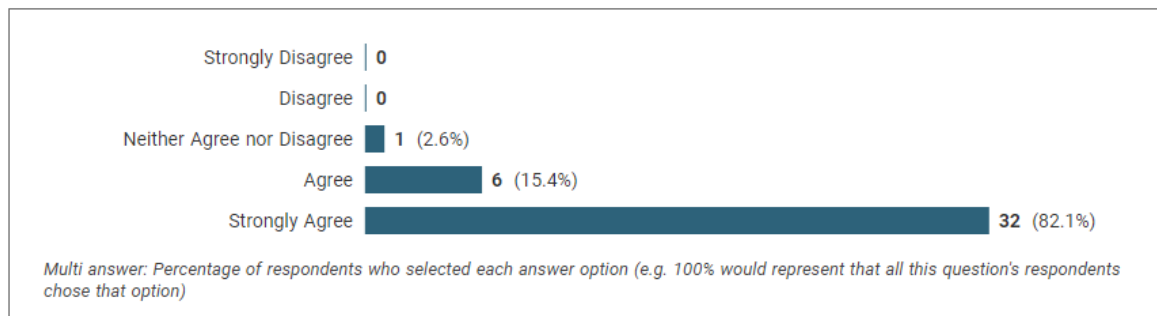
## APP Evaluation – Reflective evaluation of RIS



*The internship helped me develop my awareness of opportunities available to me.*



*I feel that overall the Reading Internship Scheme is a worthwhile scheme.*



## What advice would you give to current students thinking of doing an internship?

We asked alumni in our longitudinal survey to give current students some advice when it comes to applying for RIS internships. Below are the key themes that emerged from their advice:

### 1. Internships will look great on the CV and will help set you apart in a competitive job market when applying to graduate jobs/ placements.

*“100% do it. It’s something that super valuable to add to your cv, it shows initiative and allows you to learn skills quickly in a professional environment whilst also earning a good salary.”*

*“It’s great CV experience that future employers genuinely value and sets you apart.”*

*“Strongly recommend. One of the best means of standing out in a competitive job market.”*



## **2. Undertaking an internship helps you develop your skills.**

*“Definitely do it. The company I worked for was great and put a lot into making sure I understood the work and was learning along the way. Finding a job is only getting harder, so find an internship. Even if you change your mind afterwards, this is a good learning process.”*

*“Apply for it! It’s a great way to develop skills that a typical student job (e.g. bar work) doesn’t provide opportunities for. It helped me land jobs in the adult world!”*

*“On top of doing something you enjoy, look for an internship where you know you can learn new skills and make connections.”*

## **3. Undertaking an internship will help you decide what you want to do professionally.**

*“This is one of the few opportunities you’ll have to try out entry-level career pathways, plus you’ll do it with financial pressure and greater leeway. Pick one, apply (ask the Careers centre for help!), and use this to help you gain a sense of direction in your professional life!”*

*“Don’t worry if you’re not sure if this is what you want to do as a career -- internships have end dates so use them to test and gain experience, even if it’s experience that you don’t like something!”*

*“Just do it. In fact, try doing not only one internship but many different ones. There’s a big difference between your idea of a job and the everyday reality of a job and you want to be sure that the career path you’ve chosen is indeed the right one for you and you can only do this through an internship. I think of an internship as a demo or trial version of a job! Also, if in the end you realise that the internship you chose (and the relevant career path) is not for you, you can still benefit from the networking you did during your time in that company.”*

## **4. Be open minded and don’t rule anything out – an internship is a great insight into a sector.**

*“Know roughly what you want to apply for, but never rule anything out - the best opportunities are always those that you wouldn’t think of applying to in the first instance.”*

*“You never know where an internship can take you. Often these lead to full time employment offers so it is always worth it. Any form of experience is good when we are starting out our career as it helps you understand what you do and don’t like, and this is sometimes the hardest part, deciding what you want and don’t want to do.”*

*“Be open-minded; there are so many great roles and businesses out there offering great insights into their sectors.”*

**5. As a university scheme, it’s a supportive environment.**

*“Although it can be daunting, the process of writing CVs, cover letters and interviews is a lot less scary when you know that the internship scheme is there to help you learn and develop, and it is a very positive environment.”*

*“Relax, they know that you’re a student and don’t have unrealistic expectations. Both the university and the company are very supportive and this is a great opportunity to get access to internships you otherwise wouldn’t.”*

**Testimonials**

We’ve asked alumni in the longitudinal survey to provide some testimonials on their experience, from which the following themes have emerged:

**1. The internship helped me develop my confidence.**

*"The most important thing I got out of this internship was an increased confidence in trying new things and making the most out of new opportunities, especially when they are very much out of my areas of knowledge. Finally, I got so much experience of the museum and heritage sector, something which I would not have been able to see and work within otherwise." - 2018/19 Public Engagement Intern*

**2. The internship gave me valuable work experience which helped me get to where I am now.**

*"I got loads of experience, I really enjoyed it, and it definitely helped me to get the job I’m in now — and a promotion 6 months down the track!" - 2020/21 Marketing & Communications Intern*

*"I wanted to do an internship as I was going to be graduating with very little experience. From the internship I was made a full time employee and it was my first job out of university. Without RIS I'm not sure where I would've gone into but I'm thankful for RIS and Hex for pretty much starting my career in web development. Now I'm working in London for a bigger design and development which are aiming to be the top agency in the UK." - 2020/21 Web Developer Intern*

**3. The internship helped me explore different sectors and aided my career direction.**

*“As an accounting student I had ideas about going into finance following university, however always felt it important to gain additional experience where I could during my studies. I’d already had placements lined up in Finance, so I saw RIS as an opportunity to explore a sector that I hadn’t considered and gain new skills. I chose to do my placement at a Recruitment business, which (as an introvert) put me well out of my comfort zone and taught me some immensely valuable transferable skills. Following my internship in recruitment, I was offered part-time work during my studies, and post-graduation I decided to pursue a career in Data Recruitment rather than finance as I’d initially thought. RIS has played a huge part in helping me to decide my career direction, and I’d really encourage UoR students to get involved and try their hand at something different!” - 2018/19 Recruitment Consultant Intern*

#### 4. The internship sparked my passion for a sector.

*"I applied for the Launchpad internship with the hope of gaining experience in the charity sector, and I got this in bucketloads. I got to understand how a charity functions, and how to work with clients who are struggling. I loved my 6 week internship and it sparked my passion for charity work." 2018/19 Service Support Administrator Intern*

## Conclusions & recommendations

### Conclusions

To conclude, the Reading Internship Scheme is a valuable resource for students and appears to make a positive impact on a student’s career journey. The key themes that have emerged from this report show that:

- **RIS internships help students develop confidence:** Both RIS employers and our careers team are supporting students along the way which helps students feel more confident in applying for future roles, and in a workplace.
- **RIS internships help students develop new skills:** students learn a lot of new skills through the scheme. The scheme mimics a real recruitment process so students who may be unsuccessful in securing an internship still gain valuable skills in how to write applications, how to come across to employers and market themselves, how to answer interview questions and so on. Those that are successful gain new skills from their internships with the support of their employers who often act as mentors.
- **RIS internships help students develop professional networks:** students can network with external organisations and build meaningful professional connections.

- **RIS internships help students explore different career options:** RIS internships are interest based so students do not need specific degrees to apply for an internship. This means that students are able to explore different sectors and try out careers they may not have thought of before. As seen from testimonials, there are a few reported cases where RIS sparked a passion for a certain sector and students end up doing something completely different than what they initially planned.

As the mean responses to each item on the survey were significantly higher after RIS, and effect sizes were moderate or large, we can be somewhat confident that RIS is having the impact we expect to see according to our Theory of Change, and is benefitting students. In future evaluations, students will be asked specific questions on the intermediate outcomes from the theory of change (self-confidence, professional network). Future data analysis will also incorporate a long-term outcome of graduate destinations, to allow us to strengthen our understanding of the impact of RIS.

## Recommendations

For the 2022/23 Academic Year, we have introduced some changes to the scheme in order to support more underrepresented students in securing paid internships. The changes are as follows:

- **£100 Expense Bursary** open to home students with at least one WP marker. This is a £100 ‘top-up’ bursary that the student receives from RIS on top of their salary at the start of their internship in order to support with expenses. This bursary is automatic so the students do not need to apply. Once a student is placed, we check whether the student qualifies for the bursary and if they do the student receives the sum automatically.
- **Targeted Promotion:** each year we do lecture shout-outs to raise awareness of the scheme to students who perhaps wouldn’t hear about it through careers related activities such as fairs, or careers appointments. This year, we have targeted lecture shout outs at departments with a larger proportion of WP students.
- **Application Forms:** we have changed the application process of RIS to application forms. In previous years, students had to submit CVs and cover letters as part of the application process – this resulted in a lot of students with no work experience to be discounted from internships in favour of students with a lot of experience on their CVs. The application forms encourage students to talk about skills and experiences outside of professional life and consider skills from academia, extracurricular activities, and personal life to demonstrate how they’d succeed at the role. We provide students with support throughout the application process including information on our webpages, information

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sessions, as well as including guidance on the application form itself so students always have that support available rather than only having it available if they search for it.

- **Anonymous Applications:** the applications students submit are anonymised. Employers do not see names, contact details, or degree disciplines. Employers only see a reference number as well as the student's answers to the 3 application questions. We've done this in order to remove any conscious or unconscious bias regarding background, ethnicity, gender, or even degree discipline. Students are solely chosen based on what they've written in their application forms and how well they've articulated their skills in relation to the opportunity.

So far this year, the percentage of WP participants has increased to 71% which we will hopefully be able to retain or increase even further.

In conclusion, data from the previous three years of RIS suggests that it is a beneficial scheme for students and potentially contributes to closing progression gaps. Students report increases in confidence, sector knowledge and networking, all of which are important factors for future employment; testimonials from students are very positive about the scheme. Based on reflections on the programme, iterative changes have been implemented, including in the evaluation methods. These will allow both greater participation in RIS and a stronger evaluation of the impact.

## Notes

This report was reviewed by the APP evaluation team with some suggestions on structure and qualitative analysis reporting. The quantitative data analysis was carried out by the evaluation team.

## Appendix

### RIS Theory of Change:

