



ROCKY MOUNTAINEER®

EXPLORING INTERNSHIP FUNDING FOR ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

Research Proposal

Prepared for

Jobina Tsang

Prepared by

Paul Butland

pbutland@rockymountaineer.com

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Summary

The tourism and hospitality industry faces significant challenges in recruiting skilled labor, particularly for seasonal positions. This research aims to explore the integration of post-secondary students through co-op and internship programs as a solution to workforce shortages. Specifically, the study will focus on Rocky Mountaineer, a luxury train service in Canada, and investigate available government grants to support student internship initiatives. By identifying and accessing relevant funding opportunities, this research seeks to enhance Rocky Mountaineer's workforce while providing valuable experiential learning opportunities for students.

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality sector is a vital component of the Canadian economy, significantly contributing to employment and GDP. However, the industry frequently struggles with skilled labor shortages, particularly in seasonal roles that require specialized training and expertise. To address this challenge, organizations like Rocky Mountaineer are exploring innovative strategies to attract and retain talent, including the integration of post-secondary students through internship programs.

Despite the potential benefits of engaging students in the workforce, many companies, including Rocky Mountaineer, may not be fully aware of the government grants and funding opportunities available to support such initiatives. This research aims to bridge that gap by providing a comprehensive overview of the grants and subsidies offered by the Canadian government for student internship programs in the tourism sector.

Project Description

This research proposal aims to identify federal, provincial, and territorial government grants that specifically support Rocky Mountaineer in hiring post-secondary students. The research will assess the eligibility requirements for Rocky Mountaineer to qualify for these funding opportunities. Additionally, the proposal will investigate the application processes for various grants to outline a streamlined approach for the company. Finally, the research will analyze the availability of these grants throughout the year and determine whether Rocky Mountaineer meets the necessary criteria. The goal of this proposal is to provide actionable recommendations that will enable Rocky Mountaineer to effectively leverage these funding opportunities.

Literature Review

The literature review will examine existing research on student employment, government funding programs, and best practices in the tourism sector. By synthesizing information from academic journals, industry reports, and case studies, the review will highlight the current state of knowledge, identify research gaps, and suggest potential contributions to the field. This review will serve as the foundation for formulating key research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions or hypotheses:

1. What government funding opportunities are available for student internships?

This proposal aims to investigate funding opportunities for student employment at Rocky Mountaineer. The research will involve a thorough review of government websites, academic journals, and industry reports to identify options utilizing government grants for student hiring to extract best practices and key strategies.

Methodology:

The research will utilize a qualitative approach to gather insights from key stakeholders, including Rocky Mountaineer representatives, student employment experts, and industry professionals. Data collection methods will include interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. The sample selection will involve representatives from organizations with successful student employment initiatives. Data analysis will involve thematic coding and pattern recognition to identify common themes and best practices.

Data collection and analysis:

Sources of data will include interviews, focus groups, organizational documents, and relevant reports. Data collection will be conducted using structured interview guides and data analysis software. The validity and reliability of the data will be ensured through triangulation of sources and member checking. Analytical techniques such as thematic analysis and content analysis will be employed to derive meaningful insights.

Expected results and contributions:

The research is expected to provide Rocky Mountaineer with a comprehensive overview of funding opportunities for student employment, best practices in utilizing government grants, and successful strategies for implementing co-op and internship programs. The findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on student employment initiatives in the tourism sector and offer practical recommendations for enhancing Rocky Mountaineer's student hiring programs.

Implications and contributions to knowledge

The Propel Student Work Placement Program provides benefits to businesses such as Rocky Mountaineer for hiring post-secondary students. If Rocky Mountaineer Qualifies, they can receive significant wage subsidies for hiring eligible students:

- 50% of total gross wages up to \$5,000 for regular placements.
- 70% of total gross wages up to \$7,000 for under-represented students (women in STEM, Indigenous students, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, newcomers, and first-year students).

To utilize this program, Rocky Mountaineer must meet the following requirements:

- Must be registered Canadian businesses, startups, or not-for-profits related to the tourism and hospitality sector.
- Need to demonstrate an increase in the number of paid work-integrated learning students hired compared to their baseline year.

Students Must be enrolled at a recognized post-secondary institution. Can be from any discipline, not limited to tourism-specific programs.

The Mitacs Accelerate Program pairs businesses with graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for research internships. Here are the key details about the funding:

- Mitacs contributes \$7,500 per internship unit.
- The partner organization (employer) is required to match this with \$7,500 per internship unit.
- The total funding per 4-6 month internship unit is \$15,000.

Employers have some flexibility in how they structure the funding:

- Standard Award: \$10,000 or \$15,000 per intern, with Mitacs matching the employer contribution.
- Cluster Funding: \$13,333 per intern, available for projects with 3 or more unique interns and a minimum of 6 internship units. Mitacs provides a slightly higher match of 1:1.2 in this case.

Additional Considerations

- The full amount of the Mitacs contribution (\$7,500 or more) goes towards the intern's stipend.
- For longer projects, the Mitacs Accelerate Fellowship allows for extended collaborations, potentially increasing the total funding amount.
- The maximum funding for one placement through the Accelerate program can reach up to \$90,000 for a 24-month term.

It's important to note that while Mitacs provides substantial co-funding, the program emphasizes industry co-investment. Therefore, the grant size may not cover all project costs, and employers should be prepared to contribute their share of the funding.

Based on the search results provided, there is no specific information about the number of students employers can accept each year through the Propel or Accelerate programs. However, here are some relevant details about these programs:

Mitacs Accelerate Program

The Mitacs Accelerate program does not appear to have a strict limit on the number of students an employer can accept each year. However, there are some guidelines on internship durations for different types of students :

- College students can do up to 3 four-to-six-month internships
- Master's students can do up to 6 four-to-six month internships
- PhD students can do up to 12 four-to-six-month internships
- Postdocs can do up to 9 four-to-six-month internships
- Undergraduates and recent graduates can do up to 3 four-to-six-month internships

Propel Program

For the Propel program, which is focused on tourism and hospitality, there is no specific mention of a limit on the number of students an employer can accept.

Key Points

- Both programs allow employers to hire multiple students.

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- The number of students seems to be flexible, based on the employer's capacity and project needs.
- Employers must ensure they can provide meaningful work experiences for each student hired.
- For the Propel program, there is a "net new" requirement, meaning employers must increase their number of work-integrated learning placements compared to their baseline year to qualify for funding.

While there's no explicit annual limit mentioned for either program, employers should consult with program administrators for specific guidance on the number of students they can accept, as it may depend on factors such as available funding, project scope, and the employer's capacity to support multiple interns.

Overall, by exploring and potentially leveraging these government funding opportunities, Rocky Mountaineer can strengthen its commitment to student employment, innovation, and industry partnerships. The knowledge gained from engaging in these programs can not only benefit the organization directly but also contribute to the broader understanding of effective strategies for supporting student workforce development in the tourism sector.

Timetable

ACTIVITY	START DATE	END DATE
Extensive review of funding sources. Arrange proposal outline concerning research gathered	October 7, 2024	October 11, 2024
Examining government websites; gathering qualitative research for proposal	October 15, 2024	October 18, 2024
Information will be collected from other organizations in the tourism sector that successfully utilize government grants	October 21, 2024	October 22, 2024
Analyze case studies of organizations that have effectively used government funding for internships, identify key strategies and outcomes	October 23, 2024	October 25, 2024
Writing up of research	October 28, 2024	October 30, 2024

Conclusion

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This research proposal aims to explore the potential of leveraging the Propel Student Work Placement Program and the Mitacs Accelerate Program to enhance student employment initiatives at Rocky Mountaineer. By identifying any existing limitations in the organization's internship program and proposing solutions to address funding needs, this research seeks to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of Rocky Mountaineer's workforce.

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