



## The Role of the Malang City Education and Culture Office in Improving the Performance of Internship Students

Sopiah<sup>1\*</sup>, Nishar Rahmawati<sup>2</sup>, Nurul Khuzaimah<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Negeri Malang

**Corresponding Author:** Sopiah [sopiah.fe@um.ac.id](mailto:sopiah.fe@um.ac.id)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Internship Program of Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM), Student Performance, Malang City Education Office, Role of Government Institutions

*Received :* 02 April

*Revised :* 12 May

*Accepted:* 22 June

©2025 Sopiah, Rahmawati, Khuzaimah: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

The internship program within the framework of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) is a strategic place to connect academic theory with practice in the world of work. This study aims to examine the role of the Malang City Education and Culture Office in improving the performance of internship students. With a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation of supervisors and internship students. The results show that this agency makes a real contribution to the formation of students' technical abilities and soft skills through an inclusive work environment, regular mentoring, and provision of work facilities. However, there are still challenges in the form of inequality in the quality of guidance, mismatches in field placement, and suboptimal internal performance evaluation. Therefore, it is necessary to improve a more structured and collaborative internship system between the campus and the agency in order to optimize the overall development of student competencies.

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Internship is a vital component in higher education that serves as a bridge between academic learning and the professional world. Through internships, students are given the opportunity to implement the knowledge they have acquired during their studies into practical, real - world settings. In line with implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) the internship program is one of the main instruments in preparing students for work by fostering hard skills and soft skills needed in the world of work (Muhammad et al., 2024).

The Malang City Education and Culture Office is one of the government institutions that routinely facilitates student internships from various universities. Its strategic role is not only as a place of work placement but also as a learning environment that fosters technical ability, work ethic, and adaptability to organizational culture. Therefore, the success of the internship program is closely related to how effectively this institution carries out its role in supporting student learning and performance development during placement. (Harisda et al., 2024).

Although the positive intentions, challenges persist. Some students report a lack of structured supervision, insufficient initial training, and placements that are misaligned with their academic backgrounds. These issues indicate a gap between the institutional potential of the Office and the realities of implementation on the ground. Prastiwi et al. (2024) and Juliyanto et al. (2023) emphasizes that such gaps can hinder students' motivation and limit the benefits of internships if not addressed systematically.

To improve the effectiveness of internship programs, it is necessary to assess the actual role played by host institutions in supporting interns' performance. Lestari (2023), a well-managed internship requires not only coordination between universities and government agencies but also a commitment to mentoring, performance evaluation, and the provision of adequate resources. Moreover, recent studies highlight that institutions with inclusive work environments and active mentoring systems tend to produce more positive outcomes for interns (Az-Zahra et al., 2024; Devi et al., 2024).

From this background, this study aims to examine in depth the role of the Malang City Education and Culture Office in improving the performance of student interns. The results of this study are expected to provide a real contribution to improving internship policies, both within the scope of government institutions and universities. Thus, a synergistic collaboration is created in forming competent, adaptive, and professional young human resources according to the needs of the times (Devi et al., 2024).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM)**

The Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) Program is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia which aims to expand students' learning space through experiences outside the campus environment, one of which is through internship activities. Within the MBKM framework, internships are designed as a connecting medium between the academic world and the professional world, allowing students to develop competencies according to their fields of expertise. In addition to improving technical skills (hard skills), this internship activity is also expected to strengthen non-technical skills (soft skills), such as interpersonal communication, the ability to work in a team, and effective time management (Arisandi, Mutiara, & Mawardi, 2022).

The main objective of the MBKM internship program is to provide real work experience that can strengthen students' readiness to face the world of work after graduation. The results of research conducted by Hia et al. (2023) prove that internships in the MBKM program make a significant contribution to improving students' work readiness and competencies that are in accordance with industry needs. Interestingly, a number of internship participants also received job offers from the agencies where they did their internships.

However, the implementation of the MBKM internship program still faces various obstacles, such as the mismatch between the academic curriculum and the needs of the workplace, lack of supervision from the campus, and the suboptimal performance evaluation system for interns. To overcome these obstacles, systematic and targeted internship management is needed. According to Lestari (2023), the effectiveness of the MBKM internship program is largely determined by governance that includes aspects of planning, implementation, organization, and overall evaluation of activities. This includes the selection of relevant partners, an internship results reporting system, and the integration of internship experiences into the university curriculum.

Therefore, the internship program in MBKM is one of the important pillars in preparing superior human resources who are ready to enter the professional world. The success of this program is highly dependent on the active role of various parties, both from higher education institutions and internship institutions such as the Education and Culture Office, which have an important position as facilitators in the practice-based learning process in the field.

### **Student Performance**

The performance of student interns is influenced by various internal and external factors that interact with each other in the work environment. One of the

most dominant internal factors is individual motivation. Students who are highly motivated tend to show greater work commitment, perseverance, and initiative in completing assigned tasks. This motivation can come from the need to gain experience, the desire to develop, or a long-term career orientation (Prastiwi & Harmadi, 2023).

Facilities and supporting facilities also play an important role in determining the performance of internship students. Facilities such as adequate workspace, access to information, and relevant work aids can improve student comfort and work efficiency. When the facilities provided are inadequate, students will experience obstacles in carrying out their duties, which directly impacts the quality of performance (Simbolon, Padliansyah, & Karunia, 2022).

Support from mentors or supervisors at the internship location. The role of the mentor is not only as a supervisor, but also as a facilitator of learning and skills development. Effective guidance includes providing clear directions, constructive evaluations, and psychological reinforcement to increase student confidence in completing work. In this case, the mentor plays a strategic role in bridging students with the work culture of the organization (Saraini, 2021).

The social and cultural environment of the organization also has an influence on the performance of student interns. An open, inclusive, and cooperative work environment encourages students to adapt more quickly and be actively involved in organizational activities. Conversely, a rigid and bureaucratic environment tends to reduce student enthusiasm and participation. A supportive work environment also creates a sense of ownership of tasks and organizations, which ultimately strengthens students' work responsibilities (Az-Zahra et al., 2024).

### **The Role of Government Institutions in Student Internship Programs**

Government institutions have an important role in supporting the successful implementation of student internship programs, especially in the context of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy. As providers of public services, institutions such as education offices, ministries, and legislative institutions can function as real places of learning for students. They provide a work environment that allows students to hone their professional skills while understanding the dynamics and governance of bureaucracy. This role includes providing internship facilities, mentoring during the activities, and adjusting internship activities to the needs of the organization functionally.

Research conducted by Suprayitno et al. (2022) regarding internships at the Secretariat General of the Indonesian House of Representatives revealed that direct involvement of government institutions provides concrete experience for students in understanding the government's work system. However, challenges such as weak communication between parties, limited human resources, and the

unavailability of clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are still obstacles to optimizing the program.

Similar findings were obtained from the study of Muhammad et al. (2024) who evaluated the implementation of the Permendikbud Number 3 of 2020 policy in the Yogyakarta Special Region Government. They emphasized the importance of partnerships between universities and local governments. Collaboration that is consistently built between supervising lecturers, students, and agencies is believed to be the key to the success of the internship program.

Meanwhile, research by Juliyanto et al. (2023) shows how the involvement of the village government in the internship program also encourages the application of theory into real practice. This involvement not only improves students' professional skills but also makes a real contribution to village development, especially through strengthening the capacity of Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes).

In addition, Pertiwi and Asy'ari (2023) studied student internships in the Ministry of Finance. They found that students had the opportunity to be directly involved in the work processes of government agencies, including in public service activities such as document verification and rapid response to public requests. This activity provides added value for students, both in terms of technical skills and soft skills.

From the various research results, it can be concluded that government institutions play a key role in implementing effective internship programs. Their active involvement is not only limited to providing a place, but also involves coaching, evaluation, and aligning internship objectives with organizational needs. However, in order for the internship program to provide optimal results, good coordination, structured SOPs, and synergy between educational institutions and the government are needed.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive type to explore in depth the role of the Malang City Education and Culture Office in enhancing the performance of student interns within the framework of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. The qualitative descriptive approach is considered suitable for capturing the complexity of real-world phenomena and the lived experiences of research subjects, especially in the context of policy implementation and public sector practices (Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway, 2017). This method allows researchers to describe events as they naturally occur and interpret them based on the perspectives of those directly involved. In line with Sugiyono (2023), this approach is grounded in the post-

positivist paradigm where the researcher acts as the main instrument of data collection, emphasizing subjective meaning rather than statistical generalization.

The research was conducted at the Malang City Education and Culture Office, located at Jalan Veteran No. 19, Lowokwaru District, Malang City. This institution was chosen due to its direct authority and involvement in managing internship programs and partnerships with universities. The research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, targeting individuals who possess knowledge, authority, and direct experience in implementing and supervising student internships. The main informants in this study included Mrs. Dyah Kusarini, as the Head of the General Sub-Division responsible for administrative affairs and placement of interns; Mrs. Fitri, as the person in charge of technical coordination and mentoring for internship programs; and several student interns currently undergoing the internship at the office. These individuals were deemed capable of providing relevant and reflective insights into the implementation of the internship program.

The researcher employed three main data collection techniques, namely: (1) in-depth interviews to elicit detailed information regarding the policies, strategies, and challenges in internship implementation; (2) participant observation to directly observe intern activities, their interactions with mentors, and the overall work culture; and (3) document analysis which involved reviewing official documents such as internship guidelines, attendance records, performance evaluations, and relevant reports. A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure consistency in data collection while allowing flexibility to probe deeper into emerging topics.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, the study applied data triangulation, by comparing and cross-checking data obtained from different sources and techniques. In addition, a member checking process was carried out, in which the research findings and interpretations were discussed with key informants to confirm their accuracy and prevent potential misrepresentation (Gunawan, 2022). The researcher also maintained a field journal to record observations, reflections, and analytical memos throughout the research process.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the model developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The steps included transcribing interview recordings, generating initial codes, identifying categories, grouping them into major themes, and formulating a coherent narrative of the research findings. This analytical approach enabled the researcher to uncover patterns and meanings from qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of how the Education and Culture Office contributes to the development of student competencies during their internship experience.

## RESULT

The implementation of internship activities by students is an integral part of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy, which aims to bridge the academic world with the real world of work (Arisandi et al., 2022). In this context, the Malang City Education and Culture Office plays a strategic role as a government institution that functions as a facilitator of practice-based learning for students. Student performance during the internship program is influenced by a number of factors, both internal and external, such as personal motivation, quality of guidance, availability of facilities and infrastructure, and a supportive work environment (Prastiwi & Harmadi, 2023; Saraini, 2021). Therefore, synergy between universities and internship organizing institutions is the key to success in preparing students to face the professional world.

### 1. Accessibility and Flexibility of Placement

Initial findings show that the Malang City Education and Culture Office opens wide access for students from various disciplinary backgrounds to take part in the internship program. As expressed by the main informant, Mrs. Dyah (Head of General Affairs), the selection process is not carried out strictly, and the office is willing to facilitate placement based on student interests: "We are open to accepting students from various majors, as long as our capacity allows."

This is in accordance with the opinion of Lestari and Lestari (2023) who emphasized that flexibility and suitability of placement to the needs of the agency are important parts of effective internship management. Students like Ayu, even though they are majoring in Financial Management, are still given the opportunity to work on assignments related to public finance, such as verifying BOSNAS funds. This experience shows the continuity between the theory learned in college and the practice of government bureaucracy, as emphasized by Juliyanto et al. (2023) in a study on the integration of theory and practice through internship programs.

The absence of a quota management system has resulted in less than optimal placement, as expressed by Rizal, "Initially, I was often transferred because there were too many participants." This shows that even though inclusive access is provided, quantitative management has not been a primary concern, in line with criticism from Simbolon et al. (2021) regarding the impact of resource imbalances on the effectiveness of internship performance.

### 2. Quality of Guidance and Mentoring

One of the most important aspects in improving student performance is the quality of guidance. According to Saraini (2021), the supervisor acts as a learning facilitator and a liaison between students and the work culture of the organization. In practice, the Office has appointed field supervisors who provide daily guidance and individual consultations, as stated by Mrs. Fitri, "We directly

monitor student performance and provide direction regarding the tasks they carry out." Ayu said that she received guidance every day and felt very helped when facing technical obstacles. Rizal expressed the same thing, calling direct guidance during work practice an important form of support. However, Nada stated that guidance was only given briefly at the beginning, without further assistance. This disparity in the quality of guidance reinforces the findings of Harisda et al. (2024) regarding the weakness of the structured guidance system in government agencies.

### 1. Availability of Work Facilities and Facilities

Work facilities are one of the main indicators that influence the comfort and effectiveness of student internship performance (Simbolon et al., 2022). Based on field data, most students stated that the facilities provided were adequate. Nada stated that she could use computers, stationery, and internet networks well, while Ayu emphasized that a stable internet connection greatly supported the implementation of tasks.

However, due to limited devices, some students were asked to bring their own laptops. This inequality shows that although the role of the Office as a provider of facilities has been running, not all work units have adequate facilities, so improvements are needed in the distribution of operational devices.

### 2. Inclusive and Cooperative Work Environment

A conducive social and cultural environment of the organization has a major contribution to student work enthusiasm. The theory from Az-Zahra et al. (2024) states that an open work environment encourages a rapid adaptation process. In this study, students stated that the working atmosphere at the Office was very friendly. Ayu said, "I don't hesitate to ask questions and always get friendly answers," while Rizal said that he felt accepted as part of the team. This fact shows that the role of the Office in building an inclusive work culture has been achieved, which ultimately supports the strengthening of students' soft skills, such as interpersonal communication and work ethics.

### 3. Performance Evaluation and Appreciation

Performance evaluation is part of the internship student development cycle. The Office conducts evaluations based on direct observation and informal feedback. Ayu said that when she made a mistake, she was given a constructive explanation, not a reprimand. Rizal added that he even received overtime incentives as a form of appreciation.

However, the evaluation system used still depends on the format from the campus, not from the internal agency. The absence of this internal evaluation system shows that the Office's role in monitoring has not been equipped with a standard mechanism, so it does not guarantee consistency and objectivity of assessment, as suggested by Suprayitno et al. (2022). One real form of this

synergy is the flexibility in the placement of internship students, which emphasizes a direct and contextual learning approach according to industry needs. Mrs. Dyah as the Head of the General Sub-Division who directly supervises the internship supervisor also emphasized that "Placement is not always tied to the department, but will be facilitated if there is a special interest from the student," which reflects adjusting to the needs and interests of the interns. This is supported by Lestari (2023) that the success of the internship program is highly dependent on responsive and adaptive management, including in terms of placement and mentoring.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the Malang City Education and Culture Office has a significant role in improving the performance of student interns. This role is realized through flexible placement policies, the involvement of field supervisors in providing direct direction, the provision of relatively adequate work facilities, and the creation of an open and collaborative work environment. In addition, the evaluation of student performance carried out informally and based on daily observations shows that there is attention to the development of interns, although it is not yet equipped with a standardized assessment system.

In general, the existence of the Office as a government institution that opens internship opportunities for students has made a real contribution to the learning process outside the campus. Students not only gain technical work experience, but also the opportunity to develop soft skills, such as communication skills, work ethics, and adaptation to the culture of public organizations. This proves that the Office is not just a place for internships, but also plays a role as a strategic partner in supporting the achievement of the goals of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy.

However, this study also revealed challenges in implementing the internship program, especially related to the uneven quality of guidance between units, limited facilities in several work sections, and the lack of a standard internal evaluation system. This condition shows that although the role of the Office has been running well substantively, in terms of program governance, improvements are still needed so that the internship process can take place in a more structured and fair manner for all participants.

Through these findings, there are several recommendations that can be given to improve the effectiveness of the internship program in the future.

1. The Malang City Education and Culture Office is expected to be able to prepare technical guidelines for the implementation of the internship program, including mentoring standards, performance evaluation

formats, and cross-sector coordination flows. These guidelines are important to create uniformity and ensure that all students gain equal experience. The Office is also advised to adjust the number of students accepted with the capacity of the work unit and the number of available mentors, in order to avoid a buildup of participants that can interfere with the effectiveness of task implementation.

2. Universities as the party sending students are expected to strengthen communication with partner institutions through pre-internship briefing activities, joint monitoring, and follow-up evaluation of internship results. This is important to ensure that the internship process runs in line with the learning outcomes targeted by the study program.
3. Students as interns need to be equipped with sufficient mental and technical readiness before undergoing an internship, including interpersonal skills, discipline, and a basic understanding of the dynamics of work in a government environment. Students are also expected to be able to take advantage of internship opportunities as a medium for active and reflective learning.
4. For subsequent researchers, it is recommended to conduct a broader and comparative study of the implementation of internship programs in various government agencies, in order to obtain a more holistic picture of best practices and challenges faced. In addition, the development of standardized internship performance evaluation instruments across institutions can be an important contribution in supporting the improvement of the quality of national internship programs.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that internship programs in government agencies, especially in the Malang City Education and Culture Office, can continue to develop as a relevant, adaptive learning tool that has a real impact on the work readiness of college graduates.

## **REFERENCES**

- Arisandi, D., Mutiara, M. W., & Mawardi, V. C. (2022). Dampak Kegiatan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Magang dan Studi Independen dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Mahasiswa. *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, dan Seni*, 6(1), 215–226. <https://doi.org/10.52060/jmishumsen.v6i1.16163>
- Devi, N. P., Yustina, E., & Indra, M. (2024). Pengaruh Program Magang MBKM terhadap Kesiapan Kerja Mahasiswa di Era Industri 4.0. *Innovative: Journal of Social Research*, 5(1), 14–21. <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/view/18829>

- Gunawan, I. (2022). *Metode penelitian kualitatif: Teori dan praktik*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Harisda, M., Yusuf, A., & Safar, S. (2024). *Peran Mahasiswa Magang dalam Mendukung Administrasi Layanan Publik di Kejaksaan Negeri Parepare*. **Jurnal Administrasi Publik dan Manajemen**, 5(2), 120–128. <https://ejurnal.kampusakademik.co.id/index.php/japm/article/view/3768>
- Hia, L. M., Oktavianus, S., Sidebang, S. K., & Kuang, T. M. (2023). Dampak Magang Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Bagi Mahasiswa Akuntansi. *Owner: Riset dan Jurnal Akuntansi*, 7(4), 1260–1267. <https://doi.org/10.33395/owner.v7i4.1675>
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 40(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21768>
- Lestari, D. A., & Lestari, A. D. (2023). Manajemen Pelaksanaan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka - Program Magang atau Praktik Kerja. *Lentera: Jurnal Kajian Bidang Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 2(4), 252–259. <https://doi.org/10.58812/lentera.v2i4.1293>
- Liony Citra Pertiwi, & Muhammad Asim Asy'ari. (2024). Magang Kemenkeu Dalam Rangka Meningkatkan Kemampuan Mahasiswa. *Jurnal Pengabdian Indonesia*, 2(1), 71–81. Retrieved from <https://journal.institercom-edu.org/index.php/JPI/article/view/375>
- Juliyanto, M. N. I., Utina, R. A., & Hardiyono, H. (2023). Integrasi Teori dan Praktik: Peran Magang MBKM dalam Pengembangan Badan Usaha Milik Desa (BUMDes) di Desa Bontorappo. *Journal of Career Development*. <https://journal.amkop.id/jcd/article/view/85journal.amkop.id>
- Muhammad, A. S., Rahayuningtiar, T., Tatebburuk, B., & Rifai, M. (2024). Implementasi Kebijakan Permendikbud Nomor 3 Tahun 2020: Magang Mahasiswa Ilmu Pemerintahan UGM di Pemda DIY. *PERISAI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Riset Ilmu Sains*, 3(1). <https://jurnal.serambimekkah.ac.id/index.php/perisai/article/view/1078jurnal.serambimekkah.ac.id>
- Nurjannah, N., Walian, A., & Lemiyana, L. (2024). Pengaruh soft skill, praktik pengalaman lapangan (magang) dan motivasi kerja terhadap kesiapan kerja mahasiswa di bank syariah. *Jurnal Ekonomika dan Bisnis (JEBS)*, 4(6), 1566–1575. <https://doi.org/10.47233/jebs.v4i6.219>
- Prastiwi, A. D., Harry, S., & Harmadi, B. (2024). Analisis Faktor Kinerja Peserta Magang melalui aspek Motivasi dan Fasilitas : Studi Kasus di PT United Tractors Tbk. 1(1), 18–28.

- Saraini, F., & Prof. Armanu. SE., MSc, P. . (2018). Mahasiswa Universitas Brawijaya Malang Program Studi Manajemen 54. *MENajemen*, 2.
- Simbolon, A. S., Padliansyah, R., & Karunia, E. (2021). Dampak praktik manajemen sumber daya manusia pada kinerja perguruan tinggi di Kalimantan. *Jurnal Ecodemica: Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 5(1), 69-78. <https://jurnal.um-tapsel.ac.id/index.php/martabe/article/view/20929>
- Sugiyono. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Suprayitno, S., Purnama Putra, M., & Mujiarti Ulfah, S. (2022). Implementasi Program Kampus Merdeka (Studi Kasus Magang di Rumah Rakyat di Sekretariat Jenderal Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia). *Jurnal Administrasi dan Kebijakan Publik*, 7(2), 115-125.
- Zahwa Az-Zahra Tholib, S., Bella Maulina, S., Nur Azizah, F., Wahyu, S., & Wijaya Kusuma. (2024). Neraca PERAN STRATEGIS MANAJEMEN SUMBER DAYA MANUSIA DALAM MENINGKATKAN KINERJA ORGANISASI. *Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen dan Akuntansi*, 2(5), 206-212. <http://jurnal.kolibi.org/index.php/>
- Widodo, J. (2020). *Analisis tematik: Teori dan praktik dalam penelitian kualitatif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.