

**BUSINESS  
IN THE  
COMMUNITY  
IRELAND**



# Summer Work Placement Programme Impact Report 2022-2023

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## 1. Introduction

In late 2022 Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) received funding from IPUT Real Estate Dublin through **basis.point** to re-establish the Summer Work Placement programme. This programme ran very successfully for a number of years up to 2019, and was interrupted by the pandemic and companies adapting to new ways of hybrid working post-pandemic. The programme's annual aim is to connect 20 students in Dublin's **North East Inner City** Schools with companies located in the adjacent IFSC (Irish Financial Services Centre) to offer a post-school paid work placement for 6-8 weeks during the summer after completing the Leaving Certificate exam. Eligible students must be aged 18 years or over.

Thank you to Irish Funds and **basis.point** who were both a huge support in recruiting participating companies through webinars, direct contact, e-mailing shots and individual meetings. Thank you to the coordinators in each participating company who supported the success of this initiative.

Companies were recruited and students along with their hosting companies were supported throughout the programme, including training and preparation beforehand and feedback and evaluation surveys being completed during and at the end of the programme. Survey questionnaires were completed by both students and company coordinators.

## 2. Top Line Data Outcomes

95%

of students said that the programme overall was beneficial.

90%

of students said their self-confidence increased during the programme.

100%

of companies said they would recommend the SWPP to other companies.

86%

of supervisors surveyed said that they would consider hiring the intern if they had an opening.

100%

of supervisors surveyed said that the students progressed during their placement.

100%

of students said that they improved their interview skills and communication skills during the programme.

### 3. Student Application Process

The six North East Inner City (NEIC) Schools that participated in the Summer Work Placement Programme were:

- **Larkin Community College**, Champions Ave, North City, Dublin
- **Marino College**, Marino Mart, Dublin 3
- **Mount Carmel Secondary School**, Kings Inn St, Rotunda, Dublin 1
- **O'Connell Secondary School**, Richmond St North, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.
- **St. Josephs CBS Secondary School**, Merville Ave., Fairview, Dublin 3.
- **Rosmini Community School\***, 9 Grace Park Rd., Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

Applicants were completing Leaving Certificate in summer 2023 and over 18 years of age.

\* Rosmini did not participate: there were ten students in 6<sup>th</sup> year, only two of whom were aged 18+.

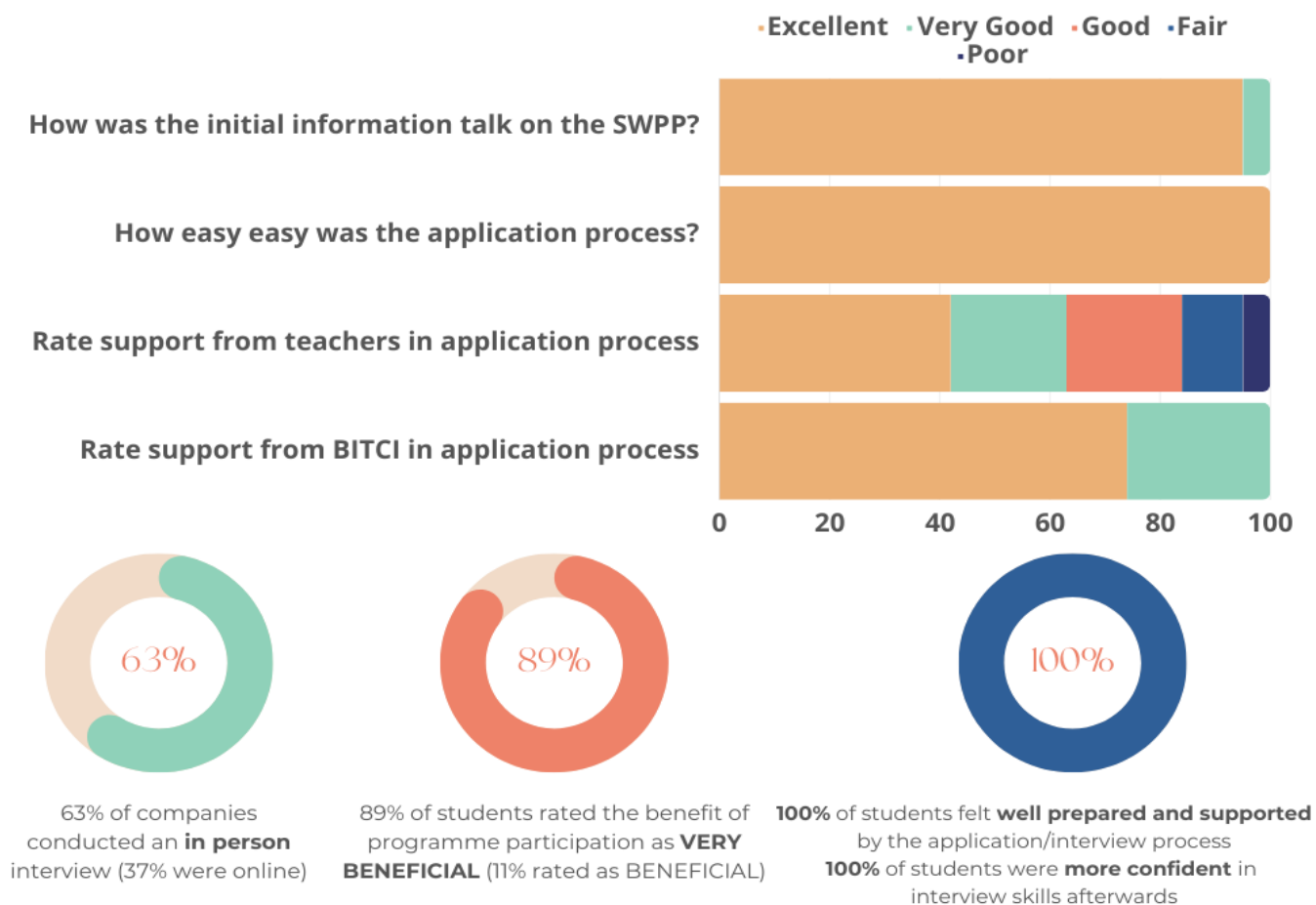
School	Male	Female	Total
Mount Carmel	0	7	7
Marino College	1	5	6
Larkin Community School	1	1	2
O Connells Boys School	6	0	6
St Joseph's CBS	6	0	6
Rosmini Community College	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Total number of applicants</b>	<b>27</b>		

#### TIMELINE



## 4. Student Evaluation – Application Process

Students completed a feedback survey on the application process. Below are some of the results.



Every student answered the below question, the results of which are valuable in demonstrating the range of programme benefits, even before starting on work placement.

What have you gained personally from participating in the programme so far?
A better understanding of what an office job is like
More confidence in interviews
Confidence in myself
I have learned more skills regarding working
Experience, confidence, feeling of independence
More confidence for future interviews
Experience in interviews
I have learned how important it is to be comfortable to be able to talk about some problems/questions with the company you are going to work for. Also, how important it is to carefully read your contract and the company's policies that come with it as well. Finally, to just be yourself and be calm during an interview.
Experience in job interviews and overall confidence when meeting new people
Improved communication skills and confidence
Knowledge skills
I am more confident as well as motivated towards my goals. I have gained and improved my interpersonal skills and communication skills as well.

Confidence
Improved my communication skills
Lost my fear of applying for a job
Experience and confidence in job applications
Experience on how to do well on interview
How to fill out application
I gained the mindset to put myself out there
Gained confidence to introduce myself and do an interview without being shy
Getting to know how a real business environment works and how other departments function within
I've gained a lot of confidence speaking in interviews, it really made me appreciate socialising

## 5. Student Evaluation – Job Readiness Workshop

All students were invited to BITCI offices in June to participate in a Job Readiness Workshop. This was an opportunity for all students to meet in person as some companies took on a number of students from different schools. Most of the students had never worked in an office environment before. During the workshop the following topics were covered:

- Office etiquette and dress code
- Health & safety/rest breaks
- Absences/ sick leave
- Tax and PRSI
- Company property
- Guidelines on email etiquette
- LinkedIn and networking





## 6. Placement Details - Summer Internships

Nineteen student placements were offered. Eighteen students started their internships during the months of June and July. One student was unable to take up a placement due to a 6-month delay in processing a work visa.

Fifteen companies offered summer internships, seven of which had participated previously. BITCI partnered with Irish Funds to recruit businesses through the Irish Funds network. This was completed through:

- Communication via Ezines to the member network (in March and April 2023)
- A Breakfast Briefing webinar with interested companies (March 2023)
- Individual contact with previously participating companies

BITCI supported the companies throughout the process. They facilitated a full exchange of information, answered questions and was available to support and answer company questions.

Company Name	Count	M/F	School
Carne Group	1	F	Marino College
Carne Group	1	M	Joeys
IPUT Real Estate Dublin	1	F	Marino College
Mediolanum	1	M	Joeys
Mediolanum	1	F	Mount Carmel
A&L Goodbody	1	F	Mount Carmel
Irish Funds	1	M	Marino College
CACEIS Ireland Ltd	1	F	Mount Carmel
Grant Thornton	1	F	Marino College
BBH (Brown Brothers Harriman)	1	F	Mount Carmel
Amundi	2	M	Joeys & O Connells
Amundi	1	F	Larkin CS
Robert Walters	1	F	Mount Carmel
KBI Global Investors	1	M	Joeys
Kennedy Wilson	1	M	Joeys
Waystone	1	F	Mount Carmel
Haven Green	1	M	O Connells
BITCI	1	F	Mount Carmel

**Confirmed placements** **19**

Gender Split	Count
Females	11
Males	8

School Breakdown of Offers	Number
Joeys	5
Marino	4
Mount Carmel	7
O Connells	2
Larkin CS	1

## 7. Student Evaluation: Experience Gained

The SWPP group of 2023 experienced considerable challenges with a global pandemic during a significant part of their post-primary education which had a huge impact on the delivery of education nationwide. All 18 students who started the SWPP completed their placements. Some discovered that working in an office is not their longer-term goal, all acknowledged the benefit of a different and positive experience throughout this process, and they value the skills gained throughout. Below are the responses from student surveys. 100% of participants responded.

### Student Working Days

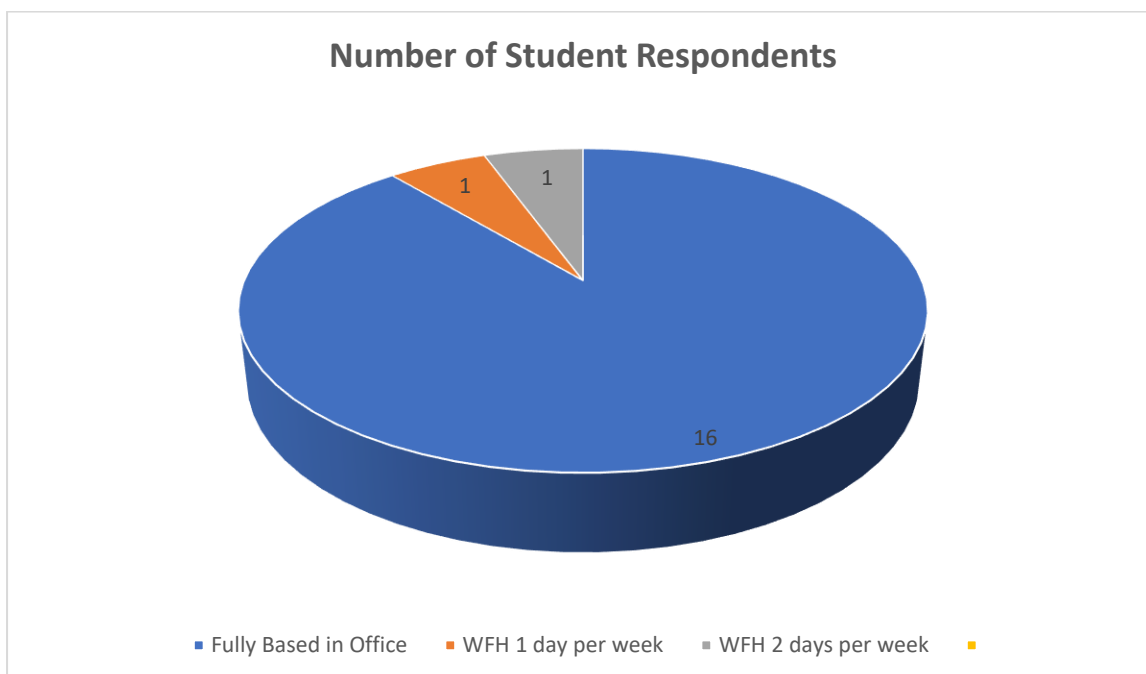
Some companies were not able to offer a 5-day working week to interns so some of the placements were less than 5 days. This was due to companies' hybrid working environment with limited staff in the office on certain days.

Question	5 days	4 days	3 days	2 days
Number of days you worked each week?	13	1	3	*1

(\*One student was receiving a disability allowance and could only work a minimum number of hours to prevent loss of allowance. The company he was placed in were very supportive and accommodated his needs from a work perspective).

### Student Work Location

Were you based in the office each day or was there an opportunity to work from home?





Student response to statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
I had a good induction at the start	11	7	0
I felt very welcome	14	4	0
I was doing interesting work	5	9	4
There was a good mix of tasks	7	9	2
The team I was assigned to were helpful	14	4	0
Some tasks were difficult	2	7	9
I found it hard to settle in the company	1	1	16
The working hours were ok	8	10	0
I improved my communication skills	10	8	0
I learnt lots of new skills	6	10	2
The work was sufficiently challenging	1	10	7
I made lots of new contacts	9	6	3
I would consider working in this industry in the future	7	7	4
I have a sense of achievement	7	8	3
The length of the placement was ok	10	7	1
I felt supported by BITCI during placement	15	3	0

Student response to statement	YES	NO
I got an excellent insight into the industry	18	0
I developed new IT skills	15	3
I learnt about the HR function	12	6
I learnt how to work well in a team	13	6
I improved my communication skills	18	0
My self-confidence has increased	17	1
I discovered my strengths (what I am good at)	11	7
I discovered areas of development (what I need to improve on)	14	4
I found an area of business that I may like to work in	12	6
I set up my LinkedIn account for networking	16	2

Programme Benefits for Students	Very beneficial	Beneficial	Not beneficial
Please rate the overall benefit of the programme for you	14	3	1
Improved my interview skills	11	7	0
Improved my communication skills	10	8	0
Taught me about business etiquette	12	6	0
Increased my self confidence	11	5	2
Improved my teamwork skills	9	4	5
Helped me decide what I want to do in the future	7	8	3
Improved my network in work environment	10	5	3

- **95% of students said that the programme overall was beneficial.**
- **Over 50% of the students who participated confirmed that their placement company said that they could contact them if they require work experience or an internship in the future.**
- **100% of students said that they improved their interview skills and communication skills during the programme.**
- **90% of students said their self-confidence increased during the programme.**

Below are some comments from students demonstrating what they gained from participating in the programme.

*I gained an insight into the work of construction and the lifecycle of buildings, I got to see what work is like, including working hours, this experience will certainly prepare me for my future work life in terms of time management. **Student IPUT Real Estate Dublin***

*It is an excellent experience where you explore and learn about the company culture and insight to real working environment which helped me to find what course and career life I want to choose in the future. **Student A&L Goodbody***

*I gave a real taster of what working in an office is like. **Student Waystone***

*This Program has been greatly beneficial because I got to make new connections within this environment, I have also improved many of my skills working side by side with others from the IT sector. **Student Mediolanum.***

*Got to get valuable experience with office life, work load, and taxes. **Student Irish Funds***

*I met lots of new people, got an insight into the world of asset management and would like to pursue this line of work in college. **Student Amundi.***

*I learned a lot of new things including how to use oracle, inputting invoices, checking expenses claims and I became more familiar with Excel. **Student Amundi.***

*Working in an office space made me realise what I like and dislike about it. I also got to experience a completely new environment with adults - in almost all areas in my life, adults have played the role of a guardian for me, so working here helped me a little to socialise with adults that aren't expected to play that role. I got to learn about company culture and what working in an office is like, which will be important for any opportunities like this that come in the future for me. **Student Robert Walters.***

*Got to see what it's like to work in an office. **Student CACEIS.***

*I finally got work experience. **Student Grant Thornton.***

*It was good insight into working in an office. **Student KBI Global Investors.***

*I got money, connections, and office experience. **Student Carne Group.***

## 8. Company Evaluation

Two separate surveys were sent out to companies for completion, as follows:

1. Feedback from company coordinator on overall programme.
2. Feedback on the student performance during placement from students' direct supervisors.

### Survey 1 – Company Coordinator Feedback on Programme

100% of surveys were completed and returned by company coordinators from 14 companies who had students on internship. Feedback was requested on the different stages involved in the programme.

Company Feedback on Programme	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair
Initial debrief on programme by BITCI	8	5	1	
Programme roll out by BITC	8	6		
Quality of applicant CV's	9	3	2	
Interviews	9	3	2	
Ease of on-boarding students	9	3	1	1

- **100% of company coordinators said the programme was completed as expected.**
- **14 out of 15 companies said they would like to participate in the SWPP next year 2024 (one of the companies said that they were unsure).**
- **100% of companies said they would recommend the SWPP to other companies.**

Below are testimonials from companies on why they would recommend the SWPP to other companies:

*It is an excellent program for both the students and the receiving company, we thoroughly enjoyed having Gabby & Luke with us for 6 weeks of the summer*

*Yes, a real chance to get involved in the community and give a young person a fantastic opportunity.*

*Yes, it is a wonderful way to give back to the community as well as benefitting the business with these bright, driven young individuals.*

*Yes, from our experience Daniyal was diligent and hardworking, he really added a strong dynamic and value to each project he worked on. We would recommend others to participate.*

*The feedback from students was incredibly positive and rewarding for the teams and managers involved. There was a great sense of support to local schools and communities and those who may not have opportunities like this available from family members.*

*Yes, I highly recommend SWPP to other companies. It is a real opportunity to support a local community initiative which is well established and administrated. CACEIS were fully supported though all the steps of the process. It is a terrific way to boost employee engagement in the area of CSR. The student was a really good support to the team and added value to CACEIS during the 6-week placement.*

Company Benefits of participating in the Programme:

- Student was a real asset to assigned team.
- Programme supports the local community.

- Contributed to our overall CSR strategy.
- Student added a new dynamic to the team.

### Further Company Comments

*Thanks for involving us and for Paula's support - she was always available and on hand for any queries and help.*

*It was great to be involved.*

*It was great to be a part of this and we are already looking forward to 2024!*

*Both Paula and [student] were great to work with and the process of interviewing, onboarding, and all in between was made seamless. The whole team was extremely impressed with the programme.*

*We really enjoyed taking part.*

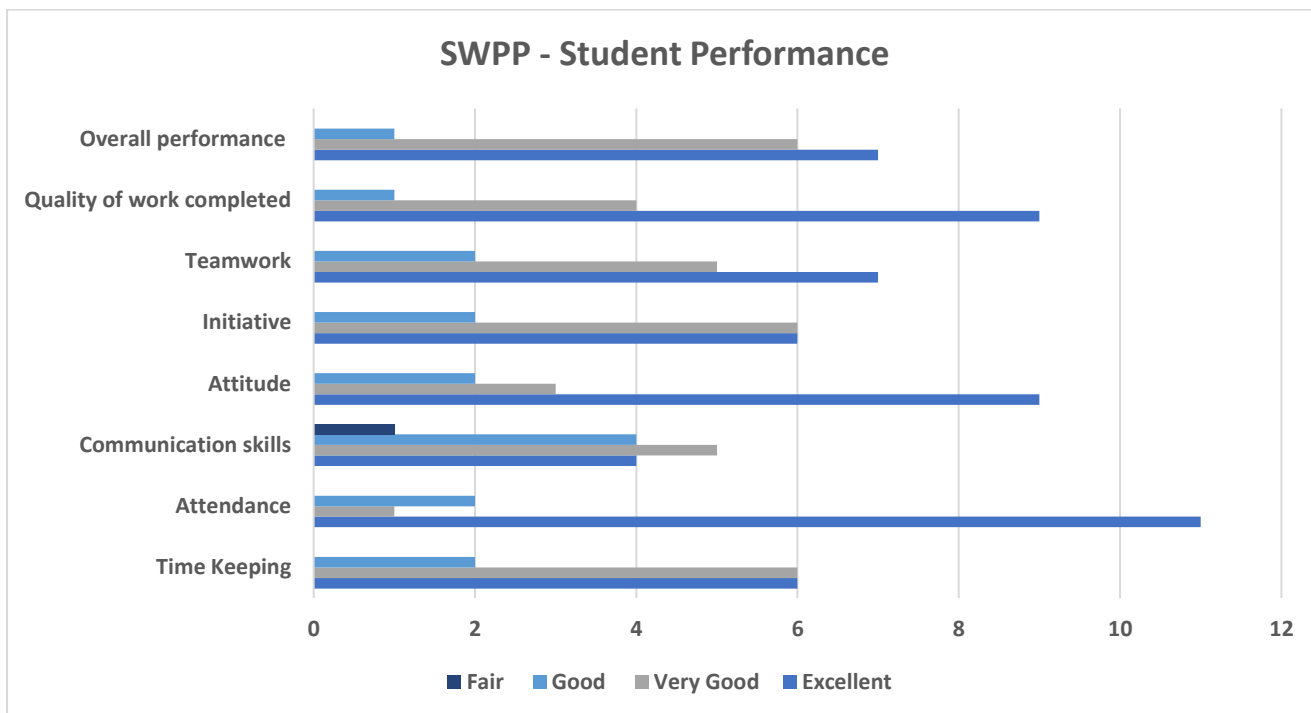
*It was great. Well done.*

*Our student was an excellent addition to our team. She added value and assisted us as and when required. She was most helpful when she stepped into cover a role during a leave of absence of an employee.*

### Survey 2 – Supervisor Feedback On Student Placed

The reported data on student performance is based on 14 responses from supervisors who had direct responsibility for students.

Student Performance	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Time Keeping	6	6	2	
Attendance	11	1	2	
Communication skills	4	5	4	1
Attitude	9	3	2	
Initiative	6	6	2	
Teamwork	7	5	2	
Quality of work completed	9	4	1	
Overall performance	7	6	1	



**100% of Supervisors surveyed said that the students progressed during their placement.**

Companies were asked: **If there was a job opening, would you consider hiring in the SWPP intern?**

**12 out of the 14 respondents answered YES, they would consider hiring in the intern.**

**86% of Supervisors surveyed said that they would consider hiring the intern if they had an opening.**

#### **Supervisor feedback on individual student performance while on placement.**

*Our student was well able to take on the work assigned and finish it accurately at speed. We varied the work for her and managed to give her more technical work as the weeks progressed. She took part in meetings and hopefully learned a lot over her time with us.*

*Our intern was asked to learn some new concepts as part of her work, and she did so with enthusiasm, good comprehension, and a positive attitude.*

*Our student gained exposure to and an insight into the working environment of a financial services company. It enabled him to consider his interest in computers within an office environment and helped him contextualise what a role with such an environment would entail.*

*Our intern was less afraid to ask questions at the end if she wasn't sure on something. She took initiative and did daily tasks without being asked. She gave everything a go and was very enthusiastic.*

*Our student showed a great want to learn during her time in the Finance team and over the last few weeks showed a good understanding of the tasks she was doing. And she grew more confident as the weeks went by.*

*Our student was fantastic during her time with us. Excellent timekeeping, brilliant initiative, great work delivered. She is a little quiet but that didn't hold her back in any way. The feedback she received from our talent and marketing teams was nothing but positive. She worked on our*

*SharePoint team sites and improved the layouts as well as the content. She also supported our grad team with our very busy summer intern programmes and did a great job there. nothing was ever an issue, and she was always happy to get her head down and do the work.*

*Our student grew in confidence throughout his time with us and created value for each project he was involved in. He originally started with work on our CRM and found his feet very fast, more recently he has been working on an IT implementation project and his insights and recommendations have been very useful for the momentum of this project.*

*Our student came on leaps and bounds during her short six-week stint with us.*

*In her second week we had a European Relationship Management Offsite over two days, she helped to co-ordinate this with senior management and attended both full days, which even for the more seasoned members of the team was an intense experience.*

*Conscious that she had zero funds experience, her ability to take notes and then do some research/come to me with questions was refreshing. She had an overwhelming desire to learn and try to understand the work that was being in put in front of her, and thankfully if she didn't understand she would ask for help.*

*We also worked on some day to day skills, like presentations, compiling reports (both in word and excel) and meeting co-ordination, again stuff she wouldn't have had exposure to and at first was nervous, but by the end of the six weeks she was whipping my colleagues into shape!*

*I noticed our intern became much more engaged and social*

*Our intern was brilliant to work with. I trusted that when I talked her through a task once, she took all information on board, asked questions, and made sure she understood the assignment. If she wasn't sure about something once, she started, she would ask, or take the initiative to complete it based on the information she had. She is a hard worker, and always asked if there was more work that she could help with. She is mature, professional, and showed great initiative. I have no doubt she will excel in whatever career path she chooses.*

*Yes, she really came out of her shell as the weeks went by. At the start she did not seem too interested, but as time went on, we could really see her opening up and engaging more. She was an excellent worker, she got through the work very quickly and kept me on my toes.*

*At the end of the placement the student redrafted his CV and was able to lay it out in a new format with an understanding of what needed to be added to his CV to highlight his experience. He gained a greater understanding of the functions of Excel.*

*Our intern became more confident during his time with us. He also developed his computer and excel skills while here.*

*Our intern rotated between a few of our departments and consistently gave a very positive impression in terms of her enthusiasm and interest in the projects being carried out by the team. She appeared to settle in more and more as the weeks went on as she was getting to know more on the team.*



## 9. Recommendations for Next Year

### Student Recommendations

Three separate surveys were completed by each student. Students were given the opportunity to provide feedback on ways of improving the programme in each survey. Here are the recommendations provided by students.

*Go over some of the things that are in an employee contract because it's worded so professionally and legally, which is something we aren't used to in school.*

*To make sure that all the students got the information and the PowerPoint after the initial talk. Ask teachers to talk about it in class.*

*Interview should be done early in the year as many students are under a lot of pressure around the end of the year with exams approaching. (Preferably) outside school.*

*For the placement: More diverse tasks and including each intern to join in on activities, even if it's just to see what it's like, to learn more skills. For the support provided: Mandatory buddy system and, if possible, providing more placements where there's at least two interns.*

*Provide more details for the various departments available.*

*Going over a contract and going over the terms of it and having a better understanding what it is you are signing and all the things you are agreeing to.*

*In the workshop should cover Time management and prioritization techniques. Financial literacy and budgeting skills for the working professional. Conflict resolution and dealing with difficult situations*

### Company Recommendations

**Question: Is there anything that BITCI could have done to improve the recruitment process?**

**66% of companies surveyed said that they were happy with the recruitment process** and would not require any improvements. Overall, the feedback was very positive with companies citing that the process ran very smoothly with most of the work completed by BITCI.

4 companies made the following suggested improvements on the recruitment process.

*It might be helpful if the organisation provides an overview of the business/industry and the role prior to students applying for the position.*

*The process went well from the company side. However, during recruitment, it would be worthwhile to deeper access the student's desire to participant.*

*During the recruitment process we interviewed one candidate. While the candidate we got was outstanding it would be valuable going forward to have more candidates to interview.*

*BITCI Ask the hiring company if there are particular interest areas or skills on their candidate wish-list.*

**Question. Any further recommendations on improving the SWPP programme?**

**9 of the companies surveyed did not have any recommendations on improving the programme.**

5 companies did have some suggestions on improvements which could be made. Here are the suggested recommendations.

- *Perhaps you can improve by providing the students with some guidance to come up with certain goals or areas they would like to touch on during their time at the placement so that the business can provide them with something that fulfils this as part of their internship.*
- *Perhaps more information provided to student by BITCI on Revenue/taxes etc. as this caused some confusion.*
- *One company who took on a student for 8 weeks felt it was too long.*

## Thank You

The Summer Work Placement Programme in 2023 was a huge success. The survey feedback from both students and companies was overwhelmingly positive.

Thank you to all the stakeholders involved who helped to make this project happen:

- **Our funders IPUT Real Estate Dublin** who funded this programme through basis.point.
- **Irish Funds and basis.point** for your help and support in promoting this programme to member companies. I appreciate the call outs for company participation and through perseverance we got there in the end.
- **School Community** - school principals and coordinators for helping to promote this programme and encouraging students to apply.
- **Participating Companies** who stepped up and took part for their time, support and sharing of their skills and expertise. Sincere thanks to all the staff in these companies who were involved in training and mentoring the students through kindness and patience. The companies involved have made an active contribution towards greater inclusion and opportunity for local young people.
- **The SWPP students** who participated and were willing to go outside of their comfort zone. Well done to all for applying and seeing the placements through. They were an amazing group of students to work with and they actively challenged themselves by stepping outside their comfort zones. They have grown as individuals having gained skills and experience throughout the programme. Students surveyed said that their confidence levels have increased during this positive experience.

These work experience opportunities have raised student's aspirations to aim for careers within the industry. One student on internship in Haven Green Investment Management impressed the team so much he has been offered a role and will continue to work on their IT team. This demonstrates how mutually beneficial these programmes can be for both student and employer. Thank you to these companies for enhancing community engagement, sowing the seeds for potential local employment, and contributing to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda.