

# ECOTALENT

Is your organisation working to create a more sustainable food system?

Are you committed to increasing the diversity of the environmental sector?

Are you able to provide a welcoming training opportunity for an enthusiastic young person (18-24)?

## OVERVIEW

### What is Eco Talent?

Eco Talent is an exciting new programme helping organisations in the environmental and sustainable food sectors to work with inspiring and talented young people, and to increase diversity in their workforce. With generous funding from the Our Bright Future programme, we are creating a range of paid internship positions (paid at the Living Wage foundation's living wage rate - £9.30 per hour UK-wide and £10.75 per hour in London) for young people aged 18-24; we will be actively promoting the opportunities to young people who are typically under-represented in our sector.

The programme is being led by Feedback, and will be delivered in partnership with a range of host organisations – from those working 'hands on' with sustainable food (for example, community food and growing projects) to those advocating for system-level change to our food systems (for example, campaigning organisations).

### What is the need for Eco Talent?

We believe that only a future of equal opportunity will be truly sustainable, and that to combat the climate crisis we need voices from every community leading the creation and implementation of solutions. To succeed in our collective aims, organisations across the environment sector must become both more inclusive and more diverse.

At Feedback, our aim is to transform the food system: to one which regenerates, rather than depletes, nature. Eco Talent offers us the opportunity take the first vital steps in training the future workforce; individuals who can be leaders for a sustainable food future through delivering the practical solutions or campaigning for systemic changes.

### How will Eco Talent work in practice?

Feedback will work with potential host organisations to identify opportunities for paid internship roles within your organisation that meet the criteria of Eco Talent (see more below). We will then work with you to create the job specification, to identify suitable candidates and to recruit the right person.

Each internship will run 4 days per week for a total of 15 weeks. The intern will spend most of this time working at the host organisation: learning about the work that you do and developing on-the-job skills and experience. There will also be some time spent with Feedback: 1 week at the beginning of the 15-week period to learn about food systems and their environmental impact; then an average of 0.5 days per week ongoing to build and hone work-based skills, build networks, receive external training & mentoring and look at other, relevant interests. Halfway through the placement, the young person will return for a further week at Feedback – this week will be spent looking towards the future, identifying job opportunities, working on CV and job application writing and interview skills.

## Example outline:

### Week 1

4 days with Feedback @ Mare St – A grounding in food, the environment, and the world of work

### Weeks 2-7 (total of six weeks)

3.5 days with Host

0.5 days with Feedback at various locations (or 1 day per fortnight)

Note: during some of this time (max 5 days) the young person may be away on external training

### Week 8

4 days with Feedback @ Mare St – CV and Job application work

### Weeks 9 – 15 (total of seven weeks)

3.5 days with Host

0.5 days with Feedback (or 1 day per fortnight)

Note: during some of this time (max 5 days) the young person might be away on external training

## Who will the intern be employed/paid by?

The interns will be employed and paid by Feedback, and 'hosted' by your organisation. We will require all host organisations to sign up to a code of best practice, covering legal formalities such as safeguarding, disciplinary procedures, workplace health and safety, etc. The interns will be paid weekly upon completion of a timesheet which you will need to co-sign; they will be paid the Living Wage foundation's living wage rate - £9.30 per hour UK-wide and £10.75 per hour in London. The host organisation would be responsible for any relevant work-related expenses (in line with their normal procedures for staff expenses).

## What are the timescales?

EcoTalent will run between January 2020 and June 2021. There will be several phases or 'cohorts' during the life of the programme. We first London-based placement was advertised in December 2019, for the internships to begin in February 2020. In Summer 2020 we hope to expand the programme to one or more other UK cities.

## Partnership Working

Feedback will work with your organisation to co-create the internship opportunity, to find and recruit the right young person, and to ensure the project is a success for both you and the young person. We will draw up a partnership agreement to define the roles and responsibilities.

As a Host Organisation, you will:

- Write a job description, advertise the placement and assist in the recruitment process
- Offer the young person a formal induction into your organisation and how their role fits into the work
- Provide the young person with a legitimate role within your organisation
- Provide the young person with a designated staff contact for the duration of their placement
- Host the young person for 13 weeks, split with a one week break halfway through
- Host the young person for 3.5 days per week (days/duration of placement can be negotiated)
- Ensure the intern receives adequate training and support to effectively deliver in their role
- Assist Feedback with monitoring and evaluation of the intern and the project itself
- Cover any expenses the intern occurs relating to their placement and during its course
- Smaller organisations may be able to apply for a bursary to cover internal costs associated with hosting the intern – please enquire for more information

Feedback will:

- Lead on advertising the internship vacancy
- Assist you in every stage of the recruitment process – from shortlisting to interview stage
- Lead on formal recruitment of a candidate for the placement
- Provide the intern with a contract and the living wage of £9.30 per hour UK-wide and £10.75 per hour in London.
- Provide the intern with a dedicated staff contact
- Host the intern for the first week, during which Feedback will outline how the environmental and ecological crisis relates to our food system
- Provide the host organisation with a dedicated staff contact and support when required
- Host weekly meetings with the intern on a set day to be agreed in advance
- Host the intern for a week towards the middle of the placement to work on CV writing, job application and interview skills.

- Organise for the intern to receive relevant formal training during their placement to be discussed and dates negotiated with you
- Manage project evaluation and reporting requirements

## Equipment

Host organisations are responsible for providing interns with all equipment needed for them to complete the role expected of them. For placements where a computer or laptop is needed but hosts are unable to provide one, please get in touch with Feedback to discuss the potential of an equipment loan.

## ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE YOU CAN EXPECT TO WORK WITH

### Are the paid internships offered through EcoTalent open to everyone?

The programme is open to young people (aged 18-24) who are passionate about the environment, food, sustainability – or all of these things – and want to take action to tackle climate change. Research by Policy Exchange UK in 2017 found that in a ranking of 202 professions, the environmental sector was the second least diverse sector, with farming being the first. To work towards changing this, the roles created through Eco Talent will be specifically geared towards those who are underrepresented in the sector.

### We are particularly keen to receive applications from:

- People from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- People from low-income backgrounds
- People who identify as LGTBQIA+
- Neurodiverse people
- We are also keen to make internships available to people with disabilities, both visible and otherwise. We understand that this will need to be reviewed on a per-placement basis, depending on the particulars of the organisation (e.g. their premises) and the role available (e.g. duties to be undertaken)

Furthermore, we are also aiming at:

- People who are passionate about the environment and want to take action to tackle climate change but have not studied a relevant subject at college or university
- People who have studied a relevant subject at university but have not been able to secure paid employment in that sector within a year of graduating

- People who are interested in training in practical food delivery (including cooking and growing) with a sustainable focus but have little or no previous professional experience
- People who are interested in environmental campaigning but do not feel confident or lack the knowledge to take steps towards this

## Application and Interview process

Applicants will be asked to answer some specific questions in their applications, these will be outlined in the job advert having been set by the host organisation and Feedback. Questions are likely to be:

- Tell us about yourself
- Tell us why you care for the environment
- Tell us why you want to work with [Host Organisation]

Applications will be invited in written or video format, although are open to discuss alternative interview methods and recruitment procedures. The interview panel will consist of at least one Feedback staff member and a staff member from the host organisation.

Applicants invited to interview will be sent the interview questions in advance. It is still possible that candidates will be asked questions during the interview which have not been outlined in advance - these may be planned in advance or may arise naturally during the interview.

Interviews will be conducted relatively informally. Interview skills will be explored and developed during the internship, as we will not expect applicants to have these as pre-existing skills.

A selection criteria will be agreed on between Feedback and the host organization in advance. This criteria will be geared towards the aims of EcoTalent – to increase accessible points of entry to the sector for those who many currently face barriers.

## About Feedback

Feedback is a campaign group working to regenerate nature by transforming our food system. To do this we challenge power, catalyse action and empower people to achieve positive change.

Founded in 2013, we combine hard-hitting investigative research, mass public participation feasts, and on the ground pilots for a better food system. As a result, we've put food issues, in particular waste, at the very top of the business and policy agendas.

We work across multiple aspects of our food system, including industrial meat, food waste, farmed fish, British sugar and 'green' energy generated through anaerobic digestion of edible food. We also work on campaigns around food citizenship, food commons and new food economies, piloting alternatives to the globalised, financialised food system.

EcoTalent forms part of our Food Citizenship work, which aims to bring about new food system models and bring new voices to the table.