# Maharashtra mandates internships for all undergraduates from May to boost practical learning



Starting in May of the upcoming academic year, undergraduate students across Maharashtra will be required to complete mandatory internships—or On-Job Training (OJT)—as stipulated under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This policy, currently being implemented by the Maharashtra government, aims to provide students from diverse academic disciplines with practical industry exposure to better inform their career choices.

The University of Mumbai, which affiliates over 900 colleges and serves approximately 75,000 undergraduate students, will see a vast scale-up in internship enrolments. Each student must complete 120 hours of OJT, earning four academic credits essential for graduation. The requirement spans all fields of study, including traditional Arts, Science, and Commerce programmes, as well as professional courses such as engineering, information technology, mass media, management studies, banking, finance, and insurance. The internships are to be undertaken during the second and third years of the undergraduate degree.

To oversee the process, every college must establish a dedicated OJT cell responsible for arranging placements that provide students with a variety of hands-on learning experiences. These experiences may include industrial training, academic and industry research projects, entrepreneurship initiatives, seminars, community engagement, and collaboration with government agencies, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Despite the policy’s well-intended objectives, the rollout has highlighted significant challenges related to the availability of suitable internship placements relative to the large number of students needing these opportunities. Interviews with college representatives reveal widespread concern over the difficulty of securing placements that meet both capacity and quality criteria.

An OJT officer involved in arranging internships noted, “Many companies do not have the resources and bandwidth to train interns, monitor their performance and evaluate their progress.” This sentiment is echoed by multiple colleges that report companies, non-profits, and start-ups are under no obligation to accept interns and often restrict their intake either in numbers or duration.

St Xavier’s College, anticipating around 1,300 participants this summer, is adopting a multi-pronged approach to increase placement opportunities. Radhika Tendulkar, coordinator of the college’s placement cell, told the Hindustan Times, “We are engaging with parents and government sectors to expand our reach. We have organised meetings with parents and appealed to them to assist in securing OJT opportunities, considering many of them work in large organisations or run their own businesses.”

Meanwhile, HR College of Commerce, part of the HSNC University cluster, is exploring alternatives for commerce students who also pursue Chartered Accountancy. Principal Pooja Ramchandani indicated, “The university is currently evaluating whether articleship under ICAI guidelines can count towards the OJT requirement.”

In some colleges, students face more acute challenges. A professor at a Kandivali-based college stated, “Until now, internships were mandatory only for professional courses such as BSc IT and BMS but now all students have to be placed. Companies partnering with us for years are willing to take a few more interns, but that’s far from sufficient.” The professor added that only 36 placements were secured for 58 students this year, underscoring a shortfall many others are grappling with.

For students in non-professional programs, securing relevant internships requires creative approaches. At St Xavier’s, history students are seeking positions with museums and tourism companies, while science students are engaging with research institutes to gain practical experience with advanced instruments. The NEP allows field visits as substitutes for OJT to enhance experiential learning. Mumbai University’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ravindra Kulkarni, said, “The nano science department has state-of-the-art equipment. We are designing skill-based workshops to help students gain practical experience handling these instruments. For students from the Pali Department, we are arranging field visits to Buddhist heritage sites to facilitate experiential learning.”

Psychology students have been approaching hospitals for practical exposure, while others find placements with NGOs. Madhav Rajwade, principal of Sathaye College, highlighted that students are “allowed to work with NGOs of their choice, giving them both practical exposure and social awareness.”

Colleges and educators have expressed that government and university bodies must play more active roles in facilitating internships. Shailendra Deolankar, director of higher education, Maharashtra, referenced a state initiative called ‘Government Internships,’ which aligns with the NEP’s OJT mandate. He explained that discussions are underway with other states that have successful government internship schemes.

Professor Kulkarni also noted that Mumbai University has signed 15 memorandums of understanding with various government, semi-government, and private industry partners to facilitate OJT internships. An additional MoU with the Central Apprenticeship Council is in progress. Furthermore, education department sources shared that district collectors will be tasked with assisting colleges in securing placements within government offices and local industries.

Expanding existing initiatives like the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) has also been suggested. Sumit Kumar, chief strategy officer at TeamLease Degree Apprenticeships—a private internship placement agency—explained, “The programme is currently limited to graduate students and 500 companies.” Broadening the scheme to include undergraduate students and increasing participating companies could help alleviate placement shortages.

Some experts advocate for stronger legal frameworks to ensure adequate internship opportunities. Aanad Mapuskar, former member of the statute committee of the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016, emphasised the need for dedicated legislation akin to the Apprenticeship Act. He said, “A law mandating industries to hire interns at a certain percentage would not only provide structured opportunities but also ensure a safe and secure working environment for students.”

Students’ personal experiences under voluntary internship programmes demonstrate the potential benefits of OJT. A law student from Vivekanand Education Society’s Law College shared, “While studying law, I interned with a lawyer through the college’s internship cell. I learnt vital skills and also gained valuable insights into property law, which is now my strength. I am now working with a law firm.” Another student mentioned, “I interned with a fashion e-commerce portal, and it taught me to apply my software knowledge in real-world scenarios and to tackle challenges at the workplace. Since it was a paid internship, I plan to continue working there after I graduate!”

However, outreach to industry partners reveals a general lack of awareness about the new OJT expectations. According to one coordinator's report, “We visited several industries to promote OJT and found that most were unaware of it. Despite reaching out to 18 organisations, we managed to secure only 17 opportunities from five companies.”

As colleges prepare to implement this extensive internship mandate from May, they are navigating a complex landscape characterised by enthusiastic student participation juxtaposed with logistical challenges in securing adequate, meaningful placements. Collaborative efforts between educational institutions, government bodies, and industry stakeholders remain critical to meeting the policy’s ambitious goals.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/work-order-colleges-in-turmoil-over-new-internship-mandate-101745693218010.html> - This article corroborates the mandate starting May for undergraduate students across Maharashtra, including Mumbai, to complete mandatory internships (On-Job Training) as per the NEP 2020, and describes challenges colleges face in placing large numbers of students in internships across diverse disciplines.
2. <https://pminternshipscheme.com> - This official site for the Prime Minister Internship Scheme confirms details about the government's existing internship program for graduate students, its scale with 500 companies, and the suggestion in the article to expand it to undergraduate students to alleviate placement shortages.
3. <https://medicaldialogues.in/news/education/muhs-invites-applications-for-summer-internship-program-sip-2025-apply-now-145763> - This source validates that Maharashtra University of Health Sciences is actively conducting internship programs for undergraduates, indicating ongoing structured internship initiatives in Maharashtra that align with the NEP emphasis on practical training.
4. <https://internship.mea.gov.in/internship> - The Ministry of External Affairs Internship Portal provides evidence of government-supported internship opportunities with significant structure and oversight, reflecting the article's mention of government and semi-government collaborations to facilitate internships.
5. <https://onlyeducation.in/news/post/muhs-extends-deadline-for-summer-internship-2025-apply-now> - This news about MUHS extending deadlines for summer internships in 2025 supports the article's point about the academic schedules and planning involved in internship programs coordinated by Maharashtra educational institutions.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - The original article is sourced from Noah Wire Services, which can be referenced as the origin of detailed information about Maharashtra's implementation of mandatory undergraduate internship programs under NEP 2020 and associated institutional responses.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiyAFBVV95cUxOcWZZVDZxbmxBT09IWVVNUzF6S3NyUzYxOXVhbWY1UzFQQW9Eckc1cmJ3QnE0UWVNUXJ2aEdQOXZ4a2FrNDlFdWpXbFJiVkdTSTg2WlBBMUx3cXZKbmNpSnB1Y3dYVldjbjY0YlN2RTNybTREVWpSRGhmM2dhQWJaYllTbHc5cHFEQjNsbnRNUlhrdWFXRzhzbWFYbENXb2pNZW1tUnI1Wk5PdDJxREwxMFFZcHdEMTI2aGFETzQycmhaYllMLVI3MA?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data