

## Chapter 9

### Gradworks Inc. – Achieving Intern Development Program Goals

#### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

Gradworks Inc. (Gradworks) is responsible for the Gradworks Intern Development Program (Intern Program). The Intern Program provides recent post-secondary graduates with employment experiences through paid internships with the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan (CIC), CIC Crown corporations, and their subsidiaries (partner employers). It is designed to help attract future employees, reflective of the demographics of Saskatchewan, to the public sector.

For the 12-month period ended December 31, 2015, Gradworks had effective processes to achieve the Intern Program goals, except for the following.

It needs to clearly communicate to partner employers its expectations related to using interns to help contribute to achieving a representative workforce (i.e., its diversity targets). Partner employers need this information so that the practices used when hiring interns align with Gradworks' expectations for the Intern Program.

Also, Gradworks needs to verify that internship applicants possess the required educational program eligibility requirements. Not verifying credentials increases the risk of ineligible interns being considered for, and filling internships.

Gradworks needs to report the results (i.e., what it achieved) of the Intern Program to partner employers and the public. Reporting results informs partner employers of areas where action to contribute towards the achievement of the Intern Program goals is needed, and facilitates public scrutiny of the Intern Program.

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the results of our audit of Gradworks' processes to achieve the Intern Program goals.

### 2.1 Gradworks Intern Development Program Purpose and Goals

*The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond (2012)* indicates that educating, training, and developing a skilled workforce is a core growth activity of the Government of Saskatchewan to accomplish its strategy to secure a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.<sup>1</sup> In January 2016, the Federal Government reported labour shortages are expected to continue to increase in Canada as the economy improves, and an aging population exerts pressure on the labour market.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.saskatchewan.ca/~media/files/pdfs/saskatchewan%20plan%20for%20growth%20-%20full%20version.pdf](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/~media/files/pdfs/saskatchewan%20plan%20for%20growth%20-%20full%20version.pdf) p. 4. (25 January 2016).

<sup>2</sup> [www.budget.gc.ca/2014/docs/jobs-emplois/pdf/jobs-emplois-eng.pdf](http://www.budget.gc.ca/2014/docs/jobs-emplois/pdf/jobs-emplois-eng.pdf) p. 12. (25 January 2016).



Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Newfoundland and Labrador saw the largest increase in job vacancy rates from 2009 to 2014, largely reflecting high labour demand in certain occupations.<sup>3</sup> In 2015, Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Statistics Canada reported that the December 2015 unemployment rate in Saskatchewan was 5.5% as compared to British Columbia's rate of 6.7%, Alberta's rate of 7.0%, Manitoba's rate of 5.9%, and Canada's overall rate of 7.1%.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the skilled labour shortage<sup>5</sup> and low unemployment rate<sup>6</sup> in Saskatchewan, employers in Saskatchewan, including the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan and its subsidiary corporations (CIC crown sector), have faced increased competition when recruiting potential future employees. Furthermore, the CIC crown sector is facing expected resource gaps from the retirement of baby boomers currently in their employ.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, CIC's *2014 Managing the Bubble Report* expected that as of December 2014, more than one half of the permanent staff in the CIC crown sector could retire by 2020.<sup>8</sup>

Since 2005, the CIC crown sector has used the Intern Program to help attract future employees to the public sector, and fill expected resource gaps. The Intern Program provides recent post-secondary graduates with 12-month paid internships with partner employers comprised of CIC, CIC Crown corporations, and their subsidiaries. Gradworks Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of CIC, is responsible for the program.<sup>9</sup>

The goals of the Gradworks Intern Development Program are to:

- › Provide recent graduates with Saskatchewan career opportunities
- › Increase retention of young people in Saskatchewan
- › Develop potential future employees for the crown sector of Saskatchewan
- › Develop current employees through their participation as coaches/mentors to interns
- › Support Saskatchewan's Crown corporations in their role as Employers of Choice
- › Support the values of workplace diversity and employment equity<sup>10</sup>

Since 2005, Gradworks, in conjunction with partner employers, has hired a total of 858 interns.<sup>11</sup> **Figure 1** shows the number of interns participating in the program for the past five years. For those years, Gradworks targeted hiring 75 interns each year for placement with nine partner employers.

<sup>3</sup> [www.budget.gc.ca/2014/docs/jobs-emplois/pdf/jobs-emplois-eng.pdf](http://www.budget.gc.ca/2014/docs/jobs-emplois/pdf/jobs-emplois-eng.pdf), p. 32. (25 January 2016).

<sup>4</sup> [www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/lfss01c-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/lfss01c-eng.htm), [www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160108/t003a-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160108/t003a-eng.htm) (25 January 2016).

<sup>5</sup> [www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/economy-lab/dont-be-fooled-by-7-unemployment-a-labour-shortage-is-coming/article15280766/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/economy-lab/dont-be-fooled-by-7-unemployment-a-labour-shortage-is-coming/article15280766/) (25 January 2016).

<sup>6</sup> [www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/provincial/economy/unemployment.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/provincial/economy/unemployment.aspx) (25 January 2016).

<sup>7</sup> *Gradworks 2015 Work Plan*, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> [www.cicorp.sk.ca/+pub/Documents/Managing%20the%20Bubble%20Long%20Version%202014%20Final.pdf](http://www.cicorp.sk.ca/+pub/Documents/Managing%20the%20Bubble%20Long%20Version%202014%20Final.pdf) (25 January 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan established Gradworks Inc. in 2005 to operate the Gradworks Intern Development Program.

<sup>10</sup> [www.gradworks.ca/what-is-gradworks/program-overview](http://www.gradworks.ca/what-is-gradworks/program-overview) (20 January 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Gradworks Inc. records.

**Figure 1 – Five-year History – Number of Gradworks Interns Placed with Partner Employers**

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Interns Placed	63	80	82	89	92

Source: Gradworks Inc. records.

## 2.2 Relationship between Gradworks Inc. and CIC

Gradworks is overseen by a Board comprised of senior CIC officials and one external member (e.g., a representative from a partner employer).

CIC, Gradworks' owner, provides Gradworks with operating funding for administrative expenses of the Intern Program (e.g., marketing, communications), and staff, at no additional cost, to administer the program.<sup>12</sup> Partner employers reimburse Gradworks for the salaries and benefits of interns placed in their agencies.<sup>13</sup> **Figure 2** shows Gradworks' expenses for the past five years.

**Figure 2 – Five-year History – Gradworks' Expenses**

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	(in thousands)				
Internship Salaries and Benefits	\$ 2,765	\$ 3,015	\$ 3,147	\$ 3,263	\$ 3,097
Administrative and Other	78	98	100	90	74
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,843</b>	<b>\$ 3,113</b>	<b>\$ 3,247</b>	<b>\$ 3,353</b>	<b>\$ 3,171</b>

Source: Gradworks Inc. audited financial statements 2011-2014 and financial records of Gradworks Inc.

A common concern of youth graduating from post-secondary institutions is not gaining a fulfilling career upon completion of their studies.<sup>14</sup> An effective Intern Program can provide graduates with relevant experience in their chosen field to help them advance in their career, and attract graduates to the public sector. Also, it provides employers with an opportunity to assess whether the intern is a good fit within the organization before offering permanent employment.

While Gradworks does not decide which particular interns to hire, in order to achieve its goals (e.g., to provide recent graduates with Saskatchewan career opportunities, to support workplace diversity and employment equity), it needs to make certain that its partner employers use fair hiring practices when selecting interns to hire.

## 3.0 AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, CRITERIA, AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this audit is to assess the effectiveness of Gradworks' processes, for the year ended December 31, 2015, to achieve the Gradworks Intern Development Program goals.

<sup>12</sup> CIC does not charge Gradworks a fee for general overhead costs or the salaries of CIC staff administering the program.

<sup>13</sup> Saskatchewan Transportation Company intern salaries and benefits are paid by CIC.

<sup>14</sup> [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/the-expectation-gap-students-and-universities-roles-in-preparing-for-life-after-grad/article21187004/?page=all](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/the-expectation-gap-students-and-universities-roles-in-preparing-for-life-after-grad/article21187004/?page=all) (25 January 2016).



To conduct this audit, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate Gradworks' processes, we used criteria based on our related work, reviews of literature, and consultations with management. Management agreed with the criteria (see **Figure 3**).

**Figure 3—Audit Criteria**

<p><b>1. Establish program strategies and targeted outcomes</b></p> <p>1.1 Agree upon roles and responsibilities of parties involved in program operation (i.e., Gradworks and partner employers)</p> <p>1.2 Assess risks to achievement of goals</p> <p>1.3 Determine key strategies to achieve goals</p> <p>1.4 Establish performance measures</p> <p>1.5 Set achievable performance targets</p> <p><b>2. Monitor program operation</b></p> <p>2.1 Design operating policies and procedures consistent with program goals (e.g., for screening of intern applications, ongoing monitoring and performance evaluations)</p> <p>2.2 Confirm that partner employers have established policies and procedures (e.g., for identifying intern positions, hiring interns) that align with program goals</p> <p>2.3 Execute the program consistent with established policies and procedures</p> <p>2.4 Assign qualified staff to oversee program operation</p> <p><b>3. Periodically evaluate program effectiveness</b></p> <p>3.1 Establish evaluation procedures (e.g., responsibility, timing, evaluation criteria)</p> <p>3.2 Track key information for performance measures</p> <p>3.3 Analyze and conclude on program effectiveness</p> <p>3.4 Implement program changes as required</p> <p>3.5 Communicate program results</p>
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**We concluded that, for the 12-month period ended December 31, 2015, Gradworks had, other than for the following areas, effective processes to achieve the Intern Program goals. Gradworks needs to:**

- › **Tell partner employers of its expectations related to achievement of diversity targets**
- › **Verify applicants possess the required educational program eligibility requirements**
- › **Report program results to partner employers and the public**

## 4.0 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, we set out the criteria (expectations in italics) and our key findings along with related recommendations.

### 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities Established but Improved Communication Needed

*We expected Gradworks would determine the key roles and responsibilities of it and partner employers in operating the Intern Program. We expected Gradworks and partner employers to formally agree upon these roles and responsibilities.*

At program inception in 2005, Gradworks determined the key roles and responsibilities of itself and the partner employers. Gradworks documents these roles and

responsibilities in five-year Gradworks Crown Corporation Agreements (Gradworks Agreement) with each partner employer.

Gradworks is responsible for the ongoing operation of the Intern Program. It sets program eligibility criteria, intern salaries, and evaluation processes. Gradworks approves internships proposed by partner employers, and performs initial screening of applicants against its eligibility criteria. Internship proposals outline a description of the internship, planned responsibilities and duties, required qualifications and skills of applicants, as well as information on the proposed partner employer coach.

Gradworks also promotes the Intern Program (e.g., via advertisements, its website, and participation in post-secondary career fairs), and provides interns with training and development opportunities. It gives partner employers guidance on training for partner employer coaches and for evaluating interns. Gradworks, as the official employer, pays the interns. Partner employers reimburse Gradworks for these amounts.

Partner employers are also responsible for:

- › Identifying specific positions they wish to fill using the Intern Program
- › Interviewing and selecting successful candidates from a listing of applicants who passed Gradworks' initial screening procedures
- › Assigning management personnel to mentor and coach each intern (i.e., coach)
- › Completing formal periodic evaluations of each intern's performance

CIC's legal counsel is responsible for establishing agreement templates and keeping agreements with partner employers current (e.g., upon expiration or when events significantly change the roles and responsibilities of Gradworks and/or the partner employers). For example, in March 2015, Gradworks amended its agreement with a partner employer given that one of the partner employer's subsidiaries expressed formal interest to participate in the program.

We found Gradworks had current Gradworks Agreements with all partner employers participating in the program. These agreements outlined expected key roles and responsibilities for partner employers.

However, while the Gradworks Agreements indicate that Gradworks and partner employers are to work together to achieve the Intern Program goals, they do not include specific requirements for partner employers to align their hiring practices with these goals. One of the Intern Program's goals is to support the value of workplace diversity and employment equity and Gradworks has set representative workforce (diversity) targets (see **Figure 4** for 2015 diversity targets and results). While partner employers' practices generally aligned with the Intern Program goals, we noted partner employers were not fully aware of and did not consider Gradworks' diversity targets when making their hiring decisions.

Without clear communication of its expectations to partner employers, there is increased risk that partner employers' practices are inconsistent with the Intern Program goals and as such, Gradworks may not be able to achieve the Intern Program goals.



- 1. We recommend that Gradworks Inc. communicate, in writing, to partner employers its expectations related to achievement of diversity targets for the Gradworks Intern Development Program.**

Individual coaches employed by partner employers play a vital role in the Intern Program. Coaches are responsible for mentoring and evaluating individual interns. Gradworks uses standard Gradworks Coach Agreements signed with each coach to confirm each coach's commitment to the Intern Program.

These agreements include the following requirements: a one-year commitment to the program, weekly meetings with interns, regular meetings with Gradworks program consultants, adherence to Gradworks' Intern Program policies and procedures, submission of intern evaluations, providing the intern with valuable work, and assisting the intern in finding permanent employment. For specific internships we examined, Gradworks had signed agreements with each coach. Agreements clearly outlined all expected key roles and responsibilities for coaches.

## **4.2 Program Goals, Strategies, Measures, and Targets Established**

*We expected, in designing the Intern Program, Gradworks would obtain an understanding of key stakeholders' (e.g., partner employers, recent post-secondary graduates) needs, and consider those needs when setting the Intern Program's goals. We expected Gradworks would assess potential risks it may face in achieving the Intern Program's goals, and determine strategies that respond to such risks. To help it assess the effectiveness of the Intern Program, Gradworks would set performance measures and targets (i.e., expectations) for key performance measures.*

### **4.2.1 Risk Assessment**

Management told us that it considers the risks facing Gradworks as part of CIC's overall risk assessment. We found that some of the identified risks in CIC's overall risk assessment applied to Gradworks (e.g., inability to attract and retain employees, inability to transfer knowledge and develop staff to succeed into key roles).

Gradworks has identified strategies, either in its policies or in its annual work plans, that respond to these risks. For example, in the Gradworks' Representative Workforce Policy, the Board identified the challenge in meeting its diversity targets given the partner employer makes the final hiring decision. This Policy outlines strategies to address this challenge (e.g., Gradworks will inform and encourage partner employers to consider designating positions for candidates belonging to a representative group and/or interview and hire candidates belonging to those groups when possible).

During 2015, the Board discussed potential options (strategies) to increase participation of persons of Aboriginal descent. This discussion aligns with the goal of the Intern Program to support workplace diversity and employment equity, and the following strategies as set out in Gradworks' 2015 and 2016 work plans:

- › To increase access for Crown corporations to educated, Aboriginal professionals
- › To contribute to the achievement of a representative workforce that reflects the demographics of Saskatchewan

### 4.2.2 Program Goals, Strategies, Measures, and Targets

In 2005, when the Intern Program was first designed, Gradworks hired an outside consultant to assess stakeholder views, and propose the design of the Intern Program. It considered the needs of numerous stakeholders including post-secondary graduates, partner employers, Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions, municipalities, and the Board in developing the goals of the Intern Program (see **Figure 4**), and the eligibility criteria of applicant interns. To be eligible to participate in the Intern Program, applicants must:

- › Have graduated from a recognized college, technical institute, or university program within the last five years
- › Have less than one year of related work experience in the relevant field of study in Canada (less than five years of work experience in the relevant field of study outside of Canada)
- › Be eligible to work in Canada
- › Have not previously completed an internship with the Intern Program<sup>15</sup>

Gradworks uses Gradworks Agreements with each partner employer to reinforce the Intern Program's purpose; each Agreement specifies that the goal of the Intern Program is to provide graduates with challenging and career-focused positions during the course of internships. This goal generally aligns with the more specific goals of the Intern Program (see **Figure 4**).

Management of Gradworks uses CIC's balanced scorecard<sup>16</sup> framework to develop a work plan each year (annual work plan). The Board-approved annual work plan typically includes strategies along with related performance measures and targets that align with the goals of the Intern Program. The Board approved the 2015 work plan, highlighted in **Figure 4**, on November 6, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> [www.gradworks.ca/what-is-gradworks/program-eligibility](http://www.gradworks.ca/what-is-gradworks/program-eligibility) (25 January 2016).

<sup>16</sup> A balanced scorecard is a planning and monitoring tool used by management to communicate its performance objectives, specific targets, and progress toward achieving performance objectives in a range of areas.



**Figure 4—Highlights of Gradworks’ 2015 Work Plan—Goals, Strategies, Performance Measures, Targets, and Results**

Strategy	Performance Measure	2015 Target	2015 Result	
Goals: Provide recent graduates with Saskatchewan career opportunities Increase retention of young people in Saskatchewan				
Increase employment opportunities for recent post secondary graduates in Saskatchewan	Number of interns placed at Crown corporations	75 interns	63 interns	
Assist in placing interns in full-time employment with partner employers or other employers	Percentage of completed* interns offered full-time permanent or temporary positions with Crowns	65% of interns completing their internship gain permanent or temporary employment with Crowns	69% of interns gained temporary or permanent employment with the Crowns.	
	Percentage of completed interns offered full-time permanent or temporary positions within Saskatchewan (including Crowns)	85% of interns completing their internship gain permanent or temporary employment within Saskatchewan	97% of interns gained temporary or permanent employment within Saskatchewan.	
Goals: Develop potential future employees for the Crown sector of Saskatchewan Support Saskatchewan’s Crown corporations in their role as Employers of Choice				
Increase access for Crown corporations to educated, young professionals	Number of total applicants per year	4,500 applicants	3,406 applicants	
	Number of applicants for each position	85% of positions have 25 applications per position	87% of positions had 25 applicants per position	
	Number of eligible applicants for positions (eligible applicant = approved by Gradworks)	90% of positions have eight eligible applications per position	100% of positions had eight eligible applicants per position	
	Number of quality applications for positions (quality applicant = interviewed applicant)	90% of positions have a minimum of three quality applications per position	92% of positions had a minimum of three quality applicants per position	
Develop a network of peers for Gradworks interns through events and communication	Number of career development and learning events	Six orientation lunches during the year	Eight orientation lunches hosted by Gradworks	
		Four workshops during the year	Five workshops hosted by Gradworks	
		One networking event during the year	One networking event held by Gradworks	
Provide career development and learning events to Gradworks interns to increase their ability to succeed in the workforce	Number of workshops	Four workshops during the year	Five workshops hosted by Gradworks	
		Number of other events (i.e. networking)	Two events during the year	Two events hosted by Gradworks
		Number of interns that attended the event	85% of interns attend a minimum of one workshop per internship during the year	85% of interns attended a minimum of one workshop



Strategy	Performance Measure	2015 Target	2015 Result
Goal: Develop current employees through their participation as coaches/mentors to interns			
Provide mentorship opportunities through assigning coaches to interns	Number of performance reviews completed**	95%	99% of interns had performance reviews completed
	Qualitative survey – feedback from interns (positive or very positive exit survey)	85% rate experience with a coach as positive or very positive	91% of interns rated their coach as positive or very positive
Goal: Support the values of workplace diversity and employment equity			
Increase access for Crown corporations to educated, Aboriginal professionals	Number of Aboriginal applicants	13.1% of total applicants****	2.8% of applicants were Aboriginal
	Number of Aboriginal applicants per position	25% of positions have three Aboriginal applicants or more to each position	9.7% of positions had three or more Aboriginal applicants per position
	Number of eligible Aboriginal applicants for positions (eligible applicant = approved by Gradworks)	45% of positions have a minimum of two eligible Aboriginal applicants per position	14.2% of positions had a minimum of two eligible Aboriginal applicants
Contribute to the achievement of a representative workforce that reflects the demographics of Saskatchewan	Number of self-declared target groups registered*** (Percentage of applicants who self-declare)	47% of registered graduates self-declare as a woman; 13.1% as a person of Aboriginal descent; 9.7% as a person with disabilities; 6.6% as a person of visible minority****	<u>Applicants (% of total applicants):</u> 37.1% - Women 2.8% - Aboriginal 1.4% - Disabled 60.3% - Visible Minority
	Number of self-declared target groups hired as interns within internships (hired) (Percentage of interns who self-declare)	47% of interns self-declare as a woman; 13.1% as a person of Aboriginal descent; 9.7% as a person with disabilities; 6.6% as a person of visible minority****	<u>Hired (% of total interns hired):</u> 46.9% - Women 3.8% - Aboriginal 0% - Disabled 32.4% - Visible Minority

Source: Gradworks Inc. 2015 Work Plan.

\* Completed interns are interns who completed their full annual internship.

\*\* Intern performance reviews completed by coaches.

\*\*\* Registered means those who self-declared in their internship application as a woman, person of Aboriginal descent, person with disabilities, and/or person of visible minority.

\*\*\*\* Targets reflect the targets set by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

We found that the identified strategies, performance measures, and targets provide Gradworks with information to help monitor its achievement of the Intern Program goals.

### 4.3 Operating Policies and Procedures Implemented but Improvements Needed

*We expected Gradworks would implement policies and procedures to operate the Intern Program consistent with program goals (e.g., for screening of intern applications, evaluating intern performance, addressing conflicts of interest, monitoring and reporting on program operation). We expected Gradworks would confirm that partner employers have established policies and procedures to fulfill their role in operating the Intern*



*Program that align with the goals of the program (e.g., for identifying intern positions, hiring interns, addressing conflicts of interest). We expected Gradworks would assign qualified staff to oversee program operation.*

### 4.3.1 Gradworks Policies and Procedures Implemented but Intern Educational Credentials Not Always Verified

Gradworks maintains job descriptions for staff operating the program (i.e., the President and Gradworks program consultants). These job descriptions set out key competencies and experience required. Gradworks also provides new staff with extensive on-the-job training regarding the Intern Program, and processes to complete their duties. As well, since CIC staff administer the Intern Program, they were subject to, and complied with CIC's Employee Conduct policy. This policy includes a requirement to remain free from any conflicts of interest.

Gradworks has implemented policies and procedures to guide staff on the program's day-to-day operations. Gradworks provides this guidance in various documents and formats. Some examples include:

- › Step-by-step procedures for posting internship opportunities on its website, and reporting of results against its annual work plan
- › Agreements with coaches and partner employers requiring intern evaluations and use of evaluation templates
- › Policies outlining intern eligibility criteria used to screen intern applications

One of the intern eligibility criteria is that applicants must have graduated from a recognized college, technical institute, or university program within the last five years. During its screening procedures, Gradworks did not verify that applicants possess the Intern Program's educational eligibility requirements. It relied on applicants for internships indicating the completion of relevant post-secondary programs in their application and resume. It did not ask applicants to provide evidence of educational credentials such as post-secondary transcripts or copy of a diploma.

For internships we examined, two partner employers requested and received evidence that hired interns possessed the required educational credentials prior to finalizing the offer of employment. Two other partner employers indicated that they relied on Gradworks' initial screening procedures to verify applicant education eligibility requirements.

Without sufficient verification of Intern Program educational eligibility requirements, Gradworks and partner employers are at risk of filling internships with ineligible interns or wasting time evaluating ineligible candidates. This could adversely affect the reputation of Gradworks and partner employers.

**2. We recommend that Gradworks Inc. verify the educational eligibility criteria of applicants for its Gradworks Intern Development Program prior to the internship start date.**

### 4.3.2 Partner Employers' Processes Generally Align with Intern Program Goals

We found partner employers had policies and procedures that facilitated fair hiring practices (e.g., use of qualified staff free of conflict of interest to make hiring decisions, documented interviews, use of assessment tools, and reference checks). For internships we examined, partner employers completed and submitted intern performance evaluations to Gradworks as required. However, as previously noted, partner employers were not always aware of and did not consider Gradworks' workforce diversity goal and related targets when making hiring decisions (see **Section 4.1**).

Gradworks monitors compliance of partner employers with Gradworks Agreements through its various interactions with the partner employers (e.g., reviewing and approving internships partner employers propose, confirming partner employers complete intern performance evaluations as expected, periodic meetings with partner employers).

## 4.4 Program Evaluated but Reporting of Results Needed

*We expected Gradworks would periodically evaluate the effectiveness of its Intern Program. It would document program evaluation criteria that cover all aspects of the program, are current, and set out factors on which it is collecting information (e.g., measures). Gradworks would analyze and conclude on program effectiveness, communicate these results to the Board, and implement changes to the program where required. Gradworks would communicate planned and actual program results to partner employers and the public.*

### 4.4.1 Program Evaluated and Changes Implemented

Although Gradworks does not have a formal policy for program evaluation, it periodically evaluated whether the Intern Program was operating effectively using various mechanisms.

Every five years, the Board of CIC, Gradworks' owner, decides whether to continue operating and funding the Intern Program. In 2013, CIC approved an extension of the program to December 2019. It based its extension on CIC's analysis that considered the following: key issues with the program (e.g., interest in the program by number of applicants, partner employer support), the impact the program had on developing and retaining educated graduates in Saskatchewan, difficulty graduates express in finding work in their area of study, and program cost. CIC gave its Board alternatives that discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Also, Gradworks obtained regular feedback from partner employers via annual meetings regarding the Intern Program. Management also analyzed information gathered annually for each of its performance measures, and determined whether the Intern Program achieved its stated goals and whether program changes were needed. For example, consultation with partner employers resulted in Gradworks, in 2015, increasing the frequency of recruiting interns each year (i.e., intakes) to allow for up to eight intakes per



year from six. It prepared documented analysis supporting the change and had an action plan to implement the change.

We found that it was clear who was responsible for implementing the change (i.e., Gradworks program consultant). The President approved this change, and it was implemented as planned. During 2015, Gradworks facilitated six intakes, one of which was a new intake period compared to prior years.

#### 4.4.2 Program Results Communicated to the Board

Gradworks' management has effective processes for collecting data, and computing the annual results for measures set out in its work plan.

Consistent with Gradworks' Board of Directors Annual Schedule, the Board receives the following information on the Intern Program:

- › Each quarter, a report outlining activities undertaken during the year (quarterly management operations updates)
- › Annually, a report that compares, in detail, the Intern Program's actual results to the approved annual work plan (annual results report) noting which targets were met.

During 2015, management and the Board reviewed and approved the 2014 annual results report and quarterly management operations updates. These reports included the information expected.

#### 4.4.3 Reporting of Program Results Externally Needed

Although Gradworks publishes the goals of the Intern Program on its website, it does not communicate to the public or to partner employers information about actual program results compared to planned results to show its progress in achieving program goals.

CIC publicly reports information on Gradworks in its annual report rather than publishing a public annual report specifically for Gradworks, or using Gradworks' website to report on the results of the program. We reviewed CIC's annual report, which indicated that Gradworks reached or surpassed its 2014 targets. However, Gradworks did not reach all of its 2014 targets (e.g., percentage of interns that gained permanent or temporary employment in Crowns, and percentage of intern registrations that self-declared). Management indicated that CIC's annual report was referring to its intern placement target. Nevertheless, this reporting does not include information regarding Gradworks progress towards achieving the other goals and related targets for the Intern Program.

Providing information on program achievements to the public facilitates public scrutiny of government programs and enhances government accountability for results achieved by its programs.

- 3. We recommend that Gradworks Inc., at least annually, publish information on key actual results compared to planned (i.e., targets) for the Gradworks Intern Development Program.**

Each year, Gradworks meets with partner employers to discuss the Intern Program. It also distributes newsletters to them that include some limited examples of Gradworks' activities undertaken to meet the goals of the Intern Program. The Board is comprised of a representative of one partner employer (i.e., SaskPower). As such, one partner employer receives, annually, detailed information about Gradworks' strategies, performance measures, targets, and actual results.

However, without periodic communication of this information to all partner employers, partner employers may not be aware of areas they may need to take action on to contribute towards the achievement of the Intern Program Goals.

- 4. We recommend that Gradworks Inc., at least annually, provide partner employers with information on key performance measures, targets, and actual results for the Gradworks Intern Development Program.**

## 5.0 SELECTED REFERENCES

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