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**FACULTY OF ACCOUNTANCY
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TABLE OF CONTENT

| SECTION A | PAGES |
|--|-------|
| 1.0 Introduction | 3 |
| 2.0 Summary of Work Done | 4 |
| 3.0 Strengths and Weaknesses of Training | 7 |
| 4.0 Self-Reflection | 8 |
| | |
| SECTION B | |
| 1.0 Issue and Problem Statement..... | 9 |
| 2.0 Discussion | 10 |
| 3.0 Recommendation | 15 |
| 4.0 Conclusion..... | 17 |
| | |
| References | 18 |
| Appendices | 19 |

SECTION A

1.0 INTRODUCTION



Muhibbin Associates SDN BHD was established in 2011 under the Companies Act 1965. The company was renamed Muhibbin Group SDN BHD in 2019, and it is currently led by Mr Mohammad Baihaqi Hassanuddin as Managing Director and two other Directors, Mr Khairul Anuar Jamaludin and Mr Luqmannulhakim Mohd Halim. The vision of Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd is to establish a company that offers global corporate services in the areas of secretarial, financial, self-development, and mind. The company's mission is to unite professional and semi-professional workforces in secretarial, financial, taxation, and self-development and mind under a single organisation while fostering a comfortable work environment and assisting one another in achieving the company's vision. It is located at E-21-1, Blok 3, Jalan Serai Wangi M16/M, Alam Avenue 2, Seksyen 16, 40200 Shah Alam, Selangor.

Next, Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd provides five services, which are company registration, Ministry of Finance (MOF) registration, Contractor Service Centre (PKK) and Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) registration, company administration, and company secretary. Additionally, this company provides a wide range of benefits, such as opportunities to become staff, a pantry section, lunch provided, a dormitory near the office, a broad exposure where you can learn from industry professionals across various aspects of accounting, and an allowance ranging from RM300 to RM1,000 for trainees.

As an accountant trainee at Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd, I was assigned to the Lead and Grow department, which is the Accounts Department. My responsibilities included performing account work under the supervision of Mr Ahmad Muzammil. Furthermore, I was assigned the responsibility of conducting tax computations under the supervision of Mr. Khairul, which provided me with additional exposure to taxation. During my job with the accounts department, I was charged with entering honest company transactions using QuickBooks. These transactions included documenting sales, purchases, expenses, and costs, as well as reconciling bank statements. In the meantime, I was tasked with calculating taxes after the management account was finalised using the Superior Taxcomp software.

2.0 SUMMARY OF WORK DONE

My practical training provided me with the opportunity to obtain significant expertise in both the field of accounting and the field of taxes. During this period, I was actively involved in a wide range of activities and responsibilities, enabling me to build a solid foundation in both areas. The following is a summary of the work that I carried out in each of these areas:

2.1 Accounting

I was allowed to work extensively with QuickBooks, a financial record and transaction management system widely used in companies. For instance, one of the account tasks I completed while using QuickBooks was to assist the Senior Accountant with the initial setup and configuration of QuickBooks for a client's business. This includes establishing a business profile, defining a financial term, and inputting the opening balance. Next, I am responsible for the day-to-day bookkeeping responsibilities, which include recording financial transactions, reconciling bank statements, and updating the general ledger. I ensure that every piece of information that is put into the program stays accurate and complete. I used QuickBooks to handle the accounts payable and receivable procedures efficiently. For this purpose, it is necessary to create and keep records of both customers and suppliers, as well as to process invoices, issue payments, and monitor outstanding balances. Lastly, I create financial statements using QuickBooks' reporting tools, including income statements, balance sheets, and general ledger listings. Overall, my experience with QuickBooks has provided me with a strong foundation in adequately using accounting software for a wide range of account work activities. I have conducted account work for the following companies, which are shown below:

| No. | Company | Year Assessment |
|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Yusly Energy solutions | 2023 |
| 2. | NDBS Master Sdn Bhd | 2023 |
| 3. | MyGreen Eco Sdn Bhd | 2020 2021 2023 2024 |
| 4. | Artseven Group Sdn Bhd | 2023 |
| 5. | Syifak Berkat Group Sdn Bhd | 2024 |
| 6. | Akademi Cikgu Awan Sdn Bhd | 2023 |

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 7. | Naz Fishing Valley Sdn Bhd | 2023 |
|----|----------------------------|------|

Table 1: List of companies for accounting work

2.2 Taxation

During my practical training at Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd, I had the advantage of using the Superior TaxComp software for tax computation purposes. After finalising the management accounts for numerous companies, I produced the tax computation. I immediately learned how to accomplish this by first filling out the company's details if it is a first-year client of Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd and then creating a tax file. Subsequently, provide all the necessary information, including exact amounts for profit or loss, non-allowable costs, capital allowance, and deemed interest. After completing all areas, the total taxes payable will be shown. After completing the task, I submit it to Mr Solehan for review before sending it to the client as the first draft of the tax computation. Upon receiving approval, I will proceed to draft a declaration form. In conclusion, my tax work at Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd was enhanced by using Superior TaxComp, which enabled me to improve my productivity, accuracy, and proficiency in utilising technology to facilitate tax procedures and produce high-quality results. Here is a compilation of companies for whom I have performed tax computations as part of my internship:

| No. | Company | Year Assessment |
|-----|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Yusly Energy solutions | 2023 |
| 2. | NDBS Master Sdn Bhd | 2023 |
| 3. | Dahlia Industries Venture Group Sdn Bhd | 2023 |
| 4. | Artseven Group Sdn Bhd | 2022 2023 |
| 5. | Syifak Berkat Group Sdn Bhd | 2024 |

Table 2: List of companies for tax computation work

3.0 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF TRAINING

Experiences in practical training often highlight my strengths as well as my weaknesses, enabling me to evaluate my progress toward a profession in accounting. One of the most valuable skills I acquired during my internship was computer ability, particularly with accounting software. I was then introduced to QuickBooks as well. After four months, I achieved mastery in QuickBooks with the assistance and guidance of my supervisor, as I was responsible for recording sales, purchases, expenditures, and reconciling bank statements. My training's exposure to real-world experience is a further benefit. I had the chance to work on actual client engagements and use their expertise in real-world situations. This hands-on training has made understanding the complexity of various businesses, learning methods particular to those industries, and navigating real-world accounting issues more manageable for me.

Conversely, I may have particular difficulties and weaknesses throughout the training term. One of my weaknesses is that I struggle to comprehend what my supervisor teaches. As a result, I usually take notes to review the material on my own. Furthermore, I require additional time to key in the transaction in the bank statement due to my slow typing speed. I address this issue by focusing intently and working to develop a faster typing speed. Furthermore, a significant learning curve involves moving from theoretical knowledge to real-world application. My inability to understand complex financial concepts and the workings of accounting software may result in mistakes and a slower work rate. As a result, I did not hesitate to ask for explanations from my supervisors and fellow employees. Despite these challenges, I am convinced that proactive communication, feedback, and continual learning will enable me to maximise my internship experience.

4.0 SELF-REFLECTION

The whole internship program was filled with learning opportunities. I learned a lot of practical skills that will be extremely valuable in the future. First, I realise the value of excellent communication and collaboration in accounting and taxation. Working in a group has been a beneficial component of my internship. By collaborating with colleagues from various backgrounds and skill sets, I have gained exposure to multiple perspectives and improved my capacity to work effectively in a team setting. I have learned how important it is to actively listen, value other people's views, and use my skills to assist the company in meeting its goals.

During my internship, I also improved my time management skills significantly. Initially, I struggled to manage various obligations and fulfill deadlines properly. However, with experience and instruction, I was able to establish ways for properly prioritising work and allocating my time. This internship has taught me the value of being organized and proactive in managing my workload. In addition, my 6-month internship taught me discipline, an important trait. Being prompt and constantly appearing on schedule at the workplace shows my dedication to professionalism and the duties assigned to me.

In conclusion, my internship as an accountant trainee has been a remarkable experience. It has given me the appropriate technical abilities, increased my time management and communication skills, and boosted my problem-solving and teamwork abilities. I appreciate this internship's opportunities and experiences and am enthusiastic about pursuing a rewarding career in accounting. I am convinced that the skills learned and the professional network I have built over this time will serve as a solid basis for my future endeavors.

SECTION B

1.0 ISSUE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

EXPECTATIONS FOR ACCOUNTING INTERNS: AN EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

A student's journey towards gaining real-world experience in accounting begins with an accounting internship. Accounting interns are expected to meet specific standards set by their employers, who want to evaluate their skills, provide helpful guidance, and potentially recognize future talent. Accounting interns should know these employer expectations to leave a good impression, develop their abilities, and secure future career prospects. As a result, the topic that I will concentrate on is employers' expectations of students engaged in practical training in accounting. In order to find out what my supervisor thought I should be doing as an accountant trainee at Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd, I researched by reading relevant journal articles and asking him a couple of short survey questions.

Employers often expect their employees to be polite, diligent, and cooperative. Setting and maintaining high standards for workers may bring several advantages, including increased motivation and attention. Recognizing these standards can help prevent miscommunications and disputes between leaders and employees. The expectations for accounting interns include having a firm grasp of accounting rules and concepts, creating financial reports and analyses, showcasing their analytical abilities, and being knowledgeable with the necessary software. Highly regarded qualities include professionalism, ethical conduct, good communication, time management, and openness to learning.

Additionally, internship students or apprentices may assist employers in addressing the demand for competent and dedicated temporary employees at a reduced cost, particularly during the peaks of company operations. For instance, research by Knechel and Snowball (1987), as cited by Beard (2007), revealed that interns' accounting coursework was substantially superior to that of non-internship students. As a result, internships in accounting are often expected to contribute to the company's overall productivity and assist the accounting staff. To enhance accounting interns' chances of landing a job later on, I will cover five critical points about the standards companies often hold for interns in the discussion section.

2.0 DISCUSSION

i) Technical Accounting Skills

The expertise needed to carry out certain accounting activities and responsibilities is known as technical accounting skills. Among the skills required for accounting interns is a solid grasp of accounting concepts and procedures, including financial reporting, tax compliance, and auditing. To thrive in the accounting profession, they need to possess a strong basis in these technical skills and the ability to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios. Most companies anticipate that interns in accounting will have a deep understanding of these skills and have the capacity to use them successfully in the workplace.

Edigba (2022) states that companies anticipate accounting students to possess a strong basis in technical accounting skills, a comprehensive comprehension of accounting principles and procedures, and the capacity to apply technical knowledge to real-world scenarios. The technical accounting abilities needed to change based on the company's demands. According to Chan et al. (2018) and Schwartz and Stout (1987), the size of a company is a subsequent factor determining the amount and kind of technical accounting skills demanded of accounting interns. Since some companies need accountants for transactional tasks like bookkeeping, invoicing, accounts receivable, and management reporting, small companies are expected to be more satisfied with technical accounting skills than larger companies. On the other hand, accounting service companies handle the external compliance accounting obligations.

To sum up, for accounting interns to be successful in the profession, technical accounting skills are, in fact, necessary. Employers expect a strong foundation in these areas of accounting interns, as it is essential for accurate financial reporting, decision-making, and overall organizational performance. These abilities elevate trainees and interns and provide the groundwork for a successful accounting career by enabling them to make substantial contributions to the accounting teams.

ii) Eagerness for Continuous Learning

An accounting trainee's success throughout their internship depends heavily on their passion and sincere interest in the profession. Companies anticipate that interns in accounting will be genuinely interested in the subject and eager to learn new things. They are inclined to be driven, involved, and ready to know when they genuinely are interested in their activity. The accounting interns would be expected to take action to seek out possibilities for learning and to ask questions if they are seeking clarification. This is something that an employer would expect from them.

Based on Bui and Porter (2010), accounting companies emphasize a personality demonstrating the ability to learn continuously. The accounting industry is dynamic and ever-changing, with standards, laws, and technology all changing. During their six months of hands-on training, employers look for accounting interns willing to pick up new ideas, adjust to changes, and expand their knowledge and skill set. An intern with a strong desire to constantly learn new things adds excellent value to the company. Interns may bring new ideas, creative methods, and effective fixes to accounting procedures by aggressively searching out new information. Employers place a high value on these attributes because they suggest the possibility of career advancement and long-term success in the accounting industry.

Finally, the most crucial trait that accounting interns should possess is a constant desire to learn new things. It demonstrates their dedication and devotion to their accounting profession. Furthermore, accounting interns may develop their comprehension of accounting concepts, acquire valuable skills, and contribute significantly to their teams by actively seeking information and asking questions. The supervisor's guidance is equally important in the development and success of accounting interns throughout their internship.

iii) Communication Skills

Employers highly value communication skills in the accounting field, and it is an essential issue that accounting interns should consider. Effective communication is crucial in the profession as it facilitates the exchange of information, collaboration with colleagues, and interaction with clients. Therefore, communicating concisely and professionally is essential to avoid false information or misunderstanding.

According to Sunisa Thatong (2016), employers in the twenty-first century seek different skills, including communication skills. Concerning communication skills, some authors also believe that oral and written communication skills are essential skills (Clark, 1990; Nelson et al, 2006; Novin & Tucher, 1993; Morgan, 1997; Delange et al., 2006). Accounting work frequently requires collaboration with team members. Thus, accounting interns are expected to communicate effectively with their team, share information, delegate responsibilities, and work together harmoniously. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, delays, and errors in work. Accounting interns must also be proficient in written communication. They should strengthen their writing skills, including grammar, structure, and organization, to communicate effectively through written documents such as emails or WhatsApp messaging. Accounting interns should also understand the value of communicating with confidentiality, integrity, and accuracy. For example, they must be transparent, honest, and trustworthy in all interactions, mainly when dealing with sensitive financial information.

In conclusion, accounting interns must possess strong communication skills to excel in their roles. Accounting interns should actively seek opportunities to improve their communication skills to meet and exceed the employers' expectations. They can also foster a positive and productive working environment by demonstrating strong communication skills. Effective communication skills enable accounting interns to build trust with clients and colleagues, accurately deliver information, and collaborate efficiently.

iv) Effective Time Management

In the fast-paced field of accounting, employers set elevated expectations for the time management skills of their accounting trainees. The accounting profession is significantly influenced by the ability to effectively manage time, essential for maintaining accurate financial records, meeting deadlines, and maximizing productivity. Accounting trainees are typically anticipated to prioritize duties and plan and manage their workload efficiently by most employers. Interns who are capable of maintaining focus and concentration and minimizing distractions to ensure attention to detail are highly valued by employers. Accounting interns can also increase productivity and alleviate tension by managing time effectively.

Cornelia Aryanti and Desi Adhariani (2020) state that companies highly value time management skills for recent accounting grads and interns. The investigation demonstrated that employers regard trainees with proficient time management skills as highly desirable. In the accounting profession, time management is considered a critical competency because of the challenging nature of the work and the necessity of adhering to stringent deadlines. Employers anticipate trainees establishing realistic objectives, allocating adequate time for each assignment, and developing well-organized schedules. Interns may maximize their workflow, minimize delays, and effectively complete duties by adhering to a structured approach. Moreover, accounting trainees who demonstrate exceptional time management skills are more likely to facilitate the attainment of a more favorable work-life balance.

To summarise, companies have a significant expectation that accounting interns will demonstrate skills in good time management. It is imperative for accounting trainees to acquire time management skills as they strive to build themselves up as professional, efficient, and reliable components of the organization. The value of an intern in the workplace is further enhanced by their dedication towards continuous improvement and ability to adapt to changes. Accounting interns not only satisfy their employers' expectations but also establish a strong foundation for future careers in the accounting field by demonstrating excellent time management skills.

v) Teamwork Skills

The expectations of employers regarding teamwork skills have become increasingly crucial for accounting interns undergoing practical training in the field of accounting. Employers seek accounting interns who can effectively contribute to group projects, collaborate with colleagues, and communicate proficiently within a team setting. Accounting tasks often require complex problem-solving, and teamwork allows for pooling knowledge, skills, and perspectives to arrive at optimal solutions.

Kavanagh and Drennan (2008) discovered that most employers expect accounting interns or graduates to have the top three skills when they enter the real working environment including teamwork skills. This demonstrates that employers seek accounting interns who can contribute effectively to team projects, communicate, share ideas, and collaborate with colleagues. Effective teamwork is essential, especially when completing audit work, to ensure the efficiency and accuracy of the audit report and to avoid any false working, adjustments, or incomplete information being included. Thus, accounting interns are expected to be open to their seniors' perspectives to complete their work properly and better understand their work since they are still new in the field. Employers also recognize that interns with solid teamwork skills are likelier to thrive in dynamic work environments and build positive relationships with clients and colleagues.

In conclusion, teamwork skills are highly valued by employers in the field of accounting when it comes to accounting interns. The ability to collaborate effectively, communicate efficiently, and work harmoniously with colleagues is essential for success in accounting. Developing and exhibiting teamwork skills during the internship not only meets the expectations of employers but also sets a strong foundation for a rewarding career in accounting. According to Saat and Ahmad (2009), teamwork skills would be developed during the internship, resulting in increased marketability after graduation.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

As accounting interns prepare to embark on their practical training in the field of accounting, meeting employer expectations becomes paramount. Employers seek interns who possess a solid academic foundation and demonstrate the necessary skills and qualities to excel in a professional setting. Thus, it is crucial for accounting interns to adhere to specific recommendations to ensure a successful internship experience.

First and foremost, it is essential for accounting interns to have knowledge of Accounting Principles. They must develop a strong foundation in accounting principles and concepts to understand their work clearly. For example, ensure to have a good understanding of financial statements, basic bookkeeping, and relevant accounting regulations. This knowledge will be the basis for working as an accounting intern. Next, accounting interns should become familiar with commonly used accounting software, such as QuickBooks, Excel, or industry-specific tools. They can seek training or self-learning opportunities, such as learning through YouTube, to improve their proficiency with that software. Employers value interns who can leverage technology to streamline accounting processes.

Accounting interns also need to manage their time and prioritize tasks effectively. They can create a schedule or to-do list to stay organized and meet deadlines. Demonstrating efficient time management skills will help them handle multiple responsibilities and projects simultaneously. In addition, they are expected to be punctual and reliable. Thus, they must arrive on time for work and meet deadlines for assigned tasks. They must show reliability by fulfilling their commitments and responsibilities. If unforeseen circumstances arise, they can communicate promptly with their supervisor or employer and propose solutions or alternative arrangements. That is why strong communication skills also are essential in the accounting profession. Good communication fosters collaboration, strengthens relationships, and ensures accurate information exchange.

Additionally, accounting interns are required to adopt a mentality that emphasizes learning. They must remember that the internship is a good learning experience. Take, for instance, the practice of being receptive to novel sensations, ideas, and encounters. Additionally, they have the ability to seek input from their bosses and coworkers, and they should be open to receiving constructive criticism. In order to improve your knowledge and skills, you should actively participate in professional development opportunities such as training sessions, seminars, and other learning experiences. In conclusion, they must preserve a robust

work ethic and actively contribute to the organizational success. Interns in accounting may fulfill the expectations of their employers and have a good influence on the internship experience if they adhere to all of the guidelines.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The matter of employer expectations for accounting trainees is intricate and necessitates meticulous deliberation from employers and interns. It is crucial to acknowledge that accounting internships provide trainees with a learning experience that enables them to implement their theoretical knowledge practically and refine their skills. Nevertheless, there are instances in which employers may have unrealistic or excessive expectations of interns, which can result in undue pressure and dissatisfaction.

In order to resolve this matter, employers must possess a comprehensive comprehension of the intern's duties and obligations. For instance, managing the expectations of both parties can be achieved by providing trainees with a clearly defined job description and establishing realistic expectations from the outset. Employers should acknowledge that apprentices are still in the process of learning and may require guidance and support to complete their responsibilities effectively.

Simultaneously, accounting apprentices should assume accountability for their learning and development. They should proactively pursue opportunities to improve their skills and seek clarification when necessary while communicating their capabilities and limitations to their employers. Interns can contribute significantly to the organization and establish a positive impression by demonstrating a willingness to learn and develop.

Additionally, it is imperative to cultivate an environment in which employers and apprentices can engage in frank dialogue. Regular feedback sessions and check-ins can help ensure that both parties are on the same page and that any issues or concerns are addressed promptly. Interns should be willing to receive feedback and actively pursue development opportunities, while employers should offer constructive feedback and guidance to assist interns in enhancing their abilities.

In conclusion, employers and trainees can collaborate to establish a positive and mutually beneficial experience by fostering open communication, recognizing the learning nature of internships, and establishing explicit expectations. Accounting internships should be regarded as a valuable stepping stone in their professional development by providing students with practical knowledge and preparing them for future success in their accounting endeavors.

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APPENDICES

SHORT SURVEY QUESTION

ISSUE: EXPECTATIONS FOR ACCOUNTING INTERNS: AN EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Respect, hard effort, and the ability to work well with others are often expected of workers by their employers. Keeping workers engaged and motivated to remain on task is one of the many advantages that may result from having expectations from employers.

Question: In your perspective as a supervisor, what do you expect from your Account Trainee during her 6-month internship at Muhibbin Group Sdn Bhd?

Answer:

- 1) Excellent skills for organization

Reason: To keep the trainee engaged and on track with the assigned work. As a supervisor, I also want her to have good time-management abilities in her career and personal life to prevent burnout.

- 2) Willingness to learn new skills, especially for accounting.

Reason: Passion in any individual is important for making work perform smoothly and progress. I hope the trainee is excited to learn new things throughout her internship. Thus, following her internship, she may have developed the skills and knowledge required to work as an accountant in the organization she is interested in.

- 3) Punctual

Reason: Showing respect for other people's time and work by being on time is important. Thus, it shows that the trainee can be trusted to complete all jobs.

Picture 1: Short Survey Question to Supervisor