

Information brochure on internships

Master of Training and Education Sciences

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Introduction

In this brochure, candidate organisations and students find the necessary information to prepare, execute and evaluate an international internship.

The main aim of internships for master students Training and Education Sciences is to acquire real-life competences and practical skills that represent the requirements of the academic focus of the education. Internship is an optional part of the curriculum.

This brochure explains context, aims, expectations and practicalities of internships. If you have any questions after reading, please contact prof. Jan Vanhoof or Mrs. Annick De Vylder. You can find their contact information on the last page.

About the University of Antwerp and the Faculty of Social Sciences

The University of Antwerp is a young, dynamic and forward-thinking university. It integrates the assets of its historic roots with its ambition to contribute positively to society. The University of Antwerp develops, provides access to and disseminates scientific knowledge through research, teaching and service to society. It carries out these tasks in a spirit of academic freedom and responsibility. The University of Antwerp espouses active pluralism. In that spirit, it stimulates critical research and teaching, reflection and debate on scientific, social, philosophical and ethical questions. The University of Antwerp conducts creative and innovative scientific research, which strives for international excellence. It aims at the development and integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare its students to take responsibility in society. The University of Antwerp is active in a global environment. It stimulates its staff and students international orientation. The University of Antwerp fosters diversity and offers its staff and students equal opportunities and maximum potential for personal development. The University of Antwerp ensures the quality (education - research) and sustainability of its activities. The University of Antwerp is an internationally oriented research university with a student body of 20,000, whereof 13% are international students. It is characterised by its high standards in education, internationally competitive research and entrepreneurial approach. It offers 20 Bachelor, 63 Master, 24 Advanced Master and 24 postgraduate degrees - all Bologna compliant.

The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) of the University of Antwerp comprises four Departments: Political Science, Communications Sciences, Sociology and Training and Education Sciences. It organises four bachelor programmes and ten masters in these disciplines. With roughly 3000 students and 300 academic and administrative staff, it is one of the leading faculties in Flanders, Belgium. Although all of the programmes are Dutch taught programmes, the faculty offers an interesting number of courses in English to facilitate the intra-European / global exchange of students (and staff).

About the Master of Training and Education Sciences

The studies of Master of Training and Education Sciences is a study within the faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Antwerp. It focuses at all aspects of training and learning by developing a curriculum that combines learning theories with management and research skills. Students are expected to study in an active, self-regulative manner. Often students combine their studies with a (fulltime) job. Many students within the Master of Training and Education Sciences program already have a (pedagogical) diploma and work as a teacher, trainer, coach, principal, inspector, advisor ... This enhances a mutual exchange between theory and practice.

Learning Outcomes

During the study, students develop the following competences:

A Master of Training and Education Sciences:

1. is aware of the recent insights in the broad field of the organisation of learning in instructional and educational settings, on micro, meso and macro level.
2. is able to independently read and interpret specialist and scientific literature and to critically reflect on it.
3. has problem solving skills which enable him/her to analyse problems in instructional and educational settings and to suggest scientifically sound solutions.
4. is able to formulate an ethical, social and sound judgement based on incomplete information.
5. is able to use his/her insights to make an original contribution to the development of new knowledge and insights.
6. has research skills which enable him/her to do independent scientific research.
7. has the learning skills which enable him/her to detect needs in his/her personal professional development and to form his /her professional development through self-direction.
8. is able to communicate knowledge, motives, considerations, methods and conclusions clearly and unambiguously, orally and in writing, to an audience of specialists and non-specialists.
9. has the social skills to function in a team in an instructional or educational setting and the management skills to lead such a team.
10. has a critical-scientific and reflective attitude.

Goals and practicalities of the internship

Types of internships and project goals

The goal of the internship is to give students the opportunity to work on a meaningful project in an authentic context. We aim to select projects situated in the field of learning and instruction in instructional and educational settings. The content of these projects may differ, varying from the development, implementation to the evaluation of new learning programs or tools. These projects are expected to take place in real-work life settings, assigned by a project leader within an organisation. This organisation, or at least a part of it, will be represented by a single contact within the organisation (i.e. the external supervisor).

With this internship, we aim to conjoin competences from different parts of the curriculum. Furthermore, students are enabled to acquire broader professional skills, such as project management, social competences and communication skills. A solid conceptualisation of the project, self-regulation, time management and skills in reporting are also important elements within the process.

Learning goals

The student acquires problem-solving skills enabling him/her to analyse a problem in an instructional or educational setting and to suggest an evidence-based solution. Furthermore, he/she acquires the social skills needed to function in a professional team. The student learns how to communicate unambiguously in both spoken and written language to diverse audiences and using different media.

More specifically, the student:

- Acquires self-regulative learning capacities;
- Is able to develop, implement and evaluate a (research)project;
- Is able to make a research design;
- Is able to make an accurate project report;
- Develops a professional attitude;
- Takes responsibility for his/her part in the project;
- Acquires problem-solving capacities in the context of a team;
- Acquires social and communication skills;
- Develops presentation skills (written, spoken and technical);
- Learns to make a substantiated judgment within a society.

Requirements of the contexts for internships

A good alignment between the content of the project and the expectations of the student is of great importance. An adequate condition for the internship enables students to become acquainted with the professional aspects in the context of their studies.

In order to watch over the quality of the internship, the following requirements are set forward. First, the content of the project and the tasks imposed on the student need to be relevant for the master studies Training and Education sciences. This means that the tasks carried out by the student need to be relevant for his or her studies in the field of training and education. Further, it is important that the student is given the opportunity to work as a full team member within the organisation in order to get to know all different aspects of organisational life. Working in a team requires different and important skills and attitudes that are a valuable complement to the students' academic life. Thirdly, it is important that students are given responsibility over one or more tasks so that they learn how to take accountability. Students in an internship will need logistic support, such as an internet connected work place with communication tools.

The internship may encompass the intern to operate as a team member during a vast amount of hours a day, taking care of specific tasks within the running project. Or the internship may start off from a project-based approach. In this case, the student gets the chance to work on a project from beginning to end. In both cases, the goals and agreements of the internship need to be explicitly written down before the start of the project.

Practicalities

The internship is estimated on 12 ECTS credits, corresponding with a study load of approximately 360 hours. In practice, it involves an internship of minimal 2 and maximal 3 months.

We strongly advice to make a clear written engagement containing all agreements made in relation to the internship. Since the learning process of the individual student is the central goal of the internship, no binding engagement can be made on the results.

Responsibilities during the internship

During the internship, the intern will be guided by both the mentor within the organisation (external supervisor) and by the coordinator of the interns at the University of Antwerp (internal supervisor). The mentor within the organisation functions as direct supervisor and contact of the intern during the internship.

Responsibilities external supervisor

The external supervisor does not only function as the contractor of the project, he or she also holds an important role during the process. The external supervisor is the direct contact for the student within the organisation and mediates as an expert on the structure and culture of the organisation.

To be more precise, (s)he is expected to be responsible for the following tasks:

- Writing down the project proposal and instruction as a part of the internship contract¹;
- Explaining the project to the student at the start of the internship;
- Introducing the student in the organisation;
- Answering questions of the student with regard to the culture and structure of the organisation as well as specificities within the domain;
- Functioning as contact and taking care of the communication between the intern and the organisation;
- Being prepared to participate in conversations with regard to the progress of the process, together with the internal supervisor if necessary;
- Delivering feedback on processes and products.

We expect external supervisors to initiate, follow-up and guide the intern by providing him or her with tips and tricks, alternatives, suggestions or directives during the internship.

The nature and the intensity of the concrete guidance depends on the student, the mentor and the organisation in which the internship takes place. Agreements on the frequency and the time schedule of the follow-up meetings can be discussed in dialogue with the student. However, regular meetings are a necessary precondition to assure timely interventions when problems occur. A clear and direct feedback from the start on is in the best interest of the student and the project goals.

We expect that formal guiding sessions are planned on a regular basis between the external supervisor and the intern with regard to the progress of the project and the extent in which goals have been reached. Informal moments of reflection or appreciation are considered to be a valuable complement.

Possible topics for the feedback sessions:

- The wellbeing of the intern in the organisation/the team;
- Collaboration and interaction between the intern and other team members;
- Performance of the intern (activities, tasks carried out);
- Expectations from both the mentor and the intern regarding future activities;
- Questions or problems that might have arisen during past activities;
- New ideas or initiatives from the intern;
- Detailed discussion of tasks that need to be carried out in the near future;
- Practical tips or tricks for the intern to enhance his/her performance;
- Reflection with intern on the most important learning that has occurred during the internship so far. Is the intern aware that learning has occurred? What were the most important learning chances so far? ;

¹ The student, the internal supervisor and external supervisor are required to sign the University of Antwerp Internship Contract (at least four weeks) before the start of the internship. If the organization has a separate document or regulation concerning the placement in the company, please append this document to the University of Antwerp Internship Contract.

- Reflection on strengths/weaknesses of the intern on his or her performance within the organisation.

We consider a solid supervision of our interns and a good contact with the mentor as indispensable factors in a qualitative internship.

Responsibilities internal supervisor

The internal supervisor is part of the staff of the Department of Training and Education Sciences at the University of Antwerp. It is his responsibility to watch over the student's process and he is the first contact for the external supervisor.

Following tasks are the responsibility of the internal supervisor:

- Communication between the Department and the student;
- Communication between the Department and the external supervisor;
- Follow-up of the process of the internship;
- Initiating formal meetings between the internal supervisor and the student or with the external supervisor when needed;
- Providing feedback on the content and the form of products resulting from the internship;
- First contact in case of problems.

The student's Responsibilities

Besides developing the competences and attitudes as written in the learning goals, the student is responsible for:

- Finding an interesting project in an appropriate organisation;
- Taking care of the UAntwerp internship contract with original signatures in three copies²;
- Communicating his/her expectations concerning the internship;
- Being prepared to participate in conversations with regard to the progress of the process with the internal or external supervisor;
- Carrying out all kinds of activities within the framework of the project - the content of these activities depends on the content of the chosen project;
- Writing and delivering the report of the internship;

Expectations about the report of the internship

The report of the internship is based on three parts:

1. *Description of the project, containing goals, design/methodology and results/products.* This part of the report will also be delivered to the external supervisor. There are no formal regulations concerning length or lay-out. Typically project reports start with an overview of project goals and a description of the project context. Conceptual underpinnings of project activities (linked to frameworks used in the master program) and project results are crucial.
2. *A report describing all activities that have been carried out by the student, based on a weekly basis.* The activity report also contains reflections the student makes at the end of each week. Special attention is given to experiences of success and problems. The activity report is

² The University of Antwerp Internship Contract is necessary for the student accident insurance. Please contact Karen.Meynen@uantwerpen.be for the latest University of Antwerp Internship Contract.

used for weekly communication with the internal supervisor and is not shared with the external supervisor.

3. *Reflections on the process of the internship.* The student looks back at his or her process retrospectively and reflects on his or her own functioning within the project and on the problems he or she encountered. The student shows a reflective capacity by critically examining his or her own process during the internship. This part of the report is not shared with the external supervisor.

Evaluation of the internship

At the end of the internship we expect the intern and the external supervisor to make an overall evaluation of the internship during a meeting. The final evaluation can be seen as a detailed and thorough conversation between the intern and the external supervisor about the performance of the intern. During this conversation, the internship as a whole and the performance of the student will be discussed. The external supervisor judges the intern as a starting professional, searching for a healthy balance between positive and negative aspects and monitors the student's progress and learning readiness during the internship. The intermediary reports can be used as a base for this final evaluative conversation.

The external supervisor is expected to write a concise evaluation report of the internship (typically 1 page in size). In this report we ask to give a global opinion about the competences and attitudes of the intern as a professional and about his or her performance and growth within the internship. Further, we ask the external supervisor to make an overall assessment of the internship.

The assessment the external supervisor made in the evaluation is an important aspect of the final grade the student will receive for his/her internship. However, the final decision is university's responsibility. The coordinator of the internships of the University of Antwerp will set the grade.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used as a guiding framework to assess the work of the student:

Problem statement and aims of the project

- The problem/knowledge gap of the external contractor is described and explained precisely
- The initiating question of the contractor is analysed critically and was reframed if necessary
- The problem/knowledge gap is defined properly
- The problem/knowledge gap is translated in proper project aims
- The aims of the project are formulated in a specific and measurable form
- The aims of the project are ambitious but realistic within the time frame of the internship

Selection and integration of conceptual frameworks

- Central concepts are elaborated
- The intern refers to relevant sources
- Existing theories, frameworks and/or studies are integrated
- The frameworks used accord with the aims of the project
- The frameworks used are discussed in a critical sense

Methodological underpinning of the project plan

- The project plan is suited to accomplish the goals of the project
- The approach/methodology is underpinned
- Activities within the project are defined adequately
- (when applicable) Data collections, instruments and methods are described according to the standards of scientific research within the Social Sciences

Project results and recommendations

- Results/products are described adequately
- Results/products coincide with the aims of the project
- Results/products vouch for the creativity and ambition of the student
- The form of the results/products is functional for the external contractor
- Recommendations are underpinned
- The recommendations coincide with the aims of the project
- Limitations of the research are discussed thoroughly
- Relevant recommendations for future research are discussed

Language, style and formal requirements

- The text is constructed systematically: information is grouped and arranged in a logic sense
- Writing style is condense, formal and (when applicable) scientific
- Writing style fits with the target audience
- Spelling and grammar is correct
- Style is consistent (tables, foot notes, acknowledgements)

Attitudes: The trainee:

- Is well prepared
- Takes initiative
- Introduces innovative ideas
- Dares to express his/her own opinion
- Works in a structured way
- Is critical
- Works constructively on solutions
- Is punctual
- Is involved
- Shows empathy
- Promotes the group spirit

Contact Information

If you have any questions, or in the case problems arise during the internship, do not hesitate to contact:

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