



VRIJE  
UNIVERSITEIT  
AMSTERDAM

Faculteit der  
Rechtsgeleerdheid

# Internship guide

Faculty of Law, VU Amsterdam

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## **Preface**

This is the internship guide for the Master's of Law of the Faculty of Law at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

An internship offers students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the job market, to improve on their legal skills and to gain work experience. Students will also be applying the theoretical knowledge acquired in practice, which will give them a clearer idea of what it's like to work as a lawyer in various workplaces. This way students can gain further insight into their own work-related preferences.

This guide is intended for both students getting started on their internship (trainees) and for supervisors working within the faculty (student/internship coordinators) and the workplace (internship supervisors). The guide outlines the requirements for the internship, tips for students on how to find an internship, what can be expected from internship supervision, and the assessment method and criteria.

Internships during the corona pandemic

Check [www.vu.nl/coronavirus](http://www.vu.nl/coronavirus) regularly to stay up to date with the latest developments; in the event of any problems, you should contact the internship coordinator.

With regard to internships, VU Amsterdam follows the guidelines of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM); you should therefore bear in mind that in some cases it will not be possible to complete internships that have already begun.

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## 1 General information

An internship is a practical training period during the Bachelor's or Master's phase of the Law programme, during which students work on a legal assignment (sometimes a joint assignment) under the supervision of one or more employees at the organisation hosting the internship.

The goal of the internship is to allow students to gain experience in the practical application of theoretical knowledge they have acquired, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

### Place of the internship in the programme of study

- In the Bachelor's Law programme, the internship is only an extracurricular activity, and is therefore not a free elective or part of a minor. Internships are shown as being worth 6 EC on the diploma supplements of Bachelor's diplomas.
- For Master's students, the internship is a free elective within the curriculum, and is worth 6 EC. An additional requirement is that the work activities are sufficiently relevant to the Master's specialisation (that is, there should be sufficient private law, criminal law, constitutional law, administrative law, etc.). For each specialisation, additional requirements may be imposed on the internship. For more information about this, please contact the internship coordinator. The names of the internship coordinators are shown on the [vu.nl](https://vu.nl) internship page.

### A number of conditions

- It is not possible to complete one internship for two separate specialisations and receive double the number of credits
- A part-time job in the legal field may not be presented as an internship. Students may not go on an internship at an organisation at which they are already employed in another capacity, or where they have already been on an internship in the context of another study programme.
- You are allowed to receive an internship reimbursement, but whether you receive this depends on the internship organisation

### Duration of the internship (6 EC)

In order to obtain the full 6 credits for an internship, the student is generally expected to work 40 hours for each credit. In other words, a full-time internship of 6 weeks equals 6 credits. Longer internships are permitted but the extra time will not yield extra credits that count towards obtaining the Law degree.

## 2 Learning objectives and final attainment levels for the degree programme

The goal of the internship is to allow trainees to gain experience in the practical application of theoretical knowledge acquired, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

The general learning objectives of the internship:

- Graduates will be able to work and think at an academic level;
- Graduates will have the following legal skills:
  - Analytical skills
  - Problem-solving skills;

- Specifically for the Master's: Graduates will have:
  - Research skills
  - Presentation skills.

The general learning objectives are derived from the final attainment levels for the programme.

### *Learning objectives*

After the internship

- the student will have acquired demonstrable knowledge and insight into the way in which the theory discussed in the degree programme is used in practice;
- the student is able to provide judgement on a legal basis based on factual information;
- in the event the student has insufficient information, the student is able to indicate what they need to provide judgement on a legal basis;
- based on the factual and the legal context, the student is able to indicate what the ethical consequences are of taking action in a practical situation;
- the student is able to draw up a document that complies with the requirements of the professional practice in question;
- the student is able to give a presentation that complies with the requirements of the professional practice in question;
- the student is able to reflect on their learning process within the internship.

## **3 Finding an internship**

Finding a suitable internship takes time. It is therefore important that the student begins looking for an internship on time, preferably six months before the start of the internship. Completing an internship in the summer months is less appealing, because the internship organisation will likely be less busy.

This affects options for supervision, diversity of tasks and planned social activities and needs to be factored into the planning.

### *Information about internships in the Netherlands*

You can find information about how to find an internship at:

- the Faculty of Law's [Career Portal](#);
- websites of law firms and other agencies such as the Authority for Consumers and Markets;
- websites of study associations.

More information about job market orientation can be found on the website of the Faculty of Law's [Career Services](#).

### *Internship abroad*

You can find a lot of information about internships abroad online. See for example:

- The [European Law Students' Association](#) (ELSA) that brings together law students and young lawyers from almost every European country. ELSA organizes initiatives such as an exchange programme for legal internships with law firms, institutions and businesses abroad.
- [AIESEC](#) also offers challenging opportunities that will enable you to live and work abroad in the fields of management, development, information technology and

education.

- There are also internship opportunities available at EU bodies and the Council of Europe, as well as at businesses in the EU (if you meet certain conditions, you may be eligible for a Leonardo da Vinci scholarship to help complete an internship at an EU business).
- In the context of the Life Long Learning Programme, Erasmus Scholarships are available for internships at businesses, centres for training and education, research centres and organisations in other EU countries. Erasmus scholarships are only available for full-time internships in the EU with a duration of two months or over. For more information go to: [scholarships abroad](#) or send an email to [erasmus@vu.nl](mailto:erasmus@vu.nl).

### **Applying for an internship**

Always use the term **student/internship** specifically when applying for an internship. This is because an internship is different to the position of junior associate (advocaat-stagiaire) but the terms are similar in Dutch.

Applying for a placement usually involves sending a cover letter, a CV and a transcript. For questions or help in writing a cover letter or a CV and preparing for a job interview, please see the website of the [Career Services](#).

#### *The job interview*

In preparation of the interview, it is advisable to gather information about the office or the internship organisation and formulate answers to the following questions:

- why do you want to complete an internship at this organisation?
- why did you choose this position?
- why are you the most suitable candidate for this organisation and position?
- what can you offer the organisation?
- what do you expect to get out of the internship?

The job interview also provides the opportunity to sample the company culture of the potential internship organisation.

## **4 Approval from the internship coordinator for the specialisation**

The student informs the internship coordinator of the specialisation in question by email of the fact that an internship position has been found and requests approval for the internship via an email that contains information about:

- the internship organisation in question (name, address, contact information),
- the duration of the internship and
- the work that will be performed.

The internship coordinator is responsible for assessing whether the academic and legal level of the internship has been adequately guaranteed. This depends to a large degree on the nature of the work that will be performed during the internship.

Internship places are approved by the internship coordinator. The internship coordinator verifies that the internship assignment meets the requirements and that the host organisation is able to provide a sufficient level of supervision. The internship coordinator must give his/her approval

before the start of the internship. If a student embarks on an internship before receiving the approval of the internship coordinator, it will not be recognised in principal.

## 5 Confirmation of the internship

After the internship coordinator has approved the internship, the student and the internship supervisor make agreements with regard to the internship. These agreements should be set down in writing. A model internship agreement is shown in Appendix 3.

Please note: The student is responsible for submitting the internship agreement, including agreements made with the internship coordinator.

## 6 Supervision of the internship

**The internship coordinator has the following duties:**

- determine whether the internship complies with the requirements in terms of level, scope, content and supervision;
- arranging and archiving the internship agreements and internship reports;
- mediation for conflicts between the trainee and the internship supervisor.

The internship coordinator is responsible for assessing the internship (pass or fail).

If the internship coordinator has any questions, he/she may ask the supervisor at the host organisation.

### **Division of roles internship coordinator (VU Amsterdam) and internship supervisor (practice)**

The division of roles between the internship coordinator and the internship supervisor means that the internship supervisor is responsible for all aspects relating to the practical experience, while the internship coordinator is responsible for the process.

**The internship supervisor:**

- ensures that the student is given the opportunity to gain useful practical experience and that he/she has access to the necessary facilities at the internship location;
- has an advisory role in relation to the assessment of the internship.

## 7 Assessment of the internship

The internship coordinator will assess the internship based on:

- the internship report made by the student
- the internship assessment

### **The internship report**

The internship report consists of at least the following:

- a description of the internship organisation;
- a broad description of the activities performed;
- an overview in the form of a table or diagram with a detailed display of the work carried out by

the student each week (students are advised to keep this up to date during the course of the internship);

- a further description of three activities in particular, with a focus on the legal problem in question (this part consists of at least 500 words);
- a reflection on the question of whether ethical questions and possible consequences have arisen;
- a reflection on his/her own performance including answers to the following questions:
  - Which three experiences during the internship did the student find particularly instructive and why?
  - Which aspect of the internship duties did the student find especially valuable and why?
  - Which aspect of the internship duties did the student experience as less positive and why?
  - Which aspect of their own performance was the student especially satisfied with?
  - Which aspect of their own performance was the student less satisfied with?

The report should not be much longer or shorter than 2000 words.

### **The internship assessment**

The assessment by the internship organisation concerns among other things the following:

- technical and legal knowledge;
- analytical skills;
- written communication skills;
- oral communication skills;
- effort;
- social skills (within the organisation and with third parties)
- final assessment

See also appendix 2.

The student hands in the internship report and the internship assessment within 15 working days after completion of the internship to the internship coordinator.

The final assessment (pass/fail) will be determined by the internship coordinator.

## **8 Complaints / problems**

In the event of any problems during the internship it is vital that the student take action immediately.

In the event of any problems or concerns about the internship, the student should contact the internship supervisor first. If the problem is not solved or not solved entirely, the student must contact the internship coordinator. The internship coordinator will then try to solve the problem in cooperation with the student and the internship organisation.

In the event of conflicts between the student and the internship coordinator, the Examination Board will serve as mediator ([examencommissie.rechten@vu.nl](mailto:examencommissie.rechten@vu.nl)).



## **Appendix 1**

### **Timeline internship**

1. It is desirable that the student contacts the internship coordinator of the specialisation in question six months prior to starting the internship.
2. The student will then look for an internship and/or apply for an internship.
3. The student has been hired for an internship.
4. The student will submit the internship to the internship coordinator for approval.
5. The student ensures that the agreements between the student and the internship organisation are recorded in a confirmation letter or internship contract.
6. The student submits the confirmation letter or internship contract to the internship coordinator.
7. The student completes the internship.
8. During the internship the student will keep track of a list of activities performed.
9. After the internship the student writes an internship report.
10. The student hands in the internship report and the internship assessment within 15 working days after completion of the internship to the internship coordinator.
11. The internship coordinator assesses the internship and passes the pass/fail mark on to the student administration.

## Appendix 2:

### Assessment of the internship by the supervisor of the host organisation

You have recently supervised a student from the ..... (study programme/specialisation) Faculty of Law, VU University Amsterdam. Please complete this form: your assessment plays an important part in the final assessment of the internship.

Name of student	
Internship host organisation	
Department	
Supervisor at the organisation	
Internship period	

	Good	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	N/A
Independence					
Initiative					
Knowledge levels					
Critical ability					
Amount of work carried out					
Quality of the work					
Flexibility in the event of problems and criticism					
Cooperating with colleagues					
Verbal communication skills					
Written communication skills					
Accuracy					
Overall impression					

General impression / any additional comments

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Would you like to host students from Faculty of Law, VU Amsterdam, more often in the future?

- Yes, from the Bachelor's /Master's degree programme / specialisation in .....
- Perhaps, because .....
- No, because .....

Name of internship supervisor	
Date	
Signature of internship supervisor	

## Appendix 3:

### Model internship agreement

#### BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S IN LAW, FACULTY OF LAW, VU UNIVERSITY AMSTERDAM

The undersigned,

1. .... *[name of organisation]*, located in ....., legally represented in this matter by ....., hereinafter referred to as the internship host organisation, and
2. Student ..... *[name of student]*, residing in ....., hereinafter referred to as the student,

agree that the student will go on an internship at the internship host organisation from .../... until .../... for ... hours per week, subject to the following conditions:

#### Article 1

Said internship is not a compulsory component of the Law degree programme (hereinafter referred to as the degree programme). The internship is exploratory, instructive, and participatory in character.

#### Article 2

The student has ascertained that he/she meets the degree programme conditions that apply to the internship.

#### Article 3

The student's work activities at the internship host organisation consist of the following:  
*[description of the assignments/work activities]*.

#### Article 4

The student shall receive from the internship host organisation a *[gross/nett]* payment for the work carried out as part of the internship of € ..... per month.  
The student *[shall/shall not]* be entitled to reimbursement of his/her travel expenses.

#### Article 5

The student shall carry out work during the internship under the supervision of the internship host organisation.

#### Article 6

The student must comply with the rules, regulations, and instructions that apply at the internship host organisation in relation to health, safety, and confidentiality. These are made known to the student upon conclusion of this agreement.

#### Article 7

Students are subject to the rules on working hours and reporting sick that are usual at the internship host organisation. These rules are also made known to the student upon conclusion of this agreement. In the event of sickness, the student *[is/is not]* entitled to continue to receive his/her internship payment.

### **Article 8**

The internship host organisation shall give the student the opportunity to fulfil his/her agreements with the internship coordinator and the internship supervisor of his/her degree programme.

### **Article 9**

The internship host organisation designates ..... **[name of employee of internship host organisation]** as the supervisor within the organisation, charged with supervising the student at the place of work. The student and the organisation supervisor will discuss the progress of the internship work activities once a week, and more frequently if necessary.

### **Article 10**

The internship host organisation shall involve and inform the student as much as possible regarding the day-to-day operations in the department and within the organisation as a whole.

### **Article 11**

At the end of the internship, a discussion shall be held between the student and the supervisor referred to in Article 9 for the purpose of assessing the internship. The findings will be recorded on an assessment form provided by the student. The internship supervisor is responsible for assigning the final mark.

### **Article 12**

The internship coordinator of the Faculty of Law, VU Amsterdam, ..... department **[department]**, shall be responsible for the process surrounding the student's internship.

### **Article 13**

In the event of any problems during the internship, the student should first contact the internship host organisation supervisor referred to in Article 9. If this does not resolve the problem, the student or aforementioned supervisor may bring it to the attention of the internship coordinator referred to in Article 12.

### **Article 14**

The agreement shall end:

- a. at the end of the agreed period;
- b. if the student leaves the university;
- c. if the parties so wish; or
- d. if one of the parties so wishes, providing the procedure mentioned in Article 13 has been pursued and providing discussions between parties designated by the internship host organisation and by the university have not led to the creation of any conditions under which the internship could proceed.

Agreed and signed

at ..... **[place]** on ..... **[date]** by:

the internship host organisation,

**[signature]**

the student,

**[signature]**

