

Business internship manual

Start 2022

Science and Business Management

Main components of the business internship

As a Master student of Science and Business Management, Utrecht University, you have to conduct an internship of 27 ECTS. The internship includes researching a practical challenge carried out at an organization in the Netherlands or abroad. Within this research, you should apply the theoretical frameworks you have studied so far. The internship offers you the chance to experience business life, put theories you have learned into practice, and develop relevant business skills. It will also help you choose your future career.

The main administrative elements of the internship are:

- It is a full-time activity, lasting at least 19 weeks.
- Will be awarded 27 ECTS.
- Needs to be supervised by a host supervisor and academic staff member of Utrecht University.
- Needs pre-approval of the internship coordinator (Dr. Hein Roelfsema) and formal approval of the Board of Examiners.
- Will be based on a contract between the student and the company/organisation;
- will culminate in a written internship report of approximately 20.000 words;
- You can choose any organization you like, as long as the internship has a link with your science and business background.

Internship Report requirements

- Overall: To set up and manage a project that analyses a practical business problem by using established research techniques.
- Translate the internship activities into an applied research project consisting of:
 - a problem definition, diagnosis, design/advice, implementation;
 - the methodological view (a plan of action to analyse the problem, the main models and theory to use, possibly collection of data at the company, and analysis);
 - a conclusion and recommendations for the company. Adequacy of specification and

- Positioning is measured on the match between the project's goals and the techniques and insights used from research. The student sets the project's goals in line with the expectations of both the involved company and Utrecht University.
- Write a well-structured, well-argued report, and your recommendations.
- Reflect on personal contribution to the project and personal development during the project.

Organising the business internship

Registration process

It is important to follow the steps described below to validate your internship. Each step in the procedure will be described in further detail below, but the general process is as follows.

1. Preapproval. When you have an internship proposal, including a prospective company supervisor, you can register for pre-approval by the internship supervisor. The internship coordinator will match you to an academic supervisor. Note, lecturers of the programme have a fixed number of slots in their teaching capacity.
2. Approval by the board of examiners following registration in Osiris Zaak. After pre-approval by the internship coordinator, you register in Osiris and are to be approved by the exam board. You need to upload the internship contract plus a description of the internship.
3. **NOTE.** Please calculate backwards from your aspired graduation moment to know when to start. The minimum should be 19 weeks. Suppose you want to have all at the exam board mid-August to graduate. Then your internship report should be ready and defended end of July. In that case, you should have started by the beginning of March. Hence, you Osiris approval around the end of January.

How to find an internship

Students are themselves responsible for finding an internship. This is part of the assignment, connected to job market skills. There is much freedom in terms of the organisation which can be chosen for an internship, as well as location. Students are advised to start their search during the second half of the first semester of the second

year of SBM. The Career Services of Utrecht University can offer tips and advice on how to write your application letter and curriculum vitae, and advise you on how to approach certain companies. They also offer interesting workshops that can be of use. For more information, see: <https://students.uu.nl/en/careerservices>. It may be wise to consult linked in and see for alumni of the FBE program. You can then directly connect to them. We have also made a small video in this.

How to define a final internship report topic.

When applying for the internship, you have provided some general approach to the internship. When starting the internship, it is useful to wait awhile (e.g. 2-3 weeks) to find out what the company finds interesting and useful. What is useful, however, is to indicate to the host supervisor when setting up the internship that you should create a substantive report about the work you are doing, using the knowledge you have gained. So, it is not a research internship, ideally, you should translate your internship duties in a report, what we call 'action research' (google that...). See the videos for specific guidance.

Writing your internship report

To conclude your internship, you should write a report of approximately 20.000 words. The report should include at least the following components:

- A management summary (probably start with that, some 2-3 pages). Tip: If you have a non-disclosure agreement, this is the part you can upload to Osiris as the final report.
- The analytical part. You tackle the practical issues you have been working on that show your command of business studies obtained in the FBE programme.
- A self reflection. What have you learned, how have you performed, what is your overall take of the internship period?

Guidelines for the analytical part

This part focuses on the research undertaken and the outcomes of the research. The set-up of the research report may differ depending on the research problem at hand. An indication (so not all things may be relevant in your context!) of a report is given below:

- An introduction, including the context, a problem definition, and your approach to solve/research this problem.
- Company profile: Market analysis, organization structure, history. What products or services does the company provide? Who are their customers? How do their markets develop? Who are their main competitors? Financials if available. The size of this chapter depends on the subject of applied research (e.g., if it is about marketing, the market analysis should be profound).
- Theoretical section, which gives an explanation of the relevant theories (and/or models) that can be applied to the issue at hand. Additionally, the student may write a science chapter (e.g. about a chemical process or a medical treatment).
- Methodology section with an explanation of (company) data and information.
- Analysis of data, information, and a link with the previously described theory and models.
- Conclusion and recommendations for the organization, industry and possibly academic debates.

Self Reflection

You will be expected to examine your work procedures critically, and to discuss the how and why of your conduct. You can do this by providing a description of your role within the department, and a critical reflection on your own suitability for this internship (skills needed at the beginning of the internship) and the connection between the SBM programme and the internship (relevant courses);

Some questions to address:

- What did you expect/want to learn from the internship?
- What did you learn?
- What was your biggest challenge?
- Which knowledge and skills did you lack at the start of your internship assignment, and which study components were the most useful?
- How did the internship contribute to your professional development?
- A strength/weakness analysis of your performance. (what did you do well; what would you do differently if you had to do the project again).
- How did the internship relate to the courses in the FBE programme? And was there a link with the internship done in the first year of the SBM master?
- What are the implications for a first job? What would you do differently in your first job?

How to get feedback and hand in your internship report

You will usually first meet your academic supervisor before the start of the internship. The academic supervisor may also visit the organization after the first month/six weeks to meet your host supervisor and discuss your research proposal in more detail, or do this online. At the end of the internship, you will schedule a final presentation in consultation with your host supervisor and academic supervisor. Both supervisors must be present during your final presentation, so plan it well ahead.

Interim assessment

A mandatory evaluation meeting between student and host supervisor should take place two or three months after the start of the internship. Please note: this interim assessment conversation is different from regular work discussions. During the interim assessment meeting, the student receives feedback on his/her work, progress, and performance. **It is strongly advised to use the rubric Evaluation of Business Internship** to discuss the applicable strong points and points of improvement of the student.

How your grade will be determined

The final grade of your internship will be determined by the internship report (60%), the process (30%) during the internship, and the final presentation (10%). Your host supervisor and academic supervisor must grade all components. After your final presentation, they will fill in the final assessment form.

Your internship is not an exam, but a creative product. This means that, unlike an exam, making no mistakes or doing everything your supervisor suggested does not mean a '10'. It is about the quality of what you create and do, which may be satisfactory according to your level of education (=7). Second perspective, also important for the company supervisor: you are a research master at a top university, the grading is according to that status. The standard passing 'colouring' would be: 10=Exceptional, 9=Excellent, 8=Good, 7=Satisfactory, 6=Sufficient.

Submitting your final grade

After completion of the research project, the student will give the report to the examiner and host supervisor. The host supervisor and examiner must complete the assessment within 10 working days after the student has handed in the report and gave his/her oral presentation, by filling in and signing the assessment form. It is advised to do this

right after the presentation and communicate it to the student. Your academic supervisor must hand in the final grade in Osiris Zaak.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need a working permits/Trainee Agreement?

Students do NOT require a working permit for an internship in the Netherlands if they stay within the term limits and are registered as a student. However, if you are from a non-EEA country and do an internship in the Netherlands, you DO need to use the NUFFIC 'Dutch Student – trainee Agreement'.

Do I receive any financial compensation from the company?

There are no fixed rules for compensation; some companies might not even offer you any compensation, but most do.

My company asks me to sign a confidentiality agreement, what should I do?

The internship results are public, unless stipulated otherwise. The host institute may request secrecy from the student and the UU examiner/supervisor, provided that the UU examiner/supervisor has access to the reports of the student, to be able to assess the level of the project. The Board of Examiners should be allowed to access the student report upon request (after signing a confidentiality agreement, if needed).

If required, you can find an example of a non-disclosure agreement on BlackBoard, which must be signed by the student, host supervisor, and academic supervisor. When the grades of your internship are submitted, you must hand in a copy of the contract on secrecy (non-disclosure agreement). In that case, it is sufficient to provide the administration with a PDF with your name, the name of the examiner, the location of the project, the title of your report and a brief description, instead of the whole thesis. Your thesis will – aside for yourself - only be accessible for your host supervisor and your academic supervisor.

What steps do I have to take when my internship and thesis are not finished on time?

If due to circumstances, e.g. illness, the final presentation and the final written report cannot be delivered within the period of the internship contract, you should ask extension from the exam board.

Should I write my thesis in English?

Yes, you should write your thesis in English. Only if it is required by the organization, you are allowed to write your thesis in Dutch.

Should my company be 'a company'?

The internship may be in a corporate environment, a startup, but also a public organisation or non-profit. It should show the competencies gained in the courses of the FBE program. You should show that you can perform business-related tasks.