



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

MANUAL FOR THE INTERNSHIP TRAINEE

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You are interested in foreign countries, getting to know new people and want to improve your practical skills and your technical knowledge? Then you are the right person for an internship abroad. On the following pages you will find information about the different stages of an internship abroad.



Phase 1 - Before the internship period

Before going on an internship you have to apply at your national agency for funding. Here you will get some information about where and how you can apply and some details about practical arrangements which have to be made in advance. Further some facts about how to prepare for your stay in a foreign country and what is expected from you on the workplace are provided in this part.



Phase 2 - During the internship

When you are already on an internship you have to consider some essential things like what the people in the company will expect from you and how you can handle all the new experiences. It is also necessary to report what you have done.



Phase 3 - At the end of / after the internship

Everybody involved in the internship wants to get feedback. In this part you will get useful advice how to write a final report, which certificates you will get and how evaluation will work.



Table of contents

1	<u>BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP PERIOD</u>	
1.1	General information about internships	4
1.2	Application	5
1.3	Practical arrangements & information	6
1.4	Preparation for the workplace	7
1.5	Preparation for living in a foreign country	8
2	<u>DURING THE INTERNSHIP</u>	
2.1	Introduction to a new country	10
2.2	The start: introduction to the company	11
2.3	Learning on the workplace	12
2.4	Writing daily/weekly reports	13
2.5	Getting new experiences	14
3	<u>AFTER THE INTERNSHIP</u>	
3.1	Reflection	15
3.2	Certificates	16
3.3	Writing a final report and sharing the experiences	17

1 PHASE 1 BEFORE THE INTERNSHIP

1.1 General information about internships



What is an internship?

In an internship (also work placement) you spend a certain period of time in a foreign country. You are supposed to put the things you have learned in vocational education and training into practice in a company. This way you get real work experience in your field of study before you finish your vocational education. Internships are mostly not paid.

Why is it a good idea to go an internship?

An internship abroad offers you a lot of benefits. It improves your personal and your professional development and provides a lot of useful experiences.

You have to live in a foreign culture and adapt to it, you have to use a foreign language, most of the time English, as a means of communication and you have to organize your daily routine on your own.

It is a very good way to broaden your horizons and when you apply for a job after completing your education it is an important part in your CV because it shows that you are interested in making new experiences and that you are an open minded person who is willing to get to know other people and to meet challenges.

Further an internship offers you the possibility to put the knowledge you have acquired at school into practice and gives you an insight in the way how companies work and what is expected from people working in different jobs. But bear in mind that you are in a foreign country for gaining work experience and that you are not on vacation.

Who can apply?

In a lot of European countries individual students cannot apply. You must ask at your school if there is an internship coordinator for Leonardo da Vinci Mobility projects. If you want to know for sure you can get information from the national Agency in your country. You'll find a list of National Agencies on this site: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2/nalist2_en.html
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/mundus/index.htm> (useful for some countries when you are in advanced vocational education)

Am I the right person for an internship?

7 good reasons why you can be interested in an internship:

1. I am a creative, problem-solving person and I like to take initiative;
2. I enjoy teamwork and I have a positive attitude;
3. I think I am intellectually curious, I always want to learn new things;
4. I have a personal interest in other cultures and empathy for others;
5. I wish to travel and I do not panic if I have to find my way on my own;
6. I think I easily adapt to living and working abroad;
7. I like to express myself in another language and I want to improve my knowledge of foreign languages.

1.2 Application



Who can apply?

- People learning in all forms of vocational education and training except at tertiary level
- People in the labor market
- Teachers, trainers and other staff within teaching institutions or organizations

Where do I apply and how do I apply?

You have to contact your coordinator/tutor/teacher in your school/company. In some countries it is also possible to apply directly at the national organization, especially if you are an apprentice. One of these countries is Austria for example.

What are the criteria for being selected?

Often you are recommended by a teacher/tutor and other staff members in school or from the company. Although there are different criteria in every school and company, there are some skills that are necessary:

- Social skills and maturity
- Appropriate behaviour when communicating with adults and other students
- Good grades in your studies and study motivation
- Good attendance level
- Language capability and motivation to learn languages
- Interest in technology and in work experience

Who will decide if I am allowed to go?

Based on staff assessment a preliminary selection of the most suitable candidates is carried out. The preliminary selection is discussed together with the tutors of the class and staff members in school. When you are an apprentice, the decisions are taken by company staff. When a consensus is reached, the final selection of the students for an internship abroad is established

Which documents are necessary?

The coordinator will tell you which documents you have to hand in. Most of the time it is a CV and a letter of motivation in which you state your reasons why you should be the one selected to go abroad. Sometimes you will be also asked to fill in an application form or a questionnaire assessing you skills and knowledge.

DOCUMENTS **Where can I apply in Austria?**

List of documents necessary for application

Letter of motivation

FORM **Trainees application form**

Self assessment questionnaire

LINK **Europass CV:**

<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/Europass+Documents/Europass+CV.csp>

1.3 Practical arrangements & information about:



What do I have to do there?

When you are on an internship you represent your school and yourself. You have to work in a company in a foreign country and therefore you have to adapt to the daily routines of working life. You have to keep working hours and follow different regulations given by your employer.

Often you cannot go home before the fixed time. If you for some reason need to go home earlier, you have to talk to your coordinator and the company. Bear in mind that you must have convincing reasons for terminating your internship earlier than planned.

How will I get there? Where will I stay? Who will organize the travel?

If your school organizes the internship, they usually take care of the travel arrangements. Otherwise, contact the organisation you sent the application to. Maybe they help you or you have to make the arrangements yourself. The hosting company or the hosting organisation might also be able to help you to find suitable accommodation in the local area with good possibilities to reach the company by local transports.

Attention! Often you don't have too much money to spend in mobility projects. The standard of accommodation will often be low, at student's level, and the flight will often be low fair tickets.

What will happen when I arrive in the country?

The host organization will often meet you at your arrival and show you the necessities in the local area so that you easily can manage every day life on your own. It's important to exchange phone numbers so you can get hold of the person responsible for you during the internship period. Often you have to get into the daily routines quickly, since the internship at the company often starts at once. Try to get hold of a map of the area. Take a walk in the local area and check out bus stops, restaurants, where to withdraw or exchange money, where to buy food and bus tickets.

Make sure that you have all the necessary documents with you before you leave your home country. The checklist in the tools section will help you.

FORM: **Checklist - What should I know before leaving my country**

1.4 Preparation for the workplace



The professional worker in an industrial enterprise

In the tools section you will find some occupational profiles for typical jobs in an industrial/technical enterprise. They might help you to learn more about the tasks and duties certain people have in a company.

- draughts man
- quality control manager
- machine tool operator
- mechanical engineer
- automation technician

The development of the industrial sector in Sweden, Austria, Catalonia and Flanders

Austria, Belgium, Spain and Sweden are all members of the EU but their industries developed differently. Possible reasons for this could be: climate, access to the sea, natural resources, population, historical development...If you want to learn more about the different countries you will find a short description of the industrial sector of the countries mentioned above in the tools section.

Education and technical training in Sweden, Austria, Catalonia and Belgium

If you want to be a good technician you need practical skills and technical knowledge. All around Europe highly qualified people work in the industrial sector. But how and where they acquire their qualifications is more or less different in each country. In the tools section you can find a description of the educational systems in Austria, Belgium, Catalonia and Sweden.

Information about the company

Now that you have read all the information about how to adapt to a new culture, how to organize your daily life and how to behave in the right way you should also try to find out more about the company you will be working for.

The first step is to ask the coordinator in your school if he can provide some information. He will know what kind of work you will have to perform and also know details about the hosting organization. If you still want to know more, use the internet. Most companies have their own web pages where you can learn more about the size of the enterprise, the products they produce, how many employees they have, etc. It is also a good idea to write down some questions which you can ask in your introductory interview in the company.

Some questions you can ask your coordinator:

- What kind of company is it?
- Where do I get more information about the company I will work for?
- What tasks/activities do I have to perform there?
- Who will be responsible for me in the company?

FORMS:	Job descriptions
	Industrial sector in Austria
	Industrial sector in Flanders
	Industrial sector in Catalonia
	Industrial sector in Sweden
	Education in Austria
	Education in Belgium
	Education in Catalonia
	Education in Sweden

1.5 Preparation for living in a foreign country



Organizing you daily life in different countries

Before you leave your country, your parents and your friends at home, you should try to get some information about the place you want to go.

It might be important to you to find out something about the following topics:

- Traffic information
- Opening hours of shops
- Where to learn about local events
- ...

On this webpage there are some details about the daily life in Austria, Belgium, Catalonia and Sweden. They should be useful for you, even if you go to another European country.

Adapting to a new culture

If you listen to other people who have done their internship abroad, they often say they had a good time. They might not want to mention the days where they found everything dull and grey and wanted to go back home.

You must be prepared that living in a new country is not only "GREAT!". It takes time to understand a new culture and it is sometimes frustrating not to be able to express yourself in your own language.

Here you can read more about how to cope with this "new" situation.

Do's and don'ts in a country

Although we are all citizens of the European Union we still all have a different cultural and social background. What is quite a normal behavior in one country could be offensive for somebody in other parts of our continent. There are also big differences in how you greet and address people.

But in the tools section there are documents about the do's and don'ts in Austria, Belgium, Catalonia and Sweden. You will not only find things you should avoid but also some useful hints that make your life easier.

For more information you can go to the following websites.

Intercultural websites

The Centre for Intercultural Learning prepares Canadians for assignments abroad. On this site you find important facts and figures and cultural information about all countries worldwide. You can also learn more about cultural misunderstandings.

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/home-en.asp?ISO=BD>

At Executive planet you find business culture guides for many countries in the world. Here you can also read guidelines for business etiquette.

<http://www.executiveplanet.com>

The British website, Kwintessential provides cross cultural solutions. Check out the tools of country profiles, and cross cultural quizzes.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/>



The World Wide classroom gives you tips of how you successfully adapt to a new culture. A travel planner with many good pieces of advice is provided.

http://www.worldwide.edu/travel_planner/culture_adjusting.html

What is culture shock? At this web site it is explained in an easy way.

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CGuanipa/cultshok.htm>

Language preparation

It is most likely that you have to use English during your internship. But it also makes sense to learn some basic vocabulary of the language spoken in the country. People there will appreciate the effort you take in learning their language.

There are many web pages offering online-language courses. Here are some examples for improving your English and learning a new foreign language:

<http://www.dialang.org/intro.htm>

<http://www.linguanet-europa.org/plus/welcome.htm>

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/lingua/products_en.html

Pages for learning English

<http://www.englisch-lehrbuch.de/>

<http://www.learnship.de/>

<http://www.lancelotschool.com>

<http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/>

<http://www.kico4u.de/>

<http://www.kidsnet.at/Englisch/englbaum.htm>

<http://www.englishbox.de/>

<http://www.ego4u.de/>

DOCUMENTS: Organizing your daily life in Austria

Organizing your daily life in Belgium

Organizing your daily life in Catalonia

Organizing your daily life in Sweden

Cultural Differences

Adapting to a new culture

Do's and don'ts in Austria

Do's and don'ts in Belgium

Do's and don'ts in Catalonia

Do's and don'ts in Sweden

Do's and don'ts in Germany

Do's and don'ts in Italy

2 PHASE 2 DURING THE INTERNSHIP

2.1 Introduction to a new country



When you arrive in the country, you will be met by the coordinator of the hosting organization. He will give you a short introduction to the area where you will be living for the next few weeks and provide some basic facts about the local culture. Also bear in mind what you have already read in 1.4. and 1.5.

Your coordinator might tell you something about the following topics:

- your accommodation
- tickets for public transport
- bus stops
- maps of the area
- hints for how you could spend your spare time
- fitness clubs, swimming pools, sports activities
- special events
- opening hours of shops and where they are
- where you can do your laundry
- banks and cash disposal machines
- restaurants + pubs
- mobile phones
- tourist office
- ...

Very often your coordinator will provide you with a handout summarizing all the necessary information. You will find some examples in the tools section.

DOCUMENTS: Information sheet from Austria
Information sheet from Belgium
Information sheet from Sweden

2.2 The start: introduction to the company



On your first day at the company you will be introduced to a lot of new people and your new work place. You will get to know your boss and your colleagues. Further you will get information about working hours, safety regulations, and many other things related to your tasks. Often there is an introductory interview. Be friendly and motivated and don't hesitate to ask questions if you haven't understood some explanations.

Your supervisor might give you some information about the following topics:

1. The company, its products or services, contact persons, traditions and customs;
2. The roles and responsibilities in your team and if there are team meetings;
3. Working hours, daily tasks, times for meals and breaks;
4. House rules, procedures for reporting ill, for late arrival, rules about smoking, the use of the Internet, dress code;
5. Security and fire alarms, use of safety clothes and shoes, name badges, entry codes;
6. Documentation (driving license);
7. Risks related to your job, medical examination, things that are bad for your health;
8. Work procedures, confidential company, quality policies;
9. Equipment and responsibility for the equipment.

DOCUMENT: Checklist for the Trainee: Introduction to the Company

2.3 Learning on the workplace



Remember that the most important reason why you are on an internship is to improve your skills and your knowledge. The people in the company will help you to reach your goal.

What is expected from me?

When you are a trainee on internship in an industrial company, there are some key competences that are expected from you

- You acquired a basic technical knowledge in your field of study.
- You have learned certain skills to apply this knowledge: research skills, technical analysis and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, language skills, communicative skills and technical skills typical for your learning pathway.
- You are also expected to be someone with these basic attitudes: orderly, punctual, motivated, respectful, positive, sociable, with a sense of initiative, flexible, creative.

Here are some useful hints for a successful internship

- Respect the **work regulations**;
- Try to do nothing that could cause harm to the good **name** of the company;
- Make sure you're always **on time** and report for **being absent or late**;
- Keep your **internship-logbook** with you and hand in your internship reports;
- Complete the **instructions** of your supervisor as well as you can;
- Try not to **damage** products, tools or equipment;
- Do your job in a **safe and healthy** way;
- It's better you go to your supervisor if you have a **problem**

DOCUMENTS: Key competences for trainees on internship

Hints for a successful internship

2.4 Writing daily/weekly reports



While you are on an internship your teachers at home want to share your experiences you have made on the workplace. But they are also interested in you spare time activities. Therefore you have to write daily or weekly reports about the things you have done.

What you have to include into your report varies from school to school. There are also different methods how you can hand in the report: e-mail, travel blogs, logbooks, ...

Bear in mind, that the daily/weekly reports are also the basis for your final report which you have to hand in at the end of your internship. So the better you prepare them the less work you have to do in the end because you have already collected a lot of facts.

Information your teacher would like to get:

- Which tasks did you have to perform?
- Were there any problems in the company?
- Did you do any interesting spare time activities?
- Do you feel good?

DOCUMENTS: Trainee's Folder (example Catalonia)

Trainee's Folder (example Belgium Sweden)

Internship Logbook & Assessment Form (example Belgium)

2.5 Getting new experiences



Exploring a new country

Although an internship is not exactly a holiday you have enough spare time to explore the country. Plan some trips and spare time activities for your weekends. Ask your colleagues at the company, students in your hosting organization or the coordinator about different possibilities like sport events, concerts, local clubs.

Take pictures so that you can show the people at home what you have done and which experiences you have made. Let them take part in your life when you are abroad. A travel blog or a web album might be good possibilities for doing that.

Try the local food and beverages at restaurants but also try to cook your own meals even it seems to be difficult at the beginning. Here you can find some easy and traditional recipes.

Some of your colleagues or students in the hosting school might have similar interests like you. Ask them if you can join them in their activities. You could also go out together in the evenings. If they don't invite you, invite them.

What if... - Coping with unexpected situations

Usually everything runs smoothly in your internship and there are always people who will help you. But if there is a problem, don't hesitate to ask for help. If you have made a mistake, don't hesitate to apologize. Nobody is perfect.

If there are difficulties on your work place your supervisor will be the person you have to talk to. For any other problems which you cannot solve on your own you can contact the coordinator in your hosting organization. So don't forget to get his telephone number.

DOCUMENTS: What if

How do I apologize if I make a mistake

Adapting to a new culture

3 PHASE 3 AFTER THE INTERNSHIP

3.1 Reflection



At the end of the internship the company you worked for will give you some feedback on your performance during the internship. Very often one of your teachers will talk to your supervisor in the company but he will also give some feedback directly to you in a final interview. Another way of assessing your competences could be a form the supervisor has to fill in.

The document "Assessment of student" is an example what it could look like.

But not only the company will evaluate your work, they might also expect, that you tell them what you liked about the job and what you didn't like. Again this could be done in an interview or with a questionnaire. State your opinion clearly and give good arguments for your statements. It is not enough just to say that the work was boring/interesting, you also have to explain why you feel in a certain way and illustrate it with examples. Your daily/weekly reports can help you to prepare for you final interview.

It also could be a good idea to write a letter of thanks to your supervisor/company. This shows them that you appreciated their support in improving your skills. If you don't know how to do it, the following example could give you some ideas.

FORMS: **Internship evaluation by the Trainee**
 Internship Assessment of a Trainee(Sweden)

3.2 Certificates



The best known certificate is the Europass, which is a portfolio of competence that will help you to bring forward your competences when you apply for a job in any EU-country.

The Europass consists of five documents:

1. Europass mobility
2. Europass CV
3. Europass language pass
4. Europass certificate supplement
5. Europass diploma supplement

You will have to bring your Europass mobility document with you. You either get it from your coordinator at home or you have to register yourself. Don't forget to have it filled in and signed by the coordinator of the hosting organisation and the supervisor in your company.

More information you can find when you click on the following link:

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Downloads/Mobility/MobExamples.csp>

DOCUMENTS: Europass Information

Europass Austria

3.3 Writing a final report and sharing the experiences



You are representing your school. It's therefore your task to document the experiences you have made during your internship abroad. The school would like to learn from your experiences. The following document might give you some ideas what should be included in a report about your internship.

This report might be read by many people, so be careful about the spelling, the layout and the style. Remember, it is not a text about a holiday or an adventure trip. Give important facts about the school and the company you visited. Also include some information about your free time and intercultural experiences.

DOCUMENT: How to write a final report