

Guidelines for Internships at the Public Administration and Policy Group (PAP, Wageningen University)

Introduction

The course guide MSc Internships at Wageningen University provides general information about the internship contract, learning outcomes, activities during the internship, the assessment and rubric. It also includes a checklist for organising an internship.¹

The objective of this guide is to provide specific information on how to organize an internship via PAP. Before doing so, we first outline what we consider an appropriate internship. Then we present the procedures for searching internships, supervision and grading. Finally, this guideline summarizes the requirements for the internship report.

What is an appropriate internship?

Both the internship provider and the character of the internship task must reflect the possible first working environment of a recently graduated student from the intern's study programme.

The internship can be done at various organisations such as research institutes, government agencies, NGOs or companies in the Netherlands and abroad, as long as the internship task relates to the areas of public administration/public policy and should include activities that are predominantly at an academic working level. We particularly encourage students to engage in internships with organisations that - like PAP - want to contribute to changing governance and governing change in the fields of climate, food (trade), water and energy.

An internship is a learning process in which feedback plays an important role. A major requirement to be met by the internship provider is that there is supervision on an academic level by at least one staff member of the organisation. The internship provider must be an organisation which is familiar with the field in question, and can guarantee that the student will participate in discussions at MSc level. The supervisor of the internship provider is to provide regular feedback to the student. At the early stage of the internship the PAP supervisor contacts the internship supervisor to thank this person and to emphasize the key role of the internship provider in the supervision of the intern. The internship provider should acknowledge that the student's *learning process* is the most important aspect of the internship and that productivity and results may be of lesser importance.

An internship for the Public Administration and Policy Group (PAP) usually lasts 4 months (24 ECTS), but can be extended up to 6.5 months (ECTS credits).

¹ <https://sharepoint.wur.nl/sites/ESAinfo/diversen/owi%20reference%20site.aspx>

How to start?

First of all, you should browse the internet for organisations of your interest who may take interns. As part of the learning process, students are expected to contact potential internship providers themselves and approach one of the PAP staff members (lecturers) as internship supervisor. You can also check at the PAP website (Information for students) and <https://tip.wur.nl/> (fill in PAP) for internship opportunities. Though PAP does not provide a database or list of internships to choose from, we are sometimes approached by organisations which offer internship places.

For discussing the possible internship(s) that you have identified, please contact the thesis and internship coordinator at PAP, Dr. Otto Hospes (otto.hospes@wur.nl). If the chosen internship meets the requirements as mentioned above and the organisation agrees to be your internship provider, you should draft an internship contract, in consultation with your PAP supervisor. You can find a standard Wageningen University internship contract, course guide and assessment form under the heading 'formulieren' at the following intranet site: <https://sharepoint.wur.nl/sites/ESAinfo/diversen/owi%20reference%20site.aspx>

The internship contract lays down, as a minimum, the internship provider and the responsible supervisor there; the chair group and the responsible academic supervisor; your learning outcomes; the activities undertaken to achieve these objectives; the duration of the internship; the method of reporting and assessment and, where applicable, particular arrangements about how the internship is to be carried out and reported. Discuss your draft internship contract with your supervisor at PAP **and** with your internship provider preferably before the start of your internship but ultimately within two weeks after you have started. Doing so will help you to gear your internship activities to your personal aims.

Some internship providers may prefer their own contracts. This is allowed, as long as the elements mentioned above are covered. If not, two contracts may be needed, one from your internship provider and one from Wageningen University.

To prepare and organize this learning process, it is crucial that you draft **different kinds of learning outcomes** before the start of the internship. The learning outcomes should not only be related to acquiring new knowledge or cognitive skills but also professional skills (like "to be able to write a business report" or "to cope effectively with hierarchical working conditions) and personal goals (like "to identify the pros and cons of working as an agent of change in the field of climate change at a ministry"). Learning outcomes can be very personal and depend on which competences you personally want to obtain. For formulating learning outcomes, you can consult Bloom's framework for categorizing educational goals at <https://wp0.vanderbilt.edu/cft/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>. Please do not formulate an activity as a learning outcome. The draft learning outcomes are to

be discussed with the PAP supervisor and internship supervisor, and to be finally agreed by the PAP supervisor.

Internship supervision

Every internship will be supervised by a supervisor of the internship provider and by a supervisor from the PAP group. The supervisor of the internship provider will be responsible for the daily supervision during the internship period and will be asked to give feedback on the process of achieving the students' learning objectives.

The PAP supervisor will advise the student during his or her search for an internship, and on the learning outcomes. If feasible, the supervisor may attend a presentation at the internship location with the student before the end of the internship. The supervisor of the internship provider will be asked by the PAP supervisor for an advise on the marking of the professional skills (see next part) and a general comment on the performance of the intern.

Evaluation of the internship

Every internship will be evaluated against the following criteria:

A. Professional skills (30%):

1. Initiative and creativity
2. Insight in functioning of another organisation
3. Adaptation capacity
4. Commitment and perseverance
5. Independence
6. Handling the local supervisor's comments and development skills
7. Time management

B. Report internship (30%):

1. Formulation goals, frame work project
2. Theoretical underpinning, use of literature
3. Use of methods and processing data
4. Reflection on results
5. Conclusions and discussion
6. Fluency of language and writing skills

C. Self-reflection on internship based on learning outcomes (30%):

1. Reflection on achievement of learning outcome 1
2. Reflection on achievement of learning outcome 2
3. Reflection on achievement of learning outcome 3
4. <and more in case of other learning outcomes>

D. Presentation (at internship location or Wageningen University) (5%)

E. Examination (defence of report and reflection on internship) (5%)

If the internship does not include a substantive research activity (characterized by formulation of a research proposal, with use of theory, formulation of research questions and design of research methods), then the percentage for B is to be set at 0%. The percentages for A and C are then each 45%.

The intern's supervisor at PAP is also the examiner. He/she will decide on the overall mark on the basis of the above elements. For the professional skills, the PAP supervisor will consult the supervisor at the internship provider.

Contents of the PAP Internship Report

Generally, the internship report consists of five sections and the Annexes. (Adaptations are allowed, if they are motivated):

1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to introduce the report and to provide some general information about the period, place, and nature of the internship.

2. Overview of the internship organization

The purpose of this section is to explore the working procedures of your internship provider and to get insight in the background of your internship activities. It should describe the organization where the internship is done, including a general sketch of the entire organization and a more detailed description of the department or group where you have been working. It is useful to give the static structure of the organization (e.g. in an organogram) and to also describe its dynamics surrounding your task: e.g. how internship activities are financed, the larger programme or project that these activities are part of, in what ways the organization is involved in this program or project and who is in charge of these activities.

3. Overview of internship activities

Here, the purpose is to account for the research, consultancy, communication, or any other kind of activities that have been carried out during the internship. This section provides the content of the activities, a concise schedule of internship activities, including the time (in days or weeks) spent and products generated (like research reports, proceedings, etc.). These products should be attached as annexes.

4. Evaluation of learning outcomes (= self-reflection report)

This section is meant for you to reflect upon your experiences during the internship. It includes the learning outcomes you set for yourself, describes your most important experiences, and states to what extent you have achieved your personal aims with regard to the internship. Experiences that do not correspond to your original objectives, but nevertheless proved to be important, should also be covered in this section. We also challenge students to share in this chapter what they find very useful from their courses at Wageningen University for their internship and what kind of knowledge or skill training they missed.

5. Conclusion

Based on 4, the student presents some final or overall conclusions on the learning process during the internship and new learning outcomes that the student wants to pursue in the near future.

A rough indication for the total size of the report (excluding annexes) is **15-20 pages A4 (6,000-8,000 words)**.

The Annexes should include the **portfolio of deliverables**, like possibly: a memorandum, research proposal, research report, policy document, communication plan, a design or education material. The deliverables indirectly give an insight into the key activities of the intern and can also be interesting for others (e.g. interested students). In case the internship includes a research activity, this should be reported according to academic standards: displaying a clear problem statement, research questions, methods, results and references. Annexes may be added to the report or handed in as separate documents (the number and size of the annexes depends on the nature of the internship).

In some cases, reflections by interns on their internship include sensitive information. The PAP supervisor in consultation with the student and internship provider, decides whether the internship report will be administered at PAP as a publicly accessible report or a non-accessible confidential report.

Writing the internship report

It is advisable to start writing the report during the internship period, after the list of learning outcomes has been finalized during the first two weeks. Usually, you will start the internship with a work plan, that can form the basis for Section 3. Material for Section 2 should obviously be collected during your internship, too.