GUIDE FOR INTERNSHIPS

ULB

BRUFACE
Brussels Faculty of Engineering

VUB

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1 Introduction

Embarking on an internship during your programme is a smart move. It not only allows you to acquire invaluable hands-on experience but also provides you with an opportunity to expand your professional connections and strengthen your CV, which gives you a significant advantage in the competitive job market.

The Brussels Faculty of Engineering offers multiple internships, both in Belgium and abroad, to cater to your specific needs and aspirations. This guide covers every aspect of an internship - from the different types to important criteria to consider, right through to the application process.

Let's explore the possibilities!

"Doing an internship gives you way more insight into your field". During my first master's year, I heard this statement countless times. That's why I decided to give it a try last summer. At the end of the journey, I can definitely tell that doing an internship is so much more than that! This summer, I did an internship on the worksite of the new Brussels subway line at Franki Construct, a Willemen company. Before my internship, I had a lot of unanswered questions such as: how does a construction company actually work and what are the different types of careers I can consider within my field. This internship was without doubt the best way to figure it out. Besides figuring out my career path, the internship gave me a lot of hands-on experience and construction knowledge that you won't be able to learn at the university. So, do I recommend an internship? I definitely do!

- Ines Chaouki,
MSc in civil engineering, Franki Construct

2 Different types of internships

BRUFACE programmes offer the possibility to perform an internship at the beginning of the last study year. This internship exists in two versions: “60 working days” or “40 working days” .

2.1 What’s the difference?

2.1.1 Learning outcomes

60 WORKING DAYS

The student has:

- Demonstrated sufficient technical and scientific expertise, as required by the task(s),
- Offered elementary professional competences: reliability, autonomy, initiative, etc.,
- Proven successful integration in a team and with the professional culture of the company,
- Efficiently used the suited project management and organization tools,
- Analysed their own learning experience (on technical as well as on soft skills) and demonstrated sufficient criticism about their own internship stay, so to be able to transfer what has been learned to new situations,
- Understood the expectations and has released the expected deliverables (device, software, analysis, measurement, report, etc) from the company’s point of view.

40 WORKING DAYS

The student has:

- Engaged in industrial and/or research engineering activities,
- Successfully accomplished a wide range of tasks by mastering the knowledge and possessing or acquiring the necessary technical skills,
- Participated in assignments designed to broaden the student’s experience and horizon,
- Gained familiarity with the company’s task chain in a hands-on way,
- Demonstrated versatility by effectively analyzing problems and implementing solutions,
- Developed a strong communicative ability,
- Proven that she/he can work within a team,
- Displayed responsibility through reliability, autonomy and initiative,
- Demonstrated the aptitude to perfom at the level expected from a young engineer.

2.1.2 Follow-up

60 WORKING DAYS

The student communicates (by mail) with her/his academic supervisor on a weekly basis. At mid-term, a meeting with the training entity supervisor, the academic supervisor and possibly Cédric Boey is organized by the student. The aim of this meeting is to give formal feedback to the student and help to prepare for the final jury. For further information, guidelines are available on “université virtuelle”.

40 WORKING DAYS

An intermediate or concluding meeting (a visit in person or via phone or Skype/Teams) of the academic coordinator or training entity supervisor may be organized by the trainee.

2.1.3 Language policy

60 WORKING DAYS

The 3-page summary and the interview are in English.
The language of the portfolio, which is a private document between the academic supervisor and the trainee, and which includes original documents from the company, is at the choice of the trainee between English, Dutch and French. Before concluding the internship agreement, the trainee will communicate the choice to the academic supervisor and get the approval of this supervisor concerning her/his sufficient proficiency to read and evaluate the portfolio in the chosen language.

40 WORKING DAYS

The report is written in English.

2.1.4 Process of choosing the training place

60 WORKING DAYS
The candidate for an internship is responsible for finding a company or lab where the training will take place. The tasks assigned to the student must be comparable to that of a junior engineer of the organization. Additionally, the student has the autonomy to select the academic supervisor.

If an agreement can be reached, the student fills in the internship declaration form available on "université virtuelle".

40 WORKING DAYS
The candidate for an internship is responsible for finding a company or institute where the training will take place. If necessary, the student may contact the academic coordinator (list at the end of the guide) to obtain information of potential training sites.

It is recommended to explore "Canvas" as well. The BRUFACE internships page offers a variety of exciting internship opportunities to discover for each curriculum.

If an agreement can be reached on these issues, the trainee proceeds to step 1 "Application Form" on the VUB website, specifically on the webpage that is dedicated to the internships in engineering.

My internship at Colruyt was a wonderful experience. I had the opportunity to follow along with multiple projects which allowed me to have a little taste of everything. The best thing about it was being able to work autonomously, they gave me a lot of responsibilities which allowed me to take charge and input my own thoughts and ideas while still being supported every step of the way. Because I come from Halle, choosing Colruyt as the organization to perform my internship was almost a no-brainer. It was a nice introduction to the company and maybe I'll return after I graduate.

- Maxime Monsieur,
MSc in electromechanical engineering, Colruyt

2.1.5 Evaluation

60 WORKING DAYS
The evaluation mark is determined based on the following criteria:
- The professional competences, as assessed by the training entity supervisor,
- The portfolio, which contains the learning tracks and the reflections of the student. The portfolio is assessed by the academic supervisor,
- A 3-page summary and an interview assessed by a jury of 2 academics and one alumnus. The jury aims to evaluate the student's ability to explain synthetically her/his internship and her/his main learning outcomes.

40 WORKING DAYS
The evaluation mark is determined based on the following criteria:
- Feedback and evaluation form by the training entity supervisor. The form needs to be submitted to the academic coordinator and academic supervisor within 2 weeks after the completion of the internship (= step 3),
- Evaluation of the internship report (= step 4).

The complete procedure and required forms are available on the VUB website, under the internships section.

Step 3: Evaluation Form
The student informs the training entity supervisor and is responsible for the follow-up. The evaluation form needs to be submitted at the latest 2 weeks after completing the internship (by the end of week 8). Once the evaluation form is filled in by the training entity supervisor, the form will be automatically forwarded to both the academic coordinator and the student.

Step 4: Reporting Form
The report includes the following items:
- A description of the training entity,
- A technical description of the activities of the student,
- Remarks concerning social or personal matters in relation to the internship,
- Conclusions, including e.g. the added value and the benefits of the internship for the student and possible shortcomings and/or assets of the curriculum that were evidenced during the traineeship.

The focus is on the technical content.

The academic supervisor evaluates the report and gives feedback to the academic coordinator.

A clearly structured and concise report of 15 to 20 pages is required. Students are advised to contact the academic coordinator of their respective master's program, who may provide further instructions. The report needs to be submitted at the latest 2 weeks after completing the internship (by the end of week 8).

3 Criteria to take into consideration

3.1 Internship period

The internship takes place between the end of the first session and the beginning of week 7. Depending on the formula, the internship must last 40 or 60 working days (hence at least 8 or 12 weeks for 5 days/week internships).

The internship period is uninterrupted. Only in exceptional circumstances (i.e. annual summer holiday closure, non-availability training entity supervisor, second session exams (with a maximum of four days depending on the number of failed courses)) and with written motivation from the training entity, the academic coordinator may allow to interrupt the period. If exceptional circumstances for interrupting the internship period are granted, this should be specified in the internship agreement.

3.2 Training place

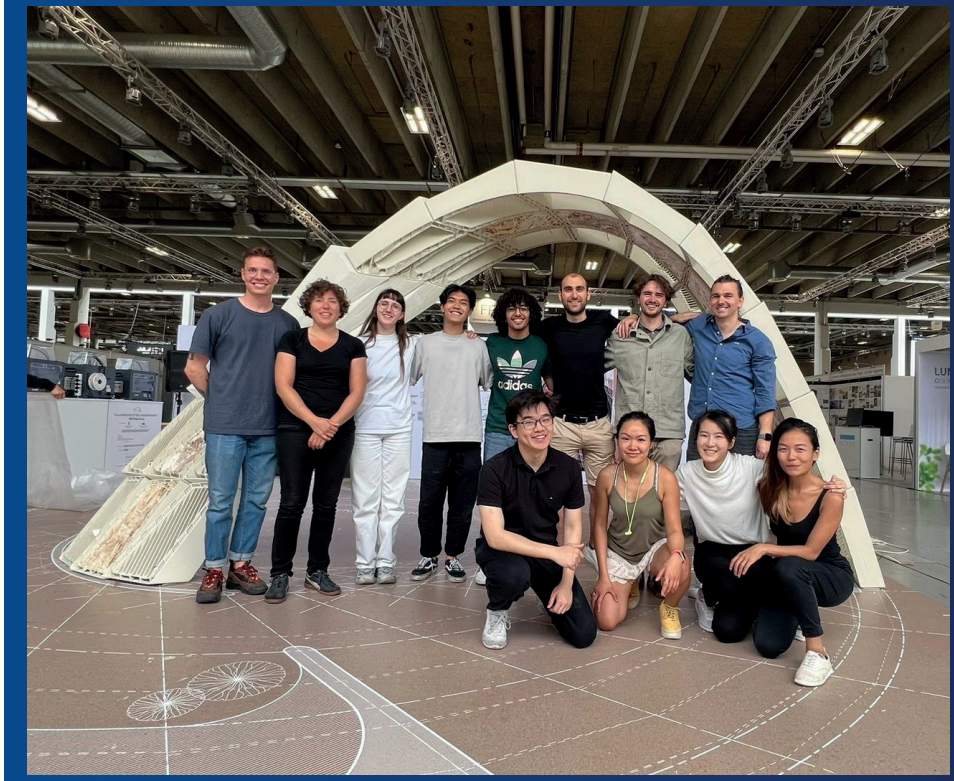
The internship project is always pending on approval of the internship coordinator(s).

In any case, the following internships are not allowed:

- In Belgian university labs,
- For international students, an internship in their home university,
- For Erasmus+ incoming students, an internship in their home country,
- In a country classified at risk. The VUB Faculty of Engineering will give negative advice for students applying for an internship in countries in war,
- When (one of) your training entity supervisor(s) is a close relative.

3.3 Master's thesis

The thesis and the internship may be done in collaboration with the same company or institution. However, the thesis and the internship must have clearly defined and distinct deliverables and learning outcomes, and they will be evaluated separately.



(Picture at the UIA Congress for Architecture in Copenhagen, July 2023. In front of the MSHRM pavilion I contributed to.)

After finishing my master's degree at DTU in Copenhagen, as a T.I.M.E. Double Degree student, I wasn't ready to leave this beautiful city yet. That's why I chose to apply for internships in Copenhagen, which would be part of the remaining 30 ECTS I had finish upon my return at VUB, to complete the Double Degree. I was lucky enough to be able to join the BIG Engineering team, after collaborating with them for my Master Thesis. It was an amazing experience over the summer, with a great work-life balance. Therefore, I could enjoy the summer there, visit the rest of Denmark during weekends, meet friends after work, get to know some amazing people at work, etc. Also, working in a big international firm felt very rewarding, as I got the opportunity to work on different kinds of projects during my three months there. The major learning experience here, is that by getting out of your comfort zone, you will learn so much more about yourself and about the professional path you would like to choose.

- Lore Vyfeyken, MSc in architectural engineering, Bjarke Ingels Group, Denmark

4 Procedure of enrolling for an internship

4.1 Application procedure

The candidate is responsible for finding a company or institute where the training will take place for an internship.

4.1.1 Deadlines

General

- **31st of May: Request an internship**
  - 40 working days: step 1 available on https://www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/all-study-programmes-vub/personal-development-during-your-studies/do-internship#paragraph-70156
  - 60 working days; the internship declaration form available on "université virtuelle"

- **15th of June: Final deadline for VUB or ULB internship agreement**
  Please note, circumstances beyond the candidate's control in meeting the deadline of 15th of June, can be considered. If not, exemptions from meeting the deadline will be refused.

Internships abroad

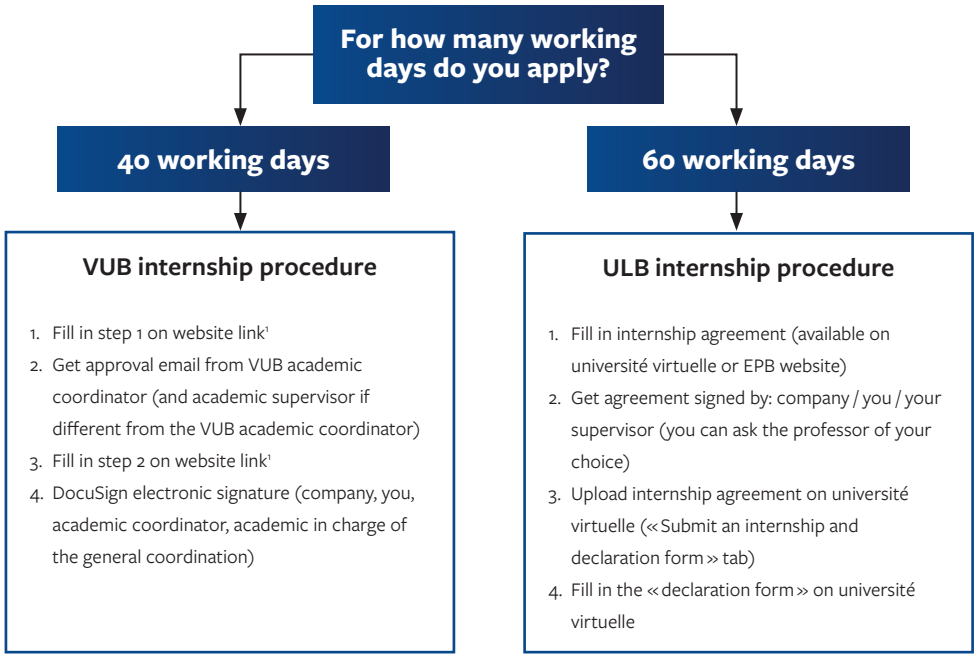
- **15th of December:** Application for students applying for an internship outside of the European Union at **VUB**, for an internship of **40 working days** abroad.

- **15th of February:** Application for students applying for an ERASMUS+ internship at **VUB**, for an internship of **40 working days** abroad. This deadline is set by the Facultaire Commissie Internationale Relaties (FACIR).

- **At least one month before the start of the internship:** Application for students applying for an ERASMUS+ traineeship at **ULB**, for an internship of **60 working days** abroad.

4.1.2 Overview

BRUFACE internship agreement procedure



website link[1]: https://www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/all-study-programmes-vub/personal-development-during-your-studies/do-internship#paragraph-70156

4.2 Legalities of the internship agreement

The internship agreement should be signed by the institutional representatives: ULB for the 60 working days and VUB for the 40 working days.

4.2.1 Specific procedure: 40 working days (VUB internship agreement)

Use the VUB agreement for the 40 working days internship. Follow the procedure on the VUB website, specifically on the webpage that is dedicated to the internships in engineering.

Step 1: Application Form
Step 2: Internship Agreement Form

The trainee organizes a meeting with the training entity supervisor to describe the internship placement duties.

The student fills in step 1. Select the academic coordinator (list at the end of the guide) of your master programme. In exceptional cases, a VUB or ULB professor with her/his expertise in the domain of the internship topic can be added as an academic supervisor if the academic coordinator prefers it.

In step 2, the student uploads the approval emails rom the academic coordinator (and academic supervisor if different from the coordinator). The emails must be uploaded in PDF format.
It is important to note that without the submission of these required approvals, step 2 will not be accepted.

After filling in the form in step 2, an automatic email is sent to the email address of the training entity supervisor. Make sure the data you enter is correct and complete.

Once step 2 is completed and there has been no request for changes within 5 working days (not from the training entity supervisor, neither from the student), the contract will be automatically signed with DocuSign by all the involved parties: the company, the student, the academic coordinator, the representative of the Dean.
Without the contract signed by all parties, the internship is not valid.

Notice that the whole procedure must be finalized the latest **15th of June**.

4.2.2 Specific procedure: 60 working days (ULB internship agreement)

Use the ULB agreement for the 60 working days internship. The internship agreement is available on “université virtuelle”. Once fully completed and signed by student/academic supervisor/company, the agreement has to be uploaded on “université virtuelle”. After having been checked, the agreement will be signed by the dean (and coordinator for 60 days internship) and send by email to the student/company/supervisor. The academic supervisor should be a VUB or ULB professor.

4.2.3 Specific procedure: ERASMUS+ internship

A student can do an internship in the company or country of her/his choice (the internship is always pending on the approval of the academic coordinator).

Students taking the 40 working days internship can apply for an ERASMUS+ Traineeship at VUB, students taking the 60 working days internship can only apply for an ERASMUS+ Traineeship at ULB.

Procedure at VUB: 40 working days

- Contact the exchange coordinator of the Master programme.
- The learning agreement for an Erasmus + Traineeship grant should be based on the technical content as approved by the placement organization, the academic coordinator and the VUB academic in charge of the general coordination of the internships. If you intend to perform an internship abroad, the deadline February 15th for application of an Erasmus + Traineeship grant should be respected, make sure that the placement organization abroad and technical content are agreed upon.
- The insurance policies for a student who will do an internship as part of her/his study programme are also applicable for internships abroad. It is recommended to take additional travel insurance for students who will do an internship outside EU.
- Considering an internship is subject to the law of the country where the internship will take place. It is possible changes will be made to the agreement template, considering the differences in legislation between Belgium and the country where the internship will take place (e.g. liability, insurance). The employer is responsible to flay any necessary changes in time.

Procedure at ULB: 60 working days

- The application must be submitted at least one month before the start of the internship, together with the signed internship agreement. Only complete applications submitted on time are guaranteed to be processed.
- The internship placement must first be approved by the ULB internship coordinator. Once approved, students will receive detailed instructions regarding the Erasmus+ administrative steps (grant agreement, OLS language test, proof of presence, and final report).
- For internships in neighboring countries (e.g. France, Luxembourg), students must provide proof of residence at the host location before the end of the stay.

"Dare to ask, to explore, to try out something you are not yet familiar with. Stepping out of your comfort zone. This is the only way you'll learn new things."
During my internship, I did a wide range of tasks, like detailed design, modeling, calculations, making physical models, using BIM, research, and business development. This experience gave me a better understanding of how companies operate and helped me figure out what I want to do in my career.
Working at BIG in Denmark was a dream come true for me, and I was able to do it thanks to my connections from my two-year exchange program at DTU.

I think this experience will open up many opportunities for my future career or, at the very least, help me find my first job. It also helped me narrow down the type of job I want, as my 'Architectural Engineering' studies covered a wide range of areas.
I highly recommend doing an internship abroad to anyone. It lets you see how work is done in different places and allows you to make international connections. It really expands your horizons.

- Aline Verwilghen, MSc in architectural engineering, Bjarke Ingels Group, Denmark

4.3 Conditions to do an internship

4.3.1 General conditions

The signed internship agreement has a conditional character till the deliberation. Students not satisfying the enrolment requirements are not allowed to perform an internship as part of their master programme. In this case the internship and internship agreement are cancelled. Students not satisfying the enrolment requirements are informed immediately after the deliberation.

The internships during the upcoming summer are accessible only to students who fulfill simultaneously the following conditions:

- When signing the internship contract: being in a position of obtaining the MA diploma at the end of the next academic year (supposing all the teaching units of the current academic year will be credited/acquired).
- At the end of the first exam session of the current year: having failed no more than 20 ECTS, and no more than 4 teaching units of the current teaching programme. If the enrolment requirements are not met at the end of the first session deliberation, the internship contract is cancelled as well as the internship itself.

In any case, the internship project is always pending on approval of the internship coordinator(s). If the internship enters in conflict with an exam, priority must be given to the exam and in no case requests for exception are considered.

4.3.2 Conditions related to Erasmus+ incoming students

Erasmus+ incoming students:

- Are not allowed to do a 60 working days internship
- Are allowed to do a 40 working days internship if they comply with the requirements stated in the BRUFACE Internship Guidelines. Alternatively, the internship period may be between the end of the first exam session in June and the end of the second exam session in September (after the 2nd Master). If the internship is in conflict with an exam, priority must be given to the exam and in no case requests for exception are considered. The internship agreement must then be signed at the latest as indicated in the guidelines for regular students. In any case, the internship must not extend beyond the end of the considered academic year.
- In any case, the internship project is always pending on approval of the internship coordinator(s).

Contact details

Internship team at the Faculty
ir-internships@vub.be - VUB Faculty of Engineering
internship.epb@ulb.be - ULB Internships

Coordinators per type of internship

60 working days

General coordination
Cédric Boey (U.B.4.227) - cedric.boey@ulb.be / 02 650 31 20

Academic in charge for all Bruface Master Programmes
Frédéric Robert - Frederic.Robert@ulb.be

40 working days

General coordination
Lincy Pyl - Lincy.Pyl@vub.be

Academic coordinators per Bruface Master Programme

MSc in Architectural Engineering
Ann Verdonck - Ann.Verdonck@vub.be

MSc in Chemical and Materials Engineering: Materials Science orientation
Tom Hauffman - Tom.Hauffman@vub.be

MSc in Chemical and Materials Engineering: Process Technology orientation
Sebastiaan Eeltink - Sebastiaan.Eeltink@vub.be

MSc in Civil Engineering
Lincy Pyl - Lincy.Pyl@vub.be

MSc in Water Resources
Marijke Huysmans - Marijke.Huysmans@vub.be

MSc in Electromechanical Engineering
Dieter De Baere - Dieter.De.Baere@vub.be

MSc in Electrical Engineering
John Lataire - John.Lataire@vub.be