



Bachelor International Studies

Why internships shape your future career



**Universiteit
Leiden**

The Netherlands

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WHY INTERNSHIPS SHAPE YOUR CAREER

The discretionary space during students' third year of the BA International Studies programme is an opportunity to shape your education and influence your future career path, by choosing between an internship, an international exchange at a university abroad, or in-depth study of a specific topic through choosing a minor. Each choice offers particular benefits. So why choose an internship?

“An internship is a solid investment in your future.”

Atse Fokkens MA, Internship Coordinator



Five reasons for choosing to do an internship:

1 Informs you on what career suits you best

An **internship** is a unique chance to ‘test-drive’ a specific industry, organisation or role. For many students this inside look has a significant effect on the career direction they choose. Internships help you refine your ideas about which roles in organisations match your talents and interests. Internships also provide a good way to get your foot in the door at an organisation.

2 Builds confidence, time management skills and more

Personal and professional skill development is a key benefit of any internship. When you are surrounded by professionals and are working in a fast-paced, international environment, you learn how to communicate in a professional way, manage your time and be part of a team. At the end of the internship students are a great deal more confident in their ability to find and successfully handle a real job.

3 Builds your resume

All **employers** value professional experience. Spending a period of time at an organisation as an intern allows you to add experience to your resume. Depending on your initiatives and the organisation you choose, an internship will bring valuable hands-on experience. This gives you a valuable edge in the job market.

4 Develops your network

The **professionals** you will meet during your internship can become valuable contacts who can help with advice and job leads. They can connect you to other people in different organisations or industries, and provide references which can make all the difference to your future job applications.



“Our internship students experience a growth that sets them apart from the crowd. You can see them develop skills that prepare them for success in their future life.”

Dr. Sarita Koendjibharie,
Academic Internship Supervisor

5 Applying classroom knowledge

An **internship** provides you a chance to put into practice what you have learned in class, whether it is knowledge of a world region, or simply your ability to apply critical thinking, and come up with your own solutions, show initiative, and rise to the challenge of having to acquire new information for an organisation.

How do they work?

You reinforce your understanding of organisations through the pre-requisite course Organizational Theory, Culture and Behaviour which you follow in the second year of your studies. Then you set out to find your role, industry and company for your internship with professional support of the Internship Coordinator. During your internship, you are guided by the Academic Internship Supervisor and a specialised faculty member.

What sort of internship

Student Clare Higgins is working in Kampala at the Delegation of the European Union to Uganda. Her many responsibilities include writing speeches, organising missions from the EU headquarters in Brussels and representing the EU at regular conferences and meetings on electoral reforms in Uganda. She also has the opportunity to attend monthly meetings with all Ambassadors from EU member states at the EU Ambassador's residence and interact with key political stakeholders.

Why organisations choose our students

Juany Murphy from the Otra Cosa Network, a Peruvian non-profit NGO and Registered UK Charity chose student Joe Blackett to be an intern in their office in Peru: *"Students in this programme are interested in becoming global citizens and these are the people we want in our organisation. Joe's marketing responsibilities have included creating a database that will include all our contacts and liaising with universities to create more placements. He has been simplifying my life immensely."*

How the programme helps

Professor Giles Scott-Smith is supervising the research of a student currently working at a newspaper in the Dominican Republic: *"The research component is a very important part of every internship. My student came up with the idea himself and asked if I would fill the role of supervisor. He has developed a very good research plan that will provide a good analysis of the current situation of inter-Caribbean trade relations that will involve a series of structured interviews talking to the stakeholders on the ground."*