

Internship Programmes

Policy objectives

Internships with the Office provide an opportunity for selected undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students who are pursuing a course of study or work in fields related to the ILO's mandate and activities to:

- Increase their understanding of relevant issues at the international level by involving them directly in the work of the Office and the application of ILO principles, programmes and strategies;
- Gain practical work experience from the ILO which is directly related to their technical specialisation.

Interns are a significant asset to the Office. They provide the Office with the assistance of young talent for a limited period and are a source of potential future recruits. They offer the most recent thinking and research experience in their area of academic study. They also have the potential to disseminate their knowledge and understanding of ILO principles throughout their future professional careers. Internships are intended to provide a learning experience. Interns are not a replacement for absent staff members nor should they be treated as additional staff. An internship should be offered by the Office when it is considered that such an experience can be mutually beneficial both for the work unit and the intern concerned.

Legal Status

Interns are not ILO officials and therefore do not enjoy the immunities and privileges of such officials. They do, however, have some of the same obligations and rights as regular staff members, including those arising from the ILO security policy, procedures and instructions. The granting of an internship does not create an expectation or an entitlement to employment with the Office at the conclusion of the internship. Interns may, however, be granted a temporary contract with the Office following an internship and, if eligible, may apply at any time for competitions as external candidates. They are of course, free to seek employment with other UN agencies during the period of internship.

Eligibility and Selection

Interns should have completed graduate and/or postgraduate studies or be in the final year of undergraduate studies. Applicants for internships can be of any nationality. An intern should not be a close relative of a serving ILO official. Continuing attention will be given by the Human Resources Department (HRD) to ensure that participation in the internship programme is gender balanced is accessible to persons with disabilities and is open to candidates from developing as well as developed countries. HRD will support a limited number of applications each year from candidates from developing countries by funding travel and related costs. Participants in the internship programme will be selected from undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students who hold degrees in disciplines considered relevant to the ILO's work e.g. international law, economics, industrial relations, political science, and the social sciences. Interns should have a working (both oral and written) knowledge of at least one of the ILO's official language (English). Interns should be able to adapt to an international, multicultural, multilingual environment, have good communication skills and be able to work in a team. Any past work experience and knowledge of IT-related work would be an advantage.

An applicant for an internship should submit the following documentation: curriculum vitae (which, inter alia, should include his/her date of birth, nationality and language spoken/written); a completed and signed internship agreement form; a list of academic courses taken and transcripts of grades; and any correspondence concerning sponsorship for the internship from a university, other institution and/or government. Applications for internships should be sent directly either to;

- HRD, in which case HRD will seek to arrange such a placement; or
- To the individual work unit which is offering the internship.

HRD is responsible for the overall operation of the internship programme including the provision of general information and other support to line managers and prospective/current interns, compilation of relevant statistical data and resolving related policy issues. HRD shall facilitate the integration of interns in the Organization by providing them with the name of the relevant unit focal point and the interns' network e-mail address. Work units offering internships are responsible for selecting interns and should identify a focal point on interns to liaise with HRD on related issues. Where a work unit proposes to engage an intern, HRD should immediately be provided with all of the documentation required to be submitted by the proposed intern (see paragraph 10), together with information as to the commencement and concluding dates of the internship, the name of the responsible supervisor and the proposed job tasks and work plan. The work unit concerned should also confirm with HRD that funding is available to support the internship and that appropriate logistical arrangements have been made.

Terms and conditions of service

The length of an internship should not normally be less than 3 months nor exceed 6 months. Where an exception is sought to these requirements, the relevant supervisor or focal point should obtain HRD's agreement. As a general rule, interns should work 40 hours per week (full time) or 20 hours per week (part-time) in agreement with his/her supervisor. Interns are entitled to 2.5 days of leave per month and may be absent from work during other periods of the internship, in agreement with their supervisor. Where an intern is sick for a period longer than 2 days, s/he should provide a doctor's certificate to his/her supervisor. Where an intern is not supported by any institution (university, government or otherwise), a stipend to cover basic subsistence costs should be paid. The Director should establish the amount of the stipend to be paid to interns in line with other similar organizations engaging interns at local level and taking account of local circumstances. Where an intern is financially supported by an institution, the ILO may, subject to the rules of such institution, pay the intern the difference between the external financial support and the applicable ILO stipend. The work unit concerned is responsible for ensuring that funding is available to ensure the payment of the appropriate stipend to an intern. No other payment to an intern of any kind should be made by the Office during the period of an internship. Work units engaging interns are responsible for providing them with the facilities needed to carry out their tasks, such as office space, access to a PC, a printer and a telephone. Likewise, the units concerned should ensure that interns receive a security pass to enter and leave the ILO premises.

Intern duties, responsibilities and rights

Interns are expected to carry out the duties assigned to them by their designated supervisor. The work programme of an intern should involve, inter alia, researching relevant issues, drafting analytical papers and reports, supporting fact-finding and technical cooperation activities as well as field operations, and providing servicing of meetings. Interns have access to informal conflict resolution mechanisms available to ILO staff as well as to sexual harassment investigation procedures. In the event of an internship being terminated unilaterally by the Office, the intern will also have the right to have the matter reviewed by HRD. Interns are not permitted to undertake official travel/missions during their internship as they are not staff members of the Office and Travel Authorizations cannot be issued for them. Interns must keep confidential any and all unpublished information made known to them during the course of the internship. They may not publish outside the ILO, without appropriate written authorisation by their supervisors, any reports or papers prepared on the basis of information obtained during their internship. Any books or other materials borrowed from the ILO Library by an intern must be returned before the last day of work. Any loss of such documents will be the responsibility of the intern concerned.

Supervision and evaluation

The official assigned to supervise an intern in a particular work unit is responsible for providing the intern, before his/her commencement with the Office, with a description of tasks to be performed during the internship and a related work plan. During the internship, the supervisor should ensure that the intern receives meaningful assignments, guidance and review of his or her work. Upon completion of the internship, but before the intern leaves the Office, the supervisor should prepare a final report describing what was achieved during the internship. The report should include the intern's name, the period covered, the tasks assigned and an evaluation of work done. The supervisor should discuss the report with and incorporate any comments provided by the intern. HRD should then counter-sign the report and it should be given by the supervisor to the intern before s/he leaves the Office. In addition, every intern will be requested to complete and return an evaluation questionnaire prepared by HRD.

Administrative arrangements

Subject to special arrangements under paragraph 6 above, travel expenses to and from the Office, at the beginning and completion of an internship, must be borne by an intern or his/her sponsor. The Office does not accept responsibility for costs arising from accidents and/or illness incurred during an internship. Interns are responsible for procuring and maintaining their own insurance coverage for illness and accidents while they are working at the ILO and a copy of documentation attesting to such insurance coverage should be provided to HRD by each intern on their first day of internship.

Termination of an internship

Either the intern concerned or the Office may terminate an internship by giving 10 working days' notice. However, where termination of an internship is made necessary because of family-related or other personal reasons, a shorter notice period may be agreed by the Office. The Office may terminate an internship for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, conduct or attitude.