



NATO Headquarters Internship Programme

Background

The North Atlantic Council decided on 18 June 2006 (C-M(2004)0042) to establish a NATO HQ Internship Programme under the auspices of the Action Plan to improve Gender and Diversity. The programme has four primary goals:

- To contribute to creating a more diverse workforce through encouraging Divisions/Offices to take on interns of different nationalities, origins and backgrounds in order to provide the Organisation with a younger and more diverse pool of potential future job applicants;
- To provide interns with an opportunity to learn from the NATO community and get a thorough understanding and balanced view of the Organisation;
- To provide the Organisation with access to the latest theoretical and technical knowledge that the intern can apply through practical work assignments, as well as with additional staff resources;
- To expand the understanding of NATO in Alliance countries by having interns return to their countries and/or universities after completing the internship and share their experience.

General Conditions

- **Number of Interns**

NATO HQ's internship programme will consist of approximately 20 interns per year. Interns entering the organisation via national programmes and as well as interns coming with a scholarship or grant will add to that number. In any case, the total number of interns at any given time should not exceed 10 percent of the total number of A-Grades in the International Staff establishment.

The Internship Programme Officer will manage the annual influx of all interns and keep records of internships.

- **Duration of Internship**

In principle, internships will last 6 months. Shorter periods or extensions will only be possible in exceptional cases based on divisional needs.

Internships start in March and September. Exceptions will only be possible due to urgent divisional requirements and for interns holding scholarships or grants.

Contracts can only be terminated by either party after one week's notice.



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Eligibility Criteria

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| Nationality | Application is limited to nationals of NATO member states. |
| Age | Candidates must be at least 21 to apply for the programme. The programme is only open to current students or recent graduates (degree obtained no longer than 12 months ago). |
| Qualification | Candidates must have at least two years of university studies or equivalent experience. However, depending on the job description, candidates may be required to have obtained a specific degree. |
| Language | Proficiency in one of the two official NATO languages is essential, and a working knowledge of the other is desirable. Knowledge of other languages will be an advantage as specified in the job descriptions. |

- **Remuneration**

Interns are paid a lump sum of € 600 per month¹. The salary is not exempt from taxation. Interns may receive emoluments from outside sources.

- **Obligations and Responsibilities**

Interns are required to exercise the utmost discretion regarding facts and information that comes to their knowledge during their internship. They remain covered by this obligation after the internship. The Organisation reserves the right to terminate the internship and take action against an intern who does not respect this obligation.

Interns are not permitted to draw files from registries. The Head of Division/Office will assess the need for access to classified information in both paper and electronic form.

- **Travel**

Interns will not be reimbursed for their travel expenses on taking up duty or on leaving the service.

In exceptional cases only, the employing office in which the intern has been placed may grant authorisation for an intern to be sent on mission, on the condition that the mission is of a technical nature and not a representative one. The expenses will be taken on by

¹ Most other international organisation but the United Nations offer paid internships or at least reimburse travel expenses and rent for the interns. The European Commission in Brussels currently pays € 950 per month. The European Central Bank doesn't pay interns but reimburses their travel expenses and provides accommodation.



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the Divisions which requests the mission. The HR Internship Officer should always be informed before an intern is sent on mission and should receive a copy of the signed mission order.

In no circumstances will an intern be permitted to participate in missions in support of Council-approved Operations and Missions.

- **Leave**

Interns will keep the same hours of work and have the same official public holidays as other NATO staff members.

After three months of service interns shall be entitled to leave (including sick leave) at the rate of 2.5 working days for every month of service completed. Any accumulated leave not taken during the contractual period will not be paid.

In case of sickness, interns must notify their division immediately, and if absent for more than two days, must provide the organisation with a medical certificate.

Unauthorized absences will be charged against such entitlement and the leave will be reduced accordingly.

- **Insurance**

Interns are responsible for their own health and accident insurance. They may, however, be covered at their request and their expense by accident insurance for occupational risks (invalidity/death) during the period of their internship. The monthly premium for this insurance amounts to 0.25% of their payment.

Interns will be required on joining to provide evidence that they have adequate insurance coverage.

- **Administrative Formalities for Belgian Authorities**

Interns will be responsible individually for fulfilling all administrative formalities required by the host nation, including registration in their local commune, during their residence in Belgium. The HR Programme Officer will assist the interns by providing all necessary information and documents.

- **Security Requirements**

Depending on the type of work to be performed, participation in an internship will normally be subject to receipt of an appropriate security clearance from the intern's



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national authorities. Interns may join the organisation only after the necessary clearance is obtained.

In order to ensure proper attitude and behaviour and make interns aware of the different security regulations regarding their internship, a security briefing will be arranged during their first weeks of internship. The attendance to that briefing is mandatory for all interns.

- **Office Space and Equipment**

Office space, furniture and equipment will be drawn from the Division/Office's own resources and planned before the arrival of the intern.

- **Future Employment**

Internships are not directly linked to recruitment, interns may however be recruited after completing their internship, as long as the conditions and rules established for employment in the category of staff in which he/she will be recruited have been fully respected and applied.

National Programmes, Scholarships

National Programmes continue parallel to the NATO Internship Programme. Delegations and/or National Programme Coordinators are responsible for establishing their own rules concerning payment of interns joining the organisation. Interns will not be paid by NATO nor covered by any insurance offered by the organisation.

In order to manage the influx of all interns in the IS workforce Delegations/ National Programme Coordinators have to inform the Internship Programme Officer of all interns joining the organisation. Interns may participate in all activities offered by the NATO Internship Programme.

For interns joining the organisation on behalf of a scholarship or grant a special application form will be provided. These interns are not bound to the specific application and onboarding deadlines. All regulations – exempt rules concerning payment or related to payment – do apply to these interns as well.



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Procedures

A. Application and Selection Process

Applications for the NATO Internship Programme will be gathered by restricted calls for applications. Applications will only be accepted within the deadline of the call and only via internet. Applications consist of a filled application form, curriculum vitae and a one page essay giving the details on their motivation for an internship at NATO, why they want to work in particular divisions, and on their expectations during the Internship (for timelines see Annex).

Divisions/Office will provide job descriptions and/or profiles for interns in their division/office. The Internship Programme Officer will screen applications regarding the eligibility criteria and possible match with the provided profile/job description. The initial screening additionally aims to keep, to the best level possible, gender balance and equilibrium between candidates from different member states.

The Division/Office is responsible for the actual selection of the intern. The administration of the programme (acceptance letter, preparation of clearance, information about living in Brussels and administrative regulations regarding their residence in the host nation, contact with national delegation) will be managed by the Internship Programme Officer. Divisions/Office will be kept informed about the status of the process.

Before an intern joins the Organisation, the Division/Office concerned provides a brief description of the tasks assigned to the Internship Programme Officer, who forwards it to the applicant.

B. Activities

All interns will undergo an induction course organised by the Internship Programme Officer, covering information about the organisation, procedures, security as well as advice on how to have a successful internship. It also covers information about the Staff Centre, which offers different activities at reduced prices for interns.



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Interns will be able to participate in a NATO Speaker Series. This gives them the chance to meet with personnel working in different parts and on different levels of the organisation.² Additionally visits to SHAPE, the European Parliament and the European Commission are organised.

The Internship Programme Officer meets with the interns on a regular basis to discuss different topics of interest and make sure they enjoy their stay at NATO. The feedback of the interns concerning different aspect of their internship is gathered twice via a formal survey. Supervising managers are requested to hand in a survey as well.

All inters are offered the possibility to take French Language Classes, organised by the Staff Centre at a reduced price.

C. Leaving the Organisation, Alumni Network

At the end of the internship, the employing office will provide the intern with a letter of reference, evaluating his/her work. A copy of the letter will be kept in the intern's file for future reference. Interns also receive a formal certificate for their internship, provided by EM.

Interns will be offered to join an Alumni Network, storing their contact details and enabling them to keep in touch, at the end of their internship. The Alumni Network is managed by the Internship Programme Officer.

² In 2005 interns met with the Secretary General, two member state delegations, the Director Policy Planning, the US Ambassador to NATO etc.