



Internship Elective

PSY9110 2024/2025



Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience



Welcome to the “Internship Elective”

In this elective you will have the opportunity to do an internship in an organization of your own choice. The central goals of this course are the following:

- Applying your theoretical knowledge and skills obtained at university in practice
- Developing your knowledge, skills and abilities as a practicing psychologist
- Exploring first career steps and possible career paths

By doing an internship, you may further increase your employability, “a psycho-social construct that embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface” (Fugate et al., 2004, p. 15). Employability has a unique influence on job search behaviours, job choice and job search outcomes. People with high employability recognize career opportunities quickly and reach their career goals more easily (see e.g. Fugate, et al., 2004). So it surely is a good thing to build up throughout your time at Maastricht University :).

To pass this course, you will be asked to hand in a development plan prior to starting your internship as well as a report following your internship. In the development plan you focus on your specific learning goals which you want to obtain throughout your internship (see [here](#) for further information). In the internship report you build on the development plan and reflect on your internship experience (see [here](#) for further information).

Below you find important information and further details about the timeline of this course, what you need to consider when choosing an organization and how the internship report will be evaluated.

Please make sure to read all the information carefully. If you have any questions, please contact the course coordinator.

Contact Information:

Course coordinator: Miriam Schilbach

E-mail: miriam.schilbach@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Timeline and general overview of the steps to take

- **Choose potential host organization & start the application process:** As early as possible. For further information, please see [here](#)
- **Contact course coordinator:** this should be done as soon as you found a host organization
- **Sign the internship contract:** Have the contract signed by everyone involved (see [here](#) for further information) by **1st of December 2024**
- **Write your development plan:** describe your learning goals and how you intend to reach them (see [here](#))
- **Do the internship:** Sometime between **January 1st and March 31st 2025**
- **Hand in the internship report:** At the latest by **1st of April 2025** (see [here](#))

Keep in mind that **next to the practical internship you will also start working on your research internship (i.e. your master thesis project)**. This means that you will have some appointments with your master thesis supervisor and you will start writing your research proposal while doing your internship. Therefore, make sure to communicate clearly with your master thesis supervisor how you will combine the practical internship with your master thesis project. Also make sure to communicate with your practical internship supervisor that you may have some (virtual) appointments with your research supervisor during this period, which may need to occur during official working hours.

Choosing an organization & application process

You can choose an organization in any subdomain of psychology that interests you, so it can be in health psychology, work psychology, forensic psychology, developmental psychology etc. Tasks you might encounter during your internship could for example be: Supporting the development and delivery of training programs in an organization, collecting and analysing HR data, assisting in the preparation of psychological evaluations and reports for court cases, administering psychological assessments under supervision, helping design and implement health promotion programs (e.g., motivate employees or my students to opt for a healthy lunch) etc. These are just a few tasks of course that you might come across while working as a psychologist.

Keep in mind that you should **start the application process as early as possible**. Application processes can take time. So the earlier you start looking and contacting organizations, the better really.

Since you will receive a maximum of 6 ECTS for this elective, this means that you will **have to work at least 168 hours (i.e., 6 × 28h) in total for the company**. You can choose yourself how to divide these hours. You could for example work fulltime for 4 weeks, or work part-time for a longer period. You are responsible for working the necessary hours and to make sure that you **combine your internship with your other obligations at the university** (e.g., working on your research proposal and Academic Skills). Furthermore, you can be flexible on when you plan your internship, but it has to take place somewhere between January 1st and March 31st 2025.

In addition, you need to **make sure that you will be supervised by someone in the host organization who has an academic or equivalent Master degree in psychology**. In case your supervisor does not have a Master or equivalent degree in psychology but in a related field (e.g. economics, sociology), you have to indicate to the coordinator of this course why this supervisor's background is relevant for your internship.

It is further important that you keep in mind the goals of this course. The internship really has to enable you to **develop skills and abilities that are crucial for psychologists**. Make sure that you clearly communicate this to the organization and note that this point is also explicitly included in the internship contract.

In summary, when choosing an organization you have to keep the following aspects in mind:

- You need to be supervised by a psychologist (or someone in a related field) working at the host organization
- Make sure that the organization can host you between January 1st and March 31st 2025
- You need to work at the organization for a minimum of 168 hours to obtain the 6 ECTS for this elective
- The organization needs to enable you to also meet your obligations at Maastricht University
- The goal of this internship is for you to develop your professional skills and abilities; the organization should guarantee that they will facilitate this
- The content of your internship must be related to the objectives of the FPN Master program
- The internship should be a practical internship and not a research internship
- Internships must be approved by the coordinator of PSY9110
- The organization should sign the UM internship contract before the deadline (i.e., 1st of December 2024)

Note: *This practical experience cannot be used to fulfil the prerequisites regarding the theoretical background and working experience set for the psychodiagnostics registration (i.e., the BAPD) and/or vLOGO.*

As soon as you found an organization, you should **contact the course coordinator via e-mail**. She will give you further instructions. In this email, please make sure to also indicate who your supervisor will be at the host organization and briefly state whether they have a Master or equivalent degree in psychology and if not, why they are still suitable as supervisor for your internship.

What if you cannot find a host organization?

At times it can be difficult to find a host organization for your internship. Please do not take this as a discouragement to attempt to find one, but rather as an encouragement to also **think about your Plan B**.

If you cannot find a host organization by the 1st of December (i.e., have a signed contract with the organization by that date), you will be assigned to another elective. You will have indicated your elective preferences beforehand and we will do our best to assign you to one of your preferred choices. You can find information about all electives on the Academic Skills Course page, on Canvas.

Internship Contract

Once you found a host organization, an internship contract needs to be signed by all parties involved. This includes you, the host organization, the coordinator of this elective, and your faculty supervisor (which will be the coordinator of this elective, in most cases). **You are responsible for obtaining all the relevant signatures on time**. Make sure to send the signed contract to the course coordinator no later than 1st of December 2024. **You can find a blank version of the contract on Canvas**.

The default setting is that you will use the internship contract provided by the university (see blank version on Canvas). Always communicate to the organizations that the internship contract is provided by the university and needs to be signed by the organization. However, sometimes organizations insist on using their own internship contracts. If this is the case, we need to check the contract written up by your host organization and evaluate whether we as a university are willing to sign it. Should this apply to your host organization, then keep the following two aspects in mind:

- Colleagues from the legal department will check the contract. This takes time so you need to send the contract **a minimum of 8 weeks** before the start of your internship to the course coordinator (and no later than the 1st of December).
- We will only check and potentially sign contracts that are either in **English or Dutch**. Contracts in other languages will not be considered. If the contract is in another language, you need to provide the course coordinator with a translation. Note that as a university we will then only potentially sign the translation and ask the host organization to do the same.

Development plan

Before you start your internship, you should send your development plan to the course coordinator. In this development plan you describe your specific learning goals and the skills and abilities that you want to develop during the internship. We use the classification by Bartram and Roe (2005) for this. The authors describe the main competences that are important for psychologists in the context of obtaining the European Diploma in Psychology. Therefore, it is highly relevant for you to focus on several of the competences that they propose in this paper. Make sure to formulate 3-5 SMART learning goals based on the competences that are described in the paper by Bartram and Roe (2005).

The development plan should be 2-3 word pages (using Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial, font size 11, 1.5 line spacing, excluding figures, tables and the reference list).

IMPORTANT: Make sure to send your development plan to the course coordinator at the latest **two weeks before you start your internship**. The course coordinator will then evaluate your development plan.

Report

After the completion of the internship, you will hand in your report. The report should entail a general introduction, your development plan, description of your learning goals, competences and tasks that you had to perform during the internship, and an overall reflection and conclusion. The final report should consist of a **minimum of 10 pages and a maximum of 15 pages**, using Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial, font size 11, 1.5 line spacing, excluding figures, tables and the reference list.

Below, you find further details regarding the specific requirements:

- **General introduction** in which you describe your host organization.
 - 1 -2 pages
- **Development plan** in which you explain your relevant studies and experiences, and, based on these, you formulate 3 – 5 SMART learning goals. You do this by selecting several competences from the paper by Bartram and Roe (2005). They describe the main competences that every psychologist should possess after graduating in Europe. You should pick 3 – 5 of these competences and formulate a specific learning goal for each. Every learning goal should be SMART (Doran, 1981). You should write this development plan before you start your internship. Make sure to explain why those learning goals are relevant to you and how you think you will work on those goals during the internship.
 - 2-3 pages

- **Middle part** in which you describe what you did during the internship to work on your learning goals. Also, you should refer to relevant scientific literature to give evidence of the methods and tools that were used in the company. You should describe for every learning goal the relevant tools, approaches and methods that you applied and you should relate this to relevant literature, explaining why you used a specific evidence-based approach. Of course, it can happen that the methods you encountered during the internship have a lack of scientific evidence. In that case, you should elaborate on what could be improved, what would you have done differently?
 - 4-7 pages
- **Conclusion and reflection:** in this chapter you should reflect on your overall experiences during the internship. Did you meet your SMART requirements that you set in the development plan? Are you happy with your own functioning and the things you have learned during the internship? Which things would you do differently in a next job/internship? Did you come across approaches within the organization that could be improved? Here, you can again refer to scientific literature. Do you think that the company was satisfied with your performance? Of course, feel free to include any relevant feedback that you received from colleagues or your supervisor. You should definitely refer to the evaluation talk that you had with your company supervisor at the end of the internship.
 - 2-3 pages

Deadline report

The deadline to hand in your final report is the **1st of April 2025**.

IMPORTANT: make sure to upload your report on Canvas!

Grading

Your faculty supervisor will evaluate your report (as Pass-Fail), based on the following criteria:

1. **Content:** Does the report cover the relevant competences sufficiently? Is there a clear description of both the relevant competences and, related to that, the tasks that the student had to perform during the internship?
2. **Argumentation:** Is the report sufficiently justified and based on existing models and practices? Does the student sufficiently argue why a certain approach or model is chosen? Is the chosen model compared to the scientific literature?
3. **Reflection:** Does the student critically reflect on the effectiveness of the chosen approach and their performance? Is this reflection backed up with evidence?

4. **Style & Clarity:** Is the structure of the report clear? Are there clear headings and an index? Did the student choose a logical and comprehensible structure which helps the reader to immediately grasp how it is organized? Is the writing style professional and to the point?

5. **Creativity:** Are the chosen approaches creative and is the report written and presented in a creative and appealing manner (e.g. not only text but also graphics, tables, figures etc..)?

Resit

A report graded as insufficient will have to be rewritten in order to pass the course. The deadline for the resit is 15 working days after reception of the initial evaluation of the report. The revised report has to be handed in via Canvas and via e-mail to miriam.schilbach@maastrichtuniversity.nl .

References

- Bartram, D., & Roe, R. A. (2005). Definition and Assessment of Competences in the Context of the European Diploma in Psychology. *European psychologist, 10*(2), 93-102.
- Doran, G. T. (1981). There's a SMART way to write management's goals and objectives." and Miller. Arthur F. & Cunningham, James A" How to avoid costly job mismatches" *Management Review, 70*(11).
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational behavior, 65*(1), 14-38.