

IVET STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES Q PLACEMENTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why participate?

There are different reasons why going abroad for an internship is interesting. Not only will you gain work practice and language skills, it will broaden your perspective and offer you a lot of life experience

- Work experience.
- An increase in your employability and differentiation from other students or apprentices when seeking for a job.
- Knowledge of foreign languages and intercultural skills. These are skills that are increasingly important in a globalized world.
- An open attitude towards and understanding of other cultures and habits.
- More sovereignty and self-confidence.

2. Who can participate?

Internships are open to trainees and apprentices in their final year and to recently graduated students. In this last case you can already be working in a company in Belgium. Naturally the company needs to agree to such an internship. All applicants need to have an IVET education (Initial Vocational Education and Training – Beroeps, Technisch en Kunst Onderwijs). The minimum age for the placement is 18.

3. Where can I go?

- **BAUTZEN** (Germany)



You can see and experience a lot in Bautzen. Above all, it is renowned for its historical town centre with its skyline of mediaeval towers. Bautzen is the centre of the Upper Lusatia (Oberlausitz). The uniqueness of the city lies in the variety of its attractions - the well-preserved and painstakingly restored historical old-town, interesting German and Sorbian cultures and the surrounding countryside which offers the visitor a wide diversity of landscapes and leisure activities.

- **DOBRICH** (Bulgaria)

Locked between the lower Danube and the Black Sea, Dobrich is a district capital covering 8 municipalities – a modern, calm and green city, famous for the fertile soil and energetic young people. Looking far into the future, Dobrich is building up its image of a modern, fast growing European city, making a name as a centre of innovation, creative energy, and beauty.



- **GOTHENBURG** (Sweden)

Surrounded by seagulls and fishing boats on the west coast of Sweden, you will find Gothenburg, the second largest city of Sweden. Meet a population with a social and humoristic



attitude, a beautiful nature and architecture with roots from the late 18th century. The city is lively, regardless of the seasons. Whether you feel like exploring the parks or the idyllic

archipelago, It is all reachable within an hour of travel. In fact, the public transport system is well developed and makes it very easy to get around in, and outside the city.

- **ITZEHOE** (Germany)

Itzehoe, surrounded by forest, is placed right near the river STÖR. The “Green City’s” roots, founded in active trade and commerce, are perceptible everywhere. While strolling through the city with its many green oases you may find that Itzehoe could retain even in times of increasing globalization the charm of a city of the middle class. In addition to modern retail and service offerings much more independent dealers and craftsmen can be found here than in other comparable cities, some with over a century of tradition.



- **LIVERPOOL** (United Kingdom)

Liverpool, the very name conjures up images of a world-beating musical heritage, two of the Premiership’s biggest football teams, a glorious maritime history and not one, but two majestically different Cathedrals. This Northwest city and the surrounding City Region is certainly all those things, but it is also so much more.



Liverpool is undergoing a thrilling renaissance, recognised by its hugely successful year as European Capital of Culture. Liverpool offers the finest collection of museums and galleries too.

- **LODZ (Poland)**

Lodz is situated in the middle part of Poland. With the population of about 740.000 inhabitants Lodz is the third-largest city in Poland. The Lodz agglomeration has more than 1 million inhabitants. At the beginning of the 19th century it became one of the Europe's biggest and fastest growing textile industry centre. Today it is a city of modern technologies, where a landscape of industrial architecture mixes with modern office buildings, production halls, culture and sports buildings. Lodz is a city of young and active people.



- **MIDI-PYRÉNÉES - TOULOUSE (France)**



Situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the Midi-Pyrénées region represents 8 % of the French territory. Toulouse is the capital. It is the 3rd university town of France with 110 000 students. The city is widely specialized in the aeronautical and spatial activities as well as in research. It is also famous for rugby and its team, the "Stade Toulousain". The region has also 25 great Tourist Sites representing a major interest on the historic, cultural or natural plans.

- **PLOVDIV (Bulgaria)**

Plovdiv is located in the Southern/Central part of Bulgaria and is the second largest city in the country. The town is situated on the two banks of the Maritza river. Its houses reveal the remarkable urban culture of Bulgarian builders, as well as their sense of harmony and their creative power. The brilliant architecture with its noble, stylish simplicity could be called rightfully the Baroque of Plovdiv. There is a kind of magic in Plovdiv in all seasons.



- **REGGIO EMILIA (Italy)**

Reggio Emilia (170.000 inhabitants), the city where the Tricolore national flag was born, is a city of young people and youth. The economy of the province of Reggio Emilia was for a long time



based on agriculture. In the twentieth century Reggio Emilia and its territory saw also a rapid development of small industries, particularly in the sector of mechanics for agriculture. A few of

those industries became large companies, with an international market. Reggio Emilia is also the place of some fashion groups of various range and importance.

- **TERRASSA (Spain)**

Terrassa is a city located in Catalonia, in the North East of Spain, 29 km from Barcelona and 161 km from France. It has 230.000 inhabitants and it is near a Natural Park . It has a mediaeval heritage, paleontological discoveries and also a rich industrial heritage in Modernist style from the 19th Century when Terrassa was one of the leading cities of the textile sector during the Industrial Revolution. Terrassa is known by its annual Jazz Festival, Modernist Fair, field hockey and traditions like popular dances and human towers.



- **TIMISOARA (Romania)**



Documentarily attested of over 730 years, Timisoara is the capital of Timis County. In 1781, Timisoara was granted privileges and was declared a free town, the credential document containing the acknowledgement of the coat of arms and of the seal. The coat of arms is divided by a horizontal line into two parts, the upper one being divided in its turn, by a vertical line. On the December 20th 1989, Timisoara was declared the First Free City of Romania .

4. Do I need to speak a foreign language?

Yes. Knowing languages is a requirement to be able to develop yourself in another country independently and to take advantage of a workplace training abroad. You should have sufficient knowledge of the working language in the company. In some countries different working languages will be used and will include English. The host company will specify which working language is needed for the internship.

The main objective of the workplace training abroad is not learning languages, although it is of course a clear benefit and useful to practice languages, gain fluency and safety, etc. There are workplace training programs (such as Leonardo) that already include language preparation.

If your foreign language level is low, there are many ways to improve your level and practice:

- In your own school or an official language school
- In language schools, language intensive courses abroad, stays abroad in host families, conversation groups, international work, camps, European youth exchanges, etc...
- Through music, movies, TV, Internet, Skype, social networks, etc.

5. How can I find a sending organization and who can support me at destination?

A sending organization, is an institute in your country of origin that will organize your traineeship and stay and will pay your grant if any:

- Q-Placements partners may act as a sending organization when no other sending organizations are available. Some of the partners (e.g. Voka East Flanders) have grants available for students / graduates willing to do an international traineeship (infra point 6)
- If you are a student, your IVET school can be the sending organization. IVET schools can apply with the European Commission / EPOS for Erasmus and Leonardo grants for their students (infra point 6)
- If you are an employee working in a company, that company can be your sending organization. Companies can apply for Leonardo grants as well (infra point 6)

In the Q placements network there will always be a sending and host organization (at destination) involved in the placement. Both institutions will coordinate your placement and follow you during your stay.

6. How can I finance my stay?

When doing an internship at a company, it is not compulsory for them to pay you a salary. Most often, as the company is teaching you, you will not be paid at all. You will also have to cover your health and other insurances in your country of origin.

The Q-Placements Network allows students and recent graduates to join the international workplace training without any funding by a public institution or European program. However, if you are looking for financing, the following overview could help you:

Generally, the European Commission has several programs that support lifelong learning including international internships: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/index_en.htm

Trainees and apprentices may enjoy an Erasmus or Leonardo grant allocated in their countries of origin. This grant will pay for accommodation, food and travel. In this case your school will be your sending organization.

- If you are an IVET student of an Initial Training Cycle the Leonardo program is the suitable program of the European Commission. You can participate as long as your school is taking part in it.
- More info on the websites:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/initial_en.htm and
<http://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/?CategoryID=255&ArticleID=124>
- If you are an IVET student of an Advanced Training Cycle the suitable program for you is the Erasmus program. You can participate as long as your school is taking part in it. More info on the websites: http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/placement_en.htm and
<http://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/?CategoryID=238>

If you are a recent graduate (employee or jobseeker), Voka Chamber of Commerce and Industry East Flanders also disposes of 10 Leonardo grants for an average of 8 weeks in the period 01/06/2012 – 31/05/2014. More info on the grant <http://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/?CategoryID=255&ArticleID=125> and by contacting Dominique.vandenhove@voka.be. Applications should also be send to this address.

Other organizations, like companies, can also apply for an Leonardo grant for employees or jobseekers. <http://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/?CategoryID=255&ArticleID=125>

7. How can I find a company?

In the Q-Placements Network students and graduates have no access to the company database and thus do not look for a host company themselves.

The Q-Placements network partners – composed by chambers of commerce, public and private institutions etc. – have created and maintain an updated database of companies in different parts of Europe that are interested in international interns. They will hence find you a suitable company.

These companies have gone through a selection procedure: they have been visited by the partners and must comply with minimum standards and are aware of their functions and responsibilities when receiving an intern. These procedures can be found in the Q-Placements Handbook (www.qplacements.eu)

Based on the profile of the candidate (student or trainee, training, etc.), the most suitable company will be selected or based on the placement offered by a host company, the most appropriate candidate-intern will be selected. Availability and preferences of the candidates and host companies are also taken into account.

8. What type of tasks will I be carrying out?

Your tasks and responsibilities will be agreed upon in consultation with your host company tutor. A work plan, which includes the different tasks to be carried out, will be discussed and agreed upon. You will receive information about your company and tasks before leaving and will have been in contact with your tutor to discuss all these issues. Also, an agreement will be signed with your sending organization, the host company, host organization and yourself, where all this is clearly specified.

9. How can I find accommodation?

Finding a place to live during an internship is an important part of preparing your stay.

In the Q placements network the sending and host organization together can guide you in finding accommodation. The Coordinating Organization in your Country of origin (Voka Oost-Vlaanderen) will send to you these accommodation options. You will however be responsible for arranging the accommodation yourself.

10. How long does the stay last?

The duration of the stay depends on the program that you apply for and can also depend upon the availability of funds at the different programs. This can go from 2 weeks up until 12 months.

Students	Leonardo grants	2 – 39 weeks
	Erasmus grants	2 – 12 months
Employees / jobseekers	Voka: Leonardo grants	Average of 8 weeks
	Leonardo grants general	2 – 26 weeks

In the Q placements project however, the duration of the internship is maximum 6 months.

11. Will I get some type of certificate after the stay?

If the stay is successful, you will receive a Q Placements certificate, issued by the host company. If you are the beneficiary of a Leonardo Grant you will also be issued an official certificate. With a grant from Voka East Flanders you will also receive a “Europass Mobility” (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/nl/documents/european-skills-passport/europass-mobility>)

12. What’s the deadline to apply for a stay?

This is an ongoing program.

The Q placements project runs until 30/09/2014. Partners are however looking at a prolongation and expansion.

Possibilities depend upon the financing programs and in the case of Q placements upon the internships available in the database at each moment.

13. Where can I find more information?

If you need more information, you can read more about the different programs on the websites above. The national agency in Belgium, EPOS, that coordinates the different grants, can also be contacted for extra information <http://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/?CategoryID=509>

If you are a student and interested in a specific program, your IVET school should also be contacted. They are the ones that will be allocated the grant and will help you coordinate everything.

More information can also be found on <http://www.q-placements.eu/> On this website you can find further information about the members of the network, testimonials news, etc.. [Here](#) you can also download the Q placements Handbook including quality procedures and User’s Guides for students / trainees or School Tutors in Dutch.

14. Contact details of the Q placements coordinating organization in Belgium

Email	dominique.vandenhove@voka.be
Contact person	Voka Kamer van Koophandel Oost-Vlaanderen
Website	http://www.voka.be/oost-vlaanderen/ & http://www.voka.be/oost-vlaanderen/diensten/q-placements/

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