

Guidance for Internships in the Psychology Program at Aalborg University

Types of Internships.

The course "Psychological Internship" in the curriculum can be organized in three different ways:

1. An internship arranged by the internship coordinator at a workplace, where an employed psychologist serves as the internship supervisor.
2. An internship arranged by the leader of the professional program in which the student is participating at the master's level. This may take place at the university and/or with an external partner.
3. An internship organized as a research internship, where the student participates in a research project with a trained researcher in the psychological field.

Below are the general rules for all internship types, followed by comments on each type individually.

Norms and Scheduling.

According to the curriculum, it is a prerequisite to start the internship that the student has passed all exams up to and including the first semester of the master's program.

The internship is assigned 15 ECTS, equivalent to 50 working days, typically over one semester. Some internship sites and professional programs have specific plans regarding the duration and timing of the internship. For example, the internship might be compressed into three months but full-time, or it might extend over a longer period with fewer hours per week. Flexibility is allowed in organizing the internship, which requires clear mutual expectations between the student and the internship site to be set in the final internship agreement. The internship is unpaid, and there should be no financial transactions between the internship site and the intern.

Role of the Internship Supervisor.

There must always be one or two internship supervisors assigned to each student. For research internships, the supervisor must be a trained researcher (PhD), while for other types of internships, the supervisor must be a licensed psychologist.

The supervisor is responsible for the student's work during the internship and must ensure adequate supervision to maintain the quality of the work. The supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that the internship meets its academic content. Details about the schedule, tasks, etc., are outlined in an internship contract that must be signed by both the supervisor and the student before the internship starts and submitted to the internship secretary.

Regarding confidentiality and handling of sensitive data, the student must follow the practices of the internship site, and information about this, as well as any required signatures, should be organized by the supervisor. The supervisor may delegate parts of the task of supervising the student but remains responsible for the internship process.

Content of the Internship.

Generally, the student should have the opportunity to become familiar with and gain experience in handling the typical tasks of a psychologist at the given workplace. The student should:

- Participate with the supervisor in tasks to observe their work methods.
- Handle a broad range of tasks typically performed by a psychologist at the workplace, with guidance.
- Receive feedback on their performance as a psychologist at the site.

Since psychologists' work can vary widely, internships can also differ, but to the extent that it is relevant and typical for the particular psychologist's workplace, the internship should include opportunities to:

- Engage in practical psychological tasks.
- Perform practical psychological tasks independently.
- Have direct client contact, where clients are broadly defined as individuals, families, groups, organizations, research participants, etc.
- Follow clients over time.
- Gain insight into interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Acquire experience with psychological work methods:
 - Collect psychological data from observations, tests, interviews, or similar methods and evaluate them relative to the methods used, and interpret the data.
 - Practice presenting results, cases, and topics to others.
 - Experience receiving feedback on one's professional function.
 - Receive individual and/or group supervision on one's work processes and results, as agreed upon based on the student's tasks, to provide appropriate professional support.
 - Receive feedback on their professional presentation and impact on their tasks, as well as their role as a prospective psychologist.
 - Participate in all phases of one or more research projects, including planning, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of analyses.

Organization of Internships.

The three types of internships are organized differently, as outlined below, but a common requirement is that if a student wishes to intern at specific sites or in particular areas and seeks out internship positions independently, this must be done in cooperation with the internship coordinator. Universities have an agreement not to seek positions in each other's areas; therefore, internships are generally organized in North Jutland. The only exception is if a professional program has a fixed research collaboration with a psychological workplace or if another university specifically allows seeking positions in their area, which is coordinated with the internship coordinator.

For all three types of internships, one or two responsible persons must be appointed to act as internship supervisors. Together with the student, an internship contract is drafted, signed, and submitted to the internship secretary before the internship begins. Both the supervisor and the student are required to thoroughly understand and adhere to the "Ethical Principles for Nordic Psychologists."

Leaders of professional programs may arrange closer cooperation with the internship coordinator so that some students from programs with internships organized by the program may have internship opportunities through the coordinator's collected positions. The leader of a professional program that organizes internships is responsible for ensuring all students in their program receive an internship placement.

Procedure for an Unsatisfactory Internship:

If the supervisor becomes aware that the intern is not meeting the requirements, they must promptly inform the intern and strive to:

- Create a mutual understanding of the problem.
- Develop an action plan to address the issues.
- Set a date and procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of the action plan.

If the supervisor and intern cannot establish this cooperation, the responsible person for organizing the internship will be involved as a third party to attempt to establish the collaboration. The supervisor may involve another representative from the internship site if needed.

If these negotiations fail, the internship may be terminated, and another opportunity will be found by the academic institution.

Special Considerations for Internships Organized by the Internship Coordinator.

The internship coordinator usually manages contact with all internship sites in North Jutland previously used by Aalborg University. In the fall, these sites are contacted to determine how many students they can take in for the following spring. In November, these positions are presented to the students under this internship organization, and they submit a prioritized wish list. The internship coordinator then allocates the positions to give as many students as possible their top choices.

Immediately after the allocation, it is the student's responsibility to contact the upcoming internship site and arrange a preliminary meeting as soon as possible. In this meeting, the internship supervisor and student discuss the framework and content of the upcoming internship, and the main points are recorded in the internship contract, which is signed and submitted to the secretary before the internship starts.

If issues arise regarding the preliminary meeting, internship contract, or other matters before or during the internship, both the supervisor and student can always contact the internship coordinator, who can assist in finding solutions according to the procedure outlined for internship issues.

Special Considerations for Internships Organized by Leader of the Student's Professional Program.

Some professional programs organize internships for their students. This means that the program leader is responsible for ensuring that all students in their cohort receive an internship placement. In this context, a supervisor must still be appointed, and an internship contract must be drafted and submitted to the internship secretary before the start of the internship. If problems arise in these internships, the program leader must be contacted and is responsible for finding solutions according to the procedure outlined for internship issues. A third party may be involved if necessary.

Special Considerations for Research Internships.

Research internships can be organized by having the student and a researcher establish contact and develop plans for the internship, or a researcher can notify the internship coordinator of a research internship opportunity, which can then be included in the allocation process mentioned above. The researcher is responsible as the internship supervisor and must ensure that an internship contract is drafted and submitted to the secretary before the internship starts. If problems arise during the internship, the researcher/supervisor is responsible for finding solutions according to the procedure outlined for internship issues. A third party may be involved if necessary.

Students who make a significant contribution to a researcher's or research group's project must be offered co-authorship by the end of the professional program. A significant contribution is defined according to the first criterion of the Vancouver Rules, described on pages 13-14 of "The Danish Code of Integrity in Research" prepared by the Ministry of Education and Research and Danish Universities. Students who meet this criterion but do not wish to be co-authors should be appropriately acknowledged in a footnote in the research manuscript. Researchers supervising students have a responsibility to ensure that the research conducted under their supervision meets the principles of research integrity and responsible research practices.

Assessment of the Internship.

To pass the internship, the student must undergo two evaluations:

A. The internship supervisor must provide a "satisfactory completion" assessment. To receive this assessment, the following is required:

- Minimum 80% attendance during the internship period.
- Participation in the offered supervision at least 80% of the time.

If a student's internship is not approved, the internship coordinator, in conjunction with the study leader, will determine whether to offer supplementary or a new internship.

An internship supervisor may also choose not to approve the internship based on the following considerations and procedures:

- If the student does not adhere to or cannot be brought to adhere to the "Ethical Principles for Nordic Psychologists."
- If the student does not follow the rules for attendance, participation in activities, etc., set by the internship site.
- If the student is found to be distinctly unsuitable in their professional practice with the target group.

It should be clarified that an internship cannot be failed based on the intern's personal characteristics. An internship can only be failed based on the intern's performance of psychological tasks with the target group.

In cases where an internship is failed by the supervisor:

- The supervisor must provide a clear explanation for the failure, including what attempts were made to address the issues. This explanation should be provided to both the student and the person responsible for organizing the internship.
- A meeting must be held between the intern and the person responsible for organizing the internship. This meeting aims to discuss the student's situation and future choices of internship areas.

B. After or alongside the internship, the student must prepare an individual written internship report of 8 to 12 pages. This report will be assessed by a university lecturer as either approved or not approved. This is typically handled by the leader of the professional program the student is enrolled in.

If an internship report is assessed as not approved, it can be revised and resubmitted up to two times, according to the general examination rules. See also the description of the internship report on AAU's website.

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