

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

All universities

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Internship

Semester 3



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Credits:

Aix-Marseille	15 ECTS (minimum of 375 internship hours)
Bochum	optional part of the 30 ECTS Master thesis
Deusto	15 ECTS (minimum of 375 internship hours)
Dublin	optional part of the 30 ECTS Master thesis
Groningen	10 ECTS (minimum of 280 internship hours)
Louvain	10 ECTS (minimum of 250 internship hours)
Uppsala	15 ECTS (minimum of 375 internship hours)

Period:

Third semester

1. Introduction

The internship is an element of the fourth component (Research and Internship, 30 ECTS) of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the third semester. It forms a recognised part of the curriculum and is a requirement for obtaining the Master's degree at most NOHA universities. Depending on national legislation and taking into consideration students' prior experience and their future career prospects, the weight given to the Internship within the fourth component of the Master's programme varies among the universities. Therefore this course manual sets the minimum format for a NOHA Internship, while the number of ECTS and obligatory nature is decided by each home university in compliance with its national regulations. In order to start with the internship students should have successfully passed at least 50 ECTS of the first and second semester courses. Students usually find that internships (practical work experience) are a good way of getting to know what the professional options are, and they increase chances of finding a suitable job. Internships can help you to discover your abilities to perform in a broader environment. They also provide the opportunity to gain experience in job applications. Overall, employers are positive about the initiatives that students undertake and there is always the possibility that undertaking an internship will result in a job offer. As such, the internship forms an important link between study and the job market.

2. Learning outcomes

As your academic training draws to a close, it is assumed that you are capable of performing at a particular level: it is this that your internship should gauge. In concrete terms, this means that your creativeness and intelligence should be put to the test on a regular basis, and that the knowledge, insights and skills that you have acquired during your studies should be applied to tasks that allow for a significant contribution on your part. You will also be required to demonstrate that you are capable of reflecting on your tasks and on the experience you have acquired by writing a critical report on these aspects.

Following this, and in conformity with the learning outcomes set out by the NOHA network, students should achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of the internship module:

- Has proven to be familiar with the HA workfield in general and in terms of access to the labour market in particular.
- Has displayed a correct awareness of the organisational context with regard to humanitarian employment.
- Has determined one's own ambition in relation to the HA workfield.
- Has demonstrated the capacity to work in accordance with the demands of the HA workfield.
- Has demonstrated the capacity to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations.
- Has shown the ability to present oneself on the HA labour market.
- Has demonstrated the capacity to function satisfactorily in an intercultural team in a professional HA setting.
- Has shown the ability to identify personal learning goals and identify contributions to these goals.
- Has demonstrated the capacity to self-reflect and assess personal strengths and weaknesses.

3. Teaching and learning methodology

All students who wish to obtain credit points for their NOHA internship should make sure that:

- They have drawn up an internship plan which has been approved by the internship coordinator of the NOHA home university.
- They have conducted an internship that complies with certain NOHA standards. The main **criteria** that an internship should adhere to in order to be accepted are:
 1. the internship should be related to the humanitarian action field;
 2. the internship activities should generally be at sufficient academic Master level in order to enable the realisation of the envisaged learning outcomes;
 3. the internship should be sufficiently challenging for the student.

In addition, the internship period should preferably be at least two months to improve chances that interesting tasks are assigned. In any case, the total hours worked for the internship organisation (full-time or part-time) should not be lower than the number of hours that the assigned ECTS represent.

Furthermore, the internship has to be conducted outside the university departments that are involved in the educational programme of the NOHA-master.

- They have made clear supervision arrangements with the parties providing the internship and their NOHA internship coordinator.
- They have arranged an internship contract signed by all parties involved prior to the commencement of the internship.
- They rounded off their internship by writing a report approved by the NOHA internship coordinator.
- They have seen to it that the internship providing supervisor returns a filled out copy of the NOHA assessment form to the NOHA internship coordinator.

In case you pursue an optional or second internship and have it recognised as part of your NOHA Master programme, please be aware that all these requirements and rules equally apply to both obligatory internships and optional internships.

4. Programme and training activities

An internship normally consists out of four phases: the orientation phase, the formalities before the internship, the internship period itself and the obligations after the internship.

In most cases, the following steps can be discerned:

1. Orientation

1a. Introduction

In the first semester you will receive an introduction on the specific requirements and rules concerning the NOHA internship as part of the joint Master and, if applicable, the specific (administrative) requirements of your home university.

Please see the time schedule of your NOHA programme for the exact times and venue.

1b. First ideas

To take stock of your general intentions for the NOHA internship, it may be wise have a first intake meeting with your NOHA Internship Coordinator and prepare yourself by reflecting on the following questions:

- What type of organisation are you considering (local NGOs, government, INGOs, IGOs, etc.)?
- What theme in Humanitarian Action would you like to specialise in while taking into

account your second semester specialisation, possible third semester mobility and your ideas concerning your Master thesis subject?

- What kind of activities/tasks would you like to perform during your internship (research studies, field work, policy-making, combinations)?

While doing this, don't forget to take into account the skills and knowledge that you already have acquired, the gaps or new interests that you would like to explore, and what would be challenging and adding value in view of your career plans.

If you have difficulty with this, explore the NOHA Blackboard for ideas. At this stage, it is okay if you haven't fully developed your plans already, but that you generate at least your general preferences.

1c. **Selecting internship possibilities**

As a part of the training for the job market, you are required to **find an internship yourself**. Even so, the NOHA staff will try to assist you as much as possible, but only when you ask us for assistance: in the end, the management of your internship process is your own responsibility. Therefore **be pro-active!**

Finding an internship will take time, which means that you should begin your search at least six months prior to the planned commencement of your internship.

It means that you have to determine for yourself:

- which type of organisations matches your interests in terms of activities, location, institutional embedding, etc.
- which organisations fit those criteria and subsequently
- which departments and persons within these organisations you want to approach.

For general ideas on which organisations might be of interest, you are advised to have a good look on NOHA Blackboard, to search yourself on the internet (e.g.

www.reliefweb.int, www.wilweg.nl), to peruse advertisements in newspapers and periodicals, and to make use of your own network (e.g. NOHA alumni).

Internship reports from former NOHA students will also give you an idea of the opportunities available. These are made available via NOHA Blackboard.

1d. **Applying for internship vacancies**

Make sure you contact the right person at the organisations you are approaching, i.e. the person who will benefit from your internship and/or the person who coordinates internships within the organisation. Following this, you should send an impeccable letter of application and CV to the organisation. In your letter of application, you should set out clearly why you would like to have an internship with that particular organisation, you should indicate what the internship should consist of, and you should explain your own skills and expertise (e.g. your major areas of study and possible work experience). On NOHA Blackboard you can find more material on this.

If you have not received any reaction to your letter after two or three weeks, contact the organisation in question and enquire about the procedures.

At a certain moment, you will arrive at a stage where you will have to show in person what you have to offer, whether this be in a telephone conversation following the receipt of a letter of application, or in an interview with someone who may offer you an internship position.

The internship provider will want to know why you want this particular internship, what it is you want to learn, and what you can offer the prospective internship organisation. It is important that you are well prepared for such an interview, particularly as there may be several candidates for the position (sometimes from various courses).

It is equally important that you formulate in advance the questions that you yourself would like to put to the prospective provider of the internship. It is advisable to adopt an open attitude during the interview with the prospective internship provider: he or she may come with an alternative proposal. Write down the arrangements made during the interview, because you will need them to draw up your Internship Plan.

2. Before the internship (incl. formalities)

2a. Submitting the Internship Plan for approval

When you have found an organisation willing to provide you with an internship, the proposed internship requires approval by your NOHA internship coordinator. For this you will need to fill in the NOHA Internship Plan form. For a prompt and swift handling of your proposal, make sure that you fill out this form accurately and completely! Pay particular attention to the listing of envisaged activities and tasks, since they will be checked against the criteria for a NOHA internship. Furthermore, you will be supervised by both the supervisor of the organisation providing the internship and your NOHA internship coordinator. As an internship is primarily intended to be a learning experience, your supervision has to be well organised. Consequently, make sure that you know what you can expect from your internship supervisors.

N.B.: Starting an internship without the approval of your Internship Plan will mean that your internship will be considered voluntary and that you run the risk that the internship is not considered eligible for ECTS credits. So, make sure that you receive formal approval before starting!

2b. Arranging the internship contracts

2b1. Completing the internship contracts

After your NOHA internship coordinator has officially approved the internship, you can proceed with arranging the internship contracts. There is a standard NOHA internship contract available. The internship contract has to be signed by the student, by the organisation that provides the internship, by the internship coordinator of NOHA and copies should be available for all parties involved. After all the signatures have been obtained, your internship will have been formally approved, and you can commence the internship.

2b2. Non-EU students

Students with a non-EU passport that are doing an internship within the EU should inform themselves about possible additional requirements of EU member states in order to avoid that the authorities view them as illegally working without a working permit.

2b3. Unsafe regions or tasks

It is important to keep in mind that if the internship is situated in an area that is considered too dangerous (or if the internship tasks themselves are considered too dangerous), the NOHA network and its universities cannot accept responsibility. To assess whether or not an area is considered too dangerous, the travelling advice of the respective national ministries of Foreign Affairs is used as a first criterion. See NOHA Blackboard for links with travel advice from various government authorities. If you nevertheless decide to do such an internship, please be aware that the NOHA network and its universities will not take any responsibility in terms of liability, insurance etcetera, etcetera (i.e. you must make these arrangements yourself). In addition, you run the risk the internship will not be recognised afterwards for awarding ECTS and being a part of your Master-programme.

2c. Arranging grants & financial matters

The best way of covering the costs of your internship is to have your internship provider agree to provide financial remuneration. However, in many cases financial remuneration is not awarded. You may be entitled to medical insurance: ask your internship provider for further information if necessary.

Non-profit organisations usually have limited budgets and consequently are not always able to pay for your internship. Despite this, you can always enquire about the possibility of

financial compensation. Sometimes this is available in the form of housing, lunch costs or the recompense for certain costs incurred.

In case you do receive remuneration, you should heed the possibility that this affects your position vis-à-vis the national tax authorities or, if applicable, a study grant you may receive.

If you are confronted with no or inadequate (financial) remuneration, it may be a good idea to look for internship grants and orientate yourself in time since strict deadlines often apply.

2d. Making travel arrangements

2d1. Arranging visa & flights

When booking for a flight, you should also check whether you need a visa and other documents. Depending on the type of visa you need, a lot of time may go into collecting all the necessary paperwork. So make sure that you do this as soon as the internship plans become more definite.

The best site on the internet to check the most up-to-date requirements for visa is: www.iatatravelcentre.com

2d2. Arranging vaccinations

In case your internship is situated abroad in places where health problems ARE an issue, you are advised to visit your local health service, doctor or general practitioner. Preferably, this should be done several weeks before departure. Especially if there is a TB risk, it is advised to have the first appointment more than 6 months before the date of departure. Bring the following information to the appointment:

- Travel planning, date of departure, length of stay;
- Vaccination pass;
- List of medication in use;
- History of relevant treatments.

Do not forget that the stress factor can influence your physical status as well!

2d3. Arranging insurance coverage

Doing an internship will also require you to make a number of insurance arrangements. You should ensure that you are covered for legal liability. Enquire about whether your internship is covered under the conditions of your insurance. Ask whether the provider of the internship has a legal liability cover that includes you, or arrange internship insurance yourself.

If you are doing an internship outside your country of residence, it is important that you find out whether your legal liability insurance also applies for the internship country, and whether the amount you are covered for is high enough.

Particularly for internships outside your country of residence, it is important to take out adequate medical, repatriation, cancellation and travel insurances. Combined insurances (legal liability, medical and travel coverage) are available in various forms. For further information, contact your insurance company.

2d4. Arranging initial accommodation

It is often difficult to arrange accommodation for the whole internship period without the possibility to inspect the place beforehand. Nevertheless, make sure that you have at least accommodation for the first couple of nights before you arrive at your internship destination.

3. At the internship

3a. Arranging accommodation

To arrange housing during your internship, inform whether your internship organisation is able to assist. Otherwise, see whether previous internship students (e.g. in their internship reports) or NOHA alumni (www.noha-students.org, on Facebook: “NOHA Network”) with experience concerning the internship location can give you tips.

3b. Safety and emergencies

When doing an internship, you should always provide your NOHA internship coordinator, your friends and family with your up-to-date contact information. In addition, always inform the embassy of your home country of your stay mentioning your date of arrival, date of departure, purpose of your stay, and your contact information.

In case of emergencies, contact your friends and family and – if necessary – turn to your embassy for additional help. In addition, you should immediately notify your NOHA internship coordinator as well.

Lastly, check out the NOHA Blackboard pages “Step 3b: Safety and emergencies” with several important resources on this topic and prepare yourself!

3c. Adapting to the internship

While starting out with your internship, please be aware that you may need time to adjust yourself to your new environment:

- Particularly, if this is your first time that you have to function in a professional work environment (being on time, fulfilling office hours, hierarchical lines, etc.).
- If you are going to a new country, whether nearby or far away, your intercultural skills and flexibility will need practice.

On the following website, you can find useful tips for humanitarian workers to keep in mind: www.aidworkers.net/?q=advice/first_time_aid_workers

To adapt as quickly as possible, try to develop a social network around you either by linking up with colleagues from work, people from your accommodation or fellow internship students.

In addition, be aware that you may experience unexpected health issues while trying to cope with a new climate, new food or different hygienic conditions. In this regard make sure that when visiting a doctor or your general practitioner during and after the internship, that you inform him/her about your experiences abroad (not only in developing countries!). Keep in mind that effects of diseases can manifest themselves more than two years after the infection.

In case of major changes or (serious) problems that you or your internship provider can not solve easily, make sure that you discuss it with your NOHA internship coordinator and that you explain your situation.

3d. Mid-term review

The mid-term review halfway through the internship is meant as a check that everything is proceeding according to plan and that there aren't any serious problems.

In most cases, a short mid-term evaluation between you and your internship provider would be wise, as well as communication by e-mail or telephone between you and your NOHA internship coordinator. The mid-term review may be very brief and it is not meant as a full-blown assessment.

However, if one of the parties (the student, the internship provider or the NOHA internship coordinator) feels that there is ground for more extensive discussion (e.g. in case of problems, doubts, important changes), then the mid-term review is certainly an occasion to have more intensive contact between the three parties, for instance by phone or Skype.

4. After the internship

4a. Completing the assessment form by the internship supervisor

The assessment by the supervisor on the job examines your execution of the assigned tasks

and activities. For this the NOHA Internship Assessment Form should be filled out and signed by the most directly involved supervisor in the internship providing organisation. The Assessment Form should be returned to the NOHA internship provider, preferably sent directly by the supervisor on the job himself/herself and either by postal service, fax or e-mail.

4b. Submitting the internship report by the student

Your internship report should largely be written during and shortly after the internship itself. Take this into consideration when planning your activities. A description of what an internship report should contain can be found below. Internship reports must be handed in to your internship coordinator of NOHA not later than two weeks after your internship comes to a close. It should be uploaded via NOHA Blackboard. When having done so, please inform your NOHA internship coordinator that your report has become available on NOHA Blackboard.

4c. Final evaluation meeting & grading

The Internship is concluded with a final evaluation meeting between the student and the NOHA internship coordinator. In this meeting over the phone, via Skype or in person, the content of the student's internship report and the NOHA Internship Assessment Form is discussed and evaluated. Following this, the internship is graded and therewith concluded.

4d. Finding a job

With the completion of the internship and hopefully your Master thesis, you'll be nearing the end of the NOHA Master programme. As such, it would be wise to start orientating yourself on the job market. On NOHA Blackboard you will find several suggestions to help you on the way. Nevertheless make sure that you use your personal network extensively as well!

5. Workload

The absolute minimum workload for this module is directly related to the number of ECTS that your home university assigns to this module (10 or 15 ECTS credits – see page 2). According to European guidelines, 1 ECTS credit should stand for between 25 and 30 hours of workload. At almost all NOHA universities, 1 ECTS signifies a minimum of 25 hours of workload, although for instance Dutch legislation sets 1 ECTS at 28 hours of workload. In any case, the total hours worked for the internship organisation (full-time or part-time) should not be lower than the number of hours that the assigned ECTS represent in total.

Independently of the question what the minimum amount of hours should be, please take very much into account that the internship period should preferably be long enough to improve your chances that interesting tasks are indeed assigned to you. You can hardly expect that organisations and their staff will invest proper time and effort into you if you are only there for a brief moment. To get the most out of it and depending on your personal situation, it may be much wiser to have an internship of at least two months: the longer the better. This may also improve your chances on the labour market afterwards.

6. Assessment methods

To gauge the extent to which the internship's assignments were properly carried out and the objectives fulfilled, the internship coordinator of NOHA will assess and grade your internship on the basis of:

- your internship report
- the NOHA assessment form as filled in by your internship supervisor
- and the final evaluation meeting

Internship report

Your internship report should describe:

- the organisation that provided the internship,
- the internship activities you conducted,
- a balanced assessment of your internship
- and – most importantly – a balanced assessment of your own performance.

An internship report has to show how you carried out your internship assignment and has to critically evaluate your own performance with regard to both positive and negative issues. As such, describe the difficulties you encountered and how you dealt with them. The concluding section of the report is ideal for this purpose, and you should give it your particular attention.

To achieve this, you should follow the following outline:

1. A cover with title page, mentioning at least your name, your home and host university, your NOHA internship coordinator, the name of the internship organisation with its address and telephone number, the name of your supervisor at the internship organisation, and last of all the period during which the internship was conducted.
2. A preface (if needed)
3. A table of contents with page numbers containing at least the following headings:
 - Introduction
 - The Internship Organisation
 - Tasks & Activities of the Internship
 - Supervision of the Internship
 - Living Conditions
 - Conclusion
4. The introduction should contain a justification of your choice for this internship and this particular organisation, how you obtained the internship, and what your expectations regarding the internship were
5. The description of the organisation should be brief and should give information on its structure and its goals
6. The description of your tasks and activities during the internship should be extensive and concrete.
7. Give an account of the internship supervision by the internship organisation, whether there were problems or issues, who were supervising the internship when, and what the supervision consisted of.
8. A concise impression regarding the living conditions, housing, costs of living, social environment, etc.
9. Optionally, you can add a paragraph with tips and advice for other students who aspire to an internship at the same organisation
10. The concluding paragraph is very important and should contain:
 - a. an outline of the intrinsic and personal learning effects of the internship
 - b. an answer to the question to what extent the expectations beforehand have been fulfilled, with a final critical assessment of the difficulties and problems you may have encountered
 - c. a final SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats) of the internship itself and the providing organisation
 - d. a short analysis of the function of the

Strengths	Weaknesses /limitations
Opportunities	Threats

internship as part of the NOHA master (e.g.: the extent to which the theoretical knowledge gained during the programme linked up with the practical activities in the field; the occurrence of gaps in required knowledge; the value of having a multidisciplinary background for the internship)

- e. a short assessment of your internship for the positioning on the job market: has the internship clarified your plans for the job market? Do you aspire to a function at the internship organisation?

11. Any supplements (but keep them concise).

Your report should be between 10 and 15 pages A4 (not including supplementary material) and it should be written in English or the language of your home university. Your NOHA internship coordinator evaluates the report. The employer may check its factual information.

In case your internship report discusses sensitive issues that should remain between you and the NOHA internship coordinator, please mention this on the cover page of your internship report and notify your NOHA internship coordinator explicitly when handing in the internship report. Otherwise, your internship report will also be used for educational purposes afterwards, such as for students who are interested in doing a similar internship.

7. Assessment criteria

The criteria for the internship are expressed in the learning outcomes of this module and further specified in the NOHA assessment form for the internship provider. To determine the final grade for the internship module, your internship coordinator will weigh the extent to which you have achieved the learning outcomes for this module based on the written evidence in your internship report, the NOHA assessment form as filled in by your internship supervisor and in case of doubts, inconsistencies or gaps, complemented by information given during the final evaluation meeting by the student or the internship provider.

To guide the weighing of criteria for determining the final grade, the NOHA internship coordinator will make use of the standardised grading form for NOHA internships.

NB: It is within the discretionary authority of the NOHA internship coordinator to determine how these criteria are assessed and weighed, an account of which is given on the standardised grading form.