



NRTO – VERENIGING HOGESCHOLEN – VNO-NCW / MKB-NEDERLAND

HBO Internship code

This national internship code¹ was developed by the umbrella organisations Vereniging Hogescholen (VH) [Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences], VNO-NCW/MKB Nederland [Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers/SMEs] and the Nederlandse Raad voor Training en Opleiding (NRTO) [Dutch Council for Training and Education]. Universities of applied sciences, companies² and students can use this code to design and improve their internships and dual pathways. The code lays down clear and unambiguous roles, expectations and responsibilities. This guarantees that every internship and apprenticeship provides an effective and valuable learning experience for students, through good cooperation between the university of applied sciences and the company.

By signing this code, the umbrella organisations agree that all member organisations of the VH, the NRTO or sector organisations belonging to VNO-NCW/MKB-Nederland will abide by these agreements and honour this code. The agreements below must be applied to full-time, part-time and dual degree programmes alike. Where a university of applied sciences or company deviates from one or more agreements for valid reasons, it must explain why it does so to students and the cooperating organisations.

1 This internship code replaces the current '[Practical Arrangements and HBO Internship Code](#)' from 2006.

2 'Companies' also include non-profit organisations.

1 Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

Internship code

A set of agreements, standards and rules of conduct that guide the professional conduct of companies, educational institutions and students during the internship period, with the aim of guaranteeing the quality, integrity and learning value of the internship.

Internship for students of universities of applied sciences enrolled in full-time and part-time degree programmes

A form of practice-based learning in which the student puts into practice the theoretical knowledge and practical skills taught during the degree programme and has the opportunity to gain work experience in a realistic work environment. Internship types and durations may vary.

Apprenticeships for students of universities of applied sciences with dual degree programmes

A form of practice-based learning and development of skills and knowledge directly in the workplace. The employee of a company learns new theoretical knowledge and practical skills while working.

Work supervisor

A jobholder at a company who guides and supports students and/or employees in their professional development during their internship or apprenticeship.

2 General agreements for students

Students of universities of applied sciences are co-responsible for their education and learning process. This is set out in the following general agreements.

- Students orient themselves to the internship position in order to gain sufficient insight into what the particular internship/apprenticeship entails and whether it matches their future profession, own interests and learning goals.
- The student actively and in a timely manner searches and/or applies for a suitable internship/apprenticeship that is geared to their field and has an internship/apprenticeship at the start of the internship period or dual degree programme. This varies by degree programme; in some programmes, students are not responsible for finding an internship placement.
- The student possesses general employee skills and adheres to the applicable rules of conduct and safety in effect at the company.
- Students are actively involved in their own learning programme and take the initiative to plan their studies, set learning goals and take the necessary steps to actually achieve these goals.

3 Internship guidance from universities of applied sciences and companies

A General agreements *in preparation* for internships/apprenticeships

Universities of applied sciences and companies are committed to further professionalising their policies on internships/apprenticeships and implementing these policies, to ensure that all students are well informed about their internship/apprenticeship, possess general employee skills and feel seen, heard and supported.

This is set out in the following agreements.

- Universities of applied sciences themselves set quality frameworks for internship and dual apprenticeships and the competences required of work supervisors.
- There is clear information from the university of applied sciences on the number of internships needed, the format and the objective of the internship. The university of applied sciences must also provide clear information on the responsibilities, obligations and rights of the student, university of applied sciences and company.
- Clear information is available about the company and the internship, covering at least the following topics: the work to be performed, the work supervision and the working conditions at the company.
- Agreements are made on the exchange of information and data needed for proper placement and supervision.
- There is a common vision on joint practical education with regard to the various forms internships can take and agreements on the orientation to internships.
- The university of applied sciences supports companies in supervising and/or training work supervisors, e.g. through an online course/platform for work supervisors or coaching.
- During the degree programme, appropriate attention is given to dealing with emotionally upsetting situations during the internship/apprenticeship, thereby increasing students' resilience. This includes discussing and preparing for special situations that could occur during the internships, such as personal setbacks, a death or transgressive behaviour.
- During the degree programme, attention is given to learning basic employee skills if needed, such as being at work on time, good manners, and hygiene aspects in healthcare.
- Bespoke guidance from the university of applied sciences and the company is offered whenever possible for students who need extra support.
- There is a fixed contact person at the university of applied sciences for the specific degree programme for the student and the company to prepare the internship/apprenticeship.
- Prior to the start of the internship/apprenticeship, there must be clarity about the roles and responsibilities of students, instructors and work supervisors in supervising and evaluating the internship and/or in the role of examiner.

Additional agreements for full-time and part-time degree programmes

The parties involved create an individual training plan and an internship agreement laying down the agreements of all the parties (university of applied sciences, company and student) with regard to the format, objectives and content of the internship, the manner and frequency of supervision (with assigned instructor and work supervisor), the personal learning programme and the testing and assessment method.

Additional agreements for dual degree programmes (see website [work-based learning in higher professional education](#))

The three parties involved will provide a separate agreement setting out arrangements for working and learning³.

B General agreements *during* internships/apprenticeships

Universities of applied sciences and companies are committed to further professionalising their policies on internships/apprenticeships and implementation of these policies to ensure that all students can learn effectively in a safe environment where they feel seen, heard and supported.

This is set out in the following agreements.

- There is personal contact between the instructor who serves as the fixed point of contact, the student and the work supervisor, with the school, student and company scheduling contact moments at the company's premises where possible.
- The internship is a part of the degree programme in which an internship company cooperates by providing an internship placement and supervision. Supervision by the university of applied sciences is a regular teaching task and cannot be charged to the company. The same applies for the supervision by the university of applied sciences of dual pathways. The company may not charge the university of applied sciences for providing the internship either.
- There is a safe and inclusive learning culture in the company's workplace.
- The student, degree programme and company coordinate on internship supervision, progress and on monitoring and improving the cooperation between all parties involved.
- The internship is primarily focused on learning and not exclusively on working. The work involved must therefore emphasise learning, and student supervision should also focus on teaching the student new skills, rather than on maximising productivity. The internship company makes time for supervision of the intern and the intern can be expected to put effort into the internship.

3 Article 7.7 of the Higher Education and Research Act stipulates this agreement (paragraph 5) and other provisions relating to dual pathways.

Additional agreements for full-time and part-time degree programmes

- There shall be at least one to three contact moments between the university of applied sciences, the student and the company during the internship period. This number depends on the duration of the internship. It is up to the university of applied sciences, student and company to determine the manner (online or in person) and frequency of these contact moments.
- The contact person at the university of applied sciences ensures:
 - a A (friendly) handover⁴ of the student to the company before the start of the internship;
 - b That, together with the work supervisor at the company, the contact person at the university of applied sciences is involved in the final assessment interview with the student, where the role of the work supervisor and the method of assessment is tailored to the agreements of the degree programme.
- The student occupies an additional space and thus does not occupy a space normally taken up by an employee. This is different for a dual degree programme.
- The student will receive an expense allowance from the company for expenses incurred in connection with the internship, such as travel expenses (provided the student does not have a public transport card for the relevant times) and the cost of requesting a certificate of good conduct.
- The student receives compensation from the company if the student demonstrably contributes to the company operations/business processes.

Additional agreements for dual degree programmes

- During dual degree programmes, there are several in-person contact moments between the university of applied sciences, the student and the company, with one contact moment per year at the company's premises to evaluate the quality of the internship environment. For the other contact moments, the university of applied sciences, the student and the company can decide among themselves what manner of contact is preferable.

4 Preventing internship discrimination

In 2022, VNO-NCW/MKB-Nederland and the VH signed [‘the manifesto against internship discrimination in higher education’](#)⁵. In this context, they commit to the four ambitions below and endeavour to achieve these to the best of their ability.

The ambitions of this manifesto are:

- To recognise that internship discrimination is a complex issue and that all actors (*education, the professional field, the government and students*), are, each in their own way, responsible to take initiatives to counter internship discrimination.

4 Where a company offers internships for several students, several students can be handed over during a contact moment, during which individual concerns and/or specific agreements for each student are discussed.

5 The NRTO, as the umbrella organisation of non-funded, private education institutions, supports the intention of the said manifesto. Private education institutions fulfil the first two ambitions independently. The third and fourth ambitions cited are specific to funded education.

- To ensure adequate guidance to students and help them seek, find and retain internship placements in the context of equal opportunities.
- To work together as part of [the national ECHO work programme](#) to realise these ambitions.
- To participate in periodic consultations on the concrete elaboration of the manifesto, progress and impact achieved. In consultation, the signatories can jointly decide to amend this manifesto and adopt additional measures.

The manifesto and the corresponding ambitions remain valid. To realise and anchor these ambitions, the following additional agreements have been made. These agreements are intended to strengthen and safeguard the actions already initiated between universities of applied sciences and companies.

Additional agreements

- Universities of applied sciences have policies on preventing and reporting internship discrimination as well as for the procedures to be followed.
- All employees at universities of applied sciences and companies serve as role models. Through their behaviour and conduct in recruiting, selecting, supervising and assessing students for their internship/apprenticeship, they demonstrate that they are committed to the fair and socially safe treatment of all students.
- Universities of applied sciences, companies and students join forces, hold each other accountable, and do not shy away from 'uncomfortable' measures such as ending an internship early.
- Universities of applied sciences have an accessible reporting point where students can report internship discrimination and improper use of student labour, receive support and follow-up care with guarantees of confidentiality and protection against repercussions.
- Universities of applied sciences inform students before and during the internship how students can recognise and report internship discrimination and how the university of applied sciences/company can respond.
- The contact person at the university of applied sciences and the work supervisor remain in conversation with the student during the internship/apprenticeship to monitor how things are going in the internship/apprenticeship.
- Following a report, a three-way discussion is held between the student, the company, and the university of applied sciences in which all sides are heard. If the student does not want to participate, an appropriate alternative route to handle the report carefully will be sought in consultation.
- If it turns out that a student needs to be placed in an alternative internship, the university of applied sciences actively provides support in finding one.

The signatories declare their commitment to comply with the agreements set out in the Internship Code. They will also jointly review these agreements annually and, if necessary, decide to amend the Internship Code.

Signed in The Hague on 17 November 2025,

Maurice Limmen
Chair of Vereniging Hogescholen



Jacco Vonhof
Chair of MKB Nederland



Ingrid Thijssen
Chair of VNO-NCW



Niek Jan van Kesteren
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