

University of Latvia
Faculty of Business, Management and Economics
Professional Master's Degree Programme in International Business
Placement Supervisor Handbook

1. The aim of the placement

Placement training is a prerequisite for professional master's degree in business administration.

Placement training aims at preparing top level managers by ensuring acquisition of professional skills and competencies while applying and building on the theoretical knowledge base in professional settings with the placement site being an enterprise, organization or institution involved in international economic activities.

2. Placement tasks:

- to reinforce and fortify the theoretical and practical knowledge in international business,
- to acquire the skills to organize and manage work, to make responsible decisions in the company or institution related to the international economic activity,
- to get acquainted with the experience of the company or institution related to the international economic activities, its leader work and responsibilities,
- to develop skills to analyse the company or institution's activities, to understand and evaluate its strategy in the international market,
- to develop the student's ability to self-critically assess their own contribution and progress

3. Graduate students

Master's students work and individual students are entrepreneurs. This means that students are not novices in the field of business. Students are well-prepared to carry out independent, analytical tasks, market research, strategy development, etc.

Besides, for students to be able to continue with their work, full-time Master's courses are organized in weekday evenings or, as in the professional Master's study programme "International Business", on Friday evenings and Saturdays.

4. Master's study programme "International Business"

- The Master's study programme "International Business", as its name suggests, is aimed at international entrepreneurship and thus targets international entrepreneurship realities.
- To be enrolled in the professional Master's study programme "International Business", the applicants are required to have at least 2 years of work experience in business or hold one of managerial positions in a company.

5. Placement period

Placement training is 26 credits and lasts for 26 weeks, that are divided into Placement I, Placement II, Placement III and Placement IV. During the placement students prepare their placement reports on the fulfilment of placement assignment. The report is submitted at the Office of Academic Dean at the Faculty of Business, Management and Economics, UL.

How student placements can benefit businesses

- Students work creatively, have new ideas and fresh enthusiasm and therefore can make a significant contribution to the further development of the company or its new strategies, etc.

- Students' perspective on the company's routine is that of an outsider, which can help to yield non-conventional solutions, identify the untapped potential and find new opportunities.
- The placement may help the company to recruit a suitable employee.

6. Essentials of placement assignments

- Since the target group is graduate-level students, their full potential should be used by provide challenging learning experiences that will encourage personal growth and develop career goals. Since students are not novices in business, they should be trusted with creative, independent analytical tasks. Such tasks can be, for example, new market research, marketing strategy development, market research for a new product launch, identifying and developing new strategic directions, product trademark research, the company's market situation analysis, product and enterprise competitiveness, etc.

Placement training should include induction to the company's operations and management, as well as international aspects, in line with the study programme interests.

7. Placement Supervisor

The Site Placement Supervisor is an authorised employee with practical experience in the field. The Site Placement Supervisor provides the student with an orientation– including general functions and goals of the company, and any key information for the student to engage in and contribute to the company's work and to fulfil placement assignment. The Site Placement Supervisor reviews the progress of the placement and offers constructive feedback on the student's performance.

The Site Placement Supervisor is a person students may approach for information, advice or assistance.

8. The trainee performance evaluation

Students performance evaluation is prepared for the entire placement period. The assessment is provided for the student's sense of responsibility as regards placement tasks, working consistency, independence and adequate results. The assessment highlights both, positive and negative aspects. The Site Placement Supervisor fills in the Site Placement Supervisor's evaluation form, which is issued to the student together with the placement posting documents. The evaluation form is stamped by the host company and added to the placement report. The assessment proposed by the Site Placement Supervisor is considered a recommendation for the decision on the final assessment.

9. Requirements for placement report

During the placement training, the student develops the placement report in conformity with the UL conventions. It is a voluminous, (min.30 pp.) analytical paper on the findings identified while implementing placement tasks. If the company offers placement training for two or more students of the Professional Master's study programme "International Business", each student shall develop and submit a separate report because students' progress is evaluated individually. Placement report is to be designed in conformity with generally accepted requirements at the UL. The report is submitted at the Department in the first week of September.

10. Placement defence

Placement defence is scheduled for second half of September at the Faculty of Business, Management and Economics, Aspazijas Blvd. 5. The Site Placement Supervisor may participate in the defence. Placement reports are defended in front of the Board, which is represented by the faculty at the Department of International Economic Relations. Each

student sets out their placement tasks, presents the work done, the results obtained. It is important to emphasize the meaningful ways the student could engage in and contribute to the company, thus, students have to prepare recommendations for company's further activities. Following the student's prepared presentation, members of the Board ask the student questions. Then the floor is given to the Site Placement Supervisor, who expresses his views on the student's performance and progress. The Board shall assess the student's placement as a whole - considering the quality of the placement report, the student's knowledge and answers to questions, as well as the Site Placement Supervisor's evaluation.

11. Ensuring continuity

To assess the placement as a whole, the employers of students and graduates are surveyed regularly, to identify the problems encountered during the placement, share experience, identify further opportunities for graduate students' placements. Therefore, the Site Placement Supervisor's recommendations are welcome in written or oral form.