

Guidelines for the internship semester in the Bachelor of Science programme in Facility Management

1 Fundamentals of the Bachelor of Science programme in Facility Management

The Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) is the only location where Facility Management is offered at tertiary level in Switzerland. The internship semester is part of the degree course.

2 Vocational profile

Facility Managers take on demanding strategic and operational leadership roles at higher management level. All facilities, equipment, fixtures and fittings as well as services which support the core activity of an enterprise are professionally managed as an integrated whole. The work includes not only management of the services and infrastructure, but also technical and commercial building management.

Within the Facility Management programme, specialisations in either property management or hospitality management are available.

Property Management deals with the provision, management and administration of the internal and external infrastructure of buildings and premises, whether for an organisation's own use or as an investment. The primary aim of property management is to optimise the entire lifecycle of a property. For this purpose, strategic objectives are as important as the optimisation of everyday operations. Graduates of the FM course with a specialisation in property management take on leadership and project responsibilities in the following areas:

- banking, insurance, real estate companies, construction companies
- housing cooperatives
- shopping centres, airports, train stations
- industrial companies with commercial buildings
- providers of facility services and management
- providers of FM-specific IT tools, planning offices and consulting companies

Hospitality Management deals with the infrastructural and personal services provided in various public and private companies and institutions. The aim is to create and market the best possible conditions in residential, recreational and working spaces. Graduates of the FM course with a specialisation in hospitality management take on leadership and project responsibilities in the following areas:

- hospitals, care and nursing homes
- hotels, training and conference centres
- banks, insurance companies, service companies
- real estate companies, construction firms, housing cooperatives, public administration
- consulting firms and planning offices
- facility services providers
- catering companies
- large-scale laundries

Fields of operation

Students are able to take on partial leadership, project or planning duties in the following areas during their internship:

- food and beverage, gastronomy
- event management
- lodging operations
- textile and cleaning management
- ecology
- logistics
- structural and technical building management
- property management
- FM projects of various kinds
- marketing and market research
- technology and ecology in the household

3 Objectives and responsibilities for the internship period

3.1 Guiding objective

The internship should allow students to implement and test the theory and skills they have learned.

3.2 Internship supervisors tasks

The internship supervisors are responsible for professional and personal tutelage as well as for supporting the students during the internship period. Together with the students, they develop goals for the internship (see 3.4) and are responsible for regular progress checks to monitor agreed targets and formulate measures for further development.

3.3 Student goals

The students put the theory and skills they have learned into practice, adapting them to the particular working situation. Their internship task is defined by the vocational profile as well as by organisational and personal goals. They make every effort to fulfil this task, or make corrections and adaptations as the situation requires.

3.4 Internship or training focus

Before the internship begins, supervisors and students determine the possible focal points and objectives in accordance with each student's vocational profile. Two weeks after the internship begins, the students submit the main focal points and objectives for the internship in writing, with a plan of action for formal approval by the university. If no negative decision from the university is received within two weeks, the plan of action is formally approved.

3.5 Internship tutor tasks

The students are assigned a tutor by the university for the period of the internship. The tutor conducts a visit to the internship location. Whenever required and when problems or conflicts arise, individual consultations between the student and tutor are a matter of course. The tutor conducts a final interview with the student to discuss the internship, in which the supervisors may also participate. The documents generated at the end of the internship period form the basis of the discussion (see 6.4, reference and reflective report).

4 Internship organisations (conditions of acceptance, organisation)

4.1 Types of organisation, suitability

Companies and organisations which carry out tasks in the area of Facility Management (see 2. Vocational profile) are suitable for internships. The internship supervisors should normally have a degree, a minimum of four years' experience, and a management qualification or at least two years' experience in a management position.

4.2 Procedure for acceptance

Organisations that are interested in providing internships for Facility Managers should contact the university.

Both the university and students can make direct enquiries to organisations regarding the opportunities for internships.

The decision on whether to accept an organisation for an internship is taken by the IFM management. This list is valid for the current internship semester.

4.3 Distribution of internship positions

4.4 Timing

Students normally receive information on possible internship positions in October.

4.5 Internship counselling

Students may apply for an internship consultation session at the university, in which personal strengths and weaknesses are pinpointed. This interview can be used to establish goals for the internship, providing criteria for the selection of a suitable organisation.

4.6 Applications

Students make a written application to the organisation of their choice. Selection and possible appointment are carried out by the organisation itself.

5 Conditions of employment

5.1 Duration of the internship

The internship semester normally lasts from March until September, for a period of at least 5 months as a fulltime job.

5.2 Salary

The recommended salary is Fr. 2300.- per month. Individual arrangements between the student and the organisation are also possible.

5.3 Contractual agreements

The organisation concludes a short-term contract of employment with the student for the period of the internship. The student sends a copy of the contract of employment to the university no later than two weeks after commencement of the internship.

6 Cooperation between the organisation, student and the ZHAW

6.1 Contact

The Zurich University of Applied Sciences remains in regular contact with the internship supervisors through meetings or information exchanges.

6.2 Alterations

The organisation is requested to inform the university of any changes affecting the internship supervisors or its organisational profile (area of operation).

6.3 Interruption of internship

If an intern is absent for more than a month, the tutor must be informed as soon as possible. The Institute management then decide in consultation with the organisation, the tutor and the student under what conditions the internship may be considered to be fulfilled, partially fulfilled or unfulfilled.

6.4 Record of achievement

On completion of the internship, the supervisors provide the student with a reference. The agreed objectives can be used as a basis for this.

6.5 Bachelor's thesis

The Bachelor's thesis is not part of the internship semester, but the student may consider topics arising during the internship as possible subjects for the Bachelor's thesis in the final year of studies.

6.6 Commencement date of applicability

These guidelines supersede all previous internship regulations and come into force on 1th July 2012.