

Postgraduate Programme International Co-operation North-South



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Concerning the postgraduate programme

Leuven University College, offers an unique one-year postgraduate programme in International co-operation North South. The postgraduate programme aims to prepare students for an increasingly international and multicultural labour market. Students following the postgraduate programme do a six-month internship, in a country in Africa, Asia or Latin America.

The internship in the postgraduate programme is different from internships in professional bachelors. In a professional bachelor the internship aims for students to acquire specific competences related to their respective study / career choice (e.g. nursing, social work, business management...). The internship in the postgraduate programme, on the contrary, aims for students to acquire more general, intercultural and interdisciplinary competences.

Before being able to apply for the postgraduate programme, students are carefully assessed and selected based on their motivation and interest. Before starting their internship, students are intensely prepared for 8 weeks (theoretical courses and individual coaching) to live in a different culture.



The internship

Leuven University College aims to develop long-term, sustainable and mutual relationships with partners in the South.

Students applying for the postgraduate programme already graduated and have a first professional degree (bachelor or master). Our students, for example, are graduated in nursing, teaching, social work, management, agricultural engineering... The postgraduate programme wants students to obtain general, intercultural and interdisciplinary competences and not to further professionalise as nurses, social workers, business managers and teachers.

The students' internships take place in Ngo's and local initiatives organizations (grassroot movements) and last for 22 weeks. Students aim to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions and the welfare of the local population. Students come to work within different domains such as education, health, etc. Students' organizations are generally located in small, local communities and students work is complementary to the work of project employees. Students learn to take the specific contexts of the organizations and the local living realities into account.



Learning activities in the broader environment

We expect the interns to explore and, with time, fully integrate in the local environment and the social life in the community. During the first weeks and months of the internship students adjust to the local culture and lifestyle of the region and the country. The more students are familiar with local culture and language, the more they fully can participate in the organization and in the socio-cultural life of the community.

The students remain for a total period of 26 weeks in their country of destination; of which they dedicate 22 weeks to do their traineeship. Students are allowed to take four weeks of holiday for traveling. On average, students work 30 hours per week in the project. Besides their work in the organization, students also are expected to have time to work on various school assignments, and to conduct research for writing their bachelor test. Students are required to organize and schedule their work, holidays and time for school assignments in consultation and accordance with their internship supervisor in the project.



Supervisors

Students are supervised by both a tutor from the postgraduate programme and by a supervisor from the project in the host country.

Supervisors at the internship organization provide follow-up and guidance of students' work activities and personal integration process and communicates with the student's tutor from the postgraduate programme.

During their internship (generally after about two months) students receive a visit of their responsible tutor(s) from Belgium. This visit aims at evaluating the student's work schedule and work progress to assure the good course of the internship and to make sure that the expectations of all the partners are met. It also aims at facilitating good communication between all partners involved, and at discussing and resolving possible outstanding issues and problems.



Living

We kindly request receiving organisations to assist with finding suitable housing for students. In the early stages of the internships a host family is preferred, however, this is not an absolute condition as it is not always feasible in all internship contexts. Afterwards, if possible and required, students can come to live independently in rooms or an apartment in the neighbourhood.

Students assume their own living costs. We insist that the internship of the students does not involve any cost for the receiving host organizations and host families.

Students are insured through Leuven University College. However, local supervisors are kindly asked to inform and advice students on safety issues. Yet, it goes without saying that students carry full responsibility for their actions.



Participatory research and Bachelor test

During their internship, students also conduct participatory research. They choose the subject of their research in accordance with their local supervisor, in order to guarantee that their research will be of long-term use and relevance for the project.

The bachelor test contains two parts:

- Firstly, a final paper in which students write up their research results.
- Secondly, a more concrete and sustainable product, emerging from their research project (for example a workshop, a flyer, a brochure...).

The Bachelor Test also contains a management summary in the language of the country of destination with a brief summary of research results. After graduating this management summary will be sent to the student's internship organization.





Contact

Etienne Beel (Internship Coordinator for Africa):

etienne.beel@ucll.be

(0032)(0)496 23 27 54

Veronique De Roeck (Practice lecturer - Cameroun)

veronique.deroeck@ucll.be

(0032)(0)473 74 64 85

Leen Hellinckx (Practice lecturer - India):

leen.hellinckx@ucll.be

(0032)(0)486 93 26 78

Kris Verhaegen (Practice lecturer - Sri Lanka) :

kris.verhaegen@ucll.be

(0032)(0)477 63 83 58