

**Griffith University**

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<b>Vignette title and details</b>	<b>International Business Internship/Practicum</b> 3.5 months, P/T – F/T (1-5 days a week – depending upon Credit Point option), workplace projects, undergraduate and postgraduate offering with domestic and international placements.
<b>Discipline</b>	International Business. (Bachelor of International Business, Master of International Business, and Combined Degrees)  International Business Internship (International) is open to all qualifying students/disciplines in the Griffith Business School.
<b>Employment sector</b>	All – industry, education, health and government
<b>Student numbers</b>	40 – 60. (Inclusive of all forms: Undergraduate Domestic; Undergraduate International; Postgraduate)
<b>Optional/compulsory</b>	Optional
<b>Credit bearing</b>	Credit Bearing
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal report, organisational audit (report)</li> <li>• weekly learning journal, bi-weekly progress report</li> <li>• Seminars/ feedback sessions</li> <li>• Peer presentation, industry presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Payment</b>	No payment. Interns do not normally receive payment for their placement. If payment is made to the Intern, then the host organisation is responsible for all workplace insurances. Note: Commercial relationship between intern and organisation will have no influence upon the learning and teaching emphasis of the Internship.
<b>Number of staff involved</b>	1 Academic Staff
<b>Key Words</b>	Experiential education, cooperative education, work-Integrated learning, synchronous classroom, reflective learning, self-efficacy, higher education management

**Overview**

The scope of the International Business Internship/ Practicum Program is to introduce Interns to the realities and urgencies of the international business world. At the same time, the program provides 'Host Organisations' with a wide range of international business skills and the provision of research / activity on a topic / area of interest to the organisation. Interns are expected to 'work' onsite at the organisation from one to four days a week, or its equivalent during the timeframe of one semester on a negotiated project (postgraduate interns only have option for more than one day a week placement option depending on Credit Point option selected / enrolled in). Undergraduate 'International' placements are full-time during summer semester and equate to a normal 10 credit point course.

The central purpose of the internship is for students to appreciate and grapple with practical problems involved in international business. It aims to do this by confronting interns with a multifaceted problem of a particular organisation conducting activities, or wishing to conduct activities, internationally. The challenge for interns is then to apply the concepts and theories acquired in the various foundation and core subjects of their degree program, along with prior experience, to the real situation of a specific organisation. The internship calls for the application of their knowledge and skills in all areas, possibly including second language skills. In addition to the 'hard' skills, acquired from their studies, interns will learn to use and develop their 'soft' skills, such as interpersonal relations, self-confidence and self-efficacy.

## Structure of program

Interns work one day a week for a period of 12 weeks at a specified work placement, under the workplace supervision of a specified organisation (seven weeks for international placement undergraduate interns). Prior to placement, interns attend a formal orientation on-campus, and additionally attend bi-weekly seminars.

In addition to various task-based activities within the workplace, a determined project is negotiated between the host organisation, student and the convenor which stipulates outcomes. The project must represent a series of activities that equate to the contact hours per week that approximate the credit point option for the course.

It is important that interns who undertake an international business degree program possess tangible skills that are readily useable once they enter the workforce, and also be able to apply the experience / knowledge acquired during their studies in a realistic and real workplace.

By undertaking a practically oriented project and placement that requires interns to directly interact with industry / government representatives at a higher level of participation, it is expected that interns will be able to embrace the ethic of employment and professionalism required for future success. Participating in the IB Internship will serve not only to improve the understanding of interns of the international business arena, but will also provide to these students the advantage of being able to interact with industry / government at those levels of professionalism that are desired, required and expected of those attaining a university qualification.

The central objective of the IB Internship / Practicum is to assist students to develop the skills required to plan, research and manage an international business project and, to engage successfully with an organisation in the professional environment.

The challenge for interns is to apply the theories and concepts acquired in the various core and foundation courses that they have participated in as part of their degree program. It additionally calls for the application and expansion of their knowledge in not only the traditional economic, business, political and marketing aspects of doing business internationally, and also includes the inclusion and application of the cultural contexts of conducting business activities in the professional environment in both the Australian and international placement context.

This course provides interns with the opportunity to put the theoretical material of other courses they have undertaken, particularly those within the core of their degree program, into practice. It further extends interns' knowledge of the practices, urgencies, requirements and restrictions that are placed upon organisations in the professional environment.

## Special features

The International Business Internship / Practicum is a learning-oriented activity that is linked to specific areas of an Intern's study / academic program and, is NOT, a work experience exercise. Learning from the holistic internship experience is sought, and the use of action learning, synchronous learning, and reflective learning form the foundation for the course.

The International Business Internship / Practicum maintains the following practice aspects:

- There is an intellectual (discipline expertise) exchange and linkage between the university (academic representative) and the student;
- The in-field / work experience activity has both direct oversight *and* direction by the university (academic representative); and,
- Intern / university interaction is comparable to existing conventional course contact using flexible learning modes, electronic contact, and /or face-to-face contact.

In order to maintain academic rigour, Interns are provided with a placement and corresponding primary project that has been pre-approved by the course convenor. The matching of intern to host organisation will be conducted by the convenor, taking into account the stated requirements of the host organisation, skills of the intern, intern's experience and, preferences in terms of type of organisation / project. However, as the internship is predominantly a 'learning' and not exclusively a 'work experience' oriented activity, the final decision for placement will be made on overall learning, access and availability determinants. By enrolling in the course students agree to accept the placement provided. With prior notice and approval by the convenor, interns can be permitted to work with a host organisation of their own choosing, and vice versa, but the final decision will be that of the convenors.

Students participating in the IB Internship / Practicum course are required to adhere to a strict confidentiality agreement between themselves and their host organisation. Any information provided by the host organisation, or information sourced on their behalf, will be termed 'commercial-in-confidence' on the basis that no information or findings will be circulated, either in whole or in part, to third parties, other than to the convenor and project supervisor, without the consent of the host organisation. Organisations will also have rights over any intellectual property developed on their behalf by the intern.

### **Ethics**

Students are required to acknowledge limitations in use of any information collected, the manner in which information is collected, and the subsequent use of information and findings. Information collected by the student cannot be utilised for personal purposes, such as for their research (publishing), unless formal Griffith University Ethics Approval is granted. Placement organisations will not be permitted to make claims that students' activities are those of the University's, or in official collaboration with the University (such as 'A University Study', 'In Conjunction with Griffith University' etc). Students in the course will be required to participate (in class) in a training program that covers matters including research ethics, responsible practice, conflicts of interest and privacy. It is expected that students will practice ethical (and legal) behaviour throughout the course.

### **Future work**

This internship has served as the foundation model for establishing 'good practice' in work-integrated learning in the Griffith Business School, with multi-day, international and postgraduate courses being developed from it. The future will see further expansion of this model.