

Internship Guide for International Students in Poland

MS in Poland Resource Guide



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For International Students

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An internship in Poland can enhance your academic experience, build your professional network, and improve your career prospects. This guide will help you navigate the process of finding, applying for, and succeeding in internships as an international student.

Understanding the Polish Internship Landscape Types of Internships in Poland

- **Corporate Internships:** Formal programs at large Polish and multinational companies
- **Startup Internships:** More flexible opportunities at growing companies
- **Government/NGO Internships:** Public sector and non-profit opportunities
- **University-Facilitated Internships:** Placements arranged through your institution
- **Remote Internships:** Virtual work opportunities with Polish organizations

Internship Seasons

- **Summer Internships:** Most competitive, typically run June-September
- **Academic Year Internships:** Part-time positions during semesters
- **Post-Graduation Internships:** Full-time opportunities after completing studies

Paid vs. Unpaid Internships

While unpaid internships exist in Poland, many reputable companies offer paid positions:

- Corporate internships typically pay 2,000-4,000 PLN monthly
- Startup internships may offer lower salaries or equity options
- EU-funded programs often provide standardized compensation
- Unpaid internships should offer significant learning value and not exceed 3 months

NOTE: As an international student in Poland, you're legally permitted to work part-time (up to 20 hours/week) during the academic year without additional permits. Full-time work is permitted during official holiday periods.

Finding Internship Opportunities Online Resources for Internship Hunting

- **Job Portals:**

- Pracuj.pl
- Jobs.pl
- NoFluffJobs.com (IT/tech)
- JustJoinIT.com (IT/tech)
- Bulldogjob.com (IT/tech)
- LinkedIn Jobs

- **Internship-Specific Platforms:**

- Erasmus Intern (erasmusintern.org)
- Student.pl
- CareersinPoland.com
- AIESEC Poland (aiesec.pl)

- **University Career Portals:**

- Most Polish universities maintain their own job/internship boards
- Alumni networks often share exclusive opportunities

Networking Strategies

- **University Career Events:**

- Job fairs (Targi pracy)
- Company presentations
- Industry speakers
- Networking workshops

- **Professional Groups:**

- Industry-specific meetups
- Young professional associations

- International business clubs
- LinkedIn groups for your field

- **Student Organizations:**

- AIESEC
- ESN (Erasmus Student Network)
- Field-specific student associations
- International student clubs

TIP: Polish business culture values personal connections. Attend industry events relevant to your field and prepare a short "elevator pitch" about yourself in both English and basic Polish if possible.

Application Process Documents and Materials

- **CV/Resume:**

- European format (Europass) is widely accepted
- 1-2 pages maximum
- Include language skills (Polish proficiency is valuable)
- Highlight relevant coursework and projects
- Adapt for each application

- **Cover Letter:**

- Address specific company needs
- Explain your interest in Poland
- Mention relevant skills and experiences
- Keep to one page
- Tailor for each position

- **Portfolio (if applicable):**

- Digital portfolio for design/creative roles
- Code samples for technical positions
- Writing samples for content/communication roles
- Academic projects relevant to the position

- **References:**

- Academic references from professors
- Previous employers if possible
- Prepare a separate reference sheet

Polish-Specific Application Tips

- **Language Considerations:**

- Applications for international companies can typically be in English
- Polish-owned companies may prefer applications in Polish
- Highlight any Polish language skills you have
- Mention other languages you speak fluently

- **Educational Recognition:**

- Explain equivalent degrees/grades from your educational system
- Highlight prestigious scholarships or programs
- Include ranking of your home university if relevant

- **Legal Status Information:**

- Clearly state your work permission status as a student
- Mention visa validity period
- Note if you need sponsorship after graduation

IMPORTANT: Many Polish companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to screen resumes. Include relevant keywords from the job description in your application materials to ensure your application passes initial screening.

Interview Preparation Interview Formats in Poland

- **Initial Screening:** Often phone or video call
- **Technical Assessments:** Common for IT/engineering roles
- **In-Person Interviews:** Usually 1-2 rounds
- **Assessment Centers:** For larger corporations
- **Case Studies/Presentations:** Particularly for consulting/business roles

Common Interview Questions

- **Background and Motivation:**

- "Why did you choose to study in Poland?"
- "Why are you interested in our company specifically?"
- "How does this internship fit with your career goals?"

- **Practical and Technical:**

- "Describe a relevant project from your studies."
- "How would you solve [industry-specific problem]?"
- "What skills from your coursework apply to this position?"

- **Cultural Fit:**

- "How do you adapt to new environments?"
- "Describe your experience working in diverse teams."
- "How do you handle feedback and criticism?"

- **Logistics and Availability:**

- "What is your availability during the semester?"
- "Can you work during exam periods?"
- "What are your plans after the internship ends?"

Polish Business Etiquette

- **Punctuality:** Arrive 10-15 minutes early for interviews
- **Formality:** Business setting tends to be formal, especially initially
- **Greeting:** Firm handshake with direct eye contact
- **Titles:** Use professional titles and last names until invited to use first names
- **Dress Code:** Business formal for interviews unless specifically told otherwise
- **Communication Style:** Polish business communication tends to be direct and to the point

TIP: Research the company culture beforehand. While traditional Polish businesses can be hierarchical and formal, many startups and international companies have adopted more casual Western approaches.

Legal Considerations for International Interns Work Permissions

- **EU/EEA Students:** No additional work permit required
- **Non-EU/EEA Students:** Student visa allows part-time work (20 hours/week) during the academic year and full-time during holidays
- **Internship-Specific Rules:** Unpaid educational internships required by your study program generally don't count toward work hour limits

Documentation Required

- **For Employers:**
 - Valid student ID (legitymacja studencka)
 - Passport and visa/residence permit
 - Certificate from your university confirming student status
 - Tax identification number (NIP) or PESEL
 - Bank account details for payment
- **For Your Records:**
 - Signed internship agreement
 - Description of internship tasks and responsibilities
 - Confirmation of completed internship
 - Reference letter (request at completion)

Tax Implications

- **Income Tax:** Required for paid internships
- **Tax Thresholds:** No income tax if earning below minimum threshold
- **Tax Treaties:** Check if your home country has a double taxation agreement with Poland
- **Social Security:** Usually not required for temporary student interns

WARNING: Always get a written agreement before starting any internship. This protects you legally and ensures clear expectations about duties, hours, supervision, and any compensation.

Making the Most of Your Internship Cultural Integration Tips

- **Observe local workplace customs:** Lunch breaks, coffee culture, social expectations

- **Participate in company events:** Team building activities, celebrations, informal gatherings
- **Ask questions about cultural norms:** Most Poles appreciate interest in their culture
- **Be patient with language barriers:** Use translation tools when needed
- **Demonstrate flexibility:** Adaptation is a valuable skill that employers notice

Performance Excellence

- **Set clear learning objectives:** Discuss specific skills you want to develop
- **Request regular feedback:** Polish supervisors may not provide it automatically
- **Document your achievements:** Keep a portfolio of projects and accomplishments
- **Connect work to academics:** Look for thesis or project ideas
- **Find a mentor:** Beyond your supervisor, identify someone who can guide your professional development

Networking During Your Internship

- **Map the organization:** Understand different departments and roles
- **Schedule informational meetings:** Request brief meetings to learn about colleagues' career paths
- **Join cross-functional projects:** Volunteer for work that exposes you to different teams
- **Connect on LinkedIn:** Maintain professional connections after meeting colleagues
- **Attend industry events:** Ask if you can represent the company at relevant conferences or meetups

TIP: In Polish business culture, relationship building often happens over coffee breaks or occasional after-work gatherings. These informal settings are valuable for networking, but remember that maintaining professional boundaries is still important.

Converting Internships to Job Offers Strategies for Long-Term Opportunities

- **Express interest early:** If you want to stay, communicate this to your supervisor
- **Inquire about development paths:** Ask about potential future roles
- **Discuss visa/work permit needs:** Be clear about what you would need to stay in Poland
- **Propose a specific project:** Identify a need and suggest how you could fill it
- **Exceed expectations:** Treat every task as an audition for permanent employment

Post-Graduation Work Permits

- **Polish Employment After Graduation:** Recent policy changes allow international graduates from Polish universities to stay and work
- **Job Seeker Permit:** Available for graduates to find employment
- **Work Permit Exemptions:** Polish degree holders have simplified procedures for work authorization
- **EU Blue Card:** For highly qualified specialists with job offers meeting minimum salary requirements

Alternative Continuation Options

- **Extended Internships:** Some companies offer extended programs
- **Part-Time During Studies:** Convert to part-time role while completing education
- **Remote Work:** Possibility to continue collaboration from abroad
- **Return Offers:** Some companies offer positions starting after graduation

IMPORTANT: If you wish to stay in Poland after graduation, begin planning at least 6 months before your student visa expires. Your university's international office can provide guidance on visa extensions or changes.

Resources and Support University Services

- **Career Centers:** CV reviews, interview preparation, job posting access
- **International Student Offices:** Legal advice regarding work permits
- **Academic Advisors:** Course credit for internships
- **Alumni Networks:** Connections with graduates working in your field

External Support Organizations

- **Professional Associations:** Industry-specific groups often have student chapters
- **Chambers of Commerce:** American, British, German and other international chambers host events
- **Expat Communities:** Provide advice and connections
- **National Cultural Institutes:** Business language courses and cultural preparation

TIP: Many universities in Poland have partnerships with companies that regularly hire interns. Check with your department and career center about these established

relationships, as application processes may be simplified for students from partner institutions.

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