

> III.16 Non-staff contracts

III.16.4 Interns and volunteers

- [Introduction](#)
- [Objectives](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Duration](#)
- [Internship periods](#)
- [Status of Interns](#)
- [Application process](#)
- [Administrative processes](#)
- [Status of interns](#)
- [Employment following internship](#)
- [Official travel](#)
- [Accident Insurance](#)
- [Contributions](#)
- [Benefits](#)
- [Claims procedure](#)
- [Limitation of risk](#)
- [Volunteers](#)

Introduction

10 WHO is committed to building future leaders in public health and WHO's Internship Programme provides a wide range of opportunities for graduate and post-graduate students to gain insight into the work of WHO. Each year, a limited number of places for internships are available.

20 Students can offer their services to WHO on a voluntary basis. Such an arrangement is known as an [internship](#). Internships are not intended for work of a continuing and/or operational nature, nor for work generally performed by a staff member.^[1] Internships are accepted by WHO on a non-remunerated basis only.

[top](#)

Objectives

30 The internship programme has three objectives:

- to provide a framework for assigning students from diverse academic backgrounds to WHO programmes, where their educational experience can be enhanced through practical assignments;
- to expose students to the work of WHO; and
- to provide WHO programmes with input from students specializing in various fields. Most students are placed in health-related programmes, although other disciplines can be considered as appropriate.

[top](#)

Definitions

40 An intern is a student who is enrolled in a course of study at a university or equivalent institution leading to a formal qualification (graduate or post-graduate); who has completed three years of full-time studies at a university or equivalent institution; and who provides his/her services to the World Health Organization without remuneration. Interns do not have the status of WHO staff members and cannot represent the Organization in any official capacity.

50 An internship is an arrangement between the World Health Organization and an intern whereby an individual's educational experience is enhanced on a non-remunerated basis through practical assignments and exposure to the work of the Organization.

[top](#)

Eligibility

60 WHO may accept applicants who meet all of the following conditions as interns:

- Applicants who are at least twenty years of age on the date of application.
- Applicants who are enrolled in a course of study at a university or equivalent institution leading to a formal qualification (graduate or post-graduate). Applicants who apply for an internship within six months of completion of their formal qualification may also qualify for consideration.
- Applicants who have completed three years of full-time studies at a university or equivalent

institution prior to commencing the assignment.

- Applicants who are fluent in at least one of the working languages of the office of assignment.
- Applicants who are not related to a staff member as defined in Staff Rule [410.3](#) (e.g., son/daughter, brother/sister or mother/father).
- Applicants who have not previously participated in WHO's internship programme.

70 Programme managers shall extend due consideration where possible to applicants who meet the above conditions from under-represented and developing countries, in support of WHO's commitment to strengthen capacity and to promote diversity.

[f1 top](#)

Duration

80 The duration of WHO internships is between a minimum of 6 weeks to a maximum of 3 months. Exceptionally, the Director of the Technical Unit may extend an internship up to 6 months to respond to special academic requirements or particular needs of the receiving programme.

Internship periods

90 There are two application periods for WHO internships each year:

- The SUMMER internship period : 1 May to 31 October
 - applications are accepted between 1 December and 31 January
- The WINTER internship period : 1 November to 30 April
 - applications are accepted between 1 August and 30 September

100 These online application periods allow for better management of the thousands of intern applications received each year. Applications received by email to interns@who.int after the deadline date will have their CV batched with other candidates' and shared with technical units on a case-by-case basis at a later date.

Application process

110 This Internship Programme process outlined here is for the WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland only. (For internships with WHO regional or country offices, please contact the regional office directly). Internship applications are accepted through WHO's e-Recruitment system ([eRecruit](#)) and remain active for a period of six months. Applications provide details on education, experience, language and computer skills. In the cover letter (optional) intern applicants are asked to articulate their motivation for seeking a WHO internship; they could also indicate the WHO work areas of interest and dates of availability. All interns, regardless of their entry point, are requested to create a profile in eRecruit.

Administrative processes

120 The Global Learning and Performance Management Department (PML): Upon closure of each application period, matrixes' are made available to cluster Administrative Assistants and cluster HRAs for review and consideration by the department and technical units. This link may be shared with colleagues at department and unit levels.

130 The Technical Unit (or receiving programme): Reviews the interns within the matrix (sorting by geographical distribution and department screening question). The Technical Unit sends a list of shortlisted candidates to PML for specific intern PHF profiles which contain intern contact information. The Technical Unit contacts those intern candidates of interest and decides on which intern (s) to invite for an internship.

140 The Technical Unit Intern Supervisor: prepares a Request for an Intern ([WHO 76.1](#)), attaches a description of the assignment to be undertaken specifying objectives and tasks (i.e., Terms of Reference), along with a copy of the intern's CV and other credentials. The Intern Supervisor ensures the intern candidate meets WHO's intern eligibility criteria. Proof of health care coverage and current or recent schooling affiliation must be attached to support this request for intern. It is essential that all interns have proper health care insurance coverage that includes Switzerland during their internship.

Note: interns are not recorded within GSM.

150 The Technical Unit Director/Coordinator: based on the Request for an Intern (WHO 76.1), an approving authority

signs a Letter for Intern ([WHO 76.2](#)) which is sent to the intern candidate for their signature and returned to WHO. Included with the Letter for Intern (WHO 76.2) are:

- Attachment 1 [Conditions for Internships/Voluntary Assignment](#) with the World Health Organization;
- Attachment 2 [Confidentiality Undertaking \(Intern or Volunteer\)](#);
- Attachment 3 [Designation, Change or Revocation of Beneficiary \(Intern or Volunteer\)](#)
- Attachment 4 Terms of Reference
- Attachment 5 [Welcome sheet \(s\)](#) (about joining the WHO Intern on -line community)

160 **The Technical Unit:** sends by post the signed Letter for Intern (WHO 76.2), along with attachments, to the intern for their review and signature. In addition, the AA may also scan these documents and send via email.

NOTE: The Technical Unit maintains a complete file for each intern in their area. All pertinent files for the intern, including all of the attachments listed above, are to be kept in this file.

170 **The Intern:** signs the Letter for Intern (WHO 76.2) as well as the Conditions for Internships, Confidentiality Undertaking and Designation of Beneficiary and returns all to WHO. The intern may be asked to hand carry these documents for submission on their initial day of the internship. The signed and counter-signed Letter for Intern (WHO 76.2) is used to secure the WHO ID badge for the intern. Following the Welcome Sheet, the intern should immediately request membership in WHO's Intern on-line community to learn about living in Geneva and their accommodations options.

180 **The Technical Unit:** sends a copy of the signed and counter-signed Letter for Intern (WHO 76.2) to INS, along with a PTAE0 number for the WHO group accident insurance coverage. Any extensions of the internship and/or any amendments to any of the attachments must also be communicated by the technical unit to INS before any amendments or extensions commence.

190 **The Technical Unit** is responsible for ensuring the intern's contact details are available and kept up to date in the White Pages, ensuring active and inactive dates do not extend greater than two weeks prior to and following the designated internship period.

200 WHO does not agree to execute any agreements proposed or required by a sponsor, university or equivalent institution. By signing the form: Letter for Intern WHO 76.2, interns confirm that they or their sponsor (university, institute, etc.) will meet all expenses for travel and subsistence and that they have adequate health insurance coverage which includes coverage for the country of the assignment.

210 When offering an internship, the receiving programme agrees to:

- ensure that an intern's assignment is related to his/her field of study, meaningful for both the programme and the intern, and at the appropriate level of complexity and variety.
- review progress regularly and provide adequate feedback and coaching/mentoring during the internship.
- provide office accommodation and related support facilities to enable the intern to undertake the assignment.
- at the end of the internship, prepare a written [evaluation](#) of the intern's performance and provide the intern with feedback (see [sample attached](#)).

220 When accepting an internship, interns agree to:

- conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the standards of conduct expected of a person working in an international environment in a specialized agency of the United Nations system.
- refrain from any conduct that would adversely reflect on WHO or on the receiving department and not engage in any activity which is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the Organization.
- provide the receiving programme with a copy of all materials prepared during the internship. Interns may not disclose or make use of any unpublished or confidential information that comes to their knowledge in the course of their internship. The provisions relating to texts prepared for publication apply also to interns.
- submit a written report at the end of the internship to be reviewed by the supervisor and other interested parties.

230 Interns are expected to devote themselves full-time to the assignments of the receiving unit for the period of the internship.

240 Either the Organization or the intern may end the internship before its completion, normally with one week's notice.

[top](#)

Status of Interns

250 Interns do not have the status of WHO staff members and shall not represent the Organization in any official capacity.

[top](#)

Employment following internship

260 The purpose of the internship programme is to complement an intern's studies. Interns shall not take up any form of contractual arrangement with the Organization as a staff member or non-staff member for a period of three months following the end of the internship. Any employment with WHO shall be subject to established recruitment and selection procedures.

[top](#)

Official travel

270 While official travel is not encouraged, interns may exceptionally be required to travel to accompany a staff member on official travel to locations with a security rating no higher than Phase I. In such cases, the technical programme must ensure that appropriate administrative action is taken to facilitate the official travel of the intern for the period concerned. The technical programme must also ensure that the health insurance of the intern provides adequate coverage, including coverage for the country of destination.

[top](#)

Accident Insurance

280 Persons participating in WHO activities, including those providing voluntary services without remuneration, who are not covered under other insurance policies used by WHO, are covered by a group accident insurance policy (see [Annex 16.B](#)) which provides compensation for accidental disablement or death and coverage of medical expenses resulting from accidents which occur within the period of assignment. The period of assignment begins upon reporting to duty on the first day in service and ends at the close of business on the last day in service prior to departure from the duty station. Coverage does not apply to accidents which occur outside the period of assignment. Accidents which are not eligible for coverage include, for example, accidents occurring during travel to and from the duty station of assignment.

[top](#)

Contributions

290 The premium for accident insurance is based on the fixed lump sum ("basic amount") of US \$ 61 200 and is paid in its entirety by the Organization, the amount being charged to a PTAE0 indicated on the Letter for Interns (WHO 76.2). The premium per day of coverage is US \$1.30 per day.)

300 This insurance can be obtained only if a copy of the WHO 76.2 reaches INS prior to commencement of the assignment. The WHO 76.2 must indicate the name of the person, date of birth, and exact period of assignment. Extensions of originally agreed internship periods require a revised form WHO 76.2 to be issued and provided to INS in advance of the expiration date.

[top](#)

Benefits

310 Compensation due from the insurance for medical expenses related to an accident may be advanced by the Organization on presentation of receipted bills pending settlement by the insurance company.

320 In case of death, the benefit is paid to the beneficiary designated by the insured person.

[top](#)

Claims procedure

330 If an accident occurs that is likely to lead to a claim, and particularly if death or disablement results from an accident, the insurance company must be notified as soon as possible by [INS](#) at headquarters, but in any case within three calendar months of the date of an accident resulting in death or disablement. The accidental death of an insured person must be reported immediately to [SEC](#) and INS.

340 Such accidents as are likely to result in a claim must be reported by supervisors and/or the insured person to INS and SEC at headquarters, by completing form WHO 417. Where accidents may involve third party liability, form WHO 800 must also be completed and submitted to INS and SEC. Form WHO 418 shall be completed in all cases by the attending physician and returned to the Director, [HMS](#).

350 Claims for the reimbursement of medical expenses should be made in writing and sent at the end of the treatment to INS at headquarters. Claims from the regions must have the approval of the [RSP](#) and be sent to INS at headquarters

through the [RBFO](#). Supporting bills must be attached accompanied by proof of payment. The full name and address of the claimant's bank and the bank account number must be given. Claims for medical expenses must be received within three months of the end of treatment.

[top](#)

Limitation of risk

360 The insurance company's liability under all items of the schedules of the policies combined for persons travelling by air as passengers is limited to US \$ 15 000 000 per aircraft, regardless of the number of insured persons traveling thereon. If the sums otherwise payable to the insured persons total more than this limit, the amount is paid to WHO, which will divide it among the insured as it deems suitable.

370 The limitation of liability to US \$ 15 000 000 per aircraft may be amended for any particular flight when the written consent of the insurance company is sought and granted before commencement of the flight in question (see [Insurance Cover During Air Travel](#) for the procedure for taking out additional insurance).

[top](#)

Volunteers

380 It is not WHO policy to engage people to carry out work without compensation. There may, however, be occasions when an individual, whose experience and professional background would allow them to make a contribution to the work of a technical programme, could be authorized to carry out specific activities on a voluntary basis on WHO premises under the supervision of a staff member. Volunteers could be on sabbatical leave from either their government or their employing institution and be available for a clearly defined period.

390 Any offer from a volunteer should be evaluated by the technical programme with a view to ensuring that the experience and professional background of the individual would contribute to the work of the technical programme.

400 The administrative provisions concerning internships, as detailed above, apply also to volunteers, with the exception of the following:

- The learning element of the assignment is not essential, as volunteers are expected to bring their experience and knowledge to the work of the programme.
- It is expected that volunteers will have finished their studies and have relevant work experience.

[top](#)

[1] A "staff member" is a person employed by WHO on a continuing, fixed-term, or temporary appointment under Staff Rule 420, or persons employed by WHO as conference and other short-term service staff on temporary appointments of 60 days or less under Staff Rule 1320.

[top](#)

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