

PRACTICAL TRAINING IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE PROGRAMMES

‘Practice makes perfect’

The stages of the practical training programme (30 credits):

Basic practical training 15 credits

- After the first year of basic practical training
- Reporting

Professional practical training 15 credits.

- Professional practical training in the final stage of studies and possible combining with thesis work
- Reporting

At the **Saimaa University of Applied Sciences**, the scope of the Bachelor of Business Administration degree programme is 210 credits, of which practical training constitutes 30. (Decree of Studies in Polytechnic Education 3.3.1995/256).

These practical training instructions are meant for the use of both students and employers.

Further information on questions relating to practical training is available from the person in charge of practical training at the Faculty of Business Administration at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences:

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1. THE OBJECTIVES OF PRACTICAL TRAINING

On the basis of the objectives of the degree programmes, practical training aims at increasing skills related to working life and professional expertise. Through practical training, the aim is to influence upwardly-mobile career development from performance-level tasks to planning, expert and supervisor tasks. Target-oriented and well-planned practical training timed to coincide with a break in theoretical studies also increases study motivation.

For the student, practical training is an educational stage combining theory and practice, which provides the opportunity to apply and test out expertise acquired in studies, and creates a foundation for students to evaluate their own skills and develop themselves. The ability to evaluate one's own skills is important in modern working life, where supervisory tasks are increasingly the responsibility of the employee him/herself.

For the employer, practical training gives the organisation new and up-to-date expertise and also acts as a channel for recruitment. Mutual benefit is increased by combining practical training with the 15-credit thesis completed during the final stage of studies. Thesis work may undertaken for needs of the business community as follows:

- surveys
- studies
- projects
- development projects

2. CONTENT

Practical training may be performed in companies in Finland or abroad, in public administration or in some other suitable organisation. In some cases, working as a private entrepreneur may also be acceptable. In such a case, the student must agree in advance with the person in charge of practical training on the content and documentation required.

2.1. Basic practical training (15 credits)

The aim of practical training is to orientate the student about working tasks based on the objectives of the degree programme on a general level.

The focus areas of practical training are theoretical and personal learning, career planning, organisational skills, interactive skills, general skills required in working life and personal working input. Business expertise, responsibility, diligence, accuracy and precision are also emphasised.

Professional practical training related to elective studies (15 credits)

Professional practical training based on elective studies chosen by the student goes deeply into a certain practical area of elective studies. Focus areas in learning are the enhancement of expertise and professional skills, the development of problem-solving skills, increasing creativity and understanding the basis of productivity, profitability and entrepreneurship. We recommend that the student selects a location for practical training, which is favourable to the achievement of the student's personal career plan.

We also recommend that professional practical training related to elective studies is combined with thesis work. For this reason, as early as during basic practical training, it is beneficial also to look at the business community from a perspective of thesis topics, and to consider how to link the thesis work to the development needs of the practical training location. In that way, the entire practical training process and its reporting can also create, establish and serve the objectives of the thesis work.

3. TIMING OF WORK PLACEMENT

All practical training takes place during study time, so work experience acquired prior to the start of studies cannot be approved as practical training. For the purposes of performing practical training, a special

practical training period is reserved each year, the timing of which is notified separately. Practical training may also be performed during the summer and at other times that are free of studies.

The 30-credit practical training required for the degree must consist of at least two separate periods of employment.

Professional practical training may not be performed until after the completion of basic practical training.

The students perform basic practical training (15 credits) in one or two periods in the summer between the first and second years of study. Professional practical training (15 credits) is timed to occur in the final stage of studies, and usually takes place in the third summer and/or during the period immediately preceding or following it.

4. SCOPE AND DIMENSIONING OF PRACTICAL TRAINING

One week of practical training corresponds to 1.5 credits and comprises five working days. The length of the working day is what has been agreed in the collective bargaining agreement of the industry or locally, but must be at least seven hours. The approval as practical training of part-time work during studies must be agreed with the person in charge of practical training. Part-time work is counted as practical training so that the accrued credits are calculated either on the basis of working hours or working days completed. If practical training takes place as shift work, no more credits can be accrued than in normal daytime work.

In addition to actual work, practical training credits also include reporting.

5. GETTING A PRACTICAL TRAINING PLACE

The student him/herself must find a practical training place. In the search for a training place, the person in charge of practical training and other teachers may assist, if necessary. Other sources of help may include notice boards, company websites, e-mail and the national job search service of the universities of applied sciences (www.jobstep.net). This service is free-of-charge to both students and employers, but requires registration.

It is advisable to start the search for a place in good time before the practical training period starts.

Approval of the practical training place is agreed with the person in

charge of practical training or the student's tutor prior to the start of the training on the basis of the practical training notice.

Any remuneration that may be paid during the period of practical training is agreed between the employer and the student. If practical training is performed under local employment conditions, the student concludes a normal employment contract **and no special practical training agreement is required**. In a case of unpaid practical training, the trainee and the employer must prepare a practical training agreement.

The Student Affairs Office can provide information on questions concerning student grants.

6. PRACTICAL TRAINING ABROAD

Practical training may also be performed abroad under the same conditions as in Finland. Those undertaking such training abroad may be granted travel and/or income support based on the framework for funding granted for the purpose by the Ministry of Education. Special instructions for applying for grants are available through the International Office.

7. GUIDANCE DURING PRACTICAL TRAINING

During practical training, the student is overseen by both a person appointed by the University of Applied Sciences and by the employer. At the Faculty of Business Administration, practical training is overseen by the student's tutor. Agreeing on a personal time for guidance is also possible with the person in charge of practical training.

As far as practical training abroad is concerned – especially in matters concerning practical arrangements – guidance is also available from the International Office and Training Manager.

If necessary, the supervisor of practical training should be in contact with the employer. A visit to the practical training location is always arranged if the student, employer or university consider it necessary.

8. REPORTING

The report is a summary of practical training carried out. Practical training is approved on the basis of the report and testimonial of service. A practical training report is prepared separately for basic and professional

practical training.

The scope of the report is 6-10 pages of text together with a cover and contents page. The report should have a standard layout. A copy of the testimonial of service verified as authentic must be attached to the report.

We recommend that the student show the report to his/her employer before returning it. In that way, it can be ensured that the report does not divulge information, which the employer considers as commercially secret and so unsuitable for external reporting. We also recommend that the report be delivered to the student's tutor as soon as practical training has been completed, but no later than by the end of November. The student must keep a copy of the report, until the mark of approval has been made on the study register.

Further reporting instructions are issued separately.

9. MARK OF APPROVAL

For basic and professional practical training, the person in charge of practical training enters the pass approval in the study register with the word 'approved'.