

FACT SHEET PRACTICAL SEMESTER (PS)

B. Sc. *Umwelttechnologie* (UT) and *Biotechnologie* (BT), StuPO 20212

1. Prerequisites

As laid out in the study and examination regulations (StuPO), the practical semester (PS) is intended for the fifth semester. Only students who have successfully completed all required assessments of the first study level are admitted to the PS, in accordance with Art. 44, para. 3 of StuPO UT, and Art. 47, para. 3 of StuPO BT, respectively.

An exemption from the PS is not possible. A postponement may be permitted only with a justified request to the Head of the Examination Board; to prove that you have been unable to find an adequate position, despite investing considerable efforts, you must submit at least ten letters of rejection from relevant employers.

2. Contact at Hochschule Offenburg

Practical Semester Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Dragos Saracsan

UT and BT Internship Office: Ms. Heidi Hug

3. Application, timeframe and procedure

Arranging for the PS position is basically your own responsibility. A list with addresses of established companies is available at the Internship Office, as are previous PS students' experience reports. In addition, current offers are posted on the notice board of the Internship Office.

You and the company offering the PS position will enter a contract, which must also be approved by the Internship Office. Sample contracts are available at the Office, but are not mandatory to use. A copy of the contract must be submitted to the Internship Office in good time before the start of the practical semester (at the very latest by the re-registration deadline for the academic semester).

You will also need the contract to enroll for the PS at the University. Reregistration, including payment of the semester fees, is required for the PS, as you will remain enrolled and also be insured against accidents.

In your PS application, you should enclose the *Zwischenzeugnis* (interim report) or *Notenbescheinigung* (grade transcript) as proof of your academic record; however, you should not enclose the grade sheet which documents any failed exam attempts, sick leaves or other absences. On request, the Internship Office can insert an addition in the grade transcript confirming that all exams of the first study level have been passed; the Office can also issue a certificate, required by some companies, that the PS is a mandatory part of your degree course as laid down in the relevant StuPO.

It is strongly recommended to start looking and applying for the PS position at least from the beginning of the preceding semester. For an internship abroad you should even apply a full year in advance, because arranging for the necessary visa and possible scholarship may take longer than expected. For further information on internships abroad, please contact the International Office (IO). Both the International Center and the Career Center of the University also offer regular information events and services that are helpful in the context of the PS, such as application-portfolio reviews in both German and English language.

The duration of the PS and the remuneration will be agreed between you and the company. According to Art. 4 StuPO, at least 95 days of attendance are required, not counting company holidays, vacation days, sick days or any other days of absence, e.g. for required events at the University.

Additional required courses of the fifth semester are held during the semester break between the fifth and sixth semester (approx. mid-February to mid-March). These courses must be taken into account in the planning and duration of the contract. We recommend that, when completing the PS in the winter semester, you start work or enter the contract by September 1 at the latest. An earlier start is possible, while a later start should be agreed with the Internship Office.

4. Purpose and content of the internship

The purpose of the practical semester is for you to get to know your chosen work field through practical engineering activities in a relevant company or institute, and enable you to make meaningful decisions towards specialization within environmental and energy process engineering or biotechnology. You should therefore be actively involved in projects at the company.

Further objectives of the PS are:

- confidence in your own calculations, designs and assessments
- structured processing of assignments
- awareness of costs and of the concerns of the company and its employees
- understanding of the consequences of your actions for the environment and for society

These objectives can be accomplished, for example, in companies in the energy-supply, process-engineering, chemical, biotechnical, pharmaceutical, food or raw-materials industries, and through the following training contents:

- analysis tasks in the field, company lab or test lab
- preparation of mass and energy balances
- implementation and assessment of lab trials
- assembly and maintenance work
- optimization of processes, e. g. for reducing environmental pollution

The exact contents are also determined by operational requirements. If possible, several work areas should be covered.

Keep in mind that with your activities during the PS – in addition to your choice of study program, electives profile and the topic of your Bachelor's thesis – you are sending important signals to potential future employers!

5. Documentation, submission of documents, credit recognition

(a) You will prepare a work report on the PS that should consist of at least fifteen text pages, including illustrations and supplements where appropriate. The cover sheet should contain your name, student ID, name and address of the company, and the period under review, including the number of attendance days. The report should be in the form of a continuous text with meaningful paragraphs, preferably with illustrations and pictures; it should not be a serially written daily or weekly report.

The report is to be signed by the employer, who thereby also confirms that no confidential information leaves the company. It is then submitted to the Practical Semester Supervisor, with a copy to the Internship Office. Email is preferred, but submission in hard copy is still possible.

(b) After completing the PS, you will submit a short personal experience report in hard copy, not exceeding one page, in which you outline your impressions of your work, the company, and the support you received; without the employer's signature.

(c) Also after completing the PS, you will submit a work reference or confirmation of your activities electronically as a scan which proves that you have fulfilled the required 95 days of attendance at the company.

(d) After completing the PS and before beginning the Bachelor thesis at the latest, a presentation on the practical semester is to be given at the subject-specific Colloquium. The presentation will be assessed by the Practical Semester Supervisor and the Head of the Colloquium.

The PS is recognized with 24 credits if all required documents outlined in (a) to (c) have been submitted to the Examination Office by the deadline listed in the University Calendar at the beginning of the following semester. If the documents are not available at this time without specifying reasons, the Practical Semester is considered not passed. It can be repeated only once.

6. Taking Exams during the Practical Semester

During the PS there is no obligation to take any examinations or repeat examinations. However, you can still take part in as many exams or repeat exams as you wish, but must register for them yourself (i. e. you won't be registered automatically).