

# Global internships for Digital Libraries Masters' students: mentors' and students' perspectives on challenges and success factors

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# Overview International Master DILL: the Profile of the Digital Librarian

- Social role
  - Learning, multiculturalism
- Interdisciplinarity of background
- Master level
- Internship



DILL 5 group, photo by Leonéia Evangelista

# DILL Internship Program Structure

The Internship is considered 5 ECTS and lasts around 125 hours (about 4 weeks).

The work being done is related to what is taught at the DILL International Master Course and is at an appropriate level of professionalism.

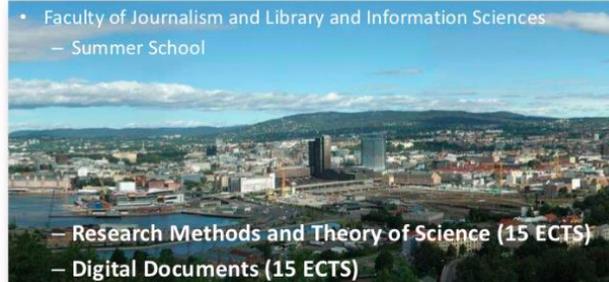
There are one or more learning outcomes to the student's work that can be stated at the outset of the internship and evaluated at the end.

Internship takes place at the end of the third semester of the second year.

...first semester

DILL

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences



...second semester  
Tallinn University

DILL

Information Studies



...third semester  
Parma University

DILL



Digital Library Learning - International  
Master Programme

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# DILL Internship Programme Objectives

## Research methods

- to select and apply appropriate research methods
- to achieve critical and analytical skills on user studies

## Soft skills

- the ability to work in a team
- capacity for interaction with information users and clients
- capacity for planning, problem solving and decision-taking
- to become aware of the professional world and its infrastructure
- to be able to acquire positive professional ethics
- to increase employability by gathering evidence of experience.

# Global DILL Internship Research

## Research questions

- 1) What are the mentors reflections on expectations of interning students?
- 2) What are the reflections and the challenges mentors and students face during the internship?
- 3) What do mentors and students consider to be the internship elements effective for learning?

# UK context... Onsite



# UK context .... On site

Loughborough University - UK

Two campuses - one in Loughborough (East Midlands) and one in London

18,851 students in Loughborough and 1027 in London

Loughborough campus is 1.78 sq kilometres (440 acres)

Loughborough University is 5th best university in “Sunday Time Good University Guide”

In the QS World University rankings in 2020 Loughborough was best university in the world for sport

# Loughborough University Library



# Loughborough University Library

Library is on 4 floors in a building the shape of an upturned pyramid!

72 staff working in three Teams: Academic Services, Research & Content Delivery and User Services

1370 study spaces

250 open access PCs

700,000 print items

USA/Virtual Only!



**1<sup>st</sup> virtual student:  
Iskander Rakhmatullaev, Uzbekistan Republic**



**3<sup>rd</sup> virtual student:  
Sara Valla, Parma Italy**



Now a librarian at  
Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien  
(Vienna, Austria)



**2<sup>nd</sup> virtual student: *(but we met first in person!)*  
Annabelle Jacobs, Hamburg Germany**

**4<sup>th</sup> virtual student: Gulchekhra Rakhmatullaeva,  
from Uzbekistan, living in TX**

October/November 2014



# Methodology: Interviews

- Reflect on the **practical skills** that you acquired:
  - If you were involved in a project, what was the experience like?
  - Share in more detail the project skills and the research methods and skills you learned?
  - How were involved in collaboration and what other employment skills did you learn?
  - Describe in more detail the communication skills you gained? particularly in the virtual only environment?
- Did you find this program helped with **cultural competencies**/how can we improve this skill set ?
- Many of you said the internship time **should be longer** - can you speak to how much longer/in what ways?
- How did your **mentor & environment** provide you with support? How were you made to feel welcome and involved? The environment - many spoke to the library holistically as a positive but how does that translate to **virtual**; how did you see the environment and how can that be improved? For **physical** internship environment, what make it so special/tell me more.
- **Any other comments** about your internship and its relationship with your life and career?

# Methodology: Survey

Which of the following internships did you experience?

- Loughborough, UK
- Virtual (USA)

To what extent has the internship impacted on your career and allowed you to apply those skills gained?

Very significantly      1      2      3      4      5      Not at all

Please explain:

Long answer text

Describe the three major skills you acquired on your internship? Please explain your choices:

Long answer text

What were the three best things about your internship? Please explain your choices:

Long answer text

What are the three things you would have changed about your internship? Please explain your changes:

Long answer text

If you were organising an internship for a DILL student where you work in 2020, what are the three major skills you would like them to acquire?

Long answer text

Please include any other comments you may have about your internship:

Long answer text

Are you available and interested in being interviewed to talk about their internship.

- Yes/Maybe
- No

# Best Practices: Onboarding & Orientation

- More difficult in a virtual only internship, **but just as important to understand the context & culture of your library.**
  - *Set up a shared onboarding document; review with them, help prioritize*
  - *What do they/can they have access too? Find a balance.*
- Get to know them a little more personally (without invading privacy) Show you care about them as a person, and their studies too.
  - *chat about books, “what you do for fun,” Virtual - eat a meal over zoom together*
- Ensure a social element/connect them with others to make them feel welcome.
  - *Coffees in library cafe; virtual game hour or trivia on Slack.*

# Best Practices: Communicate Often & Transparently

- A must to build trust *especially in an online only relationship*. Be open and honest as you can
- Feedback regularly is important. Touch base weekly. Have set meeting times to anchor them.
- Agree on communication tools/other tools
- Determine how they will communicate with a larger group & teams in the library
  - *how does this happen virtually only? (ex: Slack)*

Photo by Anna Maria Tammaro



# Best Practices: Set Learning Outcomes, Goals, Expectations

- What do they want out of this time? How can you both align for solid learning goals ?
- What can be done virtually?
  - *Before saying no, be creative and explore how that might be done in a remote way.*
- Determine up front any extra outcomes: *beyond their projects/tasks, do they or you want more? A final presentation for the library on their experiences? or about libraries in their country? a paper or article?*
- Expect the best by clarifying expectations and setting up a work plan.

# Best Practices: Be Organized

- Ask for their input on tools *that will help you both* to manage the work
- Together set a schedule that provides a mixture of down time, independent work and team work
- Time zones are critical. This is why communication/tools are critical. Stick to regular meetings to stay connected.
- *For in person interns*
  - look to introduce range of activities such as visits to other university libraries, tours of university other than library
  - Be prepared to invest a lot of effort and energy into providing support and guidance for interns' travel, accommodation, weekend activities
- Try to involve as many library staff as possible in the Interns experiences so there is a sense of ownership and involvement - must be organized to arrange this for all.

## Best Practices: Cultural Competencies/Awareness

- students from various countries and background its critical to have cultural awareness and to be flexible to their needs
- Be mindful of hidden biases and blind spots



Photo by Anna Maria Tamaro

# Competencies

## **Collaboration**

*“The collaboration between fellow trainees, colleagues and supervisors allowed me to enhance my collaboration skills to be an effective team player as well as the team leader.”*

*“Collaboration with other interns was essential throughout the portal evaluation. We had to work 2 weeks under pressure on this complex task. We also had to collaborate with library staff and were treated as partners”*

## **Communication**

*“The lessons learnt have given me the impulse to go on with my ability to make personal connections and to try to develop projects with foreign people and among groups”*

*· ““I also understood about informal communication such as when you were having coffee in the Café”*

*“For my personal communication, I learned about how to introduce myself, how to schedule and how to say what your goals are”*

## **Cultural awareness**

*“It was culturally very good – my English was not very good but it helped me develop”. “*

*I enjoyed the whole experience and we had free time to get more cultural insight. We had the chance to travel at weekends and also going to Library staff house for a meal was a positive experience”*

# Competencies

## **Employment skills**

*“To manage a working routine with colleagues planning tasks and organising activities, formal and informal meetings”*

*“Improvement of: Language skills (my direct supervisor patiently corrected all my written mistakes)”*

*“I also learnt about time management and relationship in libraries. I was based in the academic librarians’ office and I learned a lot by seeing how people interacted there”.*

*“I learned about organising work such as how to manage meetings and how to communicate with different people”*

## **Establishing user needs**

*“The acknowledgment with library users’ preferences and applying this to development of library services”*

*“Get first-hand experiences in Loughborough how consumer-oriented management practices can be used in that library”*

*“The study of experience of foreign library structure and functionality. The major skills were comparison between local (UZbek) and foreign university libraries -functionality, digital services, digital services technologies”*

*“I learnt about how to pay attention to users and I came to understand that the library needs to meet its users’ needs”*

# Competencies

## **Problem solving**

*“The ability to deal with obstacles”*

*“Problem solving and critical thinking skills (I got enough freedom to choose some of the sources of information and how to present the results)”*

## **Project skills**

*“The project I received and the opportunity to develop it in that environment - librarians, researchers, library's resources - gave me a useful lesson how to give students-phd motivation and also to plan and provide them, according to resources, the "ideal" environment to practice research”*

*“Both working in a project and running a project provided me with real understanding of project management skills”*

*“The project was around evaluation of a library portal, it was a joint project with 3 others. We had to work with library management and it offered great experience and it was challenging to find criteria. It would have been impossible to have a higher level of responsibility and it provided us with practical experience. Having to work on something concrete for the project was good”.*

# Competencies

## Research methods and skills

*“During projects data collection and application of the research method tools/instruments was a great chance to get better into practicing these tools and learning implementation of a research”*

*“Making website evaluation in teamwork, then building up a small - scale individual research project and get really major analytical skills in library management field by comparing the professional practices and environment in several UK academic libraries”*

Photo by Anna Maria Tammaro



# Conclusion

Skills acquired in the internship that have been useful to students in their career:

- Professional network
- Virtual collaboration

Reflections on what mentors and teachers would do differently:

- Internship length



Photo by Anna Maria Tamaro

# contact



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# thank you

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