

Frequent Asked Questions

about Artificial Intelligence Master Programme

Q. Is the language certificate mandatory for the admission?

A. The certificate is mandatory. Application without certificate will not be evaluated.

Q. Is it possible to start the application and upload the English certificate later?

A. It's possible within the deadlines of the intake calendar published in the Admission page on the website.

Q. Is the online form mandatory?

A. Yes, it is. Applications will not be evaluated until the online form has been filled in and submitted.

Q. Are there different deadlines to apply on Studenti Online and to submit the form online?

A. Both the Studenti Online application and the form online must be submitted within the deadlines of the intake calendar.

Q. What if I have to update the information in the form online?

A. You can submit it multiple times and only the last one will be considered.

Q. When can I fill in the study plan? What if I miss the deadlines?

A. You can submit your study plan for 2021/22 only in the following time frames:

- First period: **11th October 2021 – 12th November 2021**
- Second period: **14th February 2022 - 11th March 2022**

Similar time frames are defined each year for the current academic year. It is not possible in any way to submit the study plan outside these periods, except for type-E activities. These are the activities related to the final exam. For example, if you initially opted for an internship abroad for the preparation of the final exam, but later you decide not to go abroad, then you may modify the type-E activities in your study plan even outside of the official time frames, to reflect the new type of work you plan to carry out for the preparation of your final exam.

Q. What are Project Works about? How are they organized?

A. Project Works (PWs) are activities without frontal lectures, aimed at expanding one's knowledge or skills in one of the subjects that are already in the study plan. While nothing formally prevents you from adding to your study plan a PW associated with a course that is not in your study plan, we strongly discourage that. Usually, PWs are conducted in autonomy, with loose supervision by the teaching staff responsible for the associated course, and they start after passing or at least mastering the subject of the associated course. However, in some cases where the associated course already has a project as a means of assessment, the teaching staff might accept as a PW a significant extension of the regular course's project. In that case, the student may deliver a single, larger project that counts both for the regular course and the PW.

While regular courses result in a grade on scale of 30, PWs result in a pass grade only, which does not contribute to the GPA. In any case, the specifics (topics, exam modalities, ...) are up to the lecturer of the corresponding course to decide. Please refer to the official information published on the university website.

Q. What are the main differences between the various types of internships?

a. **Internship for final examination (abroad or otherwise)** is an elective course unit that can be carried out as of the academic year in which it is available as a study plan option onwards (18 credits). Students interested in carrying it out must:

1. put it in their study plan, as explained in the section Preparing the study plan;
2. autonomously (and well in advance) search a Host Structure where to carry out the internship and verify with them that it is indeed possible to carry out the internship. If this step is successful and the internship is confirmed by the Host Structure, students must:
3. decide objectives and plan activities of the internship, in accordance with the Academic Tutor and the Host Structure's contact person;
4. submit an internship request, according to the procedure Application for an internship at the University of Bologna.

The Internship for final examination can be carried out also abroad, thanks to several mobility opportunities such as Call for Thesis Abroad, Erasmus+ Study, Erasmus+ Training TBC and more. Check this page <https://www.unibo.it/en/international/internship-abroad/internship-abroad>

b. **Working experiences or experiences beyond university.** Students can submit a request for recognition of such activities whenever they want, under the following conditions:

- the request is made in the academic year that includes the internship activity;
- the internship activity is in the study plan.

Recognition of credits. The maximum number of credits that can be awarded for curricular internships is **12** while for internships for the final examination the limit is linked to the credits associated to the training activity in the study plan (**18**). To apply for credit recognition, you must submit the following documentation to the Student Administration Office:

- application form for recognition of extracurricular activities;
 - declaration of activities issued by the host organisation;
 - student's report on the activities carried out at the host organisation,
- by registered letter with return receipt or by appointment to be agreed (suitable forms are available for download from the university web site).

If and only if the recognition concerns the internship for final examination, in addition to the above documentation, you must include a declaration of the end of activities issued by the Thesis Supervisor, certifying the activity object of the request. Check this page <https://corsi.unibo.it/2cycle/artificial-intelligence/recognition-of-work-activities-as-a-curricular-internship>

Q. What is a typical procedure for carrying out a thesis/internship abroad?

A. The usual steps for carrying out an internship are:

1. student searches (by using search engines or professional networks, by consulting the list of internship offers here: <https://tirocini.unibo.it/tirocini/>, by talking to previous-year students or alumni networks, by asking faculty, etc) and makes a shortlist of candidate hosts/destinations;
2. student contacts HR or contacts in shortlist, sends CVs, does interviews, etc, until has one or more options to choose from;
3. depending on project subject, student contacts a faculty, usually chosen among the teaching staff of the AI degree, asking them to act as the academic advisor for the internship;
4. student and advisor agree on project aims and work plan. Eventually, student decides about which company and project;
5. student and company follow procedure to activate internship (see <https://corsi.unibo.it/2cycle/artificial-intelligence/internship-for-final-examination>);
6. academic advisor approves; work can start;

7. during the internship, there may or may not be periodic progress meetings with academic advisor. Usually, the work is done at the company without a structured interaction with the academic advisor;

8. when the work has advanced sufficiently to start writing the dissertation, and well before the deadlines for submitting the thesis, student contacts academic advisor to discuss thesis outline, decide writing plan, etc. This activity is part of the “final examination (6cfu)” and sufficient time and energy must be devoted to it. Writing a good dissertation is itself a learning activity. Bear in mind that the quality of the dissertation, not only the quality of the work done, will contribute to your evaluation and ultimately to your final graduation grade.

If the work is carried out with an academic research group, not at a company, the steps are similar, save for the activation of the internship, which is not required.

If the destination is abroad, the steps are also similar. The main difference is that to go abroad you will need to enter a competition for international mobility. Since the deadlines for such competitions are not so frequent, it is advised that you start with your search and contact the foreign host and local academic advisor well before the deadlines.

Q. How to fill in the Learning Agreement for study or traineeship and get the right recognition according to the activity in the study plan?

A. The most important document you must prepare before any Erasmus+ mobility is the Learning Agreement (LA). The LA is where you list all the activities you intend to carry out abroad and identify the corresponding activities in your study plan for official recognition after you return. The LA must be approved by the International Mobility Office and the professor in charge of mobility in each department.

If you go on mobility for traineeship and carry out work that will result in your master thesis, once you are back you will get the recognition of what is declared in the approved LA. Be aware that there are two different options: *Internship abroad for the preparation of the final examination* or *Preparation of the final examination abroad*. It is extremely important that the LA corresponds exactly to what you have in your study plan, otherwise the activity cannot be recognized.

Q. Until when are online exams guaranteed?

A. Online exams are guaranteed until May 31, 2022.

Q. What are suitable companies for an internship?

A. In principle, any company that does fundamental research in AI, develops AI solutions or intends to apply AI solutions may be a suitable candidate. You can find suitable companies by using search engines or professional networks, by consulting the list of internship offers here: <https://tirocini.unibo.it/tirocini/>, by talking to previous-year students or alumni networks, etc. Some faculty members have contacts with companies, so it may be worthwhile asking the lecturers of disciplines you particularly like if they are aware of internship offers. However, this should not replace your own search for opportunities, which is your responsibility.

Look for companies where you can learn something useful and that provide a healthy work environment you feel comfortable with. In the ideal case, the company will have an R&D team working on a specific project, and you will become part of that team. The project will already have well-defined objectives and the company considers it an important project and is eager to invest in it. Bear in mind that at the end of the internship you will use the work done and lessons learned to write your dissertation. A good dissertation will show your original contribution to solving a challenging problem, your awareness of the state of the art, such as existing solutions to similar problems and their limitations, will identify a clear motivation for doing the job, and demonstrate your analytical skills in discussing design choices, project results, limitations and future directions.

As you embark on an internship program, here's some questions you should ask yourself:

- Will the work I am being offered to carry out give me good quality material to put in my dissertation?
- Who am I going to learn useful stuff from at the company?
(if the project requires data:)
- Has the data been identified? Is the data available? Is it labeled?
(if the project requires interacting with people:)
- Have the people been identified? Are they going to be available?
- Do I want to spend the next 6 months of my life doing this?

Reimbursements, benefits, or stipends could also be factors in your decision, not only for the obvious reason, but also because they show a commitment from the hosting institution. However, do not let them be the main criterion. For example, you do not want to embark on a well-paid but ill-defined project where you find out later that the first three months of your internship will be devoted to creating a labeled dataset, because the data you need to carry out your work is not there. (That is, unless the objective of the thesis is to create a dataset, which is perfectly ok, if it is clear from the beginning).