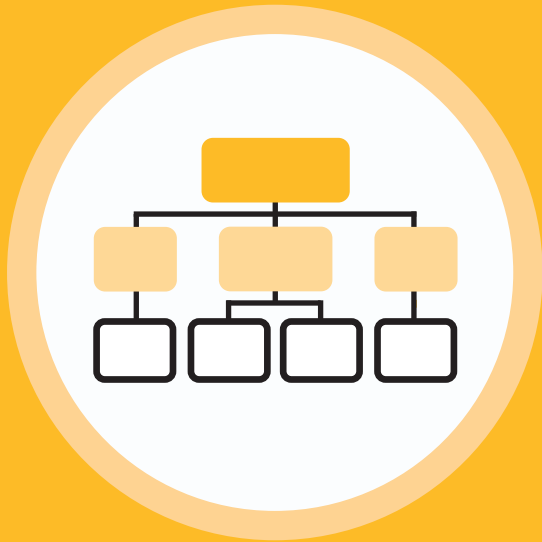# Project Plan for Study Projects
A roadmap for your tasks

How does this help me?

- You can keep track of your projects (e.g. modules, seminars, bachelor thesis…) and their accompanying tasks during the semester.

- You can evenly distribute your tasks over the semester and avoid stressful periods.

- Your project plan guides you through the semester and always shows you where you currently stand.

What is a project plan?

A project plan is a systematic method for keeping track of larger tasks ("projects") during the semester. It serves as a planning tool, checklist and guide and accompanies you throughout all phases of your project. There are usually 4 phases.

The individual phases are presented in more detail on the following pages.

Project initiation
This is where you define the type of project you are working on, the tasks that need to be completed and the goals and results you want to achieve.

Project planning
In this phase, you turn the results of your initiation phase into a concrete plan that you can implement.

Project execution
This is where you get down to business and tackle the project tasks you defined in the planning phase.

Project closure
At the end, you check whether you have completed all the tasks and achieved what you set out to accomplish.

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A "project plan" may sound like something only managers use, but it is actually great for your studies because you have lots of individual, self-contained tasks.

There are also very good apps and digital tools for project planning, e.g. *Asana* or *Zenkit*.

Literature:

Beifuss, Annika; Holzbauer, Ulrich (2020): Projektmanagement für Studierende. Strategie und Methode für ein erfolgreiches Studium. 2nd ed., Springer Verlag Fachmedien: Wiesbaden.
Ries, Antje (2018): Das Projekt Studium meistern. Erfolgreich studieren ohne sich zu verzetteln. UVK Verlag: München.
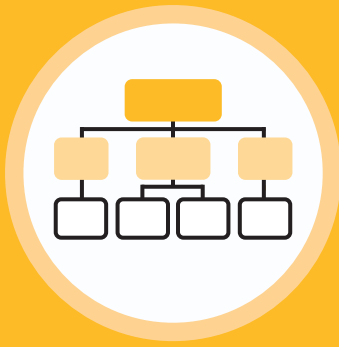
Start by defining your project:

- What type of project is it??
- What goals and results do you want to achieve?
- What tasks need to be completed? What do you need to make that happen?
- What are the general conditions?
- Are there other people involved?
- Are there any forseeable challenges or obstacles?

A solid project definition is key to better organizing and executing your project in the following phases. The project initiation is when you set the purpose and direction and determine where you want to go.

Tip: Setting **SMART goals** helps you set sensible and concrete goals.

SMART stands for:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant and
- Time-bound.

You can find out more about this in our handout: "SMART Goals":

Example

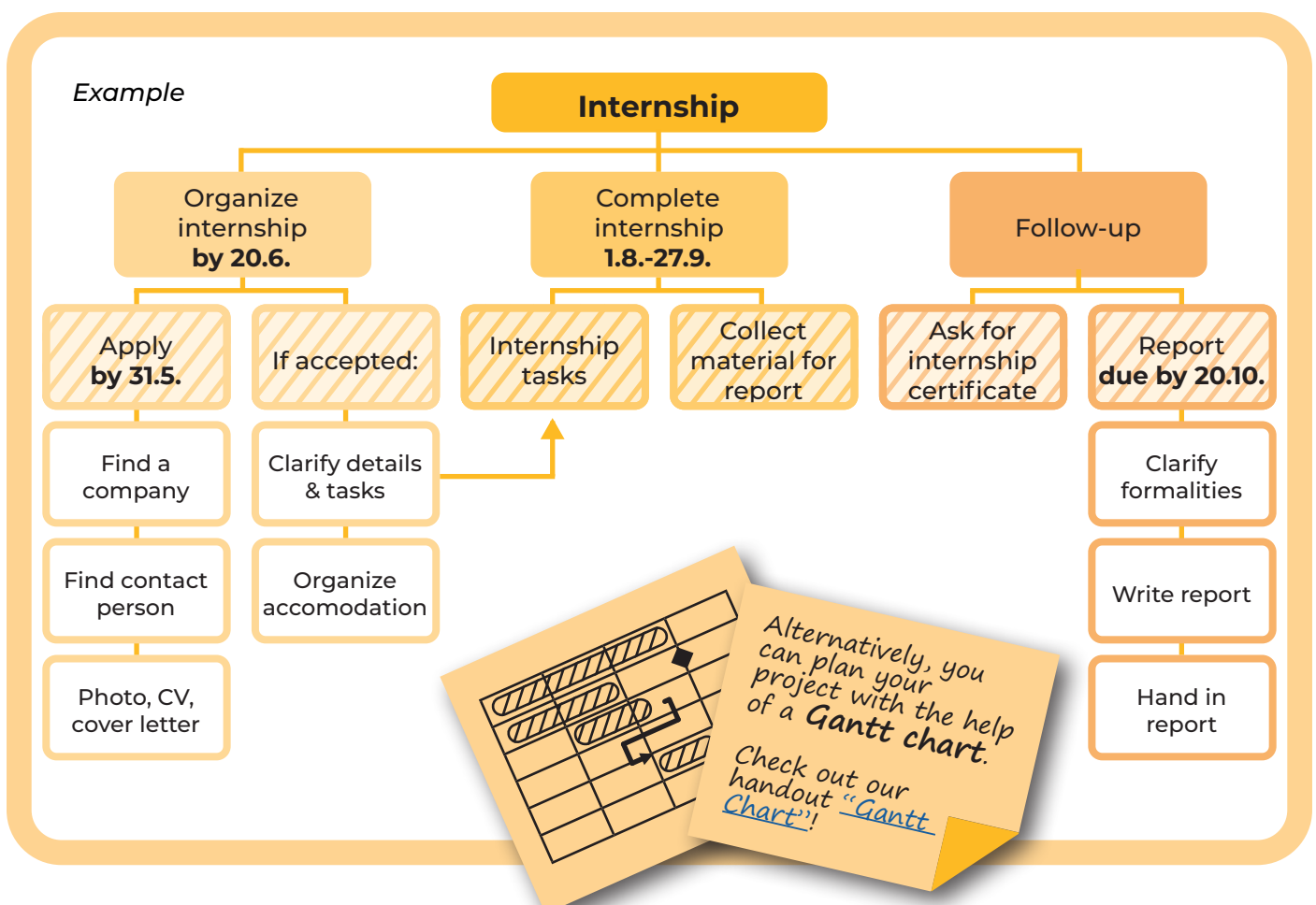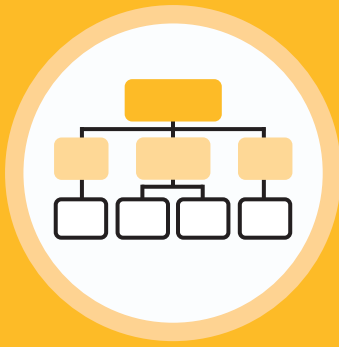| **Project: Internship**	
Goals: • Fulfill the requirements • Gain practical experience • Make contacts • Obtain a good internship certificate for my CV	**Possible obstacles:** • Competition for a spot • My own shyness • My own tendency to procrastinate
Tasks: • Write applications • Clarify details if accepted (start date, working hours, tasks, …) • Look for acommodation if necessary • Complete internship • Request internship certificate • Write internship report	**General conditions:** • 8 weeks duration during the semester break • See module manual for specific requirements **People involved:** • Prof. Dr. Mustermann (supervisor) • Future contact person during the internship
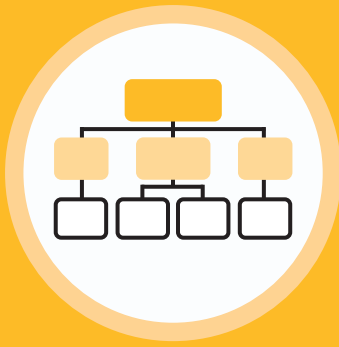
2. Project planning

This is the most important phase of the project. The better you structure your project and its tasks, the more precisely and purposefully you can accomplish everything later on.

Organize your project by writing down all the tasks and their subtasks, their sequence, the duration, and all deadlines and time limits. A good way to do this is with a **work breakdown structure (WBS)**.

You can create a WBS in a few simple steps: Start with the major tasks or phases and then break down each of them into smaller, more manageable subtasks. Finally, note all the important dates and deadlines directly in your WBS. This way, it can also serve as a timetable.

By using this method, you can see exactly which steps and subtasks are necessary to complete each major task of your project and get everything done on time.

Example

```
                              Internship

   Organize              Complete                  Follow-up
   internship            internship
   by 20.6.              1.8.-27.9.

 Apply      If accepted:  Internship  Collect      Ask for      Report
 by 31.5.                 tasks       material     internship   due by 20.10.
                                      for report   certificate

 Find a     Clarify                                             Clarify
 company    details                                             formalities
            & tasks

 Find       Organize                                            Write report
 contact    accomodation
 person

 Photo, CV,                                                     Hand in
 cover letter                                                   report
```

*Alternatively, you can plan your project with the help of a **Gantt chart**. Check out our handout "Gantt Chart"!*
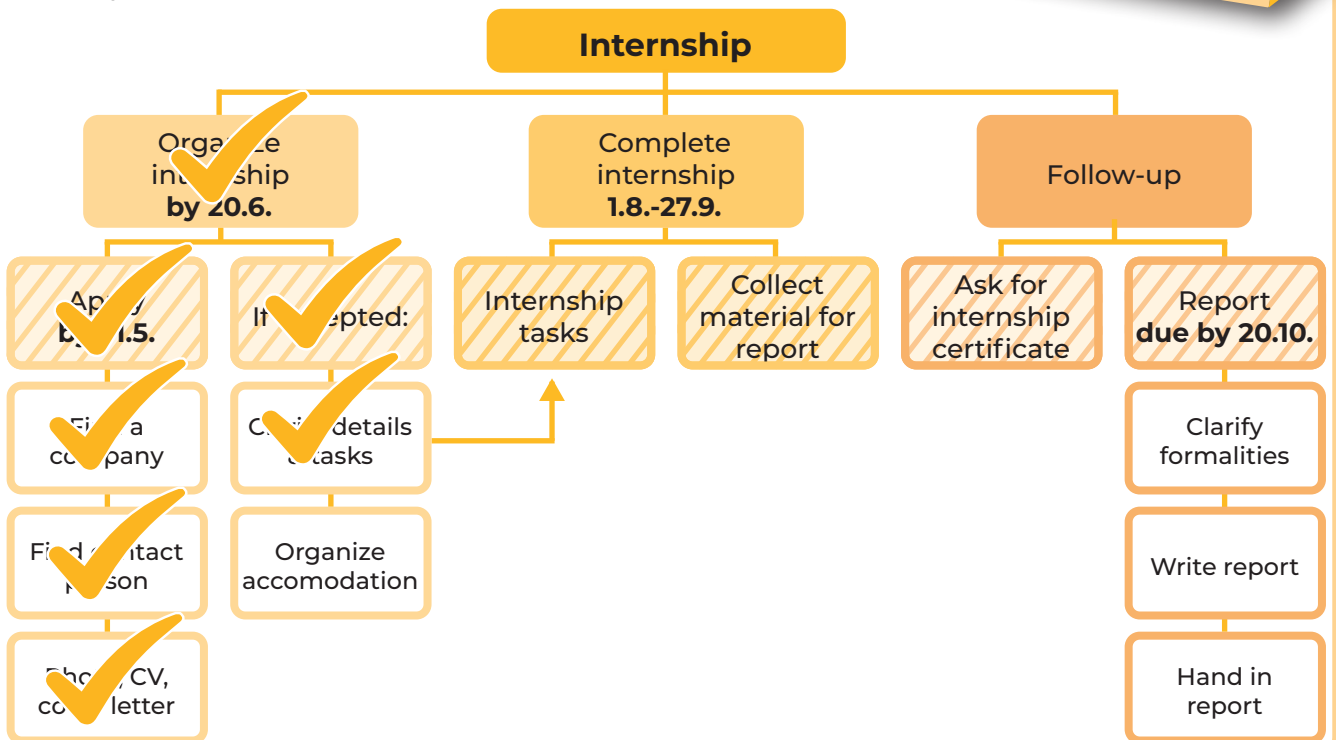
3. Project execution

The actual work takes place in this phase. This is where you work on the tasks that you outlined in the planning phase. As you complete task after tast, you monitor your project by tracking your progress. This phase ends when you have completed all the tasks.
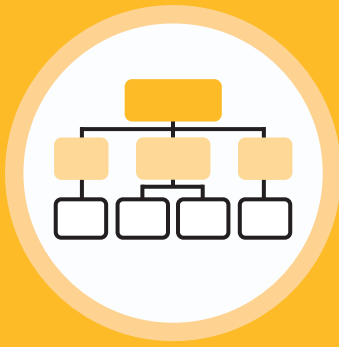
An easy way to keep an overview of your current work status is to check off the completed tasks directly in your WBS (see below).

However, you can also work with additional methods, such as a **Kanban board** (see on the right). On a Kanban board, you move cards with tasks between the three columns *To Do*, *In Progress* and *Done*, according to your progress.

To Do	In Progress	Done

You can find more information and a template in our handout „The Kanban Board".

Example

4. Project closure

This step marks the official end of your project. Here you not only check whether you have completed all the tasks, but also whether you have achieved your project goal and are satisfied with the results and the process. This phase is often neglected, but it is an important moment of self-reflection that will help you with your future projects.

Take a look back at your project:

- What went well?
- What did not go so well?
- What were the reasons for any difficulties or challenges?
- What do you want to do differently next time?

Example

Final reflexion on internship	
What went well? • Writing the application was easier than expected • The internship itself was great • Made lots of contacts • Got good tips for starting my career	**What did not go so well?** • Time pressure due to late responses from companies • Annoying phone calls because I did not realize there was a specific form I needed signed
	Possible reasons: • Companies need more time to review applications • Noticed extra requirements too late
What do I want to do differently next time? • Allow more time for the application process • Clarify formalities for submissions at the beginning of the project	

On the next page you will find a template for your own project. Of course, you can also create your own template and adapt it to your needs.

Good luck with your future projects!

Project:

Goals:

General conditions:

Tasks:

People involved:

Possible obstacles:

Final reflexion

What went well?

What did not go so well?

Possible reasons:

What do I want to do differently next time?

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