

Chapter 3

INTERNSHIP – A STEP IN YOUR CAREER



Path for Career

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Table of Contents

A. Theoretical Framework (realized by ESSENIA)

General Overview	3
Brief Introduction	6
Internships: Definitions and Key-concepts	10
1. PART I	
1.1. Legal framework and references at European level.....	13
1.2. Subjects involved in the planning and implementation of internships	18
1.3. Transition from education to the labour market and chances of employment	19
1.4. Learning contents, learning outcomes and skills development	20
1.5. Promotion and implementation of quality internships.....	22
1.6. Good practices in the planning and implementation of internships.....	24
2. PART II	
2.1. Path for Career's partner countries experiences and frameworks	32
2.1.1. Romania	32
2.1.2. Italy	34
2.1.3. Spain	35
2.1.4. United Kingdom	37
2.1.5. France	38
2.1.6. Malta	39
3. General conclusion	42
<i>Bibliography and Sitography</i>	44
<i>Appendix I</i>	46

B. Practical learning activities (realized by SEP)

1. Preparation to apply for an internship programme	49
2. During the internship	59
2.1. Advice for your internship	65
3. What to do after finishing the internship	67
<i>References</i>	73

A. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

General overview

In this Chapter we focus on internships addressed to young graduates who can undertake a period of worked-based learning in an organisation or company for a defined period of time (short-term practical work experiences).

As we will see in details, there are different types of internships and we will deepen each in the following pages in order to offer a general overview of the framework. However, the main focus of this Chapter will be on «extra-curricular internships»: the ones undertaken by recent graduates, once they have earned their university degree.

Internships are a specific tool intended to strengthen the employability of young people¹ through the acquisition of practical skills. This learning outcome plays a particularly important role because such practical skills are often missed in traditional education programs, both in schools and universities albeit their relevance is widely acknowledged and specifically required by the labour-market. Well-structured internships should be, in this sense, of the interest of individuals, employers and the economy as a whole. Internships can support the improvement of the European Union's citizens skills profile, both in terms of hard-skills and soft-skills (see **Chapter 2**), which improvement is essential to the future prosperity of the European space.

Internships are important tools for facilitate the transition from school to work, encourage the access of young people to the labour market² thanks to the development and/or reinforcement of interpersonal networks and social capital. In this sense, an internship may increase the chances of finding a regular work due to different factors:

- internships are **work-experience** and enhance **human capital, competences and skills**;

¹ It is widely known that there is no clear-cut definition of who exactly «young person» is, since youth presents a very heterogeneous category with various social, economic, cultural and educational backgrounds, interests, challenges and needs. Nevertheless, the concept of youth as a social group requires homogeneity, based on shared social position that differs from other age groups, such as «adults». For the purpose of this Chapter, as well as for the purpose of the whole Guide and Path for Career project, we refer to young people as the specific group who have completed the University path and it is in search of the first job.

² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036>

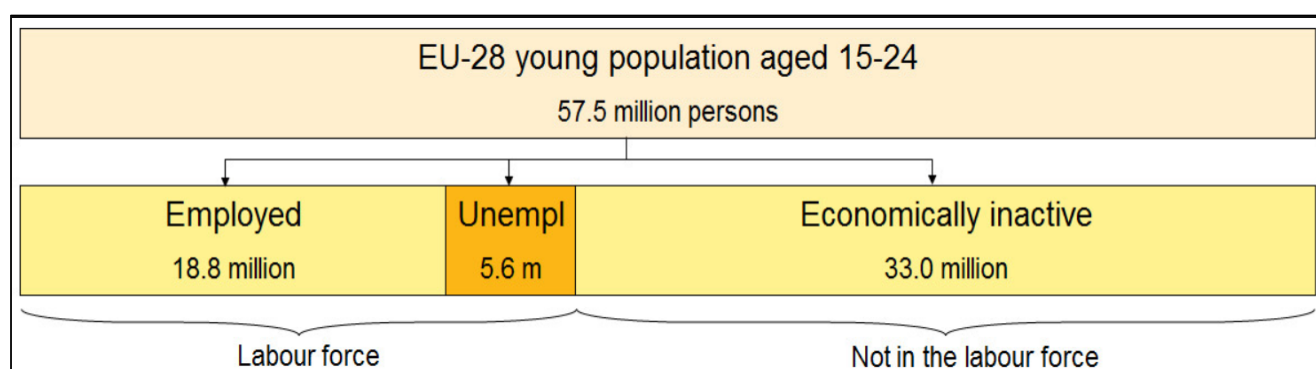
- internships are an **opportunity** to test recent graduates and their **ability** before hiring;
- recent graduates increase their **employability** through specialization and networking.

The specific focus on the importance and the impact that internships have on the transition from education to work, is part of the new emphasis on «employability policies» which has characterised the EU labour market policies over the last decades. These policies have posed attention, for example, on how to support and provide individuals with the competences and skills necessary to find a job.

The shift of emphasis from «employment» to «employability» (would be to say: from the labour supply to the labour demand) also corresponds to a shift in the criteria for evaluating employees' work activities not (only) from the point of view of the «qualifications» (official records, official completion of a course, etc.) but mostly from the point of view of the «skills» (a developed aptitude or ability).

Despite widespread awareness in this sense, current skills and employment system at European level does not fit the purpose of strengthening the employability not in general nor of recent graduates: skills shortages, gaps and underutilization is one of the main issues typifying the actual EU context when we refer to labour market and employment aspects³. As a result, in most EU member countries, youth unemployment exceeds the average unemployment rate among the general adult population⁴.

Figure 1. Population employed, unemployed and economically inactive, EU-28, age 15-24, 2012



Source : Eurostat, EU labour force Survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/>

³ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/9115>

⁴ <https://data.oecd.org/unemp/youth-unemployment-rate.htm>

Youth unemployment rates are particularly affected by the transition of young adults from education to the labour market and the gaps concerning skills acquired and suitable into the labour market.

The debate about employability, qualification and skills among young people has been long-standing in Europe. Consider that, for example, the past thirty years have been characterized, in Europe, by a significant growth in knowledge-intensive industries' sector⁵ that affect both job supply and job demand. If occupation in this knowledge-intensive industries' sector has grown, this expansion has not been general and transversal to the entire workforce: there has been a relevant loss of jobs that have primarily affected the lower-skilled labour force. This situation can tell us that labour supply and employment growth may have different trajectories. The financial crisis of 2008 has further modified the European economy and labour market dynamics within it, having a considerably impact on employment and unemployment during the recession and then over the recovery period. In order to detect key-determinants of youth unemployment it has been questioned, after 2008, the mismatch between the knowledge acquired through formal education and the skills required by the labour market; whether there are too many graduates or not; institutional and local conditions; and many other factors can contribute to the youth labour market performance.

It is possible to affirm that, according to statistics⁶ recent graduates that have completed tertiary education have more employment possibilities and the risk of unemployment, for them, decreases. In particular, graduates continue to be in demand - especially graduates in STEM⁷ disciplines. Science and innovation, indeed, will be key to the economy over the coming years. Moreover, it should be noted that, generally speaking, *education matters* and the risk of unemployment are usually more common for low-skilled youth, already at risk of long-term inactivity and exclusion.

It should appear clearer now that more efficient placement services, more adequate training activities, such as, just so, internships, are absolutely required.

⁵ The OECD defines «knowledge-intensive industries sector», industries such as: finance, insurance, telecommunications, business services. Recently this definition also includes education and health sectors: <https://www.oecd.org/innovation/inno/innovationandknowledge-intensiveserviceactivities.htm>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Tertiary_education_statistics

⁷ «STEM» stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. It's a philosophy of education that embraces teaching skills and subjects in a way that resembles real life. Nowadays, it is common to refer to STEAM which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. STEM and STEAM align with the way we work and problem solve in our daily lives. Making it an exceptional way of instructing and learning. With STEM we are teaching skills the way they will be used in the workforce, and the real world.

Brief Introduction

Internships have become very popular with many employing organizations, educational institutions, and students taking advantage of this tool, across many different job types and industries.

The total number of interns in a given year is estimated between 4 and 6 million⁸. The 2013 Eurobarometer survey⁹, shows that across the EU member countries one in every two EU citizens aged 15-35 has enrolled in at least one internship. These survey data also suggest an increase in participation level in recent years: in comparison to person aged 30-35-year-old, persons aged 20-29 more frequently report to have had experience in internships. This can be interpreted as an indication that younger generations participate more in internships¹⁰.

Internships support the transition from the university to the work environment for recent graduates. Interns can learn knowledge and skills related to the labour market in general as well as to the specific skills required by the work-place they are in. In this sense, internships can be considered as a “bridge” between the theory learnt in classroom and the practice one can exercise after University.

In this way, it is possible to impact on job performances, providing interns with the opportunity to gain knowledge within a specific work-sector, identifying his/her own work-related preferences, and developing deeper interests in specific tasks. Interns start to learn what they want and/or do not want from work, and they have the opportunity to understand these preferences and inclinations before to enter the world of work.

From the point of view of employer organizations/companies, to welcome interns and internships may have positive impact regarding an increased work capacity, proceed with an in-depth first look at potential future employee thanks to the opportunity to “test” and train interns before hiring them. Moreover, generally speaking, interns can bring into the company new ideas and motivation.

⁸ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU\(2017\)602056_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU(2017)602056_EN.pdf)

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb81/eb81_first_en.pdf

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/flash/fl_378_en.pdf

From the point of view of policy-makers and government institution, internships may be promoted in specific sector intended to have a strategic importance to the economy.

It is interesting to notice that there are a number of sectors where internships are increasingly common and these sectors are both related to private sector and public sector as well as non-profit/third sector/NGOs¹¹.

The Table that follows represents the sectors where internships have been prevalent in EU member states:

Table 1. Examples of sectors where internships are prevalent (2011)

SECTORS	MEMBER STATES
Creative industries (e.g. culture, arts & publishing)	AT, BE, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, PT, SE, UK
Media, Journalism & PR	AT, BE, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, IT, LT, LV, MT, NL, SE, UK
Tourism & Hospitality Industry	AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, EL, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK
Business Administration & Management Consulting	AT, BE, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, MT, NL, PT, SE, SI, SK, UK
Banking, Finance & Accountancy	BE, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MT, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK
Manufacturing	

¹¹ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU\(2017\)602056_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU(2017)602056_EN.pdf)

	AT, BG, BE, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, IT, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK
Third sector, NGOs	AT, BE, CZ, DE, EL, ES, IE, IT, FI, FR, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK, UK
Public Sector	BE, BG, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IT, LT, MT, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SK, UK

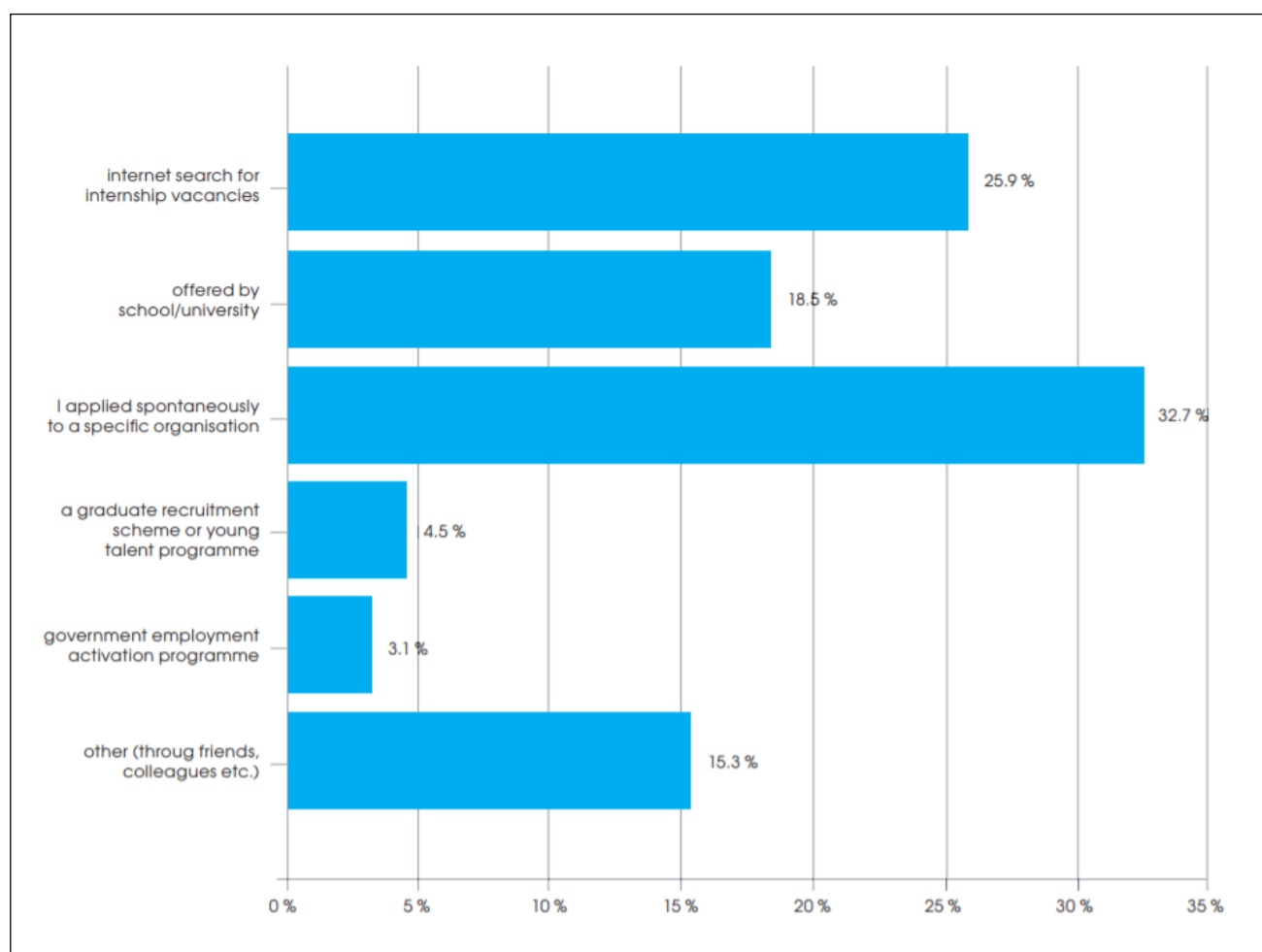
Source : <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/19623a37-37ee-4a60-b7ba-14a55526012f/language-en>

As said, internships offer the possibility to have a work-based experience in a specific professional field and so get a clearer idea of what it is required in terms of skills, competences and knowledge in such a specific field of work. It is of course advisable a coherence between qualification and the sector for which a candidate decide to apply. In any case, there is not a common rule as well as there is no set rule as to how internships can be found and applied for.

According by a survey on internship quality in Europe, administered by The European Youth Forum (2011)¹², 33% of the interns applied spontaneously to their host organisation, 26% searched for internships online, and 18% were offered the internship by their schools or universities. Graduate recruitment schemes, young talent programmes and government employment activation programmes accommodated less than 8% of the respondents, while just over 15% stated that they had used other methods.

¹² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@europe/@ro-geneva/@ilo-brussels/documents/genericdocument/wcms_175791.pdf

Figure 2. How internships are found by participants



Source: Survey on Internship Quality in Europe, 2011

Internships: Definitions and Key-concepts

It is not easy to find a common understanding of «internship» especially when we are referring to different countries. It is possible anyway to identify some points that appear to be mutual to all member states. They can be summarised as follows:

- general **educational purpose**;
- the practical element of **learning**;
- the **temporary** character of the experience.

Internships are predominantly short to medium-term in duration and they can last from a few weeks up to six months. In certain cases, they can last one year. An internship provides students and graduates with the possibility to expand their learning in a work-based context: in this sense internships are intended as *practical* learning experiences in a specific career field connected with the intern's personal and professional profile.

There is also another form of on-the-job training that may be wrongly confused as an internship: «apprenticeships». Unlike internships, apprenticeships make up part of an education or training programme which combine practical, work-related training in the workplace and theoretical education in class¹³. Apprentices are employed to do a real job while studying for a formal qualification (from University or a training centre). By the end of the apprenticeship, the apprentice should have gained the skills and knowledge needed to either succeed in the chosen career or progress into the next apprenticeship level. Apprenticeships are legally binding and involve a contract. Thus, they need to be differentiated compared to internships.

In relation to definition and common terminology of internships, the main focus of this Guide, it is first of all important to clarify that, at European level, when referring to work-based learning experience, it is generally employed the term «traineeship» while in this Guide it is employed the term «internship». Differences between these two terms are not substantial and they may also be used as equivalent term.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the European Commission (EC) provide their definitions of internships that can be useful to tackle some common point:

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/news-articles/-/asset_publisher/L2ZVYxNxK11W/content/traineeship-internship-apprenticeship-which-one-is-for-you-

International Labour Organization (ILO)	Internships provide young people who have finished their studies or are still studying, with an opportunity to learn in a workplace.
European Commission (EC)	Internships give the intern the chance to log some work experience hours and usually run from a few weeks to six months. They are not linked to recognised qualifications.

In both cases, internships are defined as a work-practice learning and as tools that provide young people with the opportunity to gain work experience or use formally acquired skills in a practical setting.

Three main broad categories can be distinguished:

1. Internships that are part of vocational/academic curricula or are part of (mandatory) professional training:

Internships in this category have a dominant focus on learning and are often mediated or certified by education providers. Even though the ultimate objective is to prepare interns for the labour market, these types of internships focus more on securing learning outcomes than securing immediate employment. These types of internships are common in school-based VET curricula and are increasingly popular in higher education curricula as well.

2. Internships associated with Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs):

The focus of these internships is more on securing an immediate employment through gaining professional experience and skills. These internships are often mediated or supported by Public Employment Services, who are also responsible for overseeing the quality and results of this type of internships. In response to the economic and financial crisis, this type of internship has become a popular measure across EU member states. These internships are usually subsidised by States, funding by the European Social Fund, or funding in the framework of the Youth Employment Initiative.

3. Internships in the open market:

Usually these internships are reserved for positions in professional fields (a law graduate/student may intern at a law firm over the summer, for example). As with ALMPs internships, these are

generally not linked to recognised qualifications. The terms and conditions for this type of internship is set by employers and interns themselves, without any mediation. Internships sought by graduates after completing their studies to gain work experience fall into this category, ranging from unpaid positions from which interns benefit little to highly competitive and popular internships (such as graduate traineeships in European Institutions).¹⁴

As said, in this **Chapter III** we focus on non-curriculum-based internships, also called extra-curricular internship: they are not part of a study curriculum and they generally have both a training content(s) and a career guidance purpose that is support recent graduates with the transition from education to work. Extra-curricular internships are a three-way relationship between: the intern, the host company and the promoter of the internship and they fall into the category 2. Internships associated with active labour market policies (ALMPs), cited above: internships associated with active labour market policies (ALMPs). This kind of internships can guarantee a better quality and implementation of activities precisely thanks to the presence of a promoter. It can be an employment center, a university, a secondary school or a VET and Training Center.

As we will see in the next pages, the quality dimension of internships represents a specifically important aspect that it has been promoted and regulated latterly both at national and EU level.

¹⁴ https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/working/graduates_en

1. PART I

1.1. Legal framework and references at European level

Employment and the transition from education to the labour market is one of the core priorities of the European Union. For this reason, internships, and other forms of on-the-job training, has become a strategic priority within the education policies of the European Union. Looking at the countries where internships are particularly carried out to, it is possible to say that they are an important tool to encourage learning and to combat unemployment for young people.

Internships have been created as tools to enhance, on one hand, the acquisition of more specific skills according to the ones required by the labour market and, on the other, to create a direct contact between young people and employment positions. These needs and the related policies, within national context as well as at supranational/EU level, have gained in importance over the past decades and got a further boost after the 2008 financial crisis: after 2008-2009 years the high rates of youth unemployment in EU has made necessary an integrated approach in order to face the difficulties in finding a stable and decent job for young people. That is the reason why work-based learning has been a high policy priority at European level in recent years.

Already in the framework of the *Lisbon Strategy*, devised in 2000, the European Union is focusing its attention on the relation between «quality» and «quantity» of jobs and training as a fundamental step to achieve a specific collective goal:

[to] become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion¹⁵.

That means that the European Union has had youth employment on its agenda for (at least) the last two decades, during which there have been launched different programs in this field with the aim to promote, support and guarantee youth employment according to the European labour market (changing) needs and with the principal aim of enhancing job opportunities for the young.

In the early Nineties, in order to enforce the capacity of the European economy to create (new) jobs, almost all EU member states went in the direction of deregulate and make the labour

¹⁵ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

market more flexible. Despite its original purpose, these new directions have created segmented labor markets characterized by “atypical” contracts (fixed-term or temporary contracts) and less stability for workers in the long-period. Atypical contracts, on one hand, can favour the entry of first-time job for recent graduates and young people in general and, at the same time, they can be useful also for employers to test skills and productivity before stable hiring. However, on the other hand, atypical contracts offer less on-the-job training, a minor pay, and are less satisfying than standard contracts¹⁶. Such conditions mostly affect young people¹⁷.

Understood the implications of the impact of these economic changes has been a central focus in knowing which kinds of policy interventions are to be considered the most effective in addressing current levels of youth unemployment.

In this direction, the *Europe 2020 Strategy* has been based around the initiatives to promote economic growth, to enhance the performance and quality of the education and training systems, to promote youth mobility, both for learning and work purposes, to ensure a smooth and speedy labour market transition of young people, and reinforce the international attractiveness of Europe’s higher education¹⁸.

To quote a more specific policy related to the field of internships, *The Bruges communiqué* (2010) is a package of objectives and actions promoted with the objective to increase the quality of vocational training in Europe by making it more accessible and relevant to the needs of the labour market, for the period 2011-2020. It indicates that:

*Work-based learning is a way for people to develop their potential. The work-based component contributes substantially to developing a professional identity and can boost the self-esteem of those who might otherwise see themselves as failures. Learning on the job enables those in employment to develop their potential whilst maintaining their earnings. A well performing VET, which enables learning on and off-the-job on a part-time or full-time basis, can thereby also strongly contribute to social cohesion in our societies.*¹⁹

¹⁶ <http://eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/emcc/comparative-information/young-people-and-temporary-employment-in-europe>

¹⁷ It should be mentioned that the problem is not limited to young people. Especially in Southern Europe new and safe job opportunities concerns also the so-called “secondary” segment of the workforce: women, 50+ aged people, the unskilled segment of the workforce, the vast majority of immigrants.

¹⁸ http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/%20docs/communication/youth-on-the-move_EN.pdf

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/brugescom_en

On April 2017 the Parliament has presented a document titled *Skills Development and Employment: Apprenticeships, Internships and Volunteering*²⁰. This report contains important conclusions that can be useful to consider as a reference in order to detect the state of art and how to deal with issues and troubles related to skills development and employment policies.

The main aspects of the Report can be summarized as follows:

- the European labour market is characterized by a **weak labour-demand**. Young people facing this situation need to do something that can mark them out in the recruitment market.
- At European level work-based learning are to be considered as important responses to **tackle youth unemployment** and **future skills mismatches**.
- In order to promote and implement quality apprenticeships, internships and volunteering activities, it is important to overcome challenges thanks to **policy responses** and **stakeholder's direct involvement**.
- Even though internships are an attractive opportunity both for employers and young people, they have been generally less regulated than apprenticeship and offer **less secure working and learning conditions** for participants. The outcomes are less pronounced compared to apprenticeships.
- The promotion and implementation of quality internships makes necessary a re-formulation of the **responsibilities** (that needs to be shared), **costs and benefits** between government, education providers, employers and individuals.

Member States, with the help and support of the EU, are then asked to work on preventing early school leaving and to support graduates get work experience. The European Commission has proposed and financed by EU funds different actions, covering a range of policies. These included Youth Guarantee schemes²¹, European Social Fund (ESF)²², ESF Technical Assistance to young business starters²³, Your First EURES Job search initiative ²⁴and, of course, Erasmus+²⁵.

The Youth Guarantee

An important document about policies and interventions on youth employment is represented by

²⁰ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU\(2017\)602056_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU(2017)602056_EN.pdf)

²¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

²² <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp>

²³ https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/finance-funding/getting-funding/eu-funding-programmes/index_en.htm

²⁴ <http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu/it/home>

²⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en

the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a «Youth Guarantee».

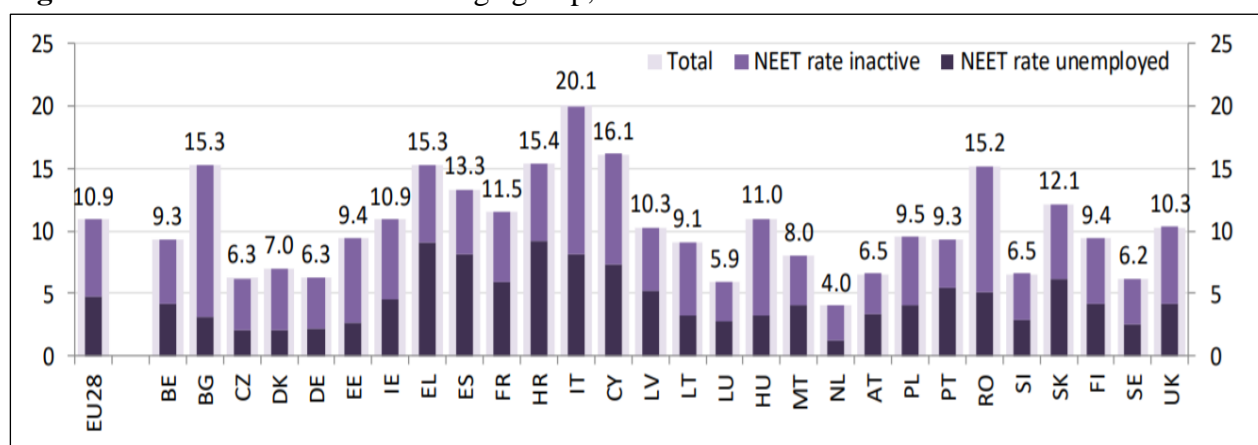
The Youth Guarantee is an approach aimed at tackling youth unemployment, ensuring that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – can get a good-quality, concrete offer after they have left formal education or become unemployed. The starting point for issuing the Youth Guarantee should be the registration with the local employment service and being a NEET (Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training).

Member States should define another starting point for NEETs not registered with the public employment service in order to reach the most of the them.

The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, internship, or continued education and be adapted to each individual need and situation.

In total, there were 7.1 million starts on Youth Guarantee schemes during 2017, 5.0 million from the main target group of NEETs aged 15-24 and 2.1 million from the 25-29 age-group in countries that adopted the extended coverage. According to data collected by the European Commission for monitoring the Youth Guarantee schemes across Europe²⁶, the NEET rate for people aged 15-24 has fallen from 12,5% in 2014, when most national YG schemes were launched, to 10,9% in 2017. This represents a reduction of more than a million in the number of young NEETs, from just under 7.0 million in 2014 to just over 5.9 million in 2017, proving a positive impact of the schemes in almost all member countries.

Figure 3. NEET rate for the 15-24 age group, 2017



Source: Data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes, 2017

The Erasmus+ Programme

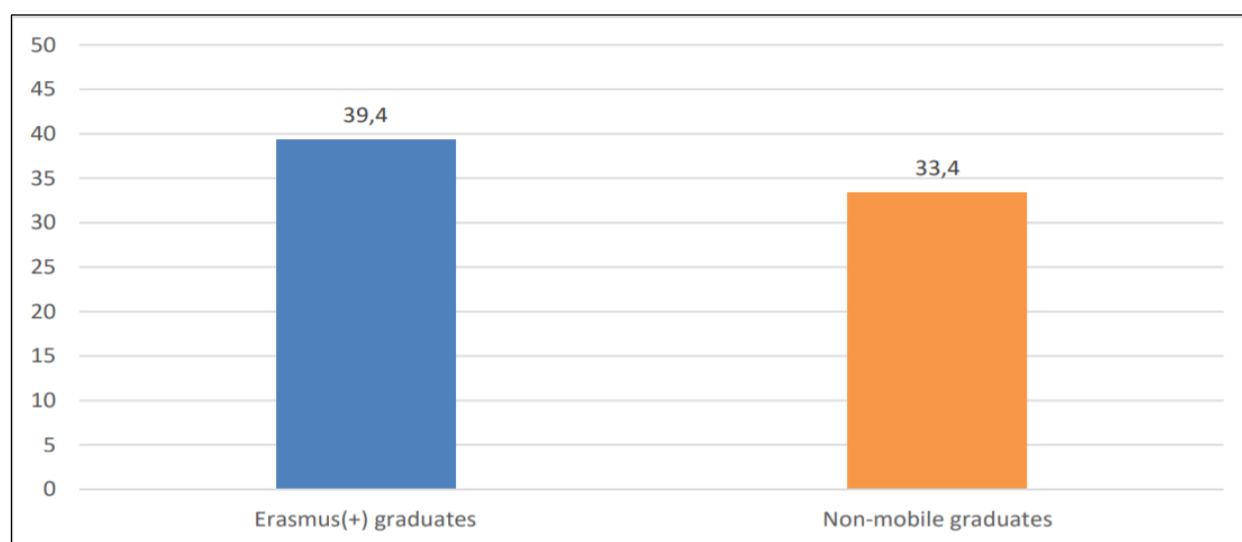
²⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&langId=en#YGIF>

Erasmus+ is started in a time when, in the EU, almost 6 million young people are unemployed, with levels that reached in some countries more than 50%. At the same time there are over 2 million job vacancies, and one third of employers detect difficulty in recruiting staff with the required qualifications. This demonstrates the existence of important skills deficits in Europe.

Erasmus+ wants to address these deficits by providing opportunities for study, training or work experience or volunteering abroad. The quality and relevance of organisations and European education, training and youth welfare will be enhanced by supporting the improvement of the teaching and learning methods, new programmes and professional development of teachers and youth leaders, as well as through greater cooperation between education and the world of work.

Erasmus+ Programme is also structured and aimed at support students in being capable of working across national boundaries, acquiring the capacity to engage in transnational circulation and establish professional relationships that traverse national fields, including the development of pragmatic skills, such as foreign language fluency, and an appreciation of cultural diversity. In this sense, Erasmus+ Programme is a useful tool for the transition from tertiary education to the labour market. Erasmus+ graduates report that mobility helped their careers: 72% of Erasmus+ graduates reported that mobility had been beneficial for their careers. Erasmus+ graduates find their first job after graduation quicker than non-mobile students²⁷.

Figure 4. International Job Index comparison between Erasmus+ graduates and non-mobile graduates



Source: Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study, 2019

²⁷ http://www.sepie.es/doc/comunicacion/publicaciones/2019/erasmus_higher_education_impact_study.pdf

The Youth Guarantee and Erasmus+ are among the most successful schemes in terms of participations and impact. They are a useful reference for many reasons, one of which the importance given to the coherence between the participant's career field/qualification level and the internship itself.

When an internship is not aligned to these characteristics, it may lose its positive impact both for employers and participants. For example, an internship in administrative sector offered to a participant that has achieved a university degree in communications cannot be considered a proper quality offer. Similarly, an offer for an internship position as professional made to a young person with upper secondary educational attainment may lead to under-qualification.

Generally speaking, what is important in order to guarantee a good matching and a quality internship, is the close cooperation among different actors directly involved in the planning and implementation of internships.

1.2. Subjects involved in the planning and implementation of internships

Internships are a three-way relationship between:

- the **intern**
- the **host company** or **organization**
- the **promoter**

The intern is the «leading actor» of the internship and for this reason s/he needs to be fully committed with the work-based experience in order to reach internship's professional goals and reflects actively on what s/he is accomplishing throughout the experience.

The role of the host company or organization, the «employer», has more specific responsibilities related to the deployment of the internships, such as: providing minimum working conditions and ensuring skill(s) development, occupational health and safety.

The promoter generally acts as the «intermediary» between the intern and the host company or organization. The promoter has the role of a supervisory, in particular monitoring the quality of the internship and the learning content and outcomes of the internship programme. Thanks to this intermediary's supervisory function, the promoter ensures a better quality of internships.

It is worth to mention that also the «tutor» has a significant role within the internship: the choice of tutoring is a key-aspect to ensure a valuable internship experience. Tutor should have sufficient competence and work experience in a specific career area or profession as well as have sufficient time to dedicate to interns. It is generally the host company or organization that identifies and designates tutor(s). The relevance of the tutor within the internship is confirmed by the roles the tutor has: first, the tutor has to guide the intern through the orientation period and the exploration of the structure of the host organization; second, the tutor is responsible to assign the specific tasks to the intern and thus ensure the achievement of the internship learning outcomes, as well as continuously monitor performance and provide feedback; third, the tutor should evaluate the overall performance of the intern at the end of his/her experience. Given the above-mentioned responsibilities, it is advisable to assign a limited number of interns to each tutor(s).

Specific roles within the different phases of internships (planning, implementation, evaluation) will be discussed in details in the next pages.

1.3. Transition from education to the labour market and chances of employment

Lately, a university degree alone does no longer seem to be enough to find a permanent job, even though it is thought to be a key-issue to labour market success. University graduates, for this reason, go through internships, before finding regular employment.

Before the Bologna Process reforms in 1999²⁸, most European countries offered 4-5 year one-cycle curricular. Those degrees were supposed to directly qualify graduates for the labour market, or prepare them for doctoral studies. Since the reform, the one-cycle degrees have been re-modulated as two-cycle curricular: a bachelor's degree (usually 3-4 year curricular), and a master's degree (additional 1-2 year curricular). The objective of the introduction of the shorter bachelor curricular was to increase the speed with which young academics enter the labour market. However, most students proceed subsequently to a master's degree and, as said, the youth employment market has not recorded specific improvements to be related to this reform. In this sense, over the last decades, internships have gained a reputation of facilitating the entry to the labour market. A growing number of graduates do internships following their graduation in order to then find a direct-hire job.

²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/bologna-process-and-european-higher-education-area_en

In general terms, all types of internships have the potential to help young people to develop a more deeper understanding of the work environment in which they will be working, and helps in developing a set of practical, work-related soft skills such as time management, confidence, adaptability, team-working, interpersonal and communication skills (see **Chapter II**). What is particularly relevant is the dual dimension of work-based learning such as internships: the acquisition of a specific and relevant set of soft skills is not only of primary importance for interns; it has a positive impact also in the labour market and society at large, enhancing the employability and the quality of work at the benefit for all. Internships have the potential to contribute to transversal competences for interns and thus boost and ameliorate the employability for them, gaining an improvement also for the labour-market as a whole.

There are a number of studies and research on the impact of internship about this transition for young people that confirm the positive outcomes of internships (European Parliament, 2017; OECD, 2010; to mention few)²⁹.

The increase in participation to extra-curricular internships across the EU has been growing due to the evidence presented for the positive outcomes of internships that accompany educational qualifications. The main explanatory factor for positive outcomes identified is the clear arrangements on the content and terms and conditions of these types of internships, either mediated by educational providers, or public employment services.

The chances of employability get better according to several factors:

- an internship provides **work experience** that is necessary to develop the **CV and competences**;
- it gives to the intern an **opportunity to build a network of contacts** in a field of interest;
- it gives a **realistic perspective** on what it is like to work within a given field.

1.4. Learning contents, learning outcomes and skills development

The purpose of internships is to gain occupational knowledge, skills, competences and experience. For this reason, the learning dimension must be primary.

Internships do not lead to formal qualifications: when the internship is part of school-based VET programmes or higher education programmes, the internship can be a condition for obtaining a

²⁹ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU\(2017\)602056_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/602056/IPOL_STU(2017)602056_EN.pdf) ; <http://www.oecd.org/global-relations/45499057.pdf>

formal qualification. In those cases, the companies provide a statement or evaluation on the intern. When the internship is not part of a formal qualification, certificates are provided such as evaluation, attendance, etc.

On the other hand, specific learning outcomes are not always clearly defined. The internship linked to education programmes are generally very-well defined in terms of learning contents and then learning outcomes. Open-market internships are least likely to have a predefined content. To a large extent, the content and practice of these internships are determined jointly by the intern and the employer, although the latter is unsurprisingly likely to have more control over these aspects. Also, the ALMPs internships are generally not necessarily elaborately described in terms of learning outcomes³⁰. But, in these kinds of internships, where education institutions or labour offices are involved (the so-called «provider»), lacks in terms of learning contents and thus outcomes are less common: these institutions usually ensure minimum standards through the host company/organization's application of guidelines and selection methods, before, during and after the internship. In order to ensure the quality of internships, the learning content should be specific and assert the level of performance expected by the intern at the end of the experience. Such level should be coherent with the intern's field of study and/or qualification and should match the learning activities with the tasks the intern will undertake to acquire the expected skills and practical experience. The internship contents should reflect the learning outcomes of the internship. It should include orientation, in particular regarding the host company/organization and the country of destination (if the internship is in mobility abroad); the acquisition of specific skills related to the sector in which the internship takes place.

Another important point is that learning objectives and outcomes may be developed on the basis of national learning outcome standards. They should include:

- the **skills** that the intern **will use** and develop during the internship;
- the **transferable skills** that will be **enhanced**;
- what the intern is expected to have **achieved by the end** of the internship.

The learning outcomes should specify both general and specific outcomes.

General learning outcomes concern knowledge-acquisition and general procedures regarding the operations of the host company/organization (for example: internal organization, policies, products and services).

³⁰ European Commission (2012), Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States

Specific learning outcomes, in the other hand, are generally connected to learning through observation and learning-by-doing.

1.5. Promotion and implementation of quality internships

Even though internships are becoming more common in European economies, their role is increasingly debated and (sometimes) criticised. Internships are intended as tools aimed at strengthening the individuals' skills and facilitating the transition between education and work. Unfortunately, internships might also trigger adverse effects. For example, they can turn into exploitation and unpaid experiences. A range of stakeholders are expressing concerns about the quality of internships. Some of them do not contain any learning elements, have poor working conditions, and interns may be excluded from social security coverage.

As a European response to quality concerns, the Council adopted the final Recommendation on a *Quality Framework for Traineeships* (QFT) in March 2014. The QTF recommends 22 quality elements for internships outside formal education which can be incorporated in national legislation or social partner agreements (see Appendix I). Together, these elements provide guidelines on how to provide high quality learning content and fair working conditions so that internships support education-to-work transitions and increase the employability of interns. The QFT also highlights the importance of transparency regarding compensation and social security coverage, as well as hiring chances. These aspects should be clear to applicants already at the stage of the application for an internship position.

Internships are better protected if an employment contract or a regulatory framework exists. In many countries, internships are not properly regulated but are characterized by an agreement between the employer and the participant only. Often internships can be unpaid and do not give to the intern the same rights, security and obligations that are generally related to regular employees. The provision and the respect of a binding contract is for the benefit of both parties: the employer and the intern. It is not possible to refer to a specific model of an internship contract because its terms and conditions can vary substantially across Member States, across different types of internships and according to the employment status of the intern. When internships are regulated through 'employment contracts', it means that general labour legislation tends to apply. Such legislations regard: restrictions on working hours; holidays, social security; etc...

In Member States with specific regulatory frameworks on internships that ensures quality (see Table 2.), the general labour standards such as: maximum weekly working time, minimum daily and weekly rest periods, minimum holiday entitlements are generally guarantee and protected.

Member States without dedicated regulation on internships (see **Table 2.**) meet these requirements only indirectly: in most cases more general labour provisions apply, including health and safety at work, and insurance for work-related accidents and basic social security provisions.

As a common point, there are usually no regulations at the national level on the compensation for interns. Even where other working conditions such as working hours or holiday entitlements are regulated for interns, no equivalent tends to be in place for remuneration.

That means that internships can be unpaid or paid. This specification should be contained in the agreement. Compensation is almost always provided for internships under youth employment policy (such as Youth Guarantee schemes), in particular if interns are disadvantaged young people with limited financial resources and/or a non-favourable socioeconomic background.

In Spain, for example, the internship allowance should be at least 80 per cent of the monthly multiplier for the Public Income Index. In the United Kingdom, minimum wage compensation is not required for internships that are part of education courses. However, where an intern is promised a contract of future work, they are classified as a worker and are eligible for the minimum national wage. In Italy, a recent law introduced a reward for internship that cannot be lower than 300 Euro gross per month. In some Italian Region the maximum reward can reach 600 Euro grosses (see **Part II**).

Table 2. Member States that apply the EU Quality Framework for Traineeships

MEMBER STATES	FRAMEWORK
BE, BG, DE, LT, PL, PT, RO, SL, ES	Legal framework both for open-market and ALMP internships
HR, DK, EE, FI, IT, MT, SK, SE	Only for ALMPs
LU	Specific discipline for open-market internships but no regulations for ALMP
	Lacking and incomplete legal frameworks

AT, FR, GR, IE, CY, LV, NL, UK, CZ, HU	
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Source: European Economic and Social Committee

According to **Table 2.**, not all the EU member states have undertaken legal changes to strengthen the alignment of national frameworks with the QFT since its adoption in 2014.

What is needed in order to implement further legislation on internships quality is:

- requiring a **prior written agreement** that sets out (among other things) the **educational objectives** and duration of the arrangement, working conditions, whether the intern is to be remunerated or compensated, and the parties' rights and obligations;
- encouraging a **supervisor** to be designated;
- ensuring that, where applicable, any limits set by national or EU laws on **working time** and **rest periods** are respected, together with holiday entitlements;
- encouraging internship providers to clarify whether they offer **health and accident insurance**, as well as **sick leave**;
- ensuring a **reasonable duration for internships** that, except where a longer duration can be justified, does not exceed six months;
- clarifying the circumstances in which an internship may be **extended** or **renewed**;
- encouraging agreements to clarify the circumstances in which an **internship may be terminated**;
- promoting the **recognition, assessment** and **certification** of the **knowledge, skills** and **competences** acquired during an internship;
- promoting **transparency**, by encouraging advertisements and other information to specify both the **terms and conditions of an internship**, and the number of interns typically recruited into ongoing employment.³¹

1.6. Good practices in the planning and implementation of internships

In the next pages there are step-by-step instructions and good practices to look at for the planning, implementation and evaluation of internships. In this sense, in the following there are three main phases related to internships and for each the specific and important activity to be implemented in order to ensure a smooth and quality-oriented internship.

³¹ European Union (EU) Council. 2014. "Council recommendation of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (2014/C 88/01)", *Official Journal of the European Union*, C88, 27 March 2014, 1–4.

❖ BEFORE the INTERNSHIP

This phase includes all those activities connected with the internship and related to the activation of it. All the parties involved play a key-role in this phase and are asked to implement specific tasks.

It is possible to recognize some specific dimensions that can be used as references to check the quality of internships and guide during the first phase of them – the “before”.

The following paragraphs explore these dimensions indicating for each the main features that should be used:

✓ WRITTEN AGREEMENT

Even if each country may have a different approach, there has been an increasing trend concerning the need to formalize internships through written agreements between all actors involved.

The written agreement can be signed by all the parties concerned (intern; host company/organization; promoter). Providing written agreement among relevant parties ensure greater security for all parties involved. In some of the cases and countries (i.e. Italy), this agreement is mandatory.

Subject of a written agreement, according to ILO (2017)³², may include:

- **Basic information about the intern:** name, address, telephone, stream of studies, latest qualification achieved;
- **Basic information of the host organization/company:** location, department hosting the interns, name and contact of host organization tutor.
- **Scope of the internship:** enforcement of knowledge acquired during University, to be considered as a period of learning and not as an employment relationship.
- **General terms and conditions:** duration of the internship and conditions of renewal (in writing and with the agreement of the intern and the host organization/company).
- **Objective and content** of the internship: the professional and career development goals the intern will achieve. This part includes both general and specific learning

³² https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_613352/lang--en/index.htm

objectives. It includes a detailed programme of the internship and knowledge, skills and competencies to be acquired.

- **Internship description:** location of the internship; number of employees; number of hosted interns; name and contact detail of tutor; start and end date, full or part-time position and hours of work; compensation (i.e. travel expenses, ticket restaurant).
- **Rights and duties** of the intern: performance of activities listed in the internship description, compliance with internal rules of the host organization/company; respect of working hours; respect of workplace security and health rules; non-disclosure of data and information of the host organization. The intern has the right to leave of absence, the right to be supervised by a professional and receive training as specified in the agreement.
- Temporary **interruption, renewal** and **termination:** renewal and temporary interruption need to be agreed in writing by the parties involved.

✓ SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection of interns should be ensured. It can be ensured by different ways and by different actors (either employer/promoter or automatically by law or system) and can cover different aspects (sickness insurance, civic liability insurance, accident insurance).

Employers and promoters should inform interns about:

- inclusion of the intern in the **social security system**, especially those of health, unemployment, pension systems;
- informing the intern of their **social and labour rights**, their responsibilities towards the organisation and any health and safety risks in the work place. Interns should be informed at the beginning of their internship of their social and labour rights and all other rights relevant to their social protection;
- ensuring that interns are covered by an **insurance policy** will protect them from unforeseen accidents at work and compensate if an unfortunate situation arises;
- providing interns with **European Health Insurance Card** certifying them with the rights to health insurance and allows, during a temporary stay in Europe, to benefit from the taking into charge medical care if necessary;

- unless exempt under the Social Security law, employers must deduct **social security taxes** from the wages of all interns;
- the intern is entitled to insurance against **accidents at work, sickness and civil liability** for the entire duration of the internship. Other entitlements may need to be included according to national legislation (e.g. parental leave).

❖ DURING the INTERNSHIP

✓ DURATION OF THE INTERNSHIP

Time period of an internship can vary from some week, to over a year. There is no clear definition, how long the internship should be. The duration is mostly defined in a way that is educational for the intern in order to let him/her gain the required competences and/or the practical experiences interns should be able to perform the job in an independent way.

A common general point concerns the idea that internships have not to be too long and they should not replace regular employees: even though they include “real” operation as the employees do, they remain similar to training which would be given in an educational environment. In this sense, interns do not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff.

In defining duration of internships, it is important to take into consideration that:

- internships may be **part-time** or **full-time**;
- duration of training defined according to the **rules** of each European country;
- **length and tasks of the internship** correspond to specified learning objectives that are shared with the interns at the beginning of the internship;
- not excessive **working hours**;
- employers must guarantee respect for the **legal rights** of interns in terms of working conditions (e.g. hours of work, holidays).

✓ LEGAL INCOME, REMUNERATIONS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Remuneration is highly recommended and increasingly seen as a best practice. An internship should be as close to a real-life work experience as possible and, of course, being paid is a core part of this. A paid internship is more likely to ensure that employers are able to attract a high motivated intern. It will also ensure that the internship programme is inclusive as it will not

prejudice those who are less able to cover the costs associated with living and working (travel, food, office clothing, etc.).

Provide a pay / remuneration to interns is not only the right thing to do in order to ensure a quality internship (as seen in **Part I**), but it also helps to widen access to internships more generally to ensure inclusion.

Remuneration can refer to:

- **fairly remuneration** for the work the interns carry out;
- paying compensation for **overtime**;
- decent remuneration not below the **EU poverty line**.

If the internship is unpaid, compensation in other forms can also be applied in different forms:

- offering a reimbursement of **costs occurred during the internship** (i.e. housing, traveling);
- directly receive **food, housing**, and public transportation **tickets**.

Promoter of the internships, for example, can provide logical support to interns concerning travel arrangements, visa and work permit, accommodation, residence.

✓ TUTORING AND SUPERVISION OF INTERN

Providing a support to interns is essential to ensure the quality of an internship as well as for the learning outcomes and personal and professional development of interns. The one-on-one attention that tutoring provides can help interns develop better skills, increase their knowledge of core-activities, and stimulate the learning. It is important to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to tutoring: every intern may a different set of needs as well as each tutor may have a different approach. Many factors can impact the type of tutoring. It is by the way important to take into consideration that is important to:

- define in advance specific **measurable learning objectives** and expected outcomes;
- providing guidance of **competent tutor**;
- **regular meetings** between tutor and intern to monitor progress (monthly assessment, mid-term review, etc.);
- **communication with the promoter** about any problem or changes regarding the internship;
- conducting **site-visits** from promoter at least once a month, if possible, **to observe interns** at work and ensure they are performing tasks related to their training;

Support to the interns can be done in different forms and by different people. A tutor can enhance the experience of an internship for both employer and intern. Tutors must have the time necessary to mentor an intern. Tutors should work in the same department as the intern so they have a good understanding of the work the intern is involved with. Tutors serve as several roles.

Nevertheless, whoever in the host organisation/company is in charge for those things, several practices can be put in place:

- the dedicated person/tutor should have **sufficient time** in his/her work schedule to act as a supervisor and tutor that should be adequately trained;
- providing **ongoing guidance, constructive** and **frequent feedback** and support as well as access to a professional network;
- conducting **regular performance** reviews based on the intern's learning objectives;
- **agreeing and revising the learning objectives** for the internship with the intern;
- monitoring interns' **training progress**;
- familiarizing intern with the organization/company;
- providing **clear assignments**;
- involving intern in meetings;
- **limited number of interns** per internship provider.

❖ **AFTER the INTERNSHIP**

It is important that knowledge, skills and experience acquired during an internship are evaluated, validated and recognized once the internship is completed. Evaluation, validation and recognition will help the trainee to demonstrate what he/she has achieved during the internship period. Internship certificates, however, do not constitute a recognized qualification for the purposes of the national qualification frameworks.

✓ EVALUATION

The evaluation activity supports each intern and host company/organisation with the opportunity to reflect on the internship experiences and allows the opportunity to explicit the professional development reached.

For this reason, it is important to take in consideration that:

- **evaluation** should be done by the intern, the tutor, the employer and/or all parties that are relevant;
- there should be a **mid-term evaluation** with clear evaluation **criteria** of internships period;
- intern submit a **report** in the specified format and any required supporting document at the end of the internship;
- tutor in the host company/organization has to **complete an evaluation** of the intern's performance which will be shared with the intern.

By their side, interns should assess:

- the **programme**;
- their **tutor**;
- **employer's ability** to successfully host interns;
- the **usefulness** of their internship relative to their career goals;
- whether the training curriculum prepared them adequately for the experience.

At the end of the internship an official formal performance review should be developed to evaluate the intern's involvement. At the end of the internship both interns and employers should provide feedback through standardized evaluation forms. Ideally be done face-to-face and followed up with a written summary.

✓ VALIDATION OF THE INTERNSHIP

The validation of the internship is a very relevant aspect too, in order to ensure a proper documented and recognised internship period once it ends and thus it needs to be recorder as a work-based learning experience to be added to CV.

Validation includes different aspects:

- **outcomes** and **processes** should be systematically documented;
- assessing and defining the **specific learning goals** and **quality objectives** identified during the planning stages of the experience;
- providing an intern with a **letter of reference**;

-
- a **written certification** by employer that includes the tasks completed, skills learnt, experience acquired and an overview of the intern's performance as a whole;
 - interns can develop an internship portfolio of their experience.

2. PART II

2.1. Path for Career's partner countries experiences and frameworks

Internships rules, conditions and even definitions are not the same in the 28 European member states. The European Commission has already published a report about legislative improvements that could be made, and the European parliament moved in the same direction, voting a non-binding motion. But a European common law on internships still doesn't exist. In an environment made up of 28 different states and 28 different sets of labour laws, it is legitimate to ask how these different countries define internships. For instance, having a closer look at the definition of internship in the United Kingdom (UK), one can find that "internship" or "work placement" does not have legal status. Generally speaking, if in UK one talks about «internship», it needs to contain the following mentions - in order to be labelled so: worker, volunteer, or employee, all of which are related to specific rules. Moreover, a British intern does not necessarily get the right to the minimum wage while, for instance, interns receive a minimum of 500 € per month (if the internship lasts more than 3 months) in France. In Spain, students and recent graduates are not considered equally: there is no legal obligation to pay the students while recent-graduates can claim 60% of the minimum wage.

The different national regulations on working hours must also be added to all these different practices.

In the following pages a snapshot about Romania, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and France (the five **Path for Career** partner countries) is presented.

2.1.1. Romania

The term «internship» does not have an equivalent in Romanian and the English term is the one commonly used.

The legal framework is provided by the Law no. 335/2013 on internship, the Government Decision no. 473/2014 for the approval of the methodological provisions to be applied when implementing the Law no.335/2013 and the Law no. 53/2003 - Labour Code.

In a more specific way, the Law 176/2018 recognizes the existence of mandatory internships which are part of the optional training and internship program that the student can carry out at his/her initiative. Internships can take place at the level of study of a degree (Article 4 of the Law

No 288/2004) and of a master's degree (Article 4 of Decision No 404/2006). For optional courses, these are held during school and university holidays. Employers accepting interns may receive a financial incentive according to the Law 72/2007 on the facilitation of student employment.

It is important to say that in Romania, only the higher education graduates can apply for internships. The intern is considered a beginner in his/her work-field.

The duration of internships in Romania is governed by Ordinance No. 3955/2008. Internships must last from at least one week to a maximum of 12 months. The length of the internships in a university course is fixed by the study program of each course. There is no obligation for what concern compensation and reward to be given to interns however it may be fixed by the organisation itself.

Only internship based on Law no. 335/2013 about the internships undertaken by the recent graduates, should be remunerated because they represent an important step into the transition of them to the labour market. That is because in Romania comprehensive legislation on internship has been introduced. This regulatory framework provides for the conclusion of a written agreement between the beneficiary and the host organization, which details the content, duration, allowance and social protection entitlements of the internship.

According to Romanian legal framework on internships, the host company/organization may conclude an employment contract simultaneously for a number of interns which may not exceed 5% of the total number of employees. For example, host organizations with less than 20 employees can simultaneously complete a maximum of 2 internship contracts. The Internship Program - the specific work of an intern for a limited period of time in a host organization, which aims at deepening the theoretical knowledge, improving practical skills and/or acquiring new skills or competences. As a general rule, internship programs are organized over a 12-month period for a maximum of 6 consecutive months (for a total of 720 hours).

There may be several programs, but these must be different and their cumulative duration may not exceed 6 months.

An intern is generally over 16 years old. An intern is entitled to an allowance equal to at least half of the country's gross minimum wage relative to working time. For interns over 18 years old, the duration of work is up to 40 hours per week: overtime is not allowed. The intern operates

under the supervision of a tutor. The Internship activity has been developed in Romania thanks to the multinational corporations that are the main host organizations.

2.1.2. Italy

Internships are called, in Italian, «tirocini».

They can be performed by students enrolled at University when they are undergraduate and, in this case, they are called «tirocini curriculari»; recent graduates too, once they have completed their educational path at University, can look for and apply for an internship and in this case they are called «tirocini non-curriculari». These internships aim to develop the theory acquired during the student's studies through a first-hand professional experience. Recent graduates are eligible for an internship within the first twelve months after their graduation.

Other kind of internships are worth to mention too: «tirocini di reinserimento/inserimento al lavoro» which are focused on reintegration and/or integration internships for unemployed and people with disabilities. Then, there are also mandatory placements to gain access to specific profession (i.e. law, medicine) and they are called «praticantato».

Extra-curricular internships, in Italy, are laid down by State, Regions and autonomous Provinces and since the 2012 Fornero Labour Market Reform: Shared Guidelines on Training and Guidance Traineeships (L. 92/2012), they have new rules. However, this regulatory framework is far from being complete: regulations are either incomplete or not operating in a third of the Italian regions: only 12 out of 20 regions have published a new, fully operating law embracing national minimum standards while other have legislated on internships but their legislation is still incomplete or not operating until the approval of further ones. Moreover, there is an evident heterogeneity also about types and durations of internships as well as, among other things, the maximum number of interns that a company can host simultaneously.

The Fornero labour reform introduced a provision of interns' remuneration amounting a minimum standard established at 300 €. Moreover, internships must be promoted by a third party that links the intern with the host company/organisation; the promoter represents the “guarantor” of quality and safety.

In Italy, from 2012 to 2016, the activations of non-curriculum base internships have increased, at national level, by +71%. Regions with the highest numbers are: Campania-Region (South of

Italy), Valle D'Aosta (North-West of Italy), Umbria (Center of Italy) and Molise (Center of Italy)³³.

To start an internship in Italy, the promoter provides the host organization with an agreement, called «Convenzione singola di tirocinio», which is valid only for the duration of the internship.

This agreement is signed by the legal representatives of the promoter, the host company/organization and the intern, containing the rights and duties of the parties and the individual learning content, which is an integral part of it. It is mandatory for the promoter or the host company/organization to communicate the activation of the internship and any change occurring: interrupting, withdrawing from and postponing an internship. This communication is called «Comunicazione Obbligatoria Telematica» and must be sent to the Employment Centers of the Region where the internship is/will be carried out. Interns must respect a number of conditions too, by their side: be unemployed, looking for their first job, be in a mobility lists or lay-off scheme; have completed the compulsory education path; have Italian citizenship or the citizenship of an EU member state; if they are a non-EU citizen they should have a valid residence permit; not being in an employment relation with the same host company/organisation in the 6 months prior to the activation of the internship.

2.1.3. Spain

Internship is recognized as «práctica».

The existing practices in Spain can be in two ways: non-work practices in companies and external practices carried out from the universities in the last years of degree (careers) or Master's degree. The Royal Decree 1543/2011 regulates non-labour practices in companies that formalize agreements with the Public Employment Services, aimed at young people who, due to their lack of work experience, have employability problems. Within the actions and measures of active employment policies, may sign agreements with young people, with no or very little work experience, in order to perform practices of a non-work nature, in their work centres in order to help improve their employability and offer them a first contact with the labour reality through the enclosure to it, while contributing to complete the training achieved by the young person. The non-labour practices in the companies will not imply, in any case, the existence of an employment relationship between the company and the young person.

³³ Traineeships Regulation in Italy after the Fornero Labour Market Reform,
http://englishbulletin.adapt.it/docs/ebook_summary.pdf

The beneficiaries of non-work placements will be addressed to unemployed young people registered in the employment office, aged between 18 and 25 years inclusive, who have an official university degree, professional training degree, middle or higher level, or qualification the same level as the latter, corresponding to vocational, artistic or sports training, or a certificate of professionalism. The internships will take place in work centres of the company or the business group, under the direction and supervision of a tutor and will last between three and nine months. Young people who have participated or participate in the program of non-work placements may be hired at the end, or during the development of the same, under any type of contract, in accordance with current labour regulations at that time.

The Organic Law 6/2001, of Universities and in its development, Royal Decree 1393/2007, emphasize the practical training of students. Having a maximum extension of 25 percent of the total credits of the degree, and should preferably be offered in the second half of the curriculum. Royal Decree 1791/2010, provides that students of Degree and Master have the right to receive theoretical and practical training of quality and according to the acquired skills or professional objectives provided in the title, as well as to enjoy an effective tutelage, academic and professional in the external practices that are foreseen in the curriculum. With respect to Master's studies, Article 9 expressly includes the right of students to have the possibility of carrying out internships, curricular or extracurricular, which may be carried out in external entities and centres. In addition, Article 24 provides that these external practices constitute an activity of a formative nature carried out by students and supervised by universities, whose objective is to allow those to apply and complement the knowledge acquired in their academic training, favouring the acquisition of competences that Prepare for the exercise of professional activities and facilitate their employability. These practices may be carried out in companies, institutions and public and private entities, including the university itself, according to the planned modality, existing two modalities of external internships: curricular and extracurricular. The first are regulated and supervised academic activities, which are part of the Curriculum. The extracurricular practices, on the other hand, are those that the students carry out on a voluntary basis, during their training period, and that are not included in the study plans. For the realization of external internships, universities will promote the establishment of agreements with companies and public or private institutions. The student will be supervised during the practice by an academic tutor and a tutor of the collaborating entity.

Interns benefit from full social security coverage. There are also non-academic internships, «contrato en prácticas» for unemployed young people registered in the employment office, aged

between 18 and 25 years old, with official university degrees; they consist of intermediate or higher vocational training or a certificate of professionalism.

2.1.4. United Kingdom

According to case law system of UK, there is lack of statutory definition of internship. However, the concept of placement exists. The types of placement programs vary. Internships are sometimes called work placements or work experience. These terms have no legal status on their own.

An internship is a period of work experience, offered by an organisation, usually lasting for a fixed, limited period of time. They are typically undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field. It can last between 6 weeks and 6 months.

Employers frequently use these placements to assess a student's or graduate's capability and often recruit employees from their interns rather than advertising their vacancies externally. One should therefore apply for an internship which they have a real interest in. Increase of professional skills and knowledge. Improve the understanding of a particular job or industry. Show other roles interns may not have previously considered. Help interns to gain an insight into the way organisations operate and the challenges they face. Provide interns with networking opportunities. Give the interns and the employer a chance to 'try before you buy' and clarify whether this type of work is really suitable for the interns. Internships can last from a few weeks during the summer holidays to a year depending on the sector and employer. Student internships tend to be shorter in length than graduate internships. In the case of medical training, for example, you might be labelled as an 'intern' until you progress to the next professional level. Usually internships are not accredited by universities as part of courses, but may be accredited or formally acknowledged by professional training organisations. For example, experience gained on an accountancy internship may count towards The ACCA Qualification, which is required to become a qualified accountant. Interns should receive at least the National Minimum Wage in the UK if performing the role of a worker. The vast majority of interns are classed as workers and you're only not a worker if you're shadowing someone. The most telling factors of a worker are set hours, duties or responsibilities. However, interns should consider the arrangement as a whole in determining their right to pay - work experience should be for your benefit, not the employer's. If interns are part of the commercial operation of a business, they are likely to be entitled to payment.

An intern's rights depend on their employment status. If an intern is classed as a worker, then they are normally due the National Minimum Wage and labour insurance protection. The rights they have depend on their employment status and whether they are classed as: a worker, a volunteer or an employee. If an intern does regular paid work for an employer, they may qualify as an employee and be eligible for employment rights.

Since 2011, the United Kingdom is implementing a «Common Best Practice Code for High Quality Internships». The key principles of this Code include: learning content, supervision and mentoring, remuneration (aligned to legislation on the national minimum wage), working conditions, transparency in recruitment procedures and certification.

2.1.5. France

Internships in France are called «stage».

There are two types of stage: the apprenticeship contract and the professionalization contract («contrat de professionnalisation»)³⁴.

Apprenticeship is not compulsory, but is matter of choice. As in other countries, apprenticeship is based on a work contract that binds an employer and an apprentice between 16 and 25 years of age, who, as he/she is paid a wage, is subject to the rules of the Labor Code and the same collective conventions as other employees.

The professionalization contract is designed for a wider public than the apprenticeship contract. It is aimed to young people 16-25 years old, jobseekers 26 years old and over, beneficiaries of the national minimum income and special solidarity allowance or the adults with disabilities. Programs last between 6 months and 1 or even 2 years. Remuneration of young people on professionalization contracts varies according to level of initial training and age. Unlike apprenticeship contracts, the State, local authorities and their public administrative bodies may not conclude professionalization contracts³⁵.

Insurance protection depends on the type and form of internship. For unpaid internships, only general public healthcare applies. The intern continues to benefit from his social protection during the internship period (student, parents' rights ...). However, in all cases, it is

³⁴ <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/formation-professionnelle/formation-en-alternance-10751/article/contrat-de-professionnalisation>

³⁵ <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/35-traineeships-and-apprenticeships-france>

recommended to take out additional insurance covering accident risks and civil liability for the period in the company.

Compulsory work insurance which covers diseases and accidents that may occur at work applies to paid internships.

To do an internship in France it is essential to have an internship Agreement which describes the details of the training experience. The Agreement needs to be signed by the company, the intern, and the promoter.

In 2011, France introduced legislation to tighten the regulatory framework for internship and strengthen interns' rights (known as «Loi Cherpion»). This law limits the duration of internships, prescribes a break period between engaging two interns in the same role, obliges host company/organizations to provide a minimum compensation for interns for internships longer than two months, and recognises internship as a “test” period if the intern is subsequently recruited within three months of its completion.

Anyway, in France, there are no official schemes for qualitative evaluation of internships apart for evaluations and monitoring of the “legality” of an intern's work conditions. These evaluations and monitoring activities are carried by inspectors from the «Inspection du Travail» (the French Labour Inspectorate) from the Ministry in charge of Labour and Employment.

2.1.6. Malta

Internships in Malta are commonly called with their English-related terms: either «internship» and/or «traineeship».

Generally speaking, internships are a growing industry in Malta, due to the growing demand that has interested such experiences in the last few decades. Many Maltese organisations have indeed flourished with the role of facilitating these internships or acting as an intermediary body. At national level one can refer to <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/>, the institutional system of job-matching for jobseekers and employers with the aim to enhance and facilitate access to jobs and the labour market.

With respect to post-graduate internship, in Malta is possible to look at the «Traineeship Scheme». It is intended to provide jobseekers with initial vocational training (pre-employment training) that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competence required to find

and retain employment. This scheme is based on a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. The programmes offered are labour market driven, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with the requests made by employers participating in the scheme³⁶. Main features are: 300 hours duration for a maximum of 12 weeks (maximum 40 hours in any given week). Participants are paid a training allowance, according to every hour attended, which is calculated on the national minimum wage³⁷. The maximum amount that a trainee can earn ranges from €2,352 to €2,688 depending on the duration of the traineeship. The «Traineeship Scheme» forms part of the Training for Employment project, which is co-financed by the EU Social Fund (2014-2020). In 2018, the Maltese Ministry of Education and Employment³⁸ has also approved the proposed «Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act» with the aim to provide a framework and a legal reference for the development and regulation of effective work-placements, apprenticeships and internships. Even though the Act mostly regulated initial vocational training (especially within the dual system), it is an important reference for other matters connected or related thereto such as internships for recent graduates and it contains: responsibilities and governance structures of these initiatives; rights and obligations for providers, employers and learners/interns. It also addresses the gap between industry and education as well as promotes job mobility and flexibility, following EU policies in the field.

Internships, in Malta, may fall into two categories:

- Training Programmes for Internships with a work-based learning component of 200 hours or less.
- Training Programmes for Internships with a work-based learning component of more than 200 hours.

All training programmes for internships require a «training programme schedule». The intern generally receives remuneration although it is possible to set an unpaid observation period at the workplace, as long as it is signed into the Agreement. Training Agreements must be registered otherwise it can be considered null and void.

People participating in internships are awarded two certificates: a certificate to cover the theoretical component delivered during the off-the-job training; and another certificate to recognize their participation in the on-the-job training. Participants are requested to fill in a handbook, whereby they need to include all the competences acquired throughout their on-the-job training. The formal qualification provided is accredited and based on the ECVET system.

³⁶ <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/schemes-jobseekers/traineeships>

³⁷ For 2020, the national minimum wage per week of whole-time employees is €179,33:
<https://dier.gov.mt/en/Employment-Conditions/Wages/Pages/National-Minimum-Wage.aspx>

³⁸ <https://education.gov.mt/en/Pages/educ.aspx>

During the experience the quality is ensured by monitoring visits that take place to evaluate the on-the-job training, and the promoter or intermediary body (i.e. national Jobsplus) staff seek feedback from both trainee and employer to gather additional information on their experience throughout the experience. During the off-the-job training, quality visits are performed by the Quality Assurance Unit, which sets learning outcomes and activities to be done.

2.2. General conclusion

The intent of this **Chapter III** is to highlight the value(s) of the internships as a starting point for a successful career. We have stated that internships have become an important part of the transition from education to employment.

Youth unemployment has been identified by the European community as one of the most pressing issues for the European Union. Employability is one of the pillars detected as priority by the European Commission in its employment strategy. In this sense, the idea to “professionalize” recent graduates through internships has gradually emerged as the best solution to overcome this problem across Europe. Internships provide opportunities to learn from experience and apply theoretical knowledge and skills into practice. At the same time, internships enable employers to observe candidates in the workplace and evaluate their potential, making it less of a risk than recruitment.

For many recent graduates, thus, internships are the first contact with work-based learning.

To encourage businesses to offer internships, in many countries, as well as at European level, additional financial assistance is provided to cover the “costs” of them. This will help ensure recent graduates to successfully do the transition into work.

Internships’ primary aim is to provide work-based learning together with employers, improving employment outcomes for participants, productivity within specific business sectors. The work-based component is supported by an in-company tutor who supervises intern’s tasks and activities.

As we have seen in the previous pages, some of the countries belonging to **Path for Career** partnership (i.e. Italy) have introduced specific legislation to regulate internships. In the other countries (i.e. United Kingdom), interns have expressly been brought within the coverage of particular labour or social laws.

According to European Parliament (2017) there are some policy pointers that are important and relevant in order to ensure and promote a proper development and impact in the field of internships and thus employability. These references are:

1. In a labour market characterised by weak labour demand, young people need to do something that will mark them out in the recruitment market.

2. At European level work-based learning including internships are positioned as important responses to combat youth unemployment and future skills mismatches.
3. In order to arrive at quality internships schemes, challenges need to be overcome by policy responses, being accepted by all stakeholders (including employers' organisations and trade unions).
4. Internships are less regulated and offer less secure working and learning conditions for participants. They are however an attractive opportunity both for employers and young people.
5. Introducing, establishing, and developing internships include a re-thinking of the sharing of responsibilities, costs and benefits between government, education providers, employers and individuals.
6. There are societal risks associated with internships. The concern is that they are not equally accessible to all, and that there are indications that they can lead to replacing regular (paid) employment and the misuse of qualified young people.

The idea of **Path for Career** project started precisely from the acknowledged need to contribute in the finding of a solution that may facilitate a job-placement for the recent graduates into the labor market. Starting with one the cause that affect employment and employability in European Union, which is a lack of competences, this project aims to improve them through different tool developed together. Since difficulties in job placement for recent graduates is a generalized problem within the European Union, the solution should be found thanks to the collaboration among different partners, as **Path for Career** consortium did.

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APPENDIX I

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 10 March 2014 on a Quality Framework for Traineeships
2014/C 88/01 HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES:

1. Improve the quality of traineeships, in particular as regards learning and training content and working conditions, with the aim of easing the transition from education, unemployment or inactivity to work by putting in practice the following principles for a Quality Framework for Traineeships:

Conclusion of a written traineeship agreement

2. Require that traineeships are based on a written agreement concluded at the beginning of the traineeship between the trainee and the traineeship provider;

3. Require that traineeship agreements indicate the educational objectives, the working conditions, whether an allowance or compensation is provided to the trainee by the traineeship provider, and the rights and obligations of the parties under applicable EU and national law, as well as the duration of the traineeship, as referred to in recommendations 4-12;

Learning and training objectives

4. Promote best practices as regards learning and training objectives in order to help trainees acquire practical experience and relevant skills; the tasks assigned to the trainee should enable these objectives to be attained;

5. Encourage traineeship providers to designate a supervisor for trainees guiding the trainee through the assigned tasks, monitoring and assessing his/her progress;

Working conditions applicable to trainees

6. Ensure that the rights and working conditions of trainees under applicable EU and national law, including limits to maximum weekly working time, minimum daily and weekly rest periods and, where applicable, minimum holiday entitlements, are respected;

7. Encourage traineeship providers to clarify whether they provide coverage in terms of health and accident insurance as well as sick leave;

8. Require that the traineeship agreement clarifies whether an allowance or compensation is applicable, and if applicable, its amount;

Rights and obligations

9. Encourage the concerned parties to ensure that the traineeship agreement lays down the rights and obligations of the trainee and the traineeship provider, including, where relevant, the

traineeship provider's policies on confidentiality and the ownership of intellectual property rights;

Reasonable duration

10. Ensure a reasonable duration of traineeships that, in principle, does not exceed six months, except in cases where a longer duration is justified, taking into account national practices;
11. Clarify the circumstances and conditions under which a traineeship may be extended or renewed after the initial traineeship agreement expired;
12. Encourage the practice of specifying in the traineeship agreement that either the trainee or the traineeship provider may terminate it by written communication, providing advance notice of an appropriate duration in view of the length of the traineeship and relevant national practice;

Proper recognition of traineeships

13. Promote the recognition and validation of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired during traineeships and encourage traineeship providers to attest them, on the basis of an assessment, through a certificate;

Transparency requirements

14. Encourage traineeship providers to include in their vacancy notices and advertisements information on the terms and conditions of the traineeship, in particular on whether an allowance and/or compensation and health and accident insurance are applicable; encourage traineeship providers to give information on recruitment policies, including the share of trainees recruited in recent years;
15. Encourage employment services and other providers of career guidance, if providing information on traineeships, to apply transparency requirements;

Cross-border traineeships

16. Facilitate the cross-border mobility of trainees in the European Union inter alia, by clarifying the national legal framework for traineeships and establishing clear rules on hosting trainees from, and the sending of trainees to, other Member States and by reducing administrative formalities;
17. Examine the possibility to make use of the extended EURES network and to exchange information on paid traineeships through the EURES portal;

Use of European Structural and Investment Funds

18. Make use of the European Structural and Investment Funds, namely the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, in the programming period 2014-2020, and

the Youth Employment Initiative, where applicable, for increasing the number and quality of traineeships, including through effective partnerships with all relevant stakeholders;

Applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships

19. Take appropriate measures to apply the Quality Framework for Traineeships as soon as possible; 20. Provide information to the Commission by the end of 2015 on the measures taken in accordance with this Recommendation;

21. Promote the active involvement of social partners in applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships;

22. Promote the active involvement of employment services, educational institutions and training providers in applying the Quality Framework for Traineeships.³⁹

³⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1411116781313&uri=CELEX:32014H0327%2801%29>

B. PRACTICAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Preparation to apply for an internship programme

Students or graduates who apply for a job are often faced with having to answer a question which appears even for *entry level* jobs: *What is your experience in this field?* Most frequently, graduates answer that they have just finished their studies and did not have time to gain any experience.

Well, the situation is not exactly so; you can gain experience during your years at university or after you finish your studies, by applying for an internship programme. These internships offer you the chance to learn, by doing and putting into practice theoretical notions, under the supervision of a professional who can become your mentor not only during the internship, but also for the rest of your career. During the program you will have the opportunity to explore your professional strengths and weaknesses, and to perfect yourself without being in the position of a permanent employee.

Selecting an internship program is not at all easy and you have to pay a lot of attention to this decision. Why does it require a lot of attention? First of all, you should carry out the internship in a field where you want to find a job, and perhaps in the company where you want to get hired. In order to be sure that you are making the right decision, you should follow this plan step by step.

Step 1

The first step that you should take in order to participate in an internship program is to identify your motivations, and to establish your objectives, and priorities. Only this way will you manage to narrow down your searches and focus on the program that will help you achieve your medium and long-term career goals.

In order to identify the motivation for undertaking an internship, you have to answer the following questions:

- What do I need an internship for?
- In what field do I want to accumulate experience?
- How can I find an important internship for my career?

In order to establish your internship-related goals, you have to answer the following questions:

- What do I want to gain from this internship?
- What kind of responsibilities would I like to have as an intern?
- What do I hope to learn from this internship?

To establish your priorities, you will need to find an answer to the following questions:

- Do I want an internship close to home, in a new town, or in another country?
- If I opt for an internship in another city or country, can I afford to rent lodging?
- How much will my living expenses add up to in the city or country in which I will be doing the internship?

In some EU states they are not paid during the internship period. You will have to consider whether you opt for an internship where you can gain connections, a training and an understanding of the field where you want to get hired, but you will not be paid. You have to weigh the benefits of the internship with your need of money at that time.

- Do I want a summer/full-time/part-time internship?
- Do I want to target a certain company where I can carry out my internship?
- Do I want to gain experience in a large/multinational organization, or do I want to work in a smaller organization where I can contribute to higher level projects?
- Do I want to be in a company where I might be able to find a full-time position later on?

Step II

After you have answered the questions from Step I, you will need to do research on the field in which you want to carry out your internship, and on the companies which offer internship programs. This kind of research will help you identify more clearly the field you want to explore and the career you wish to follow. As you have already learnt, graduating from a university offers you the possibility to work in many different fields. Your research will help you identify more clearly your interests, which you can then present to your potential employers.

The research on the activity in which you are interested should answer the following questions:

- Which are the fields in the industry of interest in which you can work?
- Which are the positions that you can fill in this field of activity?
- Which are the skills and competences that are required for the positions that you are interested in within the industry?
- Which are the social and economic trends of the industry that you are targeting?
- What are the expectations of the labour market for this industry?

The research on the position/ job that you are interested in should address the following questions:

- What degrees/diplomas/accreditations are necessary? Do you have them? How can you obtain them if you have not done so yet?
- What skills are necessary to be successful in such a position?
- What is the career route for such a position?
- What does an ordinary workday in such a position/job look like?

The research on the organizations which work in the field that you are interested in has to include:

- Their philosophy and core values
- Their working conditions
- How they treat their employees, and how their company atmosphere is What wages they offer
- What their reputation amongst clients is
- How their organization is regarded by the local community
- The types of internship programs that they offer

Step III

You should understand the benefits of a good internship. An internship can impact your future career, and offer you the opportunity to develop skills and professional competences which will help you grow as a professional. The organization also has the opportunity to reap benefits from their collaboration with you. For this reason, you should analyse the recruitment offers of the

organization whose internship program you decide to follow. The offer has to clearly describe the position for which you apply, and provide you with detailed information on the tasks that you will be required to fulfil. It should also specify very clearly who the person appointed to supervise and coordinate the activity of the intern will be, their methodology and the criteria of their evaluation.

Invest in yourself!

1. Identify the area in which you want to gain experience
2. Write on a piece of paper why you need an internship and what responsibilities you

Step IV

PREPARE TO APPLY

The application for an internship is similar to a job application. In fact, the company that selects you for an internship may already have the intention of hiring you later on. The recruitment process is based on the same principles. The applicant will have to complete an enrollment application, draw up a CV, write a cover letter and take part in an interview.

The selection process is specific to each role, and each applicant is faced with a personalized mix of testing processes:

- a group interview complete with an individual interview
- personality, creativity or knowledge tests
- role play or practical tests.

The most common selection process includes at least two tests in order to gain a better understanding of the applicant, and the most accurate prediction of his/her future behaviour . The criteria by which applicants are evaluated differs from one company to another, and varies according to the type of activity for which they apply.

CURRICULUM VITAE

The Curriculum Vitae is an indispensable marketing tool for those who want to get a job. The CV must be credible and interesting. It is a method of personal advertising in which (but not

only) the person convinces the employer that he/she is an important candidate who will contribute in achieving the organization's goals. That is why, when creating your CV, you should be concise, and focus as much as possible on the key points which can offer you a competitive advantage.

In the EU, the Europass CV is widely used. When you write such a CV, you should take into account the following principles.

❖ ***Focus on the essential issues.***

You have to take into consideration that during the first stage of the selection process, your CV will only be looked at briefly. This is why you should highlight in the most effective way possible the key points which might attract the employer to call you for an interview. A CV should be sufficiently long enough to attract the employer's/recruiter's attention, and have them invite you to a professional meeting. We recommend that the CV should not exceed 3 pages if your professional experience is less than 10 years. When writing the CV you should remove irrelevant experiences that do not contribute anything beneficial towards the position for which you are applying. It is good to leave a bit of information about yourself for the interview stage, in order to keep generating interest within your potential employer.

❖ ***Be clear and concise***

Use short sentences and avoid the clichés. Focus on the relevant aspects of your training and professional experience.

Quantify your achievements. Each relevant professional achievement must be presented by the following formula: I achieved X, measured according to Y, by doing Z. As you can see, each phrase must be started off with an active verb, followed by a numerical measure in order to present a level of comparison. Finally, you should offer details on the way in which you achieved the objective X. Your explanation on how you achieved your objective adds credibility to your presentation, and gives a concrete dimension to your competence.

This is not the right way

I studied the financial performance of companies and made recommendations for investments.





This is the right way

improved the portfolio performance by 12% (respectively 1.2 million Euro) compared to the previous reference period by refining the calculations of capital costs regarding new markets.

❖ *Always adjust your CV according to the position for which you apply*

- ✓ Highlight your relevant strengths according to the needs of the employer and focus on those skills and competences that meet the requirements of the specific position.
- ✓ Do not include work experience or professional training which is not relevant.
- ✓ Before sending the CV to an employer, check if it corresponds to the profile requested.
- ✓ Do not lie, or else exaggerate your achievements on your CV, as you risk being caught out during the interview.

❖ *Be careful when you present your CV*

- ✓ Pay attention to spelling and punctuation.
- ✓ Print the CV on white paper (unless it is going to be sent by email instead). in an electronic format).
- ✓ Stick to the specified format, and arrange your details on the page as suggested.

❖ *Check your CV as soon as you complete it*

- ✓ Correct possible spelling mistakes and make sure that the structure is clear and logical.
- ✓ Ask someone else to read through your CV to make sure that it has clear and intelligible content.
- ✓ Erase all the uncompleted fields.
- ✓ Do not forget to write and attach a cover letter.

THE COVER LETTRE

The *cover* letter is your first point of contact with the employer, and acts as a bridge between your CV and the position you are applying for.

Many employers do not take a CV into account if it is not accompanied by a cover letter. Thanks to the cover letter, or letter of motivation, you have the chance to bring out your personality, and show off the strengths that make you the ideal candidate for that position.

The cover letter should be targeted specifically towards the hiring company, and it is the first chance you have of getting noticed. It gives you the opportunity to express your interest in the company and in the position that you are applying for. Even if your CV is informative, and gives a lot of information about you, your studies and previous work experiences, the way your cover letter is written will give you an advantage over other candidates. ,

❖ ***The content of the cover letter***

- ✓ **The first paragraph** should contain the motivation behind sending the letter. Here, you should mention the position which you wish to apply for, while specifying how you came to know of the job availability (whether it was through advertisements, the Internet, acquaintances, friends etc.). If you are unsure about the availability of a certain position, you can inquire if there are any open positions in fields that interest you. In this respect, it is best to emphasize the field which stands out to you, or in which you are particularly skilled.
- ✓ **The second paragraph** should explain what attracted your interest in the position and the company. You should mention whether you have any previous experience related to the field in which the company operates, or whether you had ever attended any specialized courses that had recommended you for the job. It is beneficial to show how you could be a valuable contribution to the team, and help increase the company's efficiency and growth. Mention one or two qualifications that you believe would interest the hiring company.
- ✓ **The third paragraph** then refers to your attached CV: try not to repeat information found in the CV here. Instead, refer to people and sources from which potential employers could obtain more information about you (for instance former employees).

Therefore, paragraphs 2 and 3 should reveal your personality, and bring to light certain details and characteristics that could give you an advantage over other candidates, but due to the CV's structure, may remain unnoticed.

- ✓ **The conclusive paragraph** will then be used to thank the potential employer for taking the time to read through the CV and cover letter.

Invest in yourself!

1. Identify a company where you want to do an internship and elaborate a CV adapted to its requirements.
2. Attach to the CV a letter of intent to attract the attention of the company.
3. Analyze the CV and cover letter with the training trainer / career counselor

THE HIRIN INTERVIEW

This interview consists of a meeting between the two parties: the representative(s) of the company and the applicant. It represents the second stage of the selection process. Getting called for an interview means that the documents submitted (CV, cover letter) were well-written, and satisfactory. The upcoming discussion with the potential employers can now play a key role in getting the job.

Preparing for any interview requires special attention, because it is an invaluable opportunity for the candidate to present himself/herself to the employer in detail, and in the best possible manner. Why is preparation for interviews necessary? This is in order to allow the applicant to successfully answer all questions that may be asked, and also to reduce any stress and uncertainty which may arise before the interview.

When preparing for the interview, go over your CV and the cover letter. Think about what your main tasks and responsibilities may be, what knowledge and competencies are necessary, what the current work conditions are, and what benefits you can reap from the company. Put a lot of thought into your flaws, and be objective and self critical as your potential employer will be interested in them too.

The way you present yourself is very important because most people who conduct interviews will draw their conclusion about you in the first few minutes of the meeting, and you will not get a second chance in producing a **good first impression**. Elements that must be taken into account for first impressions are nonverbal communication, the way you dress, and your level of punctuality.

- **Nonverbal communication** in an interview is very important because it says a lot about a person, about the authenticity of his/her statements, and about their desire to be part of the team. In the recruitment team, there is usually a person who knows how to interpret nonverbal language, and you have to be very careful about your outfit, posture, the way in which you

position your hands and your facial expressions. You have to pay attention to the way in which you enter the room where the interview is being held, and to your appearance, as it is easy for interviewers to form an immediate opinion about you: *he/she is like me or he/she is not like me*.

- **Do not be late for the interview.** If you are late for the interview, you will create a negative first impression and there is a high chance that the interviewer will write you off before the interview has even started. It is not recommended that you arrive very early to the interview either, because this can create a level of discomfort for the recruitment team. It is recommended that you should get to the interview about 15 minutes early. If you arrive earlier, go grab a cup of coffee, arrange your outfit, rearrange your thoughts, and try to relax. **Your outfit** must be clean, and orderly. Your hair, hands and nails should be trimmed and neat. You should dress up for the hiring interview as though you have already gotten the job. From previous research that you've conducted, you should have a clear idea about the type of people that you will be working with, and the job's requirements. Dress up both professionally and comfortably for the interview. Your goal should not be to impress the interviewer by being the most stylish person in the room, so you should also avoid being too extreme in the way you dress. If a business outfit is required, it is important that it is of good quality. A suit is always adequate for an interview, even if the company environment appears to be relaxed, and everyone wears jeans and T-shirts. Suits should be single-colored or with discrete patterns. Shirts and blouses should not be in gaudy colours; white and blue colours are safer as they show professionalism. Avoid wearing strong perfumes and deodorants. Wear as little jewellery and accessories as possible. Try to present yourself in a way that would achieve approval, no matter the type of interviewer. .

The interview is a competition between you and the other candidates. It is recommended that during interviews, you should try to sell yourself as best and realistically as possible without lying, and without exaggerating your abilities. This is because if you successfully get the job, the expectations of your employer will comply with the image that you have created for yourself in the interview. If you are the type of person who does not know how, or cannot present himself or herself in front of people, you will have to gain more experience in doing so. It is very important to have the right approach towards interviews, and go in with a positive attitude, and with the aim of emphasising your strengths. . You have to take into account that the interviewer has experience in interviewing people, is a good listener, and has psychological testing methods and tools that will help him choose the right candidate. . However, the evaluation is also prone to a very human element, which is the element of subjectivity, and therefore one must take into consideration possible failure due to this.

We recommend that during the interview you are positive and keep in mind the 2 reasons for which you are there:

- the company has to offer you something that you want.
- you have to offer something to the company that it wants

Invest in yourself!

Here is how you can improve your presentation for the interview

Write a clear scheme with the previous experience, skills, competences you have and how you used them so far, with your previous achievements.

Practice your presentation in front of the mirror and record yourself to notice your hesitations, tone of voice and intonation.

Practice this presentation in front of a person and ask her/him to give you feedback.

2. During the internship

Preparing for the first day of the internship

❖ Check the description of your position

It is likely that you applied for the internship programme a few months ago, and have forgotten the exact requirements of the position. Check the skills and competencies that are expected of you, and try to practice them. It is likely that the use of Microsoft Office applications is compulsory. Make sure that you can easily use at least Excel and Word.

Practice speaking clearly, (without mumbling) and find an intelligible and enthusiastic answer to the question:

- What are you going to do here?
- Why have you come here?

❖ Test the route to the workplace.

One thing you never want to do on the first day of an internship, is to be late. Turning up early shows that you are eager to be there, and that you are ready to start. What can you do to make sure that you are not late? The most simple and useful way is to experiment with taking different routes to work. We recommend that you do this a few days before you start the internship, and leave exactly at the same time that you would be planning to leave for work. . If you use your own car, check if there is a parking lot available. . If you cannot do that, use an application on your smartphone to get an approximate estimation of the time it will take you to reach your workplace. . Take into account possible delays caused by traffic, and plan your time well so that you will get to your destination a bit earlier.

❖ Pick your clothes beforehand

It is very good if you have the opportunity to learn about the organization's dress code. Not everyone is able to do so. In order not to get caught off guard, check your wardrobe and identify which clothing items you are going to wear on the first day. Pick those which are not extravagant in colour or shape, and make sure that they are clean. Rather than investing a lot of money in clothes before starting your internship, save this money and go shopping after you have a clearer idea of what the dress code is.

Prepare your bag

It is the evening before your first day of the internship. As you are preparing your bag, do not forget to pack these things:

- **Your identity documents.** On the first day you might be required to fill in a lot of papers. You can fill in forms with the information obtained from your identity documents.
- **An agenda and a pen/ballpoint pen.** You will need them because you will be bombarded with a lot of information that you will definitely forget in the next 10 minutes if you do not write it down!
- Depending on your internship programme, you may need to use a **laptop**. Make sure to have a laptop in your bag.
- **Water bottle and sandwich.** It is good to have these on you, in order to stay hydrated and to have something to eat during lunch break. On your first day, you will be able to find out how the organization deals with lunch, and adapt according to the situation.

You are now ready for your first day as an intern!



The first day as an intern

The first day is very stressful for most interns, and this is normal. You are in a new environment where you do not know anybody, or almost anybody, and the unknown creates a state of stress.

It is natural that you are anxious on your first day, especially if it is your first time in a situation like this, but do not forget that you were selected for a reason. The interviewer saw inside of you something that distinguished you from the competition, and that convinced him that you were the best candidate for that position. If you are motivated, polite and you interact positively with your colleagues, you will do well.

If it helps, this has been proven even through experiments. Therefore, to get through your first day of the internship successfully, we have a couple of recommendations.

Dress up formally for the first day by choosing a classical outfit, and neutral colours.

It is recommended not to exaggerate with the amount of jewellery that you wear. You should also avoid wearing very expensive and sophisticated outfits, and overpowering perfume. If you have tattoos, try to keep them covered. It is likely that the organization will not have a problem

with tattoos, however you should wait until the first day to make sure that they do not. When wearing make-up, its application should be light, and manicures should be neat, with as little rings on the fingers as possible.

If you have opted to wear a suit, wear a dark one with a white shirt, and a conservative tie. If you have decided to wear a casual outfit, opt for classical trousers and a dark coat. Do not forget to clean your shoes, and to make sure that your socks match your trousers. Even if you are a fan of baseball caps and colourful jewellery, leave these at home on your first day of the internship.

It is recommended that you have a bag with you in which you place a notebook and even a laptop. The first day will be extremely informative, and you will have to write down the names of the people with whom you will be collaborating with, and any useful information.

How to act

On the first day you will meet up with your supervisor. Here you will have a discussion about your expectations, the objectives related to the internship, the tasks you will be required to fulfil, and how the evaluation process will be carried out. During this time you can take on an active role by asking questions which will help you understand what you have to do, and what is expected of you. Avoid tedious subjects and try to stick to the safe ones. It is not recommended that you talk about money, politics, sexual affinities, or expose your religious beliefs etc.. It is very important that your smartphone stays as long as possible in your pocket, or in your bag.

How to address people

During the meeting organized by your supervisor with the people you will work with, we recommend that you start addressing them first by their surname. It is only when the other person requests that you call him or her by their first name, that you should do so. It is recommended that you address your superiors by their surname, even if they insist that you use their first name. Finally, it is time to get introduced to the other trainees, with whom you will be sharing this experience.

How to socialize during the internship

During the internship you will get the chance to meet new people with whom you will interact with, not just in order to accomplish work duties, but also within a relaxed and informal atmosphere. You have to take advantage of this opportunity and to create an image of yourself which will help you in your future career.

For this purpose, you have to take into account a couple of tips:

- **Dress up right.** Even if you have funky outfits that you wear when meeting your friends, think twice before wearing them to an informal meeting in the organization in which you are carrying out the internship. If you have doubts about which outfit to use during these meetings, it is best that you ask your supervisor. If you wear clothes that are printed with slogans, you have to be careful about the message that they transmit.
- **Try to avoid the alcohol consumption** especially if you become very talkative after a few glasses. You might say what you think about some of your collaborators, and this is not the right place or time.
- **Monitor your behaviour during lunch breaks.** Do not sit next to the buffet table, and do not make it your property by placing dibs on the best dishes. You will not be well-regarded if you stuff food in your bag to take home with you.
- **Be proactive.** Introduce yourself to people and start conversations. You can speak about an event, holiday, the weather or about other subjects, but do not take part in any gossip.
- **Act friendly, but not too familiar.** Keep a comfortable distance, and maintain personal space between you and the person that you are talking to. Any touching is not appropriate, even if it is a social activity. Do not forget that most organizations do not encourage any flirting between employees, whether it is during the internship programme or common activities.
- **Pay attention to time.** As you are new to the organization, it is recommended that you are among the first to arrive at an event. This is a good opportunity to get to know those who arrive earlier better. Do not be the first to leave, as this creates the impression that you are not having fun. However, make sure that you are not the last to leave either.

How can you build a good relationship with the head of your department/mentor/ supervisor during the internship?

If you want to have a good, professional relationship with the head of your department/your mentor/supervisor, you have to take into consideration that the internship programme was created both for your benefit, as well as for the benefit of the organization. That is why, it is recommended that you follow these sets of points:

- Make sure that you fulfil the tasks that were entrusted to you in due course, and according to specifications. Then, ask your boss what you can do further in order to help him/her. Helping your boss out with a project is an effective way of improving your professional relationship.
- Be punctual, and do not hesitate in doing extra hours when a project is late, or has a short deadline with its delivery date. This way you will prove that you are capable of behaving like a professional, and that you care about the organization in which you are carrying out the internship.
- Stand out by introducing ideas into the workplace which can lead to an improvement in services, products, or the company's working methodology.
- Show interest in accompanying your boss to various professional meetings, both with other organizations, as well as within the company itself. Be careful not to be too persistent when this is not a possibility. Show enthusiasm in learning more about the field in which you work.
- Thank your boss for all the help you get offered while on your internship.

Collaborating with an unsatisfied boss

If you feel that your boss is not satisfied with your performance, it is best that you have a talk with him/her to clarify what it is in your behaviour that is not compatible with his/her expectations. Before attempting to start this conversation, it is best that you create a plan that highlights your objectives, and that acts as a guide in order to have a successful meeting. Here is how you should proceed:

- Establish a meeting time that is convenient for both parties, and make sure that what you want to discuss will fit comfortably within the allocated time frame. Prepare an agenda that voices your concerns.
- Present the agenda to your boss before the meeting, and make sure that he/she has enough time to reflect on your questions, and be able to offer useful answers.
- Make sure that you have a notebook on which to write down the answers of your boss, as this shows that you are committed to changing.

- Conclude your points with questions as this can make it easier for your boss to answer, as for example: “In which fields do I need to improve?”. The number of questions should be limited to 5-6.
- Refrain from interrupting your boss when he or she is speaking, and do not come up with excuses as to why you did not fulfil your tasks.
- Be a diplomatic. Do not say that you do not like your colleagues, or that the office is not properly equipped. Do not forget that your objective is to improve your situation following the meeting.
- Before the end of the meeting, ask your boss to help you revise your expectations so that you will have a new method of evaluating your performance.

Networking out of your department

Do not forget that during the internship you will get the chance to meet new people who work within your field of interest, and who can help you with your career. The goal is that at the end of the internship, you will have built up a professional network, made out of people that you were in contact with. In order to accomplish this, you need to have a well-articulated plan.

- After the first week of your internship, ask your supervisor what the best approach to meeting other employees in the department is. Explain to him/her that you want to understand how the business works as a whole. If he/she offers to accompany you, this is an advantage for you because you will benefit from his/her influence, and he/she will introduce you to various members with whom you can talk about their work.
- When you are sure that the head of the department is satisfied with your work, ask him/her to allow you to visit other departments which intersect with the department in which you work. Ask him/her to come with you, and to ask the people from the departments that you visit to spend more time with you, so that you get to learn more about the work in that department.
- Another way of introducing new members into your professional network is by attending coffee breaks, lunch breaks, social events, or going to fitness centres. Many companies make their employees wear badges with their name and position. This will help you get to know more easily the people from other departments, or those with whom you have not yet been introduced. Some trainees make it a habit of sitting at a different table every day in order to meet

new people. Make sure that you participate in as many social events as possible during the internship, in order to get to know more people.

- Participate in the volunteering activities organized by the company. During these activities you will get the chance to meet important people, both from your organization as well as from other organizations that can help you with your career.

2.1. Advice for your internship

❖ *Take full advantage of your internship*

Once you have managed to be accepted in an internship programme, you should try to take full advantage of it. Most trainees do not pay much attention to these internships as they believe that it is not a real job. This is totally the wrong approach, and you can build up a competitive advantage for yourself by using the time spent in this programme to develop and build skills and competences, which will be useful in your career.

❖ *Establish personal goals*

Your participation in the internship programme has to take into account the skills and competences that you want to develop, and the people with whom you want to come into contact with (from whom you want to learn). For this purpose, you need to have realistic and achievable goals. You have to take into account that the goals you established initially can change during the internship. It is important that you view the change in goals as something positive.

❖ *Adopt a positive attitude and be professional*

Tackle all the tasks in which you are involved in during the internship with enthusiasm and professionalism, even if fulfilling some of these requires a lot of work, or they are not pleasurable to do. It is important to respect your colleagues, and this means understanding the importance of everyone's role in fulfilling their tasks in order to achieve a project's goals. Do not treat those who are in lower positions than you with arrogance, because they can help you with your work, and there's always something you can learn from everyone.

❖ *Get involved*

What employers appreciate the most in trainees is their desire to get involved in solving problems the company may be facing, and their interest and desire to be proactive. Try to always keep an ongoing stream of communication with your supervisor, and if you have finished your

work, ask him/her if you can get involved in anything else. This is a good opportunity to get involved in a project, and to perform a task that interests, or excites you. **Ask**

Someone who keeps himself or herself constantly informed, and asks questions to problems he or she can't find the answer to, proves that he or she is interested and wants to learn. After all, internships are there to learn from them, and it is a shame not to ask questions, as nobody expects you to know everything. It is better to ask, than to make a mistake which could have unpleasant consequences for your entire team.

❖ ***Develop your network, and take advantage of the opportunities offered.***

During your internship you will be assigned a mentor who will either be your supervisor, or another person from the organization. Try to build a good relationship with your mentor, because apart from having the responsibility of teaching you, he could end up helping you get a job thanks to his references.

It is also important to socialize with other staff members, even if this means creating events in order to meet up with some of them. Participate in as many events as possible, and go to meetings organised by the company. It is only by doing this that you can learn new ideas, and meet people who can teach you, and whom you can integrate in your professional network. Try to keep in contact with the people you got to know, even after you complete your internship programme.

Meet with your supervisor regularly

The first time that you meet with your supervisor gives you the opportunity to get information about the dress code, the work programme, and the company's expectations.

Once you begin the internship, these meetings are an excellent opportunity for you to obtain permanent feedback from him/her. Use these meetings to speak openly with your supervisor about your professional performance and objectives. If your supervisor does not plan these meetings, ask him/her to schedule them. Make sure that a final meeting is planned at the end of the internship.

3. What to do after finishing the internship

When your internship programme has come to an end, you should take full advantage of the beneficial experience acquired from the host company.

- ❖ **If you wish to continue your collaboration with the host organization, you should draw up a plan and present it to the company.**

You do not need to wait for your supervisor to identify your options, but you can present them to him yourself, a week before the end of your internship. Draw up an agenda with the activities in which you want to get involved, and the value they would bring to the company.

A field on which you can focus is research, because many companies are obliged to do a lot of research, but do not have a sufficient number of people to perform this task. If you were previously involved in the evaluation of data, you can offer to draw up various reports. When you have identified the task which you can perform to bring value to the company, you should write down your proposal and present it to the person who can take the decision whether to keep you on or not.

Many companies wish to organize internships, however are overwhelmed with the responsibility of training and monitoring the trainees. You can take advantage of this by making yourself useful; this can be through writing guidelines for the new trainees, which tackles subjects such as the dress code, and the policy and corporate culture. You can also create a newsletter that serves as a marketing tool, for all those who wish to take part in an internship program with the company.

Offer to become a representative of the company. If the company participates in fairs dedicated to jobs, you can offer to go to these events and tell the students why you liked interning with the company.

Explain each possibility to your supervisor and draw up a schedule of dates proposed for your future involvement. Most likely the internship supervisor will not be able to take the decision regarding your plans by himself, and you will have to wait for him/her to talk to the decision-makers from other departments in order to reach a decisive conclusion. If your offers are not accepted, you will have to identify other options. Whatever you do, maintain a positive attitude and transform your energy into action in another field.

❖ Request references

In the current world of work, references are invaluable, especially if they come from respected people or companies within the field. That is why, you have to obtain at least a reference, and verbal approval from the important people within the company. These should give their names and their telephone numbers in order to be contacted for future reference, both in the case of a new internship and for a job. You do not need to wait until the end of the internship in order to do this. Here are the steps you need to follow:

- *Request a meeting with your supervisor.* Thank him/her for the guidance he/she has offered you during the internship and ask him/her to write a general reference letter that you may use in order to secure future internships with, or a job. If you aim to acquire a certain position, you can request that your supervisor write a reference for that position. Ask for his/her permission to use his/her name as a general reference, and if it is possible to obtain his/her address and telephone number.

- *Also take into account other adequate references.* Draw up a list of other people with whom you collaborated with during the internship, and who can also become one of your references: the leader of your work team, or the heads of the departments that you were working in. You can also ask the human resources department to issue a reference letter for you. Take into account that you can never have too many reference letters.

- *Establish a timeline.* Take into account how long it will take you to acquire the reference letters. . Begin making requests about 2 weeks before the end of internship, in order to give people enough time to write. A week before the end of internship, check if anyone has drawn up the reference letter. Thank everyone for the time taken to write the letters. Mention the date of your last day, and say that you will be coming back to pick up the letter on that day. Establish the place where you will pick up the letter.

❖ Thank the company for giving you the opportunity to kick start your career there.

You have to do this in order to maintain a good relationship and keep the door open for future jobs. This means that you have to know who to thank, and how to thank them.

Here is a short list of some people that can be thanked, depending on the purpose of the activities in which you were involved in during the internship:

- the supervisor/mentor

- the collaborators
- the heads of departments
- the human resources staff

You can consider thanking even the president of the company, by mentioning how much you appreciate the chance that was offered to you, and the professionalism of the people with whom you collaborated with in the company. If you mention them with kindness, they will definitely remember you.

➤ **How to express your gratitude**

Depending on the corporate culture and your own style, there are several options:

- a written note on paper of quality, preferably on white or pastel colours. Make sure that you have written correctly both the name and the title of the person to whom you're addressing it. The thank you letter must be sent from the office address.
- a written note on a computer is preferred if you do not have neat handwriting, and this must be signed by you with a ballpoint pen.

It is important that you use the same type of paper, and the same type of envelope, when addressing letters to different people, so that no one feels underprivileged.

➤ **Mistakes you should avoid**

- sending a thank you letter by email is not acceptable.
- do not use cards with pre-printed messages that you only have to sign. You will be more appreciated if you personally write a thank you letter, where you mention the ways in which that person has helped you.
- do not wait too long to send the thank you letters. Do this before your last day, and make sure that these get to the right person.

➤ **Other ways to thank someone**

- You can offer cookies or a special snack for your office colleagues on your last day of your internship.
- If your relationship with the supervisor was very good, you can invite him/her to lunch on your last day of the internship, or after you've completed it. This is an excellent opportunity to keep contact with him/her. You can also offer a gift, but make sure that it's not too expensive.

❖ **Assess what you have learned**

- **Evaluate yourself**, starting from the goals that you set out for yourself when applying for the internship programme. Examine the tasks that you were given to fulfill during the internship, identify those which you completed, and note down the skills and competencies that you improved or acquired. Read the evaluation report by your supervisor, and write down the positive notes identified by him/her during your internship.

- **Compare** your levels of self-confidence and self-esteem before you had the internship with those of afterwards. If your objectives were achieved, then you should feel more prepared in taking the next step towards your career.

- **Collect** all the documents, reports, and projects in which you were involved in during the internship, and include them in your portfolio. Write a note about each of them in which you explain your role and how you worked. You will be surprised and satisfied with what you discover.

- **Integrate in your professional network the people with whom you interacted with during the internship.** This way, your network will be enriched with people who could prove themselves to be invaluable when you want to get a job.

- **Update your CV** after you perform the internship. You will notice that it has become more enriched with these new experiences, skills and competences. You should show clearly the value of the tasks and achievements that you performed, and what impact these left on you within your CV.

❖ **Become interested in future opportunities**

After the internship, you can spend some time deciding what you want to do next. You will have to come up with a plan and a timeline in which you present your offer (project, plan) to the adequate parties. Do not forget to take into account that it is important to have more than one plan (A, B...Z). Remember the most important thing: *Regardless of the results, stay optimistic and enthusiastic. You will definitely manage to find the career path you wish.*

❖ **I did not like the internship. Should I tell this to others?**

If the internship that you followed resulted in a negative experience in which you wasted your time, you should make an objective evaluation before voicing your opinions to others.

Evaluation of internship

- Were your expectations realistic?

- Did you understand the offer properly when you applied for this internship?

If the answer to these questions is NO, then the problem is yours. Perhaps you were overqualified for the position in which you worked, and therefore wasted your time. You can console yourself with the idea that you practised the skills and competences you already had.

If the company changed the tasks that you were meant to fulfil after you accepted the offer, and you had no say in the matter, then the fault is of the company. If the tasks that you did consisted mainly of bringing coffee to the employees, photocopying documents, or moving files from one place to another, you should let future trainees know what to expect.

Expressing feelings

It is not recommended that you let out your frustrations related to the internship in front of employees or representatives of the company. Do not forget that one of your objectives is to obtain reference letters. In order to do things the right way, both by remaining polite to the company that allowed you to do the internship, as well as by being honest with future trainees, you have to explain very clearly why the internship was not a success to you. Even if your experience was unsuccessful, you have to overcome it and approach future internships with a positive attitude.

Look ahead towards the future.

Since you are young, you have to take into account that you can experience many internships in your career. You can spend more time on:

- <http://internship.com>
- <https://programmes.eurodesk.eu/internships>
- <https://www.gooverseas.com/internships-abroad/europe>

and look among the thousands of internships until you find the right one for you. Apply for those internships which are of interest to you. Make sure you apply h for an internship months in advance.



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