

4.2 Informative guide for the enterprise

4.2.1 Practical placement objectives relevant for the enterprise

Modernisation of higher education and transformation of the industry from one based on resources to industry based on knowledge are prerequisites to increase competitiveness and achieve successful economy. Employers want new employees to provide "added value" immediately upon their employment, be adaptive, analytical, team players. Training new employees is expensive and time consuming process.

Enterprise support to student practical placement contributes to increasing the level of students' practical knowledge, their better preparedness for the job, and at the same time gives students the opportunity to familiarize with business processes in the enterprise. On the other hand, the goal of the enterprise is to have access to the gained knowledge of students and the opportunity to choose the best among them for scholarships and employment. In this way, training costs and adjustment time of the newly employed to work obligations are reduced.

4.2.2 Practical placement duration

Depending on the academic curriculum of studies and level of studies (BSc or MSc), each faculty as a member of university has a defined mandatory practical placement of different duration and implementation dynamics. In the WBC region, where the project is implemented, four types of student practical placement have been identified:

- Student practical placement during the final semesters of BSc and MSc studies, lasting 75 hours, through student attendance in an enterprise once a week
- Student practical placement as summer practical placement that is realized during summer break (after the final semesters of BSc and MSc studies), lasting 1 month (a minimum of 20 days), the student spends 8 hours a day in the enterprise on work days
- Practical placement of graduates who want to acquire necessary practical knowledge and skills within "paid" or "unpaid" practical placements in some enterprises, lasting from 6 months to a year

4.2.3 Benefits for the enterprise

Enterprises are interested to accept students for practical placement for several reasons, including the following:

- Students bring new ideas and different interpretations of the current problems of enterprise, which are up to date with modern trends and new technologies they learn during studies
- Making closer connections with universities/faculties/research centres, and strengthening of development capacities
- Longer practices may serve well to the evaluation and selection of new employees
- The practical placement is an opportunity to influence the improvement of student education and their better preparation for inclusion in the work processes when employed
- Student involvement in the ongoing projects and reinforcing the team with fresh personnel
- Good investment refund (for € 1 invested in the student practical placement, the average reimbursement is 6 € (STEP 1999))
- Employees involved in realization of practical placement strengthen their monitoring skills
- Costs of training employees are reduced when employing graduates who have gone through the practical placement of that enterprise
- Raising the reputation and publicity of enterprises through support and sponsorship of practical placement

4.2.4 Obligations of enterprise

When the enterprise agrees to accept students for practical placement, and signs a contract with an academic institution or the competent centre, the following obligations ensue, as one of the prerequisites for successful practical placement realization and for achievement of set objectives and outcomes:

- Providing a safe place and conditions for student's stay and work during practical placement
- Introducing students to the regulations of safety and other relevant regulations and codes of conduct in the enterprise
- Provide the student with procedures in the event of an accident or some other misfortune, and with phone numbers for emergency notification as well
- Appointment of an industrial mentor and/or coordinator of practical placement, and preparation of other employees for training processes and support to students in the realization of practical placement's activities
- Helping the student to prepare Practical Placement Work Programme
- Enable the student to access the necessary resources needed for achievement of set objectives of practical placement (equipment, machinery, devices, documentation, software etc.) under condition not to compromise data confidentiality and protection of trade secrets
- Assist the student in acquiring practical knowledge and to prepare himself the best he can for the world of business
- Consider the possibilities of financing part of student activities on his practical placement
- Advising students and monitoring of their the progress, which is to be done by industrial mentor appointed by the enterprise
- Communication with academic mentor
- Proper administration of all supporting documents (Practical Placement Confirmation form, Monitoring report of industrial mentor, Final Report on the practical placement, see annexes 4.5, 4.8, 4.13)

4.2.5 Preparation of student workplace and occupational health and safety

The enterprise should provide workplace for a certain number of students are on the practical placement, whose maximum number can be specified in the Contract, in accordance with available enterprise capacities. If that is necessary for achieving the objectives of practical placement, the enterprise can provide full or limited access to IT resources, Internet, telephone, a special e-mail. The student should be familiarized with the estimated risks of workplace where he does the practical placement. The enterprise may require a signed statement by the student that he is familiar with all regulations on safety at work and codes of conduct. In the case of violation of these and other regulations in the Contract between enterprise and academic institution, the enterprise must inform the academic mentor and order cancellation of student's practical placement.

4.2.6 Practical placement monitoring

As described in Annex 4.8 of this programme, the industrial supervisor appointed by the enterprise is required to monitor student practical placement, based on daily monitoring of progress, the realization of planned activities, the level of achieved practical knowledge and skills. During practical placement, industrial mentor fills out Monitoring report with his observations about student. Also, constant communication with academic mentor and reporting are an integral part of monitoring and reporting. Upon realized practical placement, industrial mentor verifies and signs the student Final report and issues Practical placement certificate.