

4.3 Informative guideline for mentors

4.3.1 Objectives

The main objective of students practical placement is for the students to gain work experience in a real business environment. Students get the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge acquired during their study for real-life problem solving and to acquire practical knowledge from their efforts through team work and their own initiative and analysis. Practical placement should help students to start developing their own careers, acquire additional knowledge and skills, education or trainings apart from formal university education, find topics for their graduation exam and orientation towards the future occupation, make contacts and recommendations. Other than that, students should get valuable insight into business culture in enterprises, team work, their own ability to fit into working environment, impressions that they leave on their associates and supervisors. It is mentors job to guide, monitor, assess and provide feedback about students performance during their practice.

4.3.2 Practical placement

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, three 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

Mentors are to organise practical placement according to students study curriculum.

4.3.3 Benefits for the mentors

Organization of practical placement programme assume a close collaboration of universities and companies. There are many benefits for both sides resulting from this.

Academic mentors establish connections with businesses regarding practical placement which enables possibility of future cooperation in projects, case studies or research and development. Also, students practice tasks can be used by mentors for defining their graduate exams, or for further postgraduate education.

Industrial mentors strengthen their monitoring skills. They get to evaluate and select possible new employees that are already familiar with the enterprise and have proven industrious. Students bring new ideas and different interpretations of the current problems of enterprise, and reinforcing the team with fresh personnel.

4.3.4 Academic mentor responsibilities

Duties of academic mentors that are appointed for practical placement managers are:

- to organize practical placement,
- to help student to find suitable host organization that will accept students on practical placement,

Practical Placement Programme

- to consult and advise students about practical placement,
- to align student proposal of Work programme of practical placement with industrial mentor
- to coordinate with industrial mentors about practical placement tasks
- to write students practical placement referral (annex 4.5),
- to monitor students progress,
- to evaluate students reports.

4.3.5 Industrial mentor responsibilities

Duties of industrial mentor appointed by the company are:

- to submit students placement confirmation form (annex 4.5)
- to define the placement tasks according to students study and to companies core business.
- When students begin their practical placement the industrial mentors duty is to:
 - organize students workplace,
 - to align Work programme of practical placement with academic mentor and student
 - introduce students to the people they will work with and their supervisor,
 - train them in the health and safety of the workplace,
 - explain the company policies and procedures,
 - provide students with basic information about the job which they will be doing,
 - provide information about companies core business and organize a tour to familiarize students with the complete business processes and organization,
 - be available to students and monitor their progress,

After the practical placement is done the industrial mentor evaluates students endeavour and fills Industrial mentors monitoring form.

4.3.6 Reporting and Monitoring

In accordance with the general monitoring and reporting procedures student is obliged to keep the Diary of practical placement up to date and give access to it to mentors who monitor the implementation of PPP. Besides the so-called field monitoring, which is realized by academic mentor's visits of students in the enterprise (minimum 2 visits), and continual monitoring of student progress and realization of activities defined by industry mentor in Practical placement programme, the realization of practical placement will be additionally monitored by e-mail communication and student reporting. Records and monitoring results are an integral part of the Monitoring report, which is filled out by mentors.

The student is required to do reporting on the practical placement realization by making a written Final report, which is reviewed and approved by academic mentor. With the Final report, the student also submits the Confirmation on Completion of the practical placement, which is signed and stamped by industrial mentor or person in charge of practical placement coordination in the enterprise.

After the Presentation and Final report submitting, academic mentor evaluates the student taking into consideration not only the quality of the Final report and evaluation of the achieved objectives of practical placement and learning outcomes, but the content of Monitoring reports by both mentors as well.

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.