

ADAPTING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO LABOR MARKET

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Abstract: We are living in a society in which services are characterized by great expansion, mobility and adaptability to market requirements. The purpose of this article is to present the necessity of adapting educational services, namely those in the sphere of higher education, to the labour market and in particular the manner in which the requirements of the labour market are currently well understood and fulfilled by universities. The most accessible and effective way to start the process of correlating students' skills with market requirements is to facilitate internships for students at the employers. This research has been carried out among the students in the fields of economics at the „1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, following the completion of their last internship (July 2013) and among the economic operators, partners in the completion of internships.

Key words: educational services, labor market, internship, students.

Introduction

The statistics regarding the rate of unemployment indicate worrying figures as regards the proportion of graduates in the total number of unemployed persons.

Although thousands of graduates are currently reported by universities annually in Romania, their absorption on the labour market is reduced, while the demands of employers can not be covered. Just like in the case of the previous example, dozens of other specializations are in high demand on the labour market, but vacant jobs still remain unoccupied.

The main reasons for this are the total lack of adjustment of educational services to the labour market demands, the low emphasis placed on the acquisition of practical skills, failing to update the information and teaching methods, the loss in some cases of the contact with employers and their requirements, as well as the superficial treatment of internships.

In order to prevent the possible negative effects caused by the somewhat superficial treatment of internships, the „1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia has shaped a strategy regarding this process. In this respect, given the openness and receptivity manifested by the economic operators, in the last few years the students in the fields of economics, to whom I will refer in this article, enjoy the possibility of carrying out some internships in the best possible conditions, in all respects.

Thus, from the very first year of study they are assigned to local economic operators, based on their personal options, for the completion of their internship. It has a duration of 2 to 3 weeks, and it can be extended with the consent of the parties, with the possibility that at the end of their internship or period of studies, those students will remain or return to that establishment as employees.

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This cooperation agreement is initialed by a document known as Framework Agreement on the Internship Completion. Students receive during their internship period the quality of `interns`. The Framework Agreement establishes the framework in which the internship will be organized and carried out by students with a view to strengthening their theoretical knowledge and helping them acquire skills, in order to use them in accordance with the specialisation studied by them. The internship agreement defines the students' status during the completion of their internship, specifies the duration, and the responsibilities of both interns and internship partners.

Interns' Responsibilities

Interns have the obligation to respect, during the completion of their internship, the established working programme and to execute the activities specified by their internship supervisors in accordance with the internship portfolio, in compliance with the legal framework regarding their volume and difficulty.

During the internship, interns have to comply with the Internal Regulations of the internship partners. In the event of non-compliance with the Internal Regulations, the manager of the internship partner reserves the right to terminate the Framework Agreement, after listening to the intern's point of view and notifying the director of the education institution where the intern is studying, and after receiving the confirmation of receipt of this information.

Interns have the obligation to comply with the rules of safety and health at work, which they learn from the representative of the internship partner before the beginning of the internship.

The intern undertakes not to use, in any case, the information to which he or she has access during the internship regarding the internship partner or his clients, in order to communicate them to a third party or to publish them, even after finishing the internship, except with the consent of the internship partner.

The responsibilities of the internship partner

The internship partner designates an internship supervisor, selected from the company's own employees, and whose obligations are mentioned in the internship portfolio, an integral part of the Framework Agreement.

In the event of the non-compliance of the intern with his or her obligations, the internship supervisor will contact the the university teacher who is the internship coordinator and sanctions will be applied in accordance with the organization and operation rules of the higher education institution.

Before the beginning of the internship, the partner has the obligation to ensure the training of the intern with regard to the rules of safety and health at work, in accordance with the legislation in force. Among its responsibilities, the internship partner will take the necessary measures for the safety and health at work of the intern, as well as for the communication of prevention rules on occupational risks.

The internship partner has to make available to the intern all the means necessary for the acquisition of the skills specified in the internship portfolio.

The internship partner has the obligation to ensure the free access of the interns to the services of occupational medicine during the internship.

The obligations of the internship organizer

The internship organizer designates a university teacher as an internship coordinator, who is responsible for the planning, the organization and the supervision of the internship activities. The internship coordinator, together with the internship supervisor designated by the internship partner set the themes of the internship and the professional skills that need to be acquired during the internship.

In the event that the internship is not carried out in accordance with the commitments undertaken by the internship partner by the agreement, the director of the higher education institution (the internship organizer) can decide the termination of the internship based on the framework agreement, after informing the manager of the internship partner and after receiving the confirmation of receipt of this information.

Following the successful completion of the internship, the organizer will grant the intern the number of necessary credits, which will be included in the Diploma Supplement, in accordance with the Europass rules (Decision No. 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council).

During the internship, the internship supervisor and the internship coordinator will permanently evaluate the intern, based on an observation/evaluation sheet. Both the level of acquisition of professional skills and the behavior and the manner in which the intern integrates in the activity of the internship partner (discipline, punctuality, responsibility in performing the tasks, compliance with the Internal Regulations of the undertaking/public institution, etc.) will be evaluated.

After the completion of the internship, the internship supervisor elaborates a report based on the evaluation of the skill acquisition level of the intern. The result of this evaluation will represent the basis for the mark given to the intern by teacher who is his or her internship coordinator.

A number of 54 of students who have carried out their internship at economic operators, as well as 8 economic operators, partners of the University for the completion of internships have been questioned.

Thus, according to those involved, the situation looks as follows:

All students became aware of the importance of the internship for the improvement of their employment opportunities after graduation and for an easier adaptation to the labor market.

All employers were open to the idea of recruiting their future employees from the interns, provided that they meet the required conditions.

64% of the students who completed an internship have been in favour of the extension of the internship period, in order to accumulate work experience. All employers declared that they were pleased with the students' activity and the

interest manifested by them, and expressed their willingness to receive students for internship in the following academic year as well, both in the period provided for by law for carrying out internships and in any other period of the year.

72% of the surveyed students declared that they would like the following internship to take place at a different practice partner/establishment, in order to experience the contact with several types of organizational culture and to be able to make a comparison between them.

All employers have declared that the internship period is sufficient to allow them to determine whether the intern is suitable for being employed at that establishment. Thus, it can be noticed that internships, in addition to providing practical knowledge and experience, can become after a certain point a probationary period, if the intern wants to remain where he or she has completed the internship, a probationary period that should normally be passed before the employment.

It is worth mentioning the positive attitude of both the representatives of the economic environment and the interns as regards the internship activity.

I recommend the following measures at the level of the University:

- Carrying out an information campaign for students on the existing internship opportunities;
- Requesting feedback from economic operators at the end of the internship period and applying any suggestions and recommendations received from them as soon as possible;
- Requesting feedback from the interns.

As another measure for the adjustment to the requirements of the labour market, at the level of the University, and for each faculty, a Commission for the evaluation of the curricula was created, which includes not only representatives of students and university teachers, but also representatives of graduates, who are already active on the labour market, as well as representatives of employers.

That Commission meets once a year and analyses the subjects studied by students at each specialization and, at the request of employers, changes are made in curriculum according to these requests, so that students and graduates acquire the knowledge and the skills required at the time and in the future on the labour market.

„This work was financially supported through the project "Routes of academic excellence in doctoral and post-doctoral research - REACH" co-financed through the European Social Fund, by Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, contract no POSDRU/159/1.5/S/137926."

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DOSTOSOWYWANIE USŁUG EDUKACYJNYCH DO RYNKU PRACY

Streszczenie: Żyjemy w społeczeństwie, w którym usługi charakteryzują się dużą ekspansją, mobilnością i zdolnością adaptacji do wymagań rynku. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie konieczności dostosowania usług edukacyjnych, czyli tych, w sferze szkolnictwa wyższego, do rynku pracy w szczególności w sposób, w jaki wymogi rynku pracy są obecnie dobrze znane i wypełniane przez uczelnie wyższe. Najbardziej dostępnym i skutecznym sposobem, aby rozpocząć proces korelowania umiejętności studentów z wymogami rynku jest ułatwienie studentom staży u pracodawców.

Niniejsze badanie przeprowadzone zostało wśród studentów w dziedzinie ekonomii na Uniwersytecie "1 Decembrie 1918" w Alba Iulia, po zakończeniu ich ostatniego stażu (lipiec 2013 r.) i wśród podmiotów gospodarczych, partnerów w realizacji staży.

Słowa kluczowe: usługi edukacyjne, rynek pracy, staż, studenci.

适应教育服务的劳动市场

摘要: 我们生活在一个社会中的服务的特点是极大的扩张、流动性和对市场需求的适应性。这篇文章的目的是提出必须调整教育服务，即那些在高等教育，对劳动力市场的领域，特别是劳工市场的需求在目前好理解且充实的大学的方式。启动进程的关联学生的技能与市场需求的最方便和最有效方法是便于实习为雇主的学生。这项研究进行了学生在经济学领域“1Decembrie1918”大学的阿尔巴尤利亚，完成之后，他们的最后一个实习（2013年7月）和经济运营商、合作伙伴完成的实习机会。

关键词: 教育服务、劳动力市场、实习、学生。