



European University
Enterprise Network



Transilvania
University of
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Tuning research concerning entrepreneurship competences acquired during practical placement Qualitative issues

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The competences in evaluation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competences to manage small enterprises or individual businesses (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to establish productive relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of market dynamics in a particular field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills to develop new business ideas (9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to identify possible opportunities for developing new products, markets, or business models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills to make deals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to evaluate perspectives for new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to gain social capital (professional networking)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to evaluate external environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective personal entrepreneurship behavior (12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to understand customers needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social skills for professional activity in multicultural environments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business ethics

The qualitative research in the frame of EUE-Net

- **Main objective of the university: quality education for a better employability at the end of the studies**
- **As seen in the quantitative research part, core entrepreneurial competences seem to be rated as less important both in importance and level of achievement by all the respondents:**
 - **Competences to manage small enterprises or individual businesses (item # 1) – was ranked 12th on the IMPORTANCE criterion and 13th on the LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT**
 - **Skills to develop new business ideas (item # 9) – was ranked somewhere in the middle on the IMPORTANCE criterion and 12th on the LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT**
 - **Effective personal entrepreneurship behavior (item # 12) – was ranked 11th on the IMPORTANCE criterion and somewhere in the middle on the LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT**

The opinions expressed by the respondents in the open questions section – 1

The section starts with 3 semi-open questions, which invite respondents to give more details if the answer is “yes”:

17. Do the hosting company/ enterprise promote an entrepreneurial culture?

a) Yes b) No

If "yes", please explain how

18. Do the hosting company/ enterprise encourage employees to try new ideas?

a) Yes b) No

If "yes", please explain how

19. Do the hosting company/ enterprise foster and sustain innovation?

a) Yes b) No

If "yes", please explain how

The opinions expressed by the respondents in the open questions section – 2

The following questions are open and invite respondents to give any answer they consider:

20. Please describe the way the company ensures the development of entrepreneurial competences and skills for the students in practical placement.
21. What are the changes you consider necessary the universities operate in their curricula in order to increase the graduates' employability?
22. What are the changes you consider necessary the universities operate in their practical placement policies in order to increase the graduates' employability?
23. Which could be the role of the companies/ enterprises in the development of the entrepreneurial competences of students?

Analysis of the answers to open questions

- The content analysis aimed to identify the main issues related to the effects of practical placement on the development of the entrepreneurial competences during university studies

Q 17

Do the hosting company/ enterprise promote an entrepreneurial culture? – 1

- Most of the participants answered with a simple “yes” or “no”
- Some gave more details on the way companies promote entrepreneurial culture
- The main themes issued from this analysis are the following:
 - For some respondents, entrepreneurship and employability overlap
 - What respondents give as examples of “entrepreneurial culture” are rather aspects of organizational culture related to making the management more “human”, a way of improving productivity, organizational climate, motivation, satisfaction, or well being at work, not necessarily an entrepreneurial culture
 - Entrepreneurship means often joining an existing business, not creating one’s own
 - Large companies (the most frequent hosts of practical placement) promote initiative, autonomy, but not necessarily small business entrepreneurship

Q 17

Do the hosting company/ enterprise promote an entrepreneurial culture? – 2

- Some universities encourage a sort of “internal entrepreneurship” for the academics, in order to renovate the didactical process, but this doesn’t mean necessarily that the students’ entrepreneurial spirit will improve as a result
- Other universities have study programs dedicated to small enterprise management

Q 18

Do the hosting company/ enterprise encourage employees to try new ideas? – 1

- Searching continually for novelty is an important feature of entrepreneurship, even if not for entrepreneurial behavior only; it is rather a larger feature, related to creativity
- Employees' initiative is important for the success and survival for any company, not only for those in small business
- For larger companies, this is a part of company philosophy, something that is "natural" as long as the company defines itself as a learning organization
- In order to stimulate the initiative and creativity of the employees, things are done formal: the participation of any employee in the process of innovation is facilitated by strategies, procedures, and adapted infrastructure
- For some respondents, the key of promoting innovation with employees is simply money. Financial incentives are useful for motivating people to come with new ideas

Q 18

Do the hosting company/ enterprise encourage employees to try new ideas? – 2

- Students in practical placement can be involved too in this process and in some companies this is regular practice
- Even if their fresh ideas are not implemented by the company, the student learns a lot from the process of submitting his/her idea and trying to convince others of its value, to fit-in the existing projects or generally with the existing frame
- For them, it could be a first contact with real life in secure conditions of being only an intern

Q 19

Do the hosting company/ enterprise foster and sustain innovation? – 1

- Fostering, sustaining, promoting innovation are synonyms for the same process of continuing renewal of the activities, processes, products of an organization.
- Mainly in the business area, innovation means keeping the pace with the field and remaining competitive in a dynamic world.
- Employees are considered valuable resources in which the wise company invests training and for which develops infrastructure, procedures and uses systems of incentives

Q 19

Do the hosting company/ enterprise foster and sustain innovation? – 2

- For the universities is important to place students in enterprises that foster innovation, making of this a way of preparing well trained graduates and they are happy to find such partners
- In some happy cases, students are part of this process and learn hands-on how innovation leads to business success and personal accomplishment
- However, some respondents consider that the hosting enterprises have no interest in sustaining innovation of practical placement students
 - The reason is a simple one, in the opinion of an academic: *“because a company is not interested to develop the entrepreneurial culture of its employees, (because) they will leave the company :)”*

Q 20

Please describe the way the company ensures the development of entrepreneurial competences and skills for the students in practical placement – 1

Three categories of opinions

1. The hosting companies explicitly develop entrepreneurial skills by:
 - Formally recognizing individual's contribution
 - Teaching the students to take manageable risks and sometimes even about failing,
2. The hosting companies implicitly develop entrepreneurial skills by:
 - Providing topics for bachelor and master thesis
 - Individual work or involvement in organizational projects, where (they) can work with more experienced employees
 - Perform a project proving maturity, independence, intellectual ability, contacts with others

Q 20

Please describe the way the company ensures the development of entrepreneurial competences and skills for the students in practical placement – 2

Three categories of opinions

3. The hosting companies do not develop entrepreneurial skills at all:
 - Doing internships at medium or bigger sized businesses or at institutes, NGOs ignore entrepreneurial competences
 - Companies just accept students as ballast; do not pay any attention to raise possible employees
 - Companies prefer the students to participate in the regular jobs that the company has already undertaken
 - Usually on practical placements interns are trained to be good employees, and not entrepreneurs.

Q 21

What are the changes you consider necessary the universities operate in their curricula in order to increase the graduates' employability? – 1

The main changes the universities should operate are related to several aspects such as:

- Changes in vision of academia about the aims of higher education
- Changes in curricula concerning the competences and the contents taught
- Changes in teaching methods

Q 21

What are the changes you consider necessary the universities operate in their curricula in order to increase the graduates' employability? – 2

- Preparing the students for the practical placement
- Carefully and responsibly choosing the place of the practical placement
- Increasing the role of career centers in preparing the students for the world of work
- Increasing the employability, but not necessarily the entrepreneurship
- A closer cooperation with the enterprises

Q 22

What are the changes you consider necessary the universities operate in their practical placement policies in order to increase the graduates' employability? – 1

- Changes in practical placement policies
 - PP should be compulsory and at least 1 semester long
 - Long term partnership with hosting companies
- Creating infrastructure for practical placement in universities
 - Centralized internship facilitated by university career center - only one source to get all needed information, less administration work
- Changes in the procedures of practical placement follow-up
 - During practical placement, university or teachers should control students work and ask periodical report about practical placement

Q 22

What are the changes you consider necessary the universities operate in their practical placement policies in order to increase the graduates' employability? – 2

- Improving pedagogical aspects of the practical placement
 - Motivating students to be useful and personally involved in results of the hosting company
- Improving the training of supervisors from the university:
 - Valuing more the supervising teachers in terms of position and incentives
 - Specific training for teachers who start placement supervision
- Extension of the support provided by the university for the transitional stage to employment – increased role of career centers

Q 23

Which could be the role of the companies/ enterprises in the development of the entrepreneurial competences of students? – 1

- Involvement of companies in curriculum design by suggesting new study programs, subjects, teaching methods
- Increasing the role of companies in students training by strengthening the university-enterprise cooperation

Q 23

Which could be the role of the companies/ enterprises in the development of the entrepreneurial competences of students? – 2

- Great expectations of academics towards the enterprises
 - Companies should encourage the students to take their decision and to make them understand they are responsible for any future development.
 - Making entrepreneurial competences a standard part of any practical placement
 - Giving the student individual projects on which they can work before, during and after the placement
 - Organizing company workshops that improve entrepreneurial skills
 - Giving feedbacks to students at the end of practical training
 - Bringing specialists in university (for case studies and conferences)

Q 23

Which could be the role of the companies/ enterprises in the development of the entrepreneurial competences of students? – 3

- The role of the student, as a mature and motivated learner in all this
- Employers have great expectations too
 - Defining specific competences to acquire during the practical placement
 - Starting at the preparatory phase at the university (with the help and counseling of for instance an experienced coach that works as an entrepreneur)

Conclusions

- There are differences between countries concerning the educational system and the role of practical placement in training entrepreneurial competences
- Insertion of graduates involves not only employability, but entrepreneurship too
- Universities should reconsider the importance of entrepreneurship for facilitating the insertion of their graduates and rethink curricula
- The enterprises are expected to become long-term partners of universities in this respect.