

Description of practical placement in Estonia

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Practical placement (PP) in higher education in Estonia is regulated by the [Standard of Higher Education](#) (last modified 01.01.09!). According to the document practical placement is purpose targeted action to achieve the learning outcomes by implementing the knowledge and skills acquired in the training environment under supervision in the form specified by the educational institution. Practical training described in curriculum leads the students to acquire and apply effective working methods.

PP is a compulsory part of applied higher education studies and shall comprise at least 15% of the extent of studies determined by the curriculum (180-240 CP). **It is not a compulsory part of Bachelor's and Master's studies** and every university has right to decide the extent of PP.

In Tallinn University of Technology PP is a compulsory part of study programme with **the duration of 3 weeks** (3 CP – 4,5 ECTS). In other public universities in Estonia the extent (or existence) of PP is determined in respective department for every programme.

The content of PP is usually to be decided in cooperation between the student and enterprise. For now it hasn't been determined in the curriculum which are the learning outcomes expected from PP (currently in process - describing the PP according to learning outcomes due to transition to ECTS). PP coordinators in faculties (or other faculty members) can sometimes recommend the companies and specify the requirements for the PP. After the placement, the student will submit a placement report as well as signed confirmation about the PP to the faculty to be approved as part of the studies. Assessment of practical training shall be conducted as provided in the regulation of organization of practice. The volume of PP in credit points shall be provided in the curriculum. One CP shall equal from 1 to 3 weeks of practice depending on the nature of work.

Generally, in Estonia the student is the main actor in all actions regarding the placement process. The students are responsible for finding the PP enterprise (as according to a study nearly 60% of the students have a job, in TUT the % is even higher, they can conduct the PP in their company) as well as determining (in cooperation with company) the content of placement and completing the documentation necessary. The career centers in universities can give advice but the university has no official duties. In case of compulsory placements (according to curriculum), the placements have to be accepted by university and the quality is controlled by the university. The contract is signed before the PP between the university, enterprise and a student which determines the work load (duration), content and obligations for each party. Signing the contract is mostly voluntary.

Furthermore, universities career centers provide assistance (training courses, seminars) to students to apply for placements and jobs professionally and information (online database with placement/job offers).

The student takes care of the student-enterprise contact (search for companies, placement offers, and writing of applications). Also in case of compulsory placements, student is the main actor (university does not send the student to any selected enterprise) and should apply independently for a placements as he/she should train for future job applications. Students can select any placement anywhere inside the country or worldwide regarding their own interest.



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The company only needs to publish placement offers somewhere or inform the career center, where the student is supposed to find them. Supporting the student during the placement is voluntary and to be agreed between the student and PP enterprise.

There are career centers/ respective offices in bigger public universities/vocational schools in Estonia, responsible for providing information about prospective PP enterprises for students. There is no central level agency in the field of PP at the moment. While creating a RCPP in Estonia besides contacts in all universities/ vocational schools, a central level observer (Foundation Archimedes) is expected to participate.

Regarding the difficulties and obstacles, the following can be mentioned:

- There's no common PP database in Estonia (explained regulations, placement offers)
- Incipient PP "culture" nation-wide (lack of collaboration with industry/companies).
- Lack of cooperation with TUT Alumni
- PP coordinators in faculties work on voluntary basis, lack of motivation
- Lack of sufficient instruction and evaluation during the internship
- PP organized mostly during basic studies