

Description of practical placement in Lithuania

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Since 2000 practical placement (PP) in higher education in Lithuania on the national level was regulated by The Law on Higher Education (*Aukštojo mokslo įstatymas, 2000*). The section of *Basic requirements for institutions and their study programmes*, stated that:

“In the cases when study programmes provide for a student’s internship, an enterprise or an establishment in which the internship takes place and the student and the higher education establishment in which he studies, shall conclude a contract of practical training. The Ministry shall set out the content, form and procedure of registration of a contract.” [The Law on Higher Education, Article 42, paragraph 10].

Recently the new Law on Higher Education came into force on May 12, 2009. The new Law of Science and Studies (2009) contains the same text about practical placements’ contracts and an additional sentence about responsibility of higher education institution: *“Higher education institution is responsible for organizing students’ practical placement”* [The Law of Science and Studies, 2009, Article 48, paragraph 8]. Thus according to this document practical placement regulation mostly depend on higher education institution.

Practical placement regulations may vary among universities and colleges and even among the faculties of the same university or college. Usually practical placement is compulsory for undergraduate students.

Usually practical placement is based on a triangular agreement between the higher education institution, student, and the enterprise/other institution. Higher education institutions cooperate with the enterprises/other institutions in order to help students to acquire specific skills that are relevant to their future profession. The main actor of practical placement is student. Other actors of practical placement process are (1) Coordinator for practical placement of students (on the department level); (2) Academic supervisor; (3) Supervisor from the enterprise of practical placement.

Usually practical placement may be carried out also in the institutions of the foreign countries. International practical placement experience is of great value to students’ career, but is not yet developed widely.

There are also career centers or respective offices in universities or colleges in Lithuania that provide the information about practical placement opportunities.

Practical placement should be related to *specialization* (in the context of choosing enterprise; e.g. international business management – international company, it can be local department of international company). Also preferably but not necessary practical placement can be related to *final BA-work topic* (in the context of choosing work-place, department; e.g. international department, financial department, etc.). If student is employed by some enterprise, he/she can stay for the period of practical placement at the enterprise he/she already works. Students have to

find a place for practical placement by themselves or approach the coordinator of practical placement for students at the university/college.

During the period of practical placement students may have consultations with academic supervisor. After the period of practical placement students have to prepare a report. Higher education institution ensures that the results of study placements will be recognized as a part of student's curriculum. Practical placement results are being assessed and recognized by recording the results in Diploma Supplements.

The main problems: (1) Accidental choosing of enterprises; (2) No common practical placement database in Lithuania; (3) No data about employment of students by the same enterprise after the period of practical placement.