

Description of Practical Placement in Slovenia

University of Ljubljana – Vesna Tušar, Quality Assurance and Student Services Advisor

With the renovation of study programs (Bologna process) a practical placement (PP) took on an important part of the acquisition and development of specific professional skills, which are aimed at ensuring greater employability of graduates. The PP in higher education institution is regulated by a number of legal rules governing the Law on Higher Education, criteria for the accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs, and criteria for credit evaluation of courses by ECTS.

PP is an integral part of the curriculum at the undergraduate and postgraduate studies in a form of placement in a working environment or participation in a research (case study). It is compulsory in the Bachelor professional higher education programs in the first cycle and with all Master's programs in the second cycle. At the Bachelor university programs in the first cycle is left to the individual decisions of the faculty. PP is evaluated with the ECTS and varies from faculty to faculty.

University of Ljubljana (UL) has adopted guidelines for the practical training in 2007, which define the objectives of the practical training of each profession (the area of science and technology, social sciences and humanities), and the objectives of regulated profession such as medical personnel, pharmacists, veterinarians, and architects.

A PP period varies from faculty to faculty. For each study program the faculty determines in which year of studies the students must carry out the PP and to what extent. Some practice is conducted in all years of study and it is defined how many hours of practical training students must perform in a given year, or it takes place only one year.

The Slovenian PP scheme is university driven which means that the primary responsibility for implementing the PP is on the coordinator of practical training at the faculty. The main tasks of the coordinator of practical training are:

- to implement PP in the curriculum, to define main goals of PP
- to establish and maintain contacts with potential employers
- to monitor and control students on practical training
- to prepare all necessary documents for the successful completion of practical training
- to provide support and counseling to students in practical training (how to prepare CV, application form etc.).

Each faculty has established the so-called teaching practical training base operators, which offer PP. From the base students can choose the organization where would they like to carry out their practice according to their wishes and interests. On the other hand students may find employers by themselves.

Students can also practice performing abroad under the Erasmus study practices, but in this case the students have to organize the PP by themselves. Only a few faculties have signed bilateral agreements with foreign organizations in the EU. At the

university level all procedures of Erasmus study practices, including information related to the place, organization of the PP, providing help to find appropriate employers or accommodation, are the main tasks of the International Office of University of Ljubljana. The Office also publishes current offers of PP on the website of University of Ljubljana.

In all cases, PP takes place on the basis of the **Tripartite Agreement on the practical training** between students, the coordinator of practical training at the faculty and the external mentor - provider of practical training (public/private companies, educational institutions, etc.). A coordinator of the practical training at the faculty is a teacher who has an appropriate qualification. An external mentor could be any person that does not have a lower education than the level of education the student will be given after completing the study and has relevant work experience in the professional field.