



European Training Foundation

EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION

First findings of studies on improvement of internships and incentives

NAVOYAN Arayik, ETF National expert navoyana@yahoo.fr

Preparing people for tomorrow's skills in Armenia: Work-Based Learning strategy in Armenia
| 28 November 2019 | Armenia Marriott Hotel



SUMMARY

- Methodology
- Main type and purposes of internship
- Main issues of internship in VET system
- Propositions for improvement of the VET internship
- Financial and non-financial incentives for encouraging the companies' involvement in WBL
- Results of the focus group discussion
- Conclusion

METHODOLOGY

Taking into account the diversity of the VET specialties, the current challenges of the internship organization, assessment and financing as well as improvement opportunities have been firstly defined at a generic level.

Afterwards, the Internship Organization and Assessment Guide for the **internship** improvement and modernization is introduced on the specific example of middle vocational education “Animal veterinary” specialty.

First findings on **incentives** for WBL are based on the results of the Focus Group discussion organized in Yerevan among employers and employers’ representatives.

MAIN TYPE AND PURPOSES OF INTERNSHIP

Purpose of different type of internship in Armenian VET system:

- *Academic internship* – is aimed at strengthening the gained theoretical knowledge and familiarizing the students with the practical basics of the selected specialty and its characteristics, as a result of which the student will gain preliminary vocational skills and competencies
- *Production internship* - is majorly aimed at enabling students to gain vocational skills and competences through practical experience
- *Pre-graduation* (pre-diploma) internship - is implemented as the final phase of student instruction after the theoretical and practical programs have been mastered, and is directed towards the planning of the diploma project/work and preparation for the defense

MAIN ISSUES OF VET INTERNSHIP

- Companies are not motivated to welcome interns
- RA Labor Code does not envisages specific regulations with regard to the internships
- Internship programs and assessment criteria are elaborated at the VET institutions without the involvement of the representatives of the specialty sector and internship companies
- Academic internships carried out inside the VET institutions are, in essence, practical courses, organized based on the laboratory/production base of the institution and are delivered by the lecturers
- Ineffectiveness of assessing internships which is still carried out based on the system inherited from the Soviet times through “Internship Diaries”
- Lack of non-financial incentives provided to the companies to host internships
- Lack of a holistic general regulation on health and safety insurance in the workplace

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS: THE OBJECTIVES AND DURATION - 1/2

As an initial step leading to the improvement of internships, it is suggested to make the objective and the role of the latter more precise in the VET academic programmes:

- the time devoted to academic internships, which is defined in line with the state educational standards of each VET specialty, should be distributed between the production-related internship and practical works
- the production internship should be considered as a separate educational module, with well described learning outcomes and possibility to accumulate academic credits.

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS: THE OBJECTIVES AND DURATION - 2/2

State educational standards for VET specialty 0811.07.5 “Animal Veterinary” devote 32 weeks to internships, out of which 28 are academic, and 4 are production internships.

The new approach suggests defining only one type of internship (production internship), and to have the distribution of foreseen weeks by educational standard for internship like this:

- 18 weeks to modules of practical courses during 3 years of study
- 8 weeks to internships in the 2nd year of studies according to the distribution of semesters considering the seasonal periods of veterinary work
- 12 weeks of internship in the 3rd year of studies according to the distribution of semesters considering the seasonal periods of veterinary work

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : INTERNSHIP MODULE FOR THE 3RD YEAR OF “ANIMAL VETERINARY” SPECIALTY

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Module Index | |
| Module Objective | <p>This module has three main objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Practical implementation of theoretical knowledge acquired in the VETI: operations in the processes of diagnosing animal diseases, treatment, operation, obstetrics and artificial breeding, veterinary examination of animal-origin raw materials, and anti-epidemic measures.- Learning through real work experience,- Assisting job-placement of learners due to accumulated communicative skills and professional working experience. |
| Module Duration | 12 weeks |
| Module Requirements | Knowledge and skills on generic and professional disciplines covered during the 1 st and 2 nd years, as well as professional courses covered during the 3 rd year of study are essential for covering this module. |
| Module Evaluation System | The acceptable performance indicator of the module is the satisfactory level of criteria determined per outcome. This is being verified by the internship supervisor from the VETI, and the internship mentor from the organization by means of evaluation of the works carried out by the intern, his/her conduct, the graduation paper and the defense of the latter. The final score of the internship is the average of the scores the internship supervisor from the VETI, and the internship mentor from the organization have put. |

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS: INTERNSHIP MODULE FOR THE 3RD YEAR OF “ANIMAL VETERINARY” SPECIALTY

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Learning Outcome 1 | Participation in the process of diagnosing animals and preparing corresponding conclusions. |
| Performance Indicators | 1) Animals have been diagnosed and corresponding conclusions drawn in line with the working regulations. |
| Learning Outcome 2 | Implementation of zoo-hygienic measures and operations aimed at and necessary for partial treatment of animals of diverse breeds and population, care of sick animals and their maintenance.. |
| Performance Indicators | 1) Zoo-hygienic measures and operations aimed at and necessary for partial treatment of animals of diverse breeds and population, care of sick animals and their maintenance have been carried out in due time and in line with set regulations. |
| Learning Outcome 3 | Carrying out preliminary veterinary diagnosis and implementation of treatment operations with the utilization of necessary tools and equipment. |
| Performance Indicators | 1) Preliminary veterinary diagnosis and implementation of treatment operations with the utilization of necessary tools and equipments have been carried out in line with the requirements of set regulations. |

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : INTERNSHIP MODULE FOR THE 3RD YEAR OF “ANIMAL VETERINARY” SPECIALTY

When designing a separate module for internships, a flexible approach is needed to be undertaken, taking into account the specificities of the VET professions (particularly in the field of art) different forms of student internship implementation should be provided with a flexibility to combine them.

This kind of approach is especially needed when there is a lack of enterprises in the given VET profession and it is not possible to provide the defined learning outcomes in a single enterprise

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : INSURING INVOLVEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE INTERNSHIP

The involvement of learners in real working process during the internship is very much preconditioned by the active participation of companies in the processes of discussing, elaborating and determining the objectives, programmes and assessment criteria of VET students' internships.

This would help to elaborate the necessary framework of skills and competences that are to be developed/learnt throughout the internship covering all the cycles of a given specialty: production, commercial and service related

To carry out discussions on academic programmes and internship objectives of “Animal Veterinary” specialty with the involvement of representatives of receiving organizations, a form to be used as an exemplary template is suggested.

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : ORGANIZATION

With the aim of increasing the responsibility of learners and acquiring experience necessary for being recruited on competitive basis, it is suggested that the selection of interns to receiving organizations be carried out on the basis of an interview.

At the same time, it is important to encourage the interns to search for internships opportunities themselves, by utilizing determined internship proposals when “negotiating” internship conditions with receiving organizations.

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : SUPERVISION - 1/2

The supervisor of the internship from the VET institution:

- Ensures the natural flow of the internship, however, s/he does not substitute the internship mentor from the organization, when it comes to the professional work-based learning of the intern.
- Assists the internship mentor from the receiving organization and the intern in the scenario when there are certain questions and difficulties.
- Carries out mid-term evaluation of the internship, during which the structure of internship report or the topic and structure of graduation paper are being define.
- Advises the intern on the elaboration the plan of internship report or graduation paper, assembling corresponding materials and editing issues.
- Upon necessity organizes the meeting of the intern with the corresponding specialist from the VET institution.
- Evaluates the internship report or the graduation paper and participates in the defense of the latter.

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : SUPERVISION - 2/2

The internship mentor from the organization is in charge of:

- admitting and day-to-day supervision of interns
- helping the intern to discover the organization
- makes the assigned works and responsibilities precise, ensuring their effective implementation, transfer of necessary information and skills
- monitors professional and personal conduct of the intern and the improvement of the latter
- undertaking the evaluation of the works carried out by the interns via evaluation form that has prior been agreed with the representative from VET institution
- evaluating of the works carried out by the interns via evaluation form agreed with the VET institution.

IMPROVING INTERNSHIPS : EVALUATION

A number of requirements are set for the internship report, and the graduation paper (diploma work)

These requirements aim at ensuring the acquisition of skills foreseen by the internship modules, covering also the formal aspects of the internship report and the graduation paper

It is worth mentioning, that the assigned diploma work according to the VET profession may relate or not to the essential theoretical framework and the work carried out during the internship, as well as may be the combination of the two mentioned papers.

MAIN FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR WBL

- *Tax deductions/tax allowances:* deductions are expenses that can be subtracted from gross income to reduce taxable income
- *Tax credits:* Reduce tax liability dollar-for-dollar and have a greater impact than deductions
- *Tax exemptions:* that can have a form of either a tax for a certain item or type of income is reduced or eliminated
- *Tax relief:* similar to tax exemption but in this case some classes of taxpayers or activities benefit from lower rates
- *Subsidies/Grant:* a sum of money granted by the government or a public body to support apprenticeships

MAIN NON-FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR WBL

- *Redesign of apprenticeship scheme:* making the costs and benefits balance more favorable to employers
- *Capacity building:* measures to improve the training capacity of companies, especially SME with various formalities and administrative tasks of implementing a WBL programme
- *Image enhancement measures:* companies that offer apprenticeships can enhance their reputation as companies investing in people. This may indirectly increase the profits of the company, if companies seen as socially responsible are more likely to sell their products and services
- *Regulatory measures:* requiring companies to take on apprentices (or penalize them if they do not)

STATE OF PLAY

Currently there are no specific mechanisms of the financial and non-financial incentives in place targeting the employer's needs in order to ensure their active involvement in WBL programmes, effective collaboration between the VETs, learners and given sector.

“Concept paper and road map for development of the work-based learning (WBL) in Armenia for 2019-2025” foreseen:

- *Elaboration of regulation on granting targeted subsidies or fiscal, custom and social privileges for the implementation of WBL programs*

MAIN FINDINGS OF FOCUS GROUP – 1/4

- Most important is the integration of learners in the company, instead of insisting on the mandatory payment during the internship.
- A schema of gradual increase of the learner's salary was suggested: first 2-6 months involvement without salary, then in parallel of gained professional skills 50% of salary wage could be paid with the increase to 100% in the last year of study at VET institution.
- Tax exemption is considered by participants as most effective and thus preferable financial incentive. A system has to be put in place pushing the companies to prepare the needed skilled employees through WBL instead of recruiting them in the labor market
- While providing tax exemption, the preference can be given to the regions or specific sector, considered as priority.

MAIN FINDINGS OF FOCUS GROUP – 2/4

- It proposed that State have to put into place regulatory measures in order to encourage the companies to be involved in various forms of WBL
- Capacity building and development provided to companies can be effective tools to motivate them to be in various forms of WBL, especially in the case of small and medium companies
- Image enhancement measures, as non-financial incentives, are recommended to raise awareness about the brands/companies and create positive image of socially responsible enterprises in case of involvement of the various forms of WBL and thus motivating the companies to cooperate with the VET institution and government

MAIN FINDINGS OF FOCUS GROUP – 3/4

- In case of providing tax exemptions as financial incentives, the regulations should be thoroughly elaborated so that they are targeted for the companies really willing to get involved in apprenticeship/dual education
- Sectorial differences should be taken into account
- It is necessary to take into account the interests and particularities of the mid-size companies, especially if the regions of Armenia.

MAIN FINDINGS OF FOCUS GROUP – 4/4

- To better understand the different needs, a countrywide survey with the actors of WBL can help to understand the needs of each party involved within the given sector, region or country level.
- It is very important to work on the targeted awareness raising campaign through TV and modern social media channels, e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. so that all the actors, i.e. VETs, young learners and companies are more aware of the WBL benefits and more motivated to get involved.

CONCLUSION

- Sharing suggested improvement of internships with the VET institutions for implementation taking into account the particularities of each specialty
- Including first findings focus group in global report presenting current system of VET funding and recommendations on potential/appropriate incentives for the Armenian context
- Providing an information base for a further research and political decisions in the area of financing of the WBL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

END CONTACT SLIDE

Website

www.etf.europa.eu

Twitter

[@etfeuropa](https://twitter.com/etfeuropa)

Facebook

facebook.com/etfeuropa

YouTube

www.youtube.com/user/etfeuropa

Instagram

instagram.com/etfeuropa/

LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/european-training-foundation

E-mail

info@etf.europa.eu



European Training Foundation

