

WBL-PRO Professional Peer Network: The team talks with the professionals - Ricardo Manuel Meira Ferrão Luis, Portugal

It is our pleasure to present to you **Ricardo Manuel Meira Ferrão Luis** from Portugal.



Please find below what he has shared with the WBL-PRO team:

1. Main advantages with respect to work-based learning are:

- a. Allows students to gain professional experience - Through these internships (work-based learning) students can gain professional experience and the necessary technical skills to perform their duties;
- b. It will enrich your Curriculum Vitae (CV) - A candidate with professional experience will be more valued in the labor market, it also reveals pro-activeness and this will always be valued;
- c. Enables the creation of a good network of contacts - Being inserted in the professional reality of the students' qualified area allows them to develop more than competences; it also gives them the possibility to acquire contacts.

2. Main challenges with respect to work-based learning are:

- a. Lack of working conditions - In some cases, trainees do not enjoy the same working conditions as contract staff. Or because they do not perform tasks appropriate to the scope of the internship and academic training; or because they are not accompanied during the internship by limiting the supposed learning;

- b. Possibility of losing real job opportunities - This is the harsh reality. No one can assure that beyond the internship, there is an opportunity for paid work (or even a paid internship). In some cases, students may lose other and better opportunities;
- c. Abuse of free labor - If there are companies that perceive and respect the concept of internship (as a gateway to the labor market), others have used and abused interns and unpaid trainees;
- d. Finding the appropriate profile for the type of student - Sometimes it's hard to search for the adequate company that encounters the students profile and skills.

3. Solutions with respect to challenges and/or weaknesses related to work-based learning:

- a. A full-dedicated internship team - By setting up a team dedicated exclusively to manage trainees, search and interconnect with trainee companies and run all the logistics necessary. This task is usually performed by the course coordinator that also has to teach (prepare, lecture and evaluate), coordinate the course(s) and has other staff duties. Time is essential to perform these tasks desirably;
- b. Create partnerships and engage companies in student training - This synergy is very important to assure not only the internship placement but also to guarantee the expertise of actual professionals and adequate teaching of contents according to the reality of the labor market.

4. Most important knowledge, skills and competences for the work-based learning professional. What kind of trainings are necessary to acquire them?

- a. Actual and realistic professional skills - As said before, try to guarantee the expertise of actual professionals and adequate teaching of contents according to the needs and the reality of the labor market;
- b. Exercise of soft skills - Soft skills are the personal attributes, personality traits, inherent social cues and communication abilities needed for success on the job; These soft skills include attitude, communication, creative thinking, work ethic, teamwork, networking, decision making, positivity, time management, motivation, flexibility, problem-solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution.

5. Work-based learning projects:

- a. Course coordinator that manages curricular internships in the IT area at ETAP - Escola Profissional;
- b. Involved in curricular and extra-curricular internships of the Erasmus+ Program for trainees;

c. Participant in the Erasmus+ Program as school staff.

Please feel most welcome to like our facebook page and join the linkedin group to get acquainted with many best practices and other useful materials, tools and resources supporting the high quality performance of work-based professionals around Europe and beyond its borders!

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