Management of the professional practical training – strengths and weaknesses

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Abstract

The management of the Professional Practical Training is a complex process developed as a relationship among three entities: university, company and student, named sometimes according to the persons involved “responsible professor”, “tutor” and “intern”. These paper objectives consist of the following: understanding the “one command unit” principle; identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a double management system for the practical training; defining the management for professional practical training according to the sustainable education requirements. Main methods used in this research are: microeconomic analysis, comparative analysis, SWOT analysis, documents synthesis. Main results are developing new principles specific to the management of the professional practical training of students.

Keywords: professional practical training, university-industry cooperation, efficient management, motivation for placements;

1. Introduction. The need of Professional Practical Training

Professional practical training is an important part of education in order to create specialists in the study domain. Many times, the relation between university and industry is analyzed in the way of looking for alternatives to better connect education to labor market.

In the context of the Bologna process, education system meant a new set of study cycles, the possibility of comparable diplomas, the promoting of a transferable credit system, the mechanism of study mobility as well as the mobility for practical placement, the development of cooperation toward quality, new educational policies. Even if the national context may be the same, the institutional context differentiates the management of practical training.

At present, many universities have rules or internal procedures which define more or less general issues regarding the professional practical training. They include:

- general aspects about orientation criteria for the training during the placement in a company;
- description of transversal competences;
- organizational issues for the placement;
- responsible persons at institutional level.

The need of professional practical training is explained through its applicable character, which means that:

- practical stage is an organized activity where students change the reality and themselves according to their needs;

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professional practical training is a verified technique to generate experience;
placements help theoretical knowledge to be applied.

2. Features of the Management of the Professional Practical Training

Management of the professional practical training means a set of ways of achieving objectives through the effort of other people.
The objectives can be described in relation to the three parties interested in the professional practical training: professors, students and company; these objectives are:

- Professors
  - to connect their teaching items to practice
  - to contribute to the student’s success on the labor market
- Students
  - to better integrate on the labor market
  - to gain experience
- Companies
  - to understand the student’s potential
  - to select students for internship programmes
  - to higher better students or graduates

Management of the professional practical training is a complex process (see figure no 1) which is part of the university management, in cooperation with the interested companies.

![Diagram showing the management of professional practical training](source: authors)

The features of the management of the professional practical training are:

- Planning – Practical training must be planned. Universities conclude partnership agreements with companies, and each institution name a person responsible of the concrete practical training of students
Organizing – University organizes the practical training only from the point of view of placing it in the curriculum or timing as well as of formal aspects which are included in the syllabus. In addition, the concrete organizing process is run at the company; this means the exact processes and operations the student should do.

Coordinating – For the professional practical training there is a double coordination – one at the university which should know exactly the description of the stage and one at the company regarding the entire technological and economical flow.

Motivating – Professors in charge with the practical training of students should explain them the importance of the training and motivate the students. At the same time, motivation can be generated from the company as long as the student’s interest is kept high.

Decision-making – This process is also a dual one, University and company must cooperate in order to improve the professional practical training of students.

Control – During the placement, the control is part of the tutor’s activity but at the end of it, the professor evaluate the results got by the student.

Therefore, a general analysis of the management of professional practical training reveals the following strengths and weaknesses (figure no. 2).

![Figure no 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the management of professional practical training](image-url)
Therefore, the general management principles are correct for the management of practical training: efficiency, labour discipline, proper administration of the resources, continuity etc. Nevertheless, one exception refers to the principle of “unit command” which does not apply for the professional practical placement. Here, there is the principle of “dual command” which consists of the mechanism of cooperation between two institutions – university and company for mutual benefit regarding the entire process of management the professional practical placement.

3. Conclusions

In the contemporary context of unemployment and lack of proper jobs, when all countries face the contradiction between the qualification level of the graduates and the characteristics of the job offer, the relation between university and industry must be developed over the concrete practical placements, in directions such as:

- attracting specialists from companies to teach at the university
- coordinating projects in which companies should be appropriate partners
- inviting the decision makers at different event in universities
- developing extra curriculum activities for students.

The management of professional practical placement must be based on specific principles, such as:

- principle of involving professionals from the company in order to offer a good training to students
- principle of practical training orientation to students needs which means to understand the differences of students regarding knowledge, the ability to apply, the motivation
- principle of cooperation between university and company to make best decisions on professional practical training

References