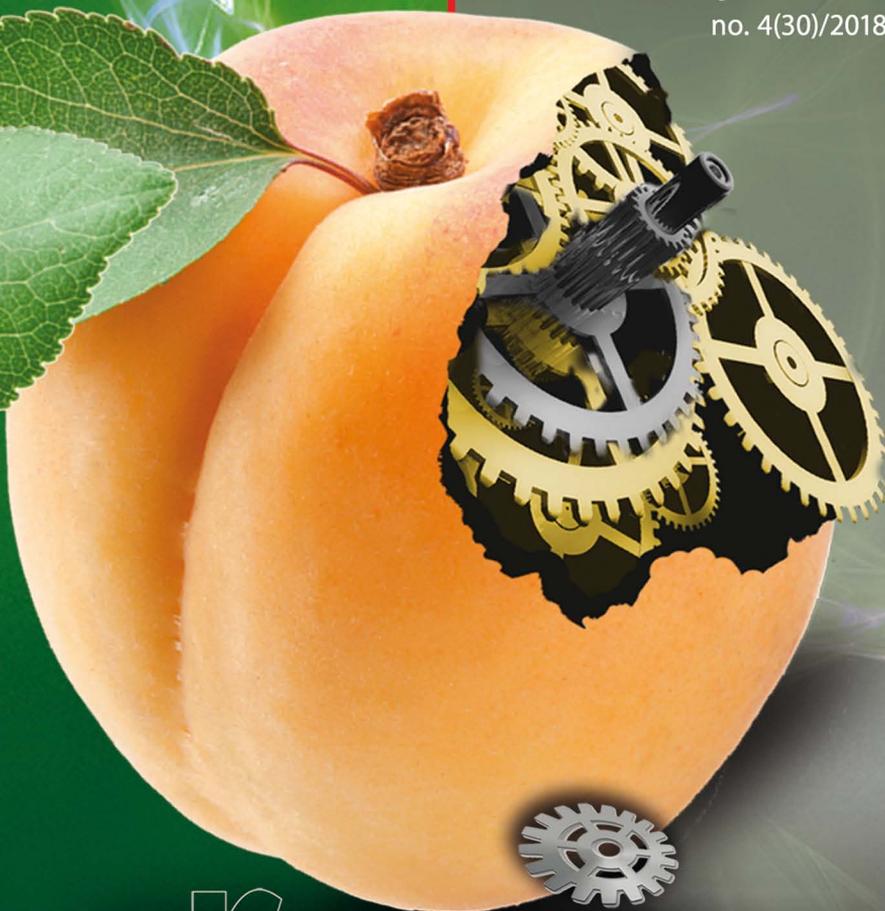


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***STUDENT AS A BENEFICIARY OF INTERNSHIP  
PROGRAMS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION***

## STUDENT AS A BENEFICIARY OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

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### Summary

Requirements for university graduates defined by employers in times of dynamic changes and challenges of the market, the need to adapt the knowledge, skills and competences of students and graduates to the needs of companies constitute new challenges for universities in the area of cooperation with business.

The student is becoming more and more often the beneficiary of internship projects financed from various sources, not just with companies' own funds, but also supported with funds from the European Union. The article presents the perspective of the student as a direct beneficiary of internship projects carried out by universities and employers and attempts to create a recommendation for entities carrying out internship projects aimed at achieving high levels of satisfaction among all project participants.

**Keywords:** student, beneficiary, internship programme, European Union, student internships, student trainings, cooperation with business, students' competitiveness on the labour market, students' satisfaction



## Introduction

Over about a dozen years the system, contents and implementation of the model of university studies worked out in the 20th century have changed substantially. There are many reasons for these changes, starting from the Bologna process and the implementation of its solutions, through support in form of educational programmes of the European Union, to a rich offer of organization of student internships combined with studies proposed by Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP), or National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR)<sup>1</sup>. We can't forget that what has recently had an undoubtedly decisive impact on many components of this model and its clear evolution, are global trends such as globalization, internationalization, digitalization (educational platforms and VR), or changing requirements of the labour market, which have substantially changed the view of the essence of education at a higher level, its position in the society and economy, as well its actual implementation<sup>2</sup>.

University students enter the labour market much earlier by combining academic education with practical education in companies. Along with long-term, or temporary employment one of the forms of this kind of professional activity is participation in internships and student trainings. What fits more and more into the changes taking place on the labour market is cooperation of companies, university and public institutions, which is supposed to support students in their effort to become competitive on the labour market and building the image of an active employer. What has also been observed is that universities don't just act as agents in informing students about the available job, internship and training offers, but they are also becoming an initiator of active cooperation with business. An effect of these actions are numerous student internship and training programmes and projects, often financed with funds from the European Union. Thanks to them, students, apart from looking for employers' offer on their own get the opportunity to take advantage of the support of a university and an employer in the whole process of project implementation, that is, from the moment of applying for an internship, through the stage of recruitment, combining studies with internship, meetings with a mentor in the company, support of career counselor and contacts with internship supervisor at the

university to the moment of obtaining certificates, employer's opinion, or full-time job offer after graduation.

The beneficiaries of this cooperation are all entities participating in it. The benefits arising from this cooperation are diversified and satisfying for each of the sides. What is in the centre of attention of this article is carrying out an analysis of the prospects of an internship in which a student participates during his educational process. The deliberations will be conducted from two perspectives — process and result perspective, in particular expectations and satisfaction of a student from participation in various stages of the process of implementation of an internship programme by a university and the effect in form of acquisition of competences and knowledge raising his competitiveness on the labour market.

### **Internship programmes financed with EU funds, as support for the role of universities in building the competitiveness of students and graduates on the labour market**

European Union's support for its Members in the 2014-2020 perspective also covers the issues of education, including education at the higher level. Generally, the financial resources allocated to universities within the framework of EU programmes are supposed to lead to changes and modifications in the process of education, so that it is better adapted to the needs of the labour market and makes it easier for university graduates to find employment and easier for businesses to find employees — as now it is a problem for them — at the same time providing a valuable contribution to the economy<sup>3</sup>. Meeting these expectations requires cooperation with companies — employers — as the place where people learn about practical solutions and acquire further skills which are useful after graduation for the development of own ideas and finding a satisfactory job. These programmes also give a chance for potential internationalization of Polish universities through student internships in other countries, or student exchange with foreign universities, which gives a chance to students from Polish universities to be more competitive.

The goals formulated for the conducted internship and professional training programmes have on the one hand a general dimension, as they are most often formulated as **raising/growth of social and professional competences and qualifications (knowledge) of students/participants on a changing labour market.** Their effect is the acquisition of additional skills associated with complementing the held qualifications and adapting them to the expectations of employers and emphasizing the significance of hard and soft competences in practice of a particular job. On the other hand, directions and effects which are supposed to be achieved as a result of implemented internship projects are defined in detail. They are focused mainly on the so-called soft competences, that is, activating features of personality and acquiring social skills such as: creativity, ability to act and solve crisis situations, the ability to work in a team, resistance to stress, or communication skills. At the same time the most often announced contests for grants formulate and emphasize unambiguously, as well as define in detail the goals for a proposed project and highlight particular effects of an implemented project; this is reflected by the following example of the goal of a project:

*„Głównym celem projektu jest podniesienie kompetencji 91 studentów (67K i 24M) kierunku Finanse i Rachunkowość (FiR) Wydziału Nauk Ekonomicznych (WNE) Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu na studiach stacjonarnych 1. roku 2 st. zgodnych z efektami kształcenia wskazanymi w programie studiów oraz potrzebami rynku pracy”<sup>4</sup>.* (The main goal of the project is raising the competences of 91 students (67 women and 24 men) from the area of Finances and Accounting at the Faculty of Economic Sciences of Wrocław University of Economics from the 1st year of 2nd cycle full-time studies, complying with the effects of education defined in the programme of studies and the demands of the labour market). Thus, there is full possibility of reflecting the specific character of the process of education at a university in the formulated goals of internship projects, adapting to the real needs of its internal and external stakeholders (economy, university, employers, student), building relations between project participants not just in the formal dimension resulting from agreements, but finding and developing other forms of cooperation not related to projects.

Thus, there is no doubt that the success of implemented internship projects (internships within programmes of studies, graduate internships, student internships, study visits, practical workshops) is determined by

their main stakeholders, namely, universities, employers and students, as well as their mutual relations. It is necessary to add that the frameworks of projects in the institutional and formal dimension are determined by the managers of financial resources, that is, EU funds (operational and framework programmes), National Centre for Research and Development, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, various other funds, or own ideas for raising funds (crowdfunding). The title of this article contains the term of programme beneficiary referring mainly to the student as the main recipient of conducted activities. However, currently in case of internship programmes we should regard all participants of programmes addressed to students as beneficiaries. In case of students the portfolio of internship programmes is quite broad and within its framework we can distinguish the already earlier mentioned dedicated internship programmes very often complemented with certified trainings, thematic and practical workshops exposing elements of professional pragmatics, study visits to employers, participation in project teams, or specialist workshops offered by employers. Within the framework of each of these internship products the participant acquires a very diversified scope of competences, usually individualized depending on the voiced needs (resulting from the scope of the concerned project) and the capacity of the entity of the participant of a project and the rules of implementation of the project (the receiving institution). These aspects will be discussed in detail in the second part of the article. For now, it is necessary to say a few words about the benefits for the university and the business entity as project participants. In case of companies, or other institutions participating in internship projects the main benefits are:

- the possibility to identify the potential, to appropriately prepare and keep a person as a future employee;
- the possibility of creating a programme for individual development of a new employee
- reduction of costs associated with the recruitment and training of new employees,
- establishing contact with a university and the possibility of continuing cooperation,
- reducing staff shortage by hiring an intern,
- refunding of the bonus associated with playing the role of an intern's supervisor.

At the same time the main benefits for the university are<sup>5</sup>:

- raising the attractiveness of studies by enriching the contents and forms of teaching;
- the opportunity to establish cooperation with business;
- raising the recognizability of a university among employers and candidates;
- potential improvement of the quality of education and research — adapting to the demands and expectations of business;
- financial benefits arising from the implementation of a project;
- fulfilling legal obligations.

At the same time the aforementioned potential benefits of an internship project from the perspective of the student, with regard to every conducted internship project should be the subject of research of its participants. What should be used as a starting point is a survey of students participating in a project. This comes from the fact that assessments made by the main actor of an internship project should take into consideration all dimensions of its implementation and constitute a very important criterion for its evaluation. It is necessary for carrying out the final assessment, as well as for the identification of the critical elements of implementation of the whole internship project and defining the directions for improvement of the process. As a rule, in these surveys quantitative and qualitative research is used, which makes it possible to evaluate many elements in comparative aspects.

### **Premises and barriers for students' participation in student training and internship programmes**

During an analysis of the issue of participation of students in student trainings and internships, it is worth taking into consideration both the premises and barriers for students' activity in this area.

Among numerous factors which determine students' activity on the labour market parallel to studying at a university we can name the following: the need to be more competitive on the labour market following graduation, as well as during studies, the expectation that you will find

work faster and that you will get a better paid job, the prospect of faster promotion from the start of professional activity, the possibility of learning about various companies and requirements in various positions, becoming financially independent faster, raising self-confidence, the possibility of establishing interesting professional contacts, which may be helpful in building your future professional career, perfecting practical skills in an international environment, possibility of improving foreign language skills, getting references from the company organizing an internship, adding a valuable point to your CV, as well as enriching the knowledge gained at a university with practical elements making it possible to achieve the effect of synergy in the process of education.

After naming potential benefits, it is impossible to omit the issue of barriers that students have to overcome when making the decision to participate in a student internship, or training. In the survey conducted by the authors of this article at Poznań University of Economics and Business for the purposes of preparing an internship project, which was carried out in 2014-2015, the most commonly named barriers for participating in student internship in companies in a situation where they are not supported by a university<sup>6</sup> were identified (table 1).

Table 1. Barriers for students' participation in student internships

Barriers	1st cycle of studies			2nd cycle of studies	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	4 <sup>th</sup> year	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year
Lack of remuneration for participation in an internship/training	58.67%	63.16%	64.76%	72.99%	73.91%
Lack of time due to duties associated with studies	46.67%	48.25%	42.86%	63.50%	30.43%
Available offer of internships/trainings is not associated with the subject of studies	37.33%	43.86%	44.76%	37.23%	69.57%
Available offers of internships/trainings are not associated with my interests	17.33%	21.93%	14.29%	10.22%	26.09%
Trainings/internships are too short and I am not able to acquire the required skills over this time	12.00%	15.79%	11.43%	9.49%	26.09%
Lack of time for duties associated with professional activity	6.67%	16.67%	11.43%	10.95%	34.78%
Internships/trainings are too long	1.33%	3.51%	1.90%	1.46%	4.35%
In case of foreign internships — high costs of travel and accommodation	29.33%	31.58%	28.57%	22.63%	43.48%

Source: Own materials prepared on the basis of the results of the survey.

As the survey showed, the barrier named by the biggest percentage of students in all surveyed groups was the lack of remuneration for participation in an internship/training, where it is necessary to point out that the unwaged character of internships was perceived as an obstacle by 58.7% of students from the second year of 1st cycle studies and 73.9% of students from the second year of the 2nd cycle of studies. The students of higher years more and more often had a negative view of internships without remuneration.

The second important barrier for making the decision to participate in student internships and trainings was the lack of time for this activity due to duties associated with studying. This declaration was made, respectively, by 46.7%; 48.3% and 42.9% of the surveyed groups of students from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years of the first cycle of studies and by 63,5% and 30,4% of students from the 1st and 2nd year of the second cycle of studies. Analyzing the results of the survey it is possible to notice the reduction of the percentage of students of consecutive (higher) years of both cycles of studies regarding the duties associated with studying as an obstacle for participation in an internship, however, we still need to regard these percentages as high.

The third very important barrier for making the decision to participate in a student internship, or training was, according to the respondents, the fact that an internship offer doesn't match the profile and field of studies. Almost 50% of students from the 4th year of 1st cycle studies and over 63% of students from the 2nd cycle studies named this factor as an obstacle for participation in a student internship, or training. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the percentage of students who notice the fact that an internship offer doesn't match the profile of studies was greater at higher years of studies, than at lower years of studies. This may be a result of the fact that the longer people study, the more precisely defined their expectations become. This means they become more aware of the possibilities of improving practical experiences which are the subject of education at a university and useful in future professional activity.

Along with the discrepancies between an offer of internship and the profile of studies, another barrier named by students was that an offer didn't match their interests. Even though it is impossible to identify a trend of growth, or decline in the popularity of this barrier in groups of students from higher years of studies, we can presume that students' answers in this respect may be dynamic in character and may depend on the current offers submitted by employers.

Among other barriers students named also the fact that the duration of a student internship/training is too short and doesn't enable acquiring skills useful on the labour market (about 12% of students from the 2nd year of 1st cycle studies and 26% of students of the second year of 2nd cycle studies). A small percentage of students named excessively long duration as a barrier for participation in a student internship, or training (from 1.3% in case of students of 2nd year of 1st cycle studies to 4.3% of the 2nd year of 2nd cycle studies).

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the barrier for participation in a student internship, or training defined as lack of time due to duties associated with professional activity. It was important only for 6.6% of students from the 2nd year of 1st cycle studies and for up to 26.1% of students of the 2nd year of the 2nd cycle of studies. The reason for these differences may be the fact that students from higher years of studies engage in regular professional activity and the possible lower interest among professionally active students in participating in an internship, or training resulting from this fact.

A separate category of student internships and trainings, which were subject to the research, were foreign internships and trainings. In this area important barriers for applying for a foreign internship were high costs of travel and accommodation abroad (for about 30% of students from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of 1st cycle studies and for 43,5% of students of the second year of 2nd cycle studies).

Among other barriers the surveyed students spontaneously named: "fear of failing to stand up to the challenge", "low self-confidence", "difficulty of gaining experience", "excessively high competition", "language barrier", "failing to acquire the appropriate qualifications following participation in an internship".

As the conducted analysis of the results of the survey shows, there are numerous barriers limiting the participation of students in student internships, or trainings. The identification of these barriers is important for the preparation of programmes without barriers not just by universities.

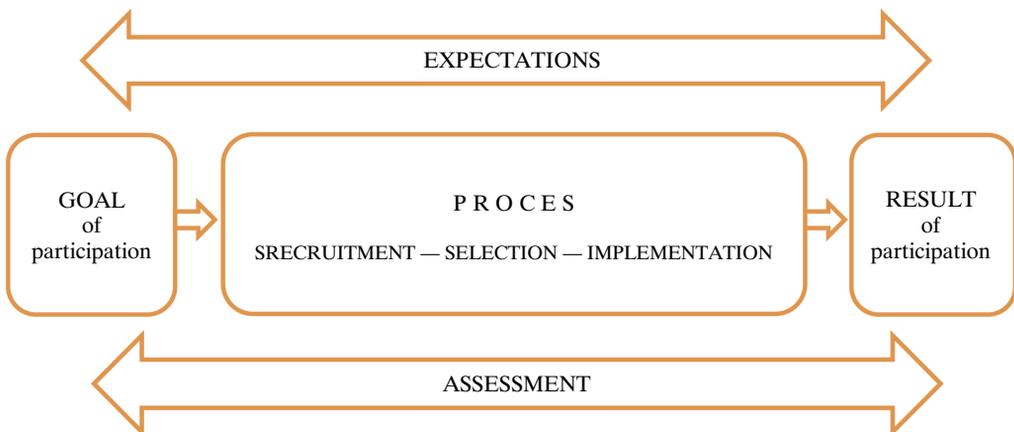
### **Determinants of students' satisfaction from participation in internship projects**

The issue of students' satisfaction from participation in projects is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. In the simplest view satisfaction can

be regarded as a state of pleasure and satisfaction resulting from satisfying particular needs. Student's satisfaction from participation in an internship project can be regarded from the point of view of process (at all stages of participation in an internship project), as well as effects (achieving the goals assumed by a student — e.g. raising competitiveness on the labour market). The perception of satisfaction in both these perspectives is important, as what contributes to a general positive assessment are not just the achieved results, but also experiences accompanying a beneficiary on the road to achieving the results. On this road students are accompanied by often numerous entities engaged in designing and implementing a project (financing institutions, university, companies, other entities responsible for supporting practical competences of students and for management of the project).

Unidimensional perception of students' satisfaction may deprive the organizers of a project of an important perspective in the creation of projects perceived by the beneficiaries in a complex way as creating a distinctive value at the stage of acquiring experiences and building future competences on the labour market. It is because full satisfaction is shaped at the stage of process and achieved results (Picture 1).

Picture 1. Process and cause-and-effect-related view of students' satisfaction from participation in a student internship and training project

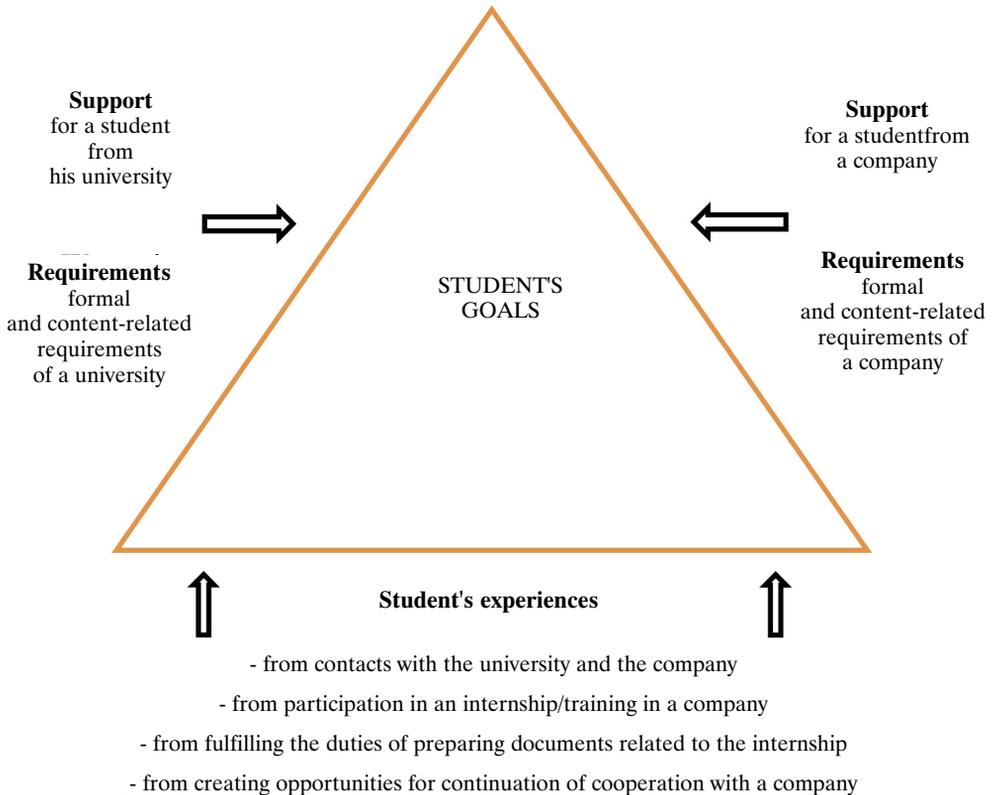


Source: Own materials.

In order to discuss the issue of building and achieving high satisfaction of the student as a beneficiary of an internship project from the perspective

of process, the authors of this article propose deliberations on the basis of the model of implementation of the aforementioned project (picture 2 and 3). Picture 2 presents the environment of a student's experiences in the process of participation in a student internship and training project.

Picture 2. The environment of student's experiences in the process of participation in student internship and training project



Source: Own materials.

It is assumed that each participant of the project makes the decision to enrich his, or her own process of education at a university with practical elements of education in a company environment defining his or her goals earlier. Project organizer's awareness of these goals is extremely valuable at the stage of preparation of a project matching the needs of students. This may

also play a special role at the stage of obtaining internship offers. One of the criteria differentiating these offers in the context of beneficiaries' expectations may be, for example, interest, needs, or expectation of both students and employers with regard to continuation of cooperation (for example, in form of full-time employment in a company) following the completion of an internship. From this perspective students of the first and second cycle of studies may formulate different goals for themselves (for example, obtaining first experience in a business environment and a return to traditional university education for students from first cycle studies completing an internship vs. getting work after completing an internship in case of students of final years of second cycle studies and starting full-time work parallel to studying at a university). The awareness of these goals also enables the university carrying out a project to more fully assess the satisfaction and success of all project participants (in such case what may determine whether a project is successful, or not, is whether all participants started work after the completion of the internship). At the same time the process perspective is on the one hand related to the goals of beneficiaries of a project, that is students, but on the other hand it is also substantially determined by the level of support provided to students, as well as the content-related and formal requirements for university, companies and students formulated by the institution financing the implementation of a project (in case of projects financed with funds of the European Union through mediating institutions, e.g. Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, or the National Centre for Research and Development). These requirements, found at every stage of project implementation may substantially contribute to various feelings of satisfaction among entities engaged in its implementation, including students (for example, from positive assessments as a result of, for example, raising organizational competences, raising internship participant's discipline in terms of managing documentation, or punctuality of reporting, to less satisfactory assessments resulting, for example, from the fact that work on reports on participation in the project takes a lot of time). A dimension combining the perspective of goals and process is experience containing a subjective assessment of the experiences of a project participant from contacts with a university and a company, participation in an internship, the related duties and building own competitiveness on the labour market (including attractiveness as a potential employee of a company organizing the internship).

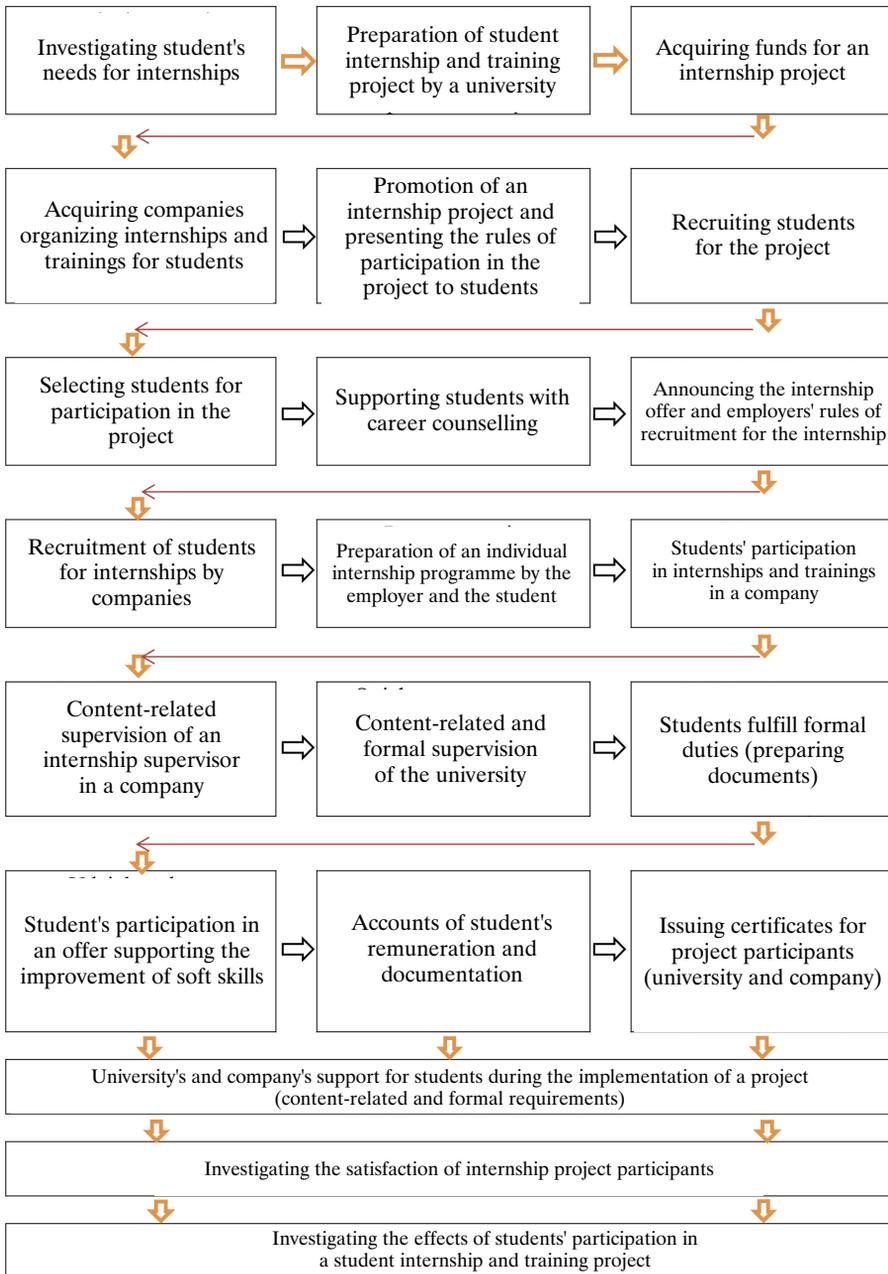
A detailed view of the process of implementation of an internship project by a university, which includes the assessment of students' satisfaction, has been presented on picture 3. As it shows, a university looking for perfection in process-focused project management and delivering high satisfaction to its beneficiaries should define these stages and later define the determinants of satisfaction at each of these stages. On the basis of experiences from managing an internship project at a university, the authors of this article have defined 21 key stages of the process which influence the satisfaction of its beneficiaries. It is worth adding here that some of them may have an intermediary character, which means that a student doesn't have to regard the role of surveys concerning internship needs as factors of satisfaction, or assess the formal issues at the stage when a university prepares an application for project financing, but at later stages.

The actions taken by the university in this area can substantially contribute to high assessment of satisfaction at other stages of implementation of the internship project. It is worth pointing out that a stage starting the process of implementation of an internship project focused on the needs of students should be the stage of investigating needs and the closing stage should be a survey of the effects of the venture.

Table 2 presents the key factors for the satisfaction of students from participation in an internship project from a process perspective, that is, occurring at every stage of the preparation of the project and student's participation in the internship project. These factors were identified in course of surveys on students, visits during internships and discussions with the employers and the internship participants and during meetings summing up the completed internships.

As the list of factors for student's satisfaction from participation in an internship project shows, the analysis of this issue from the process perspective is a complex task, which has to be conducted on many planes. Depending on the character of a conducted project, new factors may appear, important for project's beneficiaries. It is necessary to point out that their significance may vary for particular students assessing an internship project. That's why in the final approach it is recommended to verify the results on the basis of obtained weighted assessments.

Picture 3. The process of implementation of student training and internship projects by a university



Source: Own materials.

Table 2. Key factors for students' satisfaction from participation in an internship project

Stages of the process	Key satisfaction factors (student's perspective)
Investigating student's internship needs	<p>The survey takes into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students' participation and interest in participating in student internships and trainings in companies</li> <li>• barriers for participation in student internships named by students</li> <li>• students' needs and expectations with regard to student internships and trainings in companies</li> <li>• students' needs in the area of university's support for the organization of student internship and training programmes</li> </ul> <p>Analysis of the results of the survey with division of students into target groups for the purpose of adapting employers' internship offers to students' needs and the effects of education for the field of study and specialization</p>
Preparation of a student training and internship project by a university	<p>Taking into consideration in the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student's needs in relation to student internships and trainings, as well as</li> <li>• effects of education for the field and specialization of studies</li> <li>• number of internship project participants adequate to the number of students expressing interest in participation in a project</li> </ul>
Acquiring funds for an internship project	<p>Taking into consideration in the budget of a project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remuneration for students for participation in an internship</li> <li>• financing the costs of travel and living during participation in foreign internships</li> </ul>
Acquiring companies organizing internships and trainings for students	<p>The attractiveness of an employee from the point of view of a student</p> <p>Compliance of the employer's profile and the internship/training offer with the field and specialization of studies</p> <p>The availability of an internship offer in a company chosen by the student</p> <p>Compatibility of the competences developed during an internship with the profile of a graduate of a field and specialization of studies</p> <p>The possibility of continuing cooperation (e.g. getting work) with a company after the completion of an internship/training</p>
Promotion of an internship project and the presentation of rules of participation in the project	<p>Multi-channel communication with potential recipients of an internship project</p> <p>Presenting to students the benefits from participation in an internship project</p> <p>Full availability of information about an internship project for students (rules of project implementation, content-related and formal requirements of a company)</p>
Recruitment of students for an internship	<p>Equality of opportunities</p> <p>Efficient communication with the participants of the process of recruitment</p>
Selection of students for participation in a project	<p>Clarity of the criteria of selection</p> <p>Efficient communication with the participants of the process of selection</p>
Supporting students with career counselling	<p>Participation of a career counsellor in a project (competences)</p> <p>Operational efficiency in the organization of students' meetings with a career counsellor</p> <p>The influence of career counselling on the decisions of a student</p>

cont. table 2

Stages of the process	Key satisfaction factors (student's perspective)
Announcing the internship offer and rules of the process of recruitment for internships in companies	Attractiveness of internship offers Numerous internship offers Clarity of rules and easiness of following the rules of an internship The availability of internship offers matching the interests of a student The easiness of applying for an internship in a company
Recruitment of students for student internships	Meetings for students with participation of a career counsellor Method of recruitment (exclusively electronic, student's personal participation) Efficiency of providing students with information about the results of recruitment Acquisition of an internship, according to student's preferences
Preparation of an internship programme	Student's participation in the formulation of an internship programme Compliance of an internship programme with student's interests Student's ability to match the internship programme with the syllabus (combining internship with studies)
Student's participation in an internship	Implementation of an internship in compliance with an internship programme Student participates in interesting projects in a company The opportunity for the student to manage a project in a company Improving hard and soft skills Student improves his foreign language skills during an internship The opportunity to learn about specialist software The opportunity to use specialist machines and devices Practical experiences going beyond the goals of an internship
Content-related care of the internship supervisor in a company	The engagement of an internship supervisor in the improvement student's skills in the work environment Support of the internship supervisor in the company environment
Stages of the process	Key factors of satisfaction (student's perspective)
Content-related and formal supervision of the university	Clarity of rules concerning paperwork Online availability of document specimens University's support for dealing with paperwork
Working on the documentation of an internship	The easiness of dealing with paperwork The consumption of time related to work on documentation
Student's participation in improving soft skills	Number of trainings in a project's offer Attractiveness of training subjects and programmes Interesting form of a training Deadlines for implementation Person conducting a training

cont. table 2

Stages of the process	Key satisfaction factors (student's perspective)
Account of student's remuneration and documentation	University's report (formal and content-related) Easiness of reporting (documentation) Punctuality of remuneration payment
Issuing certificates of participation in a project	The significance of the certificate on the labour market Punctuality of provision of the certificate
University's support for the student during participation in a project	Efficient communication between the university, students and employers organizing an internship/training Content-related, formal, expert support
Assessment of students' satisfaction from participation in a project	Continuous assessment of satisfaction during student's participation in a project Assessment of satisfaction after the conclusion of student's participation in a project Rapid reaction of the university to student's needs
Investigating the effects of students' participation in a project	University's support for a student after conclusion of an internship in achieving the goals of participation in an internship project (e.g. getting work in a company)

Source: Own materials.

## Assessment of the effects of student's participation in an internship by the university implementing a project

While process-focused approach to the assessment of satisfaction of project participants allows a university to achieve operational perfection and achieve high results at every stage of carrying out a project, an effect-focused approach enables a university to sum up the level of satisfaction of students and companies and confront the obtained results with the assessment of own work contributed to the implementation of an internship project. It is worth pointing out that in this field various entities can perceive in various ways satisfaction as a result of participation in a project. Each time it is necessary to make sure that the conducted surveys in the context of effects are connected with the goals of a project which a university assumed while planning its implementation. In case of numerous internship projects financed with

funds from the European Union within the framework of Operational Programme Human Capital, this goal is often raising the competitiveness of the participants of a student internship and training project on the labour market.

On the basis of the survey<sup>7</sup> conducted at the Faculty of Commodity Science of Poznań University of Economics and Business in 2015-2016 on a group of 80 students who completed an internship and training project financed with funds from the European Union, the authors of this article distinguished a total of five groups and twelve areas, which contained 139 practical skills building the competitiveness of people who completed the project on the labour market, spontaneously named by students. These groups were "Student as a resource", "Knowledge", "Skills", "Competences", "Student's self-assessment" (table 3).

In the first group called "Student as a resource" there are declarative opinions of students concerning the benefits associated with the fact that a student's work has been recognized as very good by the company organizing an internship for students, the ability to manage a project in a company, or getting an offer of continuing work in the future. In the second group called "Knowledge in practice" there are such areas as: utilization of knowledge gained during studies in practice, acquiring new knowledge in a business environment, gaining knowledge about the functioning of a company, acquiring knowledge about the specific character of work in various company divisions and the relations existing between them, learning the processes and participation in the processes of an organization, establishing and maintaining contacts with external entities. The third group was formed by "Skills", which included competences in such areas as: ability to work in an organization and improve practical skills gained during studies. The fourth group called "Competences" includes: communication in the workplace in foreign language, operating equipment and learning programming. The last group which was formed by numerous benefits building, according to student's opinion, his competitiveness on the labour market was "Self-assessment". This included: the person who completed an internship project feels greater self-confidence and has higher self-esteem with regard to his value on the labour market.

Table 3. Areas of analysis of the effects of student's participation in an internship project

Lp.	Group	Area	Number
1.	Student as a resource	Student as a company's precious human resource	7
2.	Knowledge in practice	Using knowledge gained during studies in practice	10
		Acquiring new knowledge in a business environment	10
		Learning about the way a company functions	10
		Contacts with external entities	5
		Learning about processes in an organization and participating in these processes	4
		Opportunity to work in various company divisions	3
3.	Skills	Improving practical skills	26
		Ability to work in an organization	10
4.	Competences	Operating equipment/Learning programming	12
		Communication in the workplace in a foreign language	5
5.	Self-assessment	Improvement of the self-assessment of student as a job candidate	37
6.	Total		139

Source: Own materials.

The analysis of results presented in table 3 clearly shows that the improvement of the self-assessment of the student as a work candidate is a factor which may substantially influence his level of satisfaction and is a factor just as important as held knowledge, practical skills, or social competences.

On the basis of the deliberations presented above it is possible to come up with recommendations for universities carrying out student internship and training programmes, focused on the process of planning and implementation of internship projects aimed at delivering possibly highest satisfaction to its beneficiaries. Among the basic recommendations we should mention:

1. It is recommended to approach the issue of project beneficiaries' satisfaction both with focus on effects (target level of satisfaction) and with focus on the process (achieving satisfaction at every stage of project implementation).
2. The conducted surveys should be aimed at allowing the university to eliminate the existing barriers for participation of students in student internships and trainings at the stage of planning of an internship project, which will enable the university to prepare a project free from the barriers' negative impact on the final effect of the project (e.g. small

number of students interested in participation in a project offering unwaged internships, schedule of internship colliding with the syllabus, or student's interest, insufficient availability of offers from "attractive" employers).

3. It is necessary to conduct surveys concerning internship needs of the target group of students for the purpose of obtaining attractive employers and offers of internship adapted to these needs.
4. An important element of the project should be offers of internship matching the directions and effects of education.
5. What is necessary is good communication with potential and target participants of a project (both companies and students) at the stage of promotion and at all stages of implementation.
6. What is important is an efficient process of recruitment and selection of companies and students for participation in a project, based on clear criteria.
7. University should support students both with regard to content (e.g. career counselling at the stage of choosing an internship), and in the area of formalities (preparing documents concerning participation in an internship).
8. Content-related support for a student from the internship supervisor in a company.
9. University's efficient risk management in a project
10. Conducting the assessment of satisfaction of students participating in a project along with simultaneous monitoring of the satisfaction of companies organizing internships for the purpose of achieving the effect of synergy.

## Conclusion

The problem of student internships and trainings and its analysis based on an example of a project carried out at Poznań University of Economics and Business show the directions of changes which should take place due to the global trends and changing demands of the labour market mentioned in the beginning. They have substantially changed the view of the essence of education at the higher level and its position in the society and the economy; moreover, they have enforced the necessity to take into consideration the practical aspects in the process

of education and close associations with business practice. For the student as a party in the process of education at a higher level, acquiring practical skills associated with the implemented process of education and experience from carrying out tasks for a potential employer through trainings, or internships in business entities, may right now determine to a large extent his market value as a university graduate and his competitiveness on the labour market, it may also be a good start of professional career. That's why university's good preparation for the implementation of internship and training programmes, which will take into consideration the above-mentioned areas of effects generating satisfaction for the participants, is particularly important. Moreover, programmes should be matched with the conducted process of education, so that they become not just a part of it, but also a verification of the knowledge gained in the process of education and the ability to use it.

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- <sup>6</sup> The survey was conducted on a group of 454 students of the second, third and fourth year of first cycle studies, as well as students of the first and third year of second cycle studies in two areas of study. The survey was conducted so that Poznań University of Economics and Business could prepare for student san internship project titled: *Projekt staże dla studentów i współpraca z pracodawcami w ramach kierunku Towaroznawstwo UEP*. The project was carried out in 2014–2015 and was co-financed with funds of the European Union, within the European Social Fund.
- <sup>7</sup> The survey was conducted on a group of 80 students who completed an internship project for students titled *Projekt staże dla studentów i współpraca z pracodawcami w ramach kierunku Towaroznawstwo UEP*. The project was carried out in 2014–2015 and co-financed with funds from the European Union, from the European Social Fund. The subject of analysis were the contents of 80 spontaneous answers of students to the open question: "In what way do You think participation in the internship project helped You raise your competitiveness on the labour market?".

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