



Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work
Experience in Higher Education

National Literature Review Spain

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PROJECT PARTNERS



This WEXHE publication is applicable to the following disciplinary sectors:

Hard pure (e.g. physics etc.)

Soft pure (e.g. literature etc.)

Hard applied (e.g. engineering etc.)

Soft applied (e.g. management studies etc.)

WEXHE research has showed that there are no substantial differences between these four sectors regarding the implementation of Work Based Learning in Higher Education. Therefore this document represents the four sectors mentioned.

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INTRODUCTION

The project Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work Experience into Higher Education (WEXHE) involves deepening the analysis of university-business relations, seeks models of success in the integration between university and business through practices (the so-called work-based learning, WBL), in order to correct the mismatches between the training and skills acquired by the recent graduates and those that the companies demand in the labor market.

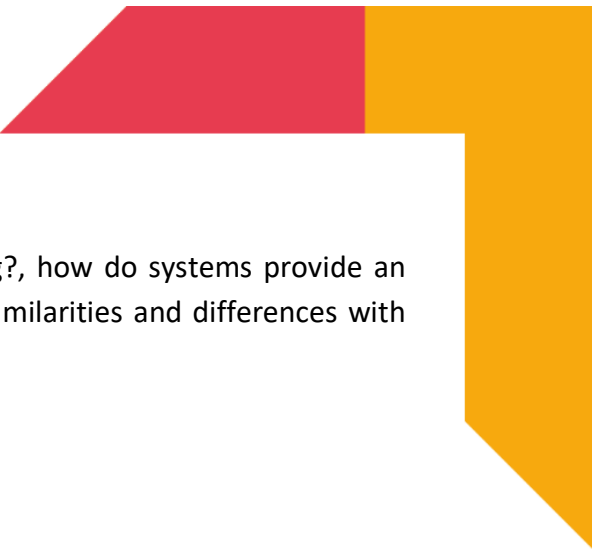
In this sense, the project aims to study the practices in companies, either through practices in the last years of university degree, practical training by companies for recent graduates or the promotion of entrepreneurship among university students. In particular, it is a matter of analyzing which of these actions provide graduates with greater employability and higher quality jobs.

The project is structured in three stages:

- In a first stage, WEXHE aims to identify and analyze successful cases in the offer of practices in companies to students of recent courses, recent graduates and entrepreneurs, from the point of view of different primary study areas (soft-applied, hard-applied, soft-pure and hard-pure). For this purpose, in-depth interviews will be conducted (case studies).
- In the next step, the project will propose different models with guidelines on management, learning outcomes, financing, quality assurance... that allow universities and companies to design practices adjusted to the capacities and abilities demanded by the companies.
- The last stage will focus on the dissemination of the models identified and its contrast by experts, through different workshops, initiatives and meetings.

The starting point, therefore, is the identification of success stories in the 7 countries participating in the project, in 4 areas (soft-applied, hard-applied, soft-pure and hard-pure) and related to 3 typologies of practices (practices before and after obtaining the graduation, and entrepreneurship).

Once the cases have been selected, the following questions should be answered: how is work based learning (WBL) understood and implemented in different countries?, what are the general and legal requirements?, which are the main obstacles and factors driving their implementation? What are the differences and similarities between work-based learning identified in terms of management, quality assurance, learning outcomes, funding and accreditation?, how is the designing process of WBL programs, especially in order to meet the needs of students based on their age, current and previous work experience, types of learning and professional obligations?, what are the skills development requirements of teachers for the integration of work-based learning in Universities or Higher Education Centers?, who is



the main responsible for implementing work-based learning?, how do systems provide an assessment, accreditation and certification?, what are the similarities and differences with respect to countries and professionals?

WBL UNDERSTANDING

Work-based learning, WBL, shows how efforts are being made to make higher-level graduates and students more proficient and employables through different means (training in companies, practices, entrepreneurship) to facilitate their incorporation into the labor market. The unemployment rate between people with higher education is still high in Spain (10.9% in the first quarter of 2017) and there is also a lack of quality in the jobs of university graduates.

In recent years, in Spain, there have been several circumstances that are encouraging the efforts in this area.

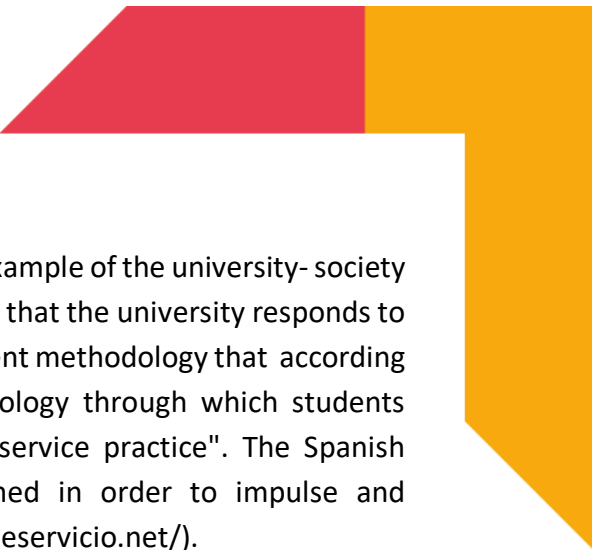
On the one hand, the fact that university degrees must be adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has forced to change university teaching methods and make them much more practical and not so theoretical. In addition, it has introduced new teachings in competences and abilities that companies demand and that previously were not part of the degrees.

On the other hand, the economic crisis that the Spanish economy has suffered, like the rest of the advanced economies in the last decade, has meant a great highly qualified workers and recent graduates drain, and even students in the last years of their careers. These resources have not rejoined the Spanish business activity, precisely because of the lower employability of Spanish university students.

Thus, it is fundamental for the Spanish economy, in general, and for the labor market, in particular, that the qualified personnel incorporates into the productive activity, and also, that working conditions adjusts to the real training and qualification of the workers.

The relationship between the university and business is key, not only in the short term to establish the needs that companies demand, but also in the medium and long term so that this union between providers of human capital (universities) and the companies could predict what qualifications and skills will need the economic system in the near future, to continue improving and to become an increasingly competitive economy.

In general, the so-called third mission of the university is increasingly acquiring a more relevant role. That is, the profitability of knowledge through companies, or in other words, the transfer of knowledge and innovation to the business activity to generate economic benefits. Sometimes, it is not just referred to the university-business relationship, adding one more link in the chain, society. García-Peñalvo (2016) points out that there are many different activities that include this mission of the university: continuous training of teachers, creation of business projects, job placement of graduates, etc. All actions are supported in two fundamental pillars: the institutional social responsibility of the university and the commitment to transform knowledge into economic value.



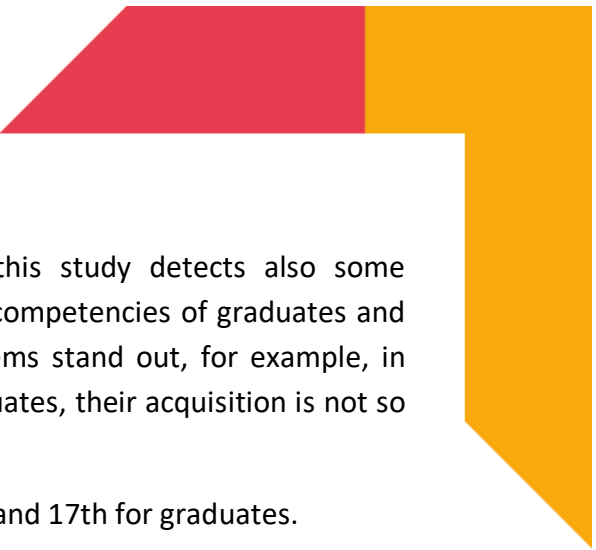
In this sense the methodology "Learning Service" (APS) is an example of the university- society relationship that Spanish Universities are developing, in order that the university responds to problems and social needs. Learning Service is a relatively recent methodology that according to Tapia (2000) is defined as a "teaching-learning methodology through which students develop their knowledge and skills through a community service practice". The Spanish Learning Service Network (2014) has recently been formed in order to impulse and disseminate this model of learning service (<https://aprendizajeservicio.net/>).

In any case, WEXHE project focuses specifically on the business-university relationship in a broad sense. WEXHE aims to facilitate the employability of university students by reviewing the actions taken in this area (practices) in the different countries participating in the project, in order to identify best practices or models.

The starting point must be the delimitation of what is called "Work-Based Learning" (WBL). The WBL encompasses all actions designed to give students and graduates skills and abilities to facilitate their incorporation into the labor market and, if possible, to provide them with not only greater employability but also higher quality jobs. To be more specific, we can define WBL as Royal Decree 592/2014 of July 11, which regulates the external academic practices of university students, that defines the external academic practices: "The external academic practices constitute an activity of a formative nature carried out by university students and supervised by the universities, whose objective is to enable them to apply and supplement the knowledge acquired in their academic training, facilitating the acquisition of skills that prepare them for the exercise of professional activities, facilitate their employability and promote their ability to entrepreneurship".

The review of the literature shows that, in Spain, there are still deficiencies in the practical training of university students, despite the efforts and advances in recent years. And it points to the asymmetry of information between petitioners and suppliers of qualified work as one of the most important problems to hiring university graduates (Bartual and Turno, 2015). Other studies by ANECA (National Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education), Coromines et al. (2010), Montoro-Sánchez et al. (2012), Freire et al. (2013), Martín del Peso et al. (2013) and Rodríguez (2015) point to the mismatches between the level of skills demanded by the labor market and that of university students. In this case, it refers not only to specific abilities but also to generic competences or skills.

Other works such as Freire et al. (2011) note the importance that employers give to the internship period, while pointing out that these are still the main training deficiencies observed in the graduates. Among the results of this same analysis, it is worth noting that the adequacy between the acquired skills of the graduates in relation to what the companies require is 78.9%.



Therefore, an improvement of 21% is needed. Finally, this study detects also some asymmetries regarding the perception and prioritization of competencies of graduates and entrepreneurs. Of 19 categories analyzed, the following items stand out, for example, in which employers consider them important and yet, for graduates, their acquisition is not so relevant:

- Problem solving: ranked 4th in importance for companies and 17th for graduates.
- Ability to apply the knowledge to the practice: position 8th for companies, 18th graduates.

On the other hand, skills that entrepreneurs consider as irrelevant but important for graduates:

- Ability to work independently: ranked 19th for companies and 4th for graduates.
- Interpersonal skills: 14th position the companies and 3rd for graduates.

TYPES OF WBL

The Spanish framework in Spain is progressing referring to the relationship between universities and companies, mainly through the practices. The Bologna Plan or the establishment of the European Higher Education Area are actions that have promoted the university's approach to the company, the employability of university students and their professional training.

The Bologna Plan (1999) addresses the issue of the need for qualifications to enable students to enter the labor market. Literally, "the title awarded at the end of the first cycle will correspond to an appropriate level of qualification for access to the European labor market". The normative development that incorporates the Bologna Plan in Spain and establishes the ordination of the official university teachings is the Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 of October, which indicates that the acquisition of competencies must be a priority objective in the study plans, thus achieving an increase in employability. In the Statute of the University Student approved by Royal Decree 1791/2010, of 30 of December, its article 8 recognizes the right of university students to make practices, curricular or extracurricular ones.

Subsequently, in 2014, Royal Decree 592/2014, of 11 of July, was approved, which regulates academic practices within the framework of the European Higher Education Area. This norm clarifies basic concepts about university practices, including their purpose, duration, contents, recipients, collaborating entities, content of the agreements...

On this basis, the following are the types of WBL existing in Spain, as well as its main content and characteristics:

[Work placement - training in practices \(Internship\)](#)

In Spain, external academic practices have a formative purpose favoring theoretical and practical learning, as well as facilitating the relationship of university students with the professional world and thus helping them to join the labor market.

These practices are carried out by students enrolled in any university or in centers attached, as well as students from other foreign universities under the academic mobility program. Therefore, these are practices performed before obtaining the university degree. In order to carry out these external academic practices, Educational Cooperation Agreements between universities and collaborating entities (companies or Public Administrations) are signed. The purpose of these agreements is to establish the legal framework of the relationship between students, the University and the collaborating entity.

There are two types of external academic practices: curricular and extracurricular ones.

- **Curricular practices**

Curricular practices are academic activities that are part of the study plan. They are designed in accordance with specific academic objectives and competences. For this reason, they are as subjects integrated in the curriculum (study plan) of each degree and, therefore, they have allocation of credits.

Normally, the university appoints a professor who performs the functions of "academic tutor", whose function is to ensure the correct development of the agreed upon, to elaborate the evaluation reports and the final qualification. In the same way, in the company there must be a tutor who supervises the student's performance and who will make a follow-up and evaluation report at the end of the practice.

Curricular practices have a maximum of 60 ECTS credits (equivalent to 1,500 hours) and are preferably done in the second half of the study plan.

- **Extracurricular practices**

Extracurricular practices are voluntary, they are not part of the study plan, although they can be contemplated in the European Supplement to the Title (degree).

The duration of the extracurricular practices will preferably not exceed 50% of the academic year, although it is fixed by the Universities and always ensuring the correct monitoring and development of academic activities.

Traineeship

The practical training (traineeship) is done by the graduates, that is, those who have completed their university studies and, normally, have not joined the labor market.

Currently, most of the Spanish universities have job boards or job counseling departments, the so-called COIE (Centro de Orientación e Información de Empleo - Employment Orientation and Information Center), who inform and advise recent graduates that are in the process of joining the labor market . In these cases, generally, universities and companies have agreements, which make it easier for companies to find the profiles that best fit their needs.

The practices of recent graduates in companies usually materialize in the so-called training (traineeship) contract (contrato en prácticas). In Spain, this training contract aims to complement the education and skills of students.

The characteristics of the trainee contract are as follows (Royal Decree 488/1998 which develops the statute of workers in matters of training contracts; Law 11/2013 for the protection of part-time workers and other urgent measures in the economic and social order):

- Those with a university degree, a medium or higher degree, or a certificate of professionalism can opt, provided that five years have not passed since the end of their studies or if they are under 30 years of age, in which case the five-year limitation does not apply.

- The duration of practices must be between six months and two years.
- The contract in practices must be related to the contents of the title or certificate (degree) that gives rise to the contract.
- This contract has economic advantages for companies with reductions in social security contributions.
- Traineeships are paid, with at least 60% of the salary of a similar job in the first year. The second year the percentage rises to 75%. In addition, if after two years of traineeship the worker is hired, the two years spent in the company count for the purposes of seniority rights.

Entrepreneurship

Another channel to increase the employability of the graduates is the entrepreneurship, as a way to approach the university to the company, in addition to the practices.

In this sense, main efforts in Spain are related to raise awareness about entrepreneurship. No longer only in the degrees of Economics or Business Administration is entrepreneurship encouraged, but in all disciplines. In addition, the number of Faculties that have Departments for the creation of companies and the promotion of entrepreneurship is increasing. There is a proliferation of programs of aid and advice to students in the elaboration of a business plan and the start-up of companies. In this case, business schools are very involved and work together with universities.

Apart from the fact that in a later stage of WEHXE project, specific cases of good practices will be identified in the different modalities and in the corresponding subjects, it is necessary to indicate in this section some outstanding actions carried out in Spain by some institutions and companies for the development and promotion of traineeships for students and graduates, through programs, collaborations with universities, financial resources In particular, the work of the Fundación Universidad y Empresa (FUE), a private non-profit organization (www.fue.es) and Banco Santander through projects such as Universia (www.universia.es), CISE (www.cise.es), among others.

CONTEXT

Central Spanish Administration has established the normative and regulatory framework of university education in Spain, as well as the guidelines on the government or performance of universities, and more specifically, the practices of students or university graduates. All this, adapted to the European framework. In addition, there are specific initiatives to support and promote the incorporation of students and graduates into the labor market, through programs and scholarships to carry out practices in Spanish or foreign companies.

Currently, the following programs under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport are in force:

- Programa Argo. Grants for training practices in companies in Europe, the United States, Canada, Asia and Oceania for university graduates (www.becasargo.es).
- Programa Faro. Training practices in foreign companies for university students (www.becasfaro.es).

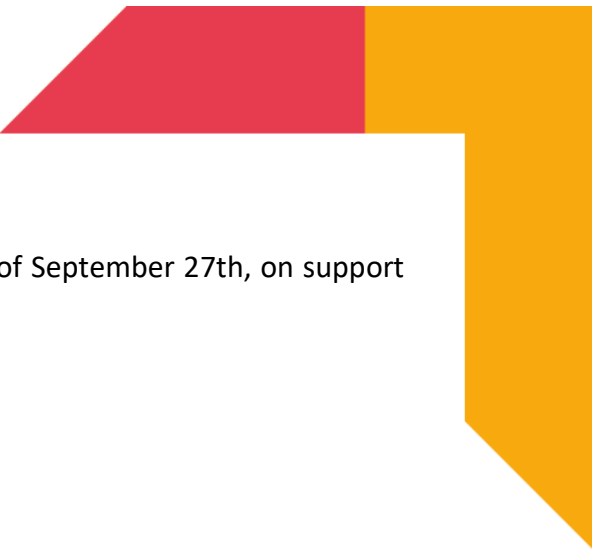
Both programs help strengthen university-business connections, with a focus on entrepreneurship and self-employment skills, facilitating interactions between academic culture and business culture.

FARO and ARGO programs have been included in the activities of the Compendium of Good Practices of the Working Group on Modernization of European Higher Education.

Referring to the regulatory framework, Royal Decree 592/2014, of July 11th, regulates the external academic practices of university students. This Royal Decree collects the objective and the nature and characteristics of the practices, duration, schedules, collaboration agreements of educational cooperation, the recipients and requirements for the realization of the practices, rights and duties of the students in practices, tutorials and requirements to execute them, rights and duties of the tutors of the collaborating company and the tutor of the university. It establishes also the guidelines for the preparation of the follow-up report and final report of both the collaborating enterprise and the student or just graduates that perform the practices.

In general, the normative framework where practices are developed in Spain is quite defined and, according to experts, is known by all participants (universities, collaborating companies and students). However, they also say that it should improve, in order not to conceive it as a mere administrative process, but to take advantage of these actions by all participants, especially the collaborating companies.

In relation to entrepreneurship among students and recent university graduates, there is no specific regulation at this respect in Spain. There are actions conducted by the General Administration of the State and the Autonomous Communities to promote entrepreneurial spirit, but for entrepreneurs in general and not for the particular case of university students



or graduates. This is the case, for example, of Law 14/2013, of September 27th, on support for entrepreneurs and their internationalization.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WBL

In general, one of the perceived obstacles, as mentioned above, is the mismatch between the training of graduates and the requirements of companies. Businesses no longer value only specific profiles, but there is a general consensus that jobseekers are prioritizing generic competences, while universities are still at an embryonic stage in this area.

Internships in companies by university students or recently graduates is, in most cases, their first contact with the labor market. Thanks to these periods in companies, students acquire certain business skills, while improving their professional and technical qualifications and, consequently, they increase their employability.

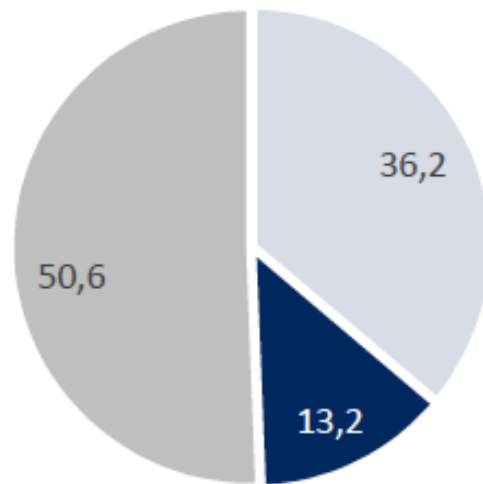
At the same time, the most important asset of any business and economy is its human capital. The provision of human resources with required training and specific skills for the development of the assigned tasks is crucial for innovation, productivity and the competitiveness of enterprises. In addition, ultimately, for their sustainability and progress.

For this reason, it is a priority to promote the efficiency of human capital through the reinforcement of relations between the University and the company. In this sense, the successive educational reforms in Spain have included progressively a more practical part in training, adapting the contents to those ones required by the companies. Royal Decree 592/2014, of 11 July, which regulates the external academic practices of university students, settles the framework of Spanish legislation about this matter.

However, the recent monographic report of the Competitiveness Observatory of the Chamber of Commerce of Spain¹ reveals that only just a third of Spanish companies has collaborated with universities in their productive activity. It is a consequence of considerable bureaucracy involved in such practices and of the differences in the language, motivations and targets used between the academic world and the business. Furthermore, there is an inevitable negative effect of the economic situation during the years of crisis over that relationship.

Has established your company some kind of cooperation with the University for the development of some project? Yes No, but has been considered No we are not interested.

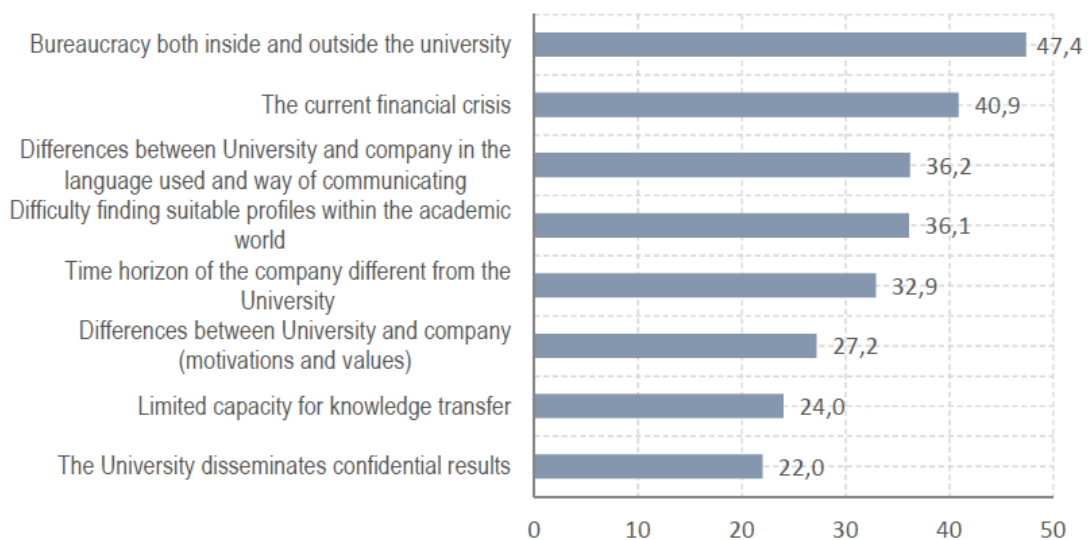
¹ https://www.camara.es/sites/default/files/publicaciones/observatorio_competitividad_n2_2016_for_macion.pdf



■ Yes ■ No, but has been considered ■ No we are not interested

Source: Chamber of Commerce of Spain


Main obstacles impeding University-enterprise collaboration
 (% of companies that indicates the obstacle as high or very high)



Source: Chamber of Commerce of Spain

Thus, this fact evidences the existence of important opportunities for Spanish companies to improve their competitiveness through the strengthening of cooperation with universities.

Apart from studies analyzing the obstacles or barriers between the university and the company, experts point out that the main problem related to practices is that they are a correct instrument but are managed inefficiently by companies. Generally, firms



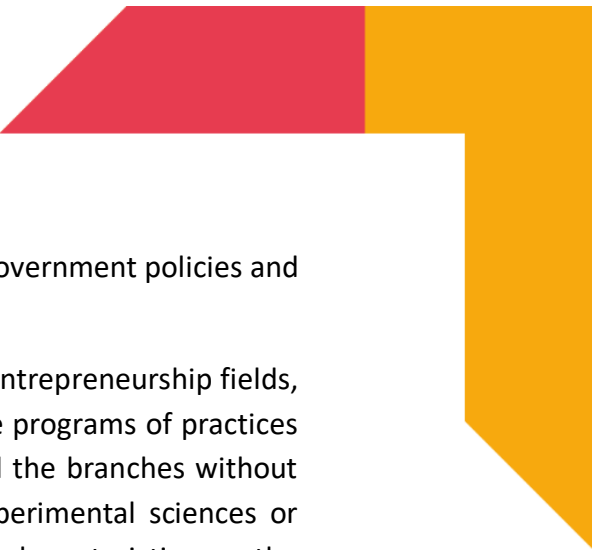
do not take advantage of these resources; there would be necessary a program of reception and exploration of the future options to the university students or graduates. They should not be considered just as a temporal or inexpensive resources. There is therefore a lack of involvement of the company in the protocol of practices.

On the business side, the European project called EMCOSU (www.emcosu.eu), in which the Spanish Chamber of Commerce participated (2014), analyzed the university-business relationship, identifying the main barriers or difficulties that companies emphasized in their relationship with the university. Almost eighty percent (78.5% of firms) considered that differences in the university and in the company in terms of motivations and values are the main obstacle, followed by the different time horizon of both (77.6%) and bureaucracy (75.8). This analysis also identified the drivers of this interaction, emphasizing the existence of trust and mutual commitment (71.0%) and the interest of higher education institutions in accessing practical knowledge (61.0%).

From the point of view of universities, the shortage of human resources that supervise the monitoring of the practices in a more direct way, that is, a more active supervision by the tutors, was one of the identified barriers for the accomplishment of the practices by the university students of the last courses or recent graduates. In addition, there was a lack of incentives that university trainers had to participate in these projects, because of their reduced practical value in their academic curricula.

Finally, on the Spanish students' side (KPMG, 2015), they perceived that the most important aspect to improve the relationship between university formation and the needs of companies was to combine theoretical and practical training in companies, which average rating of 3.6, (where 4 is the highest score, very relevant). They were followed by more detail-oriented lessons and the reality of the environment, and more teachers with recent experience in the business environment, which gave it a grade of 3.3 and 3.1, respectively. Moreover, more than half of the students surveyed believed that they would enter the labor market through a trainee contract.

In the case of entrepreneurship, the main problem is the lack of financial resources, in addition to the lack of awareness in the Institutions, especially when designing study plans. In this sense, it is still at a very early stage in Spain. These facts are shown, for example, in the GEM Spain 2016 (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), report in which experts value the environment conditions to create a company in Spain. The results reflect that education and training in entrepreneurial culture, public support, bureaucracy and taxes and financing tasks are the worst-valued aspects. On a scale of 1 to 5 (highest), they all score below 2.5. Moreover, among the 20 obstacles to



entrepreneurial activity in Spain analyzed, the first two are: government policies and financial support.

Finally, it is remarkable that both in the practices and in the entrepreneurship fields, there is, in general, a lack of specialization. That is, the same programs of practices for university students or entrepreneurs are designed for all the branches without distinction in if they are pure sciences, social sciences, experimental sciences or humanities. The actions are the same regardless of the characteristics or the participants (students or companies).

Other regularity found is that the universities manage the practices in a similar way, basically fulfilling the established in Royal Decree 592/2014 of 11th of July, which regulates the external academic practices of university students. When a variation or specific program has been detected, it is because it is designed, managed or run specifically by a third institution, such as the Fundación Universidad Empresa or the International Entrepreneurship Center of University of Santander (CISE).


IMPACT OF WBL

Currently, there is no systematic monitoring in Spain of the impact of the practices beyond the evaluation required by the programs themselves, and which establish the different universities, according to article 15 of Royal Decree 592/2014. This evaluation is mainly administrative about the punctual performance of practice programs. Thus, once the university student or recent graduate finishes his internship period in the company, there is no follow up that allows to assess if his employability is greater or not.

In addition, the experts point out that there is usually no adequate follow-up of practices due to lack of resources; the monitoring is limited to a report of the student and the tutor on practices (administrative matter). Some important conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of these reports, both from the students and from the tutors, as well as from the review of the work done in this respect. In concrete, practices are usually more effective and useful in smaller companies, because students participate more and directly in the business activity. The dimension of companies also influences the assessment of competences (Bartual and Turnmo, 2016). Thus, micro-enterprises and small companies value more specific competences than generic ones. Smaller firms have a short-term vision and value very much that the »know how". Therefore, specific competences. Meanwhile, the larger companies have a more medium and long-term vision, which determines their preference for the "ability to learn".

As for the possibility of trainees becoming part of the company's workforce, it is not very likely, since there are new trainees every year. As noted above, companies do not take advantage of these resources (moreover, they consider it occasionally as an inexpensive resource).

In any case, and although there are no exact figures on the employability of students participating in curricular or extracurricular practices programs, the fact is that practices (internships or traineeships) increase the employability of university students and graduates, and provide them with training in transversal competences demanded in the labor market. This is evidenced by several studies, investigations and surveys elaborated about this matter (Martin del Peso et al., 2010; Freire et al., 2011; Bartual and Turno, 2015 KPMG, 2015). Lastly, it is important to make reference to the impact study carried out among the students who have been beneficiaries of the FARO program, under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain (2010). This reflects that there is a high level of satisfaction among the respondents (university students), and they show that the program has had a positive influence on their lives and has contributed to improve aspects such as: predisposition to change countries to obtain better opportunities, foreign language knowledge,



possibility of obtaining employment, personal and professional skills development, etc. Some program figures: 98.5% of respondents acknowledged to have worked after the implementation of the FARO practice; their occupancy rate was 86.3%; the job search time was considerably reduced (for 51.7%, it took less than 6 months, since the end of the practice, to find employment).

With regard to the impact of the WBL in the entrepreneurship field, there are still fewer evaluations or impact analyzes than in the case of curricular and extracurricular practices. Not only because it is less common for graduates to opt for this option to join the labor market, but also because it is mainly in a stage of increases awareness.

CONCLUSIONS

Substantial progress has been made in Spain in the field of WBL or university practices in recent years, especially in the field of curricular and extracurricular practices rather than entrepreneurship. The fundamental reason is because the Spanish regulation has advanced and already incorporates currently the practice of business practices by university students or recent graduates, through Royal Decree 592/2014, July 11th, which regulates the external academic practices of the university students.

Among the three activities that make up the WBL (internship, traineeship, entrepreneurship), university practices for undergraduates and graduates are more developed and much more common, and are highly valued by firms. Nevertheless, it is still perceived that companies do not take advantage of those resources. In many cases it is considered as a mere administrative procedure, without weigh it as a skilled resource or an element of knowledge for the company.

There are still gaps in the practical training of university students, despite the efforts and advances that have occurred in recent years. In particular, it is highlighted the asymmetry of information between applicants and providers of qualified work as one of the most important problems when recruiting university graduates

In general, and as discussed throughout this document, in the case of practices of university students and graduates, whether curricular or extracurricular, there is no distinction (specialization) about the discipline or area of learning (humanities, experimental sciences, pure sciences or social sciences). In this sense, universities manage these practices equally as established in Royal Decree 592/2014 that regulates the practices of university students.

In the case of entrepreneurship as a WBL activity, it is still at a very preliminary stage in Spain, mainly focus on sensitization than action, although there are very powerful programs (FUE, CISE, UAM emprende). It is still early for strong results. Greater institutional and governmental support is demanded in the promotion of entrepreneurship, as well as financial support. This situation may change soon, due to the current importance given to the so-called third mission of the university, that is, to remark the knowledge generated in the university in order to serve society and business sector.

Finally, it is important to mention the need for an evaluation and a systematic analysis of the real impact of the WBL in Spain. The study of the results in terms of employability and improvements in the conditions of employment in the different programs of practices and entrepreneurship is fundamental to be able to improve them, and to make closer the relationship between universities and firms.

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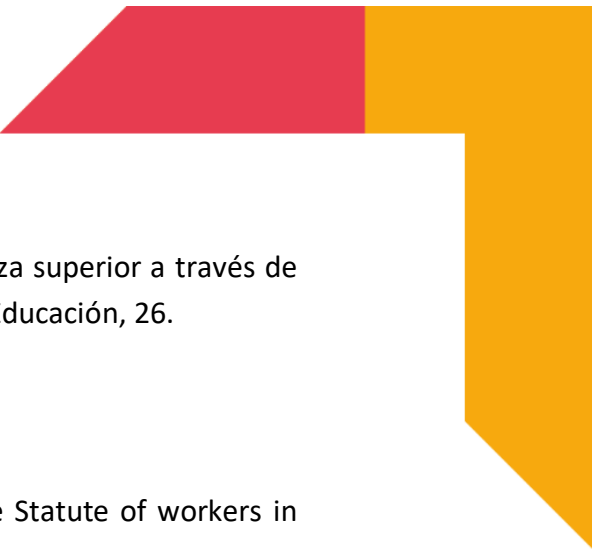
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Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29th October, which establishes the ordering of official university education.

Royal Decree 1791/2010 of 30th December 30, which approves the Statute of the University Student.

Law 11/2013, of 26th July, for the protection of part-time workers and other urgent measures in the economic and social order.

Royal Decree 592/2014 of 11th July, which regulates the external academic practices of university students.