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Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work  
Experience in Higher Education

# Work-Based Learning: Report on Capacity Building activities

Prepared by EURASHE, Groningen, MUAS and Warwick WEXHE teams, with input of the Polish and Spanish Chambers of Commerce and NOVATEX Solutions Ltd.

Groningen, 2020



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

## PROJECT PARTNERS



This publication is a result of the project that is funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2, Knowledge Alliances Projects (Grant agreement: 575683-EPP-1-2016-1-NL-EPPKA2-KA)

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## Work-Based Learning: Report on Capacity Building activities

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### Introduction

Three years of experience regarding the implementing of the project WEXHE has showed us there is an obvious need for instruments to promote and implement work-based learning (WBL) in higher education. Building-in work experience as an integral part of formal education is still highly underdeveloped. However, some countries and systems are doing better than others.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the capacity building activities developed and implemented in the context of WEXHE have been and could not be more than a drop on a glowing plate. Significant effect can only be achieved once the right context and preliminary conditions are put in place. The literature reviews, but most of all the national reports and the collection of cases from 7 EU countries, have made it rather clear that there is still very limited experience with the three types of work-based learning modes distinguished by WEXHE – work placements, traineeships and entrepreneurship – in the vast majority of higher education institutions in Europe. Even less than expected when preparing the initial application for the WEXHE project. This has proven to be a setback.

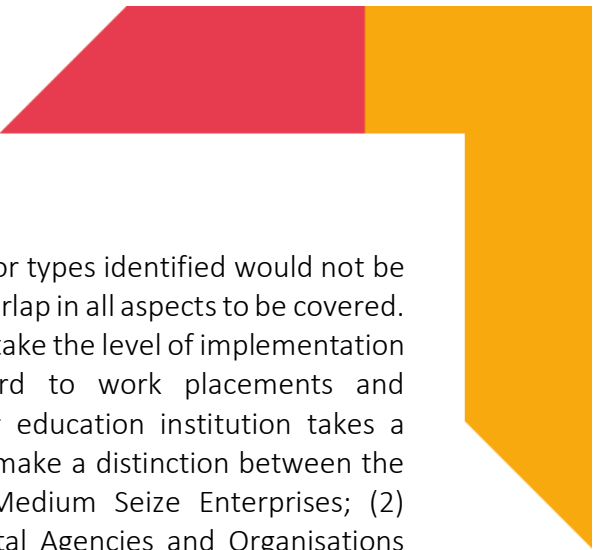
Different types or levels of capacity building activities can be distinguished: from raising awareness, as the most basic level of capacity building, up to actual integration of WBL in higher education degree programmes. The WEXHE research offers us a wide variation of applications of WBL, of which a limited number can be labelled ‘good practice’. 21 of these cases divided over the three types distinguished, have been published in a special WEXHE brochure. However, none of these are close to perfect or complete.

In the planning phase, a distinction was made between four areas of degree programmes: pure, applied, soft and hard. It was thought that each of these types had its own features. In particular, the idea was that particular modules were required to stimulate WBL in the humanities and social sciences – academic fields which claim(ed) not to be preparing graduates for one particular type of employment. The WEXHE research and the cases collected made clear that, although the knowledge domain plays a (significant) role in the type of job that can be executed, generic competences / transferable skills are of much more importance. These are expected to be developed in the context of a particular academic field, but at the same time can be applied in different contexts which are not one to one related to a domain of knowledge. For developing generic competences, building-in practical experience is an asset, whether this is a placement, traineeship or becoming acquainted with entrepreneurship. It was

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared by Robert Wagenaar, General Coordinator of the WEXHE project, using input prepared by the Chambers of Commerce of Poland and Spain, NOVATEX Solutions Ltd., EURASHE and the Universities of Groningen, Ljubljana and Warwick, and the Münster University of Applied Sciences. Wagenaar is Professor in History and Politics of Higher Education and Director of the International Tuning Academy at the University of Groningen.

<sup>2</sup> See WEXHE paper; André Perusso and Robert Wagenaar, *Synthetic Report on Work-Based Learning in European Higher Education*. Groningen, Münster, 2019.



concluded that having different modules for the four strands or types identified would not be of much added value, because there would be a substantial overlap in all aspects to be covered. Therefore, it was decided to apply a different approach and to take the level of implementation as the criterion for organising the modules with regard to work placements and entrepreneurship - two types of WBL in which the higher education institution takes a substantial / leading role. For traineeships it was decided to make a distinction between the three types of providers / stakeholders: (1) Small and Medium Sized Enterprises; (2) Governments, Governmental Agencies and Non-governmental Agencies and Organisations (NGOs) and (3) Higher Education institutions. The rationale for making this decision is outlined in the WEXHE *Strategic Paper From WBL cases to Applicable Packages* (Groningen, Ljubljana and Münster, 2019). In conjunction, the decision was made to re-name the modules in packages and sub-packages, because of the range of topics covered.

This new structure was taken as the basis for the consultation with stakeholders, for which both national and international workshops were organised. The national workshops were held in six out of seven countries for which cases had been collected and national reports had been produced. One partner collected individual feedback from experts. According to the original project outline, the international workshops took place at the Münster University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) and the University of Warwick, focussing respectively on entrepreneurship and placements / traineeships.

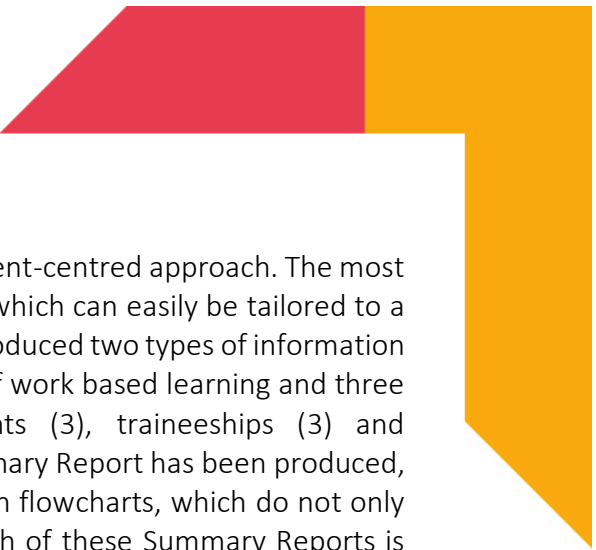
### **Sharing information: WEXHE Website, Documents and Newsletters**

Due to the fact that the actual experience of work-based learning is still rather limited in higher education institutions and as a result also in enterprises and governmental and non-governmental organisations, the first and very important step regarding capacity building is raising awareness by sharing information. This is also an important way of overcoming misunderstandings and misperceptions regarding the added value of work based learning. As stated before, the context / foundation for applying work based learning is still largely absent in many countries and higher education institutions. An important reason is that higher education programmes are still largely expert-driven or staff-centred. This implies that the focus is not on what the student should learn to be most relevant for and successful in terms of employability and contributing to the welfare of society, but on knowledge transfer and accumulation. WEXHE shows us that in educational systems where student-centred education has been introduced the reception of work based learning is (much) more positive. This change of paradigm of learning is promoted in the setting of the Bologna Process and the constructing of a European Higher Education Area but it has not surpassed the level of debate. Indeed the discourse is taking place about the required change to make higher education more relevant, but this does not mean actual implementation takes place at large scale. As has been stipulated on the basis of research by the International Tuning Academy, there is still a long way to go.<sup>3</sup>

Having said this, there is all reason to focus on informing the wider higher education community and relevant stakeholders about the added value of work based learning to the

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<sup>3</sup> Birtwistle, Tim, Courtney Brown and Robert Wagenaar, A long way to go ... A study on the implementation of the learning-outcomes based approach in the EU, in: *Tuning Journal for Higher Education*. Volume 3, Issue No. 2, Bilbao-Groningen, May 2016, pp. 429-463.



traditional learning models, and as an integral part of the student-centred approach. The most effective way seems to be by offering ready to use Packages which can easily be tailored to a particular / individual situations. In this context, WEXHE has produced two types of information materials: papers that explain the rationale and advantages of work based learning and three times three WEXHE Packages, covering work placements (3), traineeships (3) and entrepreneurship (3). For each of these, an easy to read Summary Report has been produced, to offer quick access to the materials developed. They contain flowcharts, which do not only visualise the concepts but also help to implement these. Each of these Summary Reports is based on three full WEXHE Packages. These offer all possible detail about the different types of WBL and are the core outcome of the WEXHE project. As such, they are expected to have relevance for stakeholder for many years.

All WEXHE documents have been uploaded / published on its website and can be downloaded for practical use: <https://wexhe.eu>. The strategic papers, blogs and newsletters, as well as promotional materials, offer further insight. The project published six Newsletters starting in 2017. The last was published in January 2020. Studying these materials seems an effective way of building up capacity for those who were not directly involved in the project.

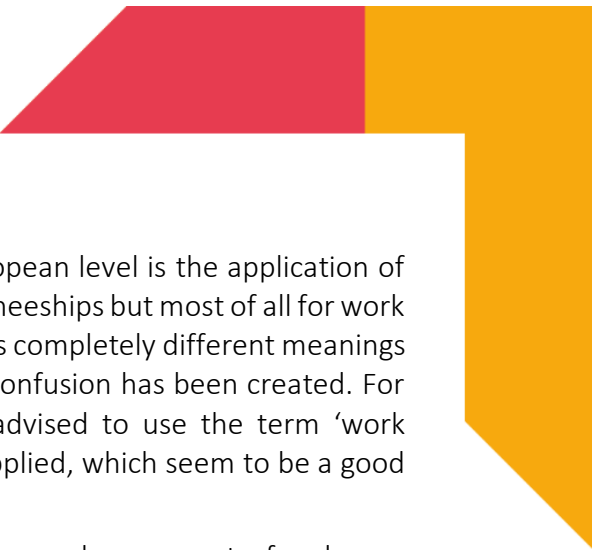
### **International workshops**

Part of the project were two international workshops, both of which took place in May 2019. Their aim was twofold. A first goal was to inform and train academic and supporting staff and employers' representatives who had interest and possibly some prior expertise in WBL. The second was to test the WEXHE materials developed so far.

Initially the workshops were intended mainly for outsiders, that is for those not belonging to the partnership. According to the rules of the EACEA this proved not possible and the partnership encountered the challenge of reaching the number of participants initially planned for, that is 30 participants in each of the workshops. In practice approximately 25 people were involved including the presenters, who were partly also participants.

The *first International workshop*, which was organised by the University of Warwick with support of all partners focussed on work placements and traineeships. The aim was defined as follows in the information material was to explore "How to advance work-based learning opportunities and outcomes for work placements and traineeships in higher education WBL in the form of work placements and traineeships that provide an important source of skills and competency enhancement in a HE environment increasingly concerned with satisfying both the needs of students to be prepared for the workplace as well as the expectations of their future employers" despite the fact that "work placements and traineeships can be a challenge to innovate and maintain successfully within HE".

In this workshop the following topics were discussed: Skills Requirements from Employers; Setting up Workplace Learning Framework; The Evolving UK Placements Landscape; Theory and Practice in Work Placements; Approaches to Workplace Learning and Traineeships; Optimizing Workplace Learning in a HEI setting; Bridging the gaps between Business and HEIs; Quality Assurance and assessment procedures; and finally The future of WBL.



A key issue that was highlighted and should be solved at European level is the application of terminology and definitions. This proved to be relevant for traineeships but most of all for work placement. By introducing the term apprenticeships, which has completely different meanings in different countries – if the term is applied at all – a lot of confusion has been created. For reasons of clarity but also capacity building, it is strongly advised to use the term ‘work placements’. In WEXHE the following definitions have been applied, which seem to be a good description of the modes of learning and teaching involved.

*Work placement (Internship):* A work placement is a learning mode as a part of a degree programme (or related to that programme), in which a student gets practical training and work experience at the workplace. A placement is based on a formal contract or written arrangement between the provider, the HE institution and the student involved.

*Traineeships:* In the setting of WEXHE a traineeship is understood as an additional training programme for HE graduates who have finished their studies but have not yet entered the labour market. The programme is meant to develop the necessary skills and competency set needed in a particular organization or company, which is primary responsible for the traineeship and finances it. Often a selection procedure is organized to recruit and select trainees, which might involve assessments and tests.


The participants stressed the importance of not only becoming knowledgeable about different approaches to organize and implement WBL effectively, both in HE institutions and the workplace, but also to be informed about the situation in different countries. Regarding the last point the project was invited to offer more insight in comparative engagement/analysis of approaches to WBL from different countries. As a response, the project prepared a *Synthetic Report on Work-Based Learning in European Higher Education* (Groningen and Münster). It has been used to prepare an academic paper entitled 'The State of Work-based Learning Development in EU Higher Education' and submitted to a re-known academic journal for publication.

Finally, the participants suggest to ‘continue to develop the planned outcomes and prepare comprehensive conclusions and recommendations’ and to include in the materials ‘further detailed references to the cases’. The project has made a summary of the 21 ‘best’ cases.

All participants evaluated the workshop as good to very good. They also confirmed that they will actively use the knowledge and expertise obtained to share it with colleagues as effectively as possible.

The *second International workshop*, which was organised by the Münster University of Applied Science (MUAS), concentrated on Entrepreneurship as a mode of teaching and learning. In WEXHE entrepreneurship is perceived as an integral part of WBL. However, it deviates from work placements and traineeships because it is developed in the context of HE institutions, involving practitioners and experienced entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship requires the development of a particular mindset, besides making learners/students familiar with the knowledge, skills and competences to be a successful entrepreneur.

As in the case of the first International workshop, it covered four working days. The programme contained eight different sessions. It started with an introduction to ‘entrepreneurial behaviour’, offering insight in the evolution of entrepreneurial education, its context and outlining why it is important and how to teach it by an expert in the field. In the second session



concrete examples – identified by WEXHE – of successful ways to introduce entrepreneurship thinking in HE were presented by the actual actors, which offered the opportunity for open dialogue. The third session focused on tools and techniques to creative thinking by practicing through engaging in group activities. It was followed-up by the task to create one's own entrepreneurship module together with teammates from different disciplinary fields and supported by two mentors, with the outcomes to be presented and discussed at the end of the day. The fifth session concentrated on the challenges of entrepreneurship applying the model of QA with three start-up founders to discuss the role of HE in entrepreneurship and everyday challenges. This session was followed-up by a visit to an incubator to see and experience first-hand what an entrepreneurial work environment looks like. Finally, day four, was devoted to social entrepreneurship and HE and its contribution to 21<sup>st</sup> century societies, including examples of how to set up a social entrepreneurial activity. The workshop was concluded with an overview of the ABC of setting-up a real business, being introduced by an expert in the field to fundamental tools and techniques of business planning and funding.

From the completed evaluation forms it can be concluded that the workshop was perceived as very helpful and inspirational to promote WBL entrepreneurship in general and to introduce / implement it in own institutions, offering many examples and operational tools and strategies.

### **National workshops**

In six countries involved in the project, national workshops were organised to discuss drafts of the materials which have now been published. At these workshops experts were invited, who had been consulted from the launch of the project and/or when preparing the 77 cases of WBL, covering the three types. Other experts responded in writing. The conclusions and observations of the national workshops were reported back to the writers of the documents to allow them to enhance these.

As a result of the consultation process, a significant group of people in seven countries involved in WBL activities were made knowledgeable about the WEXHE materials. It is expected that each of these 'experts' will inform their own – often very large – circle of contacts to spread the messages.

The outcome of the national workshops proved to be of importance for enhancing the WEXHE Packages and Summary Reports produced. The initiative to develop separate modules or guides on student, graduate and entrepreneurship practices was positively valued. It was expressed that the full WEXHE Packages worked well in tandem with the Summaries. Furthermore, the work based learning typologies and the way the WEXHE Packages were organized was perceived as helpful. In addition, the sign-posting of key competences for WBL and its presentation in competence and skills tables was acknowledged as a valuable resource for all the packages discussed, although sometimes the competence definitions were perceived as rather general. It was also suggested to pay more attention to competences developed in informal learning contexts and not to forget the domain of knowledge of the learner.

Both in the setting of the national workshops as in the individual feedback forms respondents were asked about what was valued and where there was room for further improvement. A distinction was made between the three modes of learning. In collecting opinions of the

participants of the workshop and in the respondent feedback forms, the organization of the WEXHE Packages was taken as the starting point:

1. Learning and Training Arrangements: Content of the Module
2. Organisational Arrangements and Learning & Training Procedures
3. Finance Management
4. Quality Assurance, Evaluation and Accreditation
5. Annexes (only relevant for work placements and traineeships)

More detailed feedback was obtained from the participants of the workshops as well as from individual feedback offered by experts in the teaching and learning modes concerned.

*Work Placements:*

- More focus should be given to practical competences, e.g. professional behaviour, time management, adapting to new situations.
- It is suggested there could be further reference to how learning from placements can be shared with other students. In the packages this could be supplemented for example with reference to student testimonies.
- Strengths-based assessment is an issue for interviews for employers as well as competences. Consequently it was considered that this could be identified/acknowledged in the reports as well as competences.
- Include midterm evaluation and moments of contact in the diagram.
- Include preparation of staff and students, to raise awareness about their roles.
- Include information about insurances (liability, travel, cancellation) and legal assistance.
- Stipulate in the work placement plan who is responsible for what.
- Clarification on the time-investment and support required in supervising work placements would be beneficial. In terms of time for the management and overseeing of a placement and the support this entails, the value of a dedicated placement officer was highlighted.
- The relationship between WBL and continuing education could have been further distinguished.
- The project must give extra attention in the problem of social studies and humanities. The lack of cases in some of the countries involved on social studies and humanities was noticeable.
- Stress more the reward of a placement. A paid placement is considered an ideal type of placement for both parties (the student and the organisation) because it motivates the student to be more productive but also the organisation to provide a better training for the student. One of the participants suggested tax benefits for organisations that offer payment for the work placements.
- The duration of a placement. It's mentioned in the packages that "the duration of a Work Placement must be long enough so that the students gain a good understanding of the functioning of the organization ...". An ideal placement should last a period of more than 3 months, in order to be a win – win situation for both the student and the organisation.
- It's important that through the project the employers should realise and learn somehow the value and the benefits of having a student and train him/her from



- scratch. It's also important to mention that in the National Workshop of Cyprus the participants from organisations were considerable fewer than the academic personnel.
- Regarding Quality Assurance of a placement. The project doesn't provide solutions for a dysfunctional and unsatisfactory placement. Is it possible for an intern to terminate the placement and then proceed to seek out a new one? Quality assurance in general is thought to be a great challenge.
  - The Admission Criteria. The intermediary and corporate approach are not able to guarantee equal placement opportunities for all the students due to the reduced labor demand on some fields (for example social studies and humanities).
  - The dual system in Germany should be specified better if used in the package because it is very unique and very difficult to be transferred.
  - Emphasis on non-traditional career paths is missing.
  - An overview on the importance of reflecting on the experiences from the work placement is absent.
  - In the finance section some details on the differences in wages among EU countries is missing . The finance section could be more detailed.
  - Evaluation of practice programmes. This section should be further developed, establishing quantitative objectives that allow comparison between the different programmes.
  - Quality of the programmes. It must be one of the key aspects in the practice programmes.
  - Stress more internationalization aspects, e.g. work placement programmes for university students abroad, for example offered by the Public Administration.
  - Regarding the contents, skills and competencies that are established in the guides for the practical programs, the workshop assistants consider them very important. Although they point out that they lack training in terms of skills and abilities related to internationalization and globalization
  - Little information is perceived regarding the ways of financing work placement programmes, especially in the case of students and graduates.
  - University experts indicate that in Spain a much higher percentage of extracurricular practices (outside curricula) is managed than curricular, practices that correspond mainly to recent graduate.
  - It is indicated that administrative and bureaucratic processing is still an element that does not favour the new development of practice programmes. And in general, in the collaboration between company and university that these programmes need.
  - Some competences are thought to be missing: 'ability to work under stress', 'critical thinking', etc.
  - Admission should be better elaborated since it is usually carried out as a recruitment process.
  - More accent should be given to assessment and certification which is a weak point of NGOs.
  - It is suggested that work placements could be also self-assessed and reports could be used for peer to peer learning.
  - Responsibilities of roles missing: roles can be flexibly defined and changed.

- International dimension missing – placement and traineeship abroad, placement and traineeship of foreign students, utilisation of EU schemes for placement and traineeship.
- The role of ministries should be specified: ministries for education elaborate guidelines for curricula development, ministries of economy elaborate guidelines for placement and traineeship.
- Utilisation of digital/ e-technology, e.g., on-line mentoring, IT support for organisation of placement and traineeship should be added.
- Important role of alumni and alumni's clubs; they can be best young mentors since 80 % of them want to play this role.
- Important to build a network of mentors and to work with them at the university or in the organization
- More accent on the fact that financing is one of the main hindrances for placement.
- Attention should be given to the valuation of mentors' work.
- Implementation guidelines are missing.
- Concrete elaboration needed since enterprises are not familiar with evaluation/ assessment procedures.
- Make clear in the Packages if and how one should make a selection of competences and skills
- Cases of good practice needed.

#### *Traineeships*

- It's important for some study fields to be given a training before the beginning of the traineeship (for example architects).
- It is advised to base the Traineeship on a Learning Agreement.
- The Quality Assurance. Who is going to control the quality of the traineeship? Are they going to be good enough? Who is going to pay for the training of the mentors? Government?
- The Admission Criteria. Participants were a bit sceptical about the date of graduation and the marks obtained in the study process as admission criteria.
- The duration of a Traineeship. What is the optimal duration for a Traineeship?
- Reward/ Payment. Who is paying the individual for the Traineeship?
- More detail should be included regarding Insurance issues.
- It is mentioned that in Germany traineeships are not for students but exclusively for graduates. Students do projects or Prakticum. This might cause confusion for German audiences.
- Motivation of students/ trainees as a special issue; they are motivated rather to be paid than to acquire new knowledge; they prefer quick advancement, some supervisors prefer having trainee in his/ her unit and not to make a round-trip in the company. It is important that students on placement or traineeship can contribute their knowledge to the organisations – this is motivating.
- Monitoring of traineeship is thought important, including final exam.

#### *Entrepreneurship:*

- The purpose of the package should be to identify students with entrepreneurial mind-set or to develop the mind-set in students.

- The Package definition of entrepreneurship is thought being too narrow.
- Regarding the content of entrepreneurship programmes, more attention should be given to preparation and training in skills such as error management, consider mistakes not as a failure but something positive to learn. They consider that, at least in Spain, the negative culture of error is still implanted, the opportunity that it can offer is not yet worked on. It is necessary to accompany entrepreneurs on the second opportunity, in establishing other options and, in general, in learning to manage mistakes.
- A concern to acknowledge the importance of Intellectual Property (IP) in setting up businesses.
- Critical reflections on the ways in which "entrepreneurship" is understood and how this can be taught. In relation to this, flexibility and non-linearity needs to be emphasised in the relevant packages.
- Make clear in the Packages if and how one should make a selection of competences and skills.
- Include in the skills 'alertness of internal development in society'.
- Regarding admission criteria, lessen the emphasis on personality traits for selection of students, because the purpose is training a entrepreneurial mindset.
- Stress the cooperation of students from different disciplinary areas.
- Adequate safety net would encourage students for entrepreneurship. Further elaboration needed.
- More detailed evaluation methods' description needed.
- Concrete case of accreditation thought useful.
- Entrepreneurship should take into account social dimension also. It is not all about capital, it is also about sustainability, social responsibility.
- Cases of good practice and of experienced entrepreneurs needed.
- Modes of financing of the programmes of practices and entrepreneurship.

Both from the work placement and entrepreneurship and perspectives, from the above it can be digested that the section on quality assurance should be further developed. In the case of work placements it should provide, for example, further guidance relating to evaluating the quality of placement providers. It was also advised to offer more detail to the financial management of WBL.

The many suggestions have been taken into account when preparing the final versions of the WEXHE Packages. In addition some strategic papers were prepared, responding to part of the suggestions and recommendations. These also respond to the feedback received at the national workshops and the policy workshop discussed below:

- WBL in general: *Synthetic Report on Work-Based Learning in European Higher Education*
- For Quality Assurance: *FILLING THE GAP. Defining a Robust Quality Assurance Model for Work-Based Learning in Higher Education*
- For organising work placements: *TEN STEPS. Setting-up, validating and evaluating work-based learning modules and work experience using ECTS-credits.*

These papers deserve to be distributed widely, because they tackle main issues identified in the feedback obtained.

## International Conferences

Besides organizing International and National workshops to inform and discuss the outcomes of the WEXHE project with the objective to contribute to capacity building activities, the project has also participated in several international conferences during the lifetime of the project. Because the project lacked funding to set up this type of conferences itself, the choice was made to contribute to the conferences of partners who organized conferences themselves, were one of the organizers of conferences or of third parties in which a contribution of the WEXHE project should fit. In June 2017 EURASHE organized in its office in Brussels a Round Table to discuss the necessity to give more attention to WBL. For this Round Table some key stakeholders were invited including the project coordinator of WEXHE.

The initiative also initiated an international conference which would take place one year later in Leuven about the role of WBL in HE. This conference was used to share the initial outcomes of the WEXHE project, in particular the findings of Cases of Good Practice identified in the seven countries covered by the project. It proved an important means to draw attention to the WEXHE initiative among experts in WBL at wide variety of HE institutions in Europe.

In May 2019, WEXHE offered a presentation in a special workshop organized about WBL at the Annual EURASHE Conference in Budapest. It offered the opportunity to present the initial outcomes and the WEXHE Packages to a wider audience. In addition it meant an excellent opportunity to discuss the challenges related to WBL with other projects initiated to promote its use in HE.


One concern prominent from the very start of the WEXHE project proved to be the lack of attention offered to quality assurance for WBL. This lack was confirmed in a survey organized by ENQA among its members. The findings were reported in a paper which served to prepare another paper offering an approach for QA in WBL in particular work placements, also relevant for traineeships. The paper *Filling the Gap. Defining a Robust Quality Assurance Model for Work-Based Learning in Higher Education* was used as a basis for informing the Quality Assurance Agencies in Europe and QA officers of HE institutions at the European Quality Assurance Forum, a large international conference, which was held in Berlin in November 2019. Around 100 participants were present at the presentation.

In the setting of the WEXHE project also WEXHE presentations were offered in Bilbao, Spain at the International Workshop “Quality assurance of work based learning”, organised by Unibasq/ NVAO/ Mondragon Unibertsitatea (June 2019 /Michal Karpíšek, Secretary General EURASHE) and at the ERASMUS Congress and Exhibition - ERACON 2019 & CAREER-EU Conference 2019 (July 2019 / George K. Georgiou (Novatex Solutions LTD)).

## Policy Workshop

In October 2019, EURASHE, in close cooperation with ENQA, organized a Policy Workshop in Brussels to discuss the WEXHE outcomes with main stakeholders. This workshop was meant from the very start as a corner stone of promotion and capacity building activities. Therefore its outcomes are outlined in more detail.

The objective of the workshop was to share and discuss key issues related to further development and support of work-based learning and development of entrepreneurial



competences within higher education – the concept, role of various stakeholders, key principles, role of leaders, active role of students and world of work. European partners representing higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, experts in university-business cooperation joined forces to provide a solid basis for sharing views, and also setting directions for further policy development. The workshop aimed to bring together policymakers, representatives of higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, world of work, students.

#### *Workshop plenary*

Prof. Robert Wagenaar as coordinator of the WEXHE project, after welcoming the participants on behalf of the WEXHE consortium, presented the main outcomes of the project.

Michal Karpišek (EURASHE) also welcomed participants as the host of the event and introduced the current situation of HE developments and trends, also presenting the “Role of Placements and Traineeships: the concept of linking learning with practice” and focussing on the importance of practical skills for the HE graduates employability and future careers.

Anaïs Gourdin (ENQA) shared the views on how the quality of students practical education can be assessed and assured by presenting “Quality assurance aspects of WBL”.

Prof. Thomas Baaken (Münster University of Applied Sciences) introduced the approach, practice and experience of student entrepreneurial training in his “Entrepreneurship capacity development” presentation.

After the plenary part world café sessions took part.

#### *World café session: WBL Concept & Policy development session*

Moderator Michal Karpišek invited participants to share an experiences and approaches regarding the importance of WBL and practices of its implementation.

The summary of speeches and statements included the following:

- WBL is expanding into non-traditional areas like sciences (physics, biology), humanities, social sciences.
- The conservative approach to the WBL is still dominating in the conventional universities.
- WBL has a very important influence on personal development.
- WBL developments facing different issues like policy development, terminology, education (theory/practice) time balancing, requirements for specific programmes.
- Labour market is a lighthouse for work placements in HE institutions, because it shows the trend of how it can develop in the future.
- However, the majority of professional oriented universities are still short term oriented and continue to offer programmes for the disappearing professions.
- For the employers it is very important to have strong and strategically long-term oriented professional/sectorial unions or Chambers of Commerce, facilitating and influencing the HE sector to be more labour market-oriented and flexible.
- The value of the degree will substantially improve when there it is serious attention regarding the development of competences such as capacity to think, analyse, create, argue, discuss, make, be responsible, be autonomous.
- Universities are losing the monopoly of qualification providers. If universities will not change, they can lose the role of education providers as well.

- The education community is missing the business engagement in the education processes. It can change with employers involved in the HE institutions' management.
- Universities should learn how to sell "education messages" to businesses.
- Universities – Business relations are quite different in different countries. It is important to involve business in the Bologna Process, to the education policy.
- New requirements for the academic staff (particularly professional oriented universities) – theoretical/research achievements and practical experience.
- Important to develop applied research within the WBL settings
- Increasing University-Business dialog, local University's engagement, stakeholder involvement in management and programme design.
- Quality Assurance of practical placement is still under development.
- How to measure the competencies of the graduates – how well they are prepared for the job market?
- The gap between the Education sector and Industry is very big, so it is not surprising that the scope of the competencies graduates obtains and industry requirements are also rather different. Industry needs problem solvers, not problem creators.
- WBL is a DNA for the Universities of Applied Sciences / Professional oriented universities.
- WBL gives more opportunities for learning from failure.
- The internationalization of the WBL is very important.
- The teacher/trainer role to coacher role.
- Students/graduates are capable to transfer and adapt the latest research innovations. Students as agents of change.
- The importance of interdisciplinarity is very high and continue increasing.

#### *World café session: Quality Assurance of WBL*

Moderator Alicia-Leonor Sauli Miklavčič, Association of Slovene Higher Vocational Colleges/ EURASHE, gave an introductory presentation to the topic after which participants of the sessions discussed and gave feedback on the quality criteria developed in the framework of the Apprenticeship-Q project.

The feedback included the following:

- Innovation in the field is missing in the criteria (the moderator responded that perhaps involving stakeholders in designing Learning Outcomes (LOs) is too broad and innovation in the field could be included there)
- Responsibility of students is missing in the criteria. Students need to be proactive and responsible in WBL. In innovation of education the student has also responsibility for the quality of their own learning. There is a difference if student needs to arrange the placement themselves or not. It was agreed that all three stakeholders should be involved and contribute, otherwise "the triangle collapses".
- Students are not mentioned but they should be involved but agreed that this is different from responsibility
- Many students have placements in big companies so the SME column does not necessarily resonate to all participants. Situations depends on the country.
- The different responsibilities for HEIs and SMEs should be more integrated.

- The grey area between the two responsibilities could be thought. What are the collective responsibilities?
- There are some shared responsibilities: e.g. under HEIs there is evaluation of apprenticeship and under SME there is simply evaluation. This would need to be clarified. All parties need to be involved but not necessary to name the responsibilities for everyone. It could be done in clearer way of what are the shared responsibilities.
- It is suggested to add a column for shared responsibilities. But under the shared responsibilities there are parts that are specifically responsibility of either of the two.
- It was not clear what the concept of transparency means for HEIs. Transparency is more important for SMEs as there is already a lot of transparency in HEIs.
- “Personal data protection” could be simply “Data protection”. Non-closure is important too so simple data protection could cover this. Also to add Ethical and juridical requirements.
- “Identifying mentors” under SME should be “Identify some quality criteria for mentor”. Mentors need to have competences. This is responsibility of both HEIs and SMEs. Defining mentors in HEIs, competence in SMEs
- It is important that evaluation and LOs match (LOs and what student get from placement should match)
- “Involvement of stakeholders in designing learning objectives” and “Definition of smart learning objectives” under HEIs could be combined. Maybe there are now many criteria.
- Not clear what is the QA procedures under SMEs. Why this criteria is under SME? And actually all the criteria is part of QA process so it’s more overarching.
- There was a discussion of not overloading companies with responsibilities. It was commented that SMEs should also not be underestimated, and it is important to note that HEIs will not only take from companies but also give to them. Companies are not just doing a favour by taking a student. It should be clear for the companies that they have responsibilities. Companies are involved in many same things than HEIs.
  - Important to emphasise that the criteria for SMEs is only the start. Businesses should also monitor the student.
- It was suggested that there could be a chart for stages or scenarios.
- The concept of “Responsibility” was discussed. For instance, in the Netherlands HEIs are fully responsible, no one else. So there could be another wording. SMEs are not responsible, but they take the part. It is agreed that HEIs are responsible for all as they award.
- What is the student responsibility? Students need to be motivated, otherwise the system doesn’t work. But HEIs have a lot of room to motivate them. Students don’t show in criteria but all the criteria is for the student to gain competences and knowledge.

*World café session: Entrepreneurship: a WBL mode of learning*

1. Round of introductions by the participants, representing universities and industries
  - Expression of concerns regarding the gap between universities and industries
  - Experiences of the participants in their institutions in embedding an entrepreneurial culture and practice
2. Asked the question how we can identify entrepreneurial learning. In different institutions and country contexts the approach & practices to the entrepreneurship education is different

- It is an activity not well funded by the university. The emphasis to entrepreneurship education is not at the desired level at the universities, and academics are not yet well supported in their efforts. Lowering budget of the universities and increasing workload on the academics is making it a lot harder for the institutionalising of the activities
  - Universities of Applied Sciences have a more aligned mindset than the traditional universities when it comes to entrepreneurship and engagement
  - Definition of an entrepreneurial university vs engaged university, or both?
3. Touched upon the three modes of entrepreneurship
- a. Entrepreneurship promotion: Entrepreneurial mindset
- The description, label of the model should change. Not just promotion, but also creating the mindset is the goal
  - All students should be exposed to this model, that they can decide themselves on which direction to go, either becoming business owners or entrepreneurs
  - This model should include action, and not only learning about entrepreneurship
- b. Business creation: Launching business
- c. Intrapreneurship: Improvement of products, systems by the employees
- Entrepreneurship is interdisciplinary; therefore the project could not develop different models for different study fields.
  - Transversal and generic skills knowledge skills and Autonomy and Responsibility is presented
  - The organisational arrangement flowchart was introduced for the launch of entrepreneurship programmes
- d. Labels of the flow charts in each package have to be reconsidered (feedback from participants)
- We should include the reflection step, in the flow cart. It can sit after step 12. Not only for the student but also for the teacher it is necessary.
  - For the business creation step: More frequent you expose students to failure, the more they want to be successful: The failure should be included into the flowchart.
  - SMEs should strategize and better structure their collaborations with the universities for joint initiatives.
  - The business plan in 9th box in the flowchart should be edited since the goal is not to encourage economically oriented business planning. It has to be seen in a general perspective. Different research teams have different orientations towards entrepreneurship.
  - 9th box: Solving real business issues: Situations might be different, since sometimes students are provided challenges, sometimes they might be asked to identify the challenge. Not solving but answering business challenges.

Further questions raised by the participants:

- How to manage financing the entrepreneurship programmes?
- Are there any specifications regarding the student selection? This was confirmed.
- Is there a distinction between the social and economically oriented business generation. This seems not to be the case.



### *Feedback from the participants on the three modes*

#### a. Definition of entrepreneurship

- You cannot only learn it in only traditional learning environments.
- Different countries have different interpretations of entrepreneurial education. The German Dual Model tried to be embedded in different European countries but it did not work. These models are highly embedded in cultural contexts.

#### b. Competences and skills for Entrepreneurship

- The competences listed are very context specific. The expectations are different in different contexts. You have to accommodate it. E.g. in China, it is not there. Cultural differences affect organisational structures and how entrepreneurship is nurtured.
- Autonomy and Responsibility dimension/ descriptors of the entrepreneurship programmes has to be developed further.
- The explicit descriptions of the competences and skills are helpful not only for the students but also for the academics into make learning process more transparent, and for the students using the learning outcomes to introduce themselves to the world of work.

#### c. Organisational arrangements

- The flowchart was introduced

### *Questions raised by the participants*

- Teachers should have entrepreneurial experience? >> Yes, they are expected to have the right mindset

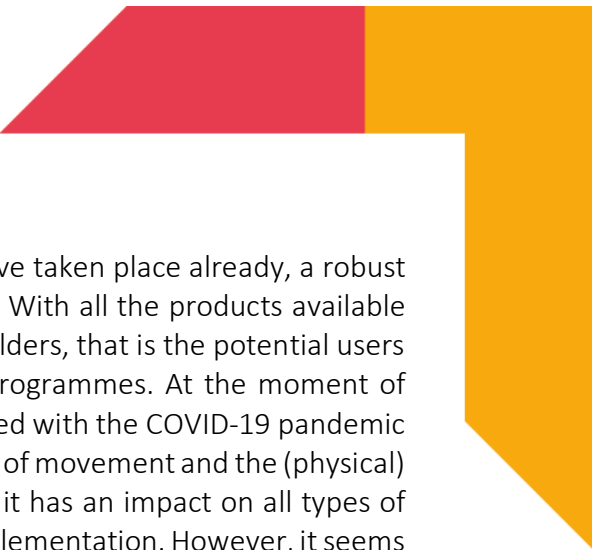
It was concluded that HE copes with differences between Research Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences. The mindset is different in both. University industry cooperation is stronger with Universities of Applied Sciences. The Research universities should go into the direction of entrepreneurship, and there is increasing interest to do so. On the other hand the binary system does not exist in all European countries.

As in the case of the International and National Workshops the feedback comments were taken into account when enhancing and finalising the WEXHE Packages and the three Summary Reports.

## **Conclusion**

Initially the WEXHE Project concentrated on identifying good cases, followed up by describing those cases. It resulted in 77 cases which could actually be prepared. Identifying and preparing the cases offered an excellent way to get into contact with informed experts in WBL as well as the world of work, enterprises as well as organisations, governmental and others, to discuss the relevance of WBL. It also allowed to establish (intensive) contacts with those working in the field of entrepreneurship. These activities proved a first and important step to create a network of stakeholders of WBL and potential users of the WEXHE outcomes foreseen.

All further activities built on these cases, that is the preparation of the nine WEXHE Packages, the three Summary Reports and the many strategic papers resulting from the project, as well as the International Workshops, the National Workshops, the Policy Workshop and the participation in a Round Table, workshops and conferences organize partly by others.



As a result of the products prepared and the activities that have taken place already, a robust basis has been created for further capacity building activities. With all the products available now, the time has come to make these manifest to all stakeholders, that is the potential users of the WEXHE Packages to intensify the use of WBL in HE programmes. At the moment of finishing this report, spring 2020, the world has been confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic of which it is unclear what the actual impact will be on freedom of movement and the (physical) accessibility of the work place. At this stage it is obvious that it has an impact on all types of WBL and will limit the possibilities for physical/face-to-face implementation. However, it seems at the same time that WEXHE offers sufficient materials and tools to also facilitate online approaches.

Groningen, May 2020.