

Project acronym: **Q-PlaNet**

Project title: **A model for quality of trans-national student placements in enterprises**

Deliverable D 2.1

Establishment of 3 regional Quality Reference Centres for student placements

Start date of project: 1 October 2008

Duration: 2 years



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1. Introduction

This document presents the developments undertaken within the project in order to establish the three Regional Quality Reference Centers, as pilot new and innovative structures permanent quality control of placements, as well as for supporting higher education-company cooperation.

A Regional Quality Reference Centre for student placements (QRC) for students is intended to act as the body responsible for quality assessment of placements, as well as for providing adequate information for recruiting a student from abroad, promoting the mobility of students in the economic environment and dissemination of results. The three QRCs have been set-up at Brasov – Romania, Bucharest – Romania and Tallinn – Estonia, with the support of two German organizations with long term expertise in this field: KOOR-BEST Karlsruhe and Leonardo Office Thuringia. All the bodies are developed as part of universities: Transilvania University of Brasov, University of Bucharest and Tallinn University of Technology.

The tasks performed during the two years of project life are the following:

- Definition of the responsible person(s) and/or unit(s) at the three pilot universities
- Designing the structure and involved units for the Reference Centre for Placements
- Presenting the three models of the new QRC at the 1st General Assembly
- Establishing the infrastructure including personnel.

2. Developments on QRC at Transilvania University of Brasov

The structure has been initially developed under the direct supervision of the Pro-Rectorate for Quality Assurance and International Evaluation, within the Department of Quality Assurance of the university (2009). After an internal reconsideration of the university management structures and instruments, at the beginning of 2010 it has been decided that the most efficient position of the *Regional Quality Reference Centre for Students Practical Placement* would be as independent entity within the Department of Links between University and the Economic and Socio-Cultural Environment – DESC. Consequently, at this moment the management structure related to student services involves the units presented in figure 1.

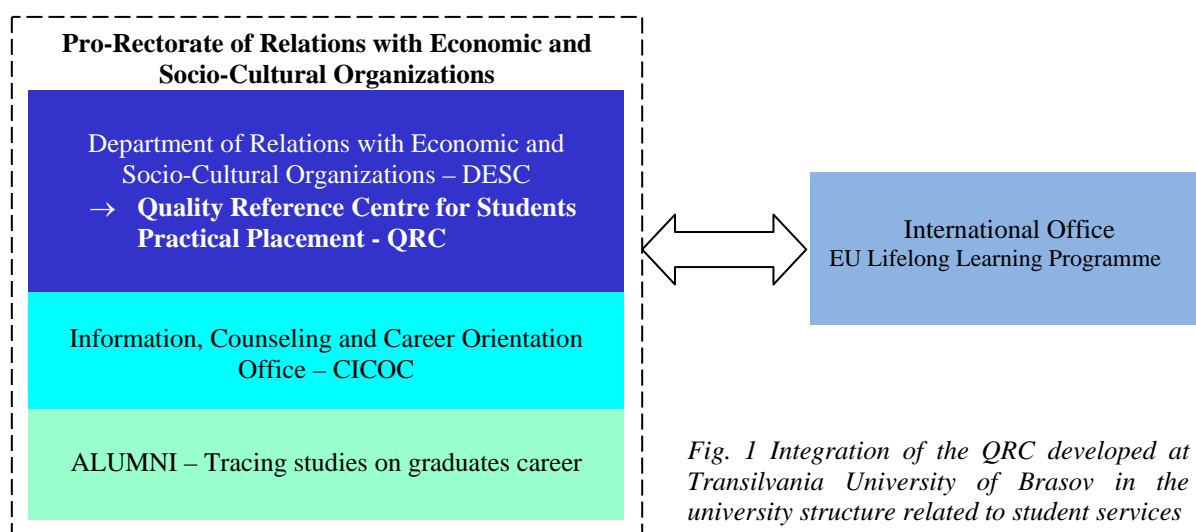


Fig. 1 Integration of the QRC developed at Transilvania University of Brasov in the university structure related to student services

The Department of Relations with Economic and Socio-Cultural Organizations – DESC, <http://www.unitbv.ro/desc/en>, represents the communication interface between the university and the extra-academic environment - three major directions:

- Students education and training: by developing cooperation in placement, graduation / dissertation theses with subjects proposed by the economic environment; identifying the needs of the economic environment and changing the academic curricula in terms of these needs;
- Research and development: joint scientific research and technological transfer;
- Training in alternative systems: life-long education, open distance learning, low frequency - identification the needs of the extra-academic environment and their tuning to the university offer.

The Quality Reference Centre for Students Practical Placement – QRC has the following tasks:

- receives offers for student placement at national level from companies, faculties and students;
- checks the quality of placements complying with the RCPP standards and labels the companies, see deliverable D5.1
- gives feedback to the companies/ faculties/ students on the quality of practical places
- organizes student placements at national level;
- cooperates with the International Office/ Lifelong Learning Programme and other QRCs at European level for organizing international placement of students.

The Information, Counseling and Career Orientation Office – CICOC, <http://www.unitbv.ro/cicoc>, acts as a communication interface between students and the university, through several types of activities:

- Counseling: career planning, training of self presentation for career, models for employment's forms, psychological testing;
- Organizing workshops and trainings, career fairs;
- Disseminating opportunities for placement/ scholarships/ part-time jobs to the students.

Current stage of QRC:

- Set-up as individual entity within the Department of Relations with Economic and Socio-Cultural Organizations, under the coordination of the Vice-Rector for Relations with Economic and Socio-Cultural Organizations.
- Employed staff:
 - one person from DESC delegated for QRC tasks
 - cooperates with staff of International office/ CICOC
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E-mail: quality-pps@unitbv.ro
Contact person: Prof. Simona Lache, slache@unitbv.ro
- Communication with faculties:
 - Quality assurance: *network 1*, with responsables appointed at faculties level
 - DESC: *network 2*, with responsables at faculties level (for national placements)
 - International Relations Office: *network 3*, with LLP responsables at faculties level (for international placements).
- web page: <http://www.unitbv.ro/q-planet/en>

3. Developments on QRC at University of Bucharest

As far as the new Reference Centre in Bucharest is concerned, it is called CRIPpE (see attached flyer) and official status and office space are installed. A first information flyer is already printed and some webspace is integrated on the university's website. The three staff members are based on different pillars: the DPPS (placements for students department), the entrepreneurship department and the administration, Fig. 2.

Center for Reference and Information on Practical Placement and Entrepreneurship (CRIPpE) is an institutional structure of the University of Bucharest which propose:

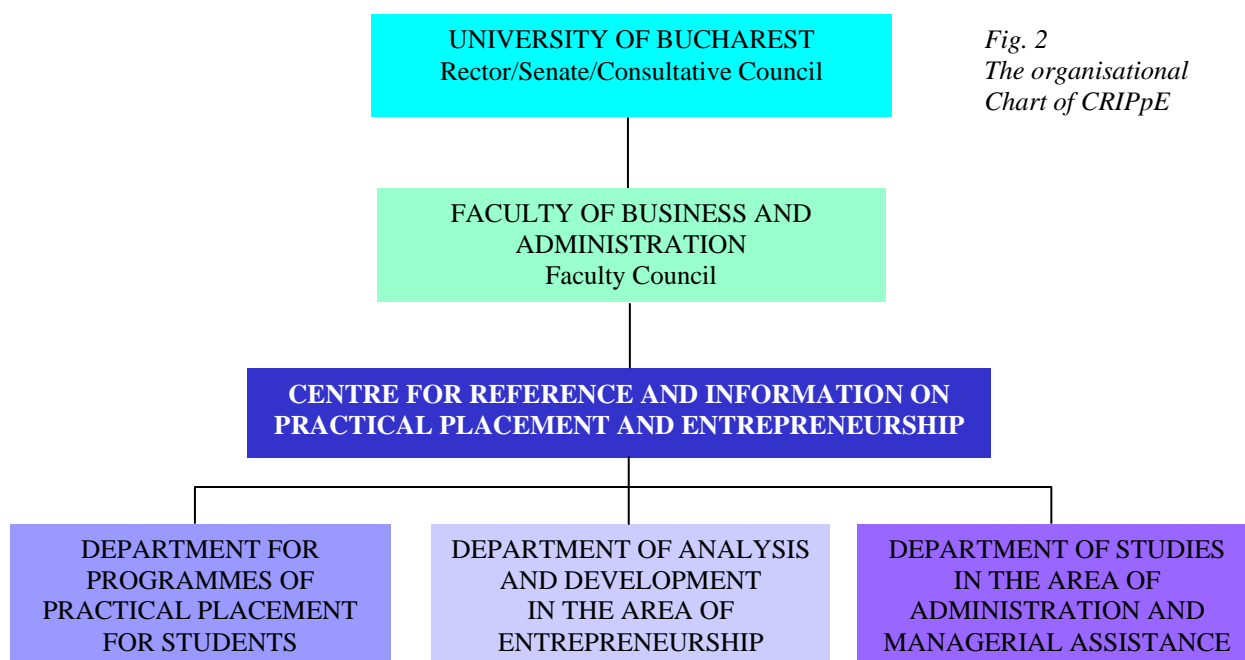
- 1 - to develop the placement system;
- 2 - to support the students in their training and career development;
- 3 - to promote programs that extend the access on the labor market;
- 4 - to offer consultancy and initiate applied researches in the area of the professional insertion on the labor market and entrepreneurship;
- 5 - to support the development process of the interaction between academic environment and business environment;
- 6 - to contribute to the designing of the curricula of placement with the support of the specialists from different academic structures and of national / international experts.

The main objectives of CRIPpE are:

- To identify itself as an efficient functional structure which expresses the link between organizations and faculties regarding any kind of requirements in the area of training and career development;
- To support the description of the competences and qualifications needed to correlate the placement for student with the career development;
- To support the organization of specific fairs and introducing organizations to students;
- To distribute the students to placement at the national level or even international one;
- To promote a general and individual information and consultation on starting a business, on entrepreneurship mechanisms and on the role of the managerial assistance;
- To promote the research activity on the development of the cooperation relationship between the economic and academic environment;
- To develop programs and actions of any type in order to promote the academic offer to the economic environment and the placement and working places offer of the organizations to the academic environment.

The main attributions of CRIPpE are:

- To involve in research, to offer consultancy and to elaborate studies on the subject of mentioned objectives;
- To analyze, evaluate and develop policies and programs in the area of professional practice for students, in the area of entrepreneurship and managerial assistance;
- To organize conferences, seminars, workshops of national/international interest in order to develop the interaction between the academic and the business environment.



*Fig. 2
The organisational
Chart of CRIPpE*

The main activities of CRIPpE are:

- Theoretical and applied research through grants and research projects, independently or in cooperation with national and international partners;
- Consulting and special services regarding the objectives;
- Organization of the scientific events (workshops, scientific communication sessions, meetings, conferences, etc);
- Organizing of introducing different companies to the academic community;
- Organizing and / or supporting of some academic courses in the area of placement, entrepreneurship and managerial assistants;
- Ability of informative publications;
- Information and distribution of the students for placements;
- Looking for investments in order to improve the infrastructure and the current activity of the Center.

The current status of CRIPpE:

- in process of creating data bases with companies;
- developing an internship programme at multinational companies during the summer holiday;
- informative studies regarding the placement in all the faculties in the University of Bucharest.

Contact: CRIPpE – Center for Reference and Information on Practical Placement and Entrepreneurship

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Faculty of Business and Administration, CREDIS Building, Bucharest, Romania.

<http://crippa.faa.ro>

Director of CRIPpE is Prof. PhD. Magdalena Platis, Magdalena.iordache-platis@drept.unibuc.ro

4. Developments on QRC at Tallinn University of Technology

A Quality Reference centre QRC in TUT, Estonia has been created as knowledge pool network comprising the two main units which carry out the strategic activities related to the (international) student placements, analysing the curricula regulations offering new developments, carrying out research in this field and reflecting the situation in Estonia. These are international relations office and career centre at TUT. Both are closely related to faculties, colleges, institutions at TUT and enterprises in Estonia, Fig. 3:

Organisation chart of the QRC at TUT

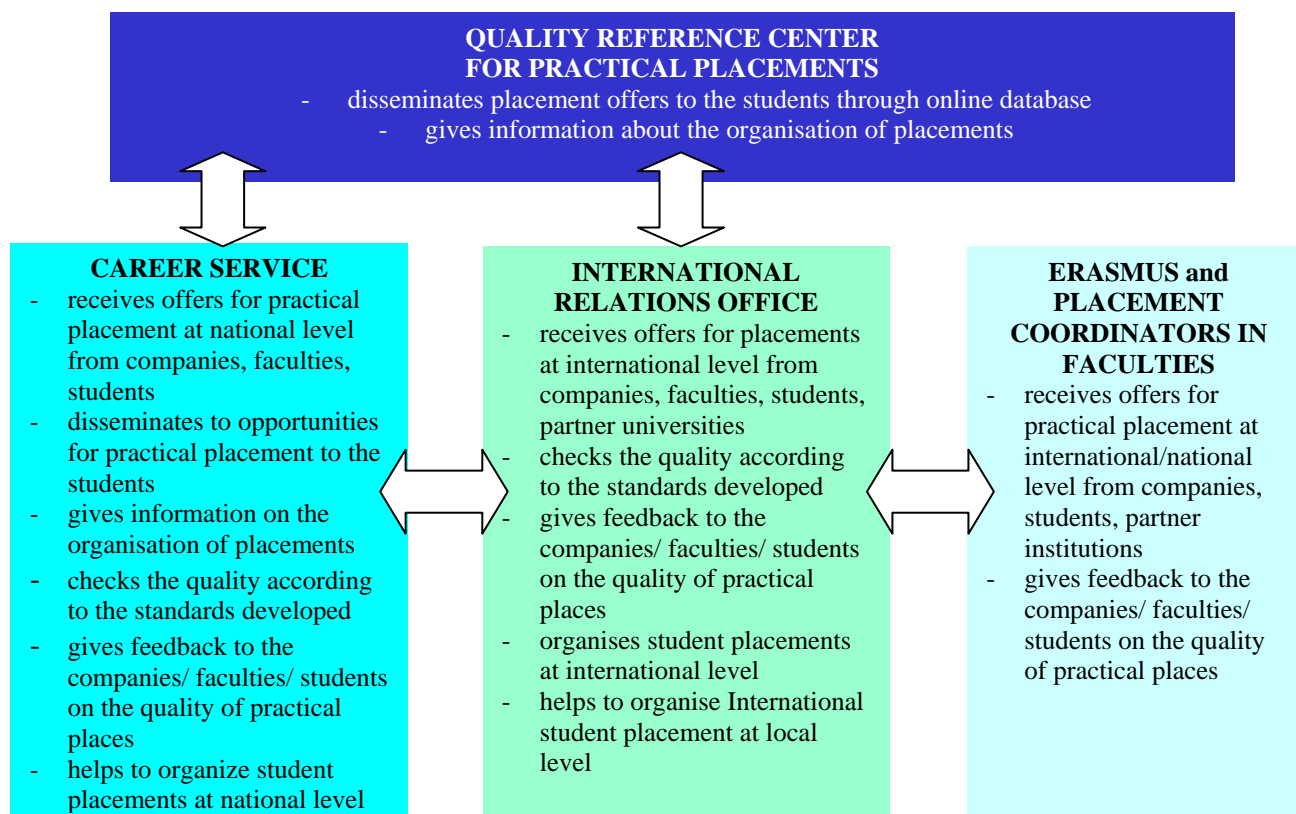


Fig. 3 Integration of the RCPP developed at Tallinn University of Technology in the university structure

The third party involved (also due to the Q Planet project) is the Ministry of Higher Education of Estonia and Archimedes Foundation who actually are on the verge of initiating the placement debate in the labour market for further quality education developments in Estonia. Thus the QRC actually is the practical outcome of the bottom up activities undertaken last 10-12 years.

Quality Reference Centre at TUT

- Created with the regulation by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs
- Set-up within the Department for Academic Affairs and International Relations Office

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www.ttu.ee/rahvusvaheline-koostoo/rso/projektid/erasmus-projektid/q-planet/

Contact persons:

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5. Future planning and QRC development

Q-PlaNet project has provided the frame for developing three new Quality Reference Centres in European countries where organizing the practical placement for students is still a process to be subjected to major improvements: Romania and Estonia. The premises differ from a university to another: some of the QRCs have been structured within already existing bodies (Transilvania University of Brasov), by taking over and combining tasks of many existing bodies (Tallinn University of Technology) or by creating new structures, firstly at faculty level, with the possibility of extension at institutional level (University of Bucharest).

To make this concept feasible and easy to extend in other European universities, the main idea is to preserve the infrastructure already developed and just add to it the additional task (which may be already present, as well, without being specifically named) of checking the quality of practical places offered by the enterprises.

Whatever the basis, all the pilot QRCs developed within the project submit application in order to be evaluated to become recognised bodies for labelling enterprises that offer quality student placement. The recognition procedure is according to the Q-Planet requirements. They started labelling host organisations in their regions and will continue doing this after the project's end.

Internal Report: Definition and job description for RC for placements

WP: 2
Date: 09.12.2009
Author: Claudia Bernarding

Quality Reference centre for student placements: definition

A Regional Quality Reference centre (RQ)RC is an administrative office, independent or linked to a unit in an higher education institution, but at least affiliated to an HEI, with one or more employee, which has the task to define, prepare, evaluate and valorise practical placements – national or abroad - for students of its university or of a geographical region, and to approve enterprises' quality in the context of placements for students according to a European uniform quality standard.

Objectives of a RC

- to function as a bridge between universities and enterprises
- to facilitate quality control for placements
- to motivate universities and students to participate in placements
- to promote a higher education system with integrated placements

Requirements to RC

- official documentation / approval from HEI: being part of HEI or affiliated to it (no commercial providers)
- responsible person (at least 1)
- localisation (office)
- structure: organisation, flowchart, procedures documentation, network within university, viable economic model
- website
- contacts to companies (list, database) + evaluation of company quality (quality check) on basis of Q-PlaNet standard
- contacts to other HEI (at least in the region, to be possibly accepted even on regional level)
- best practices, history of placements, experience with placements + written evaluation
- being able to provide qualified staff (enough and trained)

Job description for staff working in a RC

Qualifications:

- able to work in a team and to communicate with: university administration, national agencies/EU LLP administrators, students, enterprises, professors/faculties
- able to realise quality check according to Q-PlaNet standard (possible: help of university structure and professors)
- knowledge of national and international regulations for practical placements integrated in curricula
- knowledge of legal regulations of payments for students, social security, insurance and the employment law
- knowledge of MS Office and used to work with data base software (Access, online tools, etc)
- good knowledge of written and spoken English

Tasks:

- contribution to the development of a quality standard for placements
- build up / maintain university-enterprise cooperation
- assisting in integrating placements in curriculum structures
- assisting students in preparing / supervising / evaluating the placement
- checking / certifying enterprises in the RC region according to placement quality standard
- evtl. managing and distributing available money / grants for placements