

Project acronym: **Q-PlaNet**

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

*Deliverable D 4.1*

**Guidelines for organisation of student placements**

Final Version



Education and Culture DG  
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## Introduction

This document shall give a concentrated overview on necessary steps and involved parties in placement organisation, always from the view of a higher education institution, or similar, acting as Quality Reference Centre for placements (QRC).

It has been checked carefully by the regional QRCs in Ilmenau and Karlsruhe, which are regional consortia of the Universities in Thuringia respectively Baden-Württemberg as well as by the 3 newly established QRCs at University Transilvania of Brasov, University of Bucharest and Tallinn University of Technology.

## 1. Framework and important aspects

### 1.1. Ways of placement search

A QRC could assume different functions depending on its financial and human resources, geographic conditions and other individual aspects. However, the main goal of all QRCs shall be to watch over placement quality. A **one-to-one exchange** could be possible in smaller organisations with, for example, a small number of outgoing or incoming students and the QRC could possibly contact a partner QRC in the region the student is willing to choose for the placement. A more flexible structure is needed for a system with a higher number of placement mobilities. QRCs shall maintain websites where they publish quality labelled placement offers or at least links to quality labelled companies. The students could thus **apply for suitable placements by themselves**. The QRC's role in such cases would not be to mediate and find a placement for a student, but to provide and publish a list of quality offers that have been checked out and to offer the students and enterprises overall assistance.

### 1.2. Placement recognition and integration

A full integration of Q-PlaNet placements in curricula everywhere will not be realistic in the next few years. The QRC shall supervise integration into the curricula in the best possible way and will therefore maintain contacts inside universities in order to improve the situation step-by-step. If no compulsory placements are foreseen in a respective HEI, the Q-PlaNet system will also work for voluntary placements. Q-PlaNet will not be applicable for compulsory placements that do not fulfil the Q-PlaNet quality standard (e.g. a compulsory period of less than 3 months).

### 1.3. Creating contacts

A wide contact network is important in order to increase placement offers, promote placements with regard to host organisations, integrate high quality placements in curricula and increase interest from the student side. In this context, the following stakeholders have to be considered:

- **Alumni:** They build an important bridge between the HEI and host organisation, as they have come from an HEI and are now working, probably even at a level where they could offer placements to students themselves. Ways of integrating the alumni into the work of the QRC are through regular meetings, contacting national and European alumni organisations and by means of a platform where alumni and current students could meet – this could take place via online tools, events, or databases.
- **Advisors within each study course:** The QRC needs contacts in the professional departments to be able to check the professional quality of placements and host organisations. One “placement contact” in each faculty seems to be an appropriate way to stay in contact and to solve problems in an individual way. It is often the case that professors in faculties could also build the bridge to host organisations as they have a wide contact network in industry and business.
- **Central university departments:** The QRC shall also stay in contact with the office organising the study mobility (e.g. International Office) because general information about countries, administrative questions, living conditions etc. are similar for both mobility actions. Career Services are often helpful concerning questions relating to quality and

contacts within host organisations. The Rectorate shall also be informed about and support QRC activities through regular reporting.

- **Student associations:** The international student associations such as IAESTE, AIESEC, BEST<sup>1</sup> possess an important pool of experience regarding the organisation of placements as well as having plenty of practical information for students. They also organise concrete placement offers. The quality check still needs to be undertaken by the QRC; nevertheless, cooperation is recommended. QRCs should also pay attention to smaller regional or national student associations.
- **Social networks:** The significance of social networks on the Internet is increasing. Depending on its size, a QRC shall use the possibility to be present on platforms such as Xing, LinkedIn, Facebook or national sites. This creates the possibility of not only promoting the QRC and its work with students but also with host organisations and other stakeholders active on such platforms.
- **Chambers of Commerce:** they create an important link to host organisations in their respective regions. Generally, Career Services are in contact with Chambers of Commerce; synergies shall be used.

Host organisations HR departments: In the course of host organisation labelling, the QRC creates personal contact with the labelled host organisations. Those contacts need to be maintained with assiduous data management and a regular exchange of information (e.g. a newsletter or regular phone call).

#### 1.4. Documentation

The exact documentation required for any placement depends on the conditions and framework of the area in which it will take place. A concrete agreement between the QRC, student and host organisation about the outcome of the learning process has to be signed for every placement. This involves a discussion beforehand and an evaluation afterwards. Furthermore, in-depth contact information about the student abroad, the contact person in the enterprise, his/her role, function and expertise should be clearly noted.

Creating other documents is recommended, too:

- Insurance statement for the stay abroad (see next chapter)
- In the case of a compulsory placement: conditions of recognition and reintegration of acquired knowledge in the studies, ECTS specifications
- Information about the language level or preparation
- Financial agreements

#### 1.5. Insurance during placement and social security issues

QRCs cannot be aware of regulations in all EU member states in order to be able to inform the students going abroad. However, it is useful to communicate some general information to the students before they leave.

Three insurances are indispensable for a stay abroad:

- health insurance,
- an accident insurance and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.iaeste.org](http://www.iaeste.org), [www.aiesec.org](http://www.aiesec.org), [www.best.eu.org](http://www.best.eu.org)

- a third party liability insurance.

Some insurance providers within the EU also cover stays abroad from the home country, but often only for a restricted time period. As insurance systems differ from country to country and with different providers, every student going abroad must contact his/her insurance company and inform himself/herself about what is covered during the period abroad. If necessary, the student needs to have additional health insurance covering the event of sickness or accident.

The way in which these circumstances are taken into consideration may differ. A trainee may be insured by the host organisation. This is common in some countries, especially concerning health insurance. The student may also be insured by its university (sometimes in case of an obligatory placement during studies) or individually (by himself or his family). Proof of adequate insurance coverage needs to be handed in to the institution sending the student before starting the training period abroad. This could be a simple form giving the three insurance numbers and providers.

Social security mainly concerns pension and unemployment insurance. This is not very relevant for students and sending institutions for most of the training contracts within the EU. However, host organisations may be obliged to pay social security charges for the students they employ. Any QRC shall be able to provide a minimum of advice to companies, especially SMEs and micro-enterprises – about regulations in the QRC's region.

Social security issues are relevant to the student in case his/her allowance, paid by the host organisation, differs regarding gross and net amounts. Depending on the length of his/her training period, the amount of allowance and the regulations of that particular country, he/she may possibly have to pay taxes but, at the same time, will be able to get it reimbursed from the state at the end of this period. The host organisation will be able to provide him/her with information concerning this; if not, the QRC needs to be a helpful contact for the student coming to its region as it is at least able to search for the right institutions or contacts where further information could be received.

QRCs, international offices and universities shall provide assistance and advice regarding insurance and social security matters. While they cannot be aware of details for students leaving the country, they are in a position to be familiar with details for their region as they are regional centres in higher education. It is necessary to provide some information on the QRC's website about the regional insurance system and the social security system for a placement. The regulations may differ in the cases of obligatory or voluntary placements, for Bachelor or Master students, for different nationalities of students, and for different placement lengths.

## 1.6. Quality management

When organising placements, the QRC should always know the host organisation that it is "sending" a student to. This means the host organisation is either Q-PlaNet labelled or should start the labelling process according to the Q-PlaNet Quality Standard. The ability to judge placement quality is assured by the Q-PlaNet recognition of an HEI as a QRC.

Individually, each QRC shall set up quality management procedures while a placement is taking place. This is characterised by continuous communication between the QRC and student and, if necessary, the host organisation. For a destination with a high number of placements, the QRC may have a person who is responsible for quality management during placements in this region.

## 2. Roles of involved parties

### 1.7. Definition of responsibility of parties involved

Q-PlaNet has tried to consider the different participants that are involved before, during and after a placement. The following definition of responsibilities of parties involved suggests a good distribution of tasks and efficient management of placements. It refers to action prior, during and after a placement.

The coordinator at the home institution

- shall give general information to students and supervisors about placement standards/requirements;
- has overall administrative responsibility, e.g. project management in networks;
- takes care of logistic aspects (forms incl. the acquisition of evaluation, insurance, payments of grants etc).
- could be: a professor who is dealing with placement matters in a faculty, could be the same as the mentor, but does not need to be necessarily; could be on a faculty level, university level, administration level, study course level, or other position (up to university size, capacity, etc.)

The QRC in the host region

- evaluates and labels the host organisation;
- assists in general logistic aspects (accommodation, social adaptation, practical information, contacts with companies and supervisors) on a scale matching its capacity;
- shall have overall administrative responsibility, e.g. project management.

The mentor at the home institution

- has the overall responsibility for the academic content and links with the placement activities;
- takes the final decision regarding placements abroad, in general;
- gives approval regarding any suggested topic for individual placements;
- stays in continuous contact with host organisation supervisors and tries to follow the student's performance abroad;
- evaluates the placement / learning outcome as a last resort.

The tutor at the host institution

- participates in the selection procedure;
- sets up the description of the placement content and learning plan;
- is in charge of the continuous supervision of students;
- stays in continuous contact with the mentor at the student's home institution;
- evaluates the placement, i.e. reporting.

The student

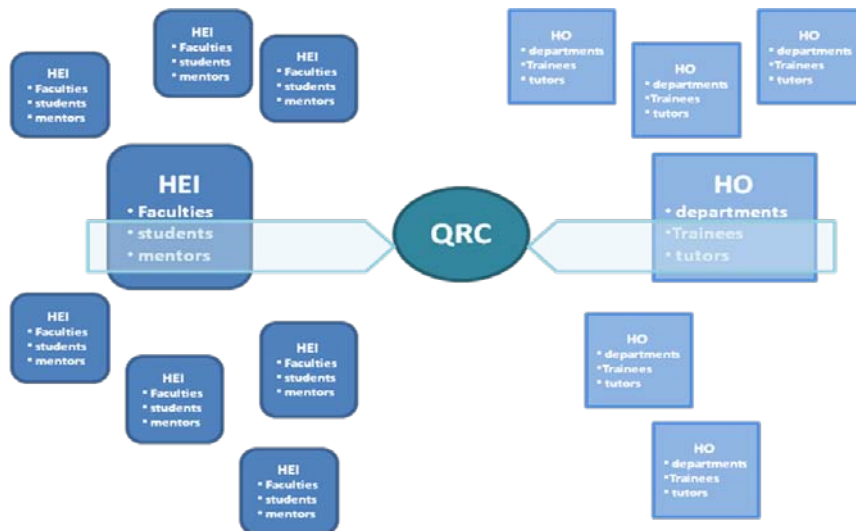
- seeks relevant information;
- fills in (and understands) all necessary forms;
- initiates (in general) and pursues all necessary contacts;
- fulfils all commitments with regard to the placement contract;
- Contacts all involved parties (coordinator, mentor, tutor) in case of any problem.

### 1.8. Schedule of activities

Activity	Before departure	During the placement	Upon return	Involved parties
First contact student-mentor				<i>Student, Mentor (Coordinator)</i>
Quality check / labelling				<i>QRC (Coordinator)</i>
Application				<i>Student, Tutor (QRC)</i>
Requirements of level & content				<i>Student, Tutor, Mentor, Coordinator</i>
Work plan & learning plan				<i>Tutor, Mentor (QRC)</i>
Placement agreement / evtl. Placement contract				<i>QRC, Student, Tutor / poss. HR of host organisation</i>
Finances				<i>QRC, Tutor, Coordinator</i>
Residence/work permission and visa (if applicable)				<i>QRC, Coordinator, Student, Tutor</i>
Insurance				<i>Student (Coordinator)</i>
Accommodation				<i>QRC, Student (Host organisation)</i>
Travel arrangements				<i>Student (QRC), (Coordinator)</i>
Linguistic, cultural, pedagogical etc. preparation				<i>Student (QRC), (Coordinator)</i>
Tutoring				<i>Tutor</i>
Mentoring				<i>Mentor</i>
Evaluation				<i>Tutor, Mentor, Coordinator</i>
Recognition				<i>Mentor, Coordinator</i>
Reintegration in studies				<i>Mentor (Coordinator)</i>

### 3. Diagrams and charts

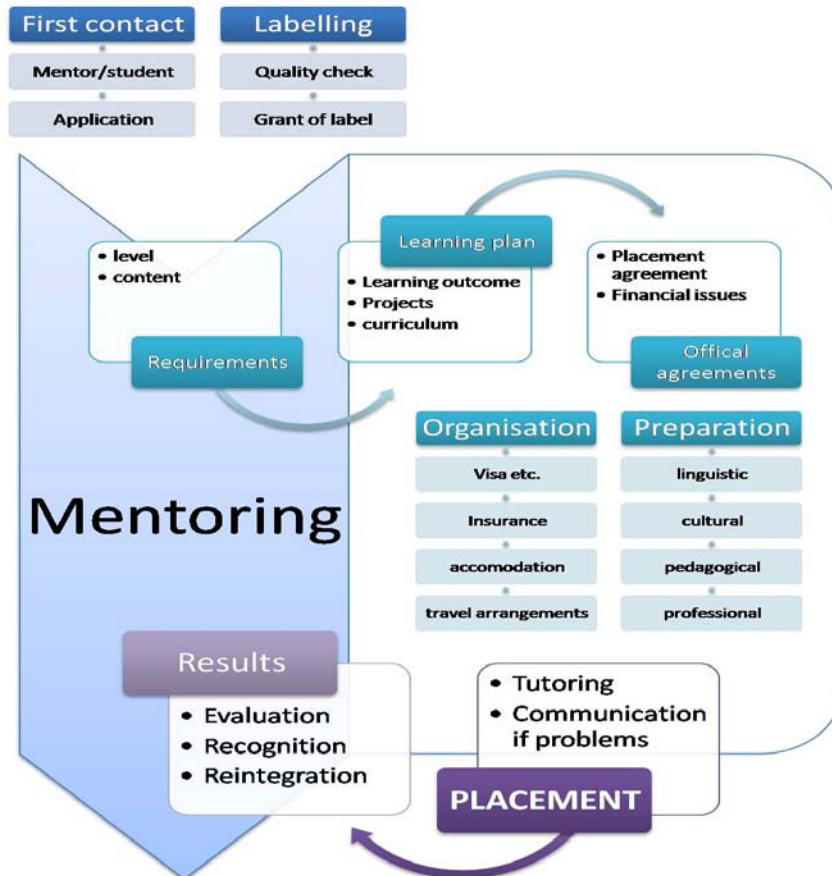
#### Organisation chart of actors



Inside Higher Education Institutions (HEI) students and mentors interact with each other, generally on a faculty level, as the placement content lies within the responsibilities of the faculty. In host organisations (HO) the trainees – students in the HEI – are assigned to one tutor, generally within the same department of work. The Quality Reference Centre (QRC) in the centre is responsible for the overall quality of the mentor-tutor system. It is able to check the host organisations locally in order to assure that a tutor inside the host organisation is always able to advise and train the trainee student from an higher education institution.



**Flowchart as a checklist for organisation of placements**



The ideal placement process starts with a first contact between mentor and student inside the university to clarify learning goals and the content of the placements. In parallel, QRCs constantly label new host organisations if it has become clear that they meet the necessary quality criteria. The placement offers of such companies are online and can be found by the student who can then apply. In the application process, requirements, the learning plan and official agreements are set up. The preparation phase regarding content goes hand-in-hand with the organisation of accommodation and travel. During the placement, the tutor (HO) and mentor (HEI) are available to provide assistance. The mentoring only “ends” when a complete reintegration of the student and the placement results in his studies have been achieved.

## 1. Follow-up of pilot placement organisation

After the first months of the project Q-PlaNet, when precise criteria and a common understanding of the quality standard among the partners was achieved, the consortium tried to organise some “pilot placements” to show the functionality of the system and receive some feedbacks and ideas for improvement.

During the project it soon became clear that it was going to be a challenge to identify and win appropriate companies for the pilot placements. At the project’s end two students from one partner country (Romania) could be found that were having their placements in Germany at two companies: at Lödige Systems GmbH in Warburg and at DHL in Bonn. The checking of the companies and the procedure of the pilot placements are still going on. The pilot placements will continue after the project’s end to show how the Q-PlaNet system works.

Kommentar [b1]: Feedback Zirra?

As overall “lesson learned” it can be noted that the QRC system is only working with a wide network of numerous QRCs all around Europe as it is impossible to find matching one-to-one pairs with students and host organisations restricted to only 5 regions of Europe.

## 2. Examples of a placement contract and training agreement

In the following are shown suggestions for a training agreement and a placement contract. Both documents shall have some kind of summary or the whole Q-PlaNet standard as annex when signed.

### 2.1. Training agreement suggestion

This document is signed by the student, the host organisation and the sending institution (university / HEI). It focuses on the training content, tasks and learning outcomes.

#### TRAINING AGREEMENT for student placements and QUALITY COMMITMENT

##### I. DETAILS OF THE STUDENT

Surname of the student		First name(s)
Address (Contact Address during the training period)		
Subject area	Degree	Academic year

##### II. DETAILS OF THE HOST ORGANISATION

Name of the host organisation / enterprise		Web address
Address (street, zip-code, town, country)		
Surname, first name(s) of the contact person		Function/position of the contact person
Phone	Fax	E-mail

##### III. DETAILS OF THE SENDING INSTITUTION

Name of the sending institution		Phone
Address (street, zip-code, town, country)		Fax
Title, surname, first names(s) of the departmental Erasmus or placement coordinator		E-mail

IV. DETAILS OF THE PLACEMENT

<b>Start of the placement</b>	<b>End of the placement</b>	<b>Duration in months</b>	<b>Working language</b>	<b>Sectorial code</b>	<b>Number of employee</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <b>Compensation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Gross: _____ €		Net: _____ €	
If Yes, please name the amount in gross and in net in €					
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>The student will receive a contribution in kind for his placement</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Has the enterprise experience with students from abroad</b>		<b>Number of actually employed students</b>	
Detailed programme of the training period					
The student's responsibilities, tasks, project etc. during the placement					
Additional qualifications, knowledge, experience the student will get during the placement					
Monitoring and evaluation plan (e.g. daily supervision, weekly/monthly reports, final report/presentation)					
Supervisor in the host organisation: Surname, first names(s)			Profession of the supervisor		
Function / position of the supervisor			E-mail		

V. COMMITMENT OF THE THREE PARTIES

By signing this document the student, the sending institution and the host organisation confirm that they will abide by the principles of the Quality Commitment for student placements set out in the document below.

<p><b>The student</b> I confirm that the proposed training programme is discussed and approved. I will keep one copy by myself as this will form an integral part of the Placement Agreement. One copy has to be handed in to ... [QRC]</p>	<p><b>The host organisation</b> We confirm that this proposed training programme is approved. On completion of the training programme the organisation will issue a Certificate to the student</p>	<p><b>The sending institution</b> We confirm that this proposed training programme agreement is approved. On satisfactory completion of the training programme the institution will award ... ECTS credits or will record the training period in the Diploma Supplement.</p>
Date/Signature	Date/Signature	Date/Signature

2.2. General placement contract

This is an example of a placement contract. This type of document is in general signed by the company and the student (not the university/ HED), it includes all legal information considering the trainee as employee. It is left up to each host organisation whether they use this contract, a similar one, no one, etc. This example is only a suggestion.

PLACEMENT CONTRACT

Between \_\_\_\_\_

(Exact name and address of the enterprise/institution)

In the following referred to as hosting institution

and Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

(Surname, First name)

born on \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

In the following referred to as placement student.

The placement is enrolled at: \_\_\_\_\_

(Exact name and address of the university/educational institution)

In the following referred to as sending institution

Between the contracting parties, the following placement contract has been agreed:

#### Section 1

The hosting institution agrees to convey experience and knowledge to the placement student during his placement in the period from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ according to the placement regulations of the sending institution.

During the placement the hosting institution is not liable to payments to the German health insurance, pension or unemployment schemes for the student; the placement student remains a student of the Sending institution.

#### Section 2

The hosting institution confirms that it is capable of conveying the experience and knowledge laid down in the current placement regulations of the Sending Institution.

The following limitations apply:

\_\_\_\_\_

The hosting institution agrees to work together with the sending institution or with its representative in all questions regarding the placement student and his/her placement.

In addition, the hosting institution commits itself to signing the report about the practical semester, which the student completes during his/her placement as well as to supply the placement student with a confirmation of employment note.

#### Section 3

The placement student agrees to

1. make use of all the possibilities, experiences and knowledge made available to him/her,
2. carry out the tasks entrusted to him/her during the placement conscientiously,
3. observe the hosting institution and workshop codes of conduct and the accident prevention regulations and to treat tools, machines and materials with care,
4. observe the hosting institution work hours,
5. safeguard the hosting institution interests and to treat the inner-hosting institution processes with confidentiality,
6. inform the hosting institution immediately in cases of absence as well as of accidents during and on the way to and from work; in the case of illness to provide the hosting institution with a doctor's note as requested by hosting institution rules (in Germany: on the third day at the latest).

#### Section 4

1. The placement contract ends without the need to give notice at the end of the period stated in section 1.
2. In addition, the placement contract can be terminated with a period of two weeks notice to the end of the month.
3. The possibility of terminating the contract with the agreement of both parties and without notice in the case of an important reason remains unaffected.
4. The trial period is one month. During the trial period both parties can terminate without notice and without the naming of a reason the placement contract.

**Section 5**

The placement student is not entitled to remuneration; he/she however, will be paid a voluntary wage of \_\_\_\_\_ / month

**Section 6**

All claims arising from the placement relationship must be made in writing within a preclusive period of six months after a claim arises, at the latest six months after the completion of the placement.

In all cases of contention arising from the placement relationship an amicable settlement should be attempted before taking legal action.

In cases of contention regarding claims arising from the placement relationship a mediator should be consulted before taking legal action. The mediator should be nominated from the teaching staff of the hosting institution by suggestion of the student or the hosting institution.

**Section 7**

The placement student is liable for damages occurred through him/her according to the legal regulations.

**Section 8**

Special agreements:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 9**

\_\_\_\_\_  
For the host organisation (name in block letters)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student (name in block letters)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature