Project acronym: **Q-PlaNet**

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

*Deliverable D 5.1*

**Quality standard for student placements**

Final Version



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| **PU** | Public | PU |
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## Abstract

Student placements in enterprises have a great positive impact for the future employability of students after graduation as it has as a main purpose to expose the students to the real working environments. As at present the current implementation across Europe varies in terms of clarity and compatibility between countries, in order to facilitate exchanges at a EU scale, especially within the Erasmus programme, common quality requirements are necessary to be defined in order to encourage transparent exchanges and proper assessment of learning outcomes. This document presents an attempt generated within the European University – Enterprise Network and its project Q-PlaNet for the development of such a framework.

After a brief introduction of the matters involved, the principles proposed are outlined followed by some definitions and requirements that would be needed to be implemented with universities curriculum development and training processes as well as processes within the enterprises. Some conclusions are provided at the end of the paper.

For a better understanding of this document, please check the references to other deliverables and the glossary online at www.q-planet.org.

Regarding the whole organisation of quality placements especially D4.1 is relevant; D2.1 refers to details of the newly established 3 Quality Reference Centres and D3.1 to details of curriculum development. D6.1 deals with the organisation of the QRC network and recognition of bodies as QRC.

# 1. Introduction and context

Practical experience has an important positive impact for the future employability of students after graduation. Student placements have as a main purpose to expose the students to the real working environments and train the necessary social competences. As a consequence the students will be able to interact easily within the world of work - either for identifying a job or for acting professionally within the enterprise environment after being hired.

Placements are still not integrated as a standard component in the academic curriculum of all European universities. Even when a student placement is foreseen in the curriculum, the provisions are often incomplete, the learning outcomes poorly defined and quality control procedures are not always defined. It must be noted however that in some European countries a kind of regional Quality Reference Centers for placements (QRC) have been working for a number of years and proven to support and guide the quality improvement of this important activity. Nevertheless, supposing the placement of students are solved locally by each university either using the QRC model or equivalent that offers the confidence of a quality placement, it is still difficult to know and check **trans-national** placements in the host enterprise in the regions across a wide area such as Europe. This is the reason for which a quality system for student placements in Europe must be developed and this task has been undertaken by Q-PlaNet. This document presents the first attempt for developing a set of guidelines with the aim of building a framework for student placement organisation across Europe that will help securing and improving continuously the quality of this important student learning activity.

# 2. Requirements for a quality assurance standard of placements

Quality assurance for student placements requires commitment and responsibility of direct involved actors such as the university, the student, and the host organisation. Not less important are decision-makers on policy level designing the learning environment and programs on national and European level. The design of LLP programs forms an important basis to all quality assurance; they can make it even possible in a coherent efficient way.

## 2.1. General requirements on all sides (QRC, university, host organisation, student)

### a. *Information and guidance*

Every student should have access to clear and reliable sources of information and guidance on mobility and the conditions in which it can be taken up. This information needs to be accessible publicly for every student; it includes general and specific information about:

- Conditions of placement (duration, payment, organisation culture, dress code, daily workload…)
- Access to application forms
- Rights and obligations
- Benefits for all partners involved
- Consultation hours with university staff
- Examples of good practice and feedback from former participants

It shall be given by QRCs, universities and host organisations, as far as these issues concern them. Tutors on all sides must be competent in the context of the study field and with appropriate experience / knowledge in the tasks the student will have.

*b. Learning plan*

A plan is drawn up and signed by the sending and hosting organisations and participants before every stay for education or training purposes. It must describe the objectives and expected outcomes, the means of achieving them, and an evaluation, and must also take account of reintegration issues.

- The learning plan must be written and signed by all parties involved
- Training purposes = learning outcome: tasks, skills required, added values (skills to be developed), active involvement into proper activities
- Establishment of minimum criteria for the students to enter the PP
- Preparation phase (Reference Centre can take action)
- Learning outcomes: different for Bachelor and Master level (variation and general for Bachelor level, more specific and involvement in research for Master level)
- Evaluation – combined: tutors (from enterprise host), student (self-evaluation of the activity during P, a standard form not only his "free" report) and university staff
- Evaluation: intermediate and final, so at least twice in a min. 3 months placement
- transfer of theory in practice
- whole project / project oriented work
- generic learning outcome needs to be evaluated and respected (soft skills, personality development, etc.)

Transnational mobility has the same quality standards as regional / national mobility. The Q-PlaNet Standard is general and leaves room for individual style, the criteria are indicators of good practice.

*c. Personalisation*

Mobility must fit in with personal learning pathways, the skills and motivation of participants, and should develop or supplement them. There must be a match between the student's interests, motivation and skills and the placement offers, therefore access to information and the opportunity to choose between the PP must be available.

*d. General preparation*

Before departure, participants should receive general preparation tailored to their specific needs that also covers linguistic, pedagogical, legal, cultural and financial aspects. The students' and companies' motivation need to be defined and documented. Short courses on general subjects may be organised before the placement and, when the student knows exactly where he/she will go, on more specific issues. Furthermore, contact persons may be appointed who are responsible for the student placements at the three levels of the QRC, the university (sending institution) and the enterprise (host institution) AND the student will be informed about these persons.

The student shall receive information about:

- the country of destination: geographical, cultural, social, etc. information
- the enterprise's main line of business
- the area of his/her training
- the training plan for the placement period including learning outcomes and objectives
- best practice examples of students coming from the same sending institution who had previously participated in the training at the enterprise

This preparation may take place via websites, seminars, personal meetings, etc. according to the respective institutions' capacities and the structure of responsibilities in the region or country.

### e. *Logistical support*

This could include providing participants with information and assistance concerning travel arrangements, insurance, the possibility of government grants and loans, residence or work permits, social security and any other practical aspects.

The QRC has mechanisms for providing the student with information related to: estimated budget needed, travel arrangements, accommodation arrangements, insurance/ health insurance, residence/ work permits, social security.

### f. *Commitments and responsibilities*

The responsibilities arising from these quality criteria must be agreed and, in particular, confirmed in writing by all sides (sending and host organisations and participants).

- written contract / agreement for all three parties in which responsibilities are fixed
- Following the model of a working contract (tasks, name, vacation, etc., insurance questions) + quality criteria from above involving the learning plan, (linguistic aspects), Mentoring, Recognition, Reintegration & Evaluation
- Mentor on the university's side, too
- the host organisation is committed to fulfil the placement, the student is committed to work to his/her best ability in the placement

## 2.2. Requirements for the universities and the curriculum

- The university shall have a documented process for the design of the curriculum.
- The student placement shall be regarded as a regular subject in the curriculum and be included in the course structure from the design stage with provisions at the same level of detail as for any other subject, including objectives, competences, learning outputs, credits allocation etc.
- It is recommended that the student placement subject within the curriculum be a compulsory component with a duration of at least three months.
- The university shall design and develop the study programme in cooperation with a sufficient number of host organisations that are able to easily support the study programme for the required student placements. The host organisations shall be consulted at the design stage within a documented process with records clearly showing the input required and provided by the host organisations as well as the way this input has been integrated into the course design.
- Each course shall have a network of supporting host organisations that have contributed to the design and are involved continuously in the improvement of the course content. The host organisation shall be recognised as supporting the respective course.

### a. *Resources – human (mentoring) and financial*

The university bears the responsibility for the realisation and improvement of regular student placements. It must secure appropriate resources and links with the potential host organisations and mediation bodies such as QRCs.

The university shall name a person who will be in charge of ensuring the quality of the placement for each course. This person shall:

- organise, monitor and assess the learning outcome of placement results for each student;
- ensure liaison between the university and the external concerned parties in any matter relating to student placements;
- constitute, maintain and develop a network of host organisations that support the course

The university shall ensure that all the financial resources needed to ensure the good progression of the student placement are available. They can include, depending on each situation:

- a time allocation for marketing the course aimed at attracting the interest of host organisations;
- a budget for international exchanges;

*b. Processes / procedures*

By means of one or more documented procedures, the university shall define:
1. The preparation process of the placement
- determining / describing the learning outcomes;
- agreeing on the extent of academic recognition of the placement results and learning outcomes
- evaluating the programme proposed by the host organisation and assessing the learning outcomes at the end;
2. The methods used for evaluating the results of the student placement, such as:
- from the student's point of view: tasks and gained knowledge;
- from the point of view of the tutor in the organisation: solving the task, and perspective;
- from the point of view of the tutor at the university: solving the task; and the progress of the student placement towards the designed learning outcome.

In the case of international exchanges, the student placement shall be organised either as an exchange between two universities or as a direct relation between a university and a host organisation in another country (direct transnational student placement)

- In the case of intra-university exchange, the host university undertakes the organisation of the student placement in the same manner as for local students in an integrated way. The exchange takes place in the same way as for any other regular exchange with credit transfers and the same formalities concerning recognition in the sending institution
- In the case of direct transnational student placement, the host organisation must have third party certification with regard to fulfilling the present guidelines provisions

If the placement has been organised by the student himself/herself, the university shall nevertheless have a consulting and guiding role, especially in view of recognition and reintegration in the future studies.

*c. Linguistic aspects*

Language skills make for more effective learning, intercultural communication and a better understanding of the host country's culture. Arrangements should therefore include a pre-departure assessment of language skills, the possibility of attending courses in the language of the host country and/or language learning and linguistic support and advice in the host country.

- The selection criteria of the host institution (enterprise) includes language competence because it ensures that the student meets the linguistic requirements needed to be able to undertake an effective placement
- The university provides language courses for students – preparatory language courses

### d. Evaluation and reintegration

On returning to their country of origin, participants should receive guidance on how to make use of the abilities acquired during their stay and, following a long stay, any necessary help with reintegration. Evaluation of the experience acquired should make it possible to assess whether the aims of the learning plan have been achieved.

- the placement is part of the studies = in the curriculum, evaluation via credit points
- the mentor in the host organisation should give a student evaluation (in a certificate, as a mark/grade, or personally)
- a report written by the student, confirmation by the enterprise that the student has done the report independently during the placement
- a review: an oral presentation and discussion with professors and other PP students on results in terms of soft skills and professional skills
- assessment of the host organisation/the placement by the students
- Reintegration: a review leads to better understanding of studies, a transfer of knowledge back to the university
- Preparation and guidance of the evaluation needs also to be taken into consideration beforehand

### e. Recognition

If periods of study or training abroad are an integral part of a formal study or training programme, the learning plan must mention this, and participants should be provided with assistance regarding recognition and certification. For other types of mobility, and particularly those in the context of non-formal education and training, certification by an appropriate document, such as the Europass, is necessary.

Before starting a placement, one should check if the student placement is included in a curriculum and the supervisor should agree with the learning plan of the placement.

## 2.3. Requirements for the host organisations

The organisation shall declare its commitment to ensuring the quality of the student placement. The management shall make sure that the objectives that were set in order to ensure the allocation of appropriate student placement quality at all relevant levels and by all relevant functions have been met.

### a. Resources – human (tutoring), financial, infrastructural

The organisation shall ensure that all the resources needed for the good progress of the placement are available.

The personnel involved in the placement shall:
- be aware of the importance of ensuring the quality of the placement;
- be trained according to the management system for placement quality;

- be informed about and trained as needed with regard to the changes that appear within the management system concerning placement quality;
- keep records of the conducted training.

The organisation shall name a person who will be in charge of ensuring the placement quality. This person shall:
- report student placement results to the top management;
- ensure liaison between the organisation and the external concerned parties;
- ensure the implementation and conformation with the management system for student placement quality.

The host organisation should provide supervision to advise and help participants throughout their stay, also to ensure their integration.
- The host organisation should appoint at least one person from its staff to be a student's tutor. This is to advise, help and guide the students throughout their stay to ensure their integration.
- The tutor has to have appropriate skills such as a language, communication and curricula related qualification.
- The host organisation should provide safety, confidentiality and intellectual property rights training relating to the work place, prior to the start of the student placement.

The organisation shall ensure that all the financial resources needed for the good progress of the student placement are available. They may include, depending on each situation: a budget for marketing activities aimed at attracting students; for remunerating students (according to national/regional regulations); for the personnel that is involved in these activities.

The organisation shall make sure that the infrastructure needed for the good progress of the student placement is available. It includes: IT equipment (software / hardware); communication equipment (telephone / network / internet access); proper work space for the good progress of the student placement quality assurance activities; an infrastructure for the student placement.

### b. Processes / procedures

By means of one or more documented procedures, the organisation shall define:
1. The preparation process for the student placement
   - the methods used in order to determine the number of students and the period of time required for the student placement;
   - determining / describing the jobs.
2. The recruiting process
   - establishing selection criteria for students (knowledge, personality, technical / school results, special knowledge – such as foreign languages);
   - description of interview methods (phone interview, e-mail, face-to-face, application forms, online-forms...)
3. The methods used for evaluating the results of the placement, such as:
   - from the student's point of view: tasks and gained knowledge;
   - from the point of view of the tutor in the organisation: solving the task; and perspective;
   - from the point of view of the mentor in the university: solving the task and the progress of the placement.

4. The organisation shall review the placement activity periodically.
- Input: corrective / preventive action; evaluation results; improvement proposals for the processes regarding the placement activity; etc.
- Output and records: improvement measures; resources needed; etc.
- The review should be integrated into the common internal audit process of the host organisation.

### c. Organisation of the activities during the student placement

During the placement period, the student will be supervised by a tutor of the organisation and by a mentor of the university. At the beginning of the placement period, the person in charge of placement quality assurance shall:
- assist the student in accomplishing all needed legal formalities as well as those required within the enterprise;
- organise the student training regarding enterprise safety regulations and the specific regulations regarding fire prevention;
- secure the student training regarding the enterprise's processes, procedures and other regulations;
- supervise the student in his/her new workplace.

At the end of the placement period, the person in charge of placement quality assurance shall coordinate the evaluation of the student placement and shall assist the student when performing all the formalities required at the end of the placement period.

During the student placement period the person in charge of placement quality assurance shall perform a sample assessment in the way the documented processes are being followed.

During the student placement period the person in charge of placement quality assurance shall record all non-conformities that occur, as well as all potential ones. These non-conformities must be analysed, their cause identified and appropriate corrective/preventive measures decided in each case.

Holiday and insurance issues are regulated according to national or regional regulations.

### d. Other provisions for host organisations

- The planning of the student placement shall be made in full compliance with the objectives and content requirements established in the relevant official university curriculum/syllabus document.
- A permanent recorded communication system must be established between the student placement supervisors in the host organisation and the university respectively.
- When quality assurance systems are available (e.g. ISO 9001:2008), an integration of the present provisions within the overall system is recommended to avoid further burden and bureaucracy.
- When a Corporate Social Responsibility system is available, an integration of the present provisions within the overall system is recommended to avoid further burden and bureaucracy.

# 3. Quality Placements Network

In contrast with the ISO 9000, where the enterprise certification is pushed by the market and undertaken entirely by the enterprises, in case of Q-PlaNet, a kind of certification, called "labelling", should be undertaken entirely by the labelling body (QRC).

The implementation of the new Erasmus-placement programme (ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc894_en.htm) gives a good chance to establish a new and urgent motivation for solid and permanent quality control of placements, as well as for supporting higher education-industry cooperation. The concept of Erasmus Consortia is in line with the concept of regional Quality Reference Centres. For further details regarding the organisation of the network, its structure and functioning, please read D6.1.



The concept of project QPlaNet Quality Placements Network
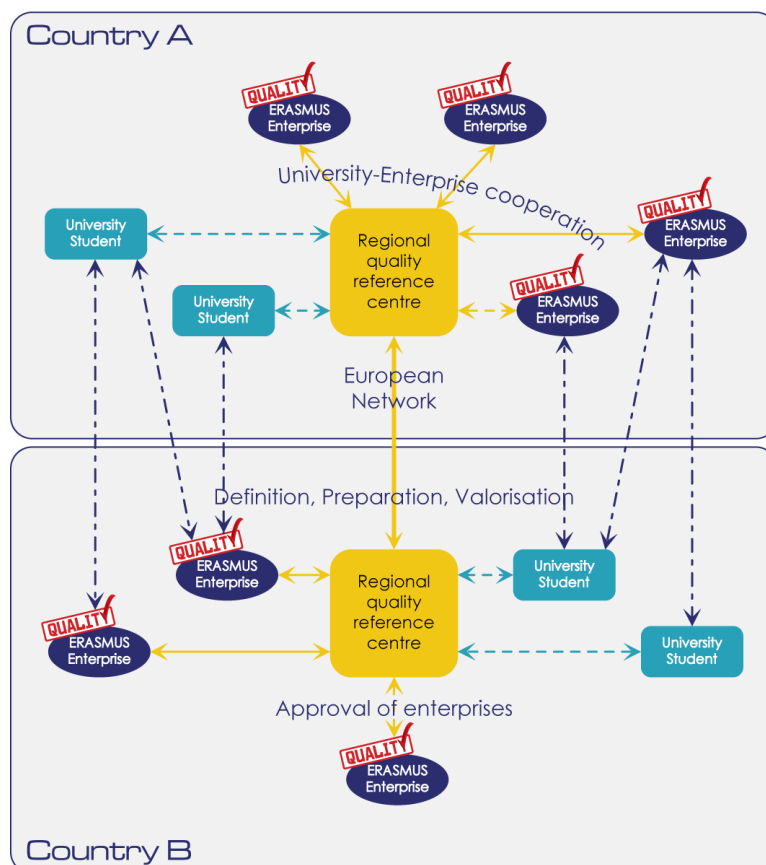
## 3.1. Regional Quality Reference Centres for placements (QRC)

While there is always a permanent relationship and interaction between the companies and the actors at universities in the target region, like Technology Transfer Units, Career Services or directly with departments and lecturers, these contacts could form a regional network of universities and host organisations, where the partners involved are well known by each other and can be easily contacted. Consequently, all the relevant requirements for international student exchanges could be easily checked locally by **a body acting in placement mobility and higher education**. It would be also easy to visit regional companies with the aim of confirming the quality of the placements and supervision of the international students when necessary by the same body.

To avoid multiple visits to companies for the same purpose, the regional Quality Reference Centre for placements (QRC) for students could act thus as the body responsible for such quality checks, as well as providing adequate information for recruiting a student from abroad, promoting the mobility of students in the industry and dissemination of results.

A possible procedure is based on the principle that a host organisation signs up for taking part in the programme by accepting the requirements and standards set up for recruiting students from abroad as well as regular checks carried out by QRCs. If the QRC issues the label, the company will obtain a status of an **"Erasmus-Host"** which is eligible to offer Erasmus-Placements for Erasmus-Students.

For this reason, the QRC should have the qualification and capacity to perform the equivalent of a certification task with respect to the host organisations. Reversely, at a later stage it could be possible that the QRC database develops and maintains a classification of the university courses portfolio and even a certification according to standards developed in cooperation with the Erasmus-Hosts. In order to create a European Quality Reference Network a general standard for integrated practical training periods needs to be developed, even for those placements, which are not financially supported by a European programme. To know more about the established Reference Centres, please read deliverable D2.1

Economic aspects for a Quality Reference Centre:

| COSTS | INCOMING RESOURCES |
|---|---|
| - Staff hours<br>- Quality check (visiting companies, rooms, paper)<br>- Development of standard and network, meetings (travel costs) | - Financial contributions of universities being associated to the QRC network / to a QRC<br>- EU funding (via Erasmus consortia, or other projects) |

## 3.2. Network of Networks – quality assurance within a meta network

Such a European Quality Reference Network will be an efficient tool for the improvement of the quality of placements and the volume of student mobility. The work of such a network would promote the <u>Erasmus-Placement programme</u>, improve considerably the <u>employability of graduates</u> and thus also support the <u>goals of the Lisbon strategy</u>.

A definition of recognition standards at European level of the QRC is needed and the recognition procedures need also to be established. This is however a more complex process, depending much on the particular conditions in each country for the organisation of student placements.

Thus regional networks of labelled host organisations will be established by the QRCs while the recognition body will maintain the "Network of Networks" (i.e of QRCs). Structured online tools assembling services of these bodies will be set up and maintained in order to evaluate at European level the capacity of organising student placements across various disciplines and facilitating their organisation as well. Such online data will be useful to all actors involved into the system:

- to the universities in order to assess realistically the possibility to organise quality student placement within the planned study courses;
- to the QRC in order to assess the need to recruit more host organisations to meet the university's needs in student placement organisation;
- to the host organisation in order to observe the availability of internships in various areas in case of planned developments that need new recruitments.

The recognition of bodies as new members in Q-PlaNet and as Q-PlaNet Quality Reference Centres is officially given by EUE-Net. In-depth recognition criteria and the application procedure is described in the Q-PlaNet project deliverable D6.1 "Establishment of the

European Network of Quality Reference Centres and a network of networks" and in "Standards and Guidelines for Recognition as 'Quality Reference Centre' (QRC)".

### 3.3. Labelling procedure (towards host organisations)

Labelling is defined as a third-party attestation relating to products, processes, systems or persons. The QRC investigates the potential host organisation of interest and proposes to them to implement a quality framework in order to organise student placements and a public label. Upon the host organisation agreeing to the terms and conditions, the labelling procedure starts by submitting a visit plan to the host organisation which provides a proposed timetable for the conditions to be assessed. Any required improvement action identified in accordance with Q-PlaNet requirements will be notified in writing during or immediately following the assessment visit. The candidate host organisation is then asked to advise how it intends to address the Q-PlaNet criteria. Once the improvement action has been implemented the Q-PlaNet label will be granted.

The label will be confirmed by surveillance visits by the QRC, with a full reassessment periodically. The Network assesses the quality of host organisations in Europe through its member QRCs, while the labelling is realised by the member QRCs, not directly by the Network.

**Assignment of host organizations to a QRC**

One host organisation shall have exactly one QRC that is responsible for its certification. During the frist years of Q-PlaNet, this assignment happens geographically, if non-ambiguously possibly. (Example: a host organisation in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, is attributed to the Karlsruhe QRC.) In the beginning there will be many regions in Europe that do not have a QRC. In this case the assignment shall take place according to the available QRC's contacts, geography, experience or capacity. The assignment procedure will be further developed as the Network grows.

**Labelling method and criteria**

The QRCs have to check the host organisations in the following way:
There are three possibilities regarding how the labelling procedure could be initialized: the QRC being assigned to the host organisation
1. proposes the Q-PlaNet labelling to the host organisation or
2. is contacted by the host or
3. wishes to contact the host organisation because of a proposal or recommendation.
The basic preconditions for initialising the labelling procedure are:
- agreeing to the terms and conditions
- for well-known host organisations (by the assigned QRC, in general case 1. above): a checklist with quality criteria is set up, explained, submitted, evaluated. Then the Q-PlaNet label will be granted.
- for unknown/new host organisations (generally cases 2. and 3. above): submitting a visit plan to the host organisation which provides a proposed timetable for the conditions to be assessed. Any required improvement action identified in accordance with quality standard requirements will be notified in writing during or immediately following the assessment visit. The candidate host organisation is then asked to advise how it intends to address

them. Once the improvement action has been implemented the Q-PlaNet label will be granted.

No more methods are detailed here as Q-PlaNet focuses on the principle and criteria of its system, not on the procedures. Because of an implementation in diverse national contexts it is up to the regional QRCs to adapt procedures in a suitable way. A host organisation has to provide evidence of its compliance with the Q-PlaNet Quality Standard in any event.

Labelling criteria

QRCs have to pay attention to the following criteria in host organisations which need to be either fulfilled or notified as improvement action. Checking these has to be documented on paper by the labelling QRC and has to be signed by the QRC and host organisation.

- Conditions of the placement(s) need to be clearly defined (duration, payment, organisation culture, dress code, daily workload, rights, holidays, insurance)
- The availability of a competent tutor in the context of the study field and with an appropriate qualification in the tasks the student will have
- The ability to draw up and sign, in cooperation with the sending institution and the participant, a learning plan describing the objectives and expected outcomes, the means of achieving them, and evaluation
- The planning of the student placement shall be made in full compliance with the objectives and content requirements established in the relevant official university curriculum/syllabus document (if applicable)
- A communication channel shall be available between the student placement tutor in the host organisation and the mentor in the sending organisation
- Placements shall have a learning outcome where added values (knowledge, skills, abilities to be developed) and active involvement into proper activities is realised (application of theory in practice and project-oriented work)
- An evaluation of the trainee's work by the host organisation according to the learning plan. This could take place in a feedback meeting between trainee and tutor, or in more official ways (e.g. presentation).
- The organisation shall declare its commitment to ensuring the quality of the student placement  (the objectives that were set in order to ensure student placement quality are known at all relevant levels and by all relevant functions)
- The organisation shall ensure that all RESOURCES (financial, human, administrative) needed for the good progress of the student placement are available, such as
  - A person in charge of ensuring the quality of student placement, reporting to the management and mediating
  - to provide personal tutoring in addition to professional tutoring in order to advise and help participants throughout their stay, also to ensure their integration
  - to provide safety, confidentiality and intellectual property rights training relating to the work place, prior to the start of the student placement
  - infrastructure including IT and communication equipment, work space
- Processes: by means of one or more documented procedures, the organisation shall define the preparation process, the recruiting process, the methods used for evaluating the results (for one specific placement or placements in general), shall perform an analysis of the placement activity regularly and a dedicated internal audit process for the quality of student placements shall be available

In addition to this, QRCs have to ensure that the Q-PlaNet Quality Standards are respected both in the host and sending organisations. The Quality Standard document may complete the above-mentioned list and gives more in-depth information about the further tasks of the QRCs.

The label itself

The label is visualised in the form of a "certificate" on paper which shows the Q-PlaNet logo, states that the host organisation is a "member of Quality Placements Network", names the host orgnisation, names the QRC which is assigned to that host organisation, and shows the year of labelling. The paper document is handed out to the enterprise every year; but the quality check and label is valid for three years.

The situation after granting the label:

The fact that the host organisation is Q-PlaNet labelled will be published via the host organisation's website by showing the Q-PlaNet logo. The QRC Network will publish a list with all currently labelled host organisations – or similar, in case a centralised Network website has not been realised. After three years, a complete renewal of the label becomes necessary for every host organisation. In case of problems in a placement during the three granted years, a withdrawal of the label is possible. The assigned QRC needs to undertake an in-depth analysis and should propose appropriate improvement action that needs to be implemented by the host organisation. In hard cases, when several and justified complaints exist, the QRC will actively clarify all open questions with the involved parties.

The feedback of students after every placement has to be assessed in a structured document that should ask questions according to the Q-PlaNet quality criteria, which are mainly the organisational assistance and working place situation in the placement for the student, the social integration / atmosphere at the work place, the professional aspects, responsibilities, project work, the financial support of the host organisation for the student. Two examples of an evaluation form, both for the host organisation and trainee, can be found in the Annex.

Placements are of great importance regarding the employability of graduates and probably constitute one of the major cooperation areas between the host organisation and the universities. It is recognised by both universities and host organisations usually hosting student internship that this activity is of mutual benefit for all participants: universities, host organisations and students – it is a 3W (win-win-win) activity.

Host organisations are mainly approached by Q-PlaNet through personal contacts and staff networks in QRCs and enterprises. Although this mainly takes place by telephone and face-to-face communication, it can be facilitated by e-mail and keywords in a written form, too. Therefore Q-PlaNet has developed a two-page "checklist" with the necessary requirements (in short) for a Q-PlaNet label to be awarded and the benefits for host organisations. QRCs may use it to send to their contact persons and host organisations may use it to circulate the information inside their enterprise.

## 4. Conclusions

Placements are of great importance for the employability of graduates and constitute probably one of the major cooperation areas between the host organisation and the universities. It is recognized by both universities and host organisations usually hosting student internship that this activity is of mutual benefit for all actors: university, host organisation and student – it is a 3W (win-win-win) activity.

Nevertheless, looking at the heterogeneity of provisions and organisation at European level, it appears with clarity that at the moment this training component is largely underdeveloped compared with other subjects and elements in the curriculum. Urgent quality measures are needed first of all within the universities in order to properly design this activity but also some quality requirements must be implemented within the host organisation for the mutual benefit.

The present document presents a first attempt in Europe for the development of a set of requirements to be implemented for the organisation of student placements in Europe in a compatible and transferable manner. It is clear that developing these guidelines towards a complete and accepted set of provisions will be a long journey and this document should not be regarded otherwise than a point to get the ball rolling. It is thus expected that the present set of requirements can be adapted coming months to incorporate other stakeholder's views.

# Annex 1: Placement evaluation by the student

| General information |
|---|

| Name | First Name |
|---|---|

| Address |
|---|

| University / Faculty / Study Course |
|---|

| Host organisation, working language, placement duration |
|---|

**Information about the placement**

| Type of placement | + + | + | +/- | - | - - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Responsibility | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Learning agreement, personal development plan, objectives | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Possibility of influence on learning plan, tasks | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Theoretical knowledge could be applied | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Practical knowledge could be applied | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| New skills could be aquired | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Expected advantages for future studies | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Expected advantages for future employment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Tutoring** | | | | | |
| By the host organisation | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| By the QRC in the host region | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| By the sending institution / university | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Social contacts during placement** | | | | | |
| To colleagues (during work) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| To colleagues (during free timee) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| To students / trainees of the host country | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| To students / trainees of the home country | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Language skills** | | | | | |
| Improvement of language skills in the host country's language | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Improvement of English | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Communication in the office / working place | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Communication during free time | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Short remark on the overall placement quality**

| Date | Signature |
|---|---|

# Annex 2: Trainee evaluation by the host organisation

1    General data

Name of the trainee

Host organisation

Brief description of the position, project and tasks of the trainee

Performance of the trainee

| Placement/Assignment | + + | + | +/- | - | - - |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applicability of knowledge and results to the needs of the host organisation | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Methods of working while performing the assignment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Results | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Attitude towards work** | | | | | |
| Independence | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Initiative | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Responsibility | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Involvement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Speed of work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Planning | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Social skills** | | | | | |
| Contact with colleagues | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Contact with senior staff | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Contact with external people | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Adaptability to organisational rules | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Student's capacity to adapt to the organisation and local culture | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Personal qualities** | | | | | |
| Flexibility | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Creativity | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Criticism towards own work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Willingness to revise own work or attitude | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Persuasiveness | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Ability to handle work pressure | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Student's/graduate's responsibilities and gained additional qualifications** | | | | | |
| To what extend did the student/graduate take over responsibilities as stated in the Learning Agreement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Did the student/graduate gain the additional qualifications agreed about in the Learning Agreement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| To what extend did the student/graduate meet your overall expectations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Additional remarks

On behalf of the host organisation

Name, Title, Function                                    Date, Signature

# The Q-PlaNet label

Annex 3: Checklist for labelled host organisations

## The Q-PlaNet label

*Practical placements in industry, research institutes and other host organisations shall train young high qualified professionals to apply their knowledge in practice. However, some host organisations compensate full time jobs with badly or not at all paid young graduates or students who are full of expectations to their first challenges. Such host organisations play with the expectations and incertitude of young people without developing their talents or training them honestly. Q-PlaNet wants to label host organisations refusing such irresponsible behaviour towards our future professionals and leaders.*

*The label is visualized via a "certificate" on paper. The Q-PlaNet logo can be published on your website, linking to the Quality Reference Centre's network where a list with all currently labeled host organizations is published.*

*The paper document is handed out to the company every year; but the quality check and label is valuable for 3 years. After this period a complete renewing according to the labeling procedure becomes necessary for every host organisation. In case problems in a placement occur during the 3 granted years, a withdrawal of the label is possible.*

*Have a look at requirements and benefits on the next page. We would be happy to issue the Q-PlaNet label to your company. For further information please contact the Quality Reference Centre in your region. General information about the Q-PlaNet system is published on www.q-planet.org.*

*You confirm to have read and discussed the Q-PlaNet criteria with a QRC responsible and agree to them for placements in your host organisation.*

_____

_____          _____

*[Name, Function]*                               *[Date, Signature]*

## Contact

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Koordinierungsstelle für die Praktischen Studiensemester der Fachhochschulen in Baden-Württemberg
Baden-Württemberg Partnership for the Exchange of Students, Graduates and Knowledge Transfer

KOOR
BEST

# A Q-PlaNet host organisation...

- ...**declares its commitment for ensuring the quality** of the student placement,
- ...**ensures that all resources needed** for the good progress of the placement are available (appropriate human resources for tutors, financial resources for student remuneration, infrastructural to give appropriate working place to the student),
- ...**defines the processes for the placement** (preparation process, recruiting process, the methods used for evaluation of the placement, the periodical review of the placement activity),
- **…names a tutor** being competent in the context of the study field and with appropriate qualification in the tasks the student will hav and for tutoring,
- ...**names a person in charge with placement quality assurance** assisting the student in legal formalities, company safety regulations, and recording all non-conformities that occur, and coordinating the evaluation,
- ...**takes care of communication** between the placement supervisor (tutor) and the university/the student's sending institution (mentor),
- ...**provides students access to clear and reliable sources of information** about placement conditions, general information about the organisation, application, rights and obligations, benefits for all partners involved, examples of good practice,
- ...**signes a learning plan** describing training purposes, expected outcomes, means of achieving them, evaluation, guarantees project oriented tasks,
- ...**signes a contract or agreement** where all responsibilities are fixed following the model of a working contract, signed by 3 parties (student, host organisation, sending institution)
- ...**tries to provide logistical support** (travel, insurance, grants, work permits, social security, etc.).

## Your benefits as Q-PlaNet host organisation:

- You can use the **Q-PlaNet** logo on your homepage to show at first sight that you are a company with high quality placements.
- You receive a **certificate on paper**, showing that your organisation has been checked by a Quality Reference Centre.
- The Quality Reference Centre in your region **publishes a list with all quality proved labeled host organisations and links to your website**.
- All Quality Reference Centres are connected in a network, communicating the Q-PlaNet system to higher education institutions and students searching for training possibilities in Europe. **Your institution is easily found** by higher education institutions and students knowing Q-PlaNet because the central website will link to the regional websites of QRCs.

# Annex 4: The label certificate for host organisations



The European host organisation

**name of company**

is labelled as

"Fully complying with the Q-PlaNet standard
for quality student placements"

*2010*

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Enterprise Network

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

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responsible for any use which may be
made of the information contained therein.

Signature of QRC responsible:

Place/ Date

Certificate no.

Quality checked by the  name of QRC

member of the European Quality Placements Network Q-PlaNet. Labelling
criteria according to labelling conditions and listings on www.q-planet.org.