



**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OBSTACLES**  
**IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC:**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The research study “Youth Employment Obstacles in the Czech Republic” showed that Czech schools do not provide graduates with required skills and practical abilities. As a consequence, students face a lack of soft skills and creative thinking that are required in the labour market. Furthermore, the level of cooperation and partnerships between schools and employers is not sufficient which results in a lack of internship and scholarship opportunities for students. In response to this research study, a team of students of the University of Economics in Prague introduces the following initiative aimed at overcoming youth employment obstacles.

## INITIATIVES

### 1. PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND COMPANIES

**Problem:** There is a lack of interconnection between theoretical studies and praxis. This problem can be solved by establishing partnerships between universities and companies, institutions or other organisations which would provide students with practical experience. For instance, business associations create an effective bridge between universities and companies.

**Objective:** To enable students to familiarize with day-to-day work and management of real situations.

**Content:**

Partnership agreement

- Partnership is led by an authorized person employed by the School Career Centre (see below Initiative n°4). Career Centre prepares contracts between schools (universities) and companies, approaches companies that have the same field of interest as the university and arranges personal meetings with representatives of companies. The company can even contact the university through a form published on the web page of each university.
- The university can offer PR at social events, contact with students and other HR activities, collaboration with research activities carried out by the university, cooperation with the implementation of various projects.
- Each university can choose its own structure of the partnership (general partners, main partners, other partners).
- There is a possibility to look for foreign partners on the website of Erasmus+. Contact seminars, Database OTLAS and Eurodesk can be also very helpful.

Website and Database

- See below in Initiative n°3.
- Preparation of educational programmes for students/recent graduates aiming at building skills in order to meet requirements of the potential employers in cooperation with private sector.

**Funding:**

- Schools/universities, companies, grants, international organizations.

## 2. UNIVERSITY COURSES BOOSTING SELF EMPLOYABILITY

**Problem:** Educational system does not provide the students with practical knowledge about how to start their own project and does not entice students/recent graduates to set up their own businesses.

**Objective:** To teach the students how to set up their own businesses through business development courses in order to enhance their self-employability.

**Content:**

**Courses**

- Package of complex courses focused on preparing the students for every aspect of setting up and running a business, such as creation of a business plan and market study, basics of taxation and accounting, HR, etc.
- Project development and project management courses and language courses at universities as part of the last year of university education.
- Establishment of obligatory courses focusing on development of soft skills such as communication, personal development, presentation and negotiation skills, mastering interviews, teamwork etc. These courses may take a form of non-formal learning.

**Funding:**

- Schools (students)/universities, grants.

### 3. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Problem: A lack of practical knowledge and professional experience.

Objective: To incorporate internships as an obligatory part of last year of studies at universities in order to allow the students to get practical knowledge and professional coaching in private sector. In this way, the students gain their first work experience, establish work contacts and boost their employability.

Content:

Internships

- Internships should be organized by the School Career Centre which should liaise with private sector and build valuable partnerships. While interning, the students work on a research project connected to the topic of their internship. The research project is subsequently evaluated and the student receives credits for it.
- Foreign partners – Erasmus, OTLAS database, Eurodesk.

Establishment of an internship website and database of potential internships and potential interns.

- Direct connection between students/graduates (max. two years after graduation) and potential employers (companies, institutions or other organisations).
- Students create their personal profiles: contact details, high school and university field (major/minor specialisation, subjects etc.), international experience, praxis, knowledge of foreign languages, areas of interest.
- Employers can search among the registered students according to their required indicators and get in touch with the (pre-)selected ones. Employers can also publish job offers on the website.

Funding

- Companies, national subsidies, EU grants or a mixture of financial resources.

## 4. CAREER CENTRES AT UNIVERSITIES

**Problem:** Students are confused about where to look for a new job, which career they should choose etc. They are not well informed about job offers or internship opportunities.

**Objective:** To set up a career centre at each university with special consultants advising the students. To spread information about job or internship opportunities among students and prepare them for the selection procedures. To help the students with the choice of future specialisation/orientation.

**Content:**

Provision of information

- The Career Centre should be beneficial to a student's career growth. It should communicate all available information to students and professors, help the students use their potential and define realistic requirements towards their potential employers.
- Information should be focused on internship opportunities, working experience, and further education possibilities that would help the employability of the student.
- The Career Centre takes care of the university Career Centre Webpage where relevant information and important forms are to be found.

Feedback form

- The Career Centre distributes feedback forms to university students. Students can send the form to the HR manager they were in touch with during job/internship interviews.
- The feedback form (see Annex 1) includes easily answerable questions and helps students develop missing skills and learn from the failures made during interviews.

Partnership building and communication with private sector

- The Career Centre should develop partnerships with private sector in order to provide the students with quality internships.

Funding:

- Schools (students)/universities, grants.

## 5. STUDENT CLUBS

Problem: A lack of practical experience gained during university studies.

Objective: To found student clubs focused on improving knowledge of foreign languages or academic knowledge by inviting experts from different fields to give lectures on different topics. Students also volunteer to educate each other in subjects that are relevant for others.

Content:

Student clubs

- Student clubs are founded and led by a group of students – “orga-team” – under a patronage of a faculty department.
- Selection of a club’s name, charter and specialisation is necessary.
- Consultation with Vice-dean responsible for pedagogical activities is needed.
- Membership is either voluntary or paid by club’s members (students) for one semester/academic year to cover possible costs of organising events (mainly material costs). Some universities are able to provide student clubs with financial support.

Events

- “Orga-team” may organise conferences and lectures of experts from given fields and promotes these events.

Funding:

- Students, schools/universities.



## 6. SHARING BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

Problem: Professors do not have practical knowledge.

Objective: To arrange lectures/traineeships for professors taught by professionals with practical knowledge who can provide the professors (and the students) with practical field knowledge/practical skills.

Content:

Practical lectures

- Schools/universities engage more professionals from companies/institutions.
- Professionals share personal experience and prepare students for a real job or setting up a company (mentioned in Initiative n°2).

Traineeships for professors

- Professors should be informed about new methods, procedures and principles used within companies/institutions so that they can provide the students with adequate information.

Funding:

- School/university, companies.

## 7. THE FINAL ASSESSMENT

**Problem:** Employers have no other way to know about students' qualities but the CV. This problem can be solved by creating a university's final assessment provided to a student after the final exam.

**Objective:** To provide potential employers with information describing student's performance, contribution to university activities and initiatives outside the university in order to reveal student's core qualities.

**Content:**

**Final assessment**

- Within the termination of the university, the university will issue a final assessment –written assessment analysing student's work and initiatives.
- The final assessment is issued in response to a student's request and can be issued by a chosen professor.
- It contains a description of student's performance at relevant classes, including student's active participation in lectures, results in exams and all seminars and a recommendation addressed to potential employers.

**Final assessment form**

- The final assessment is made in cooperation with a defender of Bachelor/Master thesis. Therefore the Final assessment form (see Annex 2) includes an evaluation of student's Bachelor/Master thesis and an assessment of student's activities during studies.

**Funding:**

- School/university.

## SUMMARY

Although each job position and each sector is different, it is necessary to keep in mind that the obstacles that young people are currently facing have a lot in common. The solution of youth employment obstacles lies not only in the hands of universities, state authorities and companies, but also in those of the applicants themselves.

This paper analyzed the biggest issues related to youth unemployment and suggested initiatives aimed at improving the harmony between students' capabilities and employers' needs, as well as the cooperation between universities and companies. In order to overcome the youth employment obstacles, the paper recommends to found university career centers and student clubs, open additional courses for students and professors, support cooperation in internship opportunities, introduce a specialized webpage interconnecting students with companies and provide students with relevant information.

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**1.**



## ANNEX 1

### FEEDBACK FOR UNSUCCESSFUL JOB / INTERNSHIP APPLICANT

Please provide an applicant with a feedback and determine the reasons why the applicant was not chosen:

#### PRAXIS

- Lack of experience needed for required position
- Irrelevant experience needed for required position
- Appropriate experience needed for required position
- Excessive experience needed for required position
- Experience did not play an important role
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### STUDIES

- - Missing university degree needed for required position
- - Irrelevant field of studies
- - Appropriate field of studies needed for required position
- - Overqualified for required position
- - University studies did not play an important role
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- Missing knowledge of foreign language(s), which? \_\_\_\_\_
- Insufficient knowledge of foreign language(s), which? \_\_\_\_\_
- . Appropriate knowledge of foreign language(s)
- Knowledge of some foreign languages that is not required
- Knowledge of foreign language(s) did not play an important role
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### EVALUATE (1 – the best, 5 – the worst, x - not part of a selection procedure)

▪ - Verbal communication	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Non-verbal communication	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Ability to persuade	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Teamwork	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Quality of motivation letter	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Quality of CV	1	2	3	4	5	x
▪ - Appropriate dress code	1	2	3	4	5	x

## ANNEX 2

### FINAL ASSESSMENT FORM

CRITERIA OF EVALUATION	POINTS MAXIMALLY	POINTS ASSIGNED
THESIS	50	
Structure and content of the thesis	25	
Practical part – cooperation with companies/public sector	15	
Choice and usage of resources	5	
Formal and language structure	5	
ACTIVITIES DURING STUDIES	50	
Organization of university events	10	
Participation in/management of university projects	10	
Internship experience	10	
Work/studies abroad	10	
Research activities	10	
OTHER COMMENTS		
TOTALLY	100	