

The project “Internships for Young Job Seekers” helps to tackle unemployment of fresh graduates

The Czech Republic, as well as the entire European Union, is confronted with a lack of employment opportunities for young people. Most companies do not want to recruit fresh graduates due to lack of practical experience. The project “*Internships for Young Job Seekers*” should compensate for such a drawback by means of providing opportunity to gain working experience and thus increasing employability and competitiveness of future graduates in the labour market. The project also aims to facilitate contacts between employers and potential employees. Above all, students acquire much needed working habits and practical experience in their field.

The three-year project will be concluded in 2015. It is being implemented by the Continuing Education Fund (Fond dalšího vzdělávání – FDV) institution funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The project is expected to provide support to 840 pupils and students from across the country.

Pupils of the last grade of secondary schools and students of the last two semesters of tertiary technical schools (VOŠ) and higher education institutions (VŠ) are entitled to participate in the project. Selected internship needs to be in line with the trainee’s field of study. Internships last between 1 and 3 months (50 – 300 hours) and can be completed also during the summer holidays depending on individual agreement between a company and a trainee. An e-learning course focusing on soft-skills development is a compulsory part of the internship. Candidates get also individual counselling helping them with orientation when for the first time entering the labour market. In the course, they learn how to write a cover letter or CV and they acquire necessary skills for the first interviews. Through participation in an internship, they acquire practical experience; get familiar with the working process and firm culture, get acquainted with the given field matters and get opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice. Internships for pupils and students are paid; they get CZK 60 (approx. EUR 2.5) per working hour. The project does not enhance or modify school curricula. That means that it does not interfere in any way with the school duties of the applicants, it is purely a leisure time voluntary activity.

Internships might be provided by private sector entities as well as non-profit sector entities. Internships provide employers with the opportunity to test young job seekers before the conclusion of a long-term employment relationship. Trainees that are selected by the companies perform determined tasks under the supervision of an experienced worker – mentor appointed by the provider of the internship. Trainee’s salary and internship costs in the form of partial re-fund of the mentor’s salary will be paid to the company ex-post from the project budget.

The first internships were launched in June 2013. The interest of students as well as employers keeps growing and in line with that increases also the expected number of newly initiated internships. Economics and administration, sales, marketing and management are the most demanded fields on the part of trainees.

Further information available at: www.stazepromlade.cz.
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