Case studies at Coimbra Group Universities and their potential generalization

“Promoting employability through higher education”

Prof. Ilaria Poggiolini
Vice-Chancellor for International Relations
University of Pavia

The Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, Brussels
The goal: acquiring relevant, expendable dynamic knowledge in the course of higher education

This means developing specific competencies/skills instrumental to employment without sacrificing academic standards

How can we achieve this goal?

✓ adapting curricula within HE
✓ connecting the adaptation of curricula to work-based learning and intense cooperation between Universities and business leaders
ADAPTING AND ANTICIPATING

✓ Dialogue between stakeholders should be established in order to develop **transversal skills**

✓ Embedding employability in higher education needs close cooperation with stakeholders **outside academia**, especially actors within the labour market

✓ Priority should be given to the analysis of how university curricula can be
  1) developed and
  2) intertwined with the acquisition of sets of skills expendable in the labour market and constantly evolving
A COOPERATIVE SCHEME

✓ We have aimed at matching the experience of Northeastern University’s students entering the workplace with up to 18 months of professional, career-related experience due to their co-op and experiential learning experience.

✓ This approach is based on the idea that an equal partnership should be created:

• **Students are paid a wage** (but do not require company benefits, such as health insurance)
• **Students must have broad exposure** to rules, mechanisms, projects and people in the workplace.
• **The energy of talented students eager to learn are expected to emerge** and make a difference in the workspace.
✓ It’s a consortia of Italian universities created precisely to identify such sets of skills by collecting data regarding graduates entering and moving within the job market
✓ Counts 74 Universities and represents about 90% of Italian graduates

Main Tasks:
✓ Annual survey of graduates’ profiles (internal effectiveness of the higher education institutions)
✓ Annual survey of graduates’ employment condition 1/3/5 years after graduation (external effectiveness of the higher education institutions)
✓ Online database of more than 2.5 million CVs contributing to the understanding of the matching of supply and demand of graduates
✓ Internationalisation: skills and research activities in a global perspective, cooperating with EU Countries in line with the Lisbon Strategy, and also non-EU countries, particularly in the Mediterranean basin and most recently in Asia
Experience of Cooperative Education and Career Development at [Northeastern University](#) has provided a very significant precedent in elaborating the Pavia model.

**Why?**

It has inspired our University, regional/national business leaders and local authorities to reflect on how we can ease the access of academic talent to the workplace and create new competences at the same time.

**Assuming that:**

We can provide our graduates with a level of critical thinking and problem-solving skills enabling them to contribute from the very beginning to the performance of the host organization.
THE PAVIA MODEL AND THE TERRITORY

UNIVENTURE PROJECT: A UNIPV BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

OBJECTIVE

- stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation by combining different but complementary skills in academia, business and industry (including PMI and startups)

HOW

- innovators collaborate with students in drafting a business plan to be presented at the key event: "FAIR OF IDEAS"

AWARD

- n. 1 award of € 10,000 for the best Business Plan;
- n. 2 awards of € 5,000 each intended to support patent applications or the software development necessary for the proposed business project

DONOR

Municipality of Pavia

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

- anyone who has an innovative entrepreneurial idea and is interested in turning it into business in the short term
- Established Startup or micro/SME registered with an annual revenue, which in the last 3 years has remained lower than € 150,000 euro
- Preference is given to projects led – as project leader - by a student at UNIP
OUR Degree Plus (LM+)

How does it work?

This is not a standard Master Degree Program offering more or less extended periods of work experience

✓ This is an integrated experience of learning and acquiring professional competences within a common framework that academia and business come to share

✓ Degree Plus is designed over 5 semesters instead of 4: 2 of them aimed at acquiring academic AND professional competences

✓ In practice the hosting business/industry partner outside our University negotiate and commits itself to a program with specific learning goals that is bound to be constantly reviewed and updated

✓ Perspective students can be involved in this process getting to know business/industry partners of the university and their activities
LM+ AT GLANCE

✓ Students enrolled as part-time

✓ 5 semesters
✓ 12 months internship
✓ 7 Master programmes
  ✓ Advanced Biotechnology
  ✓ Chemistry
  ✓ Electronic Engineering
  ✓ Philosophy
  ✓ International Business and Entrepreneurship
  ✓ Mathematics (new)
  ✓ Physical Sciences (new)
✓ 40 Companies involved

✓ 500 € per month basic salary
✓ Only the best (5 to 10 students)

Selection process:
• students’ curriculum
• personal disposition (motivation, capacity to adapt, etc.)
• interview with the project partner organizations

✓ 2 Tutors: 1 academic mentor and 1 company programme manager
supporting and advising students also in view of their final dissertation
✓ 2 assessments (midway and final)

Objectives gained by the student both on a learning as well as on a professional level
Unipv signed a two-year cooperative agreement with Accenture aimed at students’ professional training

UNIPV hosts:

- **Seminars offered by ACCENTURE employees on topics related to technological innovation and business and open to UNIPV students:**
  - The future is now: how to prepare for a changing job
  - Internet of things: building a connected world

- **CMS - Career management skills**
The course consisted of 4 meetings discussing the following topics:
  - Self awareness and problem solving
  - Innovative processes and bankruptcy management
  - Leadership styles (including case simulation)
  - Job interview via storytelling

- **Recruiting Days**
Business intelligence skills of young talented candidates was examined offering them the opportunity of meeting Accenture professionals and be potentially selected for job interviews
PROJECTING INTERNATIONALLY OUR IDEAS AND EXPERIENCE

Merging ad hoc curricula in higher education and traineeship strategies

Partner Countries involved: Lebanon

CONSORTIUM
University of Pavia, University of Poitiers, University of Tampere
• LAU, LU, Université Antonine – UA, LIU, USEK, AUB
• UNIMED
• European Association Career Guidance
• Chambers of Commerce business organizations from Lebanon
• Education for Employment

OBJECTIVE
• building on best practices already implemented both in EU and MENA regions
• rethinking the curriculum of master courses in partner HEIs via a process of comprehensive involvement of local business and industry
• Introducing internship placement as a component of the curricula as well as modules aimed at the acquisition of soft skills by creating partnerships with both business and NGOs
CONCLUSIONS

✓ Our Degree+ model has just been launched and is a work in process

✓ It revolves around a basic idea: promoting cooperative joint higher education/business & industry teaching/training projects such as Degree+ or the Accenture initiative

✓ We aim at cooperating with academic and business partners as well as local authorities and NGOs at local, regional, European and global levels

✓ Our capacity building project in the MENA region aims at working closely with University and business partners in areas characterized by the highest level of graduate unemployment