



TAMPERE POLYTECHNIC  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

FINAL THESIS REPORT

**Effect of internships as part of studies and preparation for entering  
work force**

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**ABSTRACT**

The thesis is created with the help of Placement UK, a leading European student placement organization. The company provides students and graduates internships and graduate jobs mainly in the United Kingdom.

The research topic was discovered during my work placement for the company when students of different European nationalities contacted the company in order to receive practical experience through a work placement in the United Kingdom. Some students did this voluntarily and some as a mandatory part of their studies in order to be able to graduate as well as because of smaller, underlying reasons like wanting to go abroad or improving language skills

This thesis aims to illustrate the role internships and work placements have for students as part of their studies. Also the effects it has for them as they move forward and enter the work force and answers questions about how valuable and beneficial the students themselves feel the work experience they have undertaken is to them.

The task of finding out students' views was done through two surveys, one sent through the use of the Placement UK website and another one using the writers own professional and personal contacts. This extensive survey asked the students views about whether they believed their particular internships are / were beneficial and also whether they were beneficial in general, whether they felt their universities provided enough support and how they saw their futures as graduates. In conclusion various opinions were outlined that help to illustrate how the students of today feel about their studies in the world of globalizations and exactly how vital experience and international experience is for them.

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**Key words:** HR, Internships, Work placements, Graduate jobs, Student point of view

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## **Introduction**

### ***Research background***

During my internship at Placement UK, in Kenilworth, England, some seemingly consistent issues with students and their behaviour towards internships and placements were noticed. I was personally undertaking a mandatory work placement as a part of a business degree like the main part of the students who rang the company up. Placement UK is an UK based placement company for students and graduates and my responsibility at the company was the student side of things. The two placement students working there at any given time were the first contacts most students had to the company and we were responsible for processing their details and handling their queries and possible issues and problems.

What was discovered while working there during the six months, was that students seemed very interested in coming over to England to do a placement or an internship for some time. Not only to learn the language, as English is still considered the business language of the world in most European countries and the students are well aware of the need to know how to speak the language, but more importantly students from all over Europe, were very keen on undertaking placements in a foreign country even when such things were not really encourage by their home universities. In fact it was discovered that a seemingly shocking number of universities did not have mandatory placements, so to gain practical work experience those students had to take a year off and do it voluntarily. Those students really wanted to do it to gain work experience in a foreign country in the field they were studying, believing it would aid them in the future, after graduation. Some of the students, who were placed for various work placements, did stay on in those companies after finishing their internships.

This in turn got me interested in whether the students really felt it made a difference in their lives if they did a placement (or several) and if they felt they learnt valuable

skills during those months that they worked at the different placement companies. And whether it really influenced what kind of job students found immediately after graduation and where they found it.

There are also universities around Europe that require 2-3 internships during 4 or 5 years of studies as a mandatory part of studies and this thesis set out to discover whether the length, country and actual work at the placement has an effect on the start of their future career. The concentration of the research on this thesis has fully been on the student point of view. Specifically to find out how the students felt about the whole process of finding and doing a placement, if their universities helped them in it, namely, if they felt they received enough support and guidance. Finally, what happened when they entered the workforce as graduates? Does undertaking placement have an affect on landing a job as a graduate?

### *Scope of topic*

Since there are thousands of universities in the world and Europe alone, a decision had to be made concerning how wide or narrow the topic should be. Ultimately, although I was interested in Europe as a whole, a decision was made to concentrate the main efforts on four countries in Europe, namely France, UK, Finland and Germany. This was in part because of the personal connections and contacts made within the countries in question, but also because based on own experience; it seemed that the countries had very different points of view on the subject and I wanted to explore it further. Another factor affecting the decision with the chosen countries was the fact that no matter which countries were chosen, the thought was that it would regardless give a wide overview of students across the world, because the days when students studied in their home country alone are long gone. The main part of students go on an exchange these days or even to foreign countries for their whole degree studies, so even though these four countries mentioned as were chosen as the main subject countries, it was thought and discovered that it included a quite varied selection of nationalities in those countries from literally all over the world.

The scope growing too large was a concern from the beginning, because it was a fear it would become too much handle for the purpose of this thesis so it was a natural choice to concentrate some efforts on specific schools within those countries to, choosing and wanting to target at least a couple of schools from each four. From England the University of Chester were chosen, because of personal connections there and the London School of Business and Finance, from France I chose Euromed Marseille, ESCE la Defence (where I spend my exchange semester) and the University of Lille (Lille 1). From Finland I chose my own school, TAMK and Haaga Helia and from Germany I chose the University of Fleisburg. I knew that all these schools had quite different policies in respect of internships and work placements which made choosing them easier.

The main aim of the thesis was of course to gain a more general understanding of how students feel about doing placements and whether they in fact believe in them and to what degree they actually think they make a difference. This was done in cooperation with Placement UK who allowed access to their database and provided assistance and their expertise when necessary.

# Placement UK

## Introduction to Placement UK

Placement UK is the European Student Placement Organization. It provides a specialized service designed to help the very best European undergraduates to find internships or placements in the UK. We place hundreds of European Students into UK businesses every year to gain invaluable practical experience.<sup>1</sup>

## History

Placement UK began 11 years ago when a French marketing student wanted a placement in the UK. He found a small marketing company that was willing to take him on. After a happy and successful 6 months he returned to his University, leaving the host company with a gap in its organisation.

The marketing company contacted the French university and arranged for another student to take a placement with them. Clients and colleagues were interested to hear a different accent on the telephone and wanted to know more. They were quick to realise the benefits that placement students might bring and asked how they could recruit students themselves. A business concept was born.

Over time the business developed, from finding students for those businesses that asked for them, to actually proactively looking for UK businesses who could offer placement opportunities to European students. In 2002, Placement UK became a separate business with its own management team and in 2005 it became an independent limited company.

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<sup>1</sup> Placement UK About Us

## Today

Placement UK is now growing rapidly. It has hundreds of client companies all over the UK – in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Although many are based in major cities – London, Birmingham, Manchester, Belfast, Edinburgh for example – there are placement opportunities in small towns and rural areas too. And the client base varies from major international corporations to small private businesses; from accountants to engineering to e-commerce.

Through contacts with over 1500 University and Business School Placement Officers or Course Tutors across all 25 EU member states, Placement UK receives hundreds of student applications each month. After appropriate screening and interviewing processes, students are starting their placements practically every week of the year.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Placement UK about us.

## *Internships / Work Placements*

Internship is a word used more commonly in the American continent and still carries the negative connotation of free labour. In the UK, much more commonly used term describing it is work placement.

Internships and work placements are most commonly defined as temporary work experiences where students are being provided opportunities to gain experience in their field. It offers students a chance to explore a potential career without having to make a long-term, life decision. By actually participating in a field that interests them, not only giving the opportunity to "get your foot in the door," but also to acquire practical skills and make valuable contacts. Even if they learn via their internship that they would never enter that particular career or corporation, they have learned something of immense value.<sup>3</sup>

Work placement is typically done during the second or third year of studies, and during this period the student is supposed to use the things he/she has learned in school and put it in practice. This way the student gets work experience in their field of study. The gained experience will be helpful to finish up the last year of the study. In addition to securing good work experience, students also may be able to gain academic credit and financial compensation (albeit modest in size) for internships<sup>4</sup>

Internships are unfortunately still sometimes marketed to employers as providing the employers with cheap or free labor for (typically) low-level tasks (stereotypically including fetching coffee for the office). Today luckily many business owners and managers realize that internship programs can provide them with an early opportunity to gauge the talents of a new generation of workers and, in many cases, sell themselves as a quality place for students to begin their careers after they graduate, requiring little or no training. They may also prove to be invaluable recruiting tools for the companies, when they return back to their respective

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<sup>3</sup> Introduction to Internships

<sup>4</sup> Benefits on Internship Programs

universities as students listen to their peers and often trust their opinions more than those of campus representatives or professors. The cost of recruiting permanent employees is reduced as students become familiar with the opportunities the organization has to offer and top students are attracted to permanent positions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Benefits of Internship Programs

## Survey

The survey, which is the focal point of this thesis, was designed and sent out at the start of September. It was constructed during August 2008 as a three-parted questionnaire. Consisting of, first the General Information –part, where students were asked basic demographic questions such as sex and nationality, name of university, study subject and year of graduation. The second part consisted of questions relating to work placements carried out (with a referral to another part had the students not done any work placements during their studies). The second part addressed issues like what kind of internships the students had undertaken, how many and for how long, whether they received help from their school for it, how they felt about it, if it was beneficial etc. The third and last part asked questions about their thoughts and beliefs about internships in general and their effects on studies and their future as a graduate. The last part comprised of questions such as; whether they felt the internships will help them in the future, about their weaknesses as graduates and whether they believe that doing a work placement benefits them as something an employer will look positively at from their CV.

The survey was sent in two different versions at the beginning of September. One through Placement UK, and one through personal contacts. They only varied in one question, because Placement UK asked me to inquire the students about where they had heard of placement UK from so I added that question to the second section of the survey that was sent out using their database. It was kept open for three full weeks, so that all the students who were interested in participating would have ample time to respond. Over 200 of the responses came over the course of the first 24 hours. Altogether 405 responses were received during the allotted time period.

Altogether approximately 3200 surveys were sent out to people around Europe. The exact number is difficult to say because some friends forwarded the survey to their friends and asked them to forward it to theirs. The response rates were good for this type of surveys. The goal was to get at least a 10 % response rate for the results to be

valid. I received an approximate 12.6 % response rate to the survey, which is more than enough responses for me to use them for the purpose of the thesis.

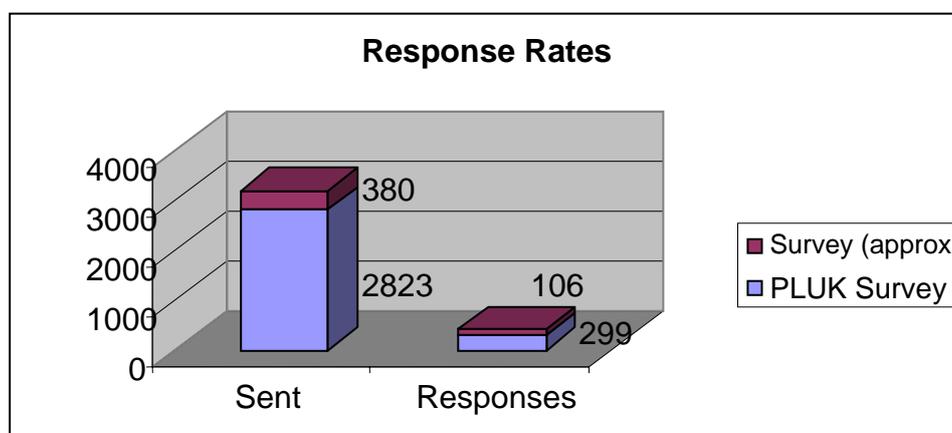


Figure 1: Response rates

For the purpose of analyzing the responses the best possible way, the results of the surveys have been combined together as one and will treat them as a single survey with the exception of the first few charts. This was done to better illustrate how the responses were formed from the two different surveys.

Table 1: Response rates for both surveys

	Sent	Responses	%
PLUK Survey	2823	299	10,59 %
Survey (approx)	380	106	27,89 %
Totals	3203	405	12,64 %

As can be seen from Chart 1 and Table 1 the response rates are adequate for the results to be taken into account. Especially from the survey I personally targeted to personal and professional contacts received a good response rate. I was also pleasantly surprised how some of the people I sent the survey to forwarded it to their friends and thus increased the number of responses to over 100. The biggest surprise at first was perhaps the number of different nationalities replying to the survey; altogether over 40 nationalities were represented in the responses, even if the majority came from the four chosen countries.

## 1 Demographics

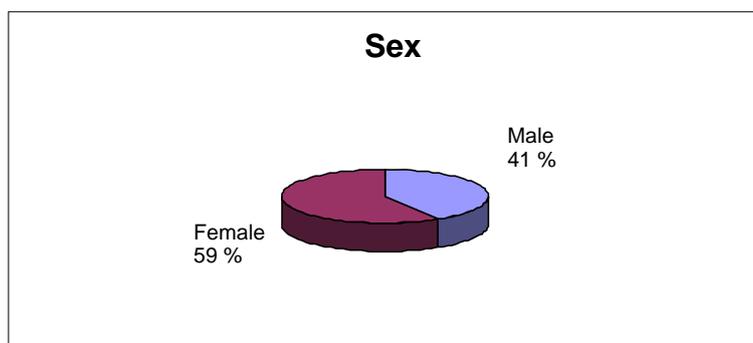


Figure 2: Respondent distribution among genders

The survey's 405 replies were distributed between sex 168 males and 237 females and represented 46 different nationalities (as illustrated by table 2) and came from schools from 18 different countries all together. They represent well the generation of the students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, meaning students who are not limited by confinements of one school and one country, but rather are free to travel and live and study amongst their current network of different universities in different countries. The students of today understand the importance of going abroad, living and experience different cultures to learn how to adapt and develop language skills and other practical skills so that they are not limited later on when they graduate and enter the work force by missed opportunities. Because of the vast amount of nationalities, the students responses are mainly going to be looked at based on the main country of studies in the hopes of making the result easier to understand and thus receiving a clearer image of what kind of differences there are between countries, but also how many similarities there are.

Table 2: Nationalities

<u>NATIONALITY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>		
French	155	Turkish	1
British	24	Mauritian	1
Finnish	55	Sri Lankan	3
German	50	Albanian	1
Indian	9	Moroccan	3
Nigerian	4	Ethiopian	1
Romanian	3	Estonian	1
Bulgarian	4	Pakistani	2
Dutch	13	Salvadorian	1
Polish	9	Portuguese	1
Chinese	12	Cameroonian	1
Spanish	5	Ivorian	1
Italian	6	Singapore	1
American	3	Zambia	1
Danish	2	Tanzania	1
Mexican	1	Vietnamese	1
Canadian	2	Ghanaian	1
Russian	2	Swiss	1
Moldavian	2	Czech	2
Belarus	1	Thai	0
Brazilian	2	Lebanese	0
Malian	1	Other	6
Hungarian	2	Total	405

The table above illustrates how many responses were received from each country. Altogether almost 50 nationalities were represented in the responses. Altogether 1455 surveys were sent to French students which represented almost half the surveys sent and shows why we received so many responses from them.

Altogether I received responses from over a 100 Universities across the globe. Most of them were Universities across the four targeted countries but some responses came from every continent on the planet. This, and the number of nationalities, can be explained by students travelling around, doing semesters as exchanges students in any country they want to, and also vice versa. Many students currently studying or

having recently completed a semester in various European Universities also replied to the survey.

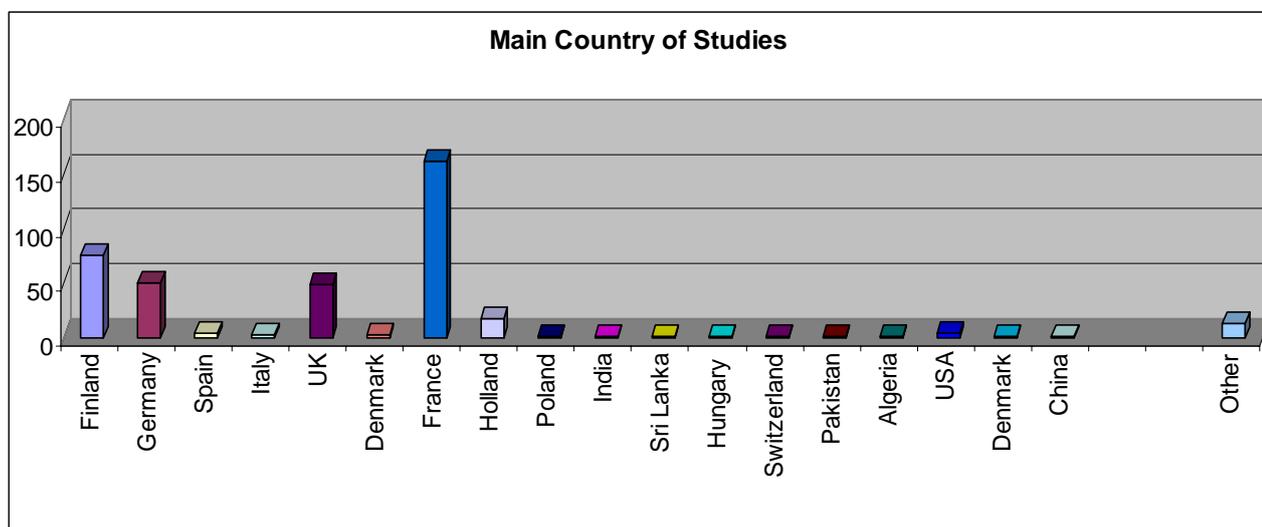


Figure 3: Main country of studies

The students responding to the survey had 18 different countries marked as their main country of studies as illustrated in both Chart 3 (above) and Table 3 (below).

Table 3: Main countries of study

Country	PLUK Survey	Survey	Totals		PLUK Survey	Survey	Totals
Finland	20	56	76	Hungary	1	1	2
Germany	41	9	50	Switzerland	1	0	1
Spain	3	1	4	Pakistan	1	0	1
Italy	3	0	3	Algeria	1	0	1
UK	46	3	49	USA	0	4	4
Denmark	1	2	3	Denmark	0	2	2
France	156	15	171	China	0	1	1
Holland	7	10	17				
Poland	2	0	2				
India	2	0	2	Other	12	2	14
Sri Lanka	2	0	2	<b>TOTALS</b>			405

As is illustrated, the majority of the responses came from students from the target countries set out in the beginning. A total of 85.43% of the responses came from students studying mainly in Finland, France, Germany and the UK. The 14 Other responses were students who had not understood the question correctly and said something else than a country in their response, such as their field of study.

Most students are/were doing a 4 or 5 year degree, meaning Master studies. This question received an unfortunately great number of wrong answers. The question might have been expressed in a slightly misleading and thus being misinterpreted by the students to be about something else. Altogether 258 correct answers were given about the length of their studies in years and the rest of the responses had to be discarded.

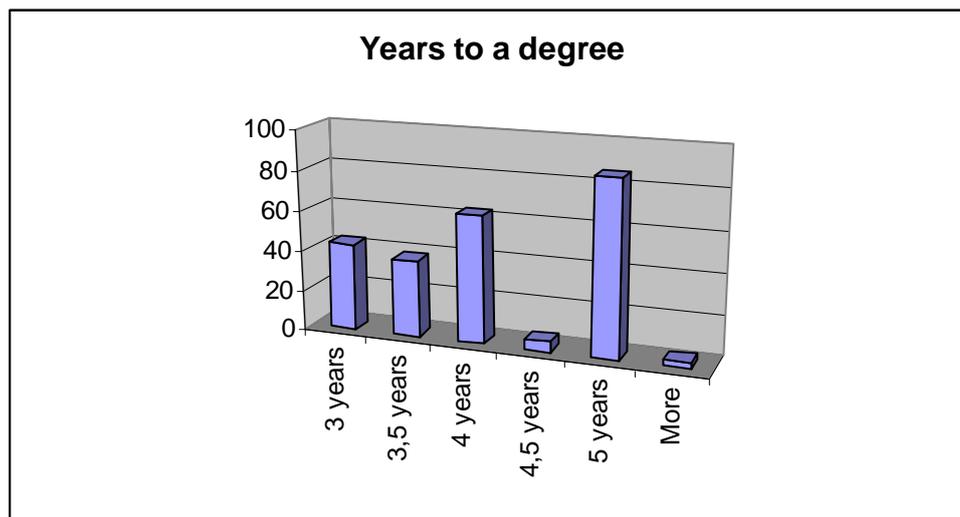


Figure 4: Years to a degree

Most of the responses came from Business students, either doing a general Bachelor or Masters degree in Business and management or International Business, or one in a very specific field of the general subject ranging from HR to finance to facility management to quantity surveying. Altogether 335 responses came from Business related studies. This represents 83.13% of the responses. Other fields of studies included IT and Engineering and everything from sociology to tourism and chemistry.

Table 4: Top study subjects<sup>6</sup>

Business Administration	107
International Business	106
IT	29
Marketing	28
International Trade	22
Finance	16

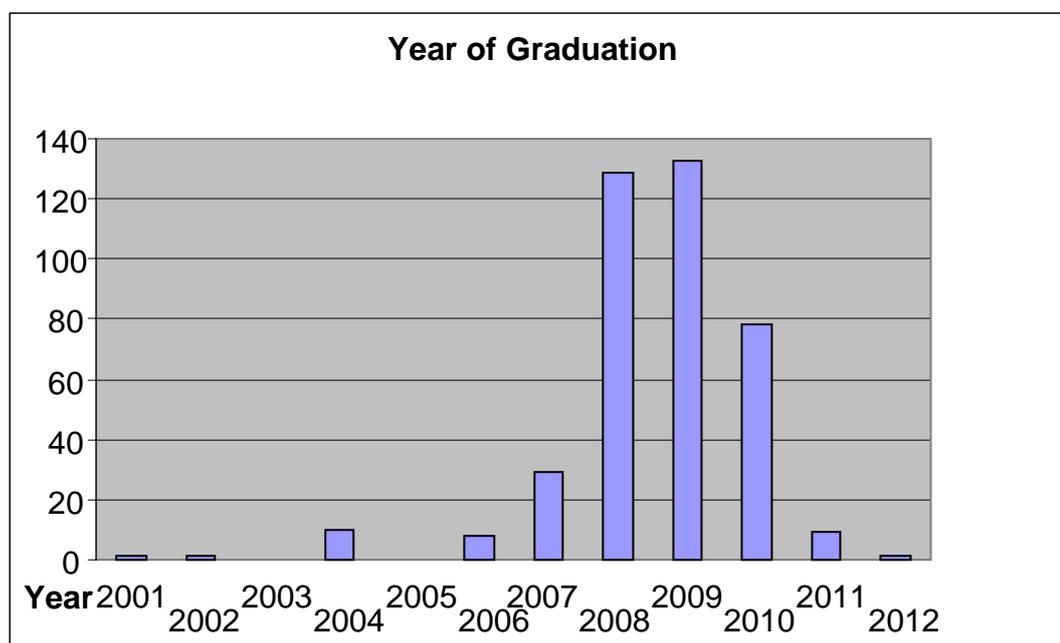


Figure 5: Year of intended graduation

Majority of the respondents have either graduated already this year or are about to graduate this year still; or next year. But the survey also reached a wider variety of students graduating in a total of 12 year span in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This was especially good because this way I was able to reach a wide spectrum of students in different parts of their lifespan. Some had already graduated a couple of years ago and had entered the work force completely or were just about to graduate. And of course there were the students just about to carry out their first placement. Altogether the students formed a good mixture of ideas and preconceptions that were surprisingly similar for them all.

<sup>6</sup> See full Table 4: Study Subjects, pg. 63

## 2. Work Placement Questions

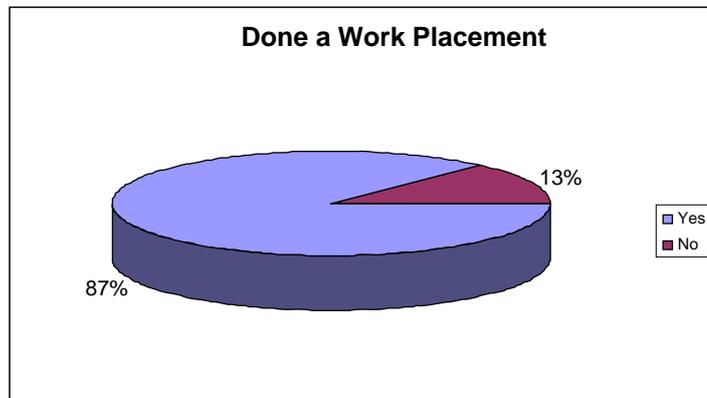


Figure 6: Work Placements carried out

Out of the respondents to the survey, the majority had carried out an internship. In fact, if the question had taken in to account the students who were yet to do an internship the number would probably have been greater.

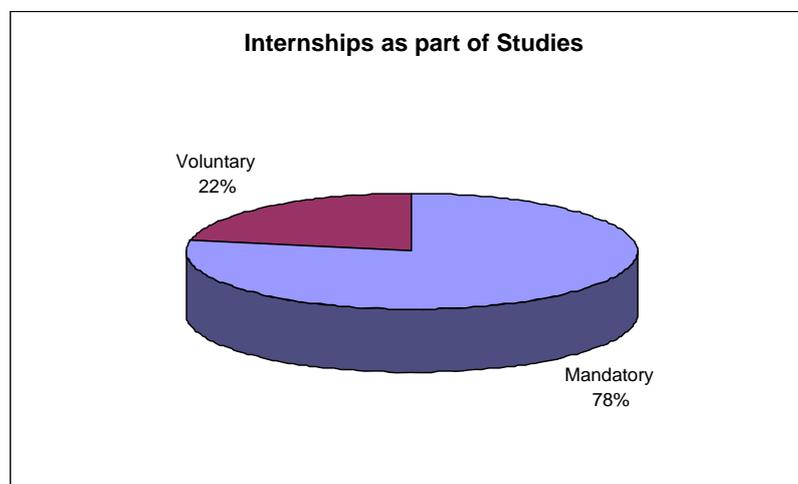


Figure 7: Internship mandatory or voluntary

From the students who carried out internship(s) during their studies, for the majority it was a mandatory part of their degrees. In other words they needed the credits and would not have graduated without it. More interesting is the amount of students doing internships voluntarily. For some, it meant taking time of studies and doing the whole process without much help or support from their respective universities. Those students, representing 11 different countries (including the 4 target countries

with 84.36 % of the responses) chose to do their internships because of a desire to go abroad or to gain practical experience and thus a competitive advantage.

One interesting thing about the students who did their placements voluntarily to note; out of the total respondents from the UK universities 42.86 % (21 out of 49) did their internships voluntarily (not as a part of a sandwich year placement etc.). Looking at the numbers for the others, of the main target countries: Finland 2.65 % (2 out of 76), France 11.70% (20 out of 171) and Germany 18 % (9 out of 50) it is clear that in the UK, the emphasis on work placements as a natural valuable part of a degree is not at the same level as in other parts of Europe.

## 2.1 Number of Internships done

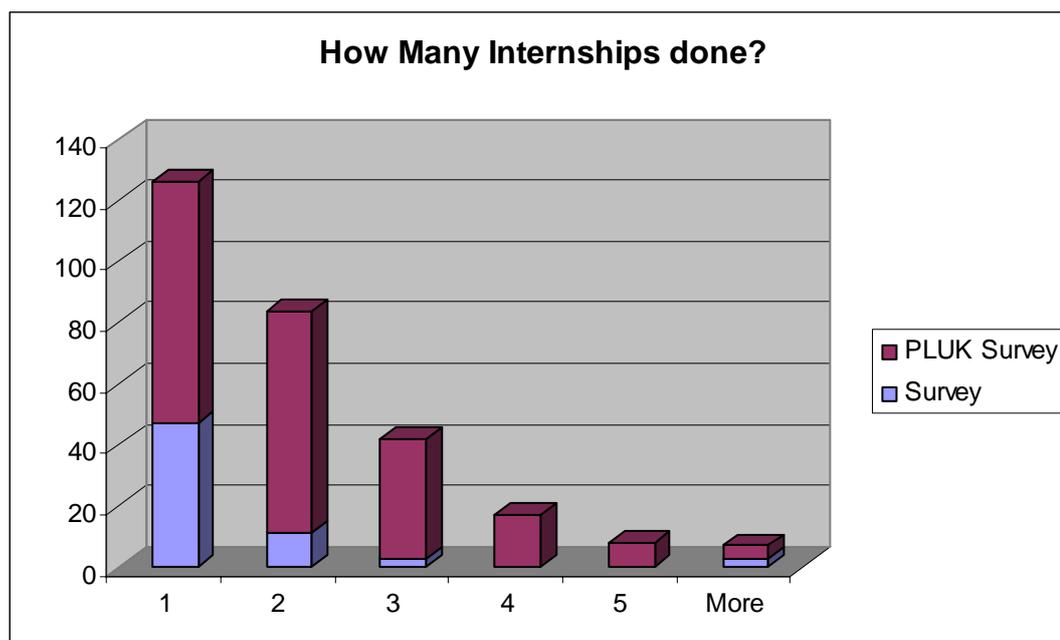


Figure 8: Number of internships carried out

As Figure 8 above illustrates most students undertake one or two placement during their studies. This is probably where the largest difference between European countries lies when it comes to work placements and internships. Mainly only French students do more than two placements usually during their studies. This became very clear while doing the totals of students who are doing or have done

more than 2 placements during their studies. In fact 87.67% of students who did more than 2 placements were French. In addition to the French there was one UK student who did 3 placements, 5 German students who did several short placements and 2 Polish students who undertook 3 placements. In fact in France it is almost a norm that the students go work at a company for a while every year of studies and the further their studies progress, the longer the time period becomes. Almost half of the French students who replied to the survey (47.78%) undertook more than 2 placements and they were the only country where it was possible to do 5 or more placements during their studies.

## 2.2 Length of the internship

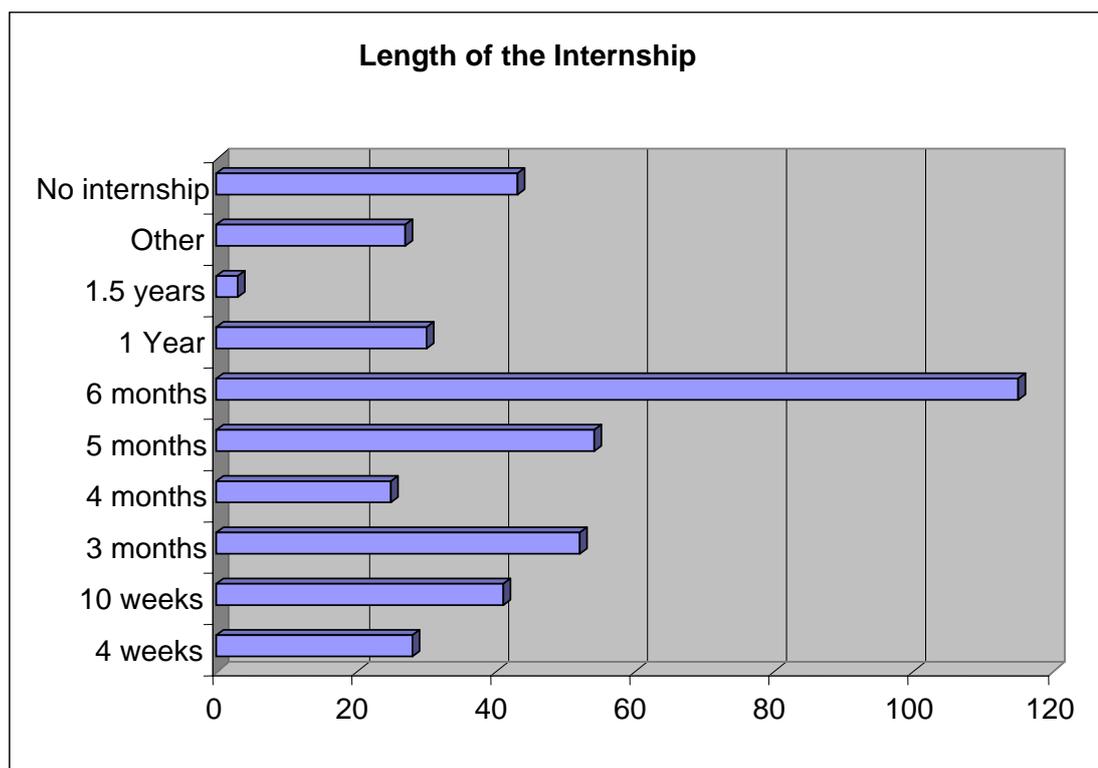


Figure 9: Length of internship

The lengths of the internships varied quite a bit, for the students who did only one placement, the length was typically longer, a placement year usually for the UK students, 5-6 months for the Finnish and European students, shorter for the students who undertook several once during their studies. Generally speaking the shortest

work placements were at least 4 weeks but there were a couple of French examples where their first internships were only 2-3 weeks. In France the last internship (depending on the degree, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year) was 6 months. Other than the French schools system for work placements, and the sandwich year placements in the UK, students generally speaking, undertook similar length placement regardless of which country they were studying in.

## 2.3 Placement UK

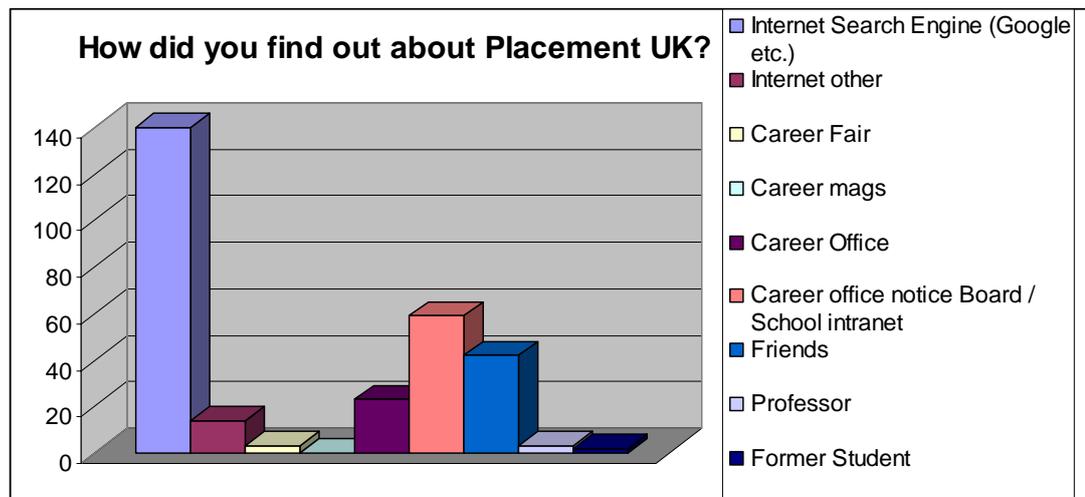


Figure 10: How students found out about Placement UK.

The students that were reached through the Placement UK database were asked an additional question about how they found out about Placement UK. Out of the 286 responses to this question 48.95 % of students found out about the company through Internet, namely Google search engine. The other half of the respondents found out about the company through their school. Either through the career office at their university or from their placement officer or from the school intranet or notice board (either electronic or physical). And the rest namely found out about the company from their friends and other students who had been successfully placed for an internship through Placement UK.

## 2.4 Places where students start looking for their internships versus the place where they find the work placement in the end

Internet is the most common, easiest and most accessible way for most students to start looking for internships. 79.58% of the respondents said that internet was the first place they went to look for information. Over half of them (52.2%) went directly to different Placement websites, such as Placement UK (in UK), Jobstep (in Finland), CIMO, Kapstages (in France), Prabo or Berufsstart or Wirtschaftswoche (Germany) and many others. Others trusted Google in search of their work placement, or went directly to different companies' websites or their schools' intranet to find something suitable.

The second most popular place for students to go to was of course the Placement Office at their respective universities. This is especially true for the English. In the UK, the placement offices of some schools have strict guidelines for their internships which means that all the internships that their students do go through them, and those students don't really need to look for placements themselves, rather than just choosing and applying to the placements they have on offer at their Career offices.

Most students of course did many of the things listed below in the figure 11, as quite often it was not enough to just browse opportunities from the internet so they used all the resources that they had available to them. Some students called all the companies that were located in the area they wanted to work at; some sent their CVs directly to them and some even went to career fairs to try make beneficial contacts. Career fairs were definitely typical concurrence in France as no other students mentioned them at any part of the survey as a means of finding a work placement. And of course a few had the opportunity to stay and work at the company they'd already worked at, either part time or as a summer employee.

One of the most interesting things to note was how often in the end personal contacts and relationships came to play in the actual finding of the work placement. Quite a few students said they listened to their recommendation or advice when they

were looking and especially choosing the company. Also some students mentioned that they, in a sense, passed around placement opportunities. One English student said she found hers from her flatmates who got two so she received the information about the other one and called them up and got the placement. Of course she had an interview and was through that deemed suitable for the role, or she would not have been successful.

The most interesting shift happens when looking at the difference between where the respondents started to look for a placement and where they found it in the end.

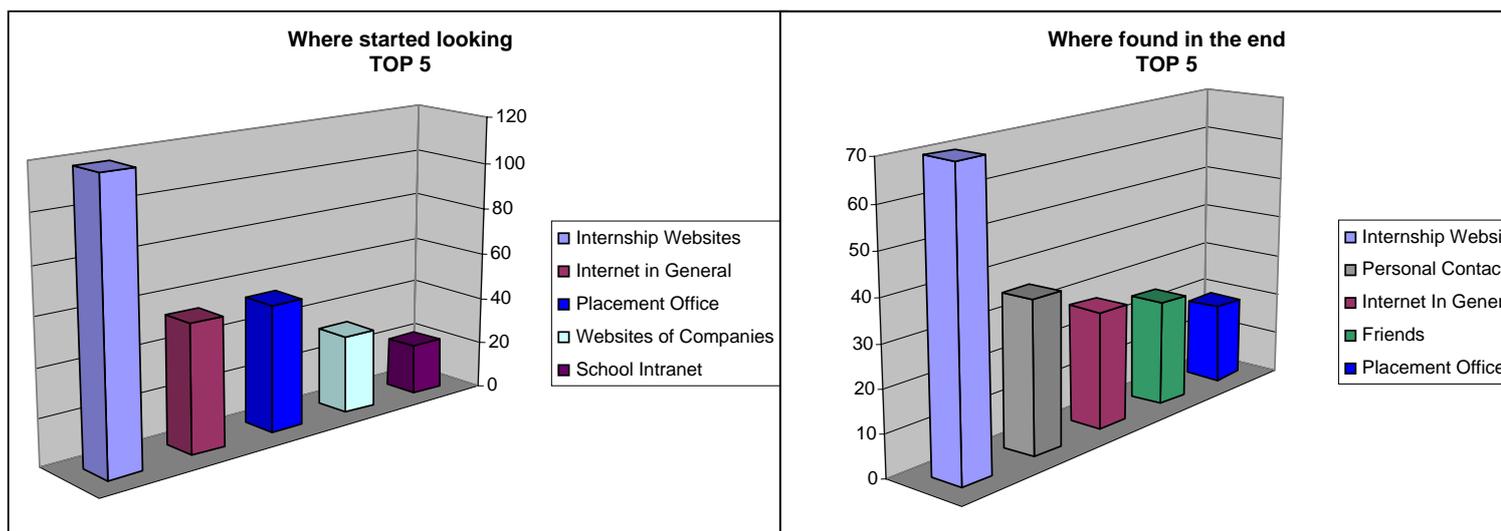


Figure 11: Comparison where students started looking or their internships versus where they found them in the end<sup>7</sup>

Most students used the internet to look for their placements and as is illustrated it is the most common way for them to find an internship as well. But there are others. In the end, almost as many students found their internships through their personal contacts or their friends as through internship websites. And it was interesting to note how the School's role was actually not that significant in finding a placement in

<sup>7</sup> See full Tables 5 & 6: Where started looking for Internships and Where found in the end, for reference, pg. 68-69

the end. That shows that the students own initiative plays a significant role in their search for a placement as well as personal relationships established before.

## 2.5 Completed internships

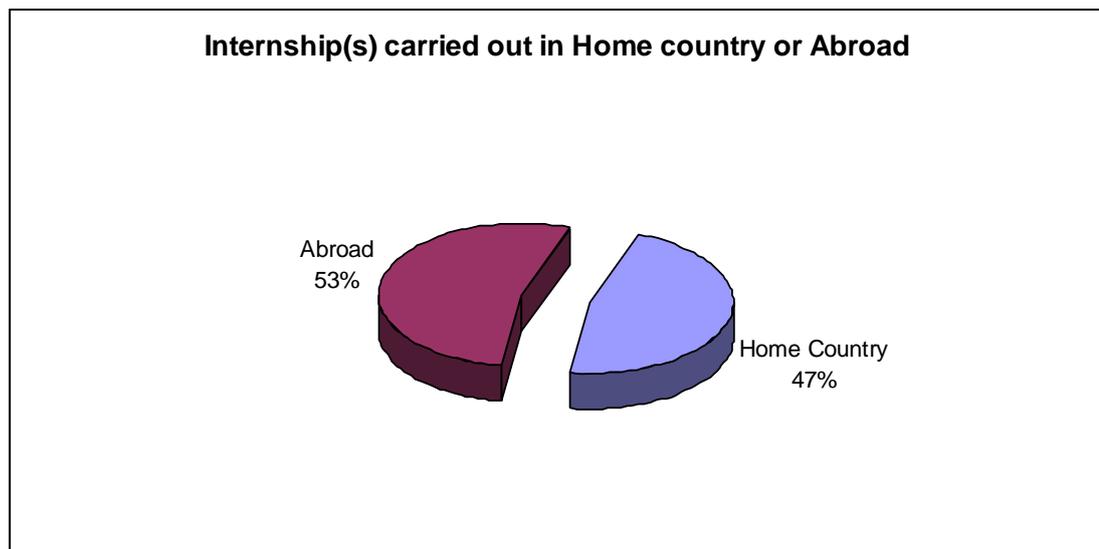


Figure 12: Internship at home country or abroad

Just over half of the students have carried out internships in a foreign country. This figure of course includes also students who completed both internships in home country and abroad and does not include the students who are yet to do their work placements. Out of the countries where the students went to for their internships, English speaking countries on top of the lists for most (UK, USA & Ireland), but no country was out of bounds really. Students went to experience the different working environment and culture all over the world.

## Internships abroad

Table 5: Country where internships abroad were carried out

UK	91	Dubai	2
France	17	Sweden	2
Germany	15	Morocco	2
USA	14	Australia	2
Spain	12	Estonia	1
Finland	6	Haiti	1
Ireland	6	Poland	1
Belgium	5	Benin	1
Switzerland	4	Senegal	1
Italy	3	Luxembourg	1
China	3	South Africa	1
Thailand	3	Mexico	1
Netherland	2	Norway	1
Singapore	2	Indonesia	1
Canada	2	Mauritius	1
India	2	Brazil	1
Czech Republic	2	New Zealand	1

## 2.6 The benefits of internships to studies

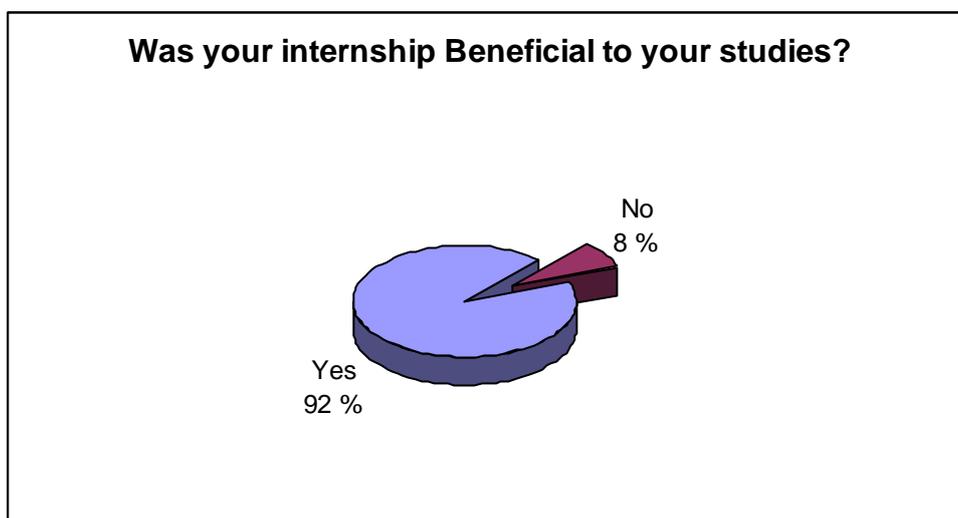


Figure13: Was Internship beneficial?

Generally speaking the students seem very pleased with their internships. They didn't all like them as a job or as working environments, but still recognized the benefits they had for their future careers. Sometimes the benefit of doing a work placement in an otherwise horrendous company was that it provided those last few study points needed for graduation.

Most students feel that it really did give them some practical experience that was, not only beneficial to them, but looks good on their CV and helps to differentiate them from the competition. Helped put theory to practice was probably one of the most commonly used sentences as an answer to why the respondents thought it was beneficial to them. It is true that school mainly only teaches theory and carrying out an internship or a work placement does help to put what is learnt in to the correct environment at the work place. The insight a work placement gives makes it all make more sense. Although some students complained a bit about the size of the company they did their work placements for, they also acknowledged the benefits of it. Because some of the companies were quite small, they got to do many different kinds of tasks and were also given more responsibility. And that way maybe got a better flair on to what life will be like as a graduate at that first real job.

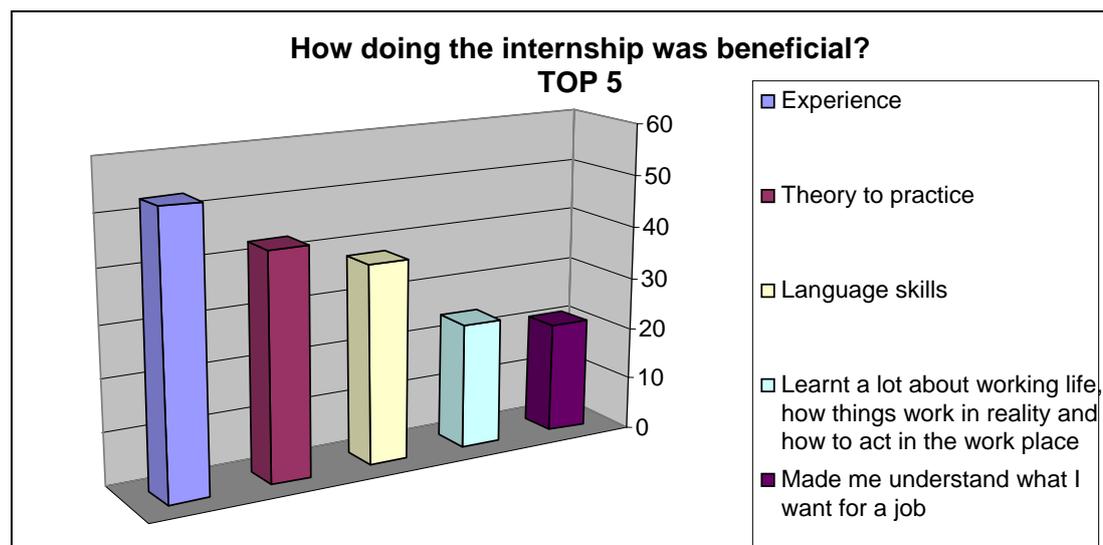


Figure 14 – How doing the internship was beneficial<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See full Table 13 How doing an internship was beneficial for reference, pg. 66

It also helped many students to understand what they wanted to do career-wise after graduation. Helped to understand what it would be really like to work in real company after graduation and what the real working conditions are like. That in turn made them realise what they liked and did not like better. For example one French student who did her internship in China said it made her realise she did not want to focus on leadership development, but also that she would like to work in Asia again. Another French student said that although the Placement was not overly great it was a good opportunity to start networking and building up for the future international career and he discovered his passion for working in cultural melting pots.

Carrying out a work placement also served as a self-esteem booster, valuable in giving the students more confidence to face the future and made them realise what their strength (and weaknesses by default) were. For the students who went abroad for their placements, they learnt to adapt to a different culture and were able to prove to themselves that they were able to survive and cope in a foreign environment and culture by themselves. And for quite a few it helped to increase their language skills, something that all students view as a crucial thing in today's ultra competitive work culture, no matter what country they are working. Living and experiencing a foreign culture and being immersed in a foreign language helped develop those skills and learn both while working at their placement and outside of it.

The main complaint the students who did not feel like they benefited from their internships was that they were not able to do much there. It was either that they felt underutilized and bored to be treated like they were only there to fetch the coffee, or the work had nothing to do with what they studied and had signed up for. Other things they mentioned that made their internships bad; some managers treated their interns like they were free slave-labour and asked them to do a lot of over-time for no compensation, or the whole experience was poorly organized. And then there were a couple of students who said that they were not provided with a long enough placement for it to really be beneficial for them.

## 2.7 Schools' guidance before and during actual placement

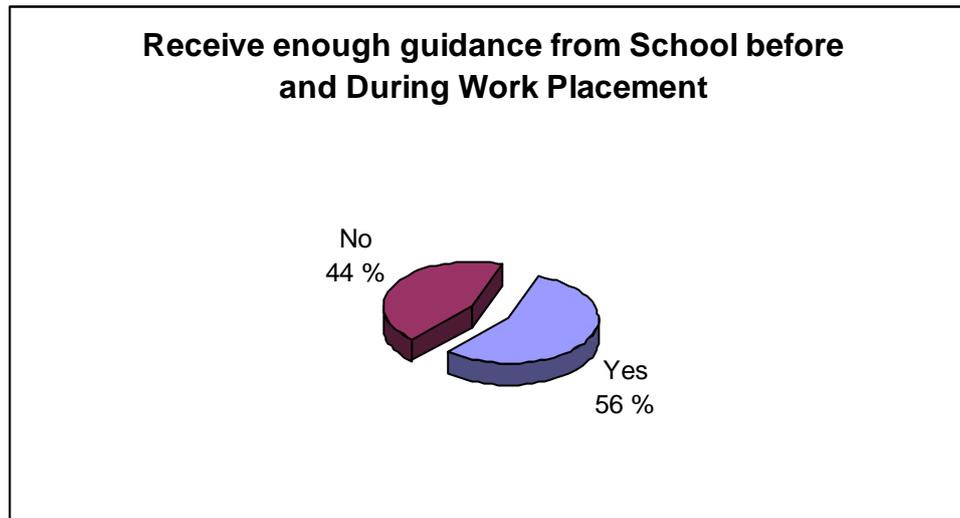


Figure 15: Guidance from school before and during placement

The answer to this question from the students was slightly surprising for me. A surprisingly large portion of the students felt they did not receive enough guidance and support from their school when they were preparing for their internship and during it. However as I was reading the students replies and thoughts on this question it became clear that this was partly a result of their expectations for the school as well as what the school actually did for them. The expectations the students had varied from one end to the other. Some simply expected the University to have an active part in everything and some expected nothing from them and did everything themselves. Those students did not really want or require any further instructions or guidance. And then there were the rest of the respondents who were something in between the two extremes.

For the students who felt they received enough help and guidance the reasons were that varied. Most had a teacher assigned as their Placement officer who provided help before hand in a variety of ways. Some received help with their CV writing and by organizing mock interviews and the actual searching of the internship. Especially in the UK, the internships often come through the Placement office so the students did not have to do much for them. Also students from France and the UK pointed out quite often that their school were well connected with businesses and that helped

in finding a suitable placement. Students were instructed about what to expect when living abroad, how to apply for a Visa when needed and generally what to expect from life in whatever country they were going to. Also some Universities made sure their students knew of the grants there were available to them (like ERASMUS). My own University emailed me to make sure I would apply for ERASMUS which I probably would not have done as I received some money from my internships and was under the assumption that I could only get it if the company did not pay me.

During the placement the teacher assigned as their Placement officer came to visit the work place to check it out and make sure everything was alright there. This was mentioned especially by the French. Quite a few students said they felt their placement office was there if they needed help. Most of them though did not and their work placements ran smoothly. Other contact mentioned was from the school by emails, and some universities expected a weekly, or monthly, report about how the placement was progressing.

Then there are the students who seem to feel that they did not receive enough help and guidance but rather had to do everything on their own. However, there is some kind of balance in part, in whether they thought it was good or not; difference in thinking whether it is the goal for students to do it on their own and feeling neglected by their universities because they did not receive enough help and then the people who did not want it, who did everything on their own and liked it.

Some did not receive any help because it was not a part of the course they were doing. Those students were allowed to take some time off to gain practical experience, but it was not credited to them directly and thus the University did not view it as their responsibility to help. One German student studying HRM said she took a year off to do some placements and her school did not even tell her she could still have the ERASMUS grant, even though they signed her placement contracts.

Some students did not receive any guidance from their university about where to look for an internship and what to expect and one French student said he wished he had, because then he would have been better able to choose a more appropriate placement. Another French student said that when she started looking for an

internship, her Placement coordinator was completely new and had no idea about internship in the U.S. so she had to find everything herself which felt very stressful at times. Especially considering that the students looking for internships have school and exams to do as well, not just search for suitable placement opportunities.

Generally speaking, the students from Germany seemed most displeased with the help their school provided. Although students from different countries said they felt that the Career service for abroad placements just was not well developed, it was mainly the students from Germany, who felt they did not have good opportunities to go abroad because it is much easier to find a placement in their home country. At least their career office had some contacts in the home country. Other sources of displeasure for them were that the work placements were not mandatory part of studies and that there just was not clear organization to help them. At least one student's business school did not even have a placement or a career office at all. Another German student doing a BBA degree said that during his placement mandatory internet sessions with the school were established at fixed times that conflicted with his working hours and just simple made life more difficult and frustrating.

For the French students, who were generally pleased with the help they received (seems like finding placements is well organized in most French schools with a few exceptions), their main concern / complaint was about the slowness of the process. There were always administrative delays and the likes which was frustrating for the excited students ready to explore the world.

Some students pointed out that they had no contact from their University during their placement and that they just did not seem interested if there were problems.

## 2.8 Usefulness of doing an internship

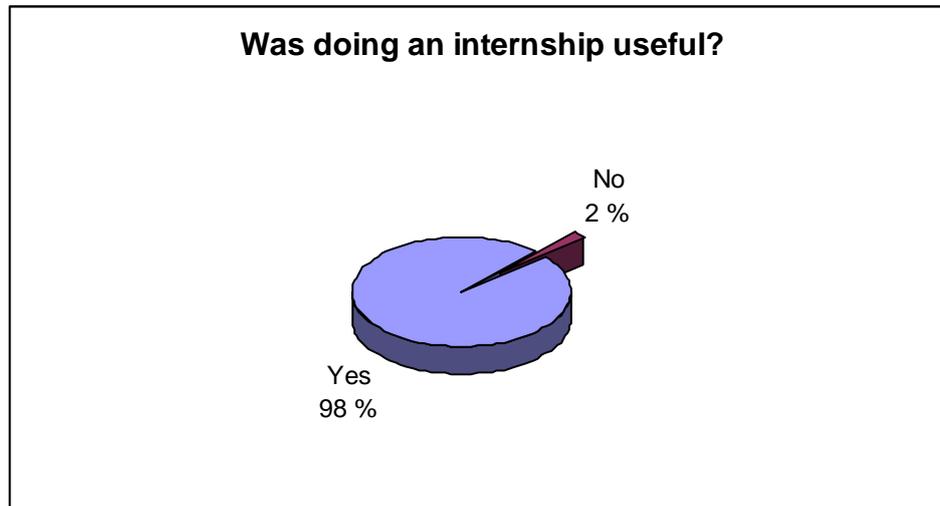


Figure 16: Usefulness of Internship completed

Almost all respondents felt that doing an internship is/was beneficial & useful for them. The few students, who said it was not, were all students who had already undertaken their placements and they had not worked out well. One student said that she was made to feel second-rate during the whole experience and the others said that it was a waste of time or just poorly organized for them.

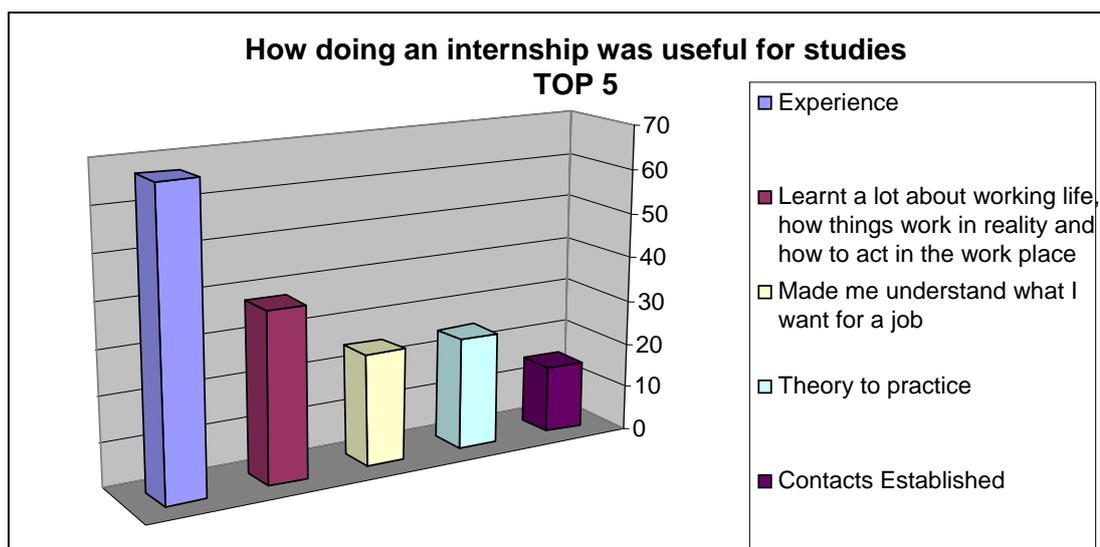


Figure 16: How doing an internship was beneficial / useful TOP 5<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Table 16: How doing a placement was beneficial for reference, pg 66.

When looking at the main reasons why the students felt it was beneficial to them, Experience came first. This was manifested in many ways. For most students it was the first and only contact with real working life in their fields of study and they relished the opportunity to build up practical experience for their future careers. Also because the students were doing a placement and were not paid full salary, they got to experience more different fields at the companies, try out roles and responsibilities that might not be available as start up positions.

For some it opened doors that might have otherwise stayed close. It might have come in the form of a good work placement certificate, or being able to do their thesis or dissertation for the company after the internship; and some were offered employment at the company after finishing their studies. Some, who were hoping that it would open doors for that career, were slightly disappointed when it did not lead to an employment contract because for them, that was the primary goal.

However it still provided them with that practical experience and gave them a feel what it would be like to have a real job at the particular field in question. It guided them in understanding what they liked and did not like, and what they would like to do for a career later on. This for some, was of course very important as they had not been entirely sure of what they wanted to do, and for some it served as validation that they were in fact studying the right thing. Furthermore, for some that they did not really want to do that particular job for the rest of their lives. One student from Germany, studying logistics, said that he realised that the kind of work his placement was did not suit him, and that he was now in the process of changing his perspectives and approach to his studies.

The second most often given answer was that it helped them learn a lot about actual working life and most importantly how things work in reality in a normal company. Universities and Business school teach the theories but the reality of a working place was sometimes quite different and without the work placements and internships students would not have the opportunity to see what it is like there in reality, the everyday functions of a company and how it differs from the things learnt in schools. Of course, besides the practical experience they received and the broader view it gave the students, it also really helped put the things taught in school in to practice. Also helped understand better why those theory lessons are important.

For the students who went abroad, it of course helped them with their language skills and helped boost their confidence and other soft skills (intercultural skills etc.), even time management and being disciplined. Knowing that you can cut it in a foreign, sometimes very different culture, served well in showing the students their strengths and the things they needed to work on and completing the internships made them feel good about themselves. They said that it encouraged them and helped them in ways that it would not have been possible had they stayed in their respective home countries. Those students supported going abroad for work placements very firmly.

Making contacts and friends was especially important for some of the students. Especially those who went abroad said that a part of what made the experience great was the possibility of gaining professional contacts and especially making new friends. Those contacts and friends can of course be beneficial later on as well, in helping find a suitable job as a graduate or at least point to the right direction.

I can personally attest to it on both accounts too. I did not go abroad to make friends or experience a foreign culture as I have lived in England for about three years out of the last six; and will go back to live and work there after finishing my studies, but I still gained some new friends from different countries because of the other international students working in the same company and building. In fact one of my best friends now is the Dutch student I shared a house with during this time period. And personally I valued the whole experience because it provided me with more professional experience and showed me that I really enjoy studying and working in an HR role. Finally because I met quite a few employers through my work and I do believe some of them might remember me a year or two from now and it might be helpful when starting a career.

For some it was the time and place where they learned how to really work, how to be efficient. They learned the entire life span of a company, that it is not that easy to start up your own company, that there are a lot of questions to make, that communication is essential, that we always have to fight and prove what are the

capabilities and reasons behind it. That kind of experience is definitely invaluable for those thinking of starting up their own companies.

Finally it also served as a transitory phase for some students, easing them in to the working environment as a part of their last year of studies. One student said it served as a kind of a trial period for entering real life. In any case, it eased the way to become a graduate and enter the work force properly.

## 2.9 Improvements for internship / Work placement(s)

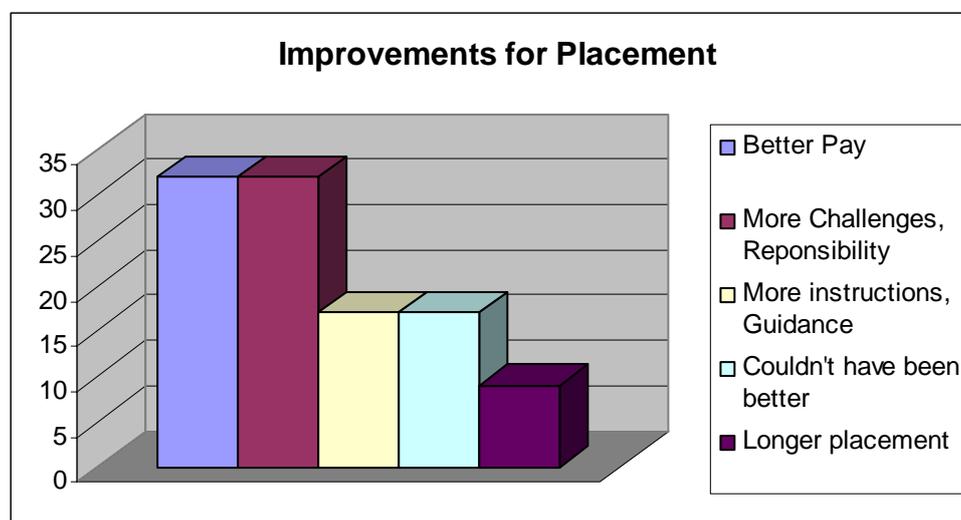


Figure 18: Improvement for placement TOP 5<sup>10</sup>

When asked how the Internships and work placements could have been better for the students, the most common complaints revolved around pay, responsibilities, given better instructions and the length of the placement.

The pay was the most common single issue for the students, alongside not having enough responsibility. Some did not get paid at all or only got a small allowance that was not enough to cover basic living expenses. Countries such as the Scandinavian countries have a good system where students get government allowance on top of possible remuneration and EU funding and thus it is easier to go abroad to do

<sup>10</sup> See Table 17: How could Work Placement have been better for reference, pg. 71

internships. Whereas in countries like Germany where internships and work placements are often still not a mandatory part of the curriculum, they are more often unpaid and even EU funding in the form of Leonardo Grants (which are most common in the Mediterranean countries) and ERASMUS are not so common.

Then again, money was not really a major complaint, most students who mentioned it, mentioned that it would have been nice to receive more money, so that they could have enjoyed more the whole experience and had been able to do more things. Living in and experiencing an expensive Metropolitan like Paris or London requires quite a bit of money. At the same time they said they still liked their internships and acknowledged that they were there to work after all, not holiday.

The length was an issue for all the students besides the French, where it is a norm to do several work placements as a part of a normal degree, so more than students from any other nationality; they feel like they receive enough practical training to enter the work force. Especially some English students who only had an opportunity to carry out a 3 to 6 week placement (or sometimes two) felt that they did not have the opportunity to properly explore the working life and develop an understanding what they really want for the future as a career. The short placement provided them more an opportunity to observe the work normal working environment rather than adapt to it and learn actual work skills. But then again even six weeks was plenty of time for some students to discover what they definitely did not want to do in the future.

Mostly the other complains revolved around outer things. Matters such as company size, bosses, holidays, working hours (over-time, working weekends) could have and should have been arranged better for the students.

The actual company where the placements took place was something unexpected for quite a few students. Mainly the size of the company. Quite a few students were surprised at the sheer size of the company, namely how small it was. Some turned up on their first day to find a one-man business or an office with fewer than 10 employees. Some said it was also good because it provided them with opportunities to do more varied tasks and they also received more responsibility and thus learnt more.

At the same time, some of those students felt that an internship at a bigger company would look better in their CV and provide them more of the kind of experience that future employers would appreciate even if the responsibilities and tasks at those companies would be more limited and stuck to the original role. For the students who did carry out their work placements in big multi-national companies, their main complaint was in fact that they did not feel like they had enough responsibilities and challenges.

Small office environment provided problems of its own as well, namely from the other employees. When working in a small office with only a few people, everybody is in close contact with each other and that provided some students with unforeseen problems. Sometimes there were not enough boundaries with what was spoken about and the spirit at the office was not always ideal. Some students also would have preferred to be surrounded with more people, especially people of their own age.

Finally, the manager was something that provided some students with issues regardless of nationality. The complaints were about them not communicating or providing enough guidance and just generally not being very nice to them. Perhaps the most shocking comment came from an English student who undertook a placement year at a UK company. She said that her manager told her he did not know what a placement student was and did not know why she was there, so she had to spend three months filing and doing other non-important work to prove she could be trusted with more responsible work.

Quite a few other students said they felt that the managers they had were just treating them as free work force to do the things they did not want to do themselves and were not very nice which sometimes created tensions at the work place and finally also that they did not give enough guidance to make the experience as meaningful as it could have been.

All and all, the students seemed pleased with their internships. Even if they realised it was not something they wanted to do as a career or it was not thoroughly

enjoyable. It still provided them with practical experience and better understanding of what is out there and what they need to do to better prepare for the future life.

## 2.10 Work Placement's role in finding a job after graduation

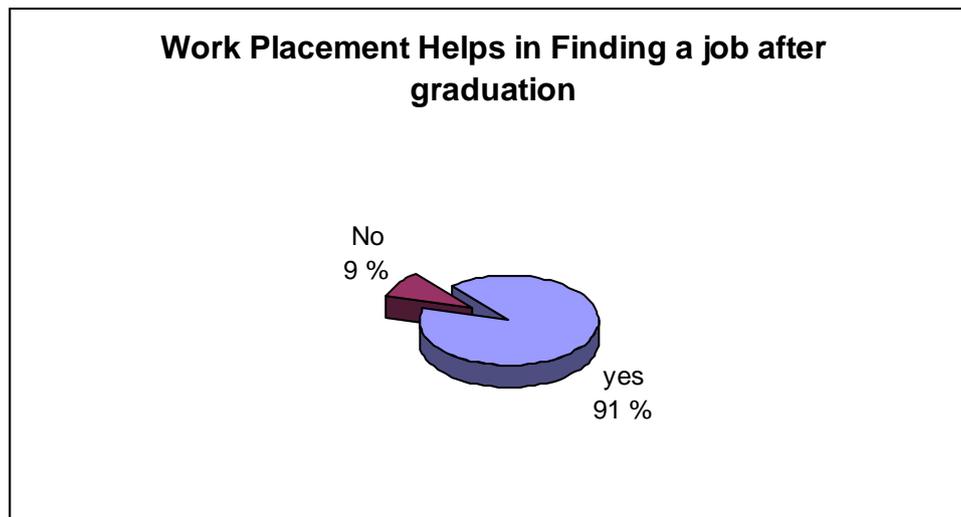


Figure 19: Work placements role in finding employment after graduation

The general consensus amongst the students seemed to be that any work placement is a benefit after graduation when looking for a job, unless it was completely and utterly away from the field of studies. One French student pointed out that because they did a linguistic internship at her school, they missed out five months of real internship in an enterprise; and even though for her five-year degree she still has another six month internship coming up next year, she is worried that she now lacks the necessary experience because of that internship done already. Another student said he could only find an internship at a restaurant which he felt was completely useless.

Most of the respondents said that their internships and work placements had to help because it served as the only experience they can realistically speaking have, when entering the work force after graduation. These days' employers look for graduates who have got experience in their industry of choice. Since it is difficult to do jobs while studying, internships are viewed to be a good substitute to the regular jobs in the hopes that companies might like that.

A couple of Finnish students pointed out that they carried out their internships at well-known multinationals in Finland. One of them said she got a permanent position at the company's logistics department. Of course that is as much to do with personal working habits during the placement as the actual placement. The same seemed to be the case for a decent number of other students in different countries. Altogether 15 students said they got a permanent job at the company they did their internship for.

The other Finnish student pointed out that he felt it was very beneficial because no matter where he would apply to after graduation, all the companies would recognize the company he did his internship for so it will give him an added benefit. The same was echoed by students from other European countries. Especially for the French it seemed important to do their internships in big companies that are respected and known across the globe and their general thought seemed to be that there was a better chance of landing a permanent job at the company after the work placement and that it looked better in the CV than just a normal placement. Much the same way as it was thought that having international work experience was an added plus.

The experience abroad specifically was raised by some students. One student studying in Denmark, but doing an exchange semester in England said he realised that in the UK experience is considered more important than the degree. An English student said he received a call-back from a company he had applied for earlier because they liked his CV (and especially his international experience coming for his internship). They had filled the position he applied for originally but arranged a second position for him at the company. One French student pointed out that big, multinational companies in France look for students with at least 6-12 months of experience abroad as an entrance requirement so having the experience is a must.

Doing an internship abroad also shows the potential employers that the students can and are willing to adapt to a different environment, different language and work culture. It benefited also indirectly by helping the students start growing their own networks which might be useful later on in life.

It is not just for the experience that students felt benefited by carrying out internship and that they would help later on. Another thing raised was that it also helped them understand the job market and what kind of jobs were out there and thus what they themselves would like to apply for when entering the work force. It also served to help them understand themselves better. What things were difficult for them and what things easy and where they needed work on themselves before graduating.

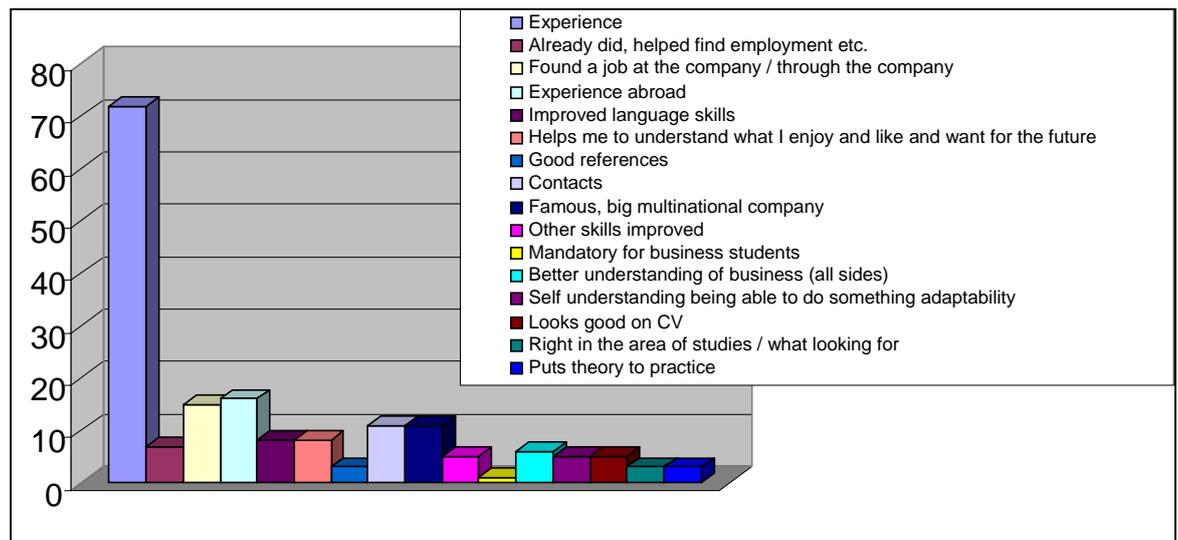


Figure 20: Main benefits why internships help land a permanent job after graduation<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Table 19: Why students believe doing a placement is beneficial in finding employment after graduation for reference, pg 74

### 3 Students who have not done internships as part of studies

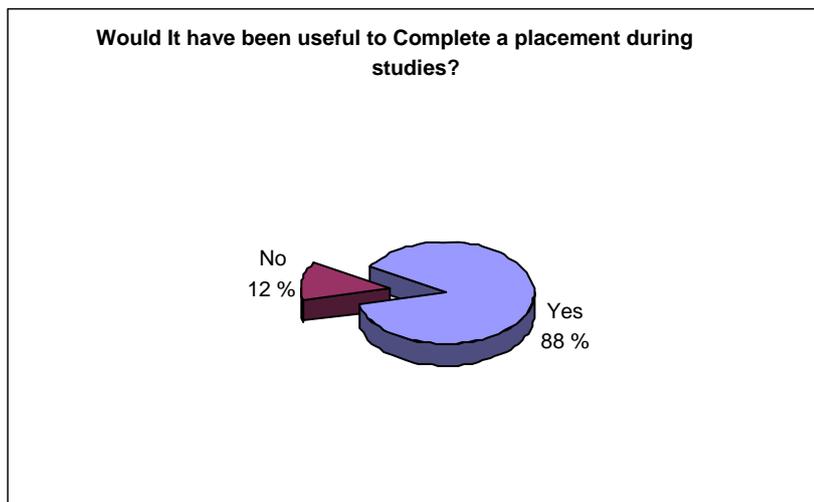


Figure 21: Would it have been beneficial if to complete a placement during studies?

There were only 17 students, who responded to this question who had not had the option of doing a work placement as a part of their degree. Interestingly enough the students were not limited to a particular country, in fact at least one student of the four main target countries did not have the opportunity to do a placement. And only two of those could not see the benefit of doing one. As for the rest, the others would have liked the opportunity to put theory in to practice and experience the things learnt in class in the real world meanwhile providing an opportunity to learn and prepare for the challenges ahead when entering the work force and starting to build up a career.

## 4 Questions about Students thoughts concerning internships and schools role in general

### 4.1 Internships in home country versus abroad

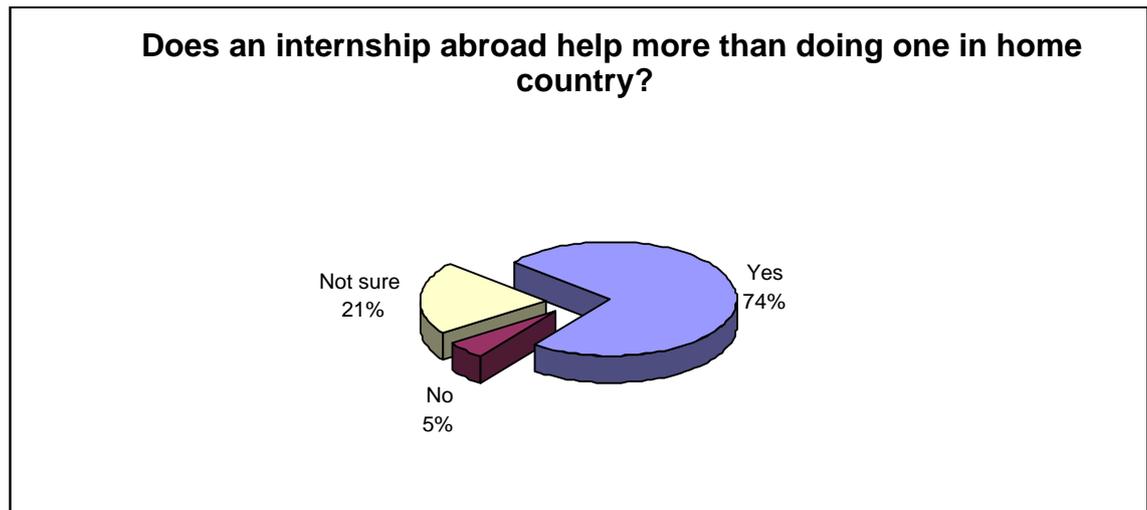


Figure 22: Difference between internship abroad and home country

Two of the questions in the third section of the survey asked the students views about doing an internship abroad and whether it was better to go abroad for them. The questions were phrased slightly differently but were essentially asking the same question which is why I am handling the responses jointly. As can be seen from charts 21 & 22, there were slight differences based on the phrasing.

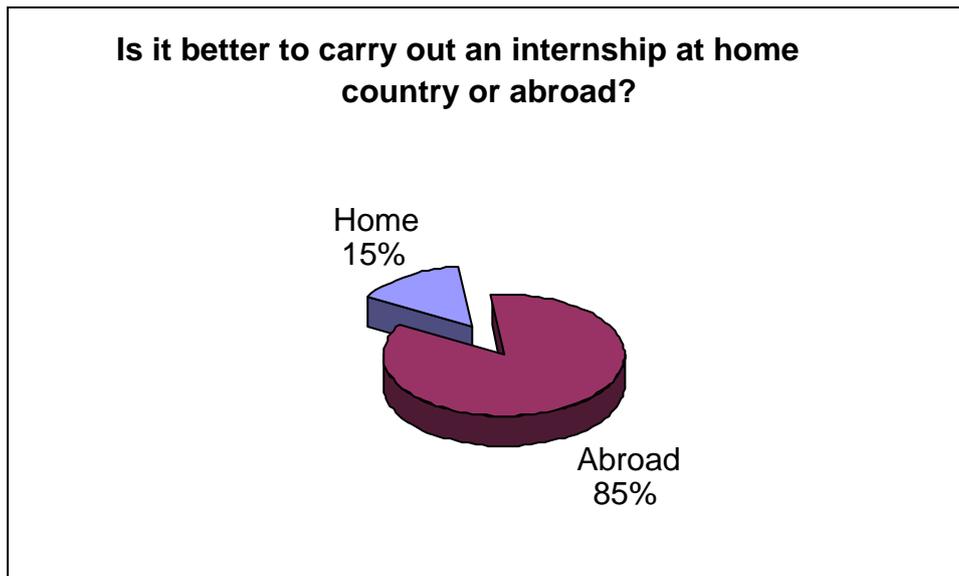


Figure 23: Students view on whether it is better to do an internship at home country or abroad

It was pointed out by quite a few students that where the student should do his or her internship depends on what the student was to do in the long-term. The students felt, if they wanted to pursue a career in home country, it would be better for them to carry out their internships there to gain local experience and possibly be able to stay on at the company as a permanent employee. One UK student even pointed out that for her it was better to do an internship in home country because she felt the UK companies reading her CV later on would appreciate home country experience more than foreign.

For the students who are not interested in pursuing a career abroad, doing a placement in their home country was of course then the natural choice. One Finnish student said that because she wants to start her career in Finland after graduation, doing her internship in Finland has definitely helped her start building up a network there that will make it easier to find employment after graduation. And the others echoed her sentiments. For the students thinking about their future and knowing they would want to settle either in the city where they were studying or the country, they found their placements there. That way they started building up their networks as early on as possible but there was also a chance of being employed by the company after graduation.

The main reason why students went abroad for their internship was to get international experience. All of the students who mentioned it felt that it was definitely an advantage for later on in life. Not only for the experience but also to improve their language skills and generally shows potential employers that they can cope in different environments and surroundings and were able to function and adapt to sometimes very strange situations and lifestyles. They also felt it would open their minds more in the sense of being on their own away. The experience and knowledge received while working abroad would be useful for them in both home countries later on and abroad if they would go back to that same country or another. Especially if doing an international degree, the students felt it is simply not enough to listen to lectures about it. Of course they felt it also looks better on the CV because of the characteristics it implies the person to have.

Interestingly, some felt that if they had gone abroad to just any company for the international experience, the potential future employers might not be able to understand the letters of reference (or work testimonials) better if it was in their mother tongue. This was mentioned especially by Finnish students who felt that if they wanted to continue working in Finland they should also do their placements there.

It was also mentioned that it is easier to get a good work placement at a well-known company in the home country than it would abroad. Again it was pointed out that in the long term having a large multi-national in your CV sounds better for some students even if they conceded that if the job was the same in both countries it would be better to have the experience abroad.

A couple of students who are pursuing an international career pointed out that one does not necessarily have to go abroad to gain international experience. Some felt that working in the international department of a company in home country was just as good as going abroad, experience-wise. This was countered, however, by some of the students going abroad who felt the exact opposite, that it was not the same.

Table 6: Students replies why it is better to carry out an internship either in home country or abroad (referenced to Figure 23)

Abroad		Home	
International experience	40	I want a career in home country	7
Language skills	37	Better career prospects	1
Experience new culture	26	More responsibilities	1
Want to work abroad	8		
Adaptation, learning independence etc.	37		
Bigger Challenge	10	Doesn't matter	4
Not everybody does it, so it's an advantage	4	Don't know	3
Provides a different point of view	3	Both as valuable	3

Some students doing their placements abroad pointed out that it differentiates them from the competition when entering the work force. At the same time they will not have as good experience on the home country or possibly have the same kind of network built as the students who have not left their respective home countries.

For the students who were not quite sure about their future yet, the tasks and responsibilities of the work were most important. Students who responded felt that it is easier to find a good placement in home country than abroad. The tasks given in home country have more responsibility and variety; and from some it seemed better to do that than to go have a bad placement abroad. Of course that was countered by the students who were eager to go abroad and wanted to have that experience of living in a foreign country and did not really care too much what they did there as long as they got to live in a different culture and environment and improve their language skills. For many just being able to go and prove both future employers and themselves they were able to adapt to a new culture was reason enough. This was true, especially for European students going to work in London and UK students going to work in Paris.

It was also pointed out that localized small businesses are disappearing from today's internationally focused society. Every workplace is going international nowadays so for that reason every company should appreciate international experience more. It is always good if your employees know different business cultures since it is much likely that you'll deal with them during your career life at one point, especially in business related jobs. Many companies are opening or wanting to open and do business abroad, which is benefiting to students in two ways. First it is easier for students to find internships, and secondly, to employment in those companies if the students already has experience in both countries business cultures. One Finnish student's boss in the States for example, told her that he hired her because she was a foreigner and he liked the idea of getting a fresh view on things and foreigners definitely see things different than Americans.

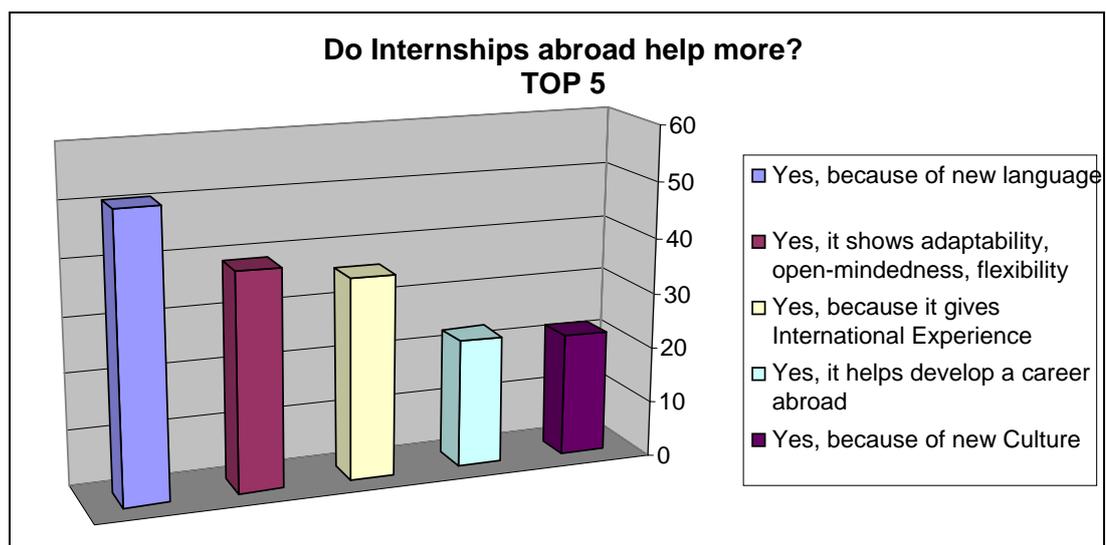


Figure 24: Top 5 responses given by the students as to the question whether internships abroad help more and why.<sup>12</sup>

Taken in to account what they, the students want in the future, most of them believed that generally speaking going abroad does provide students with a slight advantage over those who stay in home country. This was mainly due to the same reasons as already mentioned before, experiencing a different culture and working environment, which provides students with experience in handling different

<sup>12</sup> See Table 23: Reasoning whether Internship abroad help more than in home country for reference, pg 74

problems, developing language skills (especially for the French students) and opening their minds. At the end of the day, as one student pointed out, they can have a great work placement in either abroad or in home country, but more important is to find a placement that suits your studies best to really reap the benefits of the experience later on.

#### 4.2 Finding a job after graduation

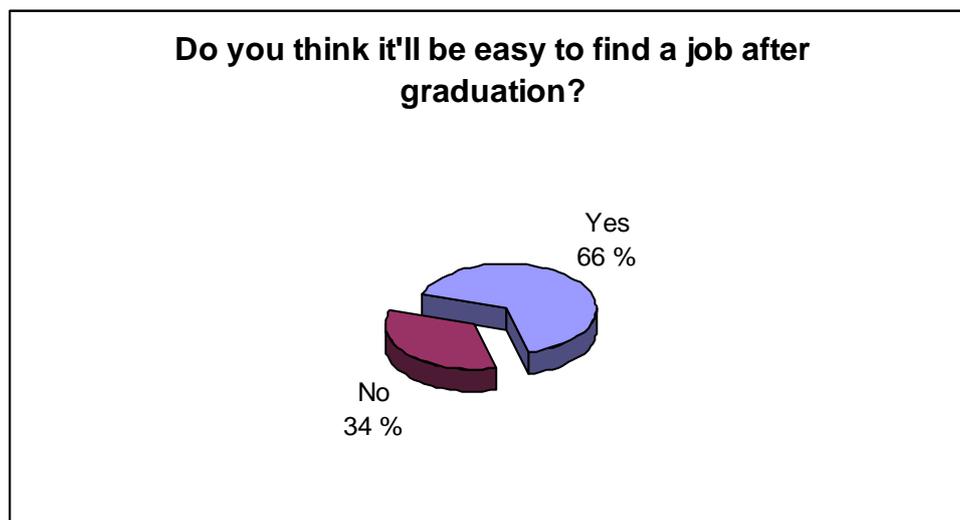


Figure 25: Students views on whether it is easy to find employment after graduation<sup>13</sup>

The majority of the students were optimistic about their opportunities in regards to finding a permanent job. However quite a few of them had the mentality of yes, but... and acknowledged that certain sacrifices would have to be made and that finding the perfect graduate job would be very difficult. Settling seemed to be the right word for it. Finding a permanent job quickly will be dependant on what they will settle for. If they are open to any opportunity coming their way, then it will be easy.

For some students it was easy to be positive about their future as they had already been shown interest by either the company they had done a placement for, or some other company. Or they were already told they would be able to stay and work for the company after graduation.

<sup>13</sup> See Table 24: Will it be easy to find employment after graduation for reference, pg 70.

The main issues why students do not think it will be easy revolved around the same issues as responded in previous questions. They feel there is too much competition in their field of study, not enough experience to stand out, not enough experience, and no suitable contacts. Or that their degree is too wide. Also a concern for many is the country's economic situation (mainly in France, but also the UK). Or for some it is simply because they have already been looking for a while and have not been successful yet.

On the other side of this there were the students who were confident about themselves. Either they were studying something that there was a demand for, like one student from Germany who said that teachers for vocational schools were desperately needed, or they had done a good and interesting degree that they hoped would be of interest to companies. From the responses it appears that students who have studied a more varied, specific degree have more faith and hope of finding a good job, especially if they had a good placement that furthered their knowledge and put theory in to practice. The internships seemed to help boost confidence and develop language skills as well which students believed will increase their employability

#### 4.3 School's preparation

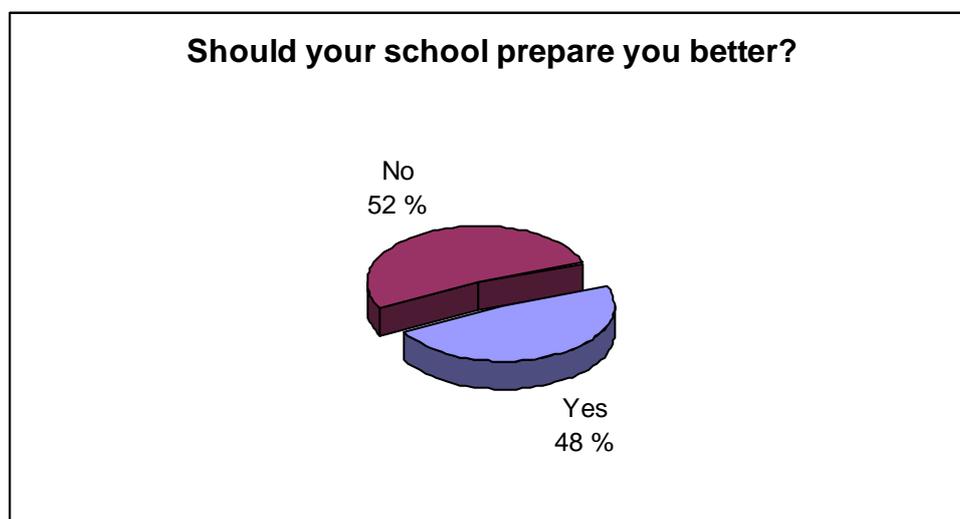


Figure 26: Students thoughts on whether their schools should help them better prepare for the working life.<sup>14</sup>

Students were quite evenly distributed for and against the role their school should have in preparing them for joining the workforce after graduation. The main complaint the respondents expressed was that the school did not tell them much about the practicalities of what life will be like in the every day work force. Also that very little information is given about issues related to work life like talking about job agreement procedures, how labour unions and unemployment funds work and how to go about finding work after graduation. Of course a school cannot tell their students about every single job but the students who felt they needed more guidance and preparation wanted to be more prepared for the reality of the situation. One French graduate said that because she went to one of the Grandes Ecoles of France and she was told throughout her studies that employers would fight over the graduates, she was not prepared when there were no jobs available right away when she graduated.

Also it was mentioned a few times that it would be better if, much like when answering the question about whether schools should help more in finding internships, the school had built a good network of companies willing to take the graduates. Especially the foreign students in Finland felt that it was hard to find employment if Finnish was not a native language.

Other things mentioned were specifically business targeted language courses, more career fairs and generally chances to meet and interact with potential future employers and thus start building those networks. It was even mentioned that it would be good for business students to receive some kind of guidance and assistance getting used to the work loads and stress of working in the business of today and even a personal tutor to act as a career advisor, assessing and evaluating possible career path and expectations.

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<sup>14</sup> See Table 25: How School should prepare their students better for reference, pg. 73

On the other side, students who represented a slight majority said that they felt that it is not the schools responsibility or job to do, a Master graduate should be able to find work on his or her own. They felt that the school's responsibility is to provide the theory which is then put in to practice after graduation when entering the work force. They also felt that they were well prepared already by what the school did and how they were prepared and felt it important to do these steps on their own, discover this new exciting life! A big part of the preparation for entering the work force was of course finding and doing at least one internship during studies and it prepared them for the future well enough. For some it made them realise that they had not learnt much useful in University for that particular position or that it was not as easy to put theory in to practice as they though, but it was still beneficial and helped them breach the gap well enough for them to confidently want to enter that next phase without support from their school.

#### 4.4 What employers look for from graduates

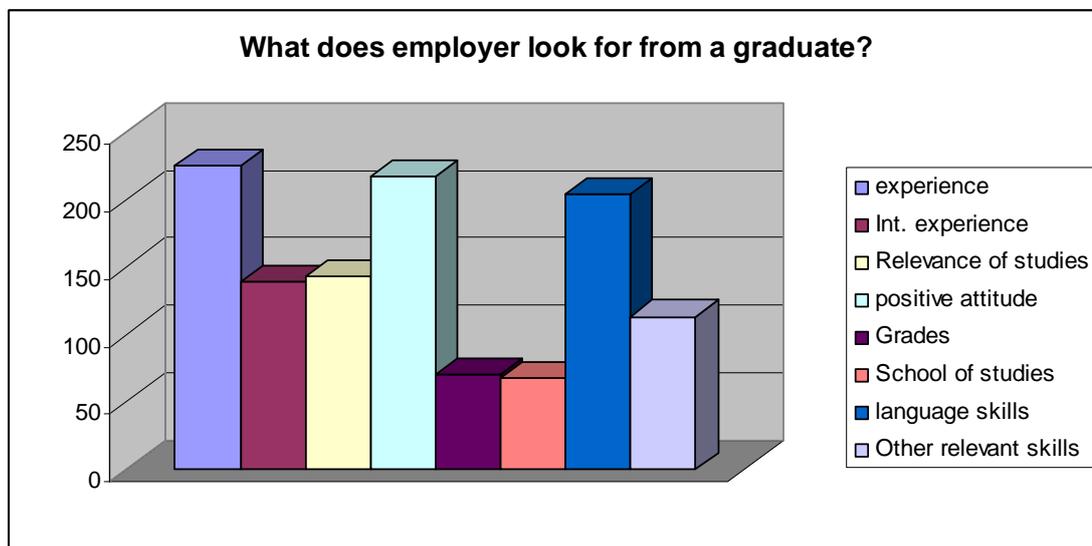


Figure 27: Top qualities that students believe employers are looking for from graduates

Of course what the employer is looking for varies greatly based on the job and the field of work but certain core skills still remain the same. Out of the choices listed for the question what students felt employers look for from graduates, the respondents chose three answers over the others. The most common answer chosen

was naturally experience. In fact almost 80 % of the respondents listed it as something employers look for. The other two main things mentioned were positive attitude and Language skills. No surprises there really. Quite a large portion of the students feel that because they lack relevant work experience, they can make up for much of it with how they present themselves, how excited and positive and professional they appear to be in their CVs and especially during the interview. In fact, positive attitude was mentioned almost as often as experience and the third most common option was language skills.

Other choices they had were the relevance of studies and other relevant skills. Most French students said that the school they studied at was important, but that option was also chosen by every other main nationality. Along the school, grades were considered less important.

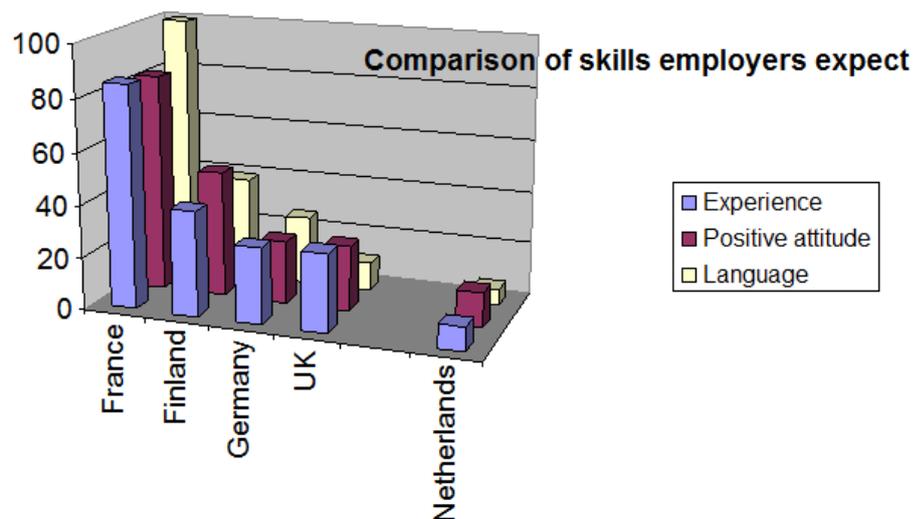


Figure 28: Comparisons of the skills students expect employers to want

When looking at what the differences are between the three most common answers between the main four countries (and The Netherlands as a control country to see whether there was a difference), it is interesting to note only slight differences. France was perhaps the most surprising, as there students expect the emphasis to be on the language skills more than anything else followed by experience and positive attitude. Whereas in Germany and the UK, the emphasis is on Experience more than any other single skills. In the UK the language skills do not even make the Top three

if looking at the singular country info. Relevance of studies and grades are deemed more important by the students. This of course can be explained by English being their native tongue. In Finland the top choice was Positive attitude, followed by Experience and Language skills, exactly the same as in The Netherlands.

With the exception of the UK the most common skills students expected their future employers to want were the same and the differences were only slight between the countries, which shows that all the countries have students with the same basic expectations.

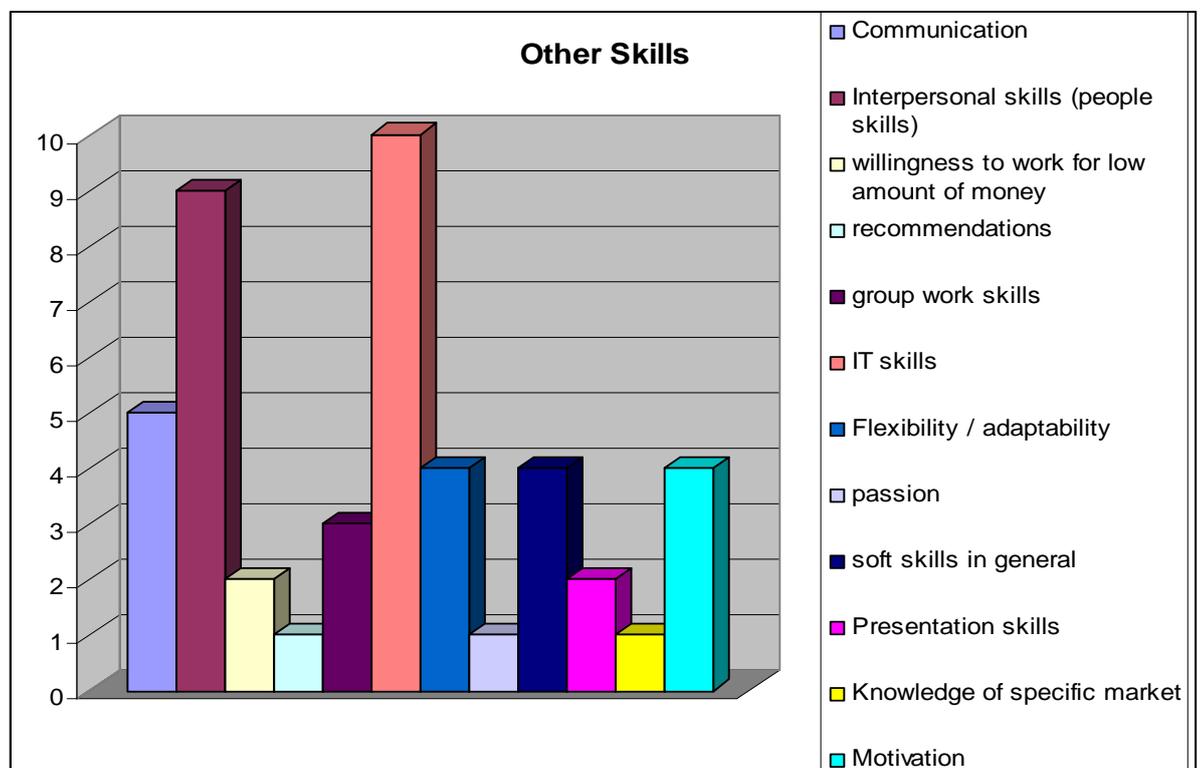


Figure 29: The other skills listed as the responses students gave in addition to the choices they had available to them (reference Figure 26)

Out of the skills the respondents wrote down on the open ended part of the survey, the students marked down that they felt they were lacking the necessary IT skills. Students feel that in most jobs today, one has to be able to use the computer in an increasingly great ability and not all of the students were sure that the lessons they receive in school is enough. Especially software skills were mentioned. Using

different work related programs like photoshopping or accounting or customer relation databases. Other things mentioned specifically were soft skills like interpersonal skills and people skills in general. This includes being excited and having passion too.

#### 4.5 Main weaknesses as a graduate

When asked what the students felt was their main weakness at the time of graduating and then entering the working life and the main issue that seemed worry about the students was that they did not have enough experience. Although some felt they had gained enough experience from the internships they had carried out (and other work experiences or part-time jobs), still over 46.29% of the respondents felt they needed more relevant experience (domestic or international) for future employers to take them seriously.

Main concern was for most that they did not have any other experience besides the experience gained while doing a work placement. And sometimes even the work placement carried out was not directly in the field of the concentration of the studies or if they did more than one, they were in un-relating fields and thus will not provide the best support for job hunting. And then there were some who did not believe that the employers would really consider their experience as true work experience as doing an internship is not the same as working in a company and that the company would have to re-train them to work at that company in any case which is a resource waste at the end of the day.

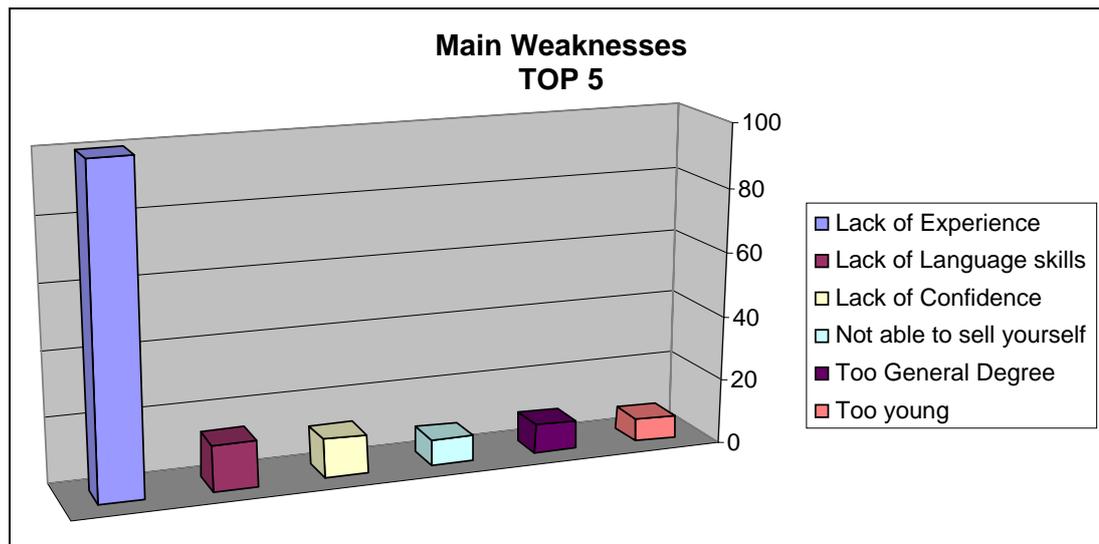


Figure 30: The TOP 5 responses to the question of what students feel are their main weaknesses<sup>15</sup>

One interesting thing to note was that once again the responses were the same or very similar for all the students, no matter where they came from. Students from every country mentioned lack of experience first and foremost; and it was followed by the other weaknesses. Especially the French students were worried about the experience which seems somewhat un-called for, because they were the students who received the most. Finnish students and the students from the other countries (besides UK, France, and Germany) were most worried about their language skills. In Finland it was mainly the foreigners who felt like in order to find a good job they needed to know Finnish better, sometimes even Swedish. The students from other countries felt they needed to learn more English and/or other languages. Generally the students who wanted to go and work abroad after graduation felt that their languages skills were not good enough at the time for employers to want to hire them or there simply was not an ability to speak the language where they wanted to work.

Other than the experience part, the respondents gave quite a varied set of replies to the question and although no other reply was echoed amongst the students the same way, they raised some interesting worries and concerns that certainly made me personally think about what my main weaknesses are as well. Some students felt

<sup>15</sup> See Table 28: Students main weaknesses for reference, pg 76

their degree was too specialized for a specific area of the field of studies and would thus limit their options when looking for employment; some were at the opposite end. They felt their study programme had been too general and touched too many fields all over and that they were pretty much not directly qualified for any job because they did not have any area of expertise. Several students said they had not really learnt much about their major. One Finnish student mentioned that because his Marketing major classes were mainly online he had not learnt enough during them. One French student criticized having too many useless courses that he felt should have been replaced with practical in-business experience.

Lack of confidence and ability to sell themselves was also mentioned repeatedly. Around 10 % of the respondents said they did not have enough confidence to appear as a good candidate for the potential employer or did not have the right skills to be able to present themselves as good as possible. Also other practical skills were mentioned. Like not enough teaching of IT skills that is so vital in today's business world.

Some students compared themselves with other graduates and said they felt they had the same basic characteristics, skills and abilities. That there was a great deal of competition for the jobs but they did not have anything that would make them stand out from all those other applicants. Interestingly one French student said she carried out five placements during her studies, and that she had to do them on three different continents and that it helped her to speak six different languages at the end of it. That was all done to create a competitive advantage. Give something to help the students to stand out from their peers.

Some felt their school was not among the best in the country or certainly abroad. This was especially important for the French students who felt it was important for French companies. Age was also a factor. Because of the similarity of people's degrees and the level of experience, some students (especially French) said they felt that they would not be given the same opportunity as an older applicant would because the employers would prefer an older more mature applicant when all other skills and qualifications were on the same level.

## 4.6 Schools standpoint to internships

Table 7: School's standpoint to internship

Abroad mandatory	6
Mandatory	63
Encourages it	24
Don't promote it	4
Don't know	6
Really important	15
Not mandatory	2
Positive	17
Helpful	3
No help, students do it themselves	1
The more the better	2
Theory to Practice	3
Send offers	2

Most respondents to this open-ended question said that they have a school, which encourages internships. Either they were really promoting the importance of them or they were encouraging and tried to provide the students with help and assistance they need it and at least promoting the offers they received. Over 40 % said that they had mandatory internships; however the difference came from how it was promoted.

One student from England said her school only promotes home country placements. This was also echoed by a couple of other students from different nationalities. Four students, all from different countries, said that their school encouraged them to do internships but they felt they did not really care about where or what they did. One German student said that everything that has something to do with degree is accepted as an internship job. Another German student said that he was only encouraged to complete a placement in home country. One UK student said that he was encouraged to take a gap year in order to gain practical experience but it was not credited to him in any way. Rather it was viewed as something providing an opportunity for students to be confronted with the professional world, to acquire practical skills in order to improve their employability and to know what type of

jobs they want to do. Another student from the UK said the school sells it to them as an alternative to elective studies.

In France internships are mandatory in most universities and thought to be a vital part of studies, so the level of encouragement and time the school puts in to their promotion seems different generally from the other school. Since they are considered highly important, the rules and guidelines for them are strictly followed and the students monitored in order for the students to make sure the students carry out their internships in companies that provide them with valuable experience. It is thought to bring honour for the school (shows that the students have been taught well) as well as providing the students with their first experiences in the working life. France was also the only country where a couple of students said their schools respective encouragement was basically the more the better. One French student also mentioned that her school even encourages her to work part time whilst studying.

Once again it seems that the students of the UK universities were most unhappy with the way their school handled internships and their promotion. One UK student said that he has heard no mention from his school about the possibility of carrying out an internship. As already mentioned, it seems that even in the more encouraging universities it is not always credited as a part of a degree or, as one recent graduate from Chester University said, it is just not deemed important enough to use time on.

## 4.7 Practical experience



Figure 31: Students need for more Practical experience as a part of studies

Students were pretty evenly distributed in their responses whether they felt that they needed more practical experience before entering the work force.

The students who felt they did not need more practical experience mostly had most of it. The students felt that they had received enough from the placement(s) they had carried out and were prepared to enter the working life and convince potential employers in interviews that they did not need any more. After all the school's role is to prepare the students with the theory and the practise is learnt while doing the work throughout the courses of their careers. That means that no matter what job the students take on, they will have to be trained and have to learn the way business is done in that particular company (in that particular country).

Those students view internships as done partly for the basic work experience and more for the students to give an idea what they want to do for a career, to bridge the gap between the theories taught in classes and give them an idea what the work is like in reality. It also served to boost their confidence and develop certain skills. Once that has been accomplished, they feel ready. For some the confidence and feeling of readiness came after a few months of work experience, for some it took 3 internships spanning over a year. For some it was also about the growing eagerness

to finish school and start working and making money as much as it was about feeling like they had enough experience.

It was also pointed out that quite a few big multi-national companies today have their own training programs and take graduates that they then train and mould instead of looking for fully developed employees to just integrate to the company and that has opened up new doors for some students. For students clearly aiming for entry level jobs at businesses such as that, they have more confidence in their abilities because they know after they are hired, they are retrained anyways. Even smaller companies have their own methods of working so there is always going to be an integration period.

So it does not come as a surprise that the students who wanted to carry out more placements did not feel ready and thus wanted some more experience to develop their skills, gain a wider view of the industry and boost their confidence. Some said they had already tried to enter the work force but were told that they did not have enough experience for the jobs they wanted. For some it was also a matter of trying again. If the first internship felt like a waste of time and useful, it left them feeling like they needed another one to combat that and give them some useful experience that they could use later on. Some felt that if they carried out at least one more work placement, they would be able to bring something more to the company and also give them more options by trying out different fields in the area they are studying. Also, it would help to differentiate them from the other graduates trying out for the same job. They would also be better prepared for the real world waiting for them.

## 4.8 Schools assistance for their students

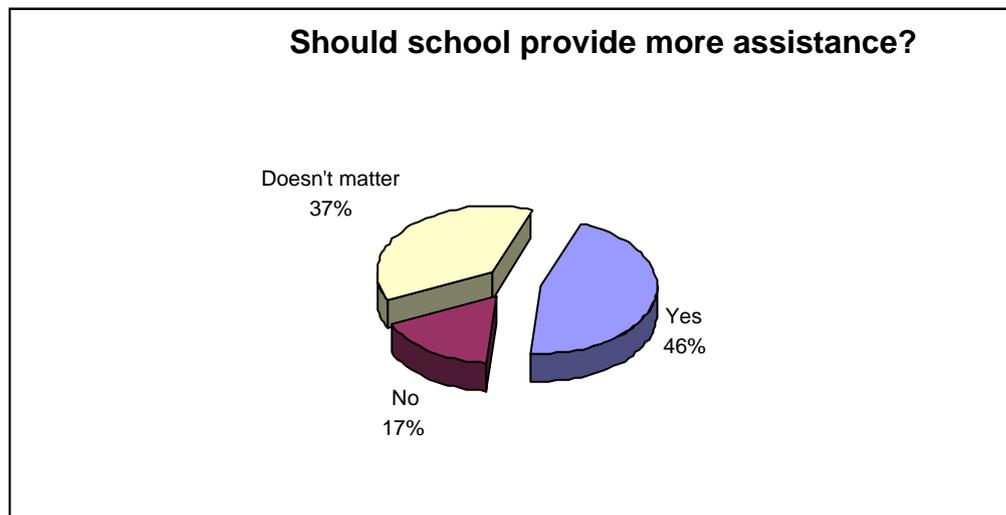


Figure 32: Should school provide more assistance to their students?

The answer for this question was clearly cut in to three different groups amongst the student. The largest portion felt that school should provide more assistant while over one third did not feel it was important or that it does not really any difference while 17 percent felt they had plenty and the rest should be up to them.

Of the students, the help and assistance they were looking for revolved mainly around finding a work placement easier and wanted their school's role in finding a placement to be larger than it was. Finding a work placement especially abroad can be very tricky and some students felt like they were left to their own devices to do it. The better the network the school has, the easier it is for students to carry out internships in different countries and that was probably the main complain that students had concerning their school for this question.

Some students are calling for mandatory placement and a few mentioned their internships were not during the last year (which is true especially in the UK where sandwich years are common), which would be the optimal time to ease the transition to working life. And not only for the transition but for the best and most realistic expectations about what will happen after graduation when entering the job market, how it works in reality.

The students, who said they did not need or want more support or assistance from their school, were very united in their views. Their main point was that it is up to ones-self to find the placements and then enter the work force and go from there where they want, not the schools responsibility. Education is bound to have a wider scope than the actual job will and some necessary skills will be learnt at the work place anyways. Students from the schools that have mandatory placement felt that it was a good thing and that it was enough. They thought it is the students job to find out how to do things for themselves. Of course it was also noted that their schools provided them with plenty of opportunities already so maybe there just genuinely is no need for it in those schools.

#### 4.9 School's encouragement to go abroad

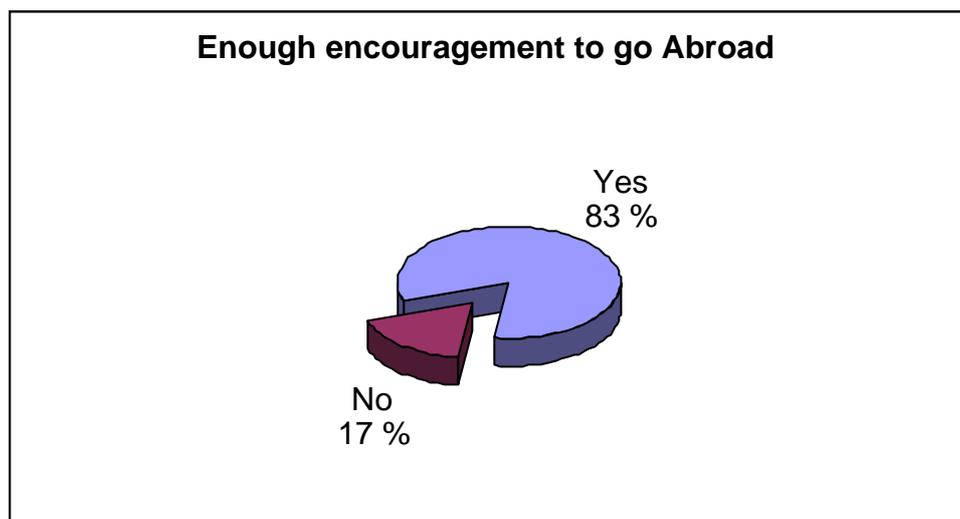


Figure 33: Students view on whether they received enough encouragement to go abroad

Most students feel they received enough support and encouragement from their university to go gain some international experience abroad. In fact many students gave praise to their universities of the support they gave and help in making it possible by providing them with guidance and opportunities (for example Zyud University in The Netherlands and Heriott Watt in the UK were specially mentioned). This was done sometimes through the ERASMUS program which is emphasized in most European countries now as an easy means for students to travel

inside Europe and explore foreign cultures and environment and gain international experience.

For most international degrees today it is mandatory, either in the form of an exchange semester or a work placement and the respondents said they were encouraged to do them knowing they could not graduate without it. Especially students in France are well informed about the benefits of going abroad and gaining experience. One French student said that his University told him facts about the salaries of people in France who are able to speak several languages (14 % more on average). The encouragement was also shown in specific info sessions about going abroad and the opportunities there, but also by individual teachers who encouraged it during their classes, explaining the benefits and what a great experience it would.

Especially those students who did not have to go abroad for an exchange year, felt like they were supported and information was being given to aid them should they choose to do it anyways. And quite often the students encouraged themselves too.

The encouragement and support from school came in many different ways. One student from France said that the students who go abroad get extra points for their final mark (out of 20). In France the students were also provided with more opportunities for internships than anywhere else. A couple of French students mentioned doing altogether two and a half years worth of internships out of the four years of studies which really helped them prepare to enter the working life.

Some schools have many international teachers and of course having exchange students around helps in creating an international atmosphere and thus encourage their students to go abroad themselves. They also had a big part in resolving possible fears about going to live in a foreign environment. Some just made an effort creating opportunities for them using their own networks and letting the students know about them.

However, the students who do not feel they were encouraged to go abroad feel the same way and have much similar reasoning. Their schools did not provide much assistance in finding opportunities for them or help them with the funding issues or

did not really think or encourage students going for international experience. Or the funding just was not available so they could not go. Some universities that have international programs are still at the very beginning of creating their international partnerships, which means that the students studying in those schools do not really have that many opportunities available.

When looking at the figures of the four main countries, Finland comes out champion based on the figures of relation between the students who said no and total number of students from each country. From the students studying in Finland, about 7.89% said they did not receive enough support, while the number is much higher in the other countries. Germany had 12.00 % unsatisfied students, while France had 13.58% and the UK 16.33%. The UK figure seems consistent with the responses from the students for the other questions as well. As for the rest of the students, the figure for all the others is 7.35% but no conclusions can be made from it as it covers 14 countries, with the exception of the students from The Netherlands, who's satisfaction rate of 11.76% sounds like it is on a correct level.

One of the strangest things were the students who felt they were not encouraged to go abroad even though they were studying an international business degree. One student from the UK said that it was never even suggested to him that he could go abroad for a placement even though he was doing an international business degree. Another French student studying international business said something similar; he felt they should always be encouraged to go abroad, the school should give the students the opportunity to leave home, but they did not, and they did not guide their students at all. Luckily however, those seemed to be only exceptions and most universities are at least trying to provide their students with ways to gain international experience should they want it.

## ***Summary***

The goal of this thesis was to gain an understanding about the thoughts and views the students of today have on internships as a part of their studies and their chances of finding employment after graduation; whether doing internships help. This was done through the two questionnaires sent out to discover whether the students thought they should be a mandatory part and to outline the benefits of doing them, as well as the roles their schools have in finding a placement and the support they should provide before and during and also how the students feel about their futures; about entering the work force as graduates.

The students responding expressed clearly how they felt their internships provided them with at least valuable life experience. Most felt they gained invaluable practical experience and also developed their other skills, like language skills and it served to boost their self-confidence and made them better understand what they wanted for the future.

It was also fascinating to note that the differences in opinions and views were not a matter of nationality as such or a country of studies, but more a general consensus amongst the students of different nationalities. The opinions to and against something, such as preparedness to enter the work market was shared by all nationalities much the same way and normally no single country rose above all the others in a large extent. Of course there were slight differences depending on the studies and the school of studies but nothing that made a big impact on the overall results.

What was really positive to note was that the general consensus amongst the students was that their internships were beneficial to them wherever they were, and that it did give them some practical important knowledge that would be valuable in the future even if it did not lead directly to find a graduate job. For some it did and for the rest, at least they received some valuable experience. Even if it served only to help them realise it was not what they wanted to do for the future.

Generally speaking the schools seem to be able to provide their students with the opportunities and the support they are looking for and seem to prepare them well enough to make them think they are ready for what is going to happen after graduation.

The views most students had for all the questions as a positive one, meaning the students were happy with their studies and universities and they received enough help and support and guidance from their school and felt prepared to enter the work force after graduating. The students realise that the first job after graduation will probably not be their dream job, but they feel they could receive a decent job that was a start to a good professional career. At least to me, that says that the schools and internships are doing their part in preparing their students for the future.

## ***Conclusion***

This is by no means a comprehensive or completely correct look at the students' views on internships. It is simply not wide enough. A far greater number of students and universities would have been needed to participate in this work. But this thesis is definitely something that conveys an idea about the students' views on the internships and definitely helps to understand how work placements work in different countries and why students choose to undertake them, sometimes going abroad, sometimes even voluntarily.

This thesis is also very much done in a "one point of view" way; only taking in to account the students' point of view in the subject. It did bring up some interesting, rather unexpected things to light. I personally originally thought that there would be a big difference based on what country the students were studying and had not really realised how much the students' of today move around in different countries.

Whether it is on a work placement abroad or an exchange semester; or as a part of the increasing two or three country degrees (that are popular especially with the French). Point is, students in Europe are not constricted by country boundaries

anymore and want to go abroad and study and work and gain experience from different cultures and environments. EU and their different Grant programs have made it even easier with programs like ERASMUS and LEONARDO. Furthermore, even the students who carry out their studies in their home countries seem to be more internationally focused and mindful of globalization and the opportunities and possibilities (and also hindrances) it will create for them later on.

For the results received and general understanding it helped to create about students view's on this issue I consider this thesis successful. It indicates trends within students as a whole that can be followed up and can provide assistance to future students and Universities in finding ways to generally improve and discover how they could better help their students to gain the knowledge they need before graduation and also to provide the right opportunities.

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## ***APPENDICES***

### Tables

Table 4: Study subjects

<u>Degrees</u>			
International Business	106	Education	1
Business Administration	107	Corporate environmental management	1
International Trade	22	Facility management	1
international communication	9	Atmospheric sciences	1
Finance	16	Sport management	2
Chemistry	1	Town planning/Quantity surveying	1
International Commerce	12	Aeronautics	1
IT	29	Aerospace engineering	1
HR	6	Business, design and communication	1
Marketing	28	Business and law - human resources	1
Logistics	9	Interactive media design	1
Biomedical science	2	Telecom	2
Economics	12	Renewable energy	1
Accounting	4	Agronomy / Biotechnologies	1
Foreign languages	11	Automotive engineering design	1
Mechanical engineering	2	International cultural and business studies	1
Engineering	11	Education of vocational schools	1
Physics	1	Political science	1
International Business relations	2	Industrial eng. + control systems & electronics eng.	1
Industrial engineering and management	1	Mechatronics engineering	1
Business informatics	1	Energy studies	1
Management in cross-cultural Negotiations	1	Sociology	1
		Beng electronics & Communication	1
		Master in petroleum engineering	1
		Tourism	1
		TOTAL	403

Table 5: Where the students start looking for internships

Through school	17
Internship websites	118
previous contacts	3
Direct contact to company	14
Personal contacts /friends	21
got offers from university	6
Placement office	54
placement company	3
Internal traineeship	2
Websites of companies	33
It was arranged for me	1
Through professor / Teachers	3
Career fair	6
Notice boards	17
School intranet	21
Summer job	5
Internet in general (Google et.)	54
Old graduates	3
Career magazines	2
School partners	1

Total of 284 responses.

Table 6: Where the internship was found in the end

Through university	17
Internship websites	70
Direct contact to company	16
Personal contacts /friends	61
Placement office	19
placement company	2
Internal traineeship /university placement	3
Websites of companies	14
It was arranged for me	2
Through professor / Teachers	3
Career fair	1
Notice boards	1
School intranet	16
Summer job / previous work, stayed at same place	4
Internet in general	28
Old graduates	3
Other	8
Not found one yet	4

Total responses 276.

Table 13: How internship was beneficial to studies

How Internship was beneficial to studies	
Learnt a lot about working life, how things work in reality and how to act in the work place	24
Experience	53
Got employed by my internship company after	1
Made me understand what I want for a job	21
Theory to practice	43
Built confidence in abilities	11
Contacts Established	7
Language skills	38
Other skills (soft skills)	6
Practical knowledge	11
Experience a different culture	11
Make friends	1
Live abroad	6
Could help in finding a job later, good on CV	5
Got employed by my internship company after	1
Necessary for graduation	3
Learnt by doing	3
Found a thesis topic	7
Great for CV	10
Well known company	1
Didn't match my studies	2

220 responses to the open ended part of the question

Table 16: Why doing a placement was useful

Learnt a lot about working life, how things work in reality and how to act in the work place	38
Experience	67
Got employed by my internship company after	8
Made me understand what I want for a job	25
Theory to practice	25
Built confidence in abilities	6
Contacts Established	15
Language skills	10
Other skills	5
Practical knowledge	7
Experience a different culture	5
Make friends	5
Live abroad	10
Could help in finding a job later, good on CV	8

Total of 198 responses to the open ended part of the question.

Table 17: How the internship could have been better

Don't know	4
More interesting real work	8
Better Paid	32
More variety	6
It was good	5
Couldn't have been better	17
not Paid at all	9
Better arrangement in details	4
More instructions, guidance from the company	17
Company not what expected	3
Location	7
Longer placement	9
Better suited assignments	5
Boss nicer, workplace atmosphere better	6
More challenges, responsibility	32
Different Company	4
Not much common with studies	6
less responsibility	1
Help from school	2
Doing it in a foreign country	3
Independent project	3
Bigger company	4
Too much work	1
myself Better prepared	2
Started looking earlier	1

Total of 205 responses to the open ended question.

Table 19 - Why students believe doing a placement is beneficial in finding employment after graduation

Experience	72
Already did	7
Found a job at the company / through the company	15
Experience abroad	16
Improved language skills	8
Helps me to understand what I enjoy and like and want for the future	8
Good references	3
Contacts	11
Famous, big multinational company	11
Other skills improved	5
Mandatory for business students	1
Better understanding of business (all sides)	6
Self understanding being able to do smth adaptability	5
Looks good on CV	5
Right in the area of studies / what looking for	3
Puts theory to Practice	3
No valuable work done during the internship	1
I am already graduate and i have not found may job yet	1
It doesn't	1
Too short period	1
Not what I'm looking for	1

Total of 184 replies to the open ended part of the question.

Table 23: Reasoning whether internship abroad help more than in home country

INTERNATIONAL (helps more)		HOME COUNTRY (helps more)	
International Experience	36	Contacts	1
New Language	51	Job after	1
New Culture	22	Experience	4
Differentiates from others	13	Home country employers appreciate home country experience more	2
more connections	1	Understand home market better	1
Meet new friends	2	Pay more	1
Foreign language	1	Better knowledge	1
Different work environment	8	More responsibilities	3
Helps develop Career abroad	23		
Shows Adaptability, open-mindedness, flexibility	39	Haven't done it	1
Great on CV	7	Depends on your studies	4
Developes other skills	9	depends on your future wants	18
More Challenging	2	Depends on the company and what you do there	5
		No idea	1

A total of 218 responses were given to the open ended part of the question.

Table 24: Reasoning whether it will be easy to find a permanent job after graduation?

Yes, have it already	6
It will depend on me and my activity, what I look for	3
Don't know	8
Nope	5
Too much competition	5
Depends what I settle for	6
Hope so	7
Still looking	2
Yes	2
Bad economic climate	3
Experience (both ways, +/-)	5
Contacts made	2

A total of 78 responses were given to the other response field.

Table 25: How schools should prepare their students better

More practical training (how things work in real business life)	12
More practical skills	2
More internships	6
More company projects	5
More preparation for interviews /CV building	13
Less theoretical lessons	5
Encourage being more international	1
Better networking with companies	17
More internship offers	4
More knowledge	2
Better suited study subjects	1
Help find work after graduation	4
It's my problem to find a job	3
Help with internships (especially abroad)	5
More foreign languages	2
Presentation skills	2
Teach to be realistic about the future expectations (Job market, salary etc.)	3
Mandatory internship (Germany)	1
More IT	2
Better guidance, assistance (more personally)	2

A total of 112 responses given to the open ended part of the question.

Table 28: Main weaknesses as a graduate

Not enough experience	96
not enough international Experience	4
Not enough contacts	4
Lack of confidence	12
Lack of practical skills	9
Not enough language skills	14
Don't stand out to employers	4
Over-skilled for some jobs now	1
No entirely sure what I want to do	1
Not ambitious enough	3
Been concentrating on the wrong things with studies	4
Too wide degree	9
too high pay expectations	2
Need more education	2
Knowledge too weak in certain areas	5
Too narrow degree	1
IT skills	5
Not smart enough	1
Age (youth)	7
Too high expectations for the job	3
took too long for studies	1
Not good presentation skills	8
No real understanding of the job market / industry	2
School Degree not good enough	1
Children	1
Not enough information about opportunities / what companies want	3
Don't know	5
A graduate shouldn't have weaknesses	3
None particularly	1

A total of 216 responses were received for this open ended question.

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## Survey

**Effect Internships have on Careers****1. General Information**

\* 1. Sex

\* 2. University

\* 3. Main Country of studying

4. Nationality

\* 5. Study Subject and Years for a degree

Study Subject

Years to a degree

\* 6. Year of Graduation

## Effect Internships have on Careers

### 2. Work placements carried out

\* 1. Have you undertaken a work Placement?

Yes

No

2. Was it a mandatory or voluntary part of studies?

Mandatory

Voluntary

3. How many Work Placements / Internships have you carried out as a part of a degree?

4. For what length(s) of time?

5. How did you find out about Placement-UK?

Internet search engine (Google etc.)

Internet other (please specify below)

Career Fair

Career mags

Career office

Career office notice board / School Intranet

Friends

Other (please specify):

6. Where did you start looking for your internship(s)? (did you go to internship websites such as [www.placement-uk.com](http://www.placement-uk.com), career mags, placement office at your school, notice boards, career fairs)

7. From where did you find your internship(s) / Work placement in the end?

8. Were they in your country of studying or abroad?

Home Country

Abroad

Where, if abroad:

**Effect Internships have on Careers**

9. Do you feel your internship(s) were beneficial to you for your studies?

Yes

No

Why

10. Did you receive enough help / guidance for you school before and during your placement?

Yes

No

Please specify:

11. Do you think doing an internship is (or was) meaningful / useful to you?

Yes

No

Why:

12. How could your Internship / Work placement have been better?

13. Do you think the work placement you carried out will help you find a job after graduation?

Yes

No

Why:

## Effect Internships have on Careers

### 3. No Internship

1. Would it have been useful to you, had you completed a placement during your studies?

Yes

No

Why:

## Effect Internships have on Careers

### 4. Beliefs about Internships and their effects

1. Do you think doing an internship abroad helps to further your career more than in home country?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

Why:

2. Do you think it will be easy to find a suitable job after graduation?

- Yes  
 No

Other (please specify)

3. Is there something you feel your school should do more to prepare you for to enter the work force?

- Yes  
 No

What, specify:

4. What do you think are the main things an employer will look for from a graduate?

- experience  
 (international experience)  
 Relevance of studies  
 positive attitude  
 grades  
 school of studies  
 languages skills  
 other relevant skills (such as software etc. skills)

Other (please specify)

5. What do you think are you main weaknesses as a graduate?

## Effect Internships have on Careers

6. Is there a difference by doing an internship either in your home country or abroad and which is more valuable?

Home

Abroad

Why do you think your chosen is more important?

7. What is your schools standpoint to internships?

8. Do you think you need more practical experience before entering the work force after graduation?

Yes

No

Why:

9. Should your school provide you with that? Means-wise or opportunity-wise?

Yes

No

Doesn't matter

Please specify:

10. Do you feel you were encouraged enough to go have some international experience?

Yes

No

Why: