**UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINITIONS OF WORK BASED LEARNING**

The higher education program in Mongolia is defined as “A complex document of learning and teaching activities at a certain level of educational achievement”. The general requirements for a bachelor program was approved by the Minister orders of Education, Culture and Science, in 2014. There is not any special requirement for the internship but in the provision 12.2.2, it is stated that “the government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, professional associations and employers shall cooperate effectively for internship”. According to the program specifics, internship term and duration shall be varied in our country.

Each program internship shall be included in the general and major core curriculum and conducted with approved guidelines. According to its guidelines, a student could find intern place by his own or it should be at partners of the university. In most cases, an internship supervisor is appointed from the program. At work, there can be a co-supervisor. Internship report should be defended and then its credit is considered in the school management information system.

However, current intern procedure is set duration and appoints supervisors; evaluation criteria is unclear and quality is not fair.

There is not partnership contract for internship. Even there is, it is not evaluated after internship; internship duration is too short; work place management and employees are lack of knowledge and skills to conduct. In addition, internship quality is unsatisfactory; professional skills are not able to gained, systematically. For these reasons, graduates do not meet the job requirements and there are many unemployed graduates. (Research on the quality of higher education and labor market demand, UB 2019, p38)

Internship and its types in our country:

1. Introductory practicum or internship: It is an introduction internship with major core curriculum subjects; realistic understanding of the relevant organizations and workplaces; professional orientation; and acquired methods, skills and abilities for future employment plans, research and specializations.

2. Professional internships: Types of internships that allow students to conduct individual researches on the theses or intention under a supervisor’s guidelines, introduced with workplaces, provided initiative innovations, entrepreneurs, start-ups and professional service skills; and opportunities to participate in contract projects.

3. Field practicum or internships: Types of internships that allow students to review major core curriculum knowledge, to measure and analyze in field, to work at internship landfill or resorts, to master field research methodologies, to gain knowledge with environment, culture, religion and historical monuments, to process research results and to develop skills to prepare research and training visual materials and other related aids.

4. An interactive internship workshops: Effective learning methodology for interactions between partners based on active communication such as discussion, observation, experimentation, analysis, essay, report, evaluation and recommendations during the intern implementation.

5. Internship syllabus: Official documents including Internship name, index, credit hours, vision, subject consistency, objectives, general understandings of knowledge, skills, practice and approaches, assessment, a list of books, textbooks or other materials and aids; detailed instruction with working and breaking hours, safety conditions and report structure.

6. Internship guidelines: Official document based on the specifics and needs of the profession in accordance with curriculum and defined rights and responsibilities of the intern partners.

Higher education institutions and partners relations:

Higher education institution and partner relations should be focused on the internships frames. Due to the social demands, universities are actively involved in internship qualities in order to train skilled professional graduates to the labor market. The internship should be regulated by mutual contracts.

**Work based learning:** It is a combined program for professional skills with academic and work based learning. Work based learning aims to provide opportunities to gain work experience and skills, to train, to instruct general skills required, and to provide a wide range of guidance on production and service in the workplace. (Researcher, 2021)

During the internship, there can be many high risks of uncertainty and difficulties for the appointed supervisors from university and partner organizations. These are similar to the potential problems mentioned in the material from ULL, France.

1. According to the internship frame, partnership is not relatively strong. Sometimes students find work places to practice on their own. It makes a cause risk of low participation from university. Also, there is not enough long-term partnerships.

2. Internship supervisors’ evaluation criteria is unclear and monitoring and improvement system is not well developed. While internship guideline states that it should be led by a person with appropriate knowledge for teaching methodology, supervisors do not meet for this requirement at work places. Also, supervisors’ feedback and mutual partnership is not enough efficient for evaluation.

3. Mutually beneficial, Win-Win principle, is unclear to partner organizations. Therefore, during heavy workloads, there is a lack of time or opportunity required professional skills for students. As an organization, internship is not its core business, so there can be shortcomings for human resources and trainings to manage. Also, there is not clear procedure for supervisor appointment, too. Internship is often perceived as either an obstacle to work or as an auxiliary workforce.

 4. As with the information provided by the UOM, There is not a provision that a student could earn an appropriate amount of income during internship. Some talented students are offered employment after graduation on the agreement with the employer, but this is very rare.

5. In the focus group interviews of employers, it is stated students are not eligible for professional skills. Because they do not meet the general needs for the employment. It shows the importance of vocational training in accordance with the needs and work based learning should be provided from first 2 courses.

Although these issues are only observed in the internship program, the information from the European universities and the purpose of the project show that it is possible to develop a wider range of work-based leaning. Therefore, it can be defined as follows.

**Work based learning:** “Work-based learning refers to all types of training that takes place in academic and workplace environments based on real work needs, aimed at professional development and preparation for direct employment after graduation. It provides graduates with the skills which can not be fully granted by academic program. These include mentoring programs, guest teacher training, practicum, introductory and professional internships and trainings on workplaces and its staffs.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

*Work based learning implementations:*

* Prior to the start of work based learning, mentors and higher education institution directors should identify and create environment necessary and other related resources for internship. This should provide good opportunities to learn and develop in the workplace.
* The proposed internship should contribute to the knowledge with professional curriculum and needed skills in the workplace during the internship.
* The internship supervisors lead, refine and update work based learning process lists.
* Guest teacher training: In addition to the approved curriculum, high professional experienced guest teachers’ trainings can be conducted.
* Practicum: University should organize field trips to the working environment, conditions and features, and provide multi-level cultures of the company or partner organizations.
* Introductory and professional internships: The internships should be conducted by the student under the supervisors’ leadership with specific guidelines. (Detailed duration and periods: For example, an introductory internship shall be for 2 months; professional internship can be full academic year or half semester.)
* Training seminars at workplace: During the internship, university or higher education institution shall arrange professional training participations for staffs.
* Mentoring program: Short or medium-term student-centered mentoring programs should be implemented by the partner organizations or higher education Institutions.
* Mentor teaches professional skills and performs practical works. They discuss the next new practice directions based on the achieved results. These provide related information on the skills and competencies for the profession. Efficient feedback shall be perfect improvement.
* Students can meet mentors at any time. A student’s assessment shall be made based on his work based learning and progress. This will prevent or resolve any conflicts, disputes, discrimination, or oppression. The mentor’s interview should intend to determine whether there are any learning opportunities in the workplace (working conditions, relationships with the mentor, motivation to work, etc.) and its progress. Its purpose shall provide an opportunity to learn well enough in the workplace. If there is a problem between a student and the mentor, or internship is stuck, it must be notified.
* Mentor shall inform to university if there is any problem related to the student.

**Partnership:** The project aims to create a legal environment to study the good experience of developing diversified activities aimed to advance higher education institutions and partner organizations relations and to create mutual benefit principles in accordance with the social and economic specifics of Mongolia. It is necessary to support any initiatives for work based learning quality from partner organizations and prepare trainings and seminars in stages.

Chosen from the above grounds:

 HWR is similar to German version of WBL with preparation and follow-up by the HEI (internships) submitted by Berlin. However, in the most programs, maximum duration is 7-8 weeks and there is no full-year internship program. Other non-project related professions, like teacher's program is offering full-time internships.

1. **HWR Berlin, Germany**
* WBL without instructions and guidance, just as getting to know the professional field (working experience)
* WBL with preparation and follow-up by the HEI (internships)
* To grant “Certificate” to a student who has successfully completed an internship in a partner organization within the framework of the work based learning internship and gained work experience. /Certificate shall be one of the official requirements for graduates of the program/
* During the work based learning internship, at least one person or a mentor from the partner organization or company provides professional guidance, advice and supervision.
* Program students shall be paid by the partner organizations or companies. During the WBL, students are legal subjects to the labor laws.
1. **UNITBV definition**

“Work based learning refers to all forms of learning that takes place in a real work environment. It provides individuals with the skills needed to successfully obtain and keep jobs and progress in their professional development. **Apprenticeships, internships/traineeships and on-the-job training** are the most common types of work-based learning. These types usually – but not always – combine elements of learning in the workplace with classroom-based learning” (Interagency Group on Technical and vocational education and training (IAG-TVET), 2017). (UNITBV)

At European Union (EU) level, apprenticeship is considered “a major type of work-based learning”, which helps students to “earn while learn”. According to the European Training Foundation, (ETF), “many partner countries have started to implement pilot projects or structural reform on apprenticeship/dual education, with the support of the ETF (ETF, 2021). In this respect, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) was established under the authority of the European Commission, aiming at promoting the quality, supply, image and mobility of apprentices (Foundation, 2021)

* Receive salaries, benefits and social insurance in accordance with relevant legislation
* Accident insurance
* The internship process starts at the beginning of the educational process, which helps them to easily decide on their career choice.
* There should be continuous communication between the trainee and the research supervisor during the internship, so that the trainee can feel the continuity of education, discuss their experiences, and clarify issues and questions.
1. **UOM definition:**

Students are able to implement their theoretical knowledge as they are taught the practical part of an academic subject. Internships, also offer them support in developing their personal skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication skills and taking initiative. They gain expertise in their future profession and are getting more equipped with self-confidence and maturity that are necessary for their future endeavors.

In some cases, University students are rewarded with extra ECTS points when completing internships. However, this is not a general rule for all Universities. Furthermore, for employers it is an opportunity for low-cost training of prospective employees. Trainees are provided with health and pension insurance which is obligatorily funded by the employer.

1. **ULL description**

WBL is an English term. Based on the Handbook published by EFT, WBL is defined as follows: “Work-based learning: Learning that takes place within the workplace using tasks or jobs for instruction and practical purposes. It may be formal and structured using instructional plans, or informal, occurring incidentally, in the process of normal daily work, for example, through experience, practice, mentoring or demonstration.” (Sweet R., 2018)

1. This definition is a suggestion of an informal definition given by the researcher. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)