

# Assessment of internship effectiveness in South Italy Universities

Internship effectiveness

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to describe and discuss the way internships are currently evaluated in Campania Universities by host institutions.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The author collected and described questionnaires used by the universities of the Regional Observatory of Campania University System. These questionnaires are given by the host institutions to interns to fill out, and they evaluate skills growth in terms of initial and final assessment. Data related to these questionnaires are not publicly available, therefore the main data source comes from 732 post-internship questionnaires collected by the University of Suor Orsola Benincasa in 2013-2014.

**Findings** – Out of the 732 participants considered, 65 per cent rated excellent for motivation and interest, 55 per cent were rated excellent for the responsibility demonstrated, but only 37 per cent were rated excellent for the level of work autonomy achieved: a signal of the need to better prepare students for internships. Cross-technical and professional skills, which increase of +37 and +32 per cent, suggest that the experience has a very positive value. Regarding the experience outcome, the author detected a positive indicator: in 6 per cent of cases, an early employment occurred.

**Research limitations/implications** – It has only been possible to analyze the questionnaires from one of the Campania universities. The results encourage us to explore further, extending instruments and research methods at a national level, too.

**Originality/value** – The author built a research database form to compare current questionnaires in Campania. The author collected internship evaluation data from Suor Orsola University to propose a common questionnaire among Campania Universities. By sharing the findings, other universities, national and international, could benefit from the results.

**Keywords** University, Internship, Education, Internship evaluation, Third mission

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Curricular internships are generally considered a first employment experience for a student, but we also consider them an opportunity and a training experience integrated with the traditional course of studies, allowing to acquire more knowledge and develop new skills. We focus on the internship evaluation questionnaires currently used in Region Campania universities to analyze the employers' perspective. Currently, internship effectiveness should be guaranteed by the clarity and transparency of the training project in planning the work, by a good relationship with the host subject, a careful monitoring of the process: these are necessary requirements for universities, to avoid internships misuse and attempts at manipulation.

Throughout our country, we observed the lack of a common tool or system to evaluate internships for host institutions. The work presented here is part of the 2014-2015 project "Regional Observatory of Campania University System", in South Italy, which aimed to promote coordination between universities on sharing of best practices. The project relies on coordination between the universities and the adoption of standardized instruments of evaluation and verification. It is articulated over four lines of autonomous action, relating to:

- (1) career opportunities and administrative data integration enterprises/universities;
- (2) population and skills of research registry;



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- (3) teaching evaluation and services for the right to education; and
- (4) new services.

The fourth action line aims at the development of new services, arising from the need to increase university attractiveness. On this line of intervention, the author has worked as a manager for Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples (UNISOB), coordinating a working group and mainly developing the idea to share the organization of curricular internships and the development of new tools among all the Campania universities. This would reinforce universities-institutions (or companies) cooperation through student internships.

This paper first explores literature about internships and particularly about the importance of evaluating their efficacy. Thereafter, we discuss current assessment in South Italy, by comparing the questionnaires used by main universities. We then consider data collected by UNISOB, with a questionnaire administered by the host institutions. We carried out an analysis of the data collected in 2013-2014, for an amount of 732 questionnaires. The paper closes with a discussion of our findings, in which we detect a positive evaluation of the internship experience and identify the hardest skills to acquire for students, corresponding to using computers and language.

### **Curricular internships in universities**

In Europe, the importance of a dialogue between work world, civil society and universities has become relevant with the introduction of the third mission in universities, which can be traced back to a study realised by the European Commission (Enterprise Directorate General, 2000). The Commission identified a number of lines of action to pursue. First, closer cooperation between universities and innovation enterprises. Second, modernization of university teaching through multi-disciplinary approach, necessary to face contemporary life issues such as sustainable development, disease management, major risks. Finally, it is emphasized how economy of knowledge should be a life-long learning. In this scenario, universities can contribute to regional development as well as to European cohesion. In Italy, too, in addition to their traditional role in education and research, universities should take a new role: the diffusion of knowledge and technology, which contributes to local or national development and growth (ANVUR, 2014).

The origin of the idea of the third mission goes back to 1963, when the president of the University of California, Clark Kerr, introduced the term "Multiversity" to refer to a community college able to give value to the differences between enterprises on which it has a given impact and capable of responding adequately to the cultural and economic changes under way, looking at the future. Kerr (1963), in short, urged American universities to a responsible attitude towards society, in a period marked by great change and turbulence from the economic-social point of view. He called for a "realistic" university community, also attentive to companies on the industrial, political and cultural aspects. He imagined this university community as a "city manifold", capable of creating jobs and economic value through technological innovation. He recognized the ability of American universities, having taken up the challenge of globalization, giving impetus to the processes of industrialization and technological development.

Therefore, there is a third mission that tends to the economic evaluation of knowledge. This means concretely developing links with economic actors in a territory, strengthening entrepreneurial culture, making productive research and paying attention to web development (della Volpe, 2013).

Currently, decision-making models and procedures in Italy are lacking, while there are still costly and slow bureaucratic procedures. Despite these difficulties, both universities and enterprises highlight the significant benefits derived from their mutual cooperation: patents, funding, research applied to the first, product and process innovation, market

expansion, employee training for the latter, and spin-off or start-up creation. Also, a further change is called for: the introduction of internships carried out in enterprises within curricula. In Italy, that is a sign of renewal of the relationship between universities and enterprises. The aim is to “achieve moments of alternation between study and work as a part of the processes requiring training” (Italian law n. 196/1997: art.18).

Curricular internship should not be a first employment relationship of a student, but an opportunity to gain experience integrated with the traditional course of studies, allowing to acquire more knowledge and develop new skills. Of course, the effectiveness of internships must be guaranteed by the clarity and transparency of the training project: these are requirements that universities must safeguard, to avoid internships misuse and attempts at manipulation.

Universities shape capabilities through “learning theoretical or practical processes, but it is only when these capabilities are stressed in the development process of the activities that they become skills” (Persico and Rizzo, 2005, p. 105). Universities need to be linked to the world of professions if they want to develop skills and capabilities. This means that they need to be more and more networked to other knowledge and skills. Their training function runs in parallel with other actors.

In literature, internships are studied from different points of view: students’ and employers’ experiences; relationship between university and industry; entrepreneurial university.

About the first point, it is highlighted how undergraduates obtain many advantages thanks to internships: less time to find a job, a better salary and a greater job satisfaction. This happens even if students expect to be trained by the host company, while companies expect to have more autonomous students, so that they can limit their supervision (Gault *et al.*, 2000). Students’ perception of internship efficacy is generally positive: undergraduates gain a work experience as important as learning in classroom, where learning is participative, engaging, rich, in a real-life environment, so that they fill the gap between traditional learning and “real world” of business (D’Abate *et al.*, 2009; Renganathan *et al.*, 2012; Carter *et al.*, 2016). Considering Italian universities, della Volpe (2009) and della Volpe and Esposito (2016) highlight how internship is a central element of teaching, within an education system aimed to entrepreneurship. Students better prepared to enter the job market and benefits to employers are underlined similarly by Gault *et al.* (2010) and Kim *et al.* (2012). Positive internship value is argued by Degraevl *et al.* (2012), especially for firms and small businesses. Other benefits for employers, such as recruitment and selection, are studied by Maertz *et al.* (2014). The great European turmoil that sees young students attracted by investing in internships suggests high attention by European Universities to the phenomenon. In an international survey (European Youth Forum, 2011), the positive contribute by internships is identified, for their role as an instrument of transition from education to the labour market. Most of the interviewees had realized an internship, which lasted from four to six months, as part of their course of studies. Most of the interviewees had realized at least two internships, searched them on the internet or using personal contacts. The satisfaction for the experience is usually high, except for the low or absent pay. Finally, research highlights the importance of identifying those areas where formal education is not enough to guarantee access to the job market and go over their programmes. Regulations for internships should be defined, at both educational and legal levels, to make internships effective and flexible.

From the perspective of a relationship between university and industry, internship is considered a tool to reduce the gap between these actors: building these collaborations enhances educational and research goals at the same time (Frasquet *et al.*, 2012). Other benefits for industries are: solutions to their problems through research insight, thanks to the student and a deep understanding about academic world and student expectations. On the other hand, universities can receive important feedback from industry about adopted learning systems (Shin *et al.*, 2013).

The knowledge transfer between universities and enterprises generally flows from the university to the enterprise (Guerrero *et al.*, 2015; Narayanan *et al.*, 2010). So the transfer on which to base the cooperation between the two parties, in view of a better collaboration, would be based essentially on a one-way asymmetrical communication, although, in our opinion, it needs a greater understanding of the specific nature of the business world by universities. In fact, there is enough knowledge within the business world beyond “academic” recognition. It comes from tacit knowledge, which drives the know-how, and is born from concrete experiences and reflections, which feed in turn new experiences in a virtuous circle of learning. It is knowledge linked to individuals and/or organizations; it is sometimes true and personal research. In our view, the first priority is to restore symmetry within this dialogue, and to be aware of the diversity of the two fields of knowledge, of the methods of research and dissemination of learning. Only this awareness can bring together universities and enterprises on a common ground of shared collaboration. Starting from this new symmetry condition, it will be possible to build that trust relationship needed to achieve a concrete and constructive dialogue. Therefore, we notice a first barrier of cultural order, which requires an action of cross-re-education of the parties involved. As Narayanan *et al.* (2010, p. 74) suggest, the university should facilitate a “2-way knowledge transfer”. Regarding entrepreneurial university, the author adds how important it is, for undergraduates’ internships, focussing on functional knowledge to improve their learning and their satisfaction. Also, they reveal the importance of mentoring to increase their satisfaction. In this perspective, Guerrero *et al.* (2015), looking at English entrepreneurial universities, observe how internships consolidate those students’ skills considered important for the employers. Looking at Italian universities, della Volpe *et al.* (2016), underline how curricular internship is to be considered an indicator of entrepreneurial university.

In an entrepreneurial economy, the main productive factor is knowledge capital, source of competitive advantage, completed by the entrepreneurial capital, which represents the ability to exploit new economic opportunities to produce entrepreneurial phenomena. This way, entrepreneurship becomes a productive factor, contributing to territory growth, increasing competitiveness, introducing diversity. In this scenario, the universities’ role, according to Kalar and Antoncic (2015), is not only that of generating knowledge, but mainly that of spreading it within the social and industrial textures.

Literature explores the perception gaps between students’ and employers’ expectations (Ameen *et al.*, 2010; Yu *et al.*, 2013). The opposing viewpoints are discussed by Jones and Abraham (2007), who underline how the most important skills for employers are the technological and interpersonal ones, while universities aim at learning abilities most of all. On the other hand, students are persuaded that previous work experience is the key factor. It has also been detected (Zaid and Abraham, 1994; Jackling and De Lange, 2009) that employers observe students’ difficulties in communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills, leadership potential, while universities are persuaded they are prepared for oral presentations and analysis abilities.

### **The evaluation of internships in South Italy**

The universities involved were: Federico II of Naples, Second University of Naples, L’Orientale of Naples, Parthenope of Naples, Suor Orsola Benincasa of Naples, University of Sannio (Benevento), University of Salerno. We have compared all questionnaires by considering the total sum of all variables considered by different universities as a basis for comparison. The most complete questionnaire, in terms of number of sections and linkage to literature (Young *et al.*, 2010; Jiang *et al.*, 2015), is the one used by UNISOB.

We will now discuss how questionnaires are shaped between universities.

University of Salerno (UNISA) has four types of questionnaire: a generic one, which we will take into account and three specifics for engineering, economy and communication, which we will not take into account. We are going to compare questionnaires shared by six out of seven universities, since the University of Sannio does not have questionnaires.

The first two variables (achieving objectives, level of professional development) related to the “success” of the learning experience are taken into account in the questionnaires of three universities (UNISOB, UNISA, Federico II), while Parthenope takes into consideration only one (level of professional development) and second university only “Achieving objectives”. The following four variables of the grid (adaptation to the context, motivation and interest, degree of responsibility-reliability, level of autonomy reached), concerning performance of the intern, are taken into account by two universities (UNISOB and UNISA), while Federico II takes into account only one (degree of responsibility). L’Orientale takes into account two (adaptation to the context, motivation and interest), Parthenope one (adaptation to the context) and second university none of them. The next set of four variables, relating to the skills developed, is common to all universities (technical-professional, cross, computer, language) and one (technical-professional) is not taken into account by L’Orientale. Parthenope takes into account none of them. The last group of three variables (curricular, extracurricular, outcome) is taken into account by UNISOB while Parthenope and L’Orientale consider two (curricular and outcome) and UNISA one (curricular). Finally, it must be said that Federico II has a report-card for “putting in transparency competences acquired through training”, that we have assimilated to the questionnaires. However, L’Orientale provides a certification of internship closing with the evaluation grid and the definition of a number score scale (1 to 5), completed by the host, who we have also assimilated to the questionnaire. In conclusion, it should be noted that UNISOB questionnaire is more comprehensive as it observes all the variables considered and allows a comparative evaluation before and after the internship. In Figure 1, results are summarized.

### Methodology

For our research, we collected – via UNISOB – 732 questionnaires from July 2013 to July 2014. Relating to the host subject, we used a database to get the kind of organization where students carry out their internship. At UNISOB, agreements between university and host organizations (bodies, companies, professional firms and associations) are listed in a database to facilitate students in their internship choice.

Currently, the agreement database is a dynamic resource structured to have two sections of consultation: a public one, for consultation by students; a reserved one, for both administrative needs and research purposes.

Agreement trend has been continuously positive: from the starting 280 agreements in 2011 to 1.321 on January 2015. For our study, we built four classes: business, non-profit, public and internal (within the university).

Generally, the questionnaire is submitted to host structures at the end of internship, to verify the actual benefits generated by the internship and to monitor students’ skill growth. This questionnaire is mandatory by law, but there are no legislative indications on its structure.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections and includes:

- (1) General data related to the student and to the host.
- (2) Assessment on the progress of the stage:
  - achieving objectives;
  - level of professional development;
  - adaptation to the context;

University /questionnaire	Achieving objectives	Level of professional development	Adaptation to the context	Motivation and interest	Degree of responsibility-reliability	Level of autonomy reached	Technical-professional skills	Cross skills	Computer skills	Language skills	Curricular internship	Extra-curricular internship	Outcome: final termination, placement	Evaluation modality
UNISOB (NA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Questionnaire
UNIVERSITY OF SALERNO-UNISA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Questionnaire
UNIVERSITY OF NAPOLI "FEDERICO II"	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Card-Report
UNIVERSITY OF NAPOLI "L'ORIENTALE"	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Final report
SECOND UNIVERSITY OF NAPOLI	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Questionnaire - Final report
UNIVERSITY OF NAPOLI "PARTENOEPE"	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Questionnaire

Yes  
No

Figure 1.  
Comparison of  
questionnaires –  
Campania Universities

- motivation and interest;
  - degree of responsibility and reliability; and
  - level of work autonomy.
- (3) Evaluation of the skills acquired during the internship, measured before and after internship experience. They are divided into:
- technical and professional skills: set of knowledge, skills and personal resources, specific and distinctive of one's professions;
  - cross-skills: leadership, work organization, communication, management of interpersonal relationships, problem solving, teamwork;
  - computer; and
  - language: ability in oral and written communication.
- (4) Type of internship: curricular or extracurricular.
- (5) Internship outcome: extension, termination and placement.

We assigned a Likert score scale from 1 to 5 both at the beginning and at end of the internship experience, to verify the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

## Findings

### Host organization sector

Host institutions involved allow us to describe this situation (Figure 2): over the observed period, the public sector has hosted 57 per cent of students in curricular internships.

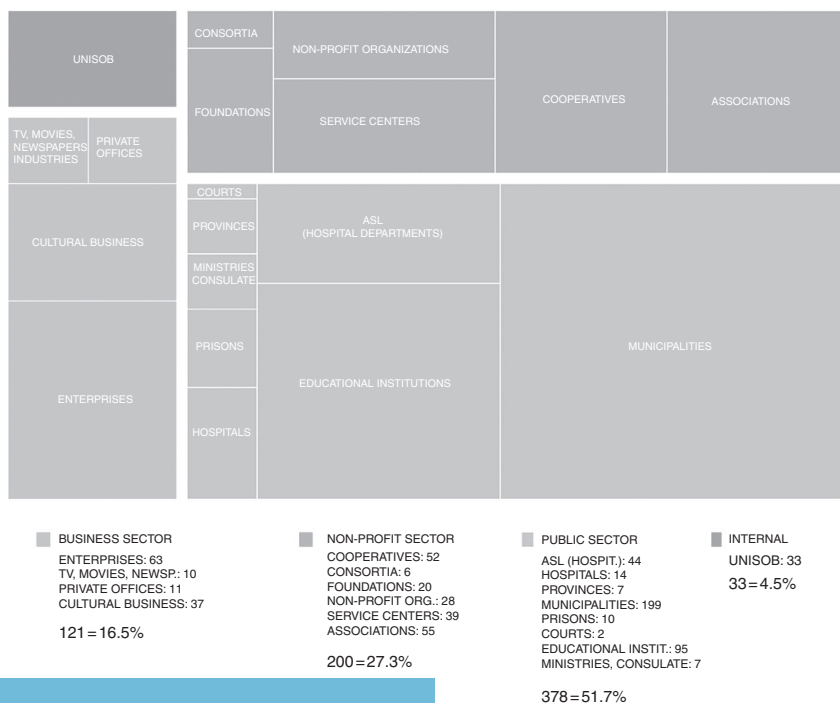


Figure 2. Host organizations sector



In this area, we have included ASL, hospitals, municipalities, provinces, prisons, courts, educational institutions, ministries, consulates. However, 27.3 per cent of students have carried out their internship in non-profit sectors: associations, cooperatives, consortia, foundations, non-profit organizations and service centres. The business sector has received 16.5 per cent of young people in private enterprises, cultural businesses, private offices, TV headquarters, movie, newspapers and publishing industries. The internal internship (in UNISOB) represents 4.5 per cent of the total. The public sector has a strong appeal for its low entry barriers, which become rather substantial when opting for enterprises that require one or more interviews to select candidates cut on specific profiles. Furthermore, enterprises often ask precise or dilated time of engagement, different from the time strictly necessary to achieve the number of hours, that is, the credits required by the educational offer. To this, we must add that the geographical area in which the university operates is certainly not characterized by strong industrialization. Therefore, on the basis of these considerations, we state that 16.5 per cent of internship made in enterprises is still a valuable and significant percentage if compared to the reference context.

Regarding the venue of the internship, it is evidenced that 97 per cent of the internships are achieved in Campania, which shows a strong attitude of non-mobility with respect to this training activity. Of the 732 internships, we have taken into account, only 19 were carried out outside Campania region and five in New York.

#### *Internship evaluation questionnaires*

Considering UNISOB data related to the assessment questionnaire: we carried out our analysis of the documents collected in 2013-2014, for a total of 732 questionnaires: 682 curricular, 36 extracurricular, 14 bonus points. In fact, we distinguish between curricular internship, which are required, internship out of the plan of study, carried out at the request of the students, and internships that allow to get bonus points to be spent for degree marks.

The specific items discussed in the questionnaire will be discussed next. Missing responses are marked as “not received”.

Regarding the first variable, degree of achievement objectives, the range is between excellent and good in 94 per cent of cases, while only 6 per cent of cases are between discrete and sufficient. As for the level of professional development, it is shown that in 83 per cent of cases ranges are between excellent and good, while between discrete and sufficient in 7 per cent of cases (see Figure 3).

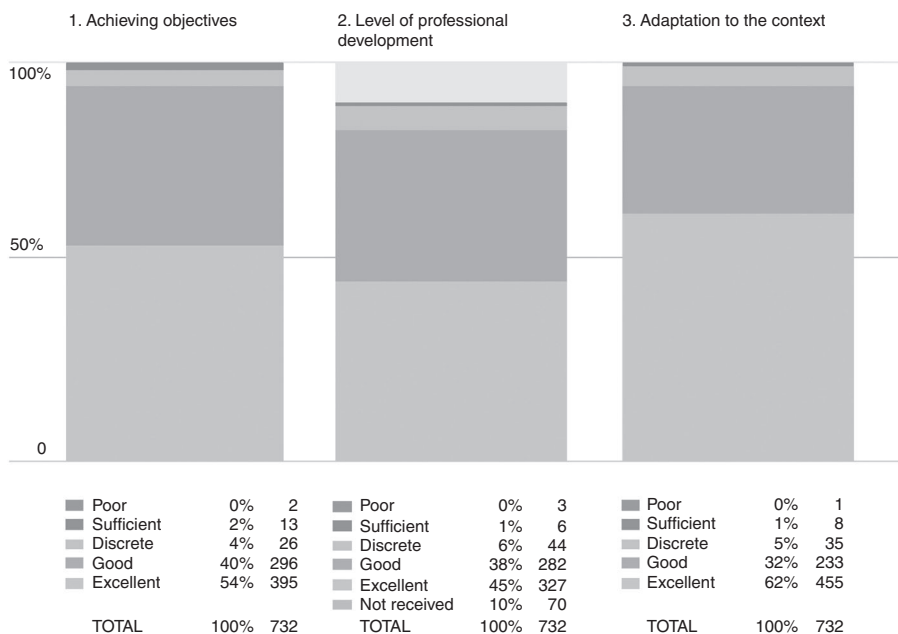
Concerning items are adaptation to the context (see Figure 3); motivation and interest, degree of responsibility/reliability; level of work autonomy reached (see Figure 4); and the values between excellent and good include a range of 78 to 94 per cent of cases. Sufficient to discrete values are ranged in 6-11 per cent of cases.

These data call for further investigation. Focussing on excellent values, we detect that, even if students show high motivation and interest (65 per cent) and a good degree of responsibility (55 per cent), they are rated lower in work autonomy achieved (37 per cent). This means that host organizations expect students to be more mature and ready to take on responsibilities. We interpret this as a signal of the need for universities to better prepare students for internships.

With reference to the technical and professional skills (see Figure 5), before internship we record a value of 46 per cent, ranging from excellent to good, and 43 per cent belong to discrete, sufficient and poor classes. After the internship, the positive area increases: 83 per cent (+37 per cent), while in parallel the negative area decreases: 6 per cent (-37 per cent).

For cross-skills (see Figure 5) the range is from 50 per cent, including excellent and good, before the internship, and it becomes 82 per cent after the internship (+32 per cent); while the negative area passes from 39 to 7 per cent with a corresponding decrease of -32 per cent.



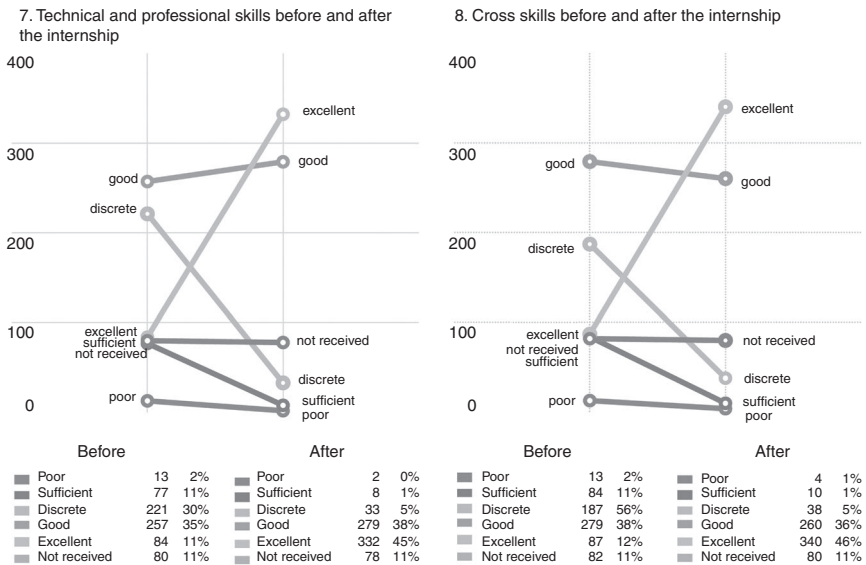


**Figure 3.**  
Employers' questionnaires: items 1-3

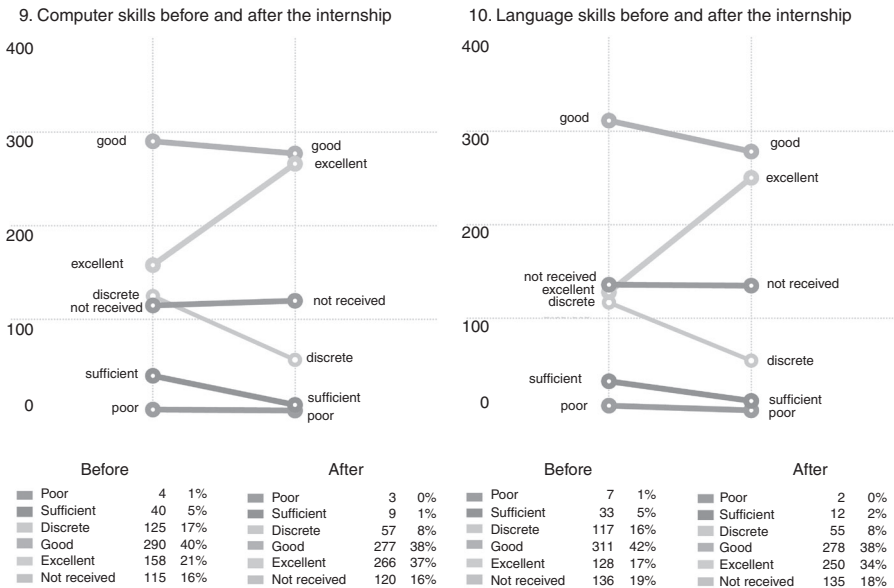


**Figure 4.**  
Employers' questionnaires: items 4-6

As for computer skills (see Figure 6) the areas excellent and good improve from 61 to 75 per cent (+14 per cent) after the internship, thus compressing the area discrete, sufficient and poor, in which the summarized value of 23 per cent is reduced to 9 per cent (-14 per cent).



**Figure 5.**  
Employers' questionnaires: items 7-8



**Figure 6.**  
Employers' questionnaires: items 9-10

For language skills (see Figure 6) we evince the same trend. After the internship we go from 59 per cent, summarizing excellent and good, to 72 per cent (+13 per cent). In parallel, the areas of summarized values poor, sufficient and discrete, declines from 22 to 10 per cent (-12 per cent). We remind here the incidence of missing values.

In conclusion, the important indication that emerges from these data is that the most complex skills to acquire are those concerning the use of computers and language.

With reference to the outcome of the experience of internship, we find that most students (89 per cent) concluded their internship and we detect an interesting signal: in 6 per cent of cases, there has been a job placement. The indication would be very interesting to study, in order to understand which factors accelerate the entrance of students into the labour market, before the conclusion of the master's degree. Another fact being that 5 per cent of the internships are extended beyond the mandatory period indicate an interest by host institutions for the intern, which in time might turn into a job offer.

### Discussion and conclusions

The importance of undergraduate internship as a bridge between academic world and work world is widely recognized in literature, which underlines many advantages for both. Students spend less time to find a job, have a participative, engaging learning and improve different skills, such as oral and written communication, team working, and a deep understanding of the job market. Companies can receive new solutions to their problems thanks to the students, and universities can obtain important feedback from industry. Curricular internships are really a good way to overcome the gap between university and organization, as the third mission requires.

Although the most important document on research strategy expressly refers to internships, Italian universities are still facing the problems of standardization and testing of internship advanced practices.

This paper aims to gauge the internship effectiveness from the host viewpoint, because we detected an absence in this field: a common tool or evaluation system does not exist yet. With the "Regional Observatory of Campania University System", in South Italy, we had the opportunity to compare the questionnaire forms actually used in the seven universities of our Region.

Using the most complete questionnaire form, in use at UNISOB, as a reference point, we observed the lacking items in the other ones and decided to share and adopt that form, which allows a comparative evaluation prior to and following the internship.

Then, we monitored the internship experience realized in UNISOB, analyzing 732 questionnaires filled by host subjects in 2013-2014. Our findings show, first of all, that most internships are realised in public sector. Here a consideration occurs: South Italy is not a strongly industrialized area, which is why students are forced towards public organizations. But, in our opinion, in this way, the contribution that university gives to territory development in many and different directions is limited. A greater students' mobility might be necessary, working through national funding, to give the opportunity to South Italy students, too, to be trained in a company.

Host organizations find students less autonomous on the job than they expect. There are different ways a university could help develop this factor. A change in the teaching methods, for example, could be useful. At UNISOB, teaching is mostly based on frontal lessons, with a low interaction between students and teachers. A different teaching methodology, more involving, with active and interactive students, helping them to be able to present contents in public.

About skills such as computer use and language, they seem the most difficult skills to improve for students, judging from the evaluation of our sample. Even in this case, university could better prepare the students in these fields before the internship experience, offering supplementary informatics courses and modifying teaching methods, as already discussed, improving ability to plan and realize multipurpose discourses, oral and written.

In short, the most important elements that emerge from our research are various. First, the necessity of a common questionnaire form for all universities, so that it would be possible to compare data collected at regional or, better, at national level. Sharing a tool such as a questionnaire filled by host organization means improving this tool to collect data,

improve reflections to reach new guidelines about curricular internships to get the best benefits, in terms of learning, for students and, in terms of new knowledge, for the organizations. Finding a common form for a region was a first step towards this goal, while the next one would be collecting the same data we used for this study in the remaining universities, in order to expand the sample size for a more solid statistical power and at the same time comparing results between different contexts, finally aiming at a national and international comparison.

Second, we underline the needs of mobility for internships, especially for South Italy students, so to offer a rich and various choice about hosts, because the geographical area encompasses a lower number of companies compared to other areas in Italy.

Third, we highlight the need of a renewed teaching way to improve knowledge, especially in some fields currently not well developed to prepare students, to the work world.

Finally, collected data by host means a deeper understanding and a stronger cooperation between university and organizations, especially with companies, in line with the third mission objective.

We are conscious that our data are partial because they are collected only in one university, but the results obtained strongly suggest a study direction with our research effort. Moreover, we find that a questionnaire is still a limited tool: it does not allow for many degrees of freedom nor does it permit discovering or exploring new elements that might be relevant to the matter.

For this reason, we believe supplementary tools should be developed and tested, to determinate the feasibility of new services as for the cooperation university-industry-government. As part of the Regional Observatory of Campania University System, relating to our project about internship, we proposed the creation of an online tool, widely used in the Web 2.0: a magazine with blogs, as prestigious universities do, including Columbia University in New York (see [www.magazine.columbia.edu](http://www.magazine.columbia.edu)) and Oxford University (see [www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/opinion/blogs/editors-blog](http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/opinion/blogs/editors-blog)). The intent is to enrich the triangulation already mentioned through informal conversations and to explore new opportunities. Hence, it is assumed that information will emerge, as well as the strengthening of ties between the parties/actors involved.

The content will be aimed at combining the simplicity and the interaction of a blog with specific editorial articles of the magazine. In particular, in addition to the central skeleton of a blog, different categories of content should be suggested and constantly updated over time. Contacts and news regarding internship offers can be posted, along with sections dedicated to specific companies or institutions, paying attention to their profiles, and sections dedicated to events, to the storytelling of the experience of internship made by young people, and to a suggestion section.

The choice of this communication tool springs from the very nature of Web 2.0 (della Volpe, 2013), whose goal is the sharing of information and collaboration to create new knowledge. Digital convergence enables a multi-directional flow of communication, in which each user at the same time enjoys the content of others and can create new ones, sharing them with the community. It is also a tool with low technological barriers and easy to use.

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#### About the author

Maddalena della Volpe is an Associate Professor of Economics and Management. Primarily, della Volpe research was focussed on enterprise communication and ICT. Currently, della Volpe is interested in students' entrepreneurial mindset development, and also interested in developing new ways of teaching. Finally, della Volpe pays attention to higher education innovation. From 2011 to 2015, della Volpe was a Rector's Delegate to relationships with companies and to internships' coordination. della Volpe created a new internship office, completely dedicated to curricular internships, starting by building a rich database of partnerships between University and companies. della Volpe designed the WayOut Project, finalized to improve entrepreneurial and managerial students' skills, leading to start-ups creation. It was based on an innovative teaching programme, with knowledge transfer from practitioners, curricular internships, lessons by university's web radio with students' participation, conferences with CEOs from different companies. Finally, della Volpe realised the first Italian university magazine, *Improving Magazine*, focussed on curricular internship. della Volpe was a Visiting Professor at the Universidad Católica de Colombia, in Bogotá, for the last three years (2014-2016). della Volpe's main research contents: web and Big Data use in companies; evolution's analysis of enterprise network in the knowledge economy era and its impact on communication strategies; studies concerning business communication in an interdisciplinary perspective, with a particular attention to the issues of corporate identity and corporate image; research on SMEs of the manufacturing sector and of information and communication technology; impact of the web as part of a corporate communication strategy. Maddalena della Volpe can be contacted at: [maddalena.dellavolpe@unisob.na.it](mailto:maddalena.dellavolpe@unisob.na.it)

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