

The impact of the EHEA on the professional internships: Interviews with the academic coordinators

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper presents a study of the professional internship models in each Faculty at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) of Barcelona, Spain; their relationship to the idiosyncrasy of each type of studies, and their evolution from 2009, before the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), until the 2013-2014 academic year. This study is part of a larger project that comprises the point of view of the three agents involved in the internships: students, academic tutors and in-company tutors.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper provides the data obtained from one of the three agents involved, namely the academic supervisor-tutors. We present the methodology used to compile the data before and after the EHEA implementation: firstly, by means of deep individual and face-to-face interviews, and in a second stage by means of e-surveys, jointly with quantitative and objective data related to the internships activity during the period of the study.

Findings: Following the conclusion of the first part of the study related to the internships before the EHEA, we found four different models of monitoring and assessing the internships;

we anticipated the four models would converge into two, and eventually into one. The final model expected was focused on more intensive monitoring.

In the second part of the study, even though we found fewer changes in the models than we expected, the impact of the EHEA deployment has been very important in quantitative aspects and in the breadth of the changes. Also, for some Faculties, the internship has become one of the most important subjects of the curricula.

Originality/value: To the best of our knowledge this is the first study of the EHEA impact on the professional internships in a Spanish University.

Keywords: Internship monitoring models, EHEA, Academic internship tutors, Face-to-face interviews, e-interviews

Jel Codes: I21, I23

1. Introduction

The EHEA (European Higher Education Area) deployment, also known as the Bologna process, has implied a change and an opportunity to rethink, develop and improve the curricula of the high education studies as a way to converge to more advanced models that have been experimented and updated in more developed countries, especially in Europe and in the Anglo-Saxon area. The case of the internships is a very illustrative example of this process and it is interesting to analyse the process and the changes performed, and to compare the process before and after the EHEA, and the current situation.

The Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) of Barcelona used to have, before the EHEA, a wide range of different professional internships that varied for each degree program. We define internships as external or professional traineeships, or practices in any kind of welcoming institution in a wide sense (i.e. firms, companies, public administrations or NGOs).

The professional internship system at UPF was decentralized and the curricula of each Faculty included internships in different modalities and some did not even include any internship at all. The Faculties in the UPF are the following: Law, ICT – Polytechnic School, Economics and Business Sciences, Communication, Translation and Interpretation, Humanities, Political and Social Sciences, and Health and Life Sciences. In Figure 1, the Faculties of the UPF are depicted. The majority of faculties are

related to the Social Sciences, except for the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Engineering School - Polytechnic School - and the Health Sciences Faculty. Some of those faculties did not consider offering internship courses for undergraduate students.

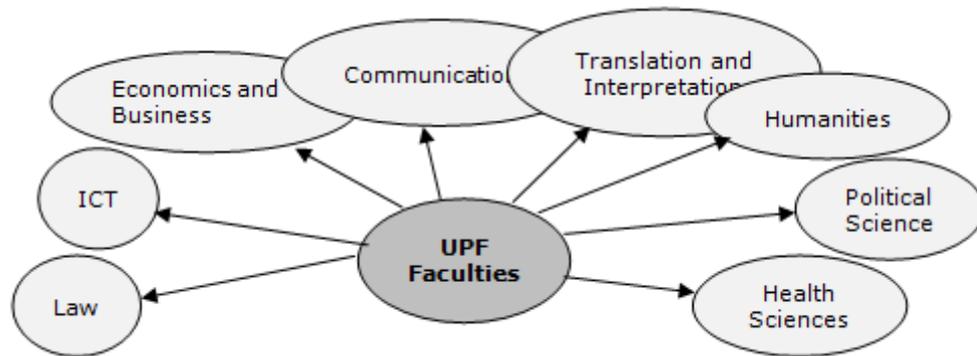


Figure 1. UPF Faculties

The EHEA adaptation process implied a redesign of the curricula of all the studies of all Faculties. This included a new definition of all courses focused on the students' needs. In the special case of the internships, where three actors are involved, namely students, academic tutors and in-company tutors (Figure 2), it is important to know the point of view of all of them. The internship specific characteristics such as out-of-classroom activity, learning at the workplace, learning by doing, practical knowledge acquisition, applying in practice previously acquired knowledge, or self-knowledge of the students own capacities, imply a specific assessment and relationship with the teacher-tutor and even the in-company tutor. In this context the initial goal of the project presented in this paper was to have a global vision of the internships in the University. The first aim of this study was to know the departure point by asking the internships coordinators of each Faculty before and after the EHEA implementation, then to know the students point of view (Alemany Costa, Perramon Tornil & Panadès i Estruch, 2014a, 2014b) and finally the in-company tutors' opinions. This stage was necessary because at that point no study had been made at the university level of the situation of the internships. The only related work in Spain at an interuniversity level that we were aware of was conducted by Equipo EIRA (2011), and it was focused on teachers' training internships.

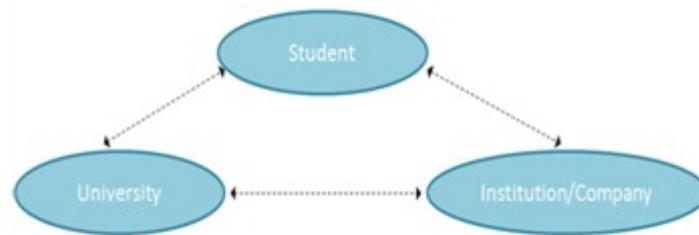


Figure 2. Participants in the internship

The main objective was to understand the differences that such a European integration process implies in terms of the designed models of the internships. In the context of this work an internship model is a set of characteristics that define various practical (procedure) aspects of the internship process, including:

- target population (percentage of students) versus compulsory or optional character of the internship,
- type of monitoring, and tools used, e.g. ICT utilization, and evaluation,
- duration versus number of ECTS credits,
- academic year of the internship,
- remuneration,
- internationalisation and
- relationship to research.

The last two items and the intensive uses of ICT are specific features of the post-EHEA models.

The first part of the project consisted in interviewing every internship coordinator of each Faculty before and after the EHEA. The fieldwork was divided in two stages: prior to the EHEA and after its implementation. In the first stage the focus of the internship models was on the monitoring level of the students as a guarantee of the quality assurance given the expected increase of the number of students, and in the second stage the focus was extended to rest of the characteristics.

From the main goal described above, three additional points of reflexion were derived. First, quality assurance, by engaging in the new wave of EHEA's implementation to maintain and even improve the monitoring of the process and the results by setting quality assurance protocols. Second, the maintenance of standards even with the dramatic increase in the number of students work placements

that the EHEA implied. Consequentially, every single stage of the internship process needs to be readapted to the new context. And thirdly, to identify which internship model is the most suitable one for the generalization of work placements.

As a consequence of the above, a review of the situation of the internship after the EHEA has been deployed. And it allows a comparison of the state of the art before and after the EHEA, and analyse the evolution of the internship. This is a very interesting topic because it explains the evolution of the Higher Education in Spain in the last years, however there is no published literature about this process. López-Guede, Graña, Oterino and Larrañaga (2014), and Ariza, Quevedo-Blasco, Ramiro and Bermúdez (2013), describe the evolution of two specific subjects of the curricula during the EHEA deployment in two interesting articles, but they are not related to internships.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section two presents the theoretical frame. The methodology used to collect the data before and after the EHEA is presented in section 3. The results of the data obtained before the EHEA are discussed in section 4, and the discussion of the models built upon these data. Section 5 presents an analogous discussion after the EHEA. The specific results of the interview after the EHEA are shown in section 6. Section 7 presents the current situation of the internships and in section 8 a summary of the results and the main conclusions are presented.

2. Theoretical Framework

The internship as a new subject for some of the new degrees was based on the constructivism theory formulated by Kolb (1984), in which learning at the workplace or experiential learning was a new way of consolidating knowledge acquired from experience.

The benefits of the internship in the experiential learning process have been described in different models (Jaques, Gibbs & Rust, 1993), and in particular in Kolb's "experiential learning". Fenwick (2008) elaborates a deep review of the research done from 1999 to 2004, concerning the relationship between individual and collective learning in workplace. The internship's theoretical framework has been analysed by many authors; for a comprehensive list of works we refer the reader to the compilation articles by Zabalza (2011), Cid, Pérez and Sarmiento (2011) and Tynjälä (2013).

The concept of experiential learning is present in many works which have analysed how students apply concepts learned in classroom to real life situations and how they reflect on this. The majority of works define the essence of the internship based on the theory of the constructivism, in which the learning

process is building in a continuous development. Tynjälä (1999) compares the constructivism and the traditional learning in the university. According to Tynjälä, learning is not passive reception of information but a learner's active continuous process of constructing and reconstructing his or her conceptions of phenomena, and that is the constructivism. It emphasizes understanding instead of memorizing and reproducing information, and it relies on social interaction and collaboration in meaning making.

In a study by Kosnik, Tingle and Blanton (2013) the benefits of using experiential learning projects from an administrative and pedagogical viewpoint were analysed using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. This study concludes that "learning by doing and applying previously acquired knowledge through experiential learning projects provide students with outstanding opportunities to hone their professional skills, apply and expand their academic knowledge, and develop moral character" (Kosnik et al, 2013).

Moving from the knowledge-transmitting paradigm of learning towards constructivist instruction requires fundamental changes also in assessment procedures, and therefore, in this case, in the monitoring models.

3. Methodology of the study

The methodology used in this work was based on interviews with all internship coordinators, mainly because we wanted to know first-hand the real situation of the internship activities at the UPF, and also because the interview methodology allowed to collect exhaustive data specific of each study-degree, which was something that had not been done before in this university due to its relatively recent date of creation (1990). We interviewed twice the supervisors-coordinators of every study-degree, before and after the EHEA deployment, in order to compare the changes occurred. The methodology used was basically qualitative in most of the items but some of them were quantitative and comparable.

The level of detail of the interviews and the observed variety of criteria due to the decentralised nature of the internships organisation could have provided enough material to conduct a separate case study of most studies-degrees, because each one organised the internships according to the viewpoint of their academic officials and the idiosyncrasy of each study (e.g. the Humanities studies did not find it necessary to offer internships to their students, while the Journalism and Communication studies offered internships intimately linked to external companies). However this was not the goal of the

present study, which was more focused on having a global overview of the situation of the internships and the expected changes caused by the EHEA deployment.

Therefore, there are two distinct phases in the methodology of this study: before and after the EHEA. Firstly a face-to-face deep interview was conducted with each supervisor to identify the different models of internships and all of their features and finally, after the implementation of the EHEA process, the interviews were online with the goal of identifying the changes in the models.

In 2009, before the EHEA, the interviews were held with the top supervisors of each of the twelve studies (N=12, n=12) at UPF in order to know the state of the question at UPF. Some of the Faculties offered more than one degree, and that means that one coordinator was in charge of the internships of multiple degrees, up to four, and obviously a great number of students.

The survey was conducted in the following manner:

- a pilot template was prepared,
- the timing of the interviews was planned,
- the template was tested and changes were introduced according to the results of the tests,
- the actual interviews were conducted and the templates were filled in with the corresponding data, and
- a summary of the collected data was elaborated.

The interview questionnaire was structured in four parts, considering separately the three participants involved in the internship, i.e. student, university (internship coordinator) and welcoming institution. The first part was about the academic organization prior to the placement. The second part was about the preliminary situation, right before the incorporation of the student into the welcoming institution (s)he is assigned in. The third part included the performance of the internship itself: from the first until the last day of the placement. The fourth and final part was based on the accumulated and final evaluation and assessment of the competences acquired in the internship.

First, we interviewed each supervisor for an average time of two hours, in which we obtained in-depth data about the internship management throughout the whole process. Once the interview was over, we collected all the data obtained and we wrote a draft report that was sent to the interviewee for double-checking. By doing so, we made sure that the data we were dealing with was absolutely correct. With all the data available, we designed a table that summarizes the whole set of results to facilitate the comparability of the data although this implied that we had to discard some specificities.

In May 2012, after the EHEA implementation was in place, we sent an e-questionnaire to the internship coordinators of every degree (N=16) and the response rate was 100% (n=16). This questionnaire contained items to compare the situations before and after the EHEA and to identify the changes arisen because of the EHEA process. It was not considered necessary to conduct face-to-face interviews again because most coordinators were the same as before the EHEA, and in the few cases where the coordinator had been changed we held a personal meeting to explain the process carried out so far.

4. Internship Models before the EHEA

As a result of the interviews' process the following features could be observed. Firstly, there was a wide diversity among the design of internship programs. Normally, every internship was designed according to the point of view of the supervisor, the Dean or even the Board of Directors of the Faculty. The diversity of models was surprisingly high. In some cases, it was considered an essential part of a comprehensive education. So every single student should take it; sometimes, from the first academic year and, from then on, once per year. On the other hand, there were some other Faculties that did not even have an internship: it was simply non-existent as they considered that they were not useful for the students and not related to the purposes of the studies themselves.

Two remarkable examples of the diversity related to the extension of the internships were, on one hand the Faculty of Humanities, which offered internship just for Master students, but not for undergraduates. On the other hand, the second example was the Health Sciences Studies, a unique case in Spain in 2009 to the best of our knowledge. In that Faculty the internship started at the first year and continued every subsequent year. Another paradigmatic example was the Economics and Business Faculty, in which there were only a maximum of 30 seats available – that is roughly a 15% of the total students. Nonetheless this internship program was innovative in two aspects. First, the incorporation of the final degree project or dissertation in these studies, and second, in giving a strong relationship between the internship and the final project in this type of studies. In addition, the internship period was exclusively devoted to the external practices and could not be taken simultaneously with other academic activities.

Table 1 shows a complete view of the variety of the internships in 2009 at UPF.

As can be seen from Table 1, there is a high variety in the workload, ranging from 3 credits (old credit system) in the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences to 15 ECTS (EHEA system) in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences; or, as another example, the number of students goes from a minimum of 5 or 8 students for each academic year (optional subject) in the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences to 100% of the students (compulsory subject) in the Faculty of Law. A wide variability of characteristics of the internship for each degree was identified.

From the results of the interviews we can stress that before the implementation of EHEA there were four differentiated performance models in internship courses according to one specific aspect which is the intensity of the monitoring, because at this stage of the study the quality of the internship was considered to be based on an adequate monitoring level given the number of students. In the first model, there were some faculties that did not have an internship design at all. Second, in some degrees there was a limited supply of vacancies. They preferred to limit it in order to be able to control the internships intensively. Furthermore, the limited resources made it impossible to extend the internships to a larger number of students. Thirdly, in some other degrees, a very high percentage of students (close to 90%) were taking work placements. Unfortunately, the resources were limited as well, so the quality of the monitoring was rather low in general terms. Fourthly, in some studies, the internship was an essential part of the comprehensive training of the students. Consequentially, its selection, monitoring and analysis of results were done tightly and thoroughly.

At that point our main conclusion was that, in our opinion, the four initial models would converge into just two, as follows. The model with the tightest monitoring would be consolidated, and the other three models would converge into just one: a model including many more students, but not all of them, with tighter monitoring. Furthermore, the longer-term trend suggested that there would be only one model: a completely structured internship with careful monitoring of quality at every stage.

	Type	Credits	Recommended year	Length
Economics and Business	Optional	3	2 nd cycle	6 months (full time)
Biology	Optional	15 ECTS	5 th Optional Year	6 months (full time)
Management	Optional or Free Choice	Up to 9	2 nd or 3 rd year	Minimum 255 hours
Political Sciences	Compulsory	4,8 ECTS	4 th year or the previous summer	120-200 hours
Audiovisual Communication	Optional	10 ECTS	4 th Year	250 hours
Law	Compulsory	14,5	4 th Year or the previous summer	Depending on the itinerary
Humanities				
Computer Science	Optional	9	After 50% of the total credits passed	180 or 200 hours
Journalism	Compulsory	10 ECTS	Last term of the studies	1 term
Advertising and Public Relations	Compulsory	14 ECTS	4 th Year, Previous or following summer	250 hours
Labour Relations	Compulsory	14 ECTS	4 th Year	Between 120 hours to 6 months
Translation and Interpretation	Optional	4,5	4 th Year	100 hours

	Number of students	Continuous evaluation	Final evaluation	Remarks
Economics and Business	5 -8	No	Report and grading by the company	Optional to elaborate a MSc thesis (12 credits)
Biology	60	No	Research work (50%) Tutor Report (30%) Poster Synthesis (20%)	Objective: Introduction to Research. Previously 3 months of an Introduction Course
Management	140	No	Report by the company and Dossier	The Student chooses the company from the DB
Political Sciences	100%	No	Report by the institution and Dossier	Companies and Spanish or International Institutions.
Audiovisual Communication	80-90 (95%)	No	Dossier by the student	Volatile sector demand causes unstable supply
Law	100%	No	External: student information Internal: Teacher grades	Wide variety of specialized itineraries, inside and outside of our university
Humanities				No internship. To be defined in the new degree
Computer Science		No	Short Student Dossier and grade by the company	The student is in charge of the company selection process
Journalism	65	No	Student Dossier + Report by the company	Grants of the EFE Agency are equivalent to practices abroad
Advertising and Public Relations	70-80	No	Student Dossier + Report by the company	High level of job placements (20%) in the same company
Labour Relations	100%	No	Student Dossier and a voluntary oral presentation	Possibility to recognise the current work as an internship
Translation and Interpretation	30 (30%)	No	Student Dossier (60%) Company Report (40%)	Compatibility with the studies (morning or afternoon shift)

Table 1. Summary of the results of the interviews with the internship coordinators before the EHEA

5. Internship models after the implementation of the EHEA. Comparison with the pre-EHEA models

To compare the situation before and after the implementation of the EHEA, we prepared a new survey to be answered by the internship coordinators of each Faculty at UPF. We present the responses in two parts. Firstly, we present in Table 2 the general features of the new internships and the comparison with the previous situation described in section 4, for example: number of ECTS, number of students, duration, evaluation, etc. Secondly, we present in Table 3, in the next section, the more specific features that are intrinsic to the implementation of the EHEA, for example: uses of ICT in the monitoring process, links to department research, links to final degree dissertation, etc.

The first set of results is summarized in the table below. In this table, we compare the previous characteristics of the internships before the EHEA and the characteristics after the EHEA. These are the characteristics that define the internship models, and the comparison of the models can be seen in the table. There is a row for each of the old studies, shown in italics, followed by the corresponding new degrees.

	Type	Credits	Recommended year	Length
<i>Economics and Business (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Optional	3	2 nd cycle	6 months (full time)
<i>Business Management and Administration</i>	Optional	14	3 rd – 4 th academic year	3 to 5 months
<i>Economics (ECO)</i>	Optional	14	3 rd – 4 th academic year	3 to 5 months
<i>International Business Economics (IBE)</i>	Optional	14	3 rd – 4 th academic year	3 to 5 months
<i>Management (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Optional or Free Choice	Up to 9	2 nd or 3 rd year	Minimum 255 hours
<i>Management</i>	Optional	Up to 13,5	3 rd or 4 th academic year	6 to 8 months
<i>Biology (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Optional	15 ECTS	5 th Optional Year	6 months (full time)
<i>Human biology</i>	Compulsory	6	4 th	Less than 3 months
<i>Medicine</i>	Under development			
<i>Biomedical Engineering</i>	Under development			
<i>Political Sciences (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Compulsory	4,8 ECTS	4 th year or the previous summer	120-200 hours
<i>Political and Social Sciences</i>	Compulsory	10	4 th	3 to 5 months
<i>Audiovisual Communication (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Optional	10 ECTS	4 th Year	250 hours
<i>Audiovisual Communication</i>	Compulsory	10	4 th	Less than 3 months
<i>Law (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Compulsory	14,5	4 th Year or the previous summer	Depending on the itinerary
<i>Law</i>	Optional	12	4 th	6 to 8 months
<i>Criminology and Public Prevention Policies</i>	Optional	10	4 th	Less than 3 months
<i>Law and Business Management and Administration or Economics</i>	There is no specific internship in the curricula yet for this double degree.			
<i>Labour Relations (Pre-EHEA)</i>	Compulsory	14 ECTS	4 th Year	Between 120 hours to 6 months
<i>Labour Relations</i>	Compulsory	14	4 th	3 to 5 months
<i>Humanities (Pre-EHEA)</i>				

	Type	Credits	Recommended year	Length
Humanities	Optional	5, 10, 15 or 20	3 rd – 4 th	6 to 8 months
Computer Science (Pre-EHEA)	Optional	9	After 50% of the total credits passed	180 or 200 hours
Computer Sciences	Optional	Up to 20	3 rd	3 to 5 months
Telematics Engineering	Optional	Up to 20	3 rd	3 to 5 months
Journalism (Pre-EHEA)	Compulsory	10 ECTS	Last term of the studies	1 term
Journalism	Compulsory	18	4 th	3 to 5 months
Advertising and Public Relations (Pre-EHEA)	Compulsory	14 ECTS	4 th Year, Previous or following summer	250 hours
Advertising and Public Relations	Compulsory	10	4 th	3 to 5 months
Translation and Interpreting (Pre-EHEA)	Optional	4,5	4 th Year	100 hours
Translation and Interpreting	Optional	20	4 th	6 to 8 months
Applied Languages	Under construction			

	Number of students	Continuous evaluation	Final evaluation	Remarks
Economics and Business (Pre-EHEA)	5 -8	No	Report and grading by the company	Optional to elaborate an MSc thesis (12 credits)
Business Management and Administration	65	Yes	Yes	Tribunal evaluation
Economics (ECO)	65	Yes	Yes	
International Business Economics (IBE)	40	Yes	Yes	-Tribunal evaluation -internship abroad compulsory
Management (Pre-EHEA)	140	No	Report by the company and Dossier	The Student chooses the company from the DB
Management	75	Yes	Yes	Tribunal evaluation
Biology (Pre-EHEA)	60	No	Research work (50%) Tutor Report (30%) Poster Synthesis (20%)	Objective: Introduction to Research. Previously 3 months of an Introduction Course
Human biology	60	No	Final report + presentation of a poster	Poster must be related to the Final Degree Dissertation
Medicine	Under development			
Biomedical Engineering	Under development			
Political Sciences (Pre-EHEA)	100%	No	Report by the institution and Dossier	Companies and Spanish or International Institutions.
Political and Social Sciences	150	Yes	Yes	Recent implementation of ICTs
Audiovisual Communication (Pre-EHEA)	80-90 (95%)	No	Dossier by the student	Volatile sector demand causes unstable supply
Audiovisual Communication	80	No	Yes	Hard to find vacancies for traineeships

	Number of students	Continuous evaluation	Final evaluation	Remarks
Law (Pre-EHEA)	100%	No	External: student information Internal: Teacher grades	Wide variety of specialized itineraries, inside and outside of our university
Law	300	Yes	n/A	Internships at university disappear
Criminology and Public Prevention Policies	60	No	Yes	
Law and Business Management and Administration or Economics	There is no specific internship in the curricula yet for this double degree.			
Labour Relations (Pre-EHEA)	100%	No	Student Dossier and a voluntary oral presentation	Possibility to recognise the current work as an internship
Labour Relations	120	No	Yes + Tribunal assessment	
Humanities (Pre-EHEA)				No internship. To be defined in the new degree
Humanities	25-30	Yes	Final report + questionnaire by external tutor	The Faculty selects the vacancies for the students High flexibility
Computer Science (Pre-EHEA)		No	Short Student Dossier and grade by the company	The student is in charge of the company selection process
Computer Sciences	80	No	Yes	Going abroad if available
Telematics Engineering	80	No	Yes	Going abroad if available
Journalism (Pre-EHEA)	65	No	Student Dossier + Report by the company	Grants of the EFE Agency are equivalent to practices abroad
Journalism	80	No	Final written report + tutor assessment	Direct agreements between the Faculty and Media companies
Advertising and Public Relations (Pre-EHEA)	70-80	No	Student Dossier + Report by the company	High level of job placements (20%) in the same company
Advertising and Public Relations	80	No	Yes	
Translation and Interpreting (Pre-EHEA)	30 (30%)	No	Student Dossier (60%) Company Report (40%)	Compatibility with the studies (morning or afternoon shift)
Translation and Interpreting	10	No	Final report + report by the tutor	Less vacancies
Applied Languages	Under construction			

Table 2. Comparative table of the internships before and after the EHEA

The implementation of the EHEA implied a change in the number of studies in each Faculty, usually increasing the degrees in comparison to previous studies. The studies, at the beginning of 2012, were the following. The Faculty of Communication had the Advertising and Public Relations degree, the Journalism degree and the Audiovisual Communication degree. The Faculty of Translation and

Interpretation had the Translation and Interpretation degree and the Applied Languages degree. The Faculty of Economics and Business had four degrees, namely Economics, Business Management and Administration, International Business Economics and Business Science – Management. The Faculty of Humanities had the Humanities degree. The Polytechnic School had a Degree in Telematics Engineering and another in Computer Sciences. The Faculty of Law had three degrees: Criminology and Public Prevention Policies degree, Law degree and Labour Relations degree. In addition it shared with the Faculty of Business and Economics a double degree: Law and Business Management and Administration or Economics degree. The Faculty of Political Sciences had the Political and Social Sciences degree. The Faculty of Life and Health Sciences had two degrees: the Human Biology degree and the Medicine degree; and it shared with the Polytechnic School a Biomedical Engineering degree.

In the Human Biology degree, there was not an internship as a subject in the curricula, but they included an orientation course, previous to the Final Project, to monitor and train the student for the professional life. During the last term of the fourth year the students took an intensive 5 weeks course. This course had to give knowledge and professional guidance about the postgraduate studies and professional environments, as well as to provide useful competences for the postgraduate level and professional integration, i.e. how to prepare the curriculum vitae or how to manage an interview. However, it did not imply that the student had to take an internship in a specific institution, research group or others. In any case this course was not part of the Final Project of these studies. The student would have a “real” internship in the Master level as a formal professional activity during 6 months.

In the Economics and Business Faculty, the internship was part of the curricula in the fourth academic year, jointly with the Final Degree Dissertation (Project) and the Mobility Programs. This means that in the last year the student did not have to attend regular classes and the curricula were closer to those in the majority of European Universities. The students were also encouraged to take the practices in foreign companies and institutions.

Besides the characteristics shown in Table 2, there was another remarkable change in the internships: in some of them the coordinators had been newly appointed and thus were still learning the procedures and for this reason they decided to defer the changes to the previous models.

After we concluded the first part of the study related to the internship before the EHEA we anticipated the four monitoring models would converge to two, and eventually to one. What we have found in the second part of the study is that there have been fewer changes than we expected.

This may be due to the fact that the new degrees are today still under development. One reason can be given by the deployment of the Bologna process to all the subjects, which represents a huge amount of work, and this means that the internship development will be left for a future stage. Another possible reason can be that the structural changes, like the number of credits, academic year, compulsoriness, etc. have been applied first, and changes of the content will be applied after the internship is running. This implies that the monitoring process and the adjustment of more specific characteristics will be done in the coming future.

To better understand why the changes in the models have been less extensive than expected, in the next section the detailed results of the interview are presented.

6. Results of the interview to the internship coordinators after the EHEA

For the interview, we designed an on-line questionnaire which was sent to all coordinators (N=16) and we received 16 answers (n=16). The results of the post EHEA survey are presented in the following subsections.

6.1. General features of the internships

The internship is an optional subject in 10 degrees (63% of the total number of degrees), while it is compulsory in 5 (31%). See Figure 3.A.

Regarding the length of the internships, the results range from 3 to 8 months. The majority of internships lie within the 3 to 5 months range, while there are 4 degrees in each of the other categories: less than 3, and 6 to 8 months. See Figure 3.B.



Figure 3. Typology (left, A) and length (right, B) of the internship

The preferred timing for the internship is as close as possible to the end of the degree. Nearly 90% are scheduled for the fourth academic year. In 5 degrees, the student can choose between the third or fourth year. Nevertheless, in two Polytechnic School degrees, they are only carried out in the third year.

About the ECTS credits awarded, there is no clear pattern: from 6 ECTS in Human Biology to more than 20 ECTS in the Polytechnic School. However, the majority awards from 10 to 15 ECTS.

In relationship to the number of students, in those six degrees tagged as “compulsory”, all students take the internship. In one degree, more than 80% of the students take it. The expectation ranges from 50 to 80% in three degrees (19%). In five degrees (31%) the internships have been taken by 20% to 50% of the students. Finally, there is only one degree in which less than 20% of students take an internship. See Figure 4.

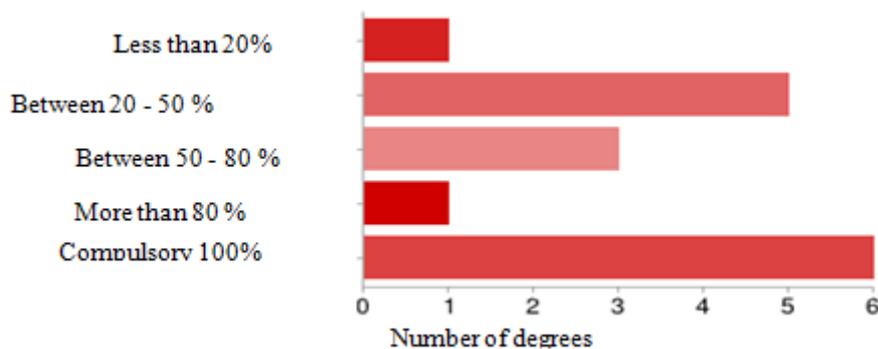


Figure 4. Expected number of students in the internships (in percentages)

Taking the internship abroad is an enriching option but with limited availability for the student. In 11 degrees (69%), it is optional according to availability. In 4 degrees, (25%) it is neither available nor recommended. It is compulsory only for International Business Economics.



Figure 5. Availability to take the internship abroad (left) and remuneration (right)

On one hand, the company remunerates the internship in 6 degrees. On the other hand, there is no remuneration whatsoever in 8 degrees. In the other two degrees it depends on whether the company or institution has previously decided so. See Figure 5.

6.2. Monitoring protocol

There is no common pattern of monitoring whatsoever. Nine degrees (56%) evaluate the performance only one time. In four degrees (25%), they carry out a monthly monitoring. Only one degree monitors the student once every one or two weeks. In one other degree, they use other assessment method. Finally, in one of the degrees, there is no assessment at all. See Figure 6.



Figure 6. Monitoring protocol

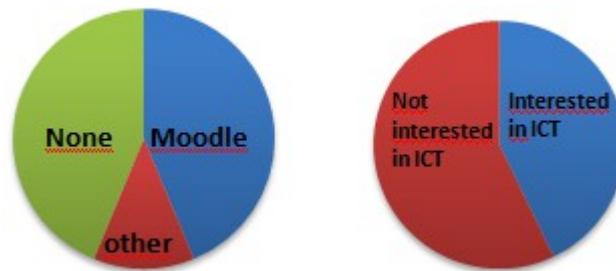


Figure 7. ICT uses in monitoring protocol; (left) and interest in using ICTs in monitoring (right)

Seven degrees (44 %) do not use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the monitoring process. The same number, seven degrees, use the Moodle platform for this purpose. Two degrees are planning to use Skype and e-mail. Of those seven degrees that do not use ICTs, three would be interested in its implementation for monitoring purposes. See Figure 7.

6.3. Evaluation

There are many possible ways to assess the internship mark in every Faculty. In order to be precise, we move further from the Faculties. Instead, we consider the degrees, taking into account that some degrees applied more than one evaluation method.

The results are wide-ranging. In most of the cases, the mark comes from a combination of different evaluation methods. The most common method, with 50% of the sample (8 degrees), is a final written assignment. Seven degrees (44%) use continuous assessment. Five degrees (31 % of the respondents) use final evaluation. While other five set a panel (board) evaluation. The same proportion (5 degrees or 31%) uses other grading methods that include tutor's evaluation, student's portfolio, company's tutor report and external tutor's questionnaire. See Figure 8.

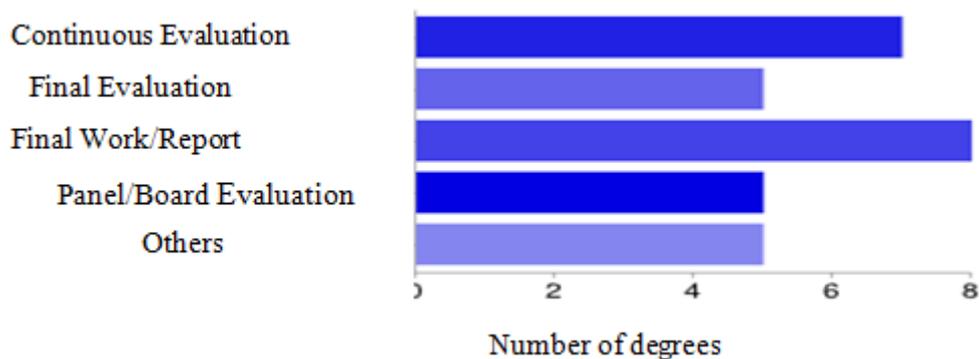


Figure 8. Evaluation

6.4. Relationship to Final Project and Research Programs

In some cases, the internship has to be linked to the Final Dissertation. Those are Telematics Engineering and Computer Science (both from the Polytechnic School), Human Biology degree (Faculty of Life and Health Sciences), and Labour Relations degree (Faculty of Law).

Even though both activities are linked in content, the evaluation of the internship and the Final Dissertation is totally independent. In another degree, they propose to deliver the final Project and to defend it in a poster format.

6.5. EHEA specific results: Internationalisation, ICT uses and links to research

The study of the internship models after the EHEA was focused on the changes in some specific items that presumably would have a higher impact on the models. These items were included specifically in the e-questionnaire sent to the coordinators in May 2012.

The relevant new items were: changes in the monitoring process and use of ICT, relationship between the internships and the research developed in the different departments, whether a link existed to the Final Degree Dissertation, the internationalisation of the internships, and changes in remuneration.

ICT are used for monitoring in half of the degrees and Moodle was the most commonly used platform, and there was even a study that made use of a more interactive system like Skype.

The observed changes related to the relationship between the research and the internship can be presented in two aspects: whether there is a connection to the Department research fields, and to the Final Degree Dissertation or Project. The top supervisors of four studies, Human Biology, Labour Relations, Computer Sciences and Telematics Engineering, propose for those students who are more research oriented the possibility to develop the internship together with the Final Degree Dissertation or Project, included in a research field of the corresponding Department. This is why in all cases where there is a link to the Department research there is always a link to the Final Degree Dissertation.

In the International Business Economics degree internships have to be mandatorily developed in another country, and in most of the other studies the option of going abroad is highly recommended and this is one of the changes that the EHEA has implied.

In addition to these features we asked about the remuneration of the internship to the students. The answers indicate that each degree has its own criteria and there is no relationship with the type of the degree.

Table 3 presents the particularities of the internship after the EHEA in every degree.

In our point of view, supported by the interviewees' responses and remarks, if the EHEA had not been deployed these features of the internship would not have been developed. The EHEA has implied a redefinition of the internship. The redefinition means that the internship is more interrelated to other subjects and to the research career of the student. And also means that the number of students taking the internship has increased significantly and the use of ICT's facilitates the monitoring of the internship, which would otherwise be impractical to manage.

	Monitoring by ICTs	Links to Department research	Links to Final Degree Dissertation	Abroad	Paid
Business Management and Administration	Moodle	No	No	If available	Yes
Economics	Moodle	No	No	If available	Yes
International Business Economics	Skype	No	No	Compulsory	Yes
Management	Moodle	No	No	If available	Yes
Human biology	No	Yes	Yes	If available	No
Political and Social Sciences	Moodle	No	No	If available	No
Audiovisual Communication	No	No	No	If available	No
Law	Moodle	No	No	No	No
Criminology and Public Prevention Policies	No	No	No	If available	No
Labour Relations	Moodle	Yes	Yes	No	No
Humanities	e-mail	No	No	No	No
Computer Sciences	No	Yes	Yes	If available	Yes
Telematics Engineering	No	Yes	Yes	If available	Yes
Journalism	No	No	No	If available	Yes, according to willingness of company
Advertising and Public Relations	Moodle	No	No	If available	Yes, according to willingness of company
Translation and Interpreting	No	No	No	No	No

Table 3. Particularities of the internships after the EHEA

7. Current situation: First EHEA graduates

All students enrolled at UPF can take external practices, either curricular or extracurricular. Extracurricular practices are those which are not part of the curriculum of the student, and they do not count as ECTS.

During the last two academic years, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, the number of students taking an internship has increased approximately by 50%. The quantitative changes occurred after the Bologna process, in some cases unexpected (e.g. in the Economics and Business Faculty), have been larger than the qualitative ones. The number of students has increased notably until the current dates, mainly due to the undergraduate students but also to the incorporation of master students (graduate students) to the internships. This new situation implied internal changes in the organization of the internship, namely to create a new organizational unit, Professional Career Service (SCP).

According to the data provided by SCP, half of the total internships at UPF correspond to the students of the Economic and Business Faculty even though they are optional in the students curricula (See Table 4). On the other side, the Advertising and Public Relations, Journalism, Audiovisual Communication, and Political and Administration Sciences degrees have more agreements with companies and organizations and the internships are a compulsory part of the students curricula.

DEGREES	YEAR 2012/2013			YEAR 2013/2014		
	Curricular	Extra-curricular	Total internship	Curricular	Extra-curricular	Total internship
Business Management and Administration	83	112	195	141	140	281
Human Biology	13	35	48	7	51	58
Business Sciences	73	38	111	127	93	220
Political and Administration Sciences	85	21	106	130	49	179
Audiovisual Communication	67	26	93	88	50	138
Criminology and Public Prevention Policies	51	1	52	64	4	68
Law	70	113	183	93	161	254
Double degree in Law and BMA or Economics		1	1	0	5	5
Economics	54	105	159	130	116	246
Biomedical Engineering	0	1	1	14	3	17
Computer Science	5	57	62	73	29	102
Audiovisual Systems Engineering	4	21	25	62	10	72
Telematics Engineering	1	80	81	51	14	65
Humanities	20	32	52	26	44	70
International Business Economics	3	51	54	8	88	96
Applied Languages	4	4	8	6	10	16
Medicine	0	11	11	9	78	87
Journalism	116	31	147	103	52	155
Advertising and Public Relations	82	67	149	93	69	162
Labour Relations	124	67	191	187	100	287
Business Science + Labour Relations	2	2	4	0	1	1
Translation and Interpretation	39	0	39	11	50	61
TOTAL	896	876	1772	1423	1217	2640

Table 4. Evolution of the internship during the period 2012-2014 by degrees. Source: Professional Career Service. UPF

With regard to aspects related to the changes occurred in the internship characteristics, it is worth mentioning that the improvement in the monitoring efficiency owing to the use of ICT will undoubtedly result in a better quality of the assessment, and therefore of the overall internship process.

One of the main objectives of the UPF related to the internship is to achieve many more international agreements with institutions in the EU and other countries, fundamentally due to the students interest. On the other hand, various governing bodies of UPF such as the Board of Trustees (Consell Social) and the University Senate (Claustre) have categorically pronounced on the precariousness of students taking curricular internships, demanding that such internships be remunerated in all cases, and even establishing a given minimum amount per hour.

Changes in the internship coordinators, tremendous increase of the number of internships in each Faculty, internship internationalisation, extension to some Faculties (e.g. Humanities) and to the master's degrees, are possible reasons explaining why the previous models of internships have been maintained in a great number of Faculties at UPF, for example there has been little internationalisation, little relationship to research, etc. But there is a solid belief that internships have to be one of the bases of the curricula and the current models will have to be adapted to the new paradigm.

8. Summary and conclusions

This study has been focused on the point of view of the UPF coordinators of the internships, and it is the first study of the internships at UPF, before and after the EHEA.

The contributions of this paper to the academic study of the internships are: it provides an overview of the evolution of the internships in a young university as UPF, the effect of the EHEA on the internships, which has implied a rethinking of the relationship between some studies and the professional world, and it facilitates the transition process to the labour market. Finally, it has raised awareness on the need for a general overview of the situation of the internships in each university by fields of knowledge and by geographical areas.

A transformation of the point of view and interests of the university officials is one of the main changes that the EHEA process has introduced in the degree curricula and the studies priorities. On one hand, because the students have shown another perspective of the learning process more related to acquire practical concepts and knowledge, which have to be useful in the workplace. Maybe due to the economic crisis in Spain, they understood that it can be a way to enter the labour market or to help in this process. But, on the other hand it is a consequence of the introduction of new paradigms of teaching at the Higher Education level, more related to the constructivism theory, learning at the workplace, out-of-classroom learning process, learning by professional practices, etc.

Before the EHEA implementation, we interviewed deeply the internships coordinators. We could stress that every study had a model of external practices adapted to its own singularities, and this made them very independent from each other. At that time, the internship was better defined in those studies with a clear professional orientation and the rest of the studies had a wide variety of situations.

After the EHEA the internship has been extended to all degrees and therefore to a greater number of students, including the master students. The number of ECTS credits, and consequently the number of hours, has also increased. Although the monitoring procedures were expected to evolve to a more intensive and technologically advanced model, the results of this study show that little changes have been introduced with respect to the previous models.

From the results we obtained in this work we suggest that the future of the internship will be based on the development of interuniversity networks related to the external national and international practices. We recommend the extension of the internship to a wider range of the students, stronger relationship to the activities of each research department, intensive monitoring procedures using ICT and guaranteeing the quality of the process by means of appropriate protocols.

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