

Call for Experts

To join the SAPS project - Supporting Apprenticeships between Professional Higher Education & Small and Medium Enterprises

The **SAPS Project** stands for *Supporting Apprenticeships between Professional Higher Education & Small and Medium Enterprises*, and aims at:

- improving the **perception** of SMEs of the benefits of engaging interns/apprentices from professional higher education (PHE) Institutions;
- lowering the **barriers** to cooperation between PHE Institutions and SMEs;
- establishing more regular and structured **cooperation** between the umbrella organizations for PHE and organizations representing SMEs.

The main idea of the project came from understanding that, across Europe, there are large disparities in the number of internship/apprenticeship placements offered to students in professional higher education. This is partially due to the fact that:

- SMEs may not have the structures in place to take on interns/apprentices;
- The value that internship/apprenticeship brings to the business is not always clear for the SMEs;
- PHE Institutions often find it easier to work with a few large enterprises than many SMEs.

Therefore, the project will bring **European experts** in managing internships/apprenticeships together to develop teaching and learning materials for SMEs, including on collaborating with PHEIs, onboarding interns and deriving value out of interns placements. It will also create quality guidelines for PHEIs offering internships/apprenticeships to SMEs, covering the areas of governance & strategy, teaching and learning as well as operations.

A 10 country internship/apprenticeship **campaign** will bring together promotional messages, examples of best practice, information tools, and a list of contacts of one-stop-shops for starting offering placements, offered by PHE Institutions across Europe.

SAPS will increase the supply of internships/apprenticeships by lowering barriers to take on interns/apprentices, both from the sides of the organisations sending and those receiving, as well as by increasing cooperation between PHE Institutions and SMEs. We will improve the quality of internships/apprenticeships by offering guidance to SMEs on how to organise these, and giving PHE Institutions a quality assessment tool. We will improve attractiveness by highlighting the value proposition of offering placements directly.

Content of the experts' work

The first phase of the project focuses on 'Supporting SMEs new to internships/apprenticeships', and will be developed in cooperation with 10 European experts. The overall aim is to:

- provide guidance to SMEs as to how to provide for:
 - an effective learning experience for interns/apprentices;
 - a productive work experience for the enterprise;
- create guidelines for managing interns/apprentices with disabilities and/or special needs;

And that way:

- assist SMEs in setting up an internship/apprenticeship scheme in collaboration with professional higher education institutions;
- assist SMEs with the process of on-boarding interns/apprentices.

The overall output of the work package will be a **resource pack for SMEs** covering all the areas set out above. The content of such resource pack will be authored by the experts experienced in setting up such schemes with SMEs, from within PHEIs across Europe, and based on best-practices from the same institutions where such schemes are already functioning.

The final publication is expected to contain a series of guidelines, instructing SMEs on how to:

- set up an internship/apprenticeship scheme in collaboration with professional higher education institutions;
- on-board apprentices;
- ensure an effective learning experience for interns/apprentices;
- ensure a productive work experience for the enterprise;
- manage interns/apprentices with disabilities and/or special needs.

Role of experts

1. **Definition of scope** – experts will meet at a 2-day meeting, defining a specific table of content for the Resource Pack, as well as outline of the content and the case studies to be used to illustrate each chapter. Experts will assign responsibilities amongst themselves for the authoring of each chapter.
This meeting will take in the beginning of April 2017 in Brussels (Belgium).
2. **Collection of good practices and existing guides** – Since the experts are expected to already have experience in operating similar schemes, an internal library will be created, containing guidelines, practice-guides, examples of implementation etc. which may help authoring of the resource pack.
(Timeline: April – May 2017)
3. **Developing the Resource Pack** – based on the outcomes of the experts' meeting on the content of the pack and division of roles, as well as in line with the input of collected good practices and guides, experts will author the Resource Pack. Each chapter will have a main author and 1-2 sub-authors.
(Timeline: April – June 2017)

Experts are expected to join the Brussels meeting, and devote 10 days of work remotely on contributing to above points 2 and 3.

The final outcome will be a publication with a working title '**Mobilising Internships/Apprenticeships for Business Success: A Guide for SMEs**'.

Profile of experts

In order to bring different perspectives and expertise in the expert team, we are looking for experts from:

- Professional Higher Education Institutions;
- Organisations representing SMEs;
- SMEs;
- Experienced professional in supporting students with disabilities.

The selected expert should be able to demonstrate:

- experience in organising internship/apprenticeship systems between PHE institutions and SMEs;
- strong cooperation with PHE stakeholders and the ability to strengthen cooperation (including with the world of work, chambers of commerce and other employers' bodies);
- significant engagement in the international environment, demonstrated through participation in international conferences, projects, associations etc.;
- preferably, experience in publishing activities on EU and/or national level of expertise;
- excellent English language skills.

Conditions and Application Process

Experts will be selected through an open call for applications. Selected experts will receive a gross honorarium of € 3.500,-- (incl.) as well as coverage of travel and subsistence costs to the Expert meeting in Brussels.

Experts interested in applying should send a CV together with a cover letter, indicating their experience in line with this call, to marko.grdosic@eurashe.eu by 20 February 2017.