

# STUDENTS' SURVEY ON THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIPS

SPRING SEMESTER OF 2018/2019

**TIME:** After the internship in the spring semester of 2018/2019.

**AIM:** To find out the opinion of the students of the study programme of Dietetics on the quality of the organisation of internships in the spring semester of 2018/2019.

**QUESTIONNAIRE:** The questionnaire consists of closed and open questions. The closed questions include 11 statements asking students to evaluate various aspects of the organisation of the internship in terms of approval ("Yes") or disapproval ("No"). Each statement is accompanied by an open question allowing the student to comment on the evaluation expressed. The student is also asked to evaluate the overall quality of the organisation of the internship on a ten-point scale. Two additional open-ended questions are intended to provide students' feedback on what they liked and disliked about the professional training.

**RESULTS:** The survey was completed by 92 per cent of the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>-and-3<sup>rd</sup>-year students of the study programme of Dietetics (69 students in total), who completed their internship in the spring semester of 2018/2019. In general, students rated the quality of the organisation of internships as good, with a score of 8.8 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Evaluation of the quality of organising internships by the students of the study programme of Dietetics**

Statements	Yes	No
There were no problems while choosing the internship placement	80%	20%
The Head for Practical Training of the Faculty provided information about internships, their organisation, and the procedure for organising internships approved in the Faculty, and I could address him if necessary	93%	7%
The internship supervisor (lecturer) provided all the necessary information (explained the internship programme, the individual task, the assessment criteria, and could contact him/her if necessary)	88%	12%
I had a mentor assigned to me at the placement	99%	1%
The mentor got acquainted with my internship programme (aim, individual tasks, assessment, etc.)	99%	1%
I received training and professional experience from the mentor and other staff members and advice when problems arose	99%	1%
The atmosphere at the internship placement was positive and cooperative	97%	3%
I could achieve the objectives and learning outcomes set out in the internship programme	97%	3%
The individual assignments were relevant to the internship placement, and I could complete them fully	93%	7%
The principles of assessing the internship were clear to me	99%	1%
I would recommend my internship placement to other students	94%	6%

**Students' comments:** Here are students' authentic responses on what they liked and disliked about the internship placement (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Feedback from the students of the study programme of Dietetics on their internship**

What they liked	What they did not like	Problems encountered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My mentor trusted me and let me do and try many things on my own.</li> <li>• The opportunity to get to know the work of a dietitian at Vilnius Santara Children's Hospital and observe different ways of feeding patients.</li> <li>• I consolidated my existing knowledge and gained new and useful knowledge.</li> <li>• New knowledge gained, pleasant communication from the mentor.</li> <li>• I enjoyed increasing my knowledge on food safety issues and seeing things up close.</li> <li>• Being able to apply the knowledge already acquired during my studies and get to know the dietitian's activity programme on the computer.</li> <li>• Applying knowledge in practice.</li> <li>• I liked that the dietitian was professional, showed me all my tasks and told me a lot about them; it was interesting to make menus for primary school children.</li> <li>• The internship mentor clearly and consistently explained her work, she showed problematic children who are allergic to many products.</li> <li>• I gained experience as a dietitian.</li> <li>• I enjoyed observing the work in the kitchen, in the groups, how the dietitian adapts new meal programmes for the children and got to know the technical charts.</li> <li>• Getting to know my speciality in a real environment.</li> <li>• I liked the environment in the placement, the timing of the internship, the dietitian who showed me around.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much monotony.</li> <li>• Monotony.</li> <li>• Too many working hours a day.</li> <li>• Writing a self-study paper.</li> <li>• Too long, 2 weeks is really enough because the dietitians have nothing new to show and teach.</li> <li>• Too many hours for an internship.</li> <li>• Negative feedback from the staff about the job.</li> <li>• Too many hours.</li> <li>• Paperwork.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's hard to find a placement because either nobody looks for trainees or they close early, and it is preferable that it is not complicated to get to the placement that accepts.</li> <li>• Not all kindergartens were willing to accept.</li> <li>• The suitability of a placement was not clearly defined, so once it was chosen, it was rejected, and another had to be chosen.</li> <li>• Little information was provided about the choice of a placement.</li> <li>• There was miscommunication about the possible placements for an internship.</li> <li>• It was very difficult to find a placement as no one is willing to accept students; besides there is not much need for dietitians as food is supplied by various companies.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of the survey results and the decisions taken:** The results of the survey were presented at the meeting of the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine; discussed with the academic staff and students of the study programme, internship supervisors - lecturers. To improve the quality of organising internships, internship diaries were prepared.