

28TH ANNUAL EAIE CONFERENCE

EAIE | 13-16 SEPTEMBER  
2016 | LIVERPOOL

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## SESSION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Internationalisation and employability: new models for the professionalisation of career services

**Chair:**

**Jérôme Rickmann**, Director for Talent Acquisition and Project Development, EBC Hochschule, Germany

**Speakers:**

**Adriana Pérez Encinas**, Lecturer and Researcher, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain

**Jérôme Rickmann**, Director for Talent Acquisition and Project Development, EBC Hochschule, Germany

**Damiano Anelli**, Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, Italy

## Overview

Ensuring employability and providing support for students entering the labour market has become an integral responsibility of higher education institutions. Many universities are looking for new ways to address internationalisation and employability. This Executive Summary discusses two case studies. The European Centre for Career Development and Entrepreneurship, made up of five institutions in five countries, is using several techniques to improve student employability and mobility, including an online platform, application guide, staff training, summer school, and network meetings. Another success story is Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore's student-driven model, which has increased the level of outbound student mobility and the number of international internships.

## Context

Adriana Pérez Encinas discussed the European Centre for Career Development and Entrepreneurship and Damiano Anelli described Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore's student-driven model for international internships.

## Key takeaways

**Facilitating international student work mobility has become more challenging for higher education institutions.**

Career services in higher education are not new, but using career services to facilitate international student work mobility has become a much bigger issue. Career services were massively pushed in Europe with the Bologna Process. In addition, higher levels of international student mobility have put pressure on traditional career services and information structures at institutions. Universities across Europe are under significant pressure to demonstrate the employability of their graduates. The main challenges include finances, staff resources, networks, language, training, and scalability of services.

## Key takeaways

*“Career services are nothing new in higher education, but facilitating international student work mobility has become a bigger issue. In addition, universities all over Europe are under pressure to demonstrate the employability of their graduates.”*

— Jérôme Rickmann

### **The European Centre for Career Development and Entrepreneurship is striving to internationalise career services and improve student employability and mobility.**

The [European Centre for Career Development and Entrepreneurship](#) (ECCE) was formed in response to increasing student mobility. Today, one of the biggest trends facing higher education institutions is student demand for internships abroad. ECCE is a three-year project that began in 2015, and is financed by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme. The five participating institutions (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Regent’s University London, Paris School of Business, EBC Hochschule, and Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore) hope to achieve seven goals:

1. Internationalising career services and widening the scope of international academic cooperation
2. Improving career services through specific training
3. Improving student employability
4. Increasing mobility of students, teaching, and administrative staff
5. Enabling graduates to access different European labour markets
6. Enabling graduates to build businesses in different European countries

## Key takeaways

7. Sharing local resources to provide a larger net of knowledge and information for all the students and institutions involved

ECCE is taking a five-step approach to achieve these objectives:

1. **Online platform.** The platform will target students from every field, as well as teachers, entrepreneurs, and career centre staff. It will offer resources like entrepreneurship databases, jobs, and student profiles. The platform will also be helpful to companies during recruitment. The platform will be completed later in 2016 or early 2017.
2. **Application guide.** This short guide compiles information about labour in the five countries represented by the five ECCE institutions. It outlines labour rules, guidelines, interviewing tips and best practices.
3. **Staff weeks.** These gatherings train staff on how institutions in different countries handle placements.
4. **Summer school.** The summer school focuses on entrepreneurship. Five students per institution can attend. The one-week programme includes lectures, student projects, and an entrepreneurship competition to select the best student project.
5. **Network meetings.** Representatives from the five participating institutions gather on a periodic basis to discuss progress.

At the conclusion of the three-year project, ECCE hopes to achieve three goals:

- Every student has the opportunity to access information on labour markets in Europe.
- Every career service has at least one staff member who can provide this knowledge in matters of the

## Key takeaways

European labour market while keeping in regular contact with European colleagues.

- ECCE is established as a cooperative framework for inter-institutional staff and student development.

*“One of the core aspects of ECCE is that the project includes staff and teachers, as well as students. It’s essential that the staff and teachers have the knowledge needed to help students find jobs abroad.”*

— Adriana Pérez Encinas

### When EU grant funding decreased in 2008, Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore re-evaluated its approach to international internships.

Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) is a private university with 40,000 students. The university has 2900 international students and 6900 internships each year.

Before 2008, the university ran two internship programmes: the LEONARDO Programme (EU) and the ERASMUS Placement Programme. These programmes were created to use EU funds for international internships and had to conform to strict rules.

- **LEONARDO Programme.** This programme was only for graduates and internships had to last three to six months. The scholarships were fixed based on the destination and duration. Some money had to be given to the student and institutions had to provide co-funding. A pre-existing network of companies was also required.
- **ERASMUS PLACEMENT Programme.** This programme was only for students and internships had to last three to six months. Scholarships were granted based on evaluation of the previous year.

## Key takeaways

Damiano Anelli discussed the advantages and disadvantages of these programmes:

- **Strengths.** Funds fostered student accessibility. Institutions had to involve companies to create the internship network. This was beneficial, especially during crises.
- **Weaknesses.** The programmes were inflexible due to strict regulations. They only addressed European internships and were scholarship driven.

When grants for these programmes decreased in 2008, Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore had to decide how to proceed. Even though government funding had declined, student demand for international internships was increasing. In addition, companies recognised the value of hiring graduates who had international experiences during their academic studies.

### Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) has replaced its scholarship-driven programmes with a student-driven model.

Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore decided to move away from the scholarship-driven model and introduce a student-driven model. To make the new model a reality, the university took five actions:

1. **Existing partners: UCSC Network.** The university asked companies in the network what they were looking for from an internship programme. The companies asked for an online portal where they could post openings and students could apply for them.
2. **Student initiative: Design Your Career.** Many students were finding internships themselves. To reward this, UCSC created the Design Your Own Career programme that gives students a scholarship as long as they put the university in touch

## Key takeaways

with the company, so the company can be added to the UCSC network.

- 3. Universities: Networks.** UCSC has gotten involved with university-based networks that promote student mobility like ECCE.
- 4. Other institutions (embassies and schools).** Other institutions often have programmes, such as assistant teaching at international schools.
- 5. Providers.** UCSC worked with providers to offer opportunities that would meet student needs. Students only have two months from October to December when they can travel abroad.

The new programme has required a change in student mentality, because students are now required to pay providers for internships. They now must recognise that investments are needed to access quality programmes.

The university is also looking internally for funds to support students through scholarships. Students apply to the internship programme, not for a scholarship. The best applicants receive a scholarship and the other accepted applicants can decide whether to stay in the programme or withdraw. Around 50% of applicants withdraw. All students pay the provider fee and make a contribution to UCSC that is used for the following year's scholarship. Over time, the number of students applying to the programme has increased. For Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, this programme has successfully increased the level of outbound student mobility, as well as the number of international internships.

*“There is no perfect model for managing international career services and international internships. Institutions should pick a model that fits their environment.”*

— Damiano Anelli