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Title

Stakeholder perception of student employability : does the duration, type and location of work experience matter? / Amy Irwin ; E. Nordmann ; K. Simms

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Abstract

Student employability is a key aspect of higher education, with multiple strategies utilised by Higher Education Institutions to support the employability of their graduates. However, little work has been done to examine, and compare, different types of work experience. To advise students appropriately, it is important to understand the factors that might influence the perceived value of work experience. The current Scottish study investigated three aspects of work experience within the context of the Social Sciences €”type (internship or volunteer role), location (extra- or co-curricular) and duration (six months or two years)â€”and compared stakeholder (student, academic, employer) perception of work experience. The study utilised an experimental vignette design, presenting 175 participants (62 students, 57 employers, 56 academics) with CV excerpts that varied according to the variables of interest. Quantitative and qualitative items were also presented to explore perceptions of work experience. The results indicate that extracurricular experience was viewed more favourably by all

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stakeholders. The type of experience was an influence, with internships viewed more positively when the job role was a high-level graduate role. The duration of experience did not produce a main effect. There were no significant differences in stakeholder perception of work experience. The qualitative data indicated that the relevancy of both experience and degree topic was important for employability, along with interpersonal and professional skills. These findings may support educators in providing students with advice regarding their activities outside the classroom, with an emphasis on extracurricular and internship experience, tied to student career aspirations, recommended. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)