

**THE INTERNSHIP SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND ITS
ROLE AND IMPORTANCE IN PERSONNEL TRAINING***Karimova Xurshida Raximovna**Master's student at Bukhara state university*

Abstract: This article scientifically analyzes the content and essence of the internship system in higher education institutions, the mechanisms for its organization, and its role and impact on shaping students' qualifications. Additionally, proposals and recommendations for improving the internship system are provided.

Key words: internship, workforce development, higher education, industrial experience, integration, international experience, digitization.

Rapid changes in the global labor market demand that higher education systems prepare skilled, innovative, and adaptable professionals. This has increasingly emphasized the role of practical training in the educational process. According to UNESCO estimates, 85% of modern job roles prioritize practical skills over theoretical knowledge.

Preparing competitive, skilled professionals who meet contemporary demands is one of the main objectives of the higher education system. In this process, developing practical skills, alongside theoretical knowledge, is of particular importance. From this perspective, the internship system plays a significant role in the professional development of students as an integral part of the educational process.

Internship is a stage in the professional preparation of students, aimed at teaching them how to apply theoretical knowledge in practical activities, and at developing professional competencies in a real work environment. Its main goals are: to develop practical skills related to professional activities, to introduce students to the production environment (workplaces), to ensure professional socialization, and to reinforce the application of theoretical knowledge in practice.

Today, the integration between education and industry is strengthening. In this process, internships: deepen professional competencies, help identify students' professional interests and career paths, create opportunities to establish connections with potential employers, and provide opportunities to learn and implement innovative approaches. Additionally, the results of internships serve as analytical materials for improving educational programs.

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), developed by American educator and psychologist David Kolb (1984), views the learning process as an active, dynamic, and cyclic system that is continuously shaped by experience. According to Kolb, people acquire knowledge not only by mastering prepared theoretical concepts but also by directly engaging in activities, learning from mistakes, analyzing them, and engaging in deep reflection. This approach is particularly effective for adults and individuals preparing for professional careers.

David Kolb's model consists of four main stages:

1. **Concrete Experience** – The learning process begins through participation in real-life situations. A student or participant gains direct experience, such as through practical exercises, laboratory work, or internships.
2. **Reflective Observation** – This stage involves reflecting on the experience, drawing conclusions, and analyzing both mistakes and successes. In this stage, the learner has the opportunity to understand what happened and view the reality from various perspectives.
3. **Abstract Conceptualization** – The conclusions drawn from reflection are generalized and expressed in theoretical frameworks, models, or concepts. In this stage, the learner systematizes individual or group knowledge and elevates it to the level of general principles.
4. **Active Experimentation** – This stage involves testing the acquired knowledge and skills in new situations. Here, the student, based on prior experience, engages in new activities and attempts to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

This cyclical process aids learners in integrating theory with practice effectively, enhancing their ability to adapt and succeed in professional environments.

David Kolb's model emphasizes learning through active participation, self-assessment, and learning from experience. This approach not only helps in deeper comprehension of knowledge but also encourages its independent application in real-life situations.

Furthermore, based on David Kolb's theory, students' distinctive learning styles are classified. These include assimilators (who prefer theory), divergers (who tend to observe), convergers (who actively solve practical problems), and accommodators (who make decisions based on experience). This methodological approach is applied to identify each student's individual learning characteristics and develop corresponding instructional methods.

David Kolb's model is widely used, especially in education systems that are based on practical activities, such as medical education, engineering, pedagogy, and business management. In the medical education system, for example, students observe various cases during clinical practice, analyze them through reflection, study clinical protocols theoretically, and then apply this knowledge in their practical activities. In this way, the learning process is enriched not only through lectures and theoretical knowledge but also through real-life experience.

The internship system serves as a key tool in aligning students' theoretical knowledge with practical activities. Different countries have shaped this system based on their national education strategies and economic needs. Below, the development of internship types and their distinctive features are analyzed through the experience of several leading countries.

Table 1: "Foreign Experience in Organizing the Internship System"

Country	Internship Type	Duration	Characteristics
Germany	Dual Education System (duale Ausbildung)	2-3 years	Full integration with production; students spend 3 days a week in internships.

South Korea	Industry-University Cooperation	6-12 months	Directed exchange of experience based on a contract with the company.
USA	Internship, Co-op	3 months - 1 year	Students work in companies at their discretion, often paid.
Finland	Practice-Based Learning	Integrated into the curriculum	Practical work based on projects in each module.

International experience shows that the effectiveness of the internship system largely depends on the integration of the education system with the economic system, the duration and content of the internships, and the active participation of students. The German model ensures full alignment with production, while the Korean experience is based on official cooperation between industry and universities. The U.S. model enhances student independence, whereas the Finnish model stands out for integrating internships into every stage of education.

In higher education, the internship process is recognized not only as a way to reinforce theoretical knowledge but also as a crucial platform for developing students' personal and professional competencies. The successful transition from education to the labor market, especially in today's rapidly changing economic and technological environment, is creating a high demand for graduates with real work experience. Empirical research shows that internships serve as a gateway for students to enter the "skills market."

The competencies developed through internships are divided into three main groups:

Functional competencies – these are the practical knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for a student to perform their professional activities effectively. For example, in the medical field, this includes practical skills such as analyzing clinical cases, communicating with patients, and managing medical documents.

Personal competencies – these are individual traits such as responsibility, time management, initiative, self-development, and adherence to ethical standards. Employers assess these competencies as factors influencing the stable performance of employees.

Metacompetencies – these are general interprofessional skills, including problem-solving ability, teamwork, analytical thinking, and adaptability to changing environments. They ensure the individual's successful performance not only within a single profession but also in various professional contexts.

These competencies are also referred to as "21st-century skills" in modern educational systems and are highly valued in the global labor market. According to Deloitte's annual global report, 79% of employers have expressed their willingness to directly hire graduates who have completed internships. This statistic clearly demonstrates the practical value of internships in workforce preparation. According to their views, graduates who have completed internships are quicker to adapt to the work environment, understand professional activities in a real context, require less training and adaptation costs, and are more ready to work in teams and interact with clients.

Internships simultaneously serve as a practical form of communication between educational institutions and employers. Through this, not only do students benefit, but companies also have the opportunity to identify talented young individuals early on, aligning with their needs. This aspect is particularly important for developing an innovative and competitive economy. By organizing internships effectively, the education system can successfully fulfill its primary function—producing competitive, socially adaptable, and modern workforce that meets the demands of the labor market.

The internship process plays a significant role in enhancing students' professional preparedness in higher education institutions. On September 26, 2018, the Minister of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan approved the "Regulation on the system of monitoring and evaluating students' knowledge" (Order No. 19-2018). This regulation designates internships as the main criterion for assessing students' knowledge. This document confirms the importance of internships within Uzbekistan's education system and outlines measures aimed at improving the effectiveness of internships. A number of resolutions adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the internship process in the higher education system. The decree of July 27, 2017, PD-3151, titled "Measures to Further Expand the Participation of Economic Sectors and Industries in Enhancing the Quality of Training Specialists with Higher Education," stipulates the integration of internships with economic sectors and the organization of professional pedagogical internships on a trial basis. The decree of June 5, 2018, PD-3775, emphasizes additional measures to improve the quality of education in higher education institutions and ensure active participation in the reform process.

On October 8, 2019, the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, PD-5847, approved the Concept for the Development of Higher Education System until 2030. This concept aims to develop a methodological foundation for organizing production and professional internships for students in a meaningful way.

The internship system allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical activities, thereby enhancing their professional qualifications. The types of internships in Uzbekistan's higher education system vary according to educational fields. However, the main types of internships in most higher education institutions are as follows:

- **Introductory Internship** – introducing students to the basic aspects of professional activity.
- **Educational Internship** – testing students' acquired theoretical knowledge in practice.

- **Production Internship** – direct involvement of students in the production process, gaining experience in real conditions.
- **Research Internship** – conducting scientific research and testing new ideas.

Internships are determined based on the curriculum of the respective courses.

We propose the following recommendations to further improve the internship process in Uzbekistan's higher education system:

- **Strengthening collaboration between enterprises and higher education institutions** – improving the system of contract formation for internships and enhancing the monitoring process.
- **Introducing a digital monitoring system (digitization)** – creating online platforms for effective monitoring of the internship process between students and educational institutions.
- **Increasing employment opportunities** – strengthening collaboration with employers to place students in jobs after completing their internships.

Strengthening the implementation of measures aimed at improving the quality of the internship process in Uzbekistan's higher education system, along with the President's decrees and decisions, is essential for further developing the integration of the internship system with the economic sectors. Additionally, new internship formats such as digital monitoring systems and strengthening collaboration between enterprises and higher education institutions contribute to enhancing the system's effectiveness. Moreover, the internship system benefits not only students but also employers, enabling them to identify talented youth and train personnel tailored to their needs. The quality organization of internships in the higher education system is a crucial factor for students' successful entry into the labor market, which ultimately serves to train specialists that meet the demands of the modern labor market.

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