



Associate Partnerships

for accreditation of foreign work placement companies

Introduction

Aequor
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Aequor is the centre of expertise for the sector Agriculture, Horticulture, Food & Environment. We link business and vocational education to ensure that the food and agricultural sectors continue to play an important economic and social role in the society. Employers, employees and educational institutions are represented in the Aequor board.

Within Aequor, five sectors have been identified:

Flower and garden centre sector

- Animal care
- Livestock and horse breeders
- Green Spaces (Landscape Gardeners & forestry)
- Plant culture
- Food and beverages industry

The key core tasks of Aequor are the development and maintenance of the qualification structure and quality improvement for practical vocational training.

Aequor is responsible for the agricultural qualification structure. Schools translate this qualification structure into curricula.

In the Netherlands practical vocational training within companies is a compulsory component of the educational system. Work placement and apprenticeship is only possible at training companies approved by Aequor. We advise and coach companies to meet the quality criteria and prepare them to be listed in a public register. To cope with international mobility of students we cooperate with organizations abroad.

Related tasks

Aequor plays an important role in monitoring trends and developments at the labour market. We deliver and exchange information to social partners, government, business and industry. On an international scale Aequor participates in projects to increase educational collaboration and harmonize the various international teaching structures.

Key competence

Building a vocational education and training infrastructure based upon the demands of businesses and industry.

European policy

The European Union stated in its 'European strategy 2020' that education has an important role in achieving the policy targets for economical growth. Stimulating the mobility of students by means of transnational practice or work placement is one of the instruments in realizing the targets.

In a survey called: 'Study on a possible framework to facilitate transnational mobility for placements at enterprises' (**) several issues are mentioned that challenges us

Dutch policy

For apprentices and full time students in senior secondary vocational education in the Netherlands it is mandatory to have a substantial amount of practical training 'on the job' during their training. In The Netherlands this on the job training may only be provided by companies that have received a previous accreditation from a National Centre of Expertise (e.g. Aequor). This accreditation is a guarantee for the quality of a number of social and educational conditions within the company. These accredited companies can be found in the public register that is published on the internet by Aequor and the other sectoral Centers of Expertise and is used by students to find an appropriate company for their practical training or apprenticeship.

Aequor partnerships

Since VET is internationalizing and students are encouraged to have a foreign practical learning period we need foreign companies that meets certain quality criteria. Therefore we would like to get in touch with institutions abroad and find a way to create associate partnerships in the interest of guaranteeing the quality of practical learning places.



associate partner

An Aequor International **Associate Partner** can differ from origin.

It can be a national authority that monitors the quality of practical learning and, like in the Netherlands, is licensing companies to permit them to act as a 'work placement company' in their specific country. Examples are the 'Industrie- und Handelskammer' or 'Landwirtschaftskammer' in Germany and Landbrugets Rådgivningcenter in Denmark (the Danish National Agricultural Advisory Service).

Or, it can be a not for profit organization or foundation that fulfills an intermediate role between a student and a work placement company or project abroad. Examples could be Non Governmental organizations (NGO's); Other private organizations with activities related to projects in developing countries; Foundations that focus on the stimulation of transnational mobility of students and trainees.

Finally it can be an organization that commercially exploits the intermediate role between a student and a work placement company or project abroad, based on high and specifically defined quality standards.

Expectations

We expect our associate partners to:

- Be certified for quality assurance by an authorized body or at least to act from that perspective.
- Share their network of companies by publishing their data in our Public Register.
- Respect the criteria for accreditation of foreign work placement companies, as set up by Aequor.
- Do not protect work placement company information for the only benefit of the partner.
- Act on a not abusive marketing policy.
- Have proven its quality by independent references and reviews.

Applying for partnership

Organizations that meets the above mentioned specifications can apply for the Aequor Partnership. After assessment of their credentials they benefit public exposure at the Aequor

website and relevant Aequor publications and are entitled to use the Aequor International associate partner logo.

The partnership is free of charge.

Additional exposure and/or services are negotiable.

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Study on a possible framework to facilitate transnational mobility for placements at enterprises (published under the responsibility of the DG Education and Culture)

The study aimed to provide the European Commission with the necessary information to come forward with proposals to address current legal and regulatory obstacles to the transnational mobility of trainees (covering students and apprentices in vocational training, people on the labour market and higher education students).

Some Key findings of the study are:

Countries not only differ in terms of their legislative framework, but also with respect to the sending and host organizations' understanding and expectations of the responsibility they should assume for the trainee. This has given rise to several challenges relating to legal status of trainees/ apprentices, conditions for a work placement, access to social benefits and insurance arrangements, in particular:

A recognized legal status of a trainee does not always exist, leading to lack of recognition of trainees' rights, adoption of ad hoc arrangements, unequal quality of placements and ambiguity over the duty of care for the trainee;

The conditions of work placements vary widely as some countries have specific regulations in place. while others do not. leading to uncertainty over which law applies.



Application form Aequor associate partnership

Name organization				
Address				
City				
Country				
URL Website				
Contact person				
function				
e-mail				
phone				
Organization type	National authority / NGO / Not for profit / Commercial / foundation / other*			
	*identify desired. In case of 'other' please describe.			
Core business				
Applied Quality Assurance System				
(international) References				
Motivation				
Other relevant information				
undersigning	name	Position	Date	signature

Mail application form to:	fvkoot@aequor.nl