

Original Research Article

Factors Affecting the Quality of Graduation Internship for Students of the Faculty of Education at Saigon University

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Abstract: Graduation internship is an indispensable subject for every student regardless of the major because of the benefits that the internship brings to students. The objective of the graduation internship study is to determine the level of student evaluation of the factors affecting the quality of graduation internships of students of the Faculty of Education, Saigon University. To improve the quality of the training program and internship practice, and at the same time help students apply the theories they have learned in internship, in recent years, the Faculty of Education, Saigon University has always focused on and constantly innovated to improve the quality of graduation internship for students. The rate of students finding a truly effective internship is very low. Based on this situation, along with the desire to help the Faculty of Education and the University improve the quality of training as well as help students connect more between theory and practice, the author makes several proposals to improve the quality of graduation internships associated with practice.

Keywords: Quality, Graduation Internship, Student of Faculty of Education, Saigon University.

INTRODUCTION

Graduation internship is one of the important activities in the process of teacher training in educational institutions. Internship activities help students get acquainted with the future education profession. Through graduation internships, the professional knowledge and skills that students acquire during the learning process are applied to practice at educational institutions. On the other hand, graduation internship helps Universities have relatively objective assessments of their training products, thereby having a basis to improve training quality, adjust training content and methods to suit the needs set by educational institutions.

The quality of students' graduation internships depends on many factors. Some authors emphasize the role of the internship advisor and instructor; the preparation for the student's internship activities and factors related to the internship context. Manathunga believes that internship mentoring is a powerful tool to help improve students' professional practice. Lamanuskas also stated that the mentor's support and participation in the internship process are very important, in the mentor's ability is of decisive importance to the internship results. Autukevičienė's research shows that the most important factor is the student's preparation for the internship, in which theoretical knowledge related to the profession and the internship context have the greatest influence.

Saigon University is a key Pedagogical University in Ho Chi Minh City, with a current training scale of up to 20,453 students, of which the Faculty of Education has 640 students. Every year, about 250 students go to educational institutions for professional practice. Therefore, to contribute to enhancing the position of a key pedagogical University of the city, carrying out the responsibility of training high-quality human resources, in which teacher training is the core; Scientific research and technology transfer in the fields of educational science, natural science and technology, social science and humanities; Serving the development of the country, focusing on Ho Chi Minh City. Therefore, the survey of the current status of evaluating the quality of graduation internships and factors affecting the quality of student internships

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is of great significance. The objective of this study is to determine the level of student evaluation of factors related to the graduation internship activities of Saigon University students. Student evaluation information is a scientific and practical basis to help the Faculty/University make improvements to improve the quality of graduation internships for students better and better.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Graduation Internship

According to the Vietnamese Dictionary, “Graduation Internship” means: practicing in practice to apply and consolidate theoretical knowledge, and further improve professional skills. Graduation internship is understood as observing practical actions to compare and contrast with the theory learned at University and then analyzing based on a specific case of applying that theoretical problem (Phe, 1998). Internship is practice in practice to apply and improve professional skills: students do internships at factories, after the internship they must submit a summary and report to the University (Y, 1999).

For the Faculty of Education, in line with the general strategic goals of the University, the goal of graduation internship activities applied to students of the Faculty of Education is to closely link the internship and learning process with practical activities, creating a highly practical and connected training process. The student internship process is linked to educational institutions that will participate in the process of evaluating, fostering and further training students in terms of practical knowledge.

Thus, it can be said that a graduation internship is an activity of applying practical knowledge of the professional and technical expertise of trained students to professional practice and student education, aiming to form the qualities and abilities of a future teacher. Internships are the best way for students to gain experience in a field they are interested in. The internship process is similar to the training process for a new employee in a company. Interns will work with other employees but are not intended to replace official positions.

Graduation Internship of Students of the Faculty of Education, Saigon University

According to the regulations of Saigon University, the pedagogical internship is implemented in semester 8 (4 credits), with a duration of 08 weeks. The content of the graduation internship of students focuses on 2 contents: Internship connecting theory with the practice of teaching methods, application of information technology in teaching, educational management and clerical work in educational institutions; Proposing improvements in teaching methods, application of information technology in teaching, educational management and clerical work in educational institutions.

Quality of Graduation Internship

The quality of graduation internship is understood as the level of meeting the goals, needs and expectations of students for pedagogical internship activities, determined based on the students' perceptions or feelings. The quality of graduation internship of students is shown in the following aspects:

Clearly understanding the position, role, and tasks of teachers and the requirements to strive to become teachers with good capacity and qualities. Teachers must ensure teaching and education according to educational goals and principles, fully implementing and having quality educational programs. Be exemplary, maintain the qualities, prestige and honor of teachers; respect and treat learners fairly; protect the legitimate rights and interests of learners. In addition, always study and practice to improve moral qualities, political level, expertise, profession, innovate teaching methods, and set a good example for learners. Internship of education management specialists:

- Improve understanding of managing and handling incoming and outgoing documents.
- Organize management and use of seals.
- Prepare records and submit records to current archives.
- Responsibilities, and requirements for preparing records.
- Ability to use methods and skills for preparing records.
- Ability to manage and submit records to current archives.
- Ability to use methods to assess students' learning outcomes.
- Ability to communicate pedagogically and handle pedagogical situations;
- Improve understanding of educational practices at educational institutions, as well as local practices.

Factors Affecting the Quality of Students' Graduation Internships

The quality of students' graduation internships depends on many factors, including:

Group of Factors Belonging to Students: Including professional and technical qualities and abilities; Awareness, attitude and behavior towards students' graduation internship activities.

Group of Factors Related to the Instructor: 3 subjects directly guide students during the graduation internship process, including: Pedagogical lecturers teaching professional subjects, and teachers guiding teaching work at educational institutions. Factors related to the instructor focus on the professional qualifications, teaching methods and educational methods of teachers, ways of guiding and evaluating students, as well as the teachers' attitudes towards students.

Group of Factors Related to the Graduation Internship Context: Including factors related to policies, documents on graduation internship, facilities, cultural environment, class size, student attitudes, etc.

Through researching the year 2023-2024 internship students of the Faculty of Education, I found that most students have a positive attitude towards the internship process, etc. The students' attitude during the internship is serious because they believe it will help them perfect their professional knowledge, strengthen relationships, improve communication skills, and gain exposure to professional reality. According to the survey results, 95% of the internship units create conditions for students to have the opportunity to intern at their unit. According to the students' opinions, most of the interns are assigned suitable work, and students love the work. Some students are also not satisfied with the internship because they are not assigned the right work, and they also have to do a lot of supervisory duties.

RESEARCH METHOD

Survey Objectives and Contents: To clarify the current situation of factors affecting the quality of graduation internship of students of the Faculty of Education at Saigon University, we surveyed the following specific contents: Factors related to lecturers guiding the internship; Factors related to teachers of educational institutions guiding the internship; Factors related to student internships; Factors related to the internship context.

Survey Methods and Subjects: The survey was conducted in July-August 2024 with 03 methods: studying records related to factors affecting the quality of graduation internship of students of the Faculty of Education at Saigon University, the survey sample was selected based on the convenient random sampling method of 4th-year students doing graduation internships at educational institutions. The total number of ballots issued was 05 managers, 10 lecturers and 76 students. The survey subjects were asked to evaluate the factors affecting the quality of graduation internship of students of the Faculty of Education at Saigon University with the following scale: 5 points - Good; 4 points - Fair; 3 points - Average; 2 points - Poor; 1 point - Poor. The average score is divided into the following levels: 4.21-5.0 points: Good; 3.41-4.20 points: Fair; 2.61-3.40 points: Average; 1.81-2.60 points: Poor; 1.0-1.8 points: Poor.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current Status of Factors Affecting the Quality of Graduation Internship of Students of the Education Management Major

Factors affecting the quality of graduation internships are internship activities that help students get acquainted with the future careers of education specialists. Through graduation internships, the professional knowledge and skills that students acquire during their studies are specifically applied to practice at educational institutions. The survey results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Current status of factors affecting the quality of graduation internship

Order	Content	Level of Implementation					
		Manager, Lecturer			Student		
		GPA	standard deviation	Rating	GPA	standard deviation	Rating
A	Factors related to the lecturer guiding the internship						
1	Conscious and responsible in guiding internships	4.27	0.46	4	4.29	0.56	4
2	Experienced in guiding student internships	4.20	0.68	5	4.32	0.47	3
3	Enthusiastic, caring, and encouraging students during their internships	4.33	0.62	3	4.01	0.70	7
4	Understanding educational practices at educational institutions	4.13	0.52	6	4.03	0.51	6
5	Consulting, supporting, and guiding students promptly, specifically, and effectively	4.47	0.64	1	4.36	0.52	2
6	Evaluating internship results objectively and fairly	4.40	0.74	2	4.43	0.57	1
7	Coordinating closely with general education teachers to promptly support and evaluate students during their graduation internships	4.07	0.88	7	4.09	0.61	5
Average total score		4.27			4.22		

B	Factors of the educational institution's teacher's practice guidance						
1	Qualities and abilities that meet professional standards	4.33	0.64	2	4.33	0.72	1
2	Have awareness and responsibility in internship guidance	4.13	0.72	7	4.11	0.66	7
3	Have experience in teaching/coaching internships	4.07	0.80	8	4.13	0.70	4
4	Have experience in guiding graduate internship students	4.27	0.53	3	4.25	0.71	2
5	Assign specific and clear tasks to students.	4.15	0.59	6	4.12	0.63	6
6	Support and guide students promptly, specifically, and in detail so that students can adjust	4.20	0.68	5	4.05	0.76	8
7	Evaluate students fairly, objectively, accurately, and according to their abilities	4.40	0.63	1	4.14	0.65	3
8	Coordinate closely with university lecturers in guiding and evaluating students during their graduation internships	4.27	0.70	3	4.13	0.68	4
Average total score		4.23			4.16		
C	Factors related to internship student						
1	Love the profession, love students, and be interested in working with students	4.40	0.63	1	4.30	0.66	2
2	Recognize the meaning and importance of graduation internship in training educational skills	4.20	0.77	4	4.13	0.75	5
3	Understand the regulations and guidelines for graduation internship	4.27	0.80	3	4.05	0.76	6
4	Be well prepared before graduation internship: In terms of expertise, pedagogy, and understanding of students at educational institutions	4.33	0.72	2	4.41	0.55	1
5	Be proactive and actively seek support and guidance from lecturers and instructors at educational institutions	4.13	0.74	6	4.14	0.60	4
6	Be persistent, try hard, and be positive during graduation internship	4.17	0.80	5	4.16	0.80	3
Average total score		4.25			4.20		
D	Factors pertaining to the internship context						
1	Documents regulating and guiding the graduation internship are specific, clear and easy to understand	4.27	0.59	7	4.05	0.65	11
2	The goals, content and process of the graduation internship are clearly defined and feasible	4.33	0.72	4	4.17	0.57	7
3	The University/class size is suitable for students to perform tasks in education	4.60	0.51	1	4.28	0.45	2
4	Students are well-behaved, respectful and cooperative with students	4.33	0.62	4	4.00	0.82	12
5	Assigning instructors with qualities and abilities that meet professional standards	4.27	0.59	7	4.18	0.67	6
6	Facilities, equipment, teaching and educational materials are adequate, convenient and modern	4.29	0.80	6	4.26	0.75	3
7	Reasonable policies for lecturers and instructors	4.13	0.52	10	4.22	0.56	4
8	Reasonable residential community with socio-economic conditions	4.40	0.51	3	4.19	0.71	5
9	Reasonable graduation internship time	4.07	0.70	12	4.11	0.83	10

10	A suitable number of students in the graduation internship group	4.53	0.74	2	4.37	0.75	1
11	A reasonable duration for graduation internship	4.20	0.77	9	4.13	0.74	9
12	Creating a positive environment for students to promote positivity and initiative	4.13	0.64	10	4.15	0.60	8
Average total score		4.30			4.18		

Table 1 shows that most of the contents related to factors affecting the quality of internship graduation of students of the Faculty of Education of Saigon University were evaluated by the Manager and lecturer at a Good level with an Average total score from 4.23 to 4.30 and students evaluated at Fair level with Average total score from 4.16 to 4.22. However, the contents all had a standard deviation <1 in the answers, showing a fairly high level of dispersion compared to GPA. The content “Factors related to the lecturer guiding the internship” was evaluated by the Manager, the lecturer at a Good level with an average total score = 4.27) and students evaluated at a Good level with an average total score = 4.22). In which the content “Consulting, supporting, guiding students in a timely, specific and effective manner” was rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Good level with (GPA = 4.47) ranked first and the student rated at the Good level with (GPA = 4.36) ranked second, the content “Evaluating the results of the internship objectively and fairly” was rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Good level with (Average total score = 4.40) ranked second and the student rated at the Good level with (GPA = 4.43) ranked first and the content with the lowest rating “Coordinating closely with general teachers to promptly support and evaluate students during the graduation internship” was rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Fair level with (GPA = 4.07) ranked 7 and the student rated at the Fair level with (GPA = 4.09) ranked 5. This shows that the University needs to pay more attention to student interns such as: Consulting, supporting, guiding students promptly, specifically and effectively, enthusiastically, caring for, and encouraging students during the internship.

The content “Factors of teachers of educational institutions guiding internships” was rated by the Manager, and lecturer at the Good level with an average total score = 4.23 and students rated at the fair level with an average total score = 4.16. In which the content “Fair, objective, accurate assessment of students' abilities” was rated by the Manager, the lecturer at the Good level with (GPA = 4.40) ranked first and the student rated at the Fair level with (GPA = 4.14) ranked third, the content “Qualities and abilities meeting professional standards” was rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Good level with (GPA = 4.33) ranked second and the student rated at the Good level with (GPA = 4.33) ranked first and the content with the lowest rating “Experience in teaching/internship guidance” was rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Fair level with (GPA = 4.07) ranked 7 and the student rated at the Fair level with (GPA = 4.13) ranked 7. This shows that the University needs to pay attention to closely coordinating with lecturers in guiding and evaluating students during the graduation internship process, assigning tasks to students specifically, and clearly during the internship.

The content of “Factors related to student internship” was evaluated by the Manager, and lecturer at a Good level with an average total score = 4.25 and students were evaluated at a Fair level with an average total score = 4.20. In which the content “Love the profession, love students, enjoy working with students” was rated by the Manager, the lecturer at a Good level with (GPA = 4.40) ranked first and the student rated a Good level with (GPA = 4.30) ranked second, the content “Being well prepared before graduation internship: In terms of expertise, pedagogical skills, understanding of students at educational institutions” was rated by Manager, lecturer at Good level with (GPA = 4.33) ranked second and student rated at Good level with (GPA = 4.41) ranked first and the content with the lowest rating “Proactively and actively seeking support and guidance from lecturers and instructors at educational institutions” was rated by Manager, lecturer at Fair level with (GPA = 4.13) ranked 6 and student rated at Fair level with (GPA = 4.14) ranked 4. This shows that the University It is necessary to guide students to realize the meaning and importance of graduation internship in training educational skills, to persevere, try hard, and actively encourage students during the internship process.

The content of “Factors related to the internship context” was rated Good by the Manager and Lecturer (Average total score = 4.30) and Fair by student (Average total score = 4.18). In which the content “The University/class size is suitable for students to perform tasks in education” is rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Good level with (GPA = 4.60) ranked first and the student rated at the Good level with (GPA = 4.28) ranked second, the content “The number of students in the graduation internship group is suitable” is rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Good level with (GPA = 4.53) ranked second and the student rated at the Good level with (GPA = 4.37) ranked first and the content with the lowest rating “Reasonable graduation internship time” is rated by the Manager, lecturer at the Fair level with (GPA = 4.07) ranked 12 and the student rated at Fair level with (GPA = 4.11) ranked 10. This shows that the University needs to pay attention to creating a positive environment for students to promote their positivity, initiative in internship, facilities, equipment, and supplies teaching, full education, and convenience during the internship.

General Comments on the Graduation Internship Process of Students of the Faculty of Education Advantages: On the Student Side:

Students are the ones who benefit the most from the graduation internship process. First of all, students have the opportunity to officially rub shoulders with a specific working environment, apply the knowledge learned at University into practice, have the opportunity to prove themselves to the internship unit and have the opportunity to find a job right after the end of the internship. This is a good opportunity for students to accumulate experience for their future careers and find documents to write internship reports or write graduation theses. The graduation internship process that the Faculty/University is applying is clear, simple, and convenient with specific timelines that students can follow and follow step by step easily.

On the Lecturer Side:

This is an opportunity for lecturers to meet students privately, guide them on how to write a graduation internship report and remind students of shortcomings that need to be improved to equip themselves when graduating. The current process of the University requires lecturers to participate in guiding students during the graduation internship process, allowing lecturers to be flexible in managing, guiding and grading students. Having accurate views on the graduation internship process.

On the Side of the Unit Receiving the Graduation Internship:

With an 8-week internship period at the educational institution, this will be an opportunity for the educational institution to find potential human resources, which can be recruited right before the students graduate to work officially. The educational institution will have the necessary additional training direction combining theory in the University with practice outside the educational institution.

Disadvantages:

However, besides the advantages, the current graduation internship process still has many disadvantages, as shown through the survey of internships of courses with 3 groups of subjects directly involved: students, instructors and internship receiving units. Specifically, as follows:

Firstly, a lecturer is assigned to instruct too many students, especially part-time instructors, leading to the situation where some students do not meet the instructor in person, only contact by phone or email, so the work efficiency is not as expected.

Secondly, having only one instructor to grade can cause the grading to be not objective and fair among students in a group.

Thirdly, the report only needs to have confirmation from the internship unit that the student has come to do the internship, without confirmation of the content in the report, making the report not under the pressure of being forced to write truthfully, thereby reducing the practical significance of the internship.

Fourthly, the fact that the university and the instructor have not closely controlled the internship location, sometimes just having a place to receive is enough, has caused many students to do internships in units that have little or no relation to the major they have studied, therefore, not serving the purpose of the graduation internship.

Some Proposals to Improve the Quality of Graduation Internship Activities of Students of the Faculty of Education on the University Side:

Firstly, for students to have a successful internship, the most basic thing is that the training program in the University needs to be built with quality, and closely linked to professional practice. It is a fact that currently, most employers have to retrain employees who are new graduates. The knowledge that students learn in the classroom is mostly theoretical, with little practice, little skill training, and little updating of new knowledge associated with the development of professions. This causes students to encounter many difficulties and confusion when approaching work, especially during the internship period. To know the limitations of the training program, the University should organize to collect feedback from educational institutions. These opinions are often very practical, helping the University understand the needs of the labor market, to equip students with knowledge. Feedback can be obtained in many ways such as organizing seminars, synthesizing information through questionnaires, direct interviews, etc.

Secondly, the University can establish a Center to support internships at educational institutions for students. The Center is primarily a place that can provide information resources for students who have difficulty accessing internship units. In addition, the Center is also a bridge for educational institutions to respond to the training quality of the university and is also a place to provide feedback from educational institutions to the Faculty of Specialization.

Thirdly, if possible, the university should increase the mid-term internship guidance allowance for the instructor. This is a necessary incentive because the instructor must also invest more in helping students improve their practicality through internship activities.

On the Student Side:

Each student must realize that each internship is very important for their future. Therefore, students need to try their best to keep up with the work, not just to deal with a good review and to be able to work well, students need to have solid knowledge. This needs to be cultivated throughout the student's previous learning process. To do so, the University and lecturers need to reinforce this awareness for students right from the beginning of their Universitying, not just before the internship.

Students need to be more proactive in finding units and internship positions suitable for their major. This search should not be done until close to the internship period but should be paid attention to long enough in advance. Each student should always be aware of complying with the regulations of the internship unit, as well as the regulations of the instructor, and always have a spirit of learning and progress.

For the content of the graduation internship report, students are encouraged to research and analyze on their own, especially new topics in the educational institution. Students should not rely too much on available reports at the internship unit, then “reheat”, copy and submit to the instructor.

On the Instructor's Lecture Side:

Lecturers study and train themselves to continuously improve their capacity. In addition to perfecting their professional capacity, lecturers also need to improve their research capacity. Each report is a scientific product, and each lecturer is a scientific instructor, so to help students complete their reports well, instructors need to improve their research methods. Instructors need to improve the content of their reports to increase practicality and application for students.

To connect practice with their internship major, each instructor needs to have more access to educational institutions. When lecturers go to the field, they will collect a lot of information and content to be able to convey to students through class hours, and share with students during the instruction process. Through field trips to educational institutions, lecturers will be able to synthesize information and write documents for teaching and research. In addition to improving professional skills and supplementing practical knowledge, each lecturer needs to be more enthusiastic with students.

On the Educational Institution's Side:

When an educational institution has agreed to accept students for internship, there also needs to be stricter management such as assigning a teacher in charge of monitoring the internship process to end the situation where students want to come or go as they please and then at the end of the time come to get a confirmation stamp and meet the requirements. Educational institutions need to maintain and coordinate regularly with the University to link the practicality to the student's internship process.

CONCLUSION

In general, graduation internship activities are a correct policy of the University because they create conditions for students to approach the actual work, helping students not only consolidate the knowledge they have learned but also practice the working style and soft skills necessary when graduating. The article has pointed out the advantages, difficulties and limitations in the graduation internship process of students of the Faculty of Education, Saigon University, thereby proposing some changes to improve the graduation internship process in a practical direction. The proposals of the article may not be the best, but the author also hopes that these proposals will help the University solve certain difficulties and hopes that shortly, the University will invest more in implementing graduation internship activities for students in the following contents: training and fostering a team of lecturers to guide and complete systematically.

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