

\* Original article

## **Non-mandatory Nutrition internship: the quest for quality in education coupled with current legal and educational requirements - a case report**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses the experience of non-compulsory stages in the nutrition course of the Mackenzie Presbyterian University. The objective is to subsidize the reflection about the actual law of stage considering one proposal for the monitoring of these stages. We consider that the period of stages is one of the most crucial steps in the formation of the nutritionist and in virtue of the new paradigms that are presented for the stages, the recent approach adopted to develop the non compulsory stages in the Nutrition courses. We concluded that this experience is well done, because further than the attendance to the legislation, it has been demonstrated that the monitoring of the student downsizes the learning troubles, improving the relationship between the Education Institution and the company, and the preparation of the future professional.

**Keywords:** stage; supervised stage; education quality; Legislation

### **Introduction**

Updating of Law Internship, in force for two years, set new standards for the hiring of interns and has brought many advances, but the changes still leave many questions about how to proceed going forward, both for trainees, and for those who want to hire them, as well as for educational institutions. Because of this issue, after the implementation of the existing legislation, it was decided to develop a study on the implementation experience of non-mandatory internships and show that, as well as possible, the training is meritorious for student qualification. This article has two objectives in mind. Firstly, it discusses about non-mandatory internships in the Nutrition course in the light of the following regulations: the 6100 Recommendatory Notification of the Ministry of Labor - 2nd Attorney General of Labor . Region - SP, resolution 380/2005 of the Federal Council of Dietitians and New Law on Internship 11,788 of 25/09/2008. In the second place, give opportunity to the reporting of the experience

of such internships in the Nutrition Course at UPM - Mackenzie University before the regulations mentioned above and start discussions on this emerging issue.

### **Nutrition internships behind current legislation**

In late 2008, directors, coordinators and professors of undergraduate courses in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) became aware of the new law on internship, law 11,788 of 9/25/2008 (BRAZIL, 2008). Although this new direction includes many of the gains in an academic point of view, many questions and several procedures, some of them misinterpreted emerge in the everyday academic life (SANTOLINI, 2009). This work presents a significant interface between higher education and the current economic environment: reflections on employability and the modus operandi of internship, which means this being classified as mandatory or not, changes that may take some time to be put in practice, so it was considered appropriate to account the adoption of practices relating to non-mandatory internships, particularly those that occur in entrepreneurship of the sector of Food and Beverage.

It is observed that undergraduate courses in different areas of expertise have different approaches toward internship, either with respect to the length of its development, whether mandatory or not, also regarding how supervision takes place, and how it is assessed. Often these determinations and issues in certain areas of knowledge, are not even discussed. In the case of courses in the health area, this issue has a different relevance. Encouraged by professors and by current standards issued by the National Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Program in Nutrition, the trainees are in a phase of "learning to act" and make use of the premises: leadership, decision making, taking responsibility, acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills (BRAZIL, 2004). For all these characteristics and, especially, because they are susceptible to the condition, directly or indirectly, of dealing with lives, trainees must always rely on professor and technical supervision with daily follow-ups (CFN, 2006).

Continuous reflections or improvements are necessary to ensure responsible, citizen-like, enterprising actions and transforming education for all who are involved: the trainee, the professor, the technician, and the employer. Studies on such matter are poor and the ones out there are mostly written by researchers on the field of Nursery, however, the approach uses the term "internship" without determining whether it is mandatory or not (SUEPE, 1998; SILVA, 2005; COSTA, GERMANO, 2007).

The "Educational Project" is cited repeatedly in the new law (BRAZIL, 2008), which signals the importance of academic internship, unlike the earlier mistaken understanding in the labor market, the mere reproduction of activities or cheap workforce or even free.

Previously the information from the new law, the term extracurricular internship was often used to designate the non-mandatory type. There was a gap in the legislation, since many students developed activities pertaining to non-mandatory internship, but neither the students nor HEI were sure of its development, because the only legal advice involved was 6100 Recommendatory Notification from the Ministry of Labor - 2nd. Region (SP), whose resolution is transcribed below (MPT, 2001):

Recommend this education institution to intervene only in the Commitment Internship Curriculum, the one laid down by law 6494 and Decree 87.947/82, and in this case, oversee

the development of internship in accordance with Article 4. "D" of the aforementioned Decree 87.947/82.

Recommendatory Notification above recognizes that internship is often incorrect, in which it uses the following terms in the introductory arguments, reported below (MPT, 2001):

[...] legislation does not supports extracurricular internships; that it is for HEIs to systematically provide management, guidance, supervision, and assessment for such internships; the non following-up of HEIs means considering them nothing but mere intermediation of workforce; that the professional internship has been an instrument of fraud used widespread to harm social rights, often obscuring real employment contracts; that the mere signing of the internship commitment does not presuppose the validity of such contract; that when HIE does not fulfill its obligations regarding the monitoring of internships it can be blamed as mediator of workforce[...]

Once the new law classifies non-mandatory internship, therefore, making it legitimate. The new law refers repeatedly to the educational aspects of the course, so it becomes crucial to establish criteria for its development to be profitable. Deep expertise in the area of knowledge in question - in this case, Nutrition Science - and in the laws that govern it, is also necessary to define the educational assumptions that govern the internship.

It is important to note that due to economic changes occurring at a national level, a growing number of students they see on internship a way to support themselves financially, but this argument does not overlap the academic goals of internship, in other words, if the course does not present an option to release a professor to supervise the student, it is understood that the internship should not be made feasible.

The Meal Production Units (Unidades Produtoras de Refeições - UPRs) comprise a large niche in the food industry. Historically, the area is considered the most important for the work of Dietitians, greatly in metropolitan areas and in the current historical moment in which the woman has been established in the labor market, with a habit of eating outside the home, especially lunch, is becoming an increasing fact (CASCUDO, 2004).

Although this framework has enabled an undeniable increase in the work of Dietitians, it must be noted that it is a rich field for activities not offered to dietitians or nutrition trainees, such as food handling and cooking utensils . This condition is particularly worrisome in times of economic crisis, when there are layoffs or high rate of absenteeism. All these features corroborate the need for professor supervision, which has the additional role of hindering work related abuse (CFN, 2006).

Regarding the supervision of internship, the Federal Council of Dietitians (2006) has instituted, as appropriate, the numeric parameter of 20 hours for the supervision of 10 interns, without discrimination, at the time the document was approved for non-mandatory and mandatory internships, defined later in this categorization, with the new law of internship (BRAZIL, 2008).

In determining the responsibilities of the dietitian, presented in Resolution 380/2005 (CFN, 2006), in all areas provided for the work of Dietitians, internship programs for students of nutrition are expected to include planning and implementing, since it has maintained the exclusive duties of the dietitian. The same document, concerning the role of the Dietitian in teaching, considers to be mandatory activities: the responsibility for academic guidance and supervision of internships, "mandatory and complementary." Regarding the terminology, one

can consider these two terms interchangeably by their own design, in other words, "complementary internship" - mentioned by CFN - is considered synonymous with "non-mandatory internship" - mentioned in the new law - (BRAZIL, 2008). Both refer to the same essence: optional additional load; not required for the completion of the course, unlike the mandatory internship.

Thankfully, dietitians are professionals who recognize it as an integral part of professional guidance to the student, as demonstrated in a recent survey in Rio de Janeiro by Trajman et al (2009).

### ***Law 11.788 (Brasil, 2008)***

The update of the Internship Law, enacted on September 25, 2008, brought many advances (BOUCINHAS FILHO, 2008):

- the new wording provides greater legal certainty for companies,
- clearer rules for education institutions, and
- improvements for the student to practice the content learned in the classroom.

Another important point is the requirement for an internship supervisor at the company and monitoring at the educational institution. These actions enhance the educational nature of internship and raise the quality of actions implemented in practice. . Thus, one can say that the news brought by this legislation are:

- granting mandatory internships that are not required;
- transportation allowance in non-mandatory internship;
- recess of 30 days or proportional payment;
- plan of activities in a period not longer than six months;
- supervisors for up to 10 trainees;
- student's option to Provident Fund Scheme as autonomous;
- legislation related to health and worker safety;
- responsibility of the agent of interaction;
- business that repeats any irregularity can be up to two years without hiring;
- it is assured to people with disabilities a 10% of slots offered by the grantor;
- reduction of working hours in periods of examinations;
- student report of activities, setting the number of trainees;
- who can hire interns.

The new rules on internships are generating many questions with still no answers to all questions. Regulation of Law and practical consequences must be checked in the future. It is known that on some issues companies must position themselves, even without the legal definition of the situation. Perhaps since then the situation becomes clearer.

The training contracts in force at the date of publication of this law remained under the regency of the old legislation, with no need for change. As for contracts signed or renewed as from 26 September 2008, there is no obligation to adapt to and compliance with all articles of Law No. 11,788, of 25/09/2008.

### **The role of the professor supervising internships**

Throughout their training, health professionals have always been exposed to reproductivist teaching methods associated with technical knowledge (Kennedy, 2005). Hence the importance of the teacher-tutor or supervisor of probation, that the educational mediation, it encourages students to take their status as subjects of the learning process, challenging and motivating the search for answers in the appropriate activities to be developed (Feuerwerk , LIMA, 2002) in order to achieve the purposes of constructivist learning.

Probation supervision is considered a visit from the teacher-supervisor in the entity, the student's attendance at the university itself, and the monitoring of students by professors in other locations.

Once in a while, student must receive visits from a teacher-supervisor responsible for the internship. These visits will provide clarifications of questions, assistance in monitoring tasks, decision making, along with the local supervisor, who may participate in defining and developing the theme of the work. The supervision of training in nutrition should be at least fortnightly, but preferably weekly or even more often, depending on the need.

### **Experience report: Non-mandatory internships in the Mackenzie Course of Nutrition: premises for responsible development**

Considering the schedule of internships in Nutrition, one of the main internships of the qualification of a dietitian and as a result of new paradigms surrounding the internships presented below is the recent approach taken to the development of non-mandatory internships in Nutrition, defined after extensive discussion within the Center for Biological and Health Sciences (CCBS), and Core Faculty Structuring (NDE) Nutrition Course of UPM. Regarding such experience, the objective is to create opportunities for discussing such issues, and thus, contribute to the improvement in the quality of diet studies in internships.

Course curriculum does not provide nutrition non-mandatory UPM-internship due to its concept under the new law: it is conceptualized as an optional activity, therefore, not all students choose to do it. However not included in the curriculum, it is planned in Pedagogic Design Course and the feasibility of the internship is not mandatory, but only for students who have attended most of the disciplines that are considered prerequisites to non-mandatory internship, or that is, those registered on the fifth period.

To define the modus operandi of the internship, whether mandatory or not, it was considered the consensus Structuring Teaching Center (NDE) the following assumptions, which if not followed might mean the immediate discontinuation of the internship:

- Quality of student education of nutrition and therefore the value of practical experience, the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills;

- Student profile for this century: access to computers and communication and the need to enter early in the world of work;
- Regulatory guidelines, especially the curriculum guidelines for teaching nutrition, providing additional internships, including distance-learning methods;
- Regarding of internship not only as in-service training, but also education of nutrition, as a health professional and critical and reflective citizen;
- The presence of a dietitian on site throughout the period that the student is performing the internship. The supervising professor on the spot and in the form of weekly meetings;
- The requirement to pay or other consideration provided for in law;
- The submission of documentation required by UPM, as well as reports and papers required in the course of supervision, in accordance with the established area of expertise in the training field, such as: application check list, exercises on the Food Guide Brazilian, evaluation menus, costing, presentation of a scientific paper, and others that may arise under the necessity of conceding.

Tables 1 to 4 illustrate the modus operandi adopted to achieve the assumptions outlined here.

Table 1 shows the case of non-mandatory internships.

<b>Condition</b>	<b><i>Modus operandi</i></b>
If in the curriculum	Non-existent, but under Educational Project - PP - so that it can be enabled as described in each period.
Appropriate time	From the 5th. Period after completion of most professional disciplines.
Possible areas	With the exception of the area of Clinical Nutrition, all others may be feasible, such as in UPRs, Sports Marketing, Teaching, Public Health, etc..
Load-clockwise	Determining by the granting of probation, provided they fit the new legislation.
Disclosure of vacancies	Organized by Center Internship of UPM or the Coordination of the Nutrition Course.
Agreement between Grantor and UPM	Internship can only be started after completion of non-mandatory internship agreement.
Signing of Internship Commitment	The Internship Center routes for the Coordination of the course, which discusses the case in Structuring Faculty Center, and is sovereign as to accept the internship. It takes into account aspects such as the list of activities, supervision and assessment of the student.

Table 1: Summary of conditions for carrying out non-mandatory internships of Nutrition at UPM, São Paulo, 2010.

Given the legal requirements, Table 2 shows the requirements for carrying out non-mandatory internships.

<b>Condition</b>	<i>Modus operandi</i>
Granting internship Requirements	<p>- Having registered dietitian in the Regional Council of Dietitians as Technical Director (RT) in working hours compatible with the presence of the trainee. Provide satisfactory conditions for the list of activities scheduled for the internship.</p> <p>The minimum number of meals in the UPR has not been set, because each case is evaluated by the supervisor regarding the conditions of student learning.</p>
Concurrently with the mandatory training Supervising teacher	<p>Can occur, since the burden-hour total for both these levels do not exceed eight hours per day provided by law.</p> <p><i>Site visits</i> at intervals according to combined with the grantor, weekly meetings with the student teacher supervisor, which may occur in the IES, <i>in situ</i> in libraries, or where the supervisor to determine, which are presented in exercises and studies case, and the final report.</p>
Daily supervision	Conducted by the Technical Manager, in this case, a dietitian.
Evaluation and Approval of the student	<p>At the end of the internship, student assessment is performed, however, the assessment is issued in the form of declaration and not in the student's transcript. Due to the very concept (a term which is an optional activity), there is no repetition, as opposed to mandatory training, but evaluation of the positive aspects and those to be improved is the student's knowledge of the IES and the grantor.</p> <p>This evaluation is done according to the form developed by the Training Committee of the Center for Health Sciences and UPM.</p>

Table 2: Summary of requirements for the completion of Nutrition non-mandatory internships at UPM, São Paulo, 2010.

The study on the implementation of the internships that are not required at HEI led to the determination of a profile of internships, which can be observed in Table 3.

Condition	Modus operandi
Wages	Defined by the internship grantor, currently varies between \$ 4.00 and \$ 5.00 per hour.
Mealtimes of Interns	Despite the new law to ensure mealtimes for trainees, for the student of nutrition, this is a moment in the list of planned activity internship, as during meals can also be evaluated organoleptic aspects of food produced in the UPR, interact or hold small meetings with the team, among other activities. For this reason, the mealtime schedule makes the internship, be it obligatory or non-mandatory. Yet, in conversations during the on-site supervision are enhanced needs restbreaks to the intern.
Percentage of students who develop non-mandatory internships	Currently there are 12% of students performing non-mandatory internship.
Characteristics of the grantor	All are characterized as legal entities that offer personal accident insurance.
Current staging areas	All students develop in internships UPRs. So far, the Nutrition Course of UPM, no optional internship has been developed in other areas of nutrition.

Table 3: Summary of characteristics of non-mandatory internships at UPM, São Paulo, 2010.

The procedures for carrying out non-mandatory internships, the departments involved and hours of complementary activities are described below (Table 4):



Condition	<i>Modus operandi</i>
Departments included in the internships (whether mandatory or not)	<p>Human Resources of UPM: a body that evaluates and validates the institutional cooperation agreement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sector Internships: vacancies releases, conducts the mediation documentation (the Cooperation Agreement and Terms of Commitment Internship), defines together with the course coordinator, the role of the trainee's activities and dialogues with companies that manage and disseminate apprenticeship positions .</li> <li>- Legal: assessing documents, dialogues with various sectors of the university and provides grants to conduct the legal internships, greatly in unexpected situations or unusual;</li> <li>- Management and Coordination Unit University Course: In addition to delegate responsibilities to the teachers responsible for courses Internships allocated there, participates in all discussions regarding this issue and presents and is entitled to institutional guidelines .</li> <li>- Coordination Unit of the University Internship (in the case of the Course of Nutrition, the Center for Biological and Health Sciences), represented by a professor of the Nutrition Course. The coordinator has the primary function of guiding the activities of all internships of the courses in the biological sciences and health.</li> <li>- Responsible for the Internship Course: appointed a teacher, whose formation is compatible with the course, course in the case of nutrition, a dietitian. The main function of this position is to direct all of the internship, the course represented in all discussions on this topic, be it internally or on external events.</li> </ul>
Respecting the Curriculum Guidelines	<p>This guidance does not mention the non-mandatory internship, however, in its Article 7. shows emphasis on the supervision of the teaching curriculum and the involvement of dietitians in local internship. In Article 8. shows a forecast of "independent practice", which includes training in distance mode. Because of this terminology (internship independent), we used as a reference to non-mandatory internship.</p>
Proceedings before the start of internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students interested in seeking jobs on their own or join us in the Department of Internship and become aware of vacancies;</li> <li>- Upon certification of the institutional cooperation agreement exists and is valid for the next periods, the Statement of Commitment is provided and sent to the course coordinator and when necessary, to Legal Counsel;</li> <li>- Coordination of course signals that the teacher responsible for traineeships visit the site and assess the conditions of supply of the internship and, if so, the documents are signed and one supervisor is appointed to monitor the internship.</li> </ul>
Procedures after the start of internship	<p>Weekly meetings, <i>on-site</i> supervision, presentation of activities, seminars and papers and reports.</p>
Computation for Complementary Activities	<p>According to the regulation of CCBS UPM, non-mandatory internships can compute up to 25% of the total workload for Additional Extension Activities.</p>

Table 4: Summary of procedures for carrying out non-mandatory internships for Nutrition at UPM, São Paulo, 2010.

It is considered therefore that the nutrition in its broadest sense, can be learned dynamically arousing students' interest in finding out autonomously and direct the "issues" of the concepts learned in theory and that, through experience described here, reflected in the following educational impacts:

- increasing experience / practical experience;
- opportunity to continue in the same field, the memento of the mandatory training;
- connection with teaching, research and extension;
- qualitative and summative assessment;
- professional development;
- increase in complementary activities.

## **Conclusion**

When the two-year experience of implementation of the updated Law on internship is considered, while many HEIs still retain doubts about the procedure regarding non-mandatory internships or simply could not adapt to it, it can be concluded that the experience of the Nutrition Course at UPM is indeed successful. Taking into account that, in addition to complying with the legislation, it has shown that the monitoring of student reduces learning, relationship, and behavior problems, strengthening links between HEI and the educational institution granting the internship. That can only lead to improvements, as far as this issue is concerned, of the advantages provided to the parties involved, namely: the HEI, the company and especially the trainee, soon to become a professional.

It is worth mentioning that this model is very helpful, since it has been generated in a process of collective construction, in which one cannot fail to mention the NDE Nutrition Course, CCBS, which is the established Center for the internship, for their support and guidance, and UPM that has made this work possible.

It is important to recall that the faculty and students are the main actors in this dynamic procedure. This proposal is expected to increasingly advance in a more productive and continuous manner, enhancing the pursuit for quality in education.

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