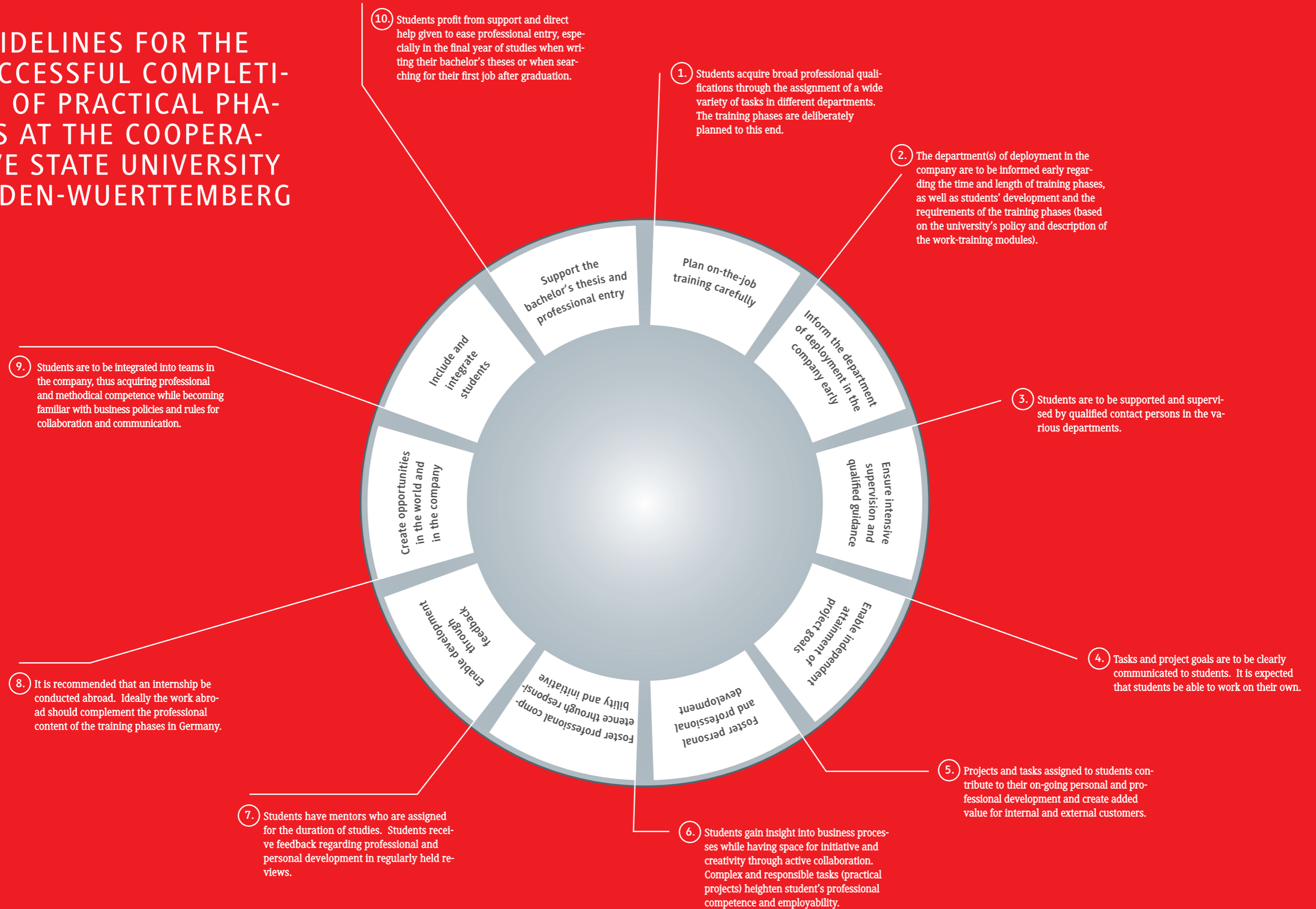


*A key feature of the Cooperative State University Baden-Wuerttemberg is the consistent integration of theoretical studies at university and on-the-job training at a cooperative partner company.*

*The interlocking of theoretical and practical phases ensures that students acquire not only methodical academic knowledge, but also practical experience along with decision-making and social competencies necessary for everyday professional life. The established guidelines and the practical examples given by the university are intended to provide stimulus and practical orientation for the successful completion of the training phases at the cooperative partner companies.*

# GUIDELINES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PRACTICAL PHASES AT THE COOPERATIVE STATE UNIVERSITY BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG



# 1. PLAN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING CAREFULLY

*Students acquire broad professional qualifications through the assignment of a wide variety of tasks in different departments. The training phases are deliberately planned to this end.*

## GOALS

- ▶ *Integrated planning based on the requirements of the cooperative partners and the university ensures a profound and practice-oriented education.*
- ▶ *The individual plan for a student's on-the-job training is based on the framework curriculum and module description of the respective study program.*
- ▶ *Systematic planning takes both the professional and the interdisciplinary learning potential of assigned tasks or areas of activity into consideration.*
- ▶ *As a result of their broadly oriented training phases, graduates can be deployed flexibly and diversely and are qualified for cross-departmental collaboration.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Larger cooperative companies follow two principles:

- ▶ The Training Department plans training content, duration, locations and assignment of professional mentors, since the first training phase usually takes place there. During this time students receive basic training related to their specific fields of studies, possibly at a company's own training site. With the progression of studies, the responsibility for the content-related design of the training phases is transferred to other departments of the company or institution.

- ▶ Another possibility is that students in higher semesters take responsibility for the content of their own training independently and apply for job openings offered by the company. Various departments select the students, while the Training Department accompanies the process, thus ensuring professional diversity.

At mid-sized and smaller partner companies students are often mentored by one person during the entire time of studies. This person coordinates the on-the-job training, according to the ways and means of the company while taking into consideration the abilities and competencies of the students.

This example shows the diverse possibilities of organizing training phases while accounting for both the regulations of the cooperative partner companies and the autonomy of the students.

Duration of work placement phases should not be too short in order for students to acquire professional depth in the various departments. Since students are to take their vacation during in-company phases, long-term planning is necessary to avoid training phases that are too brief.

Deployment of students is planned before studies begin and communicated to the students upon commencement of studies. Any changes to be made for reasons of the company or the student are to be agreed on by the students and the Training Department of the cooperative partner company.

# 2. INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEPLOYMENT IN THE COMPANY EARLY

*The department(s) of deployment are to be informed early regarding the time and duration of work placement phases, the students' development as well as the requirements of the university's policy and description of the workplace training modules).*

## GOALS

- ▶ *Informing the contact person(s) in the department of deployment early is an important prerequisite for qualified supervision and mentoring.*
- ▶ *Both the department and students can prepare for the student's assignment in the particular department.*
- ▶ *The department supervisors are aware of the requirements of the Cooperative State University Baden-Wuerttemberg for the term papers (practical project) that are written during the training phases and can define tasks accordingly.*
- ▶ *The Training Department and the department of deployment come to an agreement about a student's practical project and the supervision required, taking into account the professional and personal development of the student.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Training Department advises the contact person(s) in the department where the student is to be deployed. Hereby aspects of personal development as related to the choice of tasks and supervision are taken into consideration. The student's vita is introduced briefly and his/her development (professional, personal, methodical, social) is presented. When necessary, the cooperative study program is to be explained along with the status of the student, in particular with regard to the differences to other trainees or apprentices.

Students receive information four to eight weeks at the latest before the beginning of the training phase. This information includes the name of the department where the student is to be deployed and the name(s) of contact persons. Students should contact this person early to clarify details of their future deployment. The department of deployment provides a workplace and organizes a good start at the company.

The Training Department is aware of the requirements of the university for term papers/practical projects and communicates these to the contact person(s) in the department of deployment. The organization (registration, submission, evaluation) of practical projects is to follow the guidelines of the university. This can be done in either of two ways: 1. Students have the responsibility for the entire process or 2. either the department of deployment or the Training Department ensures the necessary steps. In both cases qualified feedback concerning the project paper is necessary.

### 3.

## ENSURE INTENSIVE SUPERVISION AND QUALIFIED GUIDANCE

*Students are to be supported and supervised by qualified contact persons in the various departments.*

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#### GOALS

- ▶ *Qualified employees support students during the training phase, helping them to acquire new competencies and skills.*
  - ▶ *They set an example for how important continuous professional development is.*
  - ▶ *The cooperative partner plans sufficient personnel capacity for supervision and mentoring of students.*
- 

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Students have a contact person/mentor available for the entire practice phase. Depending on the situation of the company, either fixed appointments will be agreed on or students can contact the person at any time. Mentors have possibly completed a relevant study program themselves and are therefore knowledgeable of the pertinent topics as well as the circumstances of studies. One possibility is to engage former students of the Cooperative State University as mentors.

Management supports and fosters mentoring of students by ensuring enough capacity for supervision. With this investment in training the cooperative partners communicate their commitment to integrated studies and professional training, such as offered at the Cooperative State University Baden Wuerttemberg. Instructing and guiding students should be considered a mark of distinction.

At the beginning of the training phase students receive concrete tasks to perform at their workplace. Mentors take care of the students from the very beginning.

The contact person/mentor is aware of the structures of the university along with the content of lectures. This person establishes an interface between theory and practice based on actual business processes, thus motivating the student for the follow-up study phases.

Company specific information can be communicated in in-house seminars, but should not, however, preempt or repeat the contents of studies during the study phase. Therefore, the persons responsible for training should be aware of the content of the theoretical studies.

### 4.

## ENABLE INDEPENDENT ATTAINMENT OF PROJECT GOALS

*Tasks and project goals are to be clearly communicated to students. Students should be expected to reach goals on their own.*

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#### GOALS

- ▶ *By formulating tasks and goals clearly, supervisors create a sound basis for planning and realizing tasks. Vague and undifferentiated instructions are to be avoided.*
  - ▶ *Students have clear plans for the training phase and can therefore work in a focused manner on their own.*
  - ▶ *Students are to be introduced to independent work, including complex tasks.*
- 

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

At the beginning of the training phase a task will be given and explained. Contents and deadlines are to be discussed and put in writing so that students have the chance to ask questions and prepare for the task.

Regular feedback and review of learning targets can foster independent work.

Some large enterprises introduce tasks to students before the onset of the training phase. In agreement with the Training Department the students choose a particular task and work in the relevant department during the training phase.

Tasks that have a defined completion (e. g. exhibitions or internal presentations, developing a prototype) are especially motivating.

Students are often under-challenged, rather than over-challenged. Mentors should have confidence in students' abilities, however, allowing them to express themselves when things get too challenging.

## 5. FOSTER PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Projects and tasks assigned to students contribute to their personal and professional development and are at the same time of value to both internal and external customers.*

### GOALS

- ▶ *Further professional and personal development ensure students' future employability.*
- ▶ *Choice and configuration of projects and tasks by supervisors should consider the personalities of students as well as their professional and methodological qualifications. Individual development will thus be fostered and supported.*
- ▶ *Supervisors structure qualifying and value-adding tasks in such a way that it enables both value creation for the company through the students' participation in operations, as well as the acquisition of personal qualifications for the student.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Students are assigned projects in both the Training Department and in the departments of deployment. Projects may range from giving support in daily routines to independent work on a part of a larger project. As students are integrated into the processes of the company or institution, independent of its size or training concept, they contribute automatically to the value chain.

Feedback from mentors is particularly important with abstract, theoretical project tasks since the motivation derived from practical realization is missing.

Students are accompanied in their personal development, whereby progress as well as any deficits are discussed and clarified with mentors.

## 6. FOSTER COMPETENCE THROUGH RESPONSIBILITY AND INITIATIVE

*By actively participating in work students gain insight into business processes and have space for initiative and creativity.*

*Complex and responsible tasks (practical projects) enable students to gain competence and employability.*

### GOALS

- ▶ *Graduates of the Cooperative State University Baden-Wuerttemberg stand out with their sound understanding of cross-departmental business processes and with their ability to develop holistic strategies.*
- ▶ *Tasks and projects progress from semester to semester with respect to complexity and responsibility, thus enabling a focused personnel development.*
- ▶ *Projects and tasks make it possible for students to build networks. This way they can not only find sound solutions for project tasks, but also experience broad acceptance among their colleagues at the company or institution.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Basic training takes place, for example, in a company's workshop at the beginning of studies. Acquisition of manual skills and the personal experience, which goes with this, convey a deeper understanding of the importance of manual and operative skills for the success of an enterprise.

Participation in daily operations is possible through

- ▶ Analysis of key quality figures
- ▶ Optimization of detail processes
- ▶ Project assistance

Challenging tasks that can be taken on primarily in the final semester are, for example

- ▶ Implementation of software, including installation, adaptation, training
- ▶ Development of products or product groups including complete documentation and optimization of complex business processes

Temporary substitution for vacationing or sick colleagues enables students to gain insight into the company's daily operations on different levels. The duration of a substitution period should be appropriate

Participation in conferences and team meetings allows students to take charge of their own projects and tasks in an overall context. In addition, they have the opportunity not only to realize the importance of methodical, social, and communicative competencies but also to acquire and practice them.

Contact with clients and suppliers also provides insight into company processes.

## 7. ENABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FEEDBACK

*Students have designated mentors/coaches, from whom they receive regular feedback about their professional and personal development.*

### GOALS

- ▶ *Personal coaches know the students and the course of their development.*
- ▶ *They give the students open feedback regularly, including valuable impulses for students' own personal development. The resulting professional development is to be optimized in the interest of both the students and the cooperative partners. Elective opportunities in the study program and in the professional career will also be discussed with this contact person.*
- ▶ *As the relationship between mentor/coach and students is a confidential one, this contact person can discuss and help solve any problems that might arise in a qualified and responsible way.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In small and mid-sized companies students often have a single designated contact person during their entire on-the-job training who is responsible for organizational supervision as well as fulfilling the role of mentor concerned with the student's personal development.

In large enterprises, in addition to the Training Department, students often have contact persons/coaches from the relevant department of deployment known as "process mentors". These people act as the interface between the departments, the university and the students. They accompany the students from the time of application to their employment as work students. The various departments receive information from the process mentors about the practical project and the performance of a student. These process mentors organize the training phase, overlapping deadlines and take on coaching tasks as well. This includes regular feedback, at least once at the end of each training phase. In small and mid-sized enterprises, a person from the relevant department of deployment should act as a process mentor.

Students with personal or academic problems turn to their trusted contact person and work together for solutions. A mentor can, for example in the case of a potential break-off of studies or a change in the study program, point out other company-internal perspectives, discuss advantages and drawbacks and strive to achieve a solution with the student.

## 8. OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WORLD AND IN THE COMPANY

*It is recommended that a semester abroad be taken during a training phase. Ideally the tasks assigned abroad should complement the professional content of the training phase in Germany.*

### GOALS

- ▶ *Graduates possess sound skills in English, as well as in other foreign languages enabling them to take on challenging responsibilities for the enterprise in an international context.*
- ▶ *Successful phases abroad awaken students' desire and willingness to take on assignments in foreign countries.*
- ▶ *Graduates possess invaluable intercultural experience enabling them to deal with people from other cultures.*
- ▶ *Students understand business processes and the interests of international partners in a broader sense, beyond the limitations of a single company.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Training phases are offered to students at a subsidiary abroad. Planning, preparation and organization of a phase abroad will ideally be taken over together by the Training Department and the students.

The Training Department establishes contact with a person at the subsidiary and clarifies the general modalities and details of the internship (e. g. deadlines, takeover of expenses). Students take care of the visa, travel details, accommodations, along with project contents abroad, and keep the Training Department informed.

The definition of project contents in foreign countries can be a difficult task, depending on the country and the planning horizon of the company abroad. High dynamics and the necessity for flexible reactions should therefore be anticipated. To avoid disappointment students should be prepared for confrontation with cultural differences.

Studies abroad are also possible during the academic study phase. Permission to travel and possible contributions to expenses on the part of the company can be contingent on the performance level of students.

In order to prepare, it is recommended that students exchange information with other students who have had prior experience abroad. The Training Department can provide contacts for this purpose.

## 9. INCLUDE AND INTEGRATE STUDENTS

*Students are to be integrated into teams, thus acquiring professional and methodical competence, and learning about the principles and rules of cooperation and communication.*

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### GOALS

- ▶ *Students experience teamwork and develop team abilities.*
  - ▶ *Students learn diverse methods of practical teamwork.*
  - ▶ *Students learn and internalize in-house rules for successful independent work as well as in a team.*
- 

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Small companies consider it important that students get to know many, if not all employees at the company. This occurs in the context of personal encounters at the beginning of studies and creates a basis of trust for collaboration.

Other possibilities to integrate students are team meetings or events that students participate in. In large companies this occurs in smaller business units that have a direct connection to the students.

In addition to the Training Department, the process mentors in the individual departments also give feedback about positive and negative behavior in daily operations. Serious violations of rules result in consultation with the head of the Training Department in order to make the relevance of in-company policies clear to students.

## 10. SUPPORT THE BACHELOR THESIS AND PROFESSIONAL ENTRY

*In their last year of studies students profit from support and mentoring while preparing their bachelor thesis, and while searching for a job after graduation to ensure successful professional entry.*

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### GOALS

- ▶ *A course of action is to be set as early as possible for the bachelor thesis and entry-level job so that students need not seek an alternative.*
  - ▶ *Mentors advise students about the possible areas of activity after graduation to ensure a positive further development for both students and the cooperative partner.*
  - ▶ *Students experience personal recognition, which in turn facilitates their retention by the company.*
  - ▶ *Students who strive for a master's degree can be retained by a company dependent on individual agreements.*
- 

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The topic for the bachelor thesis is determined by the department of deployment together with the Training Department.

The Training Department initiates any hiring of students, whereas Human Resources controls the process. For this reason, talks should be initiated early in order to take the student's own plans into consideration. In meetings with the department of future deployment, individual interests can be matched to the needs of the company or area of activity. Coordination with the Training Department enables closer consideration of the student's competence profile.

In small and mid-sized enterprises, students are often trained to fulfill a specific function which in turn allows a smooth transition into the job.

The departments of deployment thus play an important role in getting the students on board at an early stage.

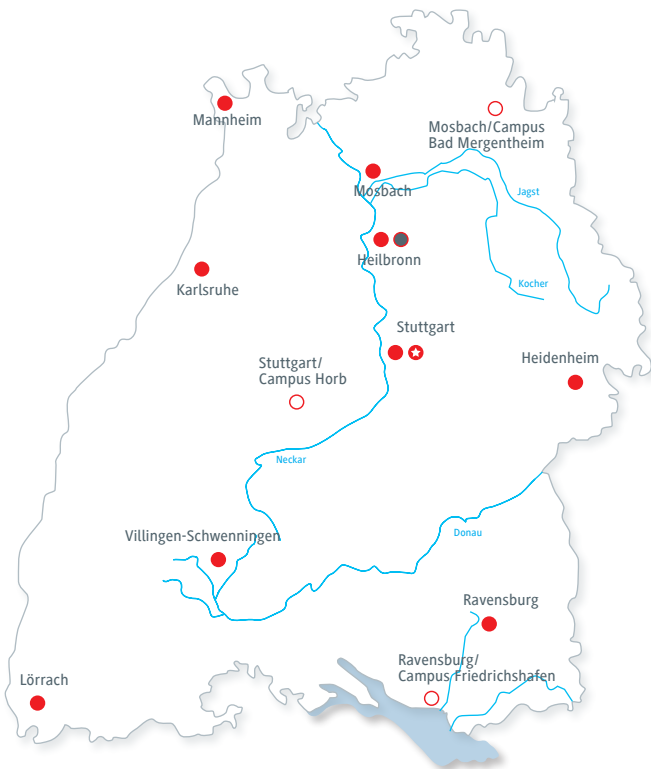
The Training Department is also prepared should a student strive for a master's degree after graduation. Students can be offered individual options, such as re-employment after the master's degree, a position as an intern during studies, or a work-study employment status.



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