



Master of Urban Climate and Sustainability (MURCS)

# Direct Effect of Internships on Project Partners: a stakeholder survey

*The MURCS Consortium*

January 2021

## Introduction

In November 2020, the MURCS Consortium surveyed Associate Partners of the Project from working life (both public and private) to ascertain the effect of the project on these organisations as well as to gauge their views arising out of their engagement with MURCS students via placements and internships.

## Participants

Eight organisations that have previously supported MURCS Students via placements or internships participated in the survey. A brief summary of the survey respondents is given below:

Respondent	Country	Type of organization
<b>Respondent 1</b>	Finland	Public
<b>Respondent 2</b>	Finland	Private
<b>Respondent 3</b>	France	Public
<b>Respondent 4</b>	Finland	Private
<b>Respondent 5</b>	Finland	Public
<b>Respondent 6</b>	Finland	Public
<b>Respondent 7</b>	Scotland	Public
<b>Respondent 8</b>	not stated (but deduced from answers to be Finland)	Private

The survey instrument and the invite can be seen in Annex 1.

## Results

In general, most of the participating organisations were '*Public*' and offered internship opportunity lasted 1-4 months. Typically, up to four students were supported by a single organization. The work was quite varied, from *urban planning, climate change* and wider *sustainability* issues to specific sub-areas such as *waste management* and *circular economy*.

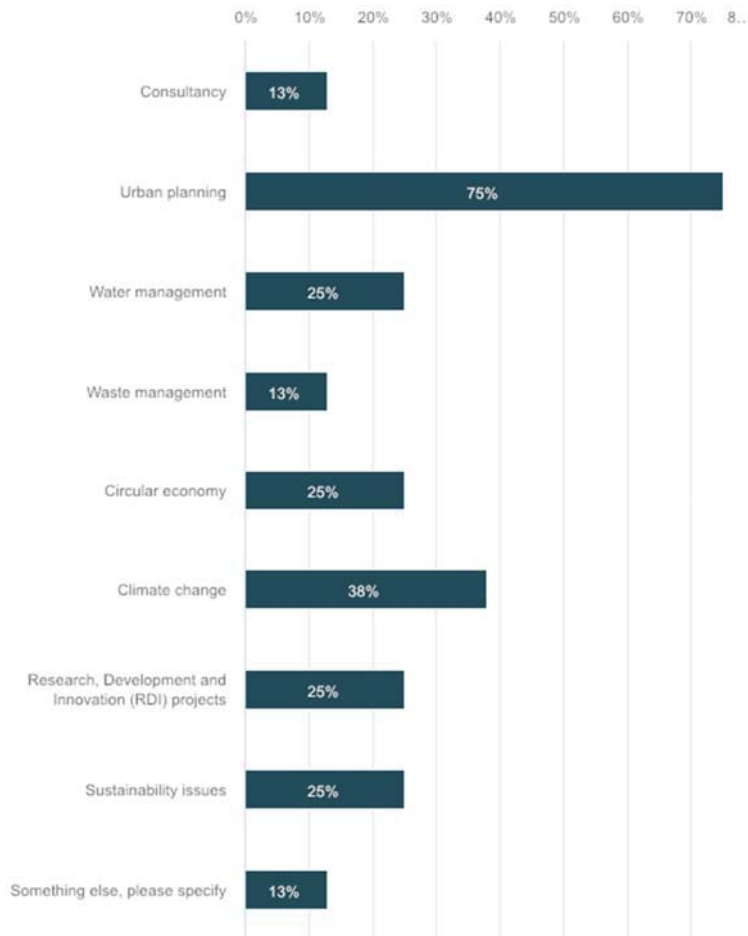
The stakeholders found MURCS students' academic knowledge to be '*high*' to '*exceptionally high*' (4-6 out of a scale of 1-6). Given their previous work experience, the students were found to be highly experienced (Average = 4.75 out of 6), with an overall satisfaction at 4.5 (out of 6).

The graphs below show the distribution of the results.

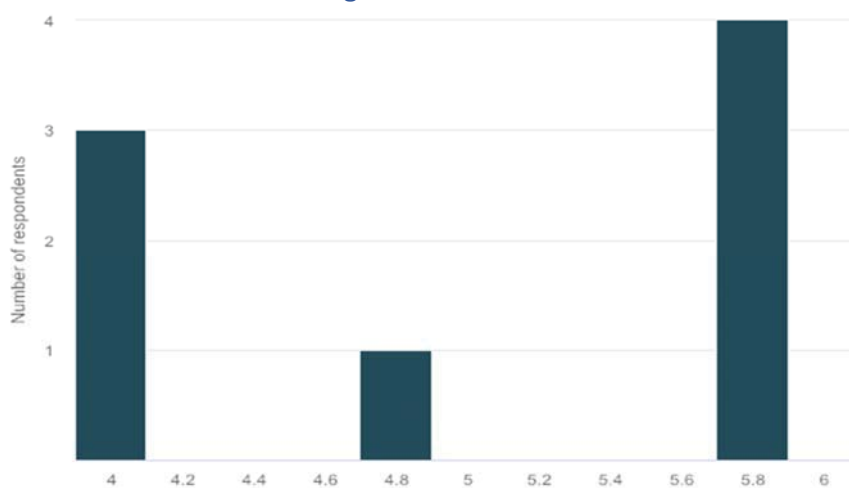
Length of Internship	No of students per institution	Type of institution
3 months	3	Public (5 institutions)
4 months	2	
2-3 months	2	
One month per student	4	
2 months	3	
3 months	0	Private (3 Institutions)
2 months	2	
1 month	1	



### Student field of work

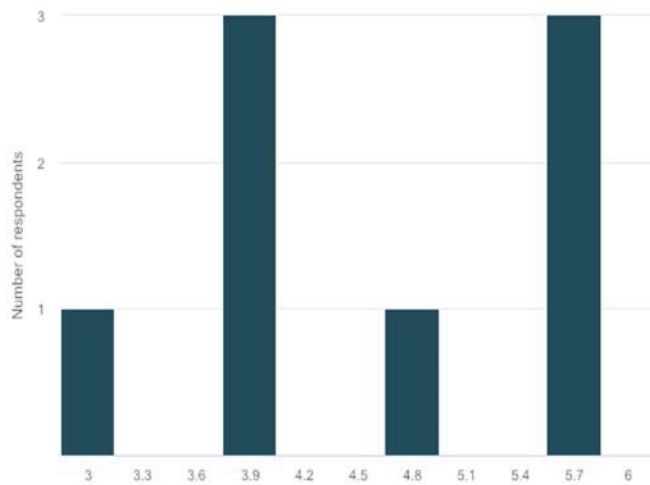


### Level of academic knowledge



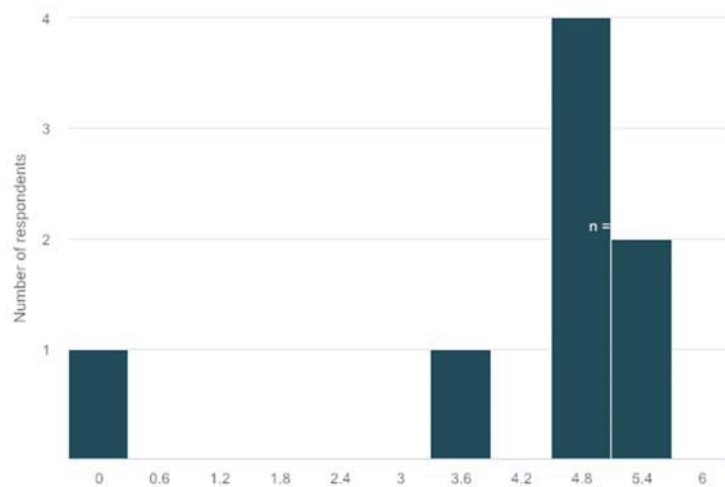
Min	Max	Average	Median	Sum	Standard Deviation
4	6	5.13	5.5	41	0.99

### Level of previous work experience



Min	Max	Average	Median	Sum	Standard Deviation
3	6	4.75	4.5	38	1.16

### Overall level of satisfaction



Min	Max	Average	Median	Sum	Standard Deviation
0	6	4.5	5	36	1.93

### Summary outcome

Internships for MURCS students have been completed in various sectors including such spheres as consultancy, urban planning, water management, waste management, circular economy, climate change, RDI projects, sustainability issues and groundwater. Majority of internships were related to the urban planning as well as for climate change which naturally underlines the interest for the MURCS students in these fields.



Survey was answered by the representatives of the companies from Finland, France and Scotland, who employed students for completing internship tasks. 2/3 of the associate partners come from the public sector and one third come from the private sector.

All of the respondents found the academic knowledge being sufficient for executing given tasks, all of them rated the knowledge as either good or very sufficient. Private companies' respondents found the academic knowledge being very sufficient, whereas public companies' representatives rated it at good level.

As for the previous working experience, both private and public sectors have rated the sufficiency of working experiences equally good or very good. Participant from public sector in Scotland couldn't evaluate the sufficiency of the employed student.

Overall, companies have highly rated skills of students after one year of studying at MURCS programme which provides a complimenting result for the academic studies being organized at the programme.

Further comments had been added regarding the benefits which MURCS students brought during working at the internship:

- Visibility, development of methods
- they contribute in an ongoing research program
- One student made very good background study for our development project. It helped to form new ideas and increased the quality of project.
- Broader perspectives to issues relating to their different backgrounds.
- Developed practical tools and supported our business development.
- Drive and fresh ideas. Social media skills
- We got very good ground info about the themes.
- New, fresh perspectives to the climate change adaptation

The exercise also highlighted some challenges:

- Lack of time for guidance, some students could commit to the agreed time limit, some students wanting to travel home and work from abroad (too difficult mainly)
- They had a 3 months deadline caused by visa/administrative context COVID-19
- Some students didn't finish their internship. Maybe the given task to plan their part of the project was too difficult or would have needed more guidance.
- Difficulties in organizing the tasks at the beginning.
- COVID impacted with restrictions on office working, travel and other practical issues.
- Funding for position. Extending position where applicable. Time for the student to get up to speed, mainly due to the size of the organization
- The language was hard in some point because the information was so specific in some areas and the experts did not have the vocabulary in English.
- The timing of the internship during the summer vacation period, when most of the organization is on vacation. Anticipation and preparation for the internship was very limited due to the tight schedule.)



#### Opportunities from organizations for MURCS graduates

- Strongly depends on current research founds related to PhD opportunities or research projects for example.
- I think private companies are interested hiring students in future. In urban planning it is difficult to find good projects, that doesn't require wide knowledge of Finnish zoning and laws connected to it.
- There definitely is potential and we are assessing the options.
- Lots of potential as the Sustainable Development theme grows within the public sector remit
- (In terms of opportunities in Finland) The language barrier is a big problem.

#### Recommendation for future internships:

- It would be easier for students to build a proposition based on the work topic proposed by the host team.
- In urban planning the plans are the way forward. Do experiments, be creative and don't be afraid of mistakes. Good plans and solutions need many versions and are only achieved by being persistent and hard working.
- Clear list of topics of interest and schedule.
- Maybe provide some examples of what the students have been preparing in previous courses.
- Having previous work experience (any) is key and a good level of social intelligence.
- As concrete tasks as possible

In summary, the organisations found the MURCS students to be “*great students with the skill and enthusiasm for whatever.*” They have brought in specific skills and competencies into the organisations which, several of them found to be stimulating.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Annex 1

## Survey of Industry and Associate partners



Master in Urban Climate and Sustainability (MURCS) is an Erasmus+ funded programme for the years 2018-2022, an extension to the programme will continue until 2026 under the official name of MURCS 1.5 with a quite similar curriculum.

Master students in the programme of Urban Climate and Sustainability MURCS have been very interested about the internship opportunities during their summer break. An internship in our context means a working period for the company or a working life based thesis project.

We would like to ask you about your organisation's experiences in hosting MURCS students to collect the feedback systematically and develop this option further which should be beneficial both for the organisations and the students. Please answer the following questions, it will take about 15 minutes of your time.



**1. The average length of internships in your company**


**2. How many MUrCS students have your company hired in the period 2019-2020?**




### 3. What were the student field of work? (Check all that apply)

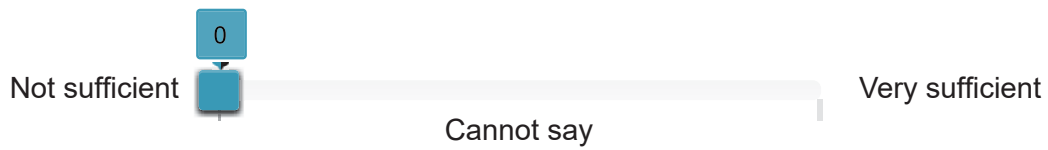
- Consultancy
- Urban planning
- Water management
- Waste management
- Circular economy
- Climate change
- Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) projects
- Sustainability issues
- Something else, please specify

### 4. Country of employment:

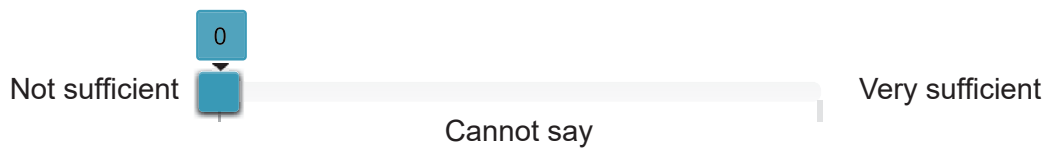

### 5. Sector

- Public
- Private
- Other, please specify

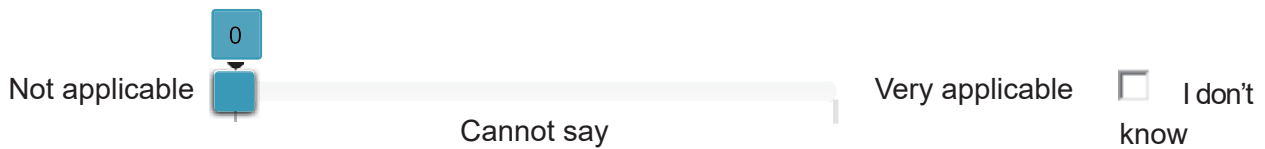
**6. Was the academic knowledge of students sufficient for executing given tasks?**



**7. Was the previous working experience of students sufficient for executing given tasks?**



**8. How would you rate overall student skills after one year of study MURCS programme?**



**9. What kind of benefits have students brought into the organization via completion of the internship?**


**10. What kind of challenges did you recognize in the arrangement and execution of the internship in your organization?**


**11. What kind of opportunities your organization has to hire an international graduate from MUrCS?**


**12. What kind of recommendations do you have for the future internships?**


**13. Any recommendations for future studies and development of MUrCS Master Programme?**
