

WRITTEN BY



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GAINING PRACTICAL SKILLS

The current qualification structure of Slovak graduates does not meet the needs of the market. Moreover, university graduates do not have sufficient skills for the 21st century - they are lacking digital skills, critical and analytical thinking, teamwork, and independent work skills. Last but not least, they do not have direct contact with the practice and therefore lack sufficient practical experience.

Based on these facts and the knowledge of investors' requirements, the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) developed its agenda focused on connecting academia with practice to bridge this gap. This agenda is striving to increase the transfer of technology and research from academia to practice, stimulate the innovation potential of Slovak companies while improving the practical skills of graduates.

The flagship of this agenda is the Practice for Universities, Solutions for Companies project in which companies can participate by placing

proposals for bachelor's, master's, and dissertation theses, identification of areas for joint research and development projects, and offers of case studies and internships.

PROJECT IN FIGURES UNTIL THE END OF 2021

The small pilot project in 2019 included only two faculties and ten companies. Since then, a total of 51 companies and 14 faculties (from nine universities) have taken part. 267 cooperation offers were generated in the form of new projects. The fourth, and thus far the largest edition is currently underway.

PRACTICE FOR UNIVERSITIES, SOLUTIONS FOR COMPANIES 4.0.

The Slovak Academy of Sciences has joined in together with eight Slovak faculties and universities and (by the time of writing) over 40 companies eager to participate in this edition. During the spring of 2022, matchmaking events will be held online or in person where the companies, the faculties, and the Slovak Academy of Sciences will present their fields of work, requirements, and offers and look for common denominators for their future projects.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION

- Cooperation of AgeVolt, e-mobility company and the Faculty of Commerce of the University of Economics in Bratislava
- Research project and internship opportunities in the laboratories of

- BioX Technologies with the Department of Molecular Biology of the Comenius University in Bratislava
- The EU structural funds project of the company MTH REMONT and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the Technical University in Košice



The cooperation between universities and practice is one of the pillars of an advanced knowledge economy, and Slovakia is, unfortunately, lagging behind in the statistics. Despite the prevailing opinion that cooperation is difficult for universities and companies, we meet every year with great interest from companies as well as faculties in this project. Therefore we do believe that it contributes to improving the Slovak workforce, bringing higher quality to the university education, and last but not least, to the development of Slovak companies and established international investment projects.

RÓBERT ŠIMONČIČ,
General Director of SARIO



I would like to thank the Slovak Agency for Investment and Trade Development (SARIO) for this project since it connected the Faculty of Materials Technology, STU based in Trnava with many industrial companies. During these matchmaking events, specific cooperation proposals were made for the development of practical skills of faculty students through internships and also decisions on final theses in the given companies, as well as proposals for cooperation in the field of joint professional and research and development projects.

MILOŠ ČAMBÁL,
Dean of the Faculty of Materials Technology based in Trnava, the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava



This is the first time we took part in a similar project in Slovakia. Although our plant in Nitra is still very young, we have already managed to establish cooperation in the field of education, whether in the form of programs or project assignments, ranging from primary schools to high schools, colleges and universities. In the connection of practice with professional knowledge there lies the innovation potential, which can also bring interesting development or improvement projects. We are happy to be part of the Practice for universities, solutions for companies 3.0 project to be able to inspire each other in this way as well.

MIROSLAVA REMENÁROVÁ,
Corporate Affairs Manager, Jaguar Land Rover Nitra, Slovakia