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How Can the Learning Process during which a Student is Shaped into a Young Professional be Optimised?

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SUMMARY

We propose a list of elements that we believe are important to try to bridge the gap between academia and the industrial world, from the recruitment at BSc level to the final industrial placement, including students' selection, technical programme, relationships between students and industrial reality.

On the one hand, many industrialists point out that a lot of young students, when taking up positions in industry, have a high theoretical knowledge but lack practical experience.

On the other hand, many students – when looking for a job – do not have any clear vision of what jobs in industry entail: neither at the day-to-day scale nor at a lifetime scale.

To minimize this potential gap between companies' needs and students' skills, the last year of studies should be organized as a transition period between university and industry.

We propose a list of elements that we believe are important to try to bridge the gap between academia and the industrial world, from the recruitment at BSc level to the final industrial placement:

- The selection should be done in line with criteria which meet industry requirements: not only academic performance but also the different soft skills necessary for an international career.
- The technical programme should be industry-oriented and eventually industry-validated. To reach such an objective, the use of industrial case studies is essential.
- Close relationships between students and industrial reality should be enhanced through guest lecturers and/or permanent staff coming from industry.
- The ultimate key point is the physical presence of the student in a company through an industrial placement or, even better, through an apprenticeship.

Beyond these general statements, which may be relevant for the whole industry, the Petroleum Exploration and Production sector has some specificities:

- integrated projects with multidisciplinary teams
- an international activity, in a multicultural context
- an ever-increasing high level of technology.

These characteristics should also be considered during the transition year between university and the petroleum industry.

These issues, which IFP School addresses daily, will be discussed in the light of our experience.