

A place for expanding experiences

Since 1997, the Government of Japan has been advancing the systemization of internships for students. These internships allow for students to obtain job experiences related to their majors or future careers while they are still in school. Local municipalities, as well as Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Employers' Associations, are also setting up support for receiving interns. The mass media is also giving a great deal of coverage to the situation of businesses taking in interns, and working towards their popularization. As a result, internships became widely known in a short period of time. The popular status of internships in colleges (see Figure 13-1) plainly shows this. Nonetheless, Japan's internship system is just in its initial stages. This is because it is hard to say what exactly should be taught to students through job experiences.

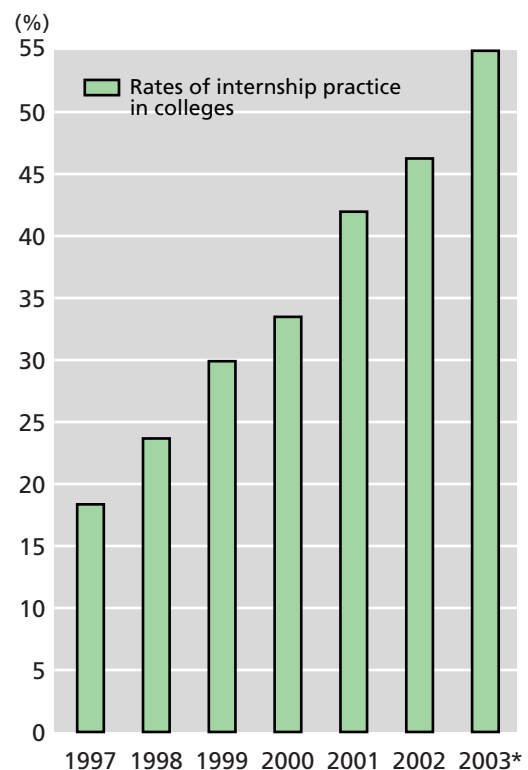
Internships for education can generally be divided between internships which provide an opportunity to nurture specialized employees with indispensable research and training, and internships which help students learn the reality of the job and find a major or the right vocation for the future. At present, it is expected that people must open the way for business careers through their own will and responsibility. In this situation, the latter internship is necessary, which carries the goals of career guidance and will raise the business awareness of young people.

Obstacles here and there

In order to let internships take root in Japan, it is necessary to overcome the obstacles which result from "Japanese-style employment." This is because at the foundation of Japanese-style employment, companies form the structural body of business careers, not individuals. On top of that, companies which have come to emphasize recruitment of new graduates prefer those who do not have any other job experiences, so that these graduates can easily assimilate to the company culture through educational training after their

recruitment. In concert with this move, the schools, whose number of newly graduated students installed in major companies became an indicator of social reputation, have rather hated to provide the job experience learnings to their students. These were the reasons why the idea of relating part-time job experiences with school education and incorporating those experiences into the curriculum did not come about, even though the higher education has progressed to be very common and part-time work hours account for a somewhat large share of current school life. At any rate, the popularization of internships does not stop with schools actively taking part in job experience learning. Companies will be pressured to revise "Japanese-style employment" as well, regardless of whether or not they accept interns.

13-1 Situation of internship practices in colleges



Note: *Predetermined rate

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology