

# **“Employability of Graduates and Higher Education Management Systems”**

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# Increasing Interest in Information on Graduate Employment

## Drivers:

- Knowledge society/economy: growing utilitarian pressures on HE
- Accountability pressures on HE: Justification of costs

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- Growing strategic potentials and responsibilities of individual HEIs

- Growing output and outcome awareness in HE
- The pervasive competition paradigm

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# The Paradoxes of the Current Public Debate on HE and Graduate Employment

1. Pressures to produce simple indicators, although complex information is needed
2. Preoccupation with Top Ranks and Elite HE and employment, although the real issue is mass higher education and its consequences for employability of graduates employment/work
3. Preoccupation with “Employability”, although the real issue are the relationships between curricula, knowledge/competences and work
4. Overemphasis on extrinsic values, although we need a strengthening of intrinsic values to increase innovativeness and creativity

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# Employment/Work of Graduates of the Individual Universities/Departments (I)

The recent trend: Increasing interest to get information on graduate employment/work as feedback for individual university/department

HEIs have different information needs than macro-level actors

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- Avoidance of wrong attributions (e.g. low income of graduates might be due to poor regional labour market)

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- Avoidance of “black box” as regards the causes of employment/work success and of arbitrary speculation about causes; not “does college matter?”, but “does programme matter?” and “what/how”

# Employment/Work of Graduates of the Individual Universities/Departments (II)

## HEIs information needs

- Interest in the complex situation of employment/work of the average and low achievers among students
- Interest in the horizontal relationships between HE and work
- Interest in understanding the professional relevance of HE beyond a close “match”
- Interest in the effect of specific profiles
- Interest in the curricula – competence – work relationship

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# Recent Challenges for Graduate Surveys

- Serving the information needs of the individual higher education institutions/departments
- Measuring the consequences of the Bologna Process
- Providing answers to changing the discourses on the relationships between HE and employment/work

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# Graduate Surveys Serving the Information Needs of Individual HEIs

## Three options

- National survey systems enlarged  
(e.g. whole populations of students of individual universities; national questionnaire: valuable for benchmarking, limited value as feedback on the impact of specific characteristics of study conditions/provisions)
- Institutional / departmental surveys  
(specific questionnaire: valuable as feedback about the specific; no benchmarking value)
- The network approach – collaboration between universities  
(undertaking surveys with a partially common and partially specific questionnaire; serving both benchmarking and measuring the impact of specific characteristics)

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# Needs for Future Improvements

A: Graduate surveys are still “construction sites”

- Difficulties in overcoming the match/mismatch paradigm
- Improvements needed in measuring competences and work tasks
- Improvements needed in understanding the role of graduates in middle-level jobs

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B: Progress needed in help to interpret the findings of graduates surveys within institutions of higher education

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- The growing importance of higher education professionals (HEPROs)
- New modes of communication