

E-DEHEMS

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Main conclusions of the DEHEMS project

The main part of the DEHEMS project seeks to ascertain differences and similarities among the highly diversified study fields (business and economics, education and teaching, engineering, medicine, science, sociology and political science), exploring several aspects of them such as socio-demographic characteristics, programme structures, the transition to employment and graduates' job characteristics.

The analysis revealed significant differences across the study fields in the way the higher education institutions prepare their graduates for work and in the way employers absorb these graduates in relation to the economic situation, labour legislation, organisation of HRM practices etc.

Key dimensions of graduates' early career success identified in the DEHEMS project were: education-job matching, challenging work tasks, job security, autonomy of work, work-life balance, and job satisfaction (with the highest correlations with e.g. high earnings, status, learning possibilities, career prospects...). However, depending on study domains, academics are generally aware of only a few career success dimensions.

Although there are differences in trajectories of graduates' careers on a domain-level basis, they depend even more on a country. In most countries, empirical data on graduates' employability receive little attention from higher education institutions and higher education governance and the main sources of information on graduates' employment needs are alumni networks or own personal networks and experiences.

What academics believe higher education should do to help graduates in employment?

- Higher education should be developing general and field-specific competencies by strengthening practical training, internationalisation and improvements in teaching and learning modes;
- the need to establish and improve the work of career centres and establish systems for tracking graduates has not been seen from the higher education system perspective as a priority in all study domains and countries;
- higher education managers and staff perceive graduates' career dimensions and their determinants in a surprisingly intuitive way – they are aware only of few dimensions.

What employers consider higher education should do to help graduates in career developments?

- They want any improvements in higher education to be based on hard facts, such as the results of graduates' tracer surveys;
- they want these results to become broadly available, and integrated into higher education systems in a transparent way;
- they want to have a formal role in processes related to transition from education to work.

More information about
the DEHEMS project on
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SOME KEY DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO HE & CAREER SUCCESS AFTER THE HEGESCO AND DEHEMS PROJECTS

- What is a relative effect of personal characteristics, social backgrounds and education to career success?
- What is the importance of fostering relevant work experiences?
- How to develop students' motives and talents?
- How demanding study should be?
- How traditional teaching is combined with problem-based learning?
- How to improve assessment modes so they support acquisition of competencies?
- How to manage tracer studies so they become an informative tool for higher education stakeholders?

LABOUR MARKET ORIENTATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Discourse on 'employability' and 'university-business cooperation' reflects two major policy pillars of higher education labour market orientation; what is related to paradigmatic shifts in higher education:

- fostering professional relevance of study programmes;
- 'entrepreneurial' expectations from higher education;
- diversification of higher education programmes that often follow job specialisations;
- internationalisation of teachers and students.

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CAREER SUCCESS AND UNIVERSITY BUSINESS COOPERATION: WHAT SHALL BE SURVEYED?

- How are factors of career success fostered by university business cooperation?
- How differently are higher education stakeholders affected by university business cooperation? (e.g. skill improvements), business (e.g. performance), society (e.g. improving the local environment) and academia (e.g. developing a personal network). - What are differences between large multinational companies and best known universities in comparison to SMEs and NGOs?
- Is university business cooperation a smart developmental decision or economic necessity?
- What are consequences of university business cooperation for hybridisation of academic roles, and nature of academic certificates?
- How university business cooperation impact traditional functions of universities?

DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF UNIVERSITY BUSINESS COOPERATION (Davey et al. 2011)

DRIVERS

- Commercial orientation of the university
- Financial resources for working with universities
- Flexibility of partner
- Interest in accessing scientific knowledge
- Employment by business of university staff and students
- Short geographical distance of the university
- Existence of mutual trust and commitment
- Prior relations
- Financial incentives

BARRIERS

- Lack of awareness of organisational research activities;
- Lack of financial resources;
- Current financial crises;
- Bureaucracy within or external to the university;
- The focus on producing theoretical results by universities
- Differing motivation / values between university and business
- Differing mode of communication and language between university and business
- Differing time horizons between university and business

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS COOPERATION IN THE EMCOSU PROJECT

The EMCOSU programme reinforces the link between education activities and HE graduates' employability needs and the promotion of cooperation with HE tools in particular. It addresses the following questions:

- a) Which are the most relevant modes of cooperation between universities and enterprises and why?
- b) How can these modes be logically systemised according to stakeholders' particular needs, countries, study fields and sectors? What are differences and similarities in these areas?
- c) What are current characteristics of cooperation modes and their future developmental needs?
- d) Which are key developmental drivers and motives on cooperation on the side of universities and enterprises?
- e) What potential do identified improvements hold vis-à-vis established policy tools: credit points and HE sector-specific qualification frameworks? Which sectors and jobs in the selected partner countries and the EU have the greatest potential in the future to absorb HE graduates?

More information about the EMCOSU project on:

<http://www.emcosu.eu/>