

GRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES IN EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKETS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOUR COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of graduate recruitment practices in four European countries in order to establish the extent to which the current institutions of higher education are producing graduates with the attributes and skills that are required to meet the needs of their economies. It starts with the assertion that there is a mismatch between the demand for and the supply of graduates in the European labour markets. Therefore the methods used by graduate employers to recruit and select graduates are examined, and the expectations of both applicants and recruiters are sought and analysed. The main research question is that: 'since more and more students are graduating from universities of other countries and are likely to be employed in their home or third countries within the European Union (EU), will it be possible to have a common qualifications structure and similar graduate recruitment procedures?'. To answer this question, secondary data, which have been collected through an extensive review of relevant literature, and primary data, which have been gathered through the use of questionnaires, have been used. The analysis of data collected has revealed the use of a wide diversity of practices among the countries studied. Despite being part of an ever-closer union, there are still differences in education systems and in the graduate recruitment policies and practices used by graduate employers. It is concluded, however, that in light of the increasing economic, political and legal integration among the EU member states, the high level of collaboration among many institutions of higher education, the willingness of member states to meet the objectives of the Bologna declaration, and the expanding presence of many multinational companies in Europe, it would be possible to develop a European model of good practice in graduate recruitment and selection, despite the current differences in education systems and labour market trends.