

DEHEMS Second International Conference:

Employability of Graduates &
Higher Education Management Systems
Slovenia, Ljubljana, 27 & 28. September, 2012

The Importance of Career Centres as Mediators between HE Students and their Potential Employers

Darka Podmenik, M.Sc. & Ivana Čančar, graduate stud. of education

What is and what might be done by higher education institutions (HE) to improve the graduates' transition into work?

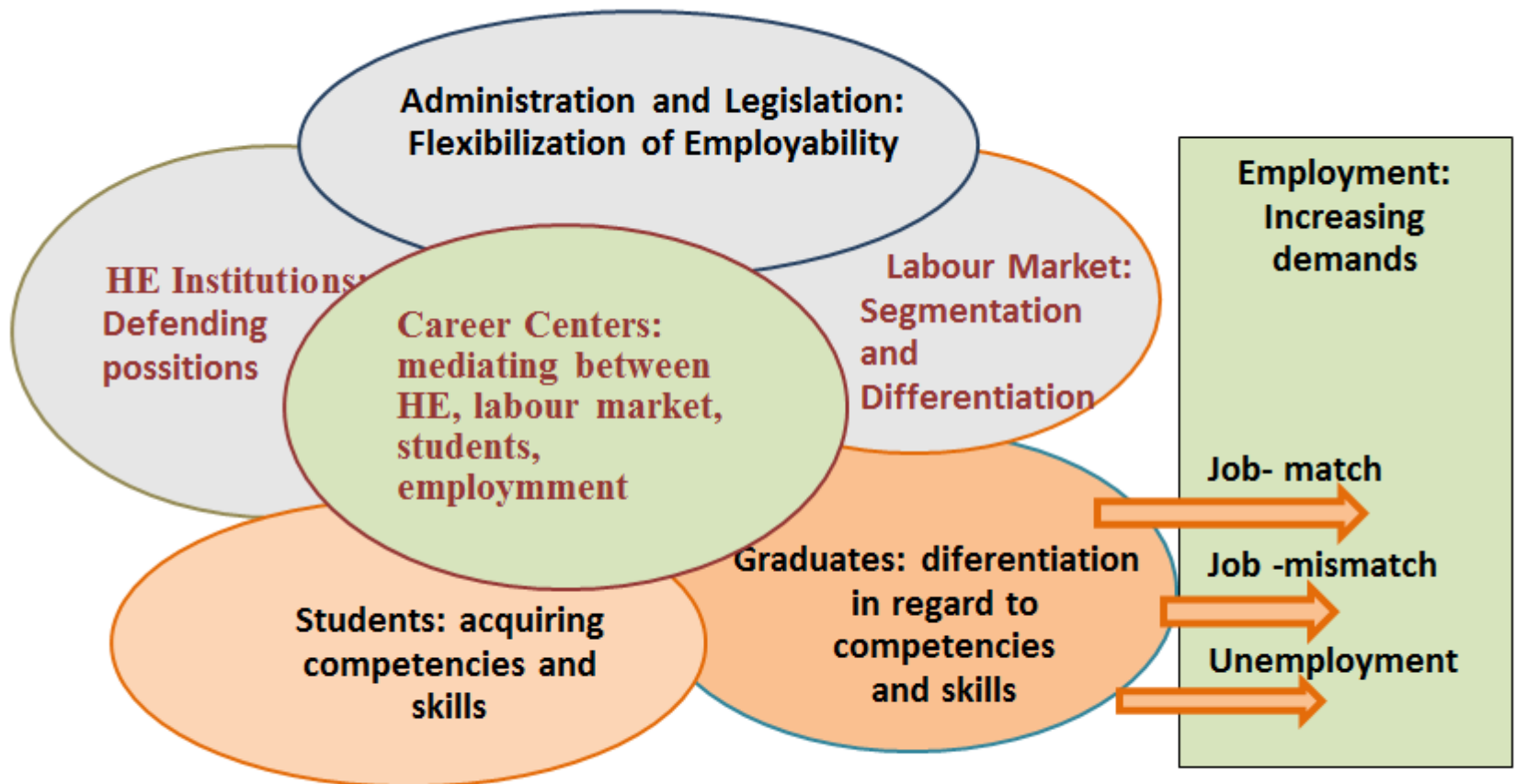
Since the signing of the Bologna Declaration until 2010, the following objectives should be achieved:

- I. Increasing of student mobility within the Europe with the establishment of a convergent structure of study programmes.
- II. To introduce measures procedures, which contribute to the convergence of higher education and the world of work.
- III. Enforcing the stages of study programmes and degrees as the single most important mode of diversification in higher education. (Teichler, 2011: 3, Teichler, 2007: 139,140)

Some results from researches (REFLEX, HEGESCO, Slovene Case Study – IRSA) in regard to Bologna objectives:

- I. Convergent study programmes have been introduced in almost all EU countries, but appropriate mobility was not established.
- II. Current debates about competencies, skills and employability, as well as reports on employers' demands (World Bank, 2012) do not support the establishment of convergence (although there are significant differences between EU countries).
- III. Outcomes in labor markets show differentiation of graduates in respect to: skills and competencies; fields and level of completed studies; having work experiences abroad and/or work experiences connected with study during the study; differentiation by the "normal" and precarious jobs and by the „job-mismatch“.

**Who determines the outcomes of the Labor markets?
What is the role of Career Centers(CC) mediation role in regard to 3 Bologna objectives, mentioned above ?**



Analysis of 8 Career Centers

Comparative characteristics of Career Centres	University of Ljubljana	EF Ljubljana	University of Maribor	University Primorska	University Nova Gorica	University Berlin	Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen	Bristol University UK
Established	2008	2000*	2011**	2008	2011	1997	***	app. 35 years ago
Employees	9	3	4	2	1	3	1+1 student	12 ¹³
CC Information services	- CC web site - Presentations ¹⁴	- CC web site	- CC web site - Presentations ¹⁴ - Introduction week ¹⁵	- CC web site - Presentations ¹⁴	- CC web site	- CC office directly - Brouschures ⁴³	- CC Web site	- CC web site - Presentations ¹⁴
CC Workshops ¹⁶								17
Counselling	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁸
Cooperation with University staff	Cooperation in planning ¹⁹	Active cooperation ²⁰	Active cooperation ²¹	Active cooperation ²¹	CC is passive ²²	CC is isolated ²³	***	Permanent connection with departments ²⁴

¹³ In career guidance section.

¹⁴ CC Self presentations to students, potential employers, companies and stakeholders.

¹⁵ CC University of Maribor pays special attention to present themselves to students at the introduction week at the beginning of study year.

¹⁶ All career centres highlighted following workshops, which we consider as AVERAGE: CV and concerning letter writing, Job searching, job interview simulation, internship promoting, Rhetoric/ public performing skills workshops.

¹⁷ Bristol PLUS Award which helps students gain extra-curricular skills.

¹⁸ CC offers Individual and group counselling.

¹⁹ Sometimes CC ask University staff for ideas, suggestions. Sometimes professors join presentations and it is obvious they are more and more aware of graduate unemployment. They have some future plans for cooperation.

²⁰ Each of the lecturers has a guidance steering committee Quality Department, to include training for employment in their subject Professors have contacts with companies and invite guests from the practice.

²¹ Mostly Interested to cooperate

²² As told the representative of CC: they do not have the authority to encourage professors to integrate careers issues in classes.

²³ The CC representative minded that: Professors usually think of their subjects and do not want to integrate our activities in their curricula.

²⁴ As told the representative the professors are mostly interested to cooperate with CC, which keeps in touch with one of the professor from each department.

Analysis of 8 Career Centers - continued

Comparative characteristics of Career Centres	University of Ljubljana	EF Ljubljana	University of Maribor	University Primorska	University Nova Gorica	University Berlin	Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen	Bristol University UK
Internship	NO ¹³	NO ¹⁴	NO ¹⁵	NO ¹⁵	NO ¹⁵	YES	YES	NO ¹⁵
Students need analysis	YES ¹⁵	***	NO ¹⁶	YES ¹⁷	***	***	***	YES
Cooperation between CC	YES ¹⁸	YES ¹⁹	YES ²⁰	YES ²⁰	YES ²⁰	YES ¹⁹	/	YES ²⁰
Student using the CC services	**	1% ²¹	app. 10% of students	up to 600 students/workshop	20-30 students/workshop	5000/year in workshops	850 students	100 consultations/day
Alumni club	NO ²²	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES

¹³ Only non-compulsory internships, encouraging and presenting internship programmes abroad, help finding internship, if employers shows interest they connect them to faculty internship coordinator

¹⁴ CC can help, but students have to find company where they will do compulsory internship by themselves.

¹⁵ Analysis has been done before CC started to work.

¹⁶ Not yet, but planning to. Activities are currently planned by following other CC practices.

¹⁷ Survey is annual at the end of year.

¹⁸ With other Slovenian CC.

¹⁹ Meeting at conferences and under Career service network in Germany

²⁰ Association of Graduate Careers Advisory is Association of all CC, where they are connected, get educated, get literature...

²¹ 1% of 6000 students. 4000 students registered in CC portal.

²² Not at the University level: except some faculties separately.

Analysis of 8 Career Centers - continued

Comparative characteristics of Career Centres	University of Ljubljana	EF Ljubljana	University of Maribor	University Primorska	University Nova Gorica	University Berlin	Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen	Bristol University UK
Networking CC with potential employers and employers with students	- Regular Interaction and promotion ¹³ - Excursions to companies - Career fair	- Regular Interaction and promotion ³⁵ - Career fair - Meeting company representatives ¹⁴ - "Job opportunities" ¹⁵	- Regular Interaction and promotion ³⁵ - Career fair ¹⁶ - Excursions to companies - Round tables ¹⁷	- Regular Interaction and promotion ³⁵ - Career fair - Round tables ³⁹ - Excursions to companies	- Round tables ³⁹ - Meeting company representatives ¹⁸	- Organising workshops ¹⁹	- Regular Intraction ²⁰ - Career fair - Brouchure ²¹	- Regular Intraction and promotion ³⁵ - CC promotion - Career fair ²²
Innovative practice	/	/	- Volunteer student help - Cooperation with partners abroad ²³	- "Coaching" ²⁴ - Cooperation with partners abroad ²⁵ - "Entrepreneurial Challenge" ⁷	/	/	- Student fair organisation ²⁶ - "Tandem coaching"	- Bristol PLUS award ²⁷ - CC Funding - 3-day graduates workshop

¹³ CC employees are in contact with potential employers, companies. They take care of student promotion in the labour market and company presentations to students.

¹⁴ Professors have contacts with companies and many times invite guests from practice.

¹⁵ Job opportunities is the event when company representative presents type of workplace and company expectations, students can apply for workplace or just get information.

¹⁶ As well participation in career fair in Austria.

¹⁷ With company representatives.

¹⁸ CC informs employers about their activities and hold presentations of occupations of their graduates.

¹⁹ Often they do not have money to organise workshop so they work together with companies or other supporters who give some money or offer free activities.

²⁰ Contacting companies all around the world as potential employers.

²¹ CC has brochures and information that students can send to companies where »Tandem coaching« is explained.

²² Employee fairs to recruit students (a dmission fee) Fair Organization for companies to present themselves to students

²³ Career fair in Austria.

²⁴ Is the only one in our sample that is introducing »coaching«, but actually they are following US practices.

²⁵ The University of Primorska is aiming to find an Italian multinational interested in working with the FAMIT and FM faculties in Koper.

²⁶ Team of 20 students that helps organise employee fair.

I.

Nearly all CCs **inform students about opportunities for studying abroad;**

- ALL CCs : workshops to introduce Erasmus, LDV, but only few organise contact with HE in other EU countries.
- CC Free University Berlin and CC University Zeppelin: organise Internship for students that are asking for it (Zeppelin – international connections with companies).

II.

Normally CCs don't introduce any special **measures procedures, which contribute to the convergence of higher education and the world of work.**

- All CCs introduce only:
 - Student exchange and practice abroad.
 - Thematic workshops that are sometimes relevant for this point.
 - Individual and group counselling.
 - Excursions to companies.
- UNI Primorska: „Enterpreneurial challenge“ and „coaching“.
- Bristol University CC: BRISTOL PLUS Awards

III.

Some are more aware of **Training & Informing students for a competent performance in the labour market.**

- Bristol University CC: BRISTOL PLUS Awards in different thematic fields and 3-day graduates' workshop.
- Zeppelin University: „Tandem coaching“

Normally CC offer standard services as: CV writing, excursions, career fairs, concerning letter, job interview simulation, different workshops, individual and group counselling.

Conslusions

- *All CCs offer similar standard services, some are more succesfull, recognised as more innovative and more active.*
- *Innovative practices bring students closer to employees.*
- *Conections between HEI, CC and Employers (TRIANGLE).*
- *All CCs have problem of further financing*

Thank you for your attention!