Integrating Key Competences into Post-Graduate Courses – achieving reform

PROPOUND Project

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Objective & Learning Outcomes

To share experience & ideas of participants

**Learning Outcomes:**

- how the European Key Competences relate to Higher Education
- the deep-rooted challenges of incorporating key competences into Higher Education, creating:
  - learning opportunities,
  - involvement of employers,
  - assessment,
  - institutional changes
- PROPOUND toolkit: to assist reform
PROPOUND Partnership

• Fundación General UGR-Empresa (Spain)
• Scienter CID (Spain)
• Hogeschool Inholland (Netherlands)
• Foundazione Politecnico di Milano (Italy)
• Scienter (Italy)
• CamProf (UK)
• University of Edinburgh (UK)
• Kutsekoda (Estonia)
PROPOUND Objectives

Drive the modernisation agenda of universities:

• Promote curricular reforms to promote employability of postgrad students
• Encourage cooperation between universities and employers
• Promote development, assessment & certification of key competences for postgrad students

• www.propound.eu
Propound Outcomes

- Review of Key Competences in 5 countries
- Case studies of use of Key Competences
- Pilots using key competences
- Mainstreaming Report
- Generic Action Plan for Universities
- Website
- National Workshops

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EU Key Competences

1. Communication – mother tongue
2. Communication – foreign language(s)
3. Maths, basic science, technology
4. Digital competence
5. Learning to learn
6. Social & civic competences
7. Initiative & entrepreneurship
8. Cultural awareness & expression

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## Comparing EU Key Competences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU Key Competences</th>
<th>OECD 9 Key Competences</th>
<th>England, Wales &amp; N Ireland 6 Key Skills</th>
<th>Canada 9 Essential Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Communication in mother tongue</td>
<td>Use language, symbols &amp; text interactively</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Communication in foreign language</td>
<td>Conduct active dialogue with world</td>
<td>Application of number</td>
<td>Document use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Competence in maths, basic science &amp; technology</td>
<td>Use technology interactively</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Digital competence</td>
<td>Use knowledge &amp; info interactively</td>
<td>Improving own learning &amp; performance</td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Learning to learn</td>
<td>Life plans &amp; personal projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Computer use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social &amp; civic competences</td>
<td>Relate well to others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sense of initiative &amp; entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Cooperate, work in teams</td>
<td>Working with others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Cultural awareness &amp; expression</td>
<td>Adapt tools to own purposes</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Thinking skills: evaluate info to reach decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deal with diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Act within big picture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Different National Paths

• Spain
  o 2011 National Employability Commission and HE Employability Plan
  o New degree subjects to match labour market demand
  o New ‘Professional Guidance Programmes’ promote students gaining key competences
  o Promotion of employability of graduates

• Italy
  o Competence entering schools
  o September 2012 EU Key Competences made target for primary & secondary schools LOs
  o Nothing on key competences at HE yet, current reforms on internationalisation (and reorganisation & staffing)
  o EQF is driving reform. Level descriptors for 2\textsuperscript{nd} cycle include communication (#1, 2), learning to learn (#5), civic (#6)
  o Career services are training in employability skills, but voluntary, no credit values

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Different National Paths (cont 1)

- **Netherlands**
  - Competences have been in VET and HE for 25 years
  - RPL based on existing (school & VET) qualifications, so key competences only assessed if already in qualification
  - Emphasis on validation of prior learning (RPL) and accessibility: into education and from VET to HE

- **Estonia**
  - All qualifications have LOs for key competences, which are assessed as part of overall assessment
  - Level descriptors for 2nd cycle include all EU key competences except #8 (culture)

- **Canada**
  - Pan-Canadian 9 Essential Skills framework, with commercial assessment for some
  - LOs not widely adopted
  - No national engagement with key competences at HE level

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Different National Paths (cont 2)

- **UK**
  - Key/Core/Functional Skills specified at all lower levels, assessed & awarded, required in schools & apprenticeships
  - Key/Core/Functional skills do not match #2 (foreign language), #3 (re: science & technology), #6 (social & civic), #7 (initiative & entrepreneurship), #8 (culture)
  - 2nd cycle level descriptor excludes the same but includes #6 (social & civic), #7 (initiative & entrepreneurship)
  - Higher Education Attainment Record (includes extra-curricular achievements)
  - Requirement for HE to have employability plan, and annual statistics on alumni employment
  - National report (Wilson) ➔ new body to promote HE-employer engagement
  - Some universities include employability LOs in degree
  - Professional & regulatory bodies routinely inspect & approve relevant HE courses
Discussion with Neighbours

• What is situation in your country with regard to Key Competences (particularly in HE)?
• What is situation in your college/university with regard to Key Competences, employability?
Recognising Key Competences

• Route A: additional key competence definitions, (sometimes teaching), assessment & awards

• Route B: embedded in existing courses, part of their LOs, teaching/learning, assessment (eg Level descriptors, graduate attributes)
Implications

• Teaching vs. Learning Opportunities
• Assessment
• Training: teachers, mentors, supervisors, assessors
• Awards
• Involvement of employers
• Governance and reform

NB much learning is unconscious, eg from role models
LOs make this conscious

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Teaching & Learning

Learning opportunities appropriate to KCs, appropriate for knowledge, skills & attitudes

Need opportunities to observe/experience, practise safely, receive feedback & coaching, reflect

• Work-based learning, ‘stage’/ prakticum
• Mentors
• Skills development courses
• On-line or blended learning
• Personal Development Plans

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Assessment

• Learner-centred: useful, forward-looking
• Appropriate for knowledge, skills & attitudes
• Appropriate for informal & nonformal learning
• Combine a variety of methods (‘triangulation’)
• Traditional methods: essays, presentations, written assignments, projects, simulations
• Self-assessment, peer assessment, portfolio, e-portfolio, e-simulations & games
Training Teachers, Mentors, Supervisors, Assessors

Learning opportunities appropriate to KCs, appropriate for knowledge, skills & attitudes

Need opportunities to observe/experience, practise safely, receive feedback & coaching, reflect

• Appropriate LOs
• Work-based learning, ‘stage’/ prakticum
• Mentors
• Skills development courses
• On-line or blended learning
• Personal Development Plans
Implications for HE

Revolutionary curricular changes required:

• Shift from ‘education supply’ to ‘partnership in learning’ (learner, employer, HE)
• HE can act as broker, supporting the stakeholders in novel responsibilities
• Use LOs from employers
• Offer what learner needs to fill gaps
• Assess evidence of LOs provided by learner
• Lifelong learning offers continuing role for HE
• Accessibility & efficiency for learners (& SME employers)
• Quality Assurance of training, assessment & awards
• Training of trainers & assessors
Implications for Employers

Revolutionary changes required:

• Better synergy between education and employers, more collaboration

• Share responsibility for learning key competences by offering:
  o Involvement in LO design, course design, career advice
  o Placements, apprenticeships
  o Opportunities for projects
  o Mentoring
  o Assessment

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Implications for Policy Makers

Revolutionary changes required:

• Employers, education and youth live in parallel universes
• Education-to-employment journey is not easy
• Education-to-employment system fails for most employers & young people
• Successful systems include early & intense collaboration between employers & education
• Stakeholders need better data to make informed choices
• Transformation requires multi-partner collaborations
• National ‘system integrators’ needed (eg sector councils, development agencies, qualifications agencies) to: take holistic view, facilitate partnerships, gather data, disseminate successes
• Create economies of scale using: ICT, partnerships, modules, shared key competences

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• ‘Mainstreaming Report’ includes all this
• Generic ‘Action Plan’ you can modify:
  2.1 Specify Key Competences as LOs
  2.2 Develop assessment processes (spelled out in 5 steps, plus 2 examples)
  2.3 Develop teaching approaches
  2.4 Training teaching staff
  2.5 Promoting formal recognition

  *Each with access to resources & practical examples*
Thank you

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