Employability in context of the Bologna Process

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Background

Main purposes of HE:

- Preparing for sustainable employment
- Preparing for life as active citizens in democratic societies
- Personal development
- The development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

Guiding policy consideration:

- Increasing societal expectation that higher education enhance employability of graduates and provide students with skills relevant on the labor market.
1998 Sorbonne and 1999 Bologna Declarations emphasised the creation of European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability by giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the knowledge based economy.

In 2001 Prague Communiqué was stressed the importance of LLL and formally acknowledged that citizens must be in a position to effectively use their qualifications, competencies and skills across Europe.

In 2003 Berlin Communiqué little more was added to the employability issues: the need to improve understanding and acceptance of the new qualifications and importance to accommodate diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs; importance to study abroad and DS as an instrument fostering employability.

2005 Bergen Communiqué Flexible learning paths in HE, interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills, to meet the needs of the wider employment market; established cooperation employers.
2007 London Communiqué, ….improve employability in relation to each of these cycles as well as in the context of lifelong learning.

2009 Leuven Communiqué HE should equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills and competences. Employability empowers the individual to fully seize the opportunities in changing labour markets.”

2012 Bucharest Communiqué: …Work to enhance employability, lifelong learning, problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills through improved cooperation with employers, especially in the development of educational programmes.
The future of employability: looking forward

- Decent higher education should produce employable graduates, regardless of subject of study or academic discipline.
- In increasingly complex societies advanced competences and skills will be a prerequisite for most kinds of employment.
- EHEA structures will serve as a basis for meaningful employment with implications for quality of education, the framework and structures of qualifications, recognition and transparency.
Employbility as a shared responsibility

- HEIs should continue to develop cooperation with employers
- Students should be part in this cooperation (ownership) in order to ensure that their perspective is included.
- Create dialogue between students and employers (confidence).
Public authorities and higher education institutions should develop and implement qualifications frameworks and study programs that:

- provide students with knowledge and understanding of the theories and methods of their chosen academic discipline and enable them to apply their knowledge on the job in order to assess and solve problems as well as to develop new knowledge, skills and competences.
- enables students to acquire relevant soft skills and to identify their own training needs.
- support students by career guidance as well as reliable information on career prospects
- enhance an outcomes orientation and turn students into critical lifelong-learners.
- describe students’ competences in transparent ways, e.g. by using transparency tools like the Diploma Supplement and the ECTS.
Employability…. 

❖ should be embedded in the study programmes at all cycles
  • ensure practical components (practice related teaching and learning, mandatory internships, practice oriented papers)
  • enhance outcome orientation
  • empower critical lifelong learning
  • enhance transparency of students’ competences (e.g. by using transparency tools like DS).
❖ should be an element of quality assurance by assessing
  • practice-oriented aspects of study programmes
  • ensure that opinion of external experts and students is taken into account.

HEIs should regularly monitor and review their programmes to ensure that they respond to the needs of students and society.
HEIs should integrate employability in their overall strategy.
Thank you.