

Promoting Employability in Professional Higher Education – An Austrian Case Study

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Professional Higher Education Institution in Austria: Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS)



- Established in 1994
- 20 providers in Austria
- 270 degree programmes
- 34.000 students** (compared to 236.000 students in traditional universities)
- 80% in the field of business and engineering sciences**
- Unemployment rate: 0,4%**

UAS as Agents of...



- Education policy (competitors to traditional universities)
- Regional policy (reduction of regional disparities)
- Social policy (flexible admission to higher education)
- Economic policy (close collaboration with and contact to companies)

Difference Between Traditional Universities and UAS



NOT:

- Theory versus practice
- Generalization versus specialization
- Input- versus output orientation
- Length of study
- Degree of freedom of students

BUT:

- Concreteness of occupational fields and images**

Main question



???

How can the academic staff bring into focus the „right“ vocational field?

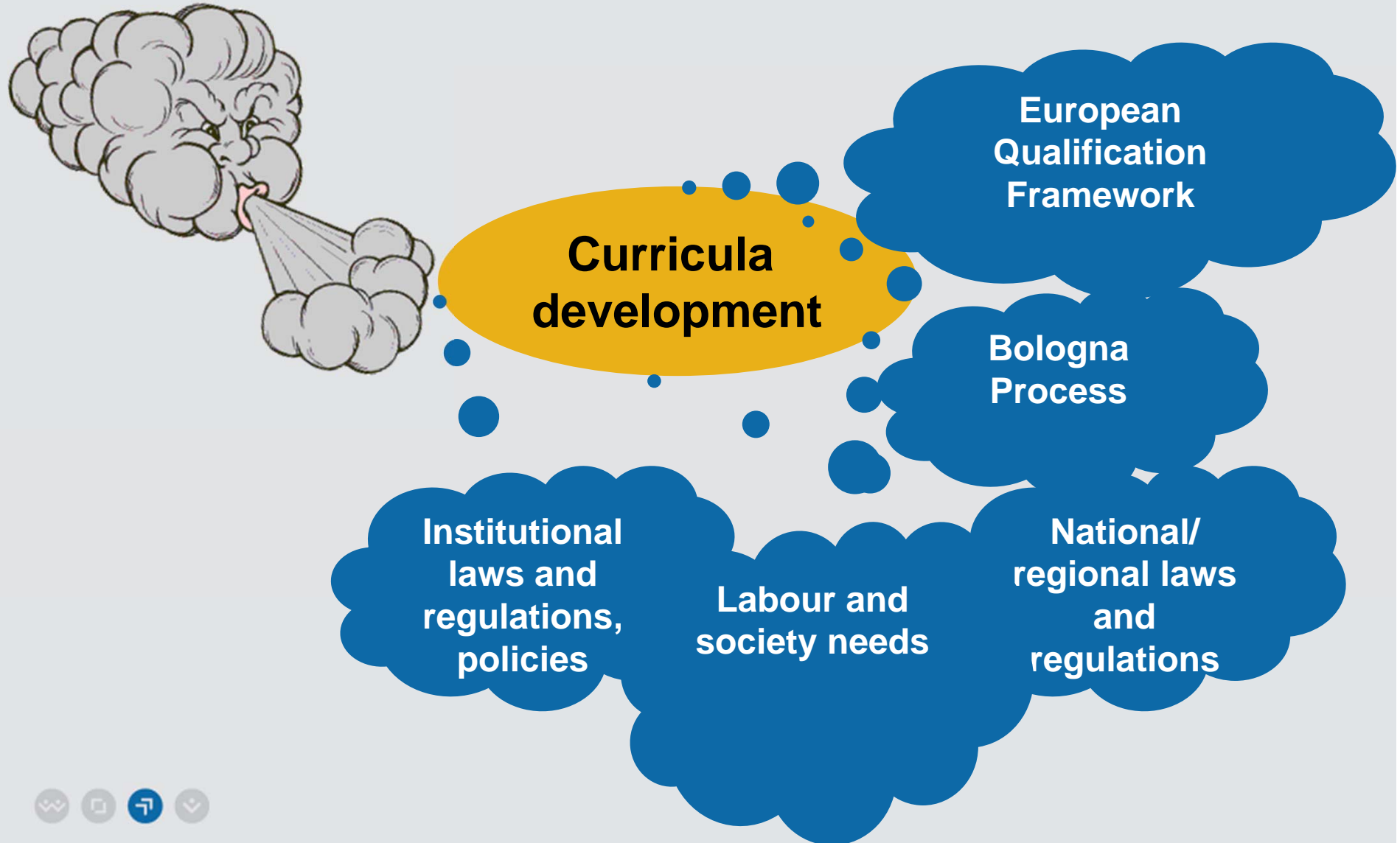
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Close and many-sided collaboration between UAS and labour market

Challenge

Dynamic factors influencing curricula development

Factors Influencing Curricula Development



Labour Market Oriented Curricula



- Practical Example 1: Accreditation procedure
- Practical Example 2: Employability competence assessment and monitoring

Practical Example 1: Accreditation Procedure



- A new FH degree programme needs to be
 1. Accredited by the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency AQ

Practical Example 1: Accreditation Procedure



- 1. The IDEA – A BOTTOM UP approach
 - **Course-providing bodies or applicants** take the initiative to set up new FH degree programmes

Practical Example 1: Accreditation Procedure



- 2. The **DEVELOPMENT TEAM** and its central role in labour market based curricula design

min. 2 professionals
with work proof in the
relevant vocational field

min. 2 academic team
members with
habilitation

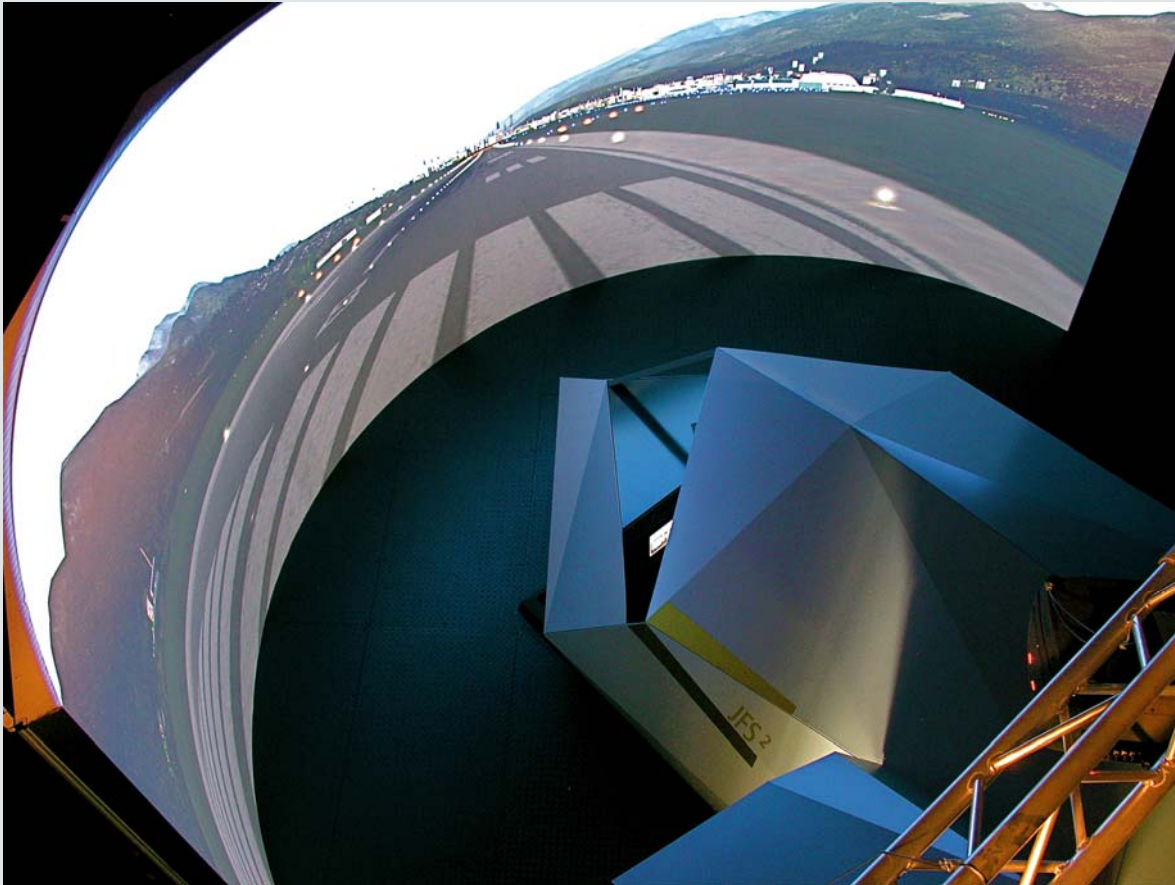


Practical Example 1: Accreditation Procedure

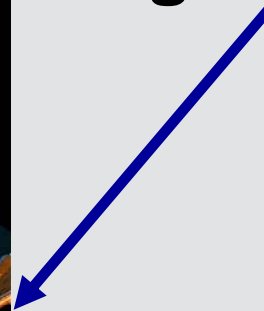


- **3. Submission to the AQ**
 - Obligatory internship of 3-6 months
 - Obligatory practical projects with companies
 - Study abroad term
 - Applied thesis in collaboration with companies or the respective occupational field

Enhancing Employability During the Study Programme



**Technology:
Aviation –
Flight simulator**



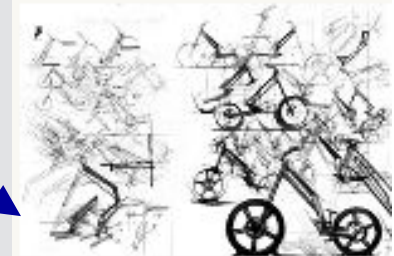
Internships and Student Projects

Technology:

Vehicle technology – Formula SAE
Michigan



Designer in Aktion
© FH Joanneum



Entwurfszeichnungen
© FH Joanneum



"einkaufswagen!"
© FH Joanneum

Art:
Industrial design –
Federal design
contest

Labour Market Oriented Curricula



- Practical Example 1: Accreditation procedure
- Practical Example 2: Competence assessment and monitoring

Practical Example 2: Competence Assessment and Monitoring

Dynamic and complex demand of the labour market

rapid expansion of HE over the past two decades

a. universities are increasingly required to produce highly skilled graduates who are capable to **respond to changing demands**

b. concerns an increasingly wide **'gap'** between the skills and capabilities of graduates, and the requirements and demands of industry

a. discussions about the **quality of the graduate labour market** and the ability of graduates to meet the needs of employers

Practical Example 2: Competence Assessment and Monitoring



- EU Research by FHJ (MISLEM study) suggests that transferable competences are more demanded by the labour market than specific competences

	Graduates Business Knowledge	Graduates Business Competencies	Employers Business Knowledge	Employers Business Competencies
Indicator (valuable)	41.56	70.50	41.32	78.09
Indicator (relevant)	48.72	82.11	51.16	82.15
Indicator (capable)	54.83	63.40	38.63	53.03
Indicator (gap)	15.05	20.69	18.94	17.00

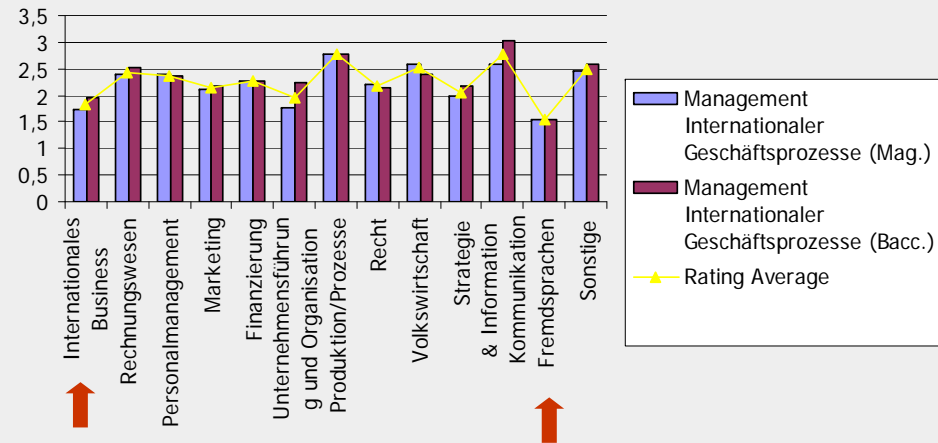
Alumni satisfaction surveys

(1= very relevant / sufficiently acquired during studies

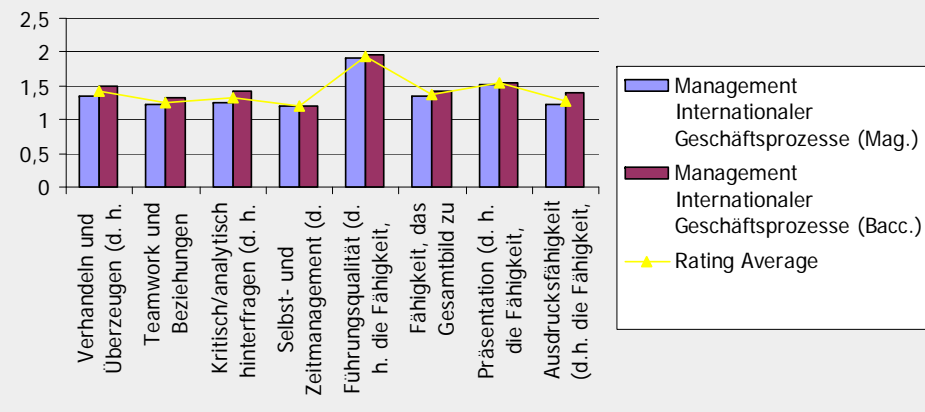
5 = not relevant at all / insufficiently acquired during studies)



Wie nützlich sind die folgenden Wissensgebiete für die Leistung, die Sie in Ihrer derzeitigen Beschäftigung ausführen?



Wie nützlich sind folgende Kompetenzen für die Leistung, die Sie in Ihrer derzeitigen Beschäftigung ausführen?



Practical Example 2: Competence Assessment and Monitoring

FOCUS GROUPS FOR 360 DEGREE FEED-BACK



- Employers
- Alumni
- Students
- Professors
- Decision-making body



Practical Example 2: Employability competences matrix

	Competence 1	Competence 2	Competence 3
Module 1			
<i>Course A</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>
<i>Course B</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	
<i>Course C</i>			<i>x</i>

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