

Tracking of graduate (un)employment in EU Higher education area (Case study of Denmark data management)

Andrej Krček

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia

andrej.krcek@gmail.com

Abstract

Tracking the destinations of graduates can provide some intelligence on the quality of learning programs in higher and vocational education and the extent to which it meets labor market needs. The Commission's New Skills Agenda for Europe (2016) emphasized the need for countries to have a 'better understanding of the performance of graduates'. The Council Recommendation on tracking graduates (2017) was subsequently issued which proposed "making progress by 2020 on the establishment of graduate tracking systems". The Recommendation acknowledges that initiatives and systems for collecting information about higher education and vocational education and training leavers could benefit from improvement and standardization.

The ability to track graduates is also considered a core component of effective quality assurance systems as it provides a mechanism for gathering intelligence on skills utilization in the labor market and placement rates. This is recommended in both the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Quality Assurance Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

A study ("Mapping the state of graduate tracking policies in the EU Member States and EEA countries") from the European Commission showed, that there are quite big differences between European countries in gathering, processing, and using the graduate (un)employment data. About two-thirds of the countries have system-level graduate tracking in higher education. In close to half of the countries, graduate tracking is both a legal obligation and a regular practice (AT, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, NL, PL, SE, and the UK).

Denmark is one of the EU countries with many years of experience in collecting data on graduates and their (un)employment and using this data in governance, internal quality assurance processes, and external quality assurance processes. An in-depth analysis of individual cases requires a good measure of caution, as it is important to look at Danish measures in the field of employability of graduates in the context of at least the entire education system, especially higher education, if not through a social and cultural prism.

Keywords: higher education area, graduates, (un)employment), data collection, graduate tracking, data usage, labour market