



TÉCNICO LISBOA



UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA
DE CATALUNYA



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO



FOLLOW

PROMOTION AND FOLLOW-UP OF GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY IN EXECUTIVE REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The FOLLOW project is the joint effort of 4 cluster universities with the main goal of identifying and disseminating the best and most effective practices concerning the monitoring and promotion of HE graduates employability and channeling them into objective and effective improvements on the local and European policies that deal with this subject.

Combining the input of all partners in this embryonic idea, the consortium managed to produce a structured and objective work team oriented, not to replicate statistics, the obvious or the subjective, but to create something which can work as resource to all stakeholders involved, directly or indirectly, with HE Graduates employability.

The general and specific objectives of FOLLOW are pointed to the accurate observation and assessment of the employability mechanisms in each partner's organization, deriving the good practices from the collected data, to be analyzed, shared and promoted. This focus will deploy knowledge update benefiting each partner and all stakeholders across Europe, once the available data allows for an unprecedented comparison, a general description of the existing employability mechanisms, their location, their features and performance. This mapping of the available employability mechanisms will benefit other HEI and provide a well-informed basis to draw future Higher Education Policies. The first output of FOLLOW will

also be useful to graduates searching for support, to the recruiting companies and to other employability interface institutions, which are vitally interested in this information on the precise employability network dots, easing communication, timely contacts and sense of interlocution.

Another main objective was to hold a Conference entirely dedicated to HE Graduates employability. The main objectives associated to this initiative were the fostering of a debate between different stakeholders and to conclude a set of main areas of intervention that can guide future discussions, actions, research and strategic planning. The conference revolved around 3 main topics:

- Managing employability at HE Institutions – An approach to employability from the point of view of the HE Institutions
- Through the eyes of the employers – The perspective from the ones who have the need and capacity to absorb the skilled work force produced by the HEI.
- The role of the publicly-owned and non-corporate institutions – What is the role of state or institutions such as professional orders in the development and improvement of HE graduates employability

There was also a concern with the dissemination of results and FOLLOW events hence the creation of Work Package dedicated exclusively to dissemination, both physical (leaflets, brochures, reports, etc.) and online (virtual seminars, social network activity, etc.)

Being a one year project, from the start there was recognition that the action radius was limited in terms of how far the consortium could go, therefore the idea of a FOLLOW 2 Project soon gained shape and the consortium agreed to guide the works in such directions. The FOLLOW 2 project is currently waiting EU approval and it is a 3 year project which, incorporating the conclusions from FOLLOW 1, will be less descriptive and more interventional. The consortium is wider and therefore it will contemplate a larger reality.

The project aims at benefiting mainly higher education institutions, employability analysis networks, national work groups and professional associations/orders. However, our expectation concerning the final outcomes

of the project will be the direct or indirect influence and support to the national employment policies in Europe and, particularly, in each member country.

The final outputs of FOLLOW will add to the EM (Employability Mechanisms) mapping and basic indicators of performance, a thorough assessment of the history, changes and orientations followed in each case, accordingly to the EU general policies and its adaptation at the level of each partner organization. These final outputs will entail contributions from all stakeholders (graduate students, company managers and EM coordinators), giving a developed sketch explaining the best results, the good practices and an innovative framework of classification and analysis.

HOW IS FOLLOW ORGANIZED?

The FOLLOW project is organized in 4 main Work Packages:

- WP1 (KUL Coordination): Employability mechanisms information collection and analysis.
- WP2 (IST Coordination): Lisbon International Conference.
- WP3 (UPC Coordination): Dissemination and Promotion.
- WP4 (IST Coordination): Administrative and organizing issues.

MAIN RESULTS

WP1 - Information Collection about Employability Mechanisms

It can be argued that most internal agents of the FOLLOW partners engage in multiple practices or multiple areas of intervention. Instead, most external agents concentrate on one particular area of intervention

– sometimes overlapping with the interventions of the internal performing agents.

In the next 2 Tables we give an overview of the most common areas of intervention per type of practice (promotion or monitoring) and higher education institution.

Figure 1 - Overview of the most common areas of intervention (promotion) per institution.

	IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
Promotion of internships	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruitment opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional guidance - skills and education match	✓	✓	✓	✓
Entrepreneurship	✓			✓
Link with companies - companies collaborations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Link to alumni			✓	

✓: practice carried out by internal agent

The type of practices most frequently employed are concerned with promotion rather than monitoring. The most common areas in the field of promotion are:

1. Recruitment opportunities: job search by students and/or dissemination of job offers;
2. Professional and career guidance activities including skills and education match;
3. Specific company collaborations.

At least one internal agent of each participating higher education institution has developed activities in these areas of intervention. The practices of these agents in

these areas are also very similar. For instance, the career sessions of IST are comparable to the job training services provided by the KU Leuven Study Advice Service, the career counseling offered by Politecnico di Torino and the orientation programmes and seminars offered by UPC Alumni.

The following table shows that all partner universities have internal agents that developed activities in the field of promotion of internships. Also, the table clearly indicates that IST and Politecnico di Torino are the only institutions of which an internal agent is occupied with the promotion of entrepreneurship. UPC seems to be the

only institution maintaining a strong link to alumni through an internal agent. Other areas of intervention such as public policies, university as employer and other

practices were less or not represented and therefore not incorporated in the Table.

Figure 2 - Overview of the most common areas of intervention (monitoring) per institution.

	IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
Follow-up of internships				✓
Employability observatory	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)

✓: practice carried out by internal agent (✓): practice carried out by external agent

In comparison, the most common areas in the field of monitoring are graduate employability observatories and follow-up of internships. Every institution has an internal or external agent implementing graduate employability observatories (. The graduates' survey and the national unemployment analysis are the most important practices conducted by OEIST. This is driven by a legal demand in Portugal to report figures concerning the employability of graduates at an institutional, programme or course level. Likewise, the alumni career research of the Study Advice Service of KU Leuven allows gathering knowledge on graduates' employability. In Spain and Italy, the external agents AQU Catalunya and AlmaLaurea are responsible for conducting graduate employability observatories. It seems that other monitoring activities are fragmented and exclusive for each partner or agent and dependent of the different realities and legislation in each country. The Stage & Job unit of Politecnico di Torino for instance, organizes events in order to support students in finding internships and monitors internships' effectiveness. Lastly, there were no practices classified in the areas follow-up of job search, follow-up of job

vacancies, employability within companies, internal and external indicators.

To conclude, in the following table a list is given of all practices for each area of intervention per type and higher education institution.

Figure 3 - Overview of all practices for each area of intervention per type and higher education institution.

	IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
Monitoring				
Follow up of internships				<p>Stage & Job unit</p> <p>Internship management. Matching demand and offer of internship vacancies.</p> <p>Stage & Job unit</p> <p>Internship observatory. Survey aimed at monitoring internships' effectiveness and improving the quality of work experience.</p>
Employability observatory	<p>OEIST</p> <p>Graduates survey. Main information collection tool about the placement and evolution of IST graduates. Both recent graduates and graduates with 5-10 years of professional experience take part in the survey.</p> <p>OEIST</p> <p>Employability reports. Detailed information on the levels of employability both general at IST level and specific for each course.</p> <p>OEIST</p> <p>National unemployment analysis. Analysis and comparison between IST graduates' employability and employability of graduates from other HEI (national benchmark).</p> <p>OEIST</p> <p>Disciplinary journeys presentations. Events held by departments of IST in which they promote and present multiple aspects of the courses including employability.</p> <p>OEIST</p> <p>Senior students survey. Survey of current students and their employability capital: employability</p>	<p>Study Advice Service</p> <p>Alumni career research. Surveys of MSc programmes' graduates. Data are collected regarding employment status, sector, income, fringe benefits, period of job search, duration of job search, main reason for recruitment and usefulness of the degree.</p> <p>Royal Flemish Society of Engineers</p> <p>Career and salary survey. Survey focusing on job, career and salary intended for Flemish civil, agricultural and industrial engineers working in the private sector in Belgium. Purpose is to inform employers and employees about engineering jobs and salaries.</p> <p>IE-net</p> <p>Employability observatories. Surveys intended for recently graduated civil, industrial and agricultural engineers focusing on their professional activities. Further, IE-net also conducts professional career surveys intended for 25-50 year old engineers and senior-professionals.</p>	<p>AQU Catalunya</p> <p>Quality reviews and reports. Reviews of Catalan universities at institutional, programme and course level.</p> <p>AQU Catalunya</p> <p>Graduate placement surveys.</p> <p>Survey to assess university graduate placement in the labour market.</p>	<p>AlmaLaurea</p> <p>Graduate employability observatories. Data are collected regarding graduates' career, courses, faculties and universities in the consortium are analyzed and compared with regard to graduates' characteristics and performances as well as the effectiveness of the study programmes in the labour market.</p> <p>AlmaLaurea</p> <p>Employability reports. Report on graduates' employment situation, examining their employment condition after one, three and five years of graduation. For each university, faculty, degree a number of factors are examined and compared.</p>

	IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
	before graduation, satisfaction, level of participation in non-academic activities, perception of future professional career and reputation of IST among employers.	Flemish Public Employment Service School leavers' study and report. Yearly report on graduates' employment situation in the Flemish region.		
Promoting				
Promotion of internships	IST Summer internships. Internships to provide MSc students with an opportunity for on-the-job experience.	Student Association Stage fair. Exposition of companies introducing their internship possibilities.	UPC Schools Bachelor and Master internship offers. Each school of UPC develops their own internship opportunities.	Stage & Job unit Internship posting. Promotion of internships on a devoted webpage.
	IEFP Professional and qualification Internships (12 months) in order to strengthen the socio-professional skills of unemployed HE graduates and facilitate their transition to the labour market.	Student Association Internships database. Overview of internships.		
	INOv and IAESTE Internships. International internships increasing the mobility of young professionals.			
Recruitment opportunities (e.g. job search by students and job vacancies by companies)	IST Job bank. Online platform designed with the objective to make the labour market needs and the skills of IST students converge.	Student Employment Service Student jobs database. Database to which students can register and search for a student job offered by employers from inside and outside KU Leuven. Students can enter their skills, interests and availability.	UPC Alumni Online job vacancies. Online publication of job vacancies by companies. UPC Alumni Conferences. Sessions for 50-80 participants aiming at showing graduates career possibilities and opportunities abroad.	Stage & Job unit Job posting. Promotion of job positions on a devoted webpage.
	IST Forum of student associations. Platform for collaboration between student associations and IST to disseminate recruitment activities or other activities to skills development and training by e-mail.	Study Advice Service Job openings database. Job vacancies and internships by companies. But also dissemination of job search by last year students, alumni and PhD students. They can search by discipline, sector and region.	UPC Alumni Recruitment activities designed to meet companies' needs, to facilitate the employment of people with polytechnic profiles (with local, national or international companies).	Stage & Job unit Mailing list and graduates database. Possibility to send internship or job offers to students and graduates with the requirements specified in the job description. Companies can request access to the graduates database through e-mail.
	IST Academic Merit Awards. Job offers or recruitment activities with companies and students associations, supported by those companies.		Schools of UPC Online job vacancies and internships for students by each school of UPC.	Stage & Job unit Newsletter "Polijob". Periodical online newsletter to promote placement activities.
	IST Student Association			BEST Torino Career support. Online service connecting students to companies.

	IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
	<p>Job Shop. Online platform on which students upload their CV's and search jobs.</p>	<p>Student Association</p> <p>Resume book. Students might publish their resume online.</p> <p>Royal Flemish Society of Engineers</p> <p>Job services. Members can publish their resume online as well as offline and get an overview of vacancies for civil and agricultural engineers. They can obtain professional advice on different employment matters and submit their professional resume for analysis.</p> <p>Flemish Public Employment Service</p> <p>Services for jobseekers. VDAB allows job seekers to register their resume online. They can also search a database with job openings posted by employers.</p>	<p>Barcelona Activa Porta 22</p> <p>Job offers. Students and graduates are able to register their resume in a database and get in touch with companies.</p>	<p>Students can browse through offers from companies and universities and send their resume.</p> <p>AlmaLaurea Promoting services. Students' curricula are published on the AlmaLaurea website and can be consulted by hiring companies. Furthermore, students can access job offers posted by companies.</p> <p>Centro per l'Impiego Sportello Alte professionalita. Employment services dedicated to high profiles.</p>
Professional guidance - skills and education match (e.g. learning of employability or transferable skills)	<p>IST</p> <p>Career sessions aimed at master degree students and intended to inform about recruitment procedures.</p>	<p>Study Advice Service</p> <p>Job training services.</p> <p>Information, workshops and training for last year students.</p>	<p>UPC Alumni Career guidance activities. Personal interviews assisting with the elaboration of students' resume. Follow-up by e-mail.</p>	<p>Stage & Job unit Career counseling. Individual support for students writing their CV, preparing interviews and conducting job research.</p>
	<p>IST</p> <p>Career scholarships. Contest to give scholarships for the IST career workshops .</p>	<p>Study Advice Service</p> <p>Competency training.</p> <p>Competency training for students and graduates in presentation and negotiation techniques and coaching.</p>	<p>UPC Alumni Job search seminars. Training sessions in small groups aimed at developing job search strategies to achieve successful job search and completion of the selection process.</p>	<p>Stage & Job unit Thematic workshops. These workshops give students and graduates the practical and theoretical tools to enter the world of work (soft skills, etc.).</p>
	<p>IST</p> <p>Career workshops. Sessions of training and development offered to master degree students. The ultimate goal is to reinforce and improve IST graduates in their labour market approach and recruitment processes.</p>	<p>Student Association</p> <p>Career days. Invited lecture and soft skill trainings focusing on different steps in the application process, e.g. how to write a resume and cover letter, how to make</p>	<p>UPC Alumni Specific orientation programmes. Events organized in collaboration with a UPC school and external agents such as professional associations.</p>	
			<p>UPC Alumni Professional skills workshops. Workshops for</p>	

	IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
		a job interview successful and how to negotiate salary.	20-25 people organized with the support of companies, professionals and experts to promote professional profiles linked to the polytechnic environment, reporting on the labour market or discuss employment prospects of graduates of UPC.	
		Student Association		
		Workshops preparing students to write their Master's thesis.		
			Barcelona Activa Porta 22	
			Workshops helping students to develop job search skills and enhancing personal and career development.	
Entrepreneurship	IST Spin-off network fostering active relationships between companies and companies-IST. Purpose is to stimulate students, graduates and researchers to create companies. IST ISTART I Funding. Initiative supporting potential entrepreneurs from different HEI. Office for job, training and entrepreneurship offering information and guidance for improving students' employability skills and their ability to start their own companies.			I3P Technology transfer incubation activities. Different initiatives for technology transfer, incubation and growth of enterprise. I3P Start Cup Piemonte Valle d'Aosta. Competition for the best innovative and knowledge-based business ideas aimed at creating innovative enterprises within the incubators or the province of the supporting agencies.
Link with companies - companies collaborations (e.g. recruitment opportunities, promotion of field placements)	IST Career weeks. Cooperation of students and companies in organizing events helping students set their professional future and helping companies disseminate their needs and activities. Companies can choose in which events they want to participate.	Study Advice Service Job information day. Job fair and information sessions for last year students from all disciplines. Study Advice Service Information sessions for last year students on employment in different sectors: cultural sector, media, public services, diplomacy, working at the EU and UN, working abroad and in developing countries. Student Association	UPC Alumni Visits to publicize projects and companies located in the Catalan territory. Often career opportunities are presented. UPC Alumni Company presentations to explain career opportunities for graduates. Schools of UPC Company fair where invited companies explain their career opportunities. These events are mostly organized by students with the agreement.	Stage & Job unit On campus events. Events defined and promoted by companies. Companies can directly reach students and graduates with the requested qualifications and obtain feedback on the success of the event. Stage & Job unit Factory tours. Plants, productive sites, visits to laboratories. Stage & Job unit Career days. Job fair for Athenaeum students and graduates. Stage & Job unit Architects (or designers)

IST	KUL	UPC	POLITO
	<p>BR launch. Different activities as well as company presentations.</p> <p>Student Association</p> <p>Job fair and job fora. Company presentations and information sessions.</p> <p>Student Association</p> <p>Interview days. Interviews with companies on campus.</p> <p>Student Association</p> <p>Panel discussions where representatives of companies debate about hot topics.</p> <p>IE-net</p> <p>Job events. Events where students and young graduates can meet and speak to potential employers.</p>		<p>on the job. Specific job and orientation fair dedicated to architects (or designers).</p> <p>Stage & Job unit Infostage. Two-day event in order to support students in finding internships.</p> <p>JETop</p> <p>Carriera & Futuro job fair. Event organized every year addressed to students and graduates.</p>
Link to alumni		<p>UPC Alumni</p> <p>Networking sessions. Events around a school or faculty of UPC aiming to encourage and support the professional relationship between members of UPC community.</p>	

WP2 - 1st International Conference on Graduate Employability

The main goal of WP2 was achieved even before the main deliverable was executed. The 1st International Conference on Graduate Employability managed to reunite all kinds of knowledge and experience in 2 days of intense debate, conversation and presentation of objective practices. The simple fact that all relevant stakeholders were represented by people who, due to the position they have or due to their work, have extremely relevant insight about the employability issue. From Faculty Deans to some high profiled companies CEO's going through research specialists, members of the Portuguese Government and former ministers. The main output was to identify the main discussion axis and concerns that are present within these stakeholders and how they address them. The most interesting aspect is that the variety of concerns is not that big and most stakeholders share the same concerns, even if they are on opposite ends of the discussion on issues such as the role of the graduate in terms of responsibility in being employed, for instance. While most employers stress out that the graduate needs to develop such intrinsic traits in order to be employable, University professors and Deans point out that the economic activity must grow through investment and innovation in order to produce more jobs. The first focus places the employability responsibility on the graduate while the second places it on the market.

The main topics/issues identified and raised at the conference were:

- **Softskills vs. Hard skills debate:** How to ensure that the courses provide the skills demanded by the employers. Whose responsibility is to train extracurricular activities? Are the so called "Softskills" able to be learnt in an exclusive university context or it needs labor context?
- **Influence of the present Conjuncture:** The role of innovation and technology in reshaping the labor market and how does it relate to the internationalization of the labor market and consequently influence the choices and opportunities of HE graduates. How to increase competitiveness and to manage the production and conception strategies. How to rethink the structure of the needed human resources in terms of who develops and the who actually executes.
- **Structural situation:** How do demographic and economic changes can restructure labor market and make areas such as social services gain more significance. Will the current crisis have structural impact on the employability of graduates?
- **Social Value of Higher Education:** What is the difference between graduate and non-graduate employment? What is the gap and is it still worth for a candidate to enroll in a course and spend 3, 5 or more years studying and will it give him better arguments to face the labor market? Did the bologna process accelerate the entry of graduates into the labor market?
- **Pedagogic and Scientific autonomy:** How far can the external influence go over the internal strategies and policies concerning HEI own management in terms of employability? How to manage the need to create,

maintain and highlight knowledge in all scientific areas in a highly unbalanced labor market? Should knowledge be restrained by the laws of the market or should it be the other way around?

- **Promotion of Employability:** Who has the main responsibility in developing structures that can promote employability? How can companies and universities act in order to bring together their interests and needs in a balanced way?
- **Employability – Concepts & Monitoring:** The concept itself might raise some confusion due to its multiple usages. In this sort of debate there is the need to clarify what the concepts are addressing to. Also in terms of statistics and information how can one produce and homogenize methodologies and therefore create comparative data.

It is important to perceive the FOLLOW Project as a dynamic structure oriented for the implementation of active and objective actions. This is one of the main differentiating characteristics of this project; it is not only a descriptive project but also an intervening one. By making a conference one of its main deliverables the

project managed to contribute for the highlight of a particular debate which is usually dissolved in the overall employability debates. One cannot address the employability of HE graduates with the same strategies and policies that are used to non-qualified human resources, the social and economic impact is quite different.

Also the FOLLOW 2 Project is already submitted for EU approval and its development was possible due to the experience achieved with FOLLOW 1 and also due to the dynamic cooperative network created by the 4 partners which allows a constant flow of information and experience exchange. This first stage of the project was the setting of this structure and the development of a cooperative methodology to support such structure which will be used and enhanced in FOLLOW 2.

On a final note, the project and its network of contacts (both within and outside the consortium) made possible the development of the “Journal of Graduate Employability” whose nº 0 will be published in mid-march and is intended to produce relevant contributions for the future debate.

MANAGEMENT & STRATEGIES | PRACTICES IN PROMOTING & MONITORING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY



This panel was dedicated to the partners of the FOLLOW Project and divided in to categories, mainly presenting the results of the first work package of the project and discussing the best practices identified in each partner country or school.

There is an overall solicitude to the effective management of the relations between the companies and the schools; this is translated in several forms, some with great involvement of the governmental entities, others much direct and objective.

The partners presented a set of practices taken place on their institutions that orbit around the monitoring and data systematization, professional counseling and training and finally labor market and company relation.

In the first case, monitoring and systematization of information, IST and KUL presented their practices and key indicators. In the case of IST the analysis of employment in graduates goes as far as 1998 when the first survey was applied, and had a positive evolution until nowadays, where the survey is applied to recent graduates and graduates with 5 years in labor market.

The methodological aspects worth overlook are, regarding target population: sampling frame, representativeness, response rate and sub-population analysis; regarding key indicators: waiting time for 1st job, contract, and way to get the job, income and internationalization; and finally regarding information

collection: primary/secondary date and the Nature of information gathering.

In the following picture we can observe the latitude of the target population of the surveys applied in IST, as well as some notes on the difficulties encountered.

4.1. TARGET POPULATION (2011-2012)						
EMPLOYABILITY			SAMPLING FRAME/ POPULATION	RESPONSE RATE	NOTES	
	1st CYCLE	GRADUATES (not continue to 2 nd cycle at IST)		83	37%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small sampling frame• Course representativeness compromised
	2st CYCLE	FINAL YEAR STUDENTS		1596	49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated sampling frame (local/current population)• High response rate (without additional pressing)
		GRADUATES	1 YEAR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	697	48%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong institutional commitment• Improved response rates• Good course representativeness
			5 YEARS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	883	34%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdated contacts (15%)• Less linkage to the institution• Hard to obtain good response rates
			10 YEARS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	In development	In development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incomplete sampling frame (18%)
		EMPLOYERS		170	48% (13%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of commitment from Employers• Indirect access to survey (Survey filled by a 3rd person)
	3st CYCLE	GRADUATES		290	48%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population with different characteristics – Analytical focus on the course impact

The evolution of the key indicators is notorious, from 1998 to 2011, variable such as internationalization, number of job offers or a more comprehensive look at the income variable, was introduced during the process that now includes the following key indicators: Waiting time for first job, contract, way to get job, position, non-variable income, variable income., incentives, job offers and internationalization.

The surveys are flexible and adaptable to the different populations were the Recent Graduates surveys have a

different approach and indicator than the 5 years professional experience survey.

The outputs from these surveys are presented in many different forms and used to build all types of materials and reports that help decision making for candidates course selection and managing structures of IST, like helping to curricular adjust or media reply with substantial data background.

In KUL the alumni career research focus on some key variables related to employment and working

conditions, mainly the employment status, sector, income and working hours. Other variables are also monitored like the start and duration of job search, main reasons for recruitment and usefulness of degree.

Some figures on the participation in the Alumni Career Research can be stated in the following picture:

	Academic year	Population	Number of participants	Response rate
KU Leuven	2008-2009	3,261	1,337	41%
Faculty of Engineering	2008-2009	214	104	48,6%

The outputs of these surveys are organized by indicator and complemented with other alternative research, like the IE-net survey, that monitors the sector of employment.

For the future the KUL Engineering Faculty focus on increasing the offer of internships available for students, increase managerial and leadership as well as entrepreneurial skills of students and increase contact and interaction with employers.



According to the second topic, professional counseling and training, UPC, POLITO, KUL and IST presented some practices, in this case UPC describes its UPC Alumni service. A service offered by UPC to its graduates with the main goal of enhancing the

belonging to UPC and to develop professional and personal relationships.

This goal can be specified in the following specific objectives: To facilitate the exchange, knowledge and experience of members of the UPC; Provide community

services related to training, career guidance and employment, entrepreneurship, sport, leisure and culture; Facilitate interaction between members through clubs, chapters, promotion meetings and social networking and Gather and visualize all at UPC existing alumni associations.

There are three types of UPC alumni members, UPC Alumni (graduates) UPC Alumni Premium (UPC Alumni that pay a fee to have access more specialized activities and services) and UPC Alumni Protectors (entities that support activities of UPC alumni paying a fee).

UPC Alumni also offers a Career Service, that include career counseling with individual support on decision taking, skill and competencies development workshops, conferences and discussions on career opportunities, professional mobility and mobility. This service also organizes visits to companies to find and identify new areas, new profiles and new working environments.

The Job Vacancies managed are exclusively for junior and seniors. The service provides assistance and support for companies regarding recruitment of people with technical profiles, information on international mobility programs and recruitment for national and international companies. The first edition of a Virtual Occupational Fair also takes place.

Entrepreneurship is also fostered by the Research Valorization Unit of UPC, with compulsory courses and entrepreneurship fostering.

POLITO Career Counseling Service has the main goal of “professional guidance of the individual by utilizing psychological methods especially in collecting case history data, using various techniques of the personal interview, and testing interests and aptitudes”. Was born in 2011 and since then has carried individual meetings taken by work and organization psychologists.

This counseling consist of four central aspects, Helping individuals to gain greater self-awareness in areas such as interests, values, abilities, and personality style; connecting students to resources so that they can become more knowledgeable about jobs and occupations; engaging students in the decision-making process in order that they can choose a career path that is well suited to their own interests, values, abilities and personality style and assisting individuals to be active managers of their career paths as well as becoming lifelong learners in the sense of professional development over the lifespan.

In this counseling meetings there are the definition of the career path; identification of skills, abilities and strengths; identification of aspirations, values and professional interests; definition and consolidation of one or more professional projects; development of the necessary tools for self-presentation (writing a CV and letters of introduction); setting of a structured self-marketing plan; illustration of how to use the different job search tools; planning of these activities and monitoring of the results of the research.

The strengths of this service are the individual approach, that fosters a personal contact and a context-sensitive work, and the weaknesses are related to limited resources and limited beneficiaries. This service can be improved by providing a more structured, complete and continuous in time service.

In POLITO, the Stage&Job Unit works close with the Career Counseling Service and provides the link between the companies and the companies, fostering internships, creating courses that respond to labor market needs and monitoring employment issues.

KUL student association also provides services of professional and career guidance, like career days and workshops.

In IST the Transfer and Technology Office manages to help career development and companies relations as well as the intellectual property. The development of a Career development plan that includes some activities like a Career week, training workshops (cv creation, job search strategies, interview methods, negotiation and career management), jobshops and summer internships. IST gives to students scholarships for 2 sessions of career workshops.

Tecnico Career Sessions



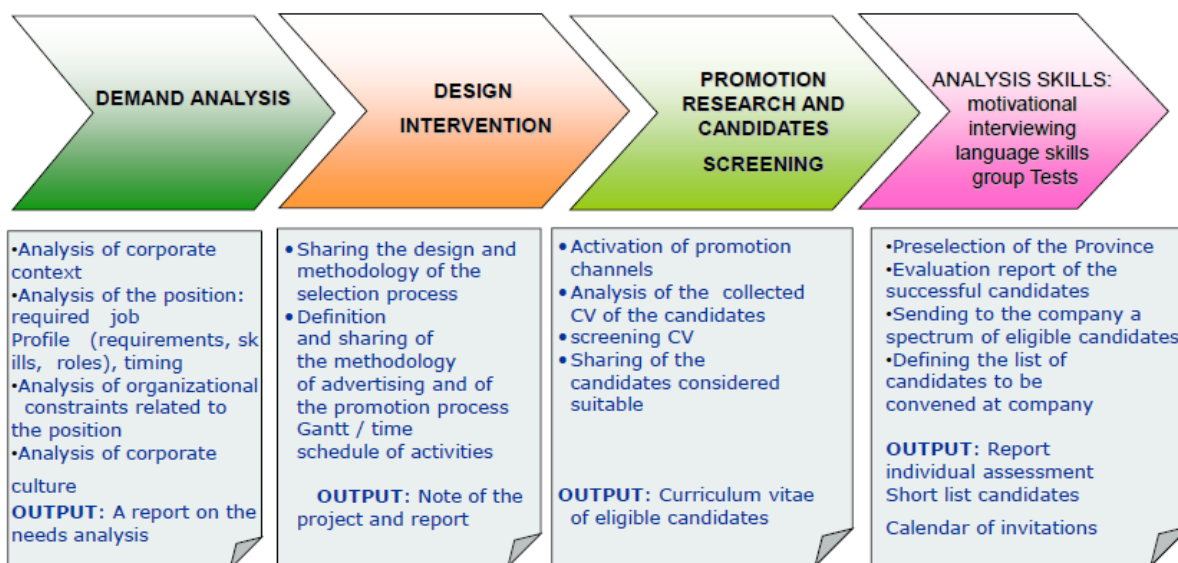
In the labor market and company relation, there were several good examples presented in the conference. The region of Torino presented a service that matches the public and private sectors. This service is based on Employment Centers, which collaborate with University of Torino and POLITO, which provide pre-selection of candidates and supply of high profile job skills or

specialized profiles to the labor market and companies in a multimodal methodology of selection and recruitment. Some of the advantages of this service is the flexibility and close cooperation between recruitment teams from both companies and Employment Center, customization of the professional integration with corporate methodology and business needs of the

company; the definition of a research process and selection of tools analysis ad hoc for the Company, construction of a system of project monitoring; the continuous control and coordination management of the applicant for all the selection process; the reduction of

indirect costs of logistics and secretarial; it's a pre-paid service without any extra charge to the Company and helps strengthening cooperation between public and private.

This service is organized in 4 stages:



This service works close with companies and universities and provides to candidates the ability to have direct access to highly skilled employment opportunities without area constraints; timely access to tools to promote research, ability to auto-nominate using different methods, support in understanding the

requirements and evaluation of the requirements requested, orientation talk regarding active research, advice and support in the articulation of an effective cv, information on the how to search job opportunities and access to "High professional" database.



Companies can access the service in three modalities, Bronze, Silver or Gold, each one with different types of offering and complexity, and adequate to companies needs and budget constraints.

In this matter all partners described a Job placement service, which goes from virtual occupational fairs or tools to offices that have a concrete relation with companies.

In KUL the student association takes a predominant role in career counseling and labor market relations. The

business relations unit organizes several events in collaboration and in demand of companies. Are example of these activities the BR-launch, the stage fair, job fair, job forum and interview days and panel discussions, among others.

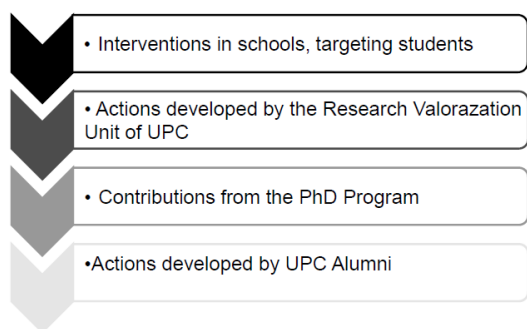
We emphasize the BR-Launch event, which combines a social activity with the companies and employment relations.

1. BR-launch: company presentations combined with a specific activity (e.g. golf courses, wine tasting)

- Main purpose: connect students and companies in an informal way
- Main audience: last year students
- Participants: +/- 100 students and 8 companies in 2011
- Response:
 - From students: positive, informal atmosphere in which students feel comfortable asking questions to companies
 - From companies: positive, approach is very much appreciated

UPC relations with companies and the labor market is framed in the looking for new technological solutions, improvement of professional development and facilitating talent to the productive sector. In this case UPC takes some strategic development among students that focus on:

Strategic development of employability among students and graduates of the UPC



The UPC schools also take actions in labor market relations through internships for bachelor and master level students, complemented by job listing in schools, participation and exchange with mobility and internship initiatives (BEST, IAESTE, etc.) and several activities taken by students like business forums.

In UPC the Research Valorization Unit also fosters the collaboration between companies and the university in research and investigation related employment.

Other contributes came from other High Education Schools represented in the Conference. The nature of the practices focuses, in general, on the same concerns. The systematic organization of data that allows schools to take decisions, the improvement and development skills

and career counseling and labor market relations, focusing also in the preparation of students for the international labor market.

In general institutions gather company profiles and establish some collaboration habits, contact persons, graduate selection for job interviews, job listings, selecting and interviewing graduates to specific institutional requests.

Directed towards the students the activities are mainly of training and counseling, internships and job fairs/career weeks. In this practices the counseling on how to prepare interviews and preparation of the cv are generally stated.

The Paula Frassinetti School also promotes shared experiences between graduates and former graduates and international employment through direct support to students on applications, partnerships with EURES network and international cooperation projects. In the field of international employment they also foster Entrepreneurship projects, market research, financing possibilities (microcredit, business angels), and active job search. They are also involved in a cooperation project, language based, with Timor Lorosae, introduction to Portuguese Language; teacher's training; support to Timor students.

Besides the general activities stated above, like internship programs, the ISLA school program Employability 360° integrates a group of best practices:



The activities integrated are diverse and goes from specific programs, like the Active job and Senior Program not only focus on recent graduates but also on students already in the labor market or with professional background, to event that bring closer companies to graduates and the university. The objective is to foster entrepreneurial mind and also put the company resources managers in contact with the students.

Some courses are integrated in the academic programmes, like communication skills, professional ethics, creativity and critical thinking, interpersonal relations, management and leadership, image and public relations.

In the field of studying the paths and statistical profiles, the Lisbon University has release since 2000 several studies concerning employability and entrepreneurship.

The building of these studies relies on survey implementation, in this particular case at recent graduates (12 and 18 months after graduation).

UL also develops activities to develop skills on employment and entrepreneurship and features workshops, personalized customer service, internationalization programs, specific technical training, promotion of internships and practical experiences and support for the creation of companies.

The strategy of UL also involves professional associations in the process, adding one more partner in the companies – universities relation, gathering professional recognition in the labor market. The professional orders are invited to participate in workshop and sessions.

The



is invited to explain to final-year students

the rules of professional recognition;
 the rights and duties of professionals;
 clarify doubts and listen to suggestions from
 future / new professionals

Annual sessions (70 participants on average) .

On a final note, it is important to mention the practice of a Job Shadowing program by Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP). This practice consists in a program for students to find out what it is like to be in a specific profession. The act of job shadowing is also utilized by college students or by non-student adults simply wanting to experience a particular career opportunity. In either, the shadower will follow the professional and observe their daily work¹. While not being an exclusive practice, it demonstrates a concern of UCP with providing their students with actual direct exposure to what is their potential future. In UCP, this program is organized in way that the top students are the ones to benefit from it. In short the strategies tend to respond to similar needs but to different contexts. In general the economic context and labor market demands is the engine of the need for a closer relation between the stakeholders on employability, fostering a better adjustment of the market needs to the graduate skills.

¹ [*Education 2020 Homeschool, Vocabular, Career elective*](#)

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND FUTURE DEBATES

The 1st International Conference on Graduate Employability did not have the ambition to produce the solutions to the overall employability problems, nor did have the ambition to produce practical results that one can pick up and implement immediately. The purpose of the conference, as the whole FOLLOW project, was to lay foundations for a more structured debate and to act as a very comprehensive and insightful starting point (or restarting point) for all sorts of work made within the employability field. Some topics, due to their stand out presence, deserve a few additional words.

The Society of knowledge

If from the viewpoint that the convergence must be focused on the capacity of the universities to the labor market needs, where is there room for investigation with the purpose of producing knowledge “per se”? The increase of knowledge and the capacity to understand the phenomena that surrounds us may have its applicability and usefulness in the long term, does this mean that there should not be investment for this kind of research?

Competences and being prepared for the labor market

The immediate capacity to perform a job that recent graduates might or might not have was a hot topic raised by universities, public institutions and employers. For future debates one can ask if the convergence between Universities and employers can be supported

by a preparation for the performance of jobs through offices and extra-curricular structures but without influencing directly the curricula for conjectural or structural motives.

The attractiveness of Higher Education

The perception potential HE candidates have can influence, in the short term the shortage of HE students in some courses and consequently might, in the mid and long term, have serious implications in the human resources structure of the labor market or even in the extinction of a course, making a Country less developed in terms of scientific knowledge . A potential lack of attractiveness might be present when the labor market conditions don't allow HE graduates to obtain jobs in a fast and satisfactory but there might even be problems in more developed labor markets. The European Project ATTRACT² deals with the problem of the shortage of technology, engineering and science work force in countries where the employment market is better balanced than in South European Economies. The development of these countries allows the population not to be highly conditioned by employability factors and can achieve good employability levels without higher education degrees. In some cases, such as Belgium or Finland there is not a significant difference in the employability of the different education levels.

The role of the students

² www.attractproject.org

The students' role and capacity to mobilize and develop their own structures for improvement and support of employability cannot be underestimated. Students are the main target of initiatives such as FOLLOW and the inclusion of their insight and experiences is essential for a complete observation of the graduate employability phenomena. The resource to quantitative indicators such as employment rates or n° of graduates signed up at job centers allows a macro vision of the phenomena but to act solely on this level might lead to investments in

measures which are not adequate and whose efficacy and efficiency may be sub-par. We can metaphorically think that if a boat is sinking, the mental disposition of the one who's on the boat will always be different from the ones on shore thinking what they can do to help. In the name of the multiplicity of motivations, experiences and mental dispositions it is relevant to bring to the debate and seeking of solutions the ones that we are ultimately addressing to, the students and graduates.