

Workshop: Developing labour market relevant curricula

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*The framework for higher education
and the labour market*



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The European university, over 900 years since Bologna:

The early phase:

- Not 'founded', networks of students and teachers, *universitas*; early autonomy;
- Urban location;
- Originally no campuses, no buildings!
- *Ius Ubique Docendi* in the 13th century: the right to teach everywhere (the first 'EHEA'); the same curricula, the same textbooks, the same methodologies – and the same religion! And also a very open 'market'!



Originally, universities were **teaching** institutions, but still with an early dichotomy between "skills or intellect", i.e., between theology/medicine/law, and "knowledge for the sake of knowledge".

Research entered universities only in the 19th century, especially with the introduction of the *Humboldt* concept, also copied by American universities.

Now universities are given **the third task**, or 'service to the society', or, 'regional engagement'.

The **role** of universities has changed and is still changing.



A great number of nations now have their strategic target as

'Knowledge-based society'

(But cf. also the European *Bildungsbürgertum*, starting ca.1810→)

At the same time, a major change of HEIs from supporting the public service to contributing to the society at large, and especially the private sector.



Estimated numbers of universities in 1875 / 1913

North America	360 / 500
Latin America	30 / 40
Europe	110 / 150
Asia	5 / 20
Africa	0 / 5
Australasia	2 / 5

(Hobsbawn)

***Current total of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
in the world is ca. 17,000. - Student numbers in HE
in China alone exceed 23 million!***



Global trends and developments in HE:

- 'Massification' of HE, a lot more students;
- Globally, demand for HE generally far exceeds the supply;
- New HE market situation, internationalisation, and competition; also, brain drain!
- The old concept of academic trust replaced by accountability, towards society, the students, the citizens at large, etc.
- A move from supply-side policies towards more demand or market-driven actions...
- New professional requirements set by the market, for learning outcomes, general skills, and competencies!



Traditionally, the universities have been given the task of basic research – 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge'; *little risk* involved;

The applied research is target-oriented, towards a specified and applicable goal; often a matter for research institutes, or the industry itself; and a *high-risk* exercise;

But the differences between basic and applied research are disappearing: the task of any (good) research is solving problems! (And there are plenty of problems around to be solved!)



'Employability' and 'meeting the labour market' are very complex matters, though proper **curricular design** is a necessary step, but not quite sufficient alone;

- Matching **strategies** at the national, regional, and institutional levels;
- Institutions: clear and open **funding**; 'core' funding and performance-based funding; internal and external efficiency; (external efficiency: 'quality' of graduates);
- Internal quality assurance (QA) systems in place and functional;



Cont'd

- The impacts of universities are so manifold that it is better to use the term '**knowledge diffusion**' rather than 'commercialisation'; also, a 'two-way-street' approach to the outside world;
- Responsive administrative and managerial skills and **structures**; development of internal human capacity;
- Plenty of institutional **autonomy**, but **not** without accountability! Proper administrative instruments;



- The new Bologna degree structure well suited to the **dynamism** of the labour market: 3+2+4 yrs;
- Curricula: **feedback** from the outside: partners, stakeholders, alumni, industry, etc.;
- Capacity for **multidisciplinarity**;
- From early on, prepare students also for use of **life-long learning** (LLL) opportunities; most of them will eventually need it; is the university itself prepared for it?
- **Collaborate** with other universities; look for best practices; take note and care of your strenghts;



As of the learning outcomes:

1. The core **professional** skills,
2. The **generic** skills: in many a field crucial for employment!
 - communication skills,
 - IT skills
 - language skills
 - team work, management skills, etc.
3. **Entrepreneurial** skills, gaining in importance!



But you do not need to be alone, there is plenty of examples from Europe and elsewhere;

IMHE/OECD launched in 2004 a review of HEIs and their regional engagement:

”Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development”

The reports are available on the internet.

(Also Jyväskylä/Finland was one of the review targets.)



Some links to the Finnish HE, Innovation, and QA Policies:

www.research.fi

www.finheec.fi



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The following **aerial view** is from the University of Kuopio (Finland) campus, showing a concentration of

- the University (ca. 6000 students)
- the Savonia Polytechnic
- the Science Park (over 230 companies)
- several Natl Research Institutes;

...all in close physical proximity, promoting collaboration...





Thank you, kiitos!



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