



The Quality of the Master Degree Courses 57/85 and 50. The perspective of the students at the University of Florence

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Introduction

The European university system is undergoing a profound restructuring with the Bologna Process, which aims to harmonize the architecture of higher education courses and has introduced the concept of course quality. Within this framework, the aspect that is studied by this research project is the concept of employability related to the transition to work in higher education and a reflection on graduate competencies that will take the TECO project as a reference point.

Aims

The research aims to investigate the perceptions of students (Gemma, Grion, 2015) of the 57/85 and 50 degree courses at the University of Florence who have just graduated, on the employability they acquired thanks to the university course they have just completed.

The research questions are the following:

- Is the Course of Study preparation adequate to perform the profession?
- What is the perception of recent graduates of the employability achieved through their degree course?

Methodology

Epistemological context → Ecological-naturalistic approach

Method → Qualitative. For the analysis of focus group and in-depth interviews through the Grounded Theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2006) and the support of QCAmap program for text analysis

Strategy → Case study (Gerring, 2007)

Techniques → Focus Group and in depth semi-structured interview. The interview protocols are an adaptation of the PRIN research.

The interviews will be conducted from February 2022 by April 2023.

Sample → Based on the number of graduates of Master Degree Course 57&85 (27 people) and 50 (75 people). Start: Graduation Session February 2022 > April 2022 > July 2022 > November 2022 > February 2023 > End: Graduation Session April 2023.

Protocol of the research → 10 days before graduation of the students: Focus Group; Just after the graduation: in depth semi-structured interview at the same students.

Objectives of the Focus Group and interviews → 3 main topics:

1. to get to know the graduates' professional profile;
2. to understand the skills and knowledge required by their professional profile;
3. to understand whether the course of study provided them with the skills and knowledge useful for their profession

References

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- Yorke M., & Knight P. T. (2006). *Embedding employability into the curriculum*. York: The Higher Education Academy.

Results

Focus Group

Participants

Graduation Session	CdL 57/85	CdL 50
February	7	-
April	6	5
Tot. participants	13	5



Fields investigated	LM 50	LM 57/85
	Core Categories	Core Categories
Desiderata	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training need• Job related motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training need• Job related motivation
Skills developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social skills• Personal skills• Competences for finding work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theoretical knowledge• Organisational and planning skills• Social skills• Personal skills• Competences for finding work
Job search channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University channels• Online research• Internet• Institutional websites• Word of mouth• Curriculum Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet• Institutional websites• Online research• Word of mouth• Curriculum Delivery
Channels for clarifying job expectancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colleagues• Meeting with the Degree Course President• University websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Related activities• Individual courses• Colleagues
Final reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional aspirations• Positive aspects of courses and initiatives• Criticisms• Reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional aspirations• Positive aspects of courses and initiatives• Criticisms• Reflections

Discussion and Conclusions

At the moment, the focus group analysis of the February 2022 and April 2022 sessions has been done.

The desires associated with enrolling in the Master's degree course are related to the need to diversify employment and the need for further education. With regard to the skills learnt, in both courses of study, students declared the development of theoretical knowledge, social skills and skills useful for job search. The group activities carried out during individual courses were particularly appreciated for the development of organisational and social skills. The job search is carried out through: the Internet (institutional sites, job search sites, social); word of mouth; university channels. In the Expectations area, which investigates the clarification of professional outlets, the following emerged: the importance of certain courses and meetings (e.g. the one with the President of the course of studies); the comparison with colleagues; the initiatives proposed by the University of Florence and the Boards of Studies.

In their final reflections on both degree courses, the students made three requests: to provide for the presentation of outgoing professional profiles from the outset and on several occasions, also involving professionals who already work in the field; to develop the practical part of the academic course; and to develop teaching methods that allow students to be active participants in the learning process and not just listeners.

Future, Limits and Impact of Research

Future → The research will be developed by analysing the interviews conducted and scheduling focus groups and student interviews for the November 2022, February 2023 and April 2023 sessions.

As a future perspective, it could be interesting to develop a comparison with the Pedagogy Course of study of another country, such as Spain, by involving graduates of these courses in focus groups.

Limits → The biggest limitations lie in the difficulty of involving students in research.

Impact of Research → The elements that will emerge from the research could be very important for the design of future study courses.

The reflection stimulated in students will enable them to become more aware of the pathway developed and the skills acquired.



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