



# Competences and Learning Outcomes

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## Learning outcomes

- the ultimate aim for defining learning outcomes is to enhance quality
- quality assurance is the responsibility of HEIs: what about the quality of transition to the labour market?
- LOs make the competencies visible to students, supervisor and employers
- they are a tool for rising the awareness, support the PhD candidates to articulate their knowledge, skills and competences ("You have a PhD, but what can you do?")
- LOs promote comparability, recognition of competencies, and thus also international mobility ("Move!, Move!" - "Let them move!")



## Key competences and skills

- capability to pursue independent research, ability to formulate research problems, to critical analysis, high level conceptual thinking, creativity, initiative, flexibility etc.
- thesis and field-specific courses are not enough for employability even in the academia
- transferable skills: generic or discipline based? discipline based way of training generic skills? (learning happens in a discipline context)
- skills in information transfer and transfer of basic or fundamental knowledge into application, presentation skills, project management, quality management, skills needed in a multicultural environment; teaching skills
- knowledge of other disciplines besides the "own"
- a check-list: 1. discipline specific 2. for all disciplines?



## Challenges and open questions

- focus on dissertation and PhD's specific research topic > do PhD programmes require more breadth in terms of subjects to be studied?
- tailor-made, individual or compulsory for every student?
- lack of information about positions doctoral candidates take > lack of knowledge about the competences they need
- who gives the training? how do we organise it? how much time do we give to them? (supervisors role?)
- the role of alumni, traineeship, international exchange
- how do we assess/measure the effect of training? (good dissertation, problem-based learning and assessment, self-evaluation, organising workshops, other "real" projects)



## Some recommendations to a PhD candidate

- Go abroad! If not possible, visit as many universities in your own country as possible.
- Begin the dialogue with the employers, speak to people directly! (what they want, what you can offer)
- Think about how you communicate with people who don't know your discipline!
- Try to be independent!
- Enjoy the three/four years of your PhD training! Don't be afraid of the labour market: if you are clever and creative enough, you'll find the job.