



Professionalisation of Bachelors

Preparing Bachelors for the labour market



Hanze University Groningen
APPLIED SCIENCES

Professionalisation of Bachelors



Els van der Werf

Hanzehogeschool Groningen

Hanze University Groningen, University of Applied Sciences

International Relations Manager

Member of the Dutch team of Bologna Experts

Professionalisation of Bachelors



Employability of undergraduates (Bachelors):
a key element of the Bologna Process

The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification.

For universities which traditionally offered undivided
Master degrees: a dilemma

For Universities of Applied Sciences: core business

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Dutch higher education

Characterized by a binary system

Co-existence of

- “ 14 research universities (212,000 students)
3-year Bachelor programmes
- “ 41 universities of applied sciences (374,000 students)
4-year Bachelor programmes

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Universities of Applied Sciences

- “ professional profile = clearly related to particular jobs/careers
- “ curriculum focuses on professional development
- “ main emphasis on undergraduate education
- “ growing number of Master programmes
- “ emphasis on applied research

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Professional focus in Bachelor programmes

- “ emphasis on practical application of knowledge throughout the curriculum (project work; problem-based learning)
- “ participation in applied research
- “ key element: mandatory work placement of at least 6 months (30 ECTS credits)

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Mandatory work placements: an organisational challenge!

Institute of 20.000 studenten . every year roughly 3,500 students on work placement

- " most of them in the Netherlands
- " ca. 700 abroad

Issues of

- " finding companies/organisations
- " matching students with placements
- " preparation and supervision of students
- " quality assurance (placement assignment, assessment)

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Employability of UAS Bachelor graduates

Based on research by Netherlands Association of UAS over 2007

Target group: graduates - 18 months after graduation

Annual transfer to labour market: 64,000 UAS students

- “ 92% of graduates of UAS find a job within 3 months
- “ 85% have a job at the right level (Bachelor)
- “ 84% have a job in the professional field for which they were trained

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Competencies of UAS Bachelors

- “ 60% - study programme is good basis for start on the labour market
- “ 70% - study programme is good basis for further development of skills and knowledge
- “ programme as preparation for professional practice - 6.6 (on a scale of 1-10)

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Self-evaluation of competence levels

	too low	just right	too high
Knowledge	35%	49%	17%
Practical skills	27%	58%	15%
Working together	17%	64%	19%
Independence	19%	67%	14%
Decision making	28%	52%	21%
Communication	33%	57%	11%
Assertiveness	25%	53%	22%

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Further professional development

- “ 33% continue their formal education
 - “ 1% lower level
 - “ 31% at Bachelors level
 - “ 68% at Masters level
- “ 45% take part in courses or company training

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Tentative conclusions:

- “ clear professional profile of Bachelor, in combination with work experience, appears to have positive impact on employability
- “ employers like ~~tailor-made~~ Bachelors
- “ interest in Master programmes is significant:
 - “ postponement of start working life?
 - “ further development alongside paid work?



Thank you!

Email:
p.e.van.der.werf
@pl.hanze.nl



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