

Professionally-oriented Higher Education – European Examples and Options for Poland

Conference organized jointly by the **Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education** and **The World Bank**.

Background Materials

The following literature and documents provide a short introduction to the subject matters of the ‘Conference on Professionally-oriented Higher Education – European Examples and Options for Poland’¹. In line with the focus of the conference, the state of professionally-oriented higher education, its (potential) relationship to the labor market as well as critical conditions for high quality institutions and programs are covered.

State of Professionally-oriented Higher Education

Even though higher education has always provided individuals with knowledge and skills for different professions, professionally-oriented higher education in a narrow sense is a more recent phenomenon. Its steadily increasing importance is a result of several processes. Two very important ones are the rapid expansion of higher education in general and the transformation of societies into knowledge societies. First, the steady growth of student numbers led to an increasingly diverse student body. This implicates a growing number of individuals who expect to be prepared for their future professional careers in a way that the traditional, academic higher education is hardly able to provide. Second, more and more occupations require a level of education that cannot be attained via secondary education. There is, thus, a strong demand for a type of education that goes beyond the secondary level but differs from the traditional higher education.

Contemporary challenges, such as rising youth unemployment and apparent mismatches between the skills of many graduates and the labor markets’ needs, support this trend. Notwithstanding those new individual and societal demands, which are met best by professionally-oriented higher education, its development is far from being a linear process.

¹ Given the scope of each of these topics, the literature and documents cover only a small portion of the information possible. Additional information will be available after the conference in form of the speakers’ presentations, which will be available via the conference website (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2013/05/15/professionally-oriented-higher-education-conference>).

Perceived as a less prestigious part of higher education and sometimes marginalized in the public discussion, professionally-oriented higher education is still in a state of evolution.

The following literature covers the topics mentioned above: the diverse development paths of the past, the current state as well as the challenges and possibilities that are lying ahead.

- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) (2011). “Vocational education and training at higher qualification levels.” CEDEFOP Research Paper No 15. Luxembourg ([Online](#))
- Mikhail, Samih W (2008). “The Alternative Tertiary Education Sector: More Than Non-University Education.” World Bank Education Working Paper Series No 10. Washington D.C. ([Online](#))
- de Weert, Egbert and Maarja Soo (2009). “Research at Universities of Applied Sciences in Europe. Conditions, Achievements and Perspectives.” On the initiative of the European Network for Universities of Applied Sciences. ([Online](#))
- World Bank (2002). “Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education.” Washington D.C. ([Online](#))
- World Bank (2011). “Europe 2020 Poland. Fueling Growth and Competitiveness in Poland Through Employment, Skills, and Innovation. Overview.” Washington, D.C. ([Online](#))

The Relationship between Higher Education and the Labor Market

The starting point for professionally-oriented higher education institutions and programs that strive to realize their potential is their relationship to the labor market. In order to adapt higher education to labor market needs, several obstacles have to be overcome. First of all, labor market needs have to be determined, accounting for longer working lives and more rapidly changing labor markets. Once identified, these needs have to be implemented into the educational process. The quality and the pace of this implementation process are dependent on the instruments used, which range from government policies on the national level to approaches that are located at the institutional or even the program level. Finally, processes of aligning labor market needs and higher education can be of a more sporadic nature or assume the form of direct feedback loops, e.g. close partnerships between actors from the two sectors and government arrangements including employers². All of these three issues are treated in

² The issue of collaboration between higher education and the world of work is also part of the following section.

the following literature, in addition to basic considerations on the topic of skills.

- Allen, Jim and Rolf van der Velden (2007). “The Flexible Professional in the Knowledge Society: General Results of the REFLEX Project.” ([Online](#))
- EURYDICE (2010). “New Skills for New Jobs. Policy initiatives in the field of education: Short overview of the current situation in Europe.” Brussels. ([Online](#))
- Górnjak, Jarosław et al. (2011). “Study of Human Capital in Poland. Report concluding the 1st round of the Study conducted in 2010.” Warsaw. ([Online](#))
- Jelonek, Magdalena et al. (2012). “Oczekiwania pracodawców a pracownicy jutra. Na podstawie badań zrealizowanych w 2012 roku w ramach III edycji projektu Bilans Kapitału Ludzkiego” ([Online](#))
- OECD (2012). “Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives. A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies.” ([Online](#))
- de Weert, Egbert (2011). “Perspectives on Higher Education and the labour market. Review of international policy developments.” IHEM/CHEPS Thematic Report. ([Online](#))
- World Bank (2008). “Linking Education Policy to Labor Market Outcomes.” Washington D.C. ([Online](#))

Critical Conditions for High Quality Professionally-oriented Higher Education – The Educational Process, Relationships to the World of Work and Lifelong Learning

The quality of professionally-oriented higher education institutions and programs ultimately depends upon several critical conditions that are located at the ‘technical’ level. Differing from institution to institution, especially between professionally-oriented higher education institutions and professionally-oriented higher education programs in academic institutions, the best ways for developing curricula, the best teaching methods and relevant resources have to be identified. Also among the critical conditions are the organization of the relationship to the world of work, i.e. to employers, businesses and the industry, and the approach towards lifelong learning as well as general factors like financing, quality assurance and governance arrangements, and the characteristics of staff and students.

- Allinson, Rebecca, Christopher Allinson and Zsuzsa Jávorka (2012). “The University Business Forum. A trends report 2008-2011.” ([Online](#))
- DG Education and Culture (2011). “University Business Cooperation. 15 Institutional Case Studies on the Links Between Higher Education Institutions and Businesses.”

[\(Online\)](#)

- Dunkel, Torsten and Isabelle Le Mouillour (2009). “Through the looking-glass. Diversification and differentiation in vocational education and training and higher education.” In. *Modernising vocational education and training. Fourth report on vocational training research in Europe: background report. Volume 2.* CEDEFOP. Luxembourg ([Online](#))
- FLLLEX (2012). “Towards an institutional strategy for Lifelong Learning in Higher Professional Education.” FLLLEX project Results and Recommendations. ([Online](#))
- Grubb, Norton W. (1999). “Honored but Invisible. An Inside Look at Teaching in Community Colleges.” New York ([Content](#))
- Knust, Michaela and Anke Hanft (eds.) (2009). “Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning. An international comparative study on structures, organisation and provisions.” Dordrecht ([Content](#))
- Kouwenhoven, Wim (2009). “Competence-based curriculum development in Higher Education: a globalised concept?” In. *Technology Education and Development.* Aleksandar Lazinica and Carlos Calafate (eds.) ([Online](#))
- de Oliveira, Eva Dias and Isabel de Castro Guimarães (2010). “‘Employability’ through curriculum innovation and skills development. A Portuguese case study.” In. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 22(2) ([Content](#))
- Powell, Justin J.W. and Laurence Coutrot, Lukas Graf, Nadine Bernhard, Annick Kieffer and Heike Solga (2009). “Comparing the Relationship between Vocational and Higher Education in Germany and France.” WZB Discussion Paper SP 1 2009-506. Berlin ([Online](#))
- Science|Business Innovation Board (2012). “Making Industry-University Partnerships Work. Lessons from successful collaborations.” ([Online](#))
- Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre (2011). “The State of European University-Business Cooperation.” ([Online](#))
- EC/TEMPUS (2011). “Declaration. Lessons learned from and recommendations for the implementation of the matching of competences between higher education and the work field and the implementation of competence-based education.” ([Online](#))
- Wolf, Peter and Julia Christensen Hughes (2007). “Special Issue: Curriculum Development in Higher Education: Faculty-Driven Processes and Practices.” *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 112 ([Content](#))