Professional Higher Education

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Eurashe
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
Double goal

- Characteristics of excellent professional HE
- Challenges in European professional HE
Double perspective

- Flemish University Colleges
  - ‘Academisation’ of programmes …
  - Almost binarity (PHE / AHE) on institutional level

- Eurashe: representing and promoting PHE in all types of institutions
What is professional HE?

Already a European **Challenge #1**!

Harmonising Approaches To Professional Higher Education In Europe

www.eurashe.eu/haphe
Features of Professional Higher Education

• A strong link with the world of employment & with enterprises
• Close involvement of all stakeholders (including students)
• Regional embedding of education & research
• Practice-oriented & competence-based
• Accessible and labour-market oriented
• Flexible schemes and study programmes for new groups of learners, following new requirements of the labour market
1) Try to characterize (good) PHE
2) Challenges following this characterization
3) Some preliminary Haphe results
USP of PHE

EQF
(5) 6 – 7
Comparable and transferrable

Prof. Orientation
Linked to specific contexts
Knowledge
Skills
Competences

e.g. 6  -> advanced knowledge …
        -> manage complex technical professional activities

e.g. 7  -> highly specialized knowledge
        -> responsibility for contributing to prof. knowledge
Commonly accepted?

Why do some professional graduates (BA or Ma!) experience trouble to prove their value?

What about specifications (of science / of arts)?

What about rankings?

Challenge #2: Europe should fight this kind of discrimination
Professional orientation

Bachelor and master education in specific professional contexts

- **Content**
- **Work forms**
- **Network**
- Practice-oriented research
Content

- Professional examples, use and relevance
  But generally applicable and on scientific base
- Analytical and scientific but applied in professional situations
- Specifically applied, generally transferable

(e.g. IT, anatomy, communication, psychology)
Work forms

Similarity to professional working contexts
Internships/work placements/work place learning
Not applying the learned, but learning through applying
Different contexts: flexibility and transferability
Projects/problem solving/assignments
Work forms

Building a strong professional learning environment
Also case studies, simulations, labs, final theses
In cooperation with world of work
Assessed by people outside university

Extra : more general skills and attitudes linked to professional contexts
Challenge #3: financing

These types of work forms cost a lot of effort and money
Networks

Teaching staff with professional experience
Visiting professionals
Network building through work placements, cases, study visits …
Network for curriculum/university/staff
Network for graduates

Innovation and improvement of all partners
Challenge #4: professional versus political network
Practice-oriented research

Applied
Demand driven
Close cooperation with world of work
Extra for SMEs and social-profit
Involving staff and students
Innovation driver

Benefits for students, staff, society
Challenge #5: promote recognition and funding of practice oriented research
Challenges

Previously:

Challenge #1: Define PHE
Challenge #2: End discrimination of PHE
Challenge #3: Recognize financial demands of PHE
Challenge #4: Empower professional networks
Challenge #5: Promote practice-oriented research
Challenges

More:
Challenge #6: Academic drift
Challenge #7: Professional drift
Challenge #8: Professional narrowing
Perceptions of PHE in Europe

HAPHE Survey Results
Prepared for the Eurashe conference Split

Prepared by Prof. Dr. Nicole Graf, Raimund Hudak
DHBW Stuttgart, Germany
Survey of PHE in Europe

Survey Objectives

➤ The survey had to ask the main national actors in PHE (be they umbrella organisations for PHE, groups of institutions or government bodies), in at least 15 member states.

➤ The survey had two aims:
  - to characterise the nature of PHE provision in the respective countries.
  - to collect the national stakeholders’ views on PHE.
Key Findings (1)

- For most stakeholders the term “Professional Higher Education” (PHE) is clear.

- There is a growing demand for well profiled PHE in all countries.

- More than 50 % of the survey participants perceive that economic and educational policies are the main drivers for PHE.
Q3: In your understanding: Is the term “Professional Higher Education” clear?

- **HE Institutions**
  - Very clear: 25%
  - Clear: 34%
  - Not sure: 24%
  - Unclear: 14%
  - Not clear at all: 3%

- **System Level**
  - Very clear: 21%
  - Clear: 30%
  - Not sure: 32%
  - Unclear: 13%
  - Not clear at all: 4%

- **External Level**
  - Very clear: 28%
  - Clear: 27%
  - Not sure: 24%
  - Unclear: 17%
  - Not clear at all: 4%
### Characteristics of PHE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The combining of academic and professional elements</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education providing qualifications to non-traditional groups</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education providing education and training for update/upgrade of qualifications</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration between higher education institutions and the industry going beyond higher education provision but also covering research and…</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curriculum emphasises practical aspects and elements for development of skills and competence</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study program includes extended phases of practical experiences in form of internships and/or work experiences</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study programme is focused on practical aspects of the specific job profile</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong focus on practical application of study</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong focus on practical application of research</td>
<td>138</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings (2)

- A significant number of participants perceive that the cooperation between higher education and professional sphere is not existent.

- More than 50% of all participants stated that the importance of PHE in the labour market is high….

- … but the rate of the current offer / fulfilment is rather medium.
Q13: Please qualify the actual demand for PHE programmes from the labour market and the offer / fulfillment of HE institutions in your country.

Rate the importance of PHE in your labour market

- HE Institutions:
  - Very high: 16%
  - High: 38%
  - Medium: 34%
  - Low: 10%
  - Very low: 2%

- System Level:
  - Very high: 17%
  - High: 47%
  - Medium: 26%
  - Low: 9%
  - Very low: 2%

- Public Organisations:
  - Very high: 19%
  - High: 41%
  - Medium: 30%
  - Low: 9%
  - Very low: 1%
Key Findings (3)

- More than 60% of survey responses are stating that the majority of higher-education institutions are interested in developing and implementing PHE in their country.

- Also international policies, trends or benchmarks support the development of PHE across all analyzed countries.

- Regulations, guidelines or policies that explicitly define the shape and particular structure of PHE exist mostly, but shows room for improvement.
Q21. Are the majority of higher-education institutions interested in developing and implementing PHE in your country?
Key Findings (4)

• More than 80% of all participants comment that over the next years, industry demand for employees with qualifications combining practical skills and academic higher education will increase.

• And more than 90% are stating that the need for qualified employees is the primary motivator for professional sphere.

• And that the student retention and completion rate will increase with PHE.
Q27. How would you rate each of the following characteristics of PHE with regards to the outcomes and benefits of PHE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Characteristics</th>
<th>HE Institutions</th>
<th>System Level</th>
<th>External Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical-orientation in education is seen as a prerequisite for success</td>
<td>1-Completely disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical-orientation in education increases dedication to study</td>
<td></td>
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<td>PHE gives graduates a wider range of employment opportunities</td>
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<td>Practical use of knowledge and Academic ability enhance career development</td>
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Topic 3: In your opinion, what action should your government and stakeholders take to increase professional-oriented education and in its relationship with the market? (How to stimulate PHE in your country)

- Improve the definition
- Partnership between academic and PHE
- Marketing for the image of PHE
- Provision of labour market needs, trends…
- Measure the outcome
- Show the quality of PHE
www.eurashe.eu
www.uasnet.eu

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