



# **EUROGRADUATE Pilot Survey**

Proposal for the survey topics

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**Content**

- 1 Questionnaire ..... 4**
- 1.1 Topic: Labour Market Relevance ..... 4
  - 1.1.1 Labour market entrance ..... 5
  - 1.1.2 Labour force status at time of survey ..... 5
  - 1.1.3 Job characteristics at time of survey ..... 5
- 1.2 Topic: Skills ..... 7
- 1.3 Topic: (Inter-) national mobility ..... 8
- 1.4 Topic: Democratic Value & Citizenship ..... 8
- 1.5 Topic: Further study ..... 9
- 1.6 Topic: Explanatory Factors ..... 9

## 1 Questionnaire

This document provides interested countries with information on the topics covered by the EUROGRADUATE survey as well as a first set of indicators.

Principles for the development of the questionnaire:

1. The goal in developing the questionnaire is to ensure *reliable, valid and equivalent measurements* of topics relevant for understanding short-term transition (one year) from higher education to the labour market as well as mid-term transitions (five years).
2. Both questionnaires for the one and five-year cohort need to be suitable for:
  - a. Bachelor's and Master's graduates with the option to include graduates from short cycle studies, if appropriate.
  - b. Graduates from different types of study programmes such as full-time, part-time, dual study programmes or if agreed on, long-distance programmes.
  - c. Graduates from different types of higher education institutes (e.g. universities, universities of applied sciences, private, public).
3. The questionnaire needs to be able to capture changes taking place in modern societies that graduates experience in their daily lives, for examples changes in their working environment, their family context, and in society at large.
4. Although the core of a European Graduate Survey lies in the analysis of the transition from Higher Education to the labour market and the career trajectories in the first five years on the labour market, it is crucial in the development of the questionnaire to recognize other outcomes of education such as *democratic values* and *citizenship*.
5. In order to understand and to be able to compare short-term and mid-term transitions from higher education to the labour market, the questionnaire requires a core set of identically measured indicators one year and five years after graduation for all types of graduates.

The pilot study covers a selection of potential and desirable topics<sup>1</sup>: *Labour market relevance, skills, (international) mobility, democratic values, further studies and explanatory factors*.

### 1.1 Topic: Labour Market Relevance

Labour market relevance covers both objective and subjective indicators to provide information on *Labour market entrance, career trajectories* and *sectoral mobility*. Labour market entrance is the core sub-topic in the survey one year after graduation whereas career trajectories and sector mobility are central sub-topics in the survey five years after graduation. Nevertheless, the setup of the questionnaire needs to be able to capture career trajectories and sectoral mobility already in early stages of the work life. Therefore, retrospective information

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<sup>1</sup> Topics are of course subject to revision and amendment during the pilot study and serve only as starting point for discussion with the stakeholders.

about first steps on the labour market need to be captured in the survey that takes place five years after graduation.

Hereafter, we briefly discuss indicators with respect to Labour Market Relevance:

### 1.1.1 Labour market entrance

To capture information on the first steps on the labour market, the questionnaire looks at *Job search duration to first job* and *job search behaviour*.

*Job search behaviour* captures differences in channels used to search for jobs after graduation and the effectiveness of different job search channels within different countries for different groups of graduates. The respondents are asked e.g. to indicate both the different channels they used to search for their first job as well as what the successful channel was.

*Job search duration* until the first paid job will be measure retrospectively. Hence, we need to rely on a subjective assessment rather than a formal definition. By that, we take into account that graduates might have started their working life (or at least their job search) while studying.

### 1.1.2 Labour force status at time of survey

To measure the *labour force status*, the questionnaire takes the formal definition of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a starting point. A disadvantage of this definition is that it requires a large set of questions, which is tedious for respondents and eats into precious questionnaire space. It is therefore worth considering a shortened definition. The definition should however be true to the spirit of the ILO definition and minimally take into account whether respondents are currently in paid employment, and if not whether they are available for work and are taking active steps to seek it. Based on the labour force status, two central groups will be distinguished: *Employed Labour Force* and *Unemployed Labour Force*.

For graduates not currently employed and not looking for work, the questionnaire will capture additional information on their status, for example engaged in further education or training (see topic *further study*), caring duties for children or other family members or hampered by poor health or disabilities. By capturing these information, the questionnaire will allow to identify at risk groups such as those not in education, employment or training (the so-called NEETS), as well as potential barriers to labour market participation.

### 1.1.3 Job characteristics at time of survey

Finding a job is the one step, finding a qualitative good job is another, certainly not less important. To capture the 'quality' of the job found, the questionnaire will measure several indicators (both objective as well as subjective indicators) in an identical manner both for the group of respondents surveyed one year after graduation and the group of respondents surveyed five years after graduation.

By that, we capture occupation or economic sector mobility, mobility between temporary and permanent contracts or between part-time and full-time work in the first five years after graduation.

*a) Occupation*

The pilot questionnaire will take as main approach questions with pre-coded occupations, a so-called tree approach, allowing for rather detailed information with respect to the occupation graduates hold.

*b) Economic sector*

The pilot questionnaire will take as main approach questions with pre-coded economic sectors.

Next, the questionnaire will supplement the pre-coded questions with respect to the economic sector with questions to differentiate the economic sectors further between (e.g. public, private or NGO sector).

*c) Type of contract*

To differentiate further, the questionnaire contains questions with respect to the nature of the contract or position held by the graduate (e.g. salaried employment, self-employment, freelancing, work via temping agency) and also whether their position is temporary (including information on the remaining contract time) or permanent.

Next, the questionnaire will capture the *number of hours* the graduate works within the pre-specified time of one week. The question will separately ask for regular hours according to contract and overtime.

For respondents not working full-time, the questionnaire captures additional information on the reasons for not working full-time. This will allow differentiating between voluntary and involuntary part-time work.

*d) Salary*

The questionnaire will ask to indicate the *gross salary* for the pre-specified time of 1 month. In line with the information on the number of hours, respondents are asked to indicate the contractual salary and separately any salary based on bonus or overtime.

For graduates working self-employed or e.g. as freelancer, the wording of the question is adapted to consider their specific situation.

*e) Match between study and work*

A central indicator is the match between the degree achieved in higher education and the present job. This match is generally not sufficiently measured by comparing occupation/economic sector and field of study. For more detailed insights, the questionnaire applies a subjective manner to measure both the vertical as well as the horizontal match.

The *vertical match* is measured by asking the respondent to compare the level of education required by the employer according to their knowledge for their job<sup>2</sup>. By that, the indicator allows to measure if graduates are *over-educated*, *well matched* or *under-educated*.

The *horizontal match* is measured by asking the respondent to compare the field of study that best prepares for their current job and the field of study they graduated from. By that, the indicator allows to measure if graduates are working inside their own educational domain or outside.

The indicators with respect to vertical and horizontal match are strongly related to the topic *Skills*.

#### f) *Job satisfaction*

Complementing the objective indicators, a set of more subjective measures captures the satisfaction of the graduates with the work found.

In addition to a question on the general job satisfaction, the questionnaire contains a set of indicators measuring specific aspects of the job (e.g. career perspectives, work autonomy, job security, balance between job and private life). Given that different groups of graduates might value these specific aspects differently, the questionnaire not only asks about the satisfaction with these aspects but also about the importance graduates attach to these aspects.

## 1.2 Topic: Skills

According to the New Skills Agenda (European Commission, 2016<sup>3</sup>) of the EU, “skills are a pathway to employability and prosperity. With the right skills, people are equipped for good-quality jobs and can fulfil their potential as confident, active citizens. In a fast-changing global economy, skills will to a great extent determine competitiveness and the capacity to drive innovation. They are a pull factor for investment and a catalyst in the virtuous circle of job creation and growth. They are key to social cohesion”. This is in line with the OECD Skills Outlook 2017 (OECD, 2017<sup>4</sup>). However, they also indicate big differences in the extent to which countries, also inside the EU, are equipping their workers with the right skills to benefit from the globalization of production chains. At the same time, the EC recognizes that there is a mismatch between “the skills Europe needs and the skills it has: many parts of the EU are experiencing shortages in certain high-skill professions, both in terms of qualifications and the quality of the associated skills. At the same time, too many students graduate with poor basic skills (literacy, numeracy, digital) and without the range of transversal skills (problem-solving, communication, etc.) they need for resilience in a changing world” (EC, 2017).

To capture the skills requirements on the labour market as well as to match these requirements to the skills acquisition by higher education graduates, the questionnaire asks for self-

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<sup>2</sup> In case of self-employment or freelancing, the question is slightly adjusted to take the requirements of their main contracting parties into consideration.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2016). New Skills Agenda. Press release

<sup>4</sup> OECD (2017). OECD Skills Outlook 2017: Skills and Global Value Chains. *OECD Publishing*, Paris.

assessment of a set of skills containing discipline-specific skills, basic skills and transversal skills:

*Required level of competence* (what is normally needed to perform the work tasks in your job)

*Own level of competence* (the level of mastery, independent of whether one is actually required to use it in the job)

This approach allows to derive additionally the mismatch between the required level and the own level and hence, allows to get insight into skills shortages (both one year and five year after graduation).

### 1.3 Topic: (Inter-) national mobility

The (inter-)national mobility behaviour of European graduates represents a key issue within the survey. It is highly relevant to learn more about patterns of regional and international movement, in terms of explaining labour market placement and successful employment trajectories, but also in terms of which regional and national characteristics are of relevance for the choice of field of study. For this purpose, it is necessary to track graduates over time, in order to find out at which point in their individual life course they consider spatial relocations. Moreover, it is crucial to assess causes and potential consequences of spatial mobility behaviour.

To start with, the questionnaire will ask the graduates to state their region of living at three (four in case of the t+5 survey) time points:

- At the age before entering higher education
- During the final year of their higher education
- One year after graduation (time of survey for t+1)
- Five years after graduation (time of survey for t+5)

Making use of a tree approach the residential information will be captured on all available NUTS levels (e.g. NUTS0: Germany – NUTS1: Bayern – NUTS2: Oberbayern – NUTS3: Rosenheim).

Next, as part of the Topic 'Explanatory Factors', the questionnaire covers temporary spatial mobility behaviour during the time of studying (e.g. semester(s)/internships abroad).

The questionnaire contains questions to distinguish between the different NUTS 3 areas e.g. urban areas from non-urban areas. Finally, the topic regarding (inter-)national mobility contains a set of questions to distinguish causes of mobility (e.g. lacking job opportunities, further study or private reasons).

### 1.4 Topic: Democratic Value & Citizenship

Democratic values and active citizenship represent a core topic within the study. It can be argued that higher education promotes engaged citizenship and democratic values, and thus contributes towards a higher level of social cohesion and trust. In order to learn more about



orientations and active citizenship of higher education graduates within the countries included in the pilot study the questionnaire asks specifically about values, norms and civic engagement. To facilitate comparability between higher education graduates and other (non-academic) citizens and in order to ensure a high quality and appropriateness of the questionnaire, questions will be developed in collaboration with experts from the *European Value Survey* and the *European Social Survey*. The questions concentrate on three key issues:

- *Democratic values*

This set of questions will focus around attitudes towards different styles of governments, the perception of their national government and nationalism.

- *Attitudes toward Europe*

The questions on Europe will address graduates attitude towards the European idea and their perception of advantages and disadvantages of the European Union.

- *Active Citizenship*

The questionnaire will contain information on the perception and evaluation of civic engagement in general, as well as on the individual willingness to get engaged and on the extent to which graduates are actively caring out voluntary work and other forms of civic engagement.

## 1.5 Topic: Further study

Next to the transition from higher education to the labour market, the transition from study to study is a core topic. This holds true in particular for graduates from Bachelor studies continuing their higher education career in Master studies.

To start with, the questionnaire contains a question if graduates continued directly (e.g. within the first 6 months) after receiving their degree with a further study and captures the level of that study (e.g. master, post-doctoral, PhD), the field of that study as well as the country and region of the further study<sup>5</sup>.

Next, in the 1 year after graduation survey, the situation at time of survey is assessed (e.g. still studying, received degree, dropped out of study). In the five years after graduation, survey respondents are asked to provide information with respect to all degrees received since graduation and again, the situation at time of survey is assessed (e.g. still studying).

Finally, the survey contains a set of questions capturing the graduate's satisfaction with the preparation for the further study as well as the reasons for continuing to study (e.g. lack of labour market opportunities with the degree achieved, scientific interest).

## 1.6 Topic: Explanatory Factors

To assess labour market placement and labour market success of higher education graduates, it is essential to collect information on personal characteristics, the (higher) education history, the (extracurricular) experiences during the study as well as study content and organisation of study programmes.

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<sup>5</sup> Capturing the country and region of the further study allows to track again (inter-)national mobility.

- *Personal characteristics*

The survey gathers information with respect to e.g. gender, age, ethnical background, partner of the respondent (e.g. educational attainment, work situation), children of the respondent (e.g. age) and the parents of the respondent (e.g. educational attainment, work situation).

- *(Higher) Education history*

The survey gathers information with respect to e.g. type of study (full-time/part-time), duration of the study (e.g. start time, end time, possible interruptions), previous (successfully) followed study programmes (e.g. Bachelor study in case of Master degree) and average final grades received. Next, the questionnaire asks a small set of questions regarding per-higher education studies.

- *(Extracurricular) experiences*

The survey contains a set of questions to gather information with respect to e.g. internships, temporary studying at another institution, study-related working experience, not study-related working experience, positions on study-/student or other voluntary or organisation as well the question if the graduate has started his or her own business during the study.

With respect to these indicators, where relevant, the questionnaire asks if the experience has taken place in the home country or abroad to measure temporary international mobility.

- *(Satisfaction with) content and organisation of study program*

The content and organisation of the study program graduated from will first be assessed by asking the graduates the extent to which specific modes of teaching have been emphasised (e.g. lectures, group assignments, project-based/problem-based learning, multiple-choice exams).

Secondly, the survey contains questions asking the graduate to assess the study program with respect to e.g. vocational orientation, the broadness of the focus of the study or level to which the study was academically prestigious.

Finally, the survey contains a set of questions asking the graduates about their satisfaction with the study program, both in general terms (e.g. if the graduate in retro perspective would choose again for the same study) and for indicators that are more specific (e.g. the base the study provided to start on the labour market).