

# What is a university student like you doing in a job like this?

13<sup>th</sup> July- 14<sup>th</sup> July

## INTRODUCTION

For the second consecutive year, Unibasq organised a course addressed to university, business and student-related spheres, in the frame of the UPV/EHU SUMMER COURSES.

*“At University you get lots of theory, but then you start to work and realise you know nothing.”*

This and other clichés were disentangled in this course, in which the evolution of the synergies between the university system, the business world, and society was analysed. For this purpose, the demands from the job market in regards to skills and abilities were pointed out, and how they are implemented in university study programmes.

Both the strengths and improvement areas were underlined, and the experiences of universities, Basque and foreign, in terms of employability increase were shared. It was also debated how Quality Assurance Agencies should evaluate the employability factor.

## OBJECTIVES

- Identify the main competences and skills the job market demands from university graduates.
- Identify the main competences and skills acquired at university that promote employability and its improvement.
- Analyse whether a university study programme in its design and implementation develops effectively competences and skills that promote employability and its improvement.
- Reflect on the convenience, viability, and efficiency of the evaluation systems for employability within the study plans and university institutions, comparing them to the procedures followed in the frame of the European and international institutions.
- Be acquainted with the local and international activities for the increase of employability in university study programmes, and their subsequent results.

## SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATIONS

### “Youth employability: a social challenge for all”

- **Ana Díaz Álvarez Fundación Novia Salcedo -- Social Innovation Field Manager**
- **Elisa Mena Ortiz Fundación Novia Salcedo -- Youth-business world Cooperation Programmes Manager.**

The main objective of Fundación Novia Salcedo is to accompany youths in their professional integration process, having a long experience in this field. Once the working methodology of the Fundación was explained, **Ana Díaz Álvarez** conducted a presentation on “New types of jobs and necessary competences”.

In the introduction, she firstly explained the necessities and priorities companies have nowadays, based on **RIS-3** (Research and Innovation Strategies for an Intelligent Specialization) and in the Basque Competitiveness Report 2017. On the one hand, the challenge it entails for the Educational System and its capacity to provide for the demands of the companies was recognised. On the other hand, the importance of the coordination of all the agents to provide an integrated answer to the challenges faced was underlined.

A survey was presented portraying the most highly valued or most frequently demanded competences in the job market, comparing them to the degree of preparation of the youths when landing on these jobs.

Three key factors were spotted with regards to those competences:

- Competences relating tasks, quality and excellence (analysis, organization, self-improvement, ambition, learning capability)
- Competences relating innovation and autonomy (vision for new ideas, creativity, leadership, initiative)
- Competences linked to a personal and social dimension of work (listening, team-work, communication ability, flexibility, positive attitude)

The conclusions of the survey are that, in spite of an adequate acquisition of technical competences in factor 1, employees consider there is plenty of room for improvement in competences for factors 2 and 3, which are essential for the business world today.

It is of the utmost importance nowadays to develop creative, innovative, and cooperative abilities to improve employability, together with participation in organizational management. SHARED LEADERSHIP was mentioned as a working model.

About the model for the business culture, the importance of social innovation in business was highlighted. For this, individual competences—among which creativity (thinking autonomy, mental flexibility, entrepreneurship, cooperation...), transactive memory (innovative team based on shared knowledge), digital platform— should be developed.

Finally, she addressed the five axes of employability: cooperation, ambition for a well-executed job, excellence, productivity, creativity, and participation in leadership.

**Elisa Mena Ortiz** spoke about the [New Model for the Generation of Employment](#).

She stressed the importance of creating spaces for the creation of employability, and emphasised that ATTITUDE is as important as knowledge in youths.

In the case of business, she explained the need for changes in order to incorporate innovation in a trade or organisation, with the capacities of younger generations that have more specific qualifications, using tools such as team work, multi-discipline focus, internal and external cooperation, inter-generational learning space, tutoring, and education.

She also recalled the methodology of Fundación Novia Salcedo, and the compromises to be acquired by the YOUTHS on the one side, and the FUNDACIÓN AND THE COMPANIES, on the other.

#### “The increase in employability in the universities of the Basque University System (BUS)”

- **María José Uranga Iturrioz, Universidad del País Vasco/ Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea – Head of internships and employability.**
- **Jesús Riaño Universidad de Deusto/ Deustuko Unibertsitatea - Head of Deusto Alumni**
- **Jon Altuna Iraola Mondragon Unibertsitatea – Academic Vice-Rector.**

The representatives of the three universities of the Basque University System explained the work being done to increase employability at university, its functioning, and the tools available for this purpose.

**María José Uranga**, signalled the importance of the study programme design, based on the competences and external internships, together with the work done by job centres and other tools for the development of employability.

Apart from needing good organising of the external internships, the importance of attracting professionals who can directly transmit their external experience to the universities, was underlined.

She also mentioned the difficulties of evaluating the transversal competences of leadership and cooperation, and emphasised that employability, and competences relating it, should begin to be taken into consideration from the very first year of the study plan.

**Jesús Riaño** presented data about occupation rates in the Basque Autonomous Community, compared to the data of Spain and European Union, from an equidistant point of view, indicating there is a clear difference between the degrees in science and technology, and those in humanities where unemployment rates are higher.

This fact led to the conclusion that students should be encouraged to choose degrees in Science and Technology, as digital economy is one of the engines for labour market in Europe. All these changes are bringing about new professional profiles to meet the demands from the labour market. In fact, many of the jobs that will be commonplace in ten years, are unknown to us currently, and therefore, a specific career plan cannot be set for them nowadays, what leads to a need for transversal competence acquisition.

The next topic discussed was employability in Deusto, establishing five strategic Axes: Increase of Youth Employability, Professional Career Escort Plan, Entrepreneurship Model Development, Alumni Community, and Applied Research.

Among the data provided regarding the aspects valued by the youth, the most frequently mentioned were training and development, flexibility of the working environment, and employers with similar Social-Corporative Responsibility.

In fact, 56% of the consulted youths would consider resigning in the case of non-concurrence with the core-values of the employer.

Another aspect valued was that most university-graduated working youths would like to work for companies that cultivate creativity.

**Jon Altuna** explained that Mondragon Unibertsitatea understands its role as an active agent in the transformation of society, helping vertebrate the territory by clearly committing to innovate and research, and boosting the social, economic, and industrial development. He mentioned the unemployment rate in the area of Debagoiena (9.7%), and the percentage of investment in innovation and development (4.6%), as examples of the impact caused in society.

He also described his educational model Mendeberry, based on competences and containing different modalities of dual education – internships in companies leading to international experiences– all supporting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Finally, he went over some data on the employment situation amongst Mondragon Unibertsitatea graduates– Survey of University Graduates Class of 2012, Lanbide– in which the unemployment rate is 9.31% as opposed to 16.5% of the total in the Basque University System, and in an average of less than 6 months period of job hunt.

## PANEL DISCUSSION.

During the afternoon, a panel discussion was held in which the representatives of some companies and universities discussed, moderated by the Chief Executive of Unibasq. All partakers underscored how beneficial it is to create links between universities and the labour market.

A mention was made pointing towards the need for companies to take a more proactive role in the design and implementation of study programmes, promote and recognise industrial doctorate programmes, and develop dual university study programmes, as the mentoring from companies is essential for this kind of qualification.

Finally, it was agreed that in order to ensure independence in education, and not to simply focus on the interest of one or some particular companies, evaluations of dual university study programmes should be carried out by external agents.

### “Lights and Shadows in competence acquisition in higher education to enter the business job market”

- **Iruñe Saez de Vicuña Ortueta Tubacex - People Development Director**
- **Jon Kepa Izaguirre Laboratorios A & B – Quality Chief Executive for R&D&I**
- **Unai Ansejo Barra Indexa Capital – Co-founder & CEO**

All Speakers from the business world agreed that the technical knowledge acquired at university is good, but a certain increase in innovative skill development, creativity, initiative, leadership, cooperation, and team-work would be of high value.

**Iruñe Saez** in the introduction explained the history of TUBACEX and its evolution towards internationalization. This internationalization has created the possibility of transference of cooperation models between universities and companies existing in other countries.

Concerning MANPOWER, she explained the core-values of TUBACEX, which are: leadership, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, creativity and innovation, team-work, value creation and profitability, work diversity, and corporate ethics.

She considers that the company’s demands for competence, creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence have experienced a great increase lately.

She also spoke about the strengths and weaknesses in the steps taken by the universities and the business world to increase employability, making a special mention of the opportunities for dual study programmes, and specialisation programmes amongst others.

Internships were also mentioned as a part-taking model in which different stakeholders may interact (government, university...)

About dual study programmes, their main objectives were highlighted: to improve competitiveness in the global market, to increase the employability of our partners and our environment, to facilitate internal promotion, to boost polyvalence and poli-competence, to speed-up change management and organisation, to stimulate the competence level and experience in global environments of the youth, to achieve a greater involvement and commitment of the workers in social aspects, and to have professionals ready for the generation shift.

Finally, she considered as opportunities for improvement: dual study programmes, competence-based learning, the importance of the figure of a MENTOR University, the recognition of competences (vocational training, re-qualifying...), specialisation programmes, promoting international cooperation between different universities, promoting cooperation between universities-companies, coordination and contact with the universities, etc.

Jon Kepa Izaguirre in his introduction explained the product, evolution of the company where he holds the chair of Quality and Research & Development & Innovation, and how the company is run, remarking the importance of their core values: creativity and innovation, continuous improvement, respect and personal satisfaction, team work, client value addition, and social responsibility.

He also underlined that competence acquisition in order to achieve efficiency at work is essential, especially in a small company like his, where everybody should be ready to undertake any task, the client being the main target.

He referred to the market of the future, that will have an international sphere, where competences in cooperation, empathy, interculturality, and so on, will gain importance.

He also mentioned in a final reflection the importance of competences such as creativity, leadership, internationalisation, polyvalence, creativity and innovation.

Unai Ansejo reflected on employability from the point of view of his START-UP. He also introduced INDEXA and explained what his START-UP seeks in newly-graduated people: ambition, independence, flexibility, analytic capacity, programming, courage, and internationalisation.

He also underscored the preparation graduate students have, as can be seen in the impressive CVs they present, but he also pointed out it is necessary to improve in the acquisition of other attitudes and abilities, apart from the technical ones, such as leadership, adaptability, creativity, initiative, etc.

As ideas for employability, he proposed the incorporation of businesspeople/entrepreneurs to university education and a larger presence of students in business during their educational period.

### “The development of skills for employability at the OWL University of Applied Sciences”

- **Stefan Vörtler Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe - University of Applied Sciences - LeitKOM - Institut für Kompetenzentwicklung**

Professor **Stefan Vörtler** presented the activities to increase the development of transversal competences carried out by the Applied Science University of Ostwesfalen-Lippe (OWL) in Germany.

He began by talking about the competences in different fields of knowledge in which newly graduated students are employed (DIHT Erwartungen an Hochschulabsolventen, 2004).

In this same report different competences that help increase employability were analysed. He then proceeded to do a brief presentation of his institution and of the Institute for the Development of Competences, where he exposed the main key aspects: Teaching-Learning, Academic Staff Development, Continuous training throughout their careers, and evaluation and research.

He also established the situation of the University in an industrial environment orientated towards a regional development.

In his presentation he described the strategies for the improvement of the performance rates for students, the study methods that include efficient learning with different learning strategies and task and time management, writing labs orientated towards the improvement of the communicative skills, reading efficiency containing reading strategies and text knowledge, and job orientation to help create effective CVs.

After this introduction, he gave an example of how to address the demands of the job market through dual teaching, and the different models implemented in Germany: shifting, for instance, every three months between university and companies, or the “franchise” model in which the company in cooperation with the university makes this specific offer to its employees working at a certain business unit.

Finally, he explained the tendencies in teaching-learning, based on competences, underlining the concept CORE (Competence Oriented Research and Education) of the University of Heidelberg.

**“The assessment of the employability of study programmes and Higher Education institutions in Europe”**

- **Eva Fernández de Labastida Amurrio – Internationalisation and Projects Manager, Unibasq. Member of a work Team about Innovation in Quality Assurance and Accreditation in ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation).**

**Eva Fernández de Labastida** made a presentation on the labour of the quality assurance agencies in the evaluation of degrees at a European level.

She introduced the topic describing the tasks of the quality assurance agencies and the evaluation criteria established in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

She later explained some definitions for employability and the most common tools used to check work insertion – not employability– of graduate students.

Finally, she explained the questionnaire that was sent to the members of ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation), in which a work group is doing research in graduate employability, detailed the main targets of the research – compile the updated information about tools and practices of the agencies relating employability and transversal competence acquisition in their evaluation processes, both at a study plan level, and at institutional level– and presented the general outcomes, in which the most relevant are the involvement of external groups of interest in evaluation panels (professionals and employers), interviewing with employers and graduate students in external visits, publishing indicators about work insertion from universities, and research on work insertion by different partakers.

The methodology used to evaluate the acquisition of transversal competences is not totally developed in most of the cases, what is considered to be a clear improvement opportunity.

It was also pointed out that the work group is still focused on this aspect, what could end up becoming a proposal for a European project in future.

**“Student body’s vision on competence and skill development for employability in university education”**

- **Uxue Arostegui Marin- Bachelor’s Degree in Computer Engineering Student (UPV/EHU)**
- **Maitane Veá Seijo - Bachelor’s Degree in Humanities minoring in History (Universidad de Deusto), and Master’s Degree in Cultural Management (Universitat de Valencia)**
- **Irantzu Saez López - Bachelor’s Degree in Industrial Organisation Engineering (Mondragon Unibertsitatea) and Master’s Degree in Industrial Engineering (Mondragon Unibertsitatea)**

The three students stated that there were some interesting activities in their study programmes that are related to work insertion, although they remarked that information about them was probably not very accessible and sometimes went unnoticed for students.

Generally speaking, they underlined the need to insist on the convenience of taking part in these activities, or even making them mandatory.

They also considered it necessary to create a monthly newsletter informing about internships and job offers, and commented that job fairs, that apparently will begin to be held this year, could offer a good opportunity to reinforce all this.

However, the student from Mondragon Unibertsitatea emphasised the great relationship of her university and the business world, particularly in the field she studied.

They all agreed on the importance of educational activities organised by companies and universities, especially internships, which in their opinion should become mandatory, although they also remarked that universities should always supervise these internships to make sure they do not become “undercover jobs”, or do not correlate with the acquisition of skills and competences relevant for the degrees they were aimed for.

Along the same lines, they made a point on the relevance of university orientation in job hunts, and the resources this could provide, such as interview preparation, CV writing, and so on.