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Analysis report on the results of the questionnaire for the identification of the situation regarding tracer studies' implementation in higher education institutions (synthesis)

The purpose of the questionnaire analyzed in this report is to identify the current institutional situation regarding tracer studies: to what extent Romanian universities have electronic database concerning graduates, what kind of data they have, the moment when the data is updated, if there is any monitoring of the graduates' insertion on the labor market.

The questionnaire on the situation regarding tracer studies' implementation in higher education institutions is composed of a series of 10 questions, divided into the following areas of interest:

1. The existence of an electronic database regarding the graduates;
2. Ways to centralize the database regarding the graduates;
3. Type of information included in the database regarding the graduates;
4. When is the database updated;
5. Existing structures to monitor the graduates' insertion on the labor market;
6. Having a/person(s) responsible for monitoring the labor market insertion of graduates, employment and participation in training courses;
7. Monitoring implementation of projects on graduate labor market insertion;
8. Way of contact and the level of contacting the graduates considered optimal by universities;
9. Methods of collecting and storing data;
10. The existence of software programs for data analysis obtained within studies/research.

The questionnaire was sent to a total of 55 universities in Romania, 38 public universities (out of which 6 military universities) and 17 private universities, interested in participating in the project "National study of monitoring the higher education graduates' insertion on the labor market". Of the 55 universities contacted, 42 responded. Of the 42 universities that responded, 39 have electronic database for 2008/2009 cohort and 26 have electronic database for 2004/2005 cohort.

Conclusions:

Due to the existence of many electronic databases regarding the graduates of the 2008/2009 cohort compared with the 2004/2005 cohort, contacting the graduates and applying the questionnaire will be more difficult for the latter graduates. Additional efforts will be made regarding the human resources involved in the project in order to obtain a satisfactory response rate.

During the project implementation it will be necessary to overcome difficulties and other issues related to the aspects identified through this analysis:

- the need to clarify the structures responsible for the monitoring of graduates' insertion on the labor market, because right now it is not structured, there are several offices that are dealing with these issues according to the intersection with the type of activity performed;
- lack of specialized staff currently involved in monitoring graduates - for the ongoing study the involvement of researchers in psychology, sociology who possess the necessary knowledge and experience to apply this study and interpret the research results is recommended, as well as the future adaptation of tools and the making of suggestions and proposals on institutional policies and educational strategies based on the results obtained;
- lack of previous experience of universities in implementing similar projects of this scale – detailed project planning and hiring of specialized staff for its implementation at institutional level are necessary;
- lack of infrastructure and software/applications dedicated to storage and collection of data on students and graduates – it is probably one of the easiest deficiencies to remedy as it pertains to matters of purely technical nature. This problem may be solved by resort to people able to use them effectively.

Throughout the project implementation period it is important to take into account the current situation regarding tracer studies, to plan activities based on the given context in order to obtain the best results. For example, in the stage of consolidation and validation of the database it is important to start from existing information in order to ease the process of updating contact information, in the stage of contacting graduates and application of the questionnaire it is important to use ways to contact that have already proven successful at institutional level, in order to obtain a higher response rate.





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It is important to effectively use the resources in the university, both material and human, so as to ensure the sustainability of the project after completion and beyond external funding.

For more information on the analysis of the items mentioned above, please see the detailed Romanian version of this document.

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