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**INSTITUTIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE  
LABOUR INSERTION OF THE UNIVERSITY DEGREES**

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**Abstract**

This communication presents the writing of a protocol that allows the university institution to know the academic and labor characteristics towards the labor market of the university graduates, as well as, the procedures and instruments designed to carry out the future professional monitoring of the graduates. The results come from two research projects on the labour incorporation of the graduates of the Faculties of Law and Economics and Business, of the University of Barcelona and, comparatively, with the Atlantic Headquarters of the National University of Río Negro and the University Center Regional Atlantic Zone of the National University of Comahue (Argentina). The methodology proposed for the analysis is mixed, combining the quantitative (questionnaire surveys when finishing the university degree and four years later after finishing the university studies) with the qualitative analysis (interviews with graduates and employers). In both methodologies, the gender perspective will be included.

Keywords: Labour insertion of university graduates, Career paths, Professional monitoring of graduates, Institutional actions of employability, University of Barcelona.

**1 INTRODUCTION**

The analysis of the labor transition of young people is complex so it is necessary to contextualize it in a historical perspective [1]. Thus, the generation of which we analyze their professional insertion is, with respect to their level of studies, a generation that has been formed in full expansion of the school of masses; on the contrary of their parents, who were born in the late 50's and went to school during the 60's and 70's, characterized by the poverty educational of Franco's system. Moreover, in contrast to what happened to their mothers, during the last decades, educational expansion has been characterized by a growing presence of women in university education [2].

Educational expansion refers to the massive extension of training, both among the population (through the universalization of the educational system) and over time (the average duration of studies has not ceased to increase since the 1960s of the previous century). In the Spanish case, comparing with the countries of its environment, this is a later phenomenon, but more abrupt in the last decades. This implies that the differences in the educational opportunities of the generations of our research compared with those of their parents, have been much higher than those observed in neighboring countries for the same generations [3].

In Spain, since the 1960s and especially during the democratic period, there has been a great growth of students in all educational levels, and particularly in the university. This fact is due both to the growth of the public offer of places in universities, and in the number of universities. In the case of Catalonia, during the democratic period, the number of university students has almost tripled [4].

In order to understand the professional insertion of university graduates, the economic capital, social capital and the level of education of their parents (cultural capital) must be considered in addition to the quality of their studies. Comparatively, the graduates of the university of masses have economic, social and cultural capitals lower than the graduates during the first half of the twentieth century. Despite this, the inclusion of the Catalan graduates during 2004-2005 is quite good, as shown by the results presented by Fachelli and Planas [5]. The comparison between the occupation of the parents born in the late 50s and the graduated children during the first decade of the 21st century is emblematic, since

the distance between the parents' birth date and the graduation of the children embraces. This half century that has been dominated by educational expansion. This expansion has had as a context the changes in the socio-productive models (that include the increase in the public occupation of university graduates), in the public policies in general and educational in particular, with special importance in the higher education in the democratic period.

The variable sex also appears as relevant and fundamental to understand the labor insertion of students in the university work market. The academic literature on the issue indicates that women are inserted in the labor market conditioned by their family life (according to data from the year 2012 in Spain, the employment rate of men between 20 and 49 years old living in partner with children was 82.6% and women 59.9%). At the same time, the family life, the maternity and the couple formation are conditioned by the insertion of young people in the labor market. The data indicate that part-time and temporality in the labor market are a reality that affects women more than men (according to data from 2012, in Spain, men working part-time were 6.1%, while women were 24.1%). It is also relevant that women find themselves in a glass ceiling in different areas of the labor market. Therefore, if more women graduate from universities than men, it is not women who enter the higher labor categories, or the management positions of companies, administrations or other work centers [6].

Consequently, the transition from the university to the labor market is a social phenomenon of multidimensional nature. In this process, educational opportunities, occupational strategies, the variability and complexity of labor markets, public support policies for youth employment, and the structure and preferences of the working population converge. In this context, it is necessary to study the role of higher education institutions in the labor market integration of young people. The university institution has a responsibility to know the results of the training that provides its graduates with respect to later opportunities and degree of employment.

In this line, the present communication presents the configuration of a Program of professional follow-up of the university graduates by the institution with the objective of knowing the career trajectories of its graduates. Two research projects (in progress) are then presented, in which the program has been designed, for the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics and Business of the Universitat de Barcelona (Spain) and in America Latina, for the Sede Atlántica de la Universidad Nacional de Río Negro and the Centro Universitario Regional Zona Atlántica de la Universidad Nacional del Comahue.

The configuration of the Program for professional follow-up of university graduates begins, firstly, in 2014 with the project titled *Labour insertion of the university graduates of the Faculty of Law*<sup>1</sup>, which had the following objectives:

1. Analyze the labor insertion and the intergenerational mobility of the graduates<sup>2</sup>
2. Elaborate a protocol to monitoring the labor insertion of graduates and design tools to gather information to create a database of graduates for the faculty, its systematic application and future planning that enables the monitoring of professional insertion of graduates of each degree.

Secondly, the continuity of the Monitoring Program is part of the second project (currently in force) entitled *Analysis of the initial situation towards the working world of the graduates of the Faculty of Law and transference of experience to the Faculty of Economics and Business of the UB and at the international level*<sup>3</sup>, (2016-2017). The objectives of this research are:

1. Analyze the characteristics and initial situation towards the working world of the graduates of 2014-15 course of the Faculty of Law, making a comparison between the students of the different degrees of the Faculty. The analysis includes knowing three basic aspects of the situation of students at the end of the career: academic, labor and sociodemographic, taking into account the gender perspective.
2. Create the database of the graduates of the 2015-16 course of the Faculty of Law. That is, to apply the survey to students who are finishing the degree.

<sup>1</sup> Project awarded in the Call for aid to research in university teaching REDICE14, University Teaching Research Program of the Institute of Education Sciences of the University of Barcelona. Project code REDICE14-1146.

<sup>2</sup> The university degrees analyzed are all offered by the Faculty of Law of the University of Barcelona: Political Science and Administration, Criminology, Law, Management and Public Administration and Labor Relations.

<sup>3</sup> Project awarded in the Call for aid to research in university teaching REDICE16 University Teaching Research Program of the Institute of Education Sciences of the University of Barcelona. Project code REDICE16-1682.

3. Review the appropriateness of the instrument used to collect the information (questionnaire survey) in order to create an annual database of graduates and improve identified deficiencies, taking into account the gender perspective.
4. Generate a transfer of knowledge from the experience of the Faculty of Law, through a proposal to follow up and analyze the labor insertion of the graduates in the Faculty of Economics and Business with a pilot experience in the studies of the degree of Sociology.
5. Generate a transfer of knowledge of the experience carried out at the UB, through a proposal to monitor and analyze the labor insertion of university graduates of the careers of Social and Human Sciences at Sede Atlántica of the Universidad Nacional de Río Negro and the Centro Universitario Regional Zona Atlántica of the Universidad Nacional del Comahue.

The completion of both research projects will allow the participating university centers to know, on the one hand, the characteristics of the students at the time of completion of the studies, regarding the degree of satisfaction with the training received, the employment situation and the sociodemographic characteristics. This information is relevant for the university institution since it will allow the comparison in a second moment, four years after obtaining the title, as well as, to establish transfer of knowledge and to generate exchange networks between universities. And, on the other hand, have a protocol that will make it possible to carry out the professional monitoring of graduates.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the two research projects is of a mixed nature, that is, it combines the quantitative and qualitative methodology. Regarding the first one, the own tool of collection of information of the graduates has been designed just at the moment of finishing its studies: a questionnaire survey. This allows us to obtain academic, labor and sociodemographic information of the students who are finishing the degree. This survey has been applied to the following promotions of graduates:

1. At the Faculty of Law (UB): graduates of Criminology, Labor Relations, Law, Management and Public Administration, and Political Science and Administration of the 2014-15, 2015-16 y 2016-17 courses.
2. At the Faculty of Economics and Business (UB): graduates of Sociology of the 2016-17 course.
3. At the Universidad Nacional de Río Negro: graduates of the Public Accountant and Law of the 2016 and 2017 courses.
4. At the Universidad Nacional del Comahue: graduates of the Public Administration, Psychopedagogy and Political Science of the 2016 and 2017 courses.

A questionnaire to survey the graduates four years after completing their studies has also been designed.

With regard to the second methodology (qualitative), interviews have been conducted with the members who hold positions of directors and management of the participating university centers, in order to know the characteristics of university careers, the actions of professional practice offices, Work and promotion of employment, the information needs of graduates, the design of information collection instruments and the planning of field work. Information gathering tools (protocol / interview script) have also been developed to interview graduates and employers four years after completing university studies, in order to address perceptions and subjective assessments of study and employment trajectories by the graduates, and on the skills and demands of the employers.

## 3 RESULTS

Overall, the expected results of the two projects, once finalized, are the following<sup>4</sup>:

1. To know the level of satisfaction of the university formation received and its utility for the work.
2. Know the evaluation of external practices and their impact on the work.
3. Obtain a diagnosis of the situation and working conditions of students at the time of finishing their studies.

<sup>4</sup> The results of these surveys are being processed right now, so cannot provide specific details thereof

4. To determine the profiles of graduates according to their sociodemographic characteristics.
5. To study if the university, as a social institution, has a role of reproduction of the inequalities of origin of the graduates or, on the contrary, it is equitable giving the same job opportunities to the graduates irrespective of their social origin.
6. To have an own tool of collection of information to create during each academic course a data base of the graduates.
7. Creation of databases of graduates of different promotions.
8. Define and design own data collection instruments on the professional insertion of graduates, both in their quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (protocols-dash of interviews with graduates and employers) for the purpose of carrying out future research on the trajectories to the world of work.
9. To have a Program of professional follow-up of the graduates for each Faculty.
10. To create a space for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between researchers from different academic fields.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Globally, these results offer important impacts for higher education institutions:

1. To provide indicators of the degree of academic satisfaction of graduates and the impact in their work life's.
2. To know the weaknesses and strengths of the training received and, consequently, to be able to act in the improvement of the training quality.
3. To dispose indicators on the degree of labor insertion of the students at the end of the studies and the relation of the studies with the work.
4. To follow-up of the graduates to know the possible changes in their labor insertion, as well as, to advance in the knowledge about the nexus between university education and the world of work.
5. To locate the centers involved in the research as pioneers in the study of the graduates in the Universitat de Barcelona, as in the Universidad Nacional de Río Negro and in the Universidad Nacional del Comahue.
6. To have comparative data from three university institutions.
7. To start an international network on the knowledge of processes of labor insertion of university students.

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