

# PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES OF GRADUATES AS A LABOUR MARKET MECHANISM FOR ALIGNING BUSINESS SCHOOL CURRICULUM REFORM WITH THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION PRINCIPLES

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*Higher education institutions in Europe have been recently faced with a rapidly changing external framework for developing new study programmes and their curricula. The main contribution of our paper is to provide a better insight into the skills and competences of business school graduates needed at the labour market, as seen by employers, graduates of business schools, and academics. The paper attempts to enhance our understanding of different aspects of curriculum revision by incorporating professional competences into the early stages of the curriculum development process. In this paper, the experience of the Faculty of Economics and Business from Maribor (Slovenia), which has transformed its bachelor and master study programmes according to the principles set out in the Bologna Declaration, also is presented and discussed.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Not only business and management schools, but higher education institutions in Europe, in general, have been faced recently with a rapidly changing external framework for developing new study programmes and their curricula. Slovenia joined the European Union in 2004 and Slovenian business schools have already started with the curriculum transformation process based on the principles set by the Bologna Declaration and on changes in Slovenian higher education legislation.

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The Bologna Process, as part of an emerging European Higher Education Area, has already started to change the higher education framework in Europe through the process of the harmonisation of study structures and qualification systems, increased international student and faculty mobility, internationalization of schools and their study programmes, etc. As a consequence of that process, the competition between business schools will increase. Professional competences and employability of graduates are in the centre of this higher education transformation process.

Many higher education institutions in several European countries, especially business schools (also in Slovenia), are in the middle of a comprehensive transition process by aligning their curricula and study programmes with the principles of the Bologna process. They will transform their curricula and teaching approaches from the old, traditional model, based on teacher and lecture oriented modes of teaching, toward more pragmatic and student learning modes that support the development of their professional competences. Therefore, for each of the three study cycles in the new higher education structure, *a specific set of competences* should be considered and included in the curriculum development, supported by appropriate modes of teaching. In this transition process, the requirements of the labour market should be considered very early in the study programmes and curriculum development in order to provide students with applicable knowledge and to develop their professional competences for an efficient entry into the labour market after their graduation.

In a business school's transformation process, the key ideas of the Bologna Declaration and findings of the Tuning project should be considered and then applied in the development process for study programmes, curricula and teaching approaches in order to put the professional competences of its graduates, student knowledge and skills in the centre of the design process. In the process, different relevant entry and graduation points in the formal three-cycle education process should be considered according to the following principle of the Bologna Declaration (See details in: European Ministers of Education, 1999; Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education, 2003):

- adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees in order to promote the employability of European citizens, increase comparability and compatibility of qualifications, and consequently, increase the competitiveness of the European higher education system;

- adoption of a system based on two main cycles: undergraduate and graduate (known as “3+2” and “3+2+3” model of higher education structure, including third doctoral study cycle);
- first and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs;
- first cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes and second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies;
- establishment of a system of credits (e.g. ECTS system) as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility;
- promotion of student and teacher mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement;
- improved transparency and flexibility of local (national) higher education degree systems should foster employability and facilitate easier academic recognition for further studies;
- promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies; promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to joint curriculum development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

The paper is intended to make three main contributions. The first is to provide a clearer insight into the skills and competences needed by graduates when entering the labour market in their search for employment. These competences serve as important input into the study programme development process, as graduates should develop a substantial part of their relevant competences through learning at the business school. Secondly, we propose that a relevant opinion of the “faculty” should also be considered in a curriculum reform as an academic facet of curriculum alignment with the principles of the Bologna process. Our third contribution lies in the approach that enables business schools a better understanding of the professional competences of graduates as a key input in various aspects of curriculum revision that should be incorporated into the early stages of the curriculum development project.

With the purpose to achieve the main contributions of the paper, the concept of competences was carefully analyzed in section 2. In section 4, we also present the experience of the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Maribor, which has recently transformed its study programmes into a new structure according to the model “3+2+3”. The school has already

transformed its bachelor and master study programmes and is in the middle of the design phase for its new doctoral programme. The above-described issues are discussed on the basis of three surveys, conducted in the local business higher education context: a survey of 477 graduates of the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Maribor, a survey of 63 employers in Slovenia and a survey of 65 academics of the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Maribor. Empirical survey and its methodology are presented in section 3. Also, comparisons regarding similarities and differences with the results of the Tuning project (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe 2003) are provided.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the graduates' professional competences as the relevant underlying starting-point that is significant for the business school management in the curriculum revision process in order to better align its study programmes with the requirements of the labour market.

## **2. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT AS A STARTING-POINT IN NEW CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AT BUSINESS SCHOOLS**

As described above, one of the key ideas of the Bologna process is to create a more unified and transparent higher education study model in Europe, with a vision to make the European labour market more flexible and competitive.

### **2.1. External forces of change in higher education**

The degree awarded after the first cycle should be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification that should enable bachelor graduates to enter the labour market. First cycle degrees should also give access to the second cycle of studies and the second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies. The key goal of the proposed new study structures is to promote employability and facilitate academic recognition as a basis for further studies and employment. Here, employability should be understood in a broad sense, not only as the ability of graduates to develop their professional competences to get a job, but also as a blend of (Loades, 2005, 76):

- personal attributes that help individuals get a job,
- soft skills that help them work with others,
- practical skills that help them to cope with change,

- capabilities that help them to stay ahead of change.

Obviously, local higher education institutions in Slovenia (and in other transition countries), including business schools, should carefully consider this broader, European context in their strategies of study programme alignment with the Bologna Declaration principles. With the opening of the local business education market to increased competition stemming from local private business schools and those from the EU and the broader global business education context respectively, business schools are faced with a constantly changing business education environment. This requires a proper strategic response by each business school through the restructuring of its education services and processes. Increasingly, competition for students and academic staff is taking on an international dimension and is more and more supported by aggressive marketing campaigns, especially by new private business education providers, with the aim to attract enough candidates to enrol into their school's programmes.

Several countries have already introduced a tuition fee system in public higher education; still, others are discussing to do that in the near future. By viewing education services as marketable services, we may also expect changes in student behaviour as schools' customers. Governments are generally withdrawing from the direct management of higher education institutions, yet at the same time, they are introducing new forms of control and influence based largely on the powerful enforcement mechanisms, e.g. funding system, quality standards and recognition, study programmes and schools' accreditation procedures, etc.

According to the results of a recent GMAC study on changes in management education in Europe, it is expected that in the future students will be more and more put in the role of becoming the purchasers of higher education services, and as they will demand greater quality and service, they will be prepared to travel to a selected business school to find them (Loades, 2005). In this context, business schools are moving toward a new system of governance with more competition between public and private institutions in the education market and with regulation of the state, but at the same time, embedded into the principles of the Bologna Declaration. In the future, business schools will probably use more aggressive marketing approaches to attract new students. At the same time, they will be forced to act according to clear academic standards in order to provide students with relevant professional knowledge and skills that will enable them to raise their employability.

Obviously, the market for higher education has become more fragmented and individualised, thus offering students and adults a broader variety of channels of access to knowledge. Especially for adults, the learning process has become more *demand driven and individualised*. While the formal higher education at the undergraduate level is based on universal or mass participation, lifelong learning is conceived as a process that facilitates the acquisition of virtually infinite possible ranges of skills and competences for individuals with different starting and finishing points. As one can easily notice, the education market for students is both expanding and changing, but at the same time, the competition from a much wider range of providers becomes more intensive (See: OECD, 2003a; OECD, 2003b), especially in the field of business and management education.

Heavy and explicit criticism about the pervasive rigid business and management education system has been recently raised by the late management researcher and educator Sumantra Ghoshal. He noted (Ghoshal, 2005, 82) that business schools have lost a taste of scholarship pluralism, as described by Ernest Boyer (Boyer, 1990) as four different kinds of scholarship: discovery (research), integration (synthesis), practice (application), and teaching (pedagogy). Instead, the application of the 'discovery' concept to the study of business has ended up in eliminating all other forms of scholarship from the world of business schools. As a consequence, the academic table is now reserved only for the scientists and the institutional structures within and around business schools that are rigidly built around a dominant model based on the sanctity of the academic freedom of business school academics (ibid., 87-88).

This constantly changing higher education context is the reality within which business faculties work with curriculum reform as part of the Bologna process. It is obvious that study programme development should not be left only to the reforming efforts of faculty and business school management, but should also be developed in close collaboration with other key stakeholders (students, employers, other stakeholders in a broader society). In this process, obviously, a much broader higher education context should be considered if a business school wants to sustain its position in an increasingly competitive business and management education market.

This heterogeneity implies, in turn, a greater reliance on smoothly functioning markets for education, training and learning opportunities, in which barriers to multiple suppliers are low. Individuals have incentives to express their individual demands with the expectation that their learning experience will

better prepare them for the challenges in a more dynamic European business world. Credits (ECTS) of prior learning are also an important form of certification, particularly for adults who wish to re-enter formal education without leaving to duplicate what they already know, or the weakening of economic incentives caused by an extended duration of study (See: OECD, 2003a; OECD, 2003b). In the changes of the higher education system, as well as in international cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail as guidance.

## **2.2. Professional competences and curriculum development**

Many usable and explicit guidelines or recommendations concerning the approaches of aligning business schools' study programmes with the principles of the Bologna process are already available. Particularly important among them are those suggesting a more flexible framework for study programmes and curriculum design. The key step in this process is a proper evaluation of the relevant professional qualifications (knowledge, skills) of graduates. They should be considered as a starting-point in developing a curriculum content, student workload and level of learning outcomes, competences and graduate qualification profiles. Namely, due to the higher education market opening, it is expected that in the future, cross-national competition will grow stronger and stronger, and future local business schools will be much more exposed to international competition. Their graduates will face a similar situation in the labour market.

Some very useful ideas, reference points and conceptual approaches for curriculum development on the basis of graduates' professional competences and the learning outcomes of study programmes have been offered by a group of researchers and presented in the Tuning project (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe 2003), especially in their first project report. As noted by researchers (p. 28), the schools should include in their new study programmes the Europe-wide comparable learning outcomes and competences. Besides the subject-related (professional area) specific competences, generic competences, such as the capacity to learn, decision making capacity, project design and management skills, etc., should also be explicitly formulated. These are viewed as shared attributes and could find their place in any degree because they are important for graduates in the labour market, where employers' demands tend to be in constant reformulation, requiring from graduates the capability for lifelong learning and constant adaptation to new situations in the business context.

In the process of developing a new study programme at the business school, described later in the text, ideas and suggestions of the Tuning project (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe 2003) were incorporated into the study design phase activities. The Tuning project was aimed to bring about a high level of Europe-wide convergence in higher education in seven main subject areas, one being business and management, which should be achieved by defining commonly accepted professional and learning outcomes in terms of *generic* and *subject-related skills and competences*.

The first step in the curriculum development was, therefore, a comparative analysis of the skills and competences defined and described in the Tuning project, with the opinions and needs of all the relevant stakeholders in Slovenia. Results obtained were analyzed in comparison with the results in the Tuning research project, where the research was performed in the same way, but in the European region.

Competences and skills were understood as:

- *knowing and understanding* (theoretical knowledge, the capacity to know and understand)
- *knowing how to act* (applications of knowledge to certain situations)
- *knowing how to be* (values, living and working with others, etc.).

In our research, we focused on two different sets of competences:

- *Subject-related competences* - related to specific knowledge of a field of study, giving consistency and identity to the particular degree programme.
- *Generic competences* – identify shared attributes which are general to all fields and are divided into three groups:
  - *Instrumental competences* – having an instrumental function. These are cognitive abilities (capacity to understand and manipulate ideas and thoughts), methodological capacities (decision-making, solving problems, learning strategies, etc.), technological skills (computing and information management skills) and linguistic skills.
  - *Interpersonal competences* – individual abilities (like critical and self-critical abilities) and social skills (team work, social and ethical commitment).



- *Systemic competences* – skills and abilities concerning whole systems, representing a combination of understanding, sensibility and knowledge that allows one to see how the parts of whole systems are related and how they come together.

The Tuning project showed that the convergence in educational structures in the European Higher Education Area is possible by *defining the right learning outcomes* – within them, generic outcomes are general, while subject-related skills vary from discipline to discipline.

### 3. DATA

The main data sources for our empirical research were the three surveys conducted in parallel steps in the time period 2003 to 2005: a survey of 477 graduates of a local business school in Slovenia (the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Maribor), who mostly graduated in 1999, 2000 and 2001 (we assumed that they had already, on the basis of gained professional experiences, developed their awareness about their relevant competences profile – which skills and competences they need at the labour market), a survey of 63 employers in Slovenia (we conducted a survey among managers in Slovenian companies) and a survey of 65 academics of the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Maribor.

A comparative analysis regarding similarities and differences with the results of the Tuning project (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe 2003) was performed. Graduates and employers in the Tuning project, as well as in the present analysis, evaluated *generic competences*. Analysis was performed at two levels (on a scale from 1 – not important/unsuccessful to 4 – very important/successful): (a) *importance of single generic competence* and (b) *level of achievement of a competence in the study programme*. Academics participated in evaluating *generic competences* as well as *subject-related competences*.

First, they had to rank 17 selected generic competences (out of 30) that were considered the most important for graduates and employers, with ranks from 1 – the most important to 17 – the least important. Secondly, they ranked 25 subject-related competences regarding their importance in the undergraduate and separately in the postgraduate study programme.

#### 4. RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF LEARNING OUT COMES – COMPETENCES AND SKILLS AT THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS (FEB) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR

##### 4.1. Analysis – employers and graduates

One important conclusion of the Tuning research (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe 2003) was a very high correlation between ratings of graduates and employers all over Europe (correlation coef. 0.97). In relation to importance, these two groups consider *the importance of competences as follows in Table 1.*

*Table 1: Importance of generic competences – employers and graduates in the Tuning project*

The most important competences	The less important competences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity for analysis and synthesis</li> <li>• Capacity to learn</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Capacity for applying knowledge in practice</li> <li>• Capacity to adapt to new situations</li> <li>• Concern for quality</li> <li>• Information management skills</li> <li>• Ability to work autonomously</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries</li> <li>• Appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism</li> <li>• Ability to work in an international context</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Research skills</li> <li>• Project design and management</li> <li>• Knowledge of a second language</li> </ul>

At the bottom end of the »importance« scale, the concentration of »international« competences is evident. It is important to point out that two-thirds of the competences which were considered the most important in Tuning were also the most successful regarding the *level of achievement* by study programmes. In Figure 1, we summarised the results on *our graduates' responses.*

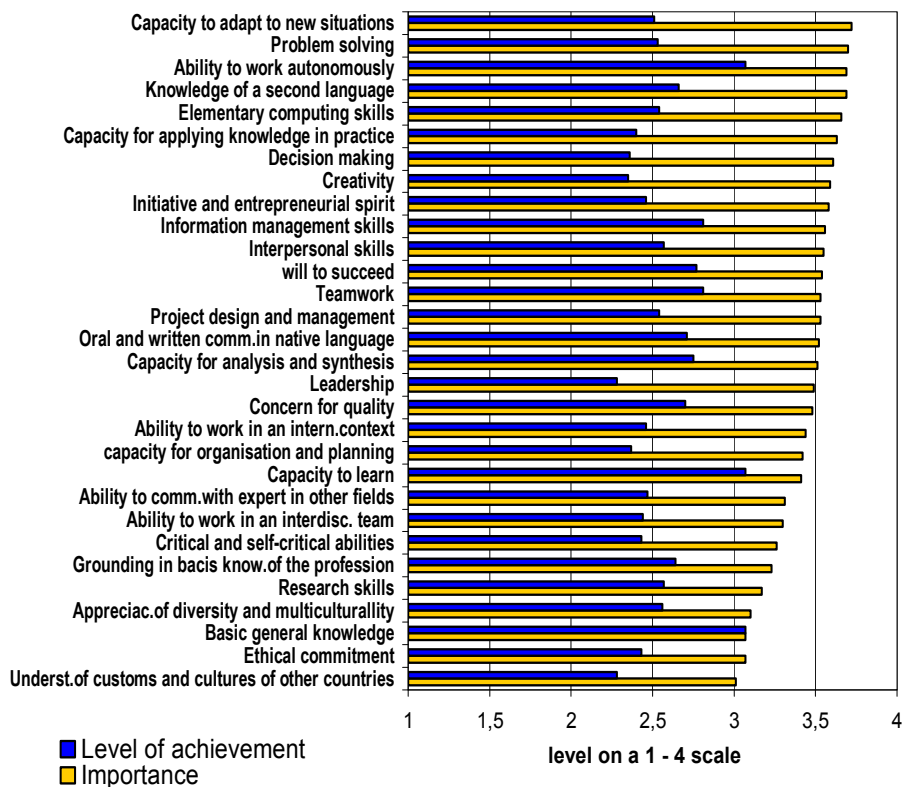


Figure 1. Importance and level of achievement of competences – the graduates' view

We have also considered the views of employers – results are summarised in Figure 2.

The most striking differences between the Tuning results and those of our graduates are the following competences:

- *Capacity for analysis and synthesis,*
- *Capacity to learn,*
- *Concern for quality.*

The above-mentioned competences ranked very high in terms of their *importance* in Tuning research, but were among the less important competences in the opinion of our graduates.

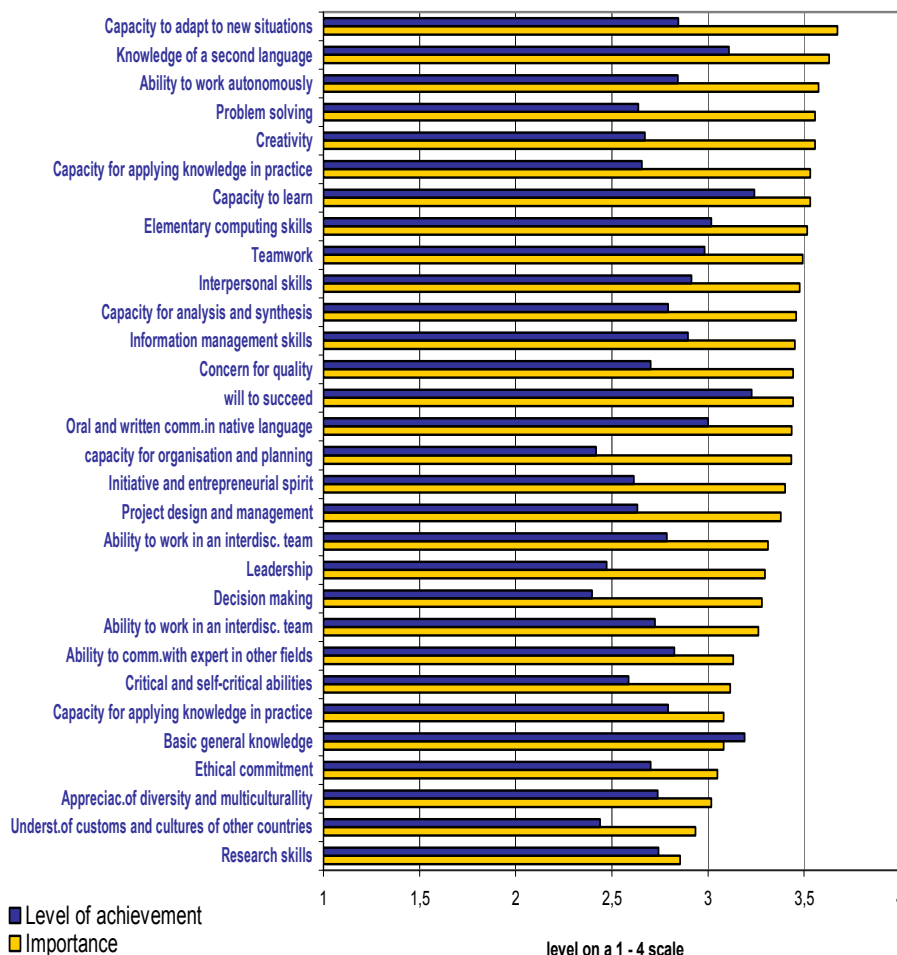


Figure 2. Importance and level of achievement of competences – employers in Slovenia

On the other hand, the competence of *knowledge of a second language* ranked very high in the opinion of the business school graduates in our survey, but was considered less important in Tuning. However, it must be pointed out that some competences express a very high level of ranking variation by countries in the Tuning project; and knowledge of a second language is among them. Others are: ability to work in an international context, willing to succeed, concern for quality, ability to work autonomously, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit. As in Tuning, the majority of the so-called »international« competences

are again ranked to the lower part of the importance scale by the graduates in our research.

Regarding the level of achievement, we can conclude that three competences were ranked the highest, but only one among them is considered important. This competence is the *ability to work autonomously*. The only competence where the level of its achievement reached its importance is the competence of *basic general knowledge*, but this competence is ranked among the less important competences.

The competence of *capacity to learn* also reached a high level of achievement, although it is considered less important for the graduates of our Faculty, but it is important regarding the results in Tuning. All other competences reached a lower level of achievement than their importance.

On the other end of the achievement scale, there are some competences that are very important regarding graduates' opinions, but obviously their level of achievement is low. These are:

- *Problem solving,*
- *Capacity for applying knowledge in practice,*
- *Capacity to adapt to new situations,*
- *Creativity,*
- *Decision-making,*
- *Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit.*

The analysis of employers' responses shows that:

- All competences ranked high on the *importance* scale by Tuning are also ranked high on the opinion of employers in Slovenia.
- The competence of *knowledge of a second language* is also (as by graduates) ranked very high regarding its importance, although it is less important regarding Tuning results.
- There is again a high disproportion regarding importance and level of achievement of some important competences, like *problem solving*, *creativity* and *ability to use knowledge in practice*. It is very important that graduates ranked these three competences very high, but they also ranked them low regarding the level of achievement.

## 4.2 Analysis – academics

### Generic competences

The most striking difference regarding graduates and employers is that academics in Tuning rank *Basic general knowledge* in the first position on the list of importance, while both graduates and employers ranked it as less important. In general, employers' and graduates' ranking tend to be highly correlated, while the ranking of academics differed from theirs.

By comparing the results of our analysis to those in Tuning, a highly positively correlated ranking is found (correlation of ranks = 0,816):

- Competences can be divided into three groups (in our research): The first group includes seven of the most important competences (Capacity for applying knowledge in practice, Creativity, Basic general knowledge, Grounding in basic knowledge of the profession, Capacity for analysis and synthesis, Capacity to learn, and Capacity to adapt to new situations). The second group consists of nine medium important competences (Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team, Leadership, etc.) and as already mentioned, the competence of Appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism was ranked last place.
- Six out of seven of the most important generic competences in Tuning are also the most important according to the ranking results of our faculty. The only exception is the competence of *Critical and self-critical abilities*, which is considered less important by our academics than by Tuning.
- By Tuning as well as by the results of our survey, academics ranked the competence of *Appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism* last place.

These results are, in fact, contrary to the findings of the interdisciplinary OECD project DeSeCo (Salganic and Rychen 2003), that among the three groups of key competences that are essential for the personal and social development of people in modern, complex societies, there is also the ability of interacting in socially heterogeneous groups. This group of competences is especially relevant in pluralistic and multicultural societies. Individuals need to learn how to join and function in groups and social orders whose members are from diverse backgrounds and how to deal with differences and contradictions.

### **Subject-related competences – business and management field**

The continuation of the Tuning project in Europe is the recognition that there exists a great diversity in the ways in which business programmes could be and have been designed. Therefore, it is difficult to identify the very specific standard of subject-related competences that are to be achieved in the first and second cycle in programmes around Europe. However, there exist a number of similarities in European institutions regarding aims, contents and views on subject-related competences in both cycles. Following the Tuning project, *five key subject-related competences that students should be able to achieve in the first cycle are:*

- Use and evaluate tools for analyzing a company in its environment.
- Work in subject-specific fields of a company and be a specialist to some extent.
- Interface with other functions.
- Have self-awareness.
- Be able to argue for the principles to be used in finding solutions to a problem, mainly at an operational or tactical level.

*Five key subject-related competences in the second cycle (in addition to those in the first cycle) should be:*

- Skills enabling participation in strategic decision-making.
- Ability to do a guided research.
- Ability to work independently.
- Skills and abilities to make and find strategic solutions.
- Skills to manage changes.

*Besides the above-mentioned, in the third cycle there is the following additional key subject-related competence (this cycle was not studied in our research):*

- Demonstrate the ability to perform independent, original and ultimately publishable research in one or more business or subject areas relating to business analysis, choice and implementation.

Finally, in Figure 3, we summarise the results of importance of subject-related competences at the undergraduate and postgraduate level as expressed by the business school academics that were included in our survey. The first result obtained is that almost all subject-related competences are more important in the second cycle than in the first. This may mean that all subject-specific knowledge should be studied in more detail in the second cycle.

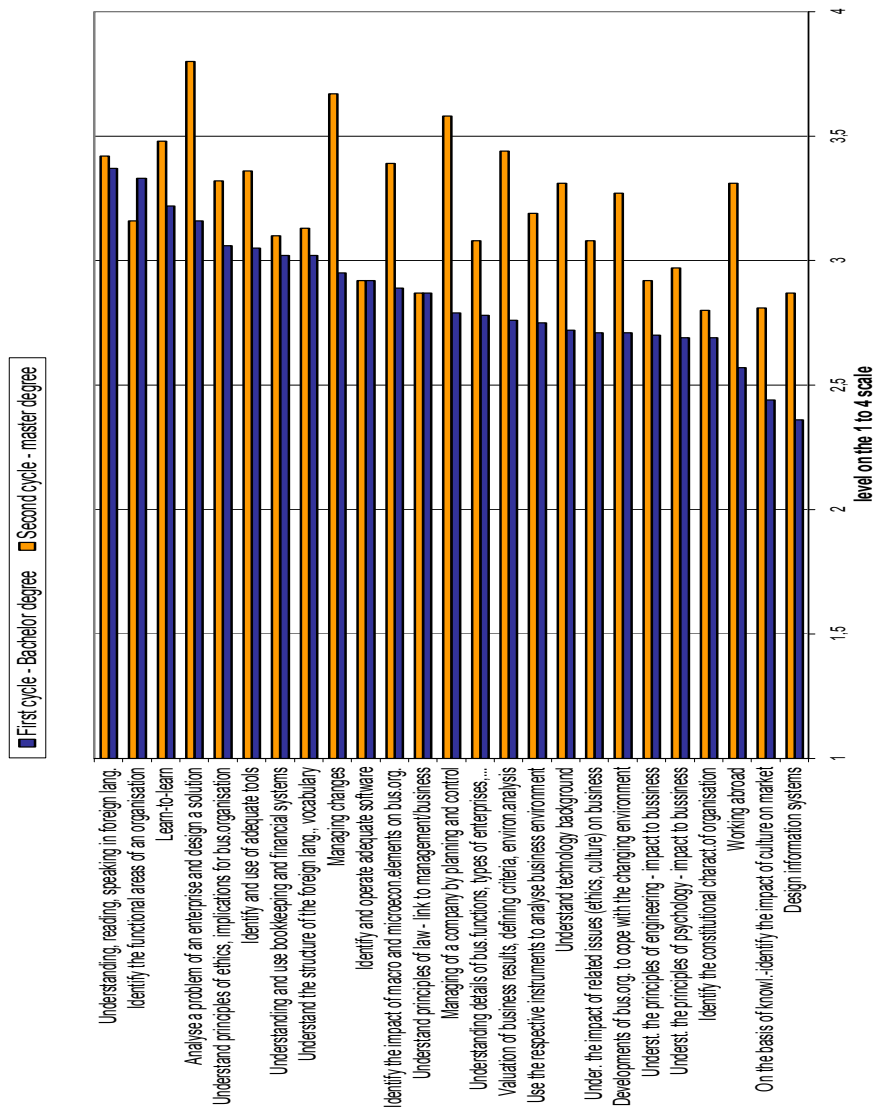


Figure 3: Importance of subject-related competences – academics' view (in our survey)

Competences that are among the *most important in the first as well as in the second cycle* are:

- Analyzing a problem of an enterprise and designing a solution



- Understanding, reading, speaking in a foreign language
- Managing changes
- Learning-to-learn
- Understanding principles of ethics, implications for a business organisation
- Identifying the impact of macro and microeconomic elements on a business organisation
- Identifying and using adequate tools.

Competences that are among *the most important in the first cycle* but among *the least important in the second cycle* are:

- Identifying the functional areas of an organization
- Understanding and using bookkeeping and financial systems
- Understanding the structure of a foreign language, vocabulary
- Identifying and operating adequate software.

Competences that are among *the most important in the second cycle* but among *the least important in the first cycle* are:

- Managing of a company by planning and control
- Valuating of business results, defining criteria, environmental analysis
- Understanding technology background
- Working abroad.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Higher education has been faced recently with new pressures from the labour market and by changes in a broader external framework. As a result of external pressures, business schools should put more emphasis on the professional competences of their graduates when they start to redesign their study programmes by aligning them with the requirements of the Bologna process. In the emerging European Higher Education Area, the proposed harmonisation of study structures and qualification systems should increase international student mobility and contribute to the creation of a true European labour market. Professional competences and employability of graduates have especially evolved as key requirements to the Bologna curriculum reform as part of a higher education system adaptation to the new competitive reality in Europe.

In the design phase of new study programme development at the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Maribor, a basic concept for curriculum transformation, according to the Bologna Declaration principles based on detailed research, was developed as a prototype for internal discussion. Many similar findings and results between the Tuning research group report and findings of our own research, conducted among business school graduates and employers in the Slovene labour market, were found. In designing new business school study programmes and curricula, the professional competences of graduates should be taken as a starting-point for new study programme content definition and development of appropriate teaching and learning methods. Therefore, in the paper, we proposed that the first step in curriculum development should be the detailed analysis of the required skills and competences of graduates after their graduation in the study programme.

The comparison of our results obtained by three different focused surveys, especially regarding the importance of the majority of generic competences, shows many similarities to those in the Tuning report. On the other hand, some special features found in our analysis also exist, e.g. the knowledge of a second language ranked very high, but is ranked at the bottom half of the importance scale by Tuning. Our research has also shown that the level of achievement of certain important competences has to be improved during the education process (especially for the following generic competences: problem solving, creativity and ability to use knowledge in practice). All these conclusions should be taken into account when preparing the structure of our new study programmes and their curricula, and especially in the implementation of study programmes during the phase of preparing appropriate approaches to educational activities (teaching and learning methods) and the organization of learning.

Since the diploma obtained by graduates should be viewed only as an entry ticket to the labour market, the general and professional abilities, competences and skills of graduates are the attributes that count most by the employers. The development of new study programmes should be implemented in close cooperation with selected entrepreneurs and managers with the purpose to consider the labour market needs in the curriculum reform. With such an approach, a business school would reach its key goal, which is enabling their graduates to be better equipped with professional competences for the challenges in a dynamic business world reality when they enter the labour market.

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**PROFESIONALNE KOMPETENCIJE DIPLOMIRANIH STUDENATA KAO  
MEHANIZAM TRŽIŠTA RADA ZA USKLAĐIVANJE NASTAVNOG  
PROGRAMA POSLOVNIH ŠKOLA S PRINCIPIMA BOLONJSKOG  
PROCESA**

**Sažetak**

Visokoškolske ustanove u Europi odnedavno se suočavaju s brзом promjenom vanjskog okvira djelovanja za razvoj novih studijskih i nastavnih programa. Temeljni doprinos ovog rada je pružanje boljeg uvida u sposobnosti i kompetencije diplomiranih studenata potrebne na tržištu rada, kako ih vide poslodavci, diplomanti i članovi akademske zajednice. Radom se pokušava povećati razumijevanje različitih aspekata revizije nastavnog programa uključivanjem profesionalnih kompetencija u rane faze razvoja nastavnog programa. Također se predstavlja i obrazlaže iskustvo Ekonomskog i poslovnog fakulteta iz Maribora (Slovenija), koji je također transformirao svoje preddiplomske i diplomske nastavne programe u skladu s principima Bolonjskog procesa.