

The Bologna Process and Employability: The Impact of Employability on Curricular Development

A Key Objective of Academic Studies and for
Academic Institutions

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Preface: Employability as a Key Feature of the Bologna Process – Why?

Providing and enhancing “employability on the European labour market” is a key feature of the Bologna process, identifiable in the key Bologna documents all the way since 1999. As such, however, the demand to ensure that academic programmes contribute to “employability” is neither new nor specific to the Bologna process, nor is “employability” the only objective assigned to higher education programmes in the context of the Bologna process.

As for the first statement, developing “employability” of students in the course of their academic studies is not unique to the Bologna process. Matching this objective has for decades been an explicit, unequivocal and uncontested requirement of academic programmes stipulated by law, certainly in Germany and probably in other countries, which is expected to be met quite irrespective of any distinction between universities in the narrow sense of the word and polytechnics, or between studies leading towards professions or the arts and humanities. This comes without surprise for two reasons:

- Firstly, at a collective level, society finances higher education expecting return on investment in real monetary terms, not to mention the essential truth that every society is bound to rely on later generations to pick up the challenge and ensure its very economic survival at the highest level of prosperity possible.
- Secondly, from the viewpoint of the individual student, it is also obvious that the vast majority of them sees higher education not only, but also and maybe mainly as a key to earning a living.

At the same time, the second statement that ensuring “employability” is not the only aim of the Bologna process, or indeed of any other serious political opinion, also holds true. Following the standard set of objectives as formulated by the Council of Europe, higher education strives to accomplish four overriding objectives of equal significance. These are:

- Providing academic value, which means maintaining knowledge gained in the past and widening, or correcting, knowledge in the future in a systematic, verifiable, open-minded way;
- Ensuring personal development, which means fostering individuality, character, morality, integration into groups and teams, personal contentment and happiness;
- Educating for democratic citizenship, which encompasses active participation, team integration, mutual respect, steering social processes and interactivity as well as integrating into social processes; and last but not least

- Being meaningful to society, which – among other items, such as the wide range between enriching the arts, contributing to culture and civilisation and practical matters like technology transfer – certainly encompasses ensuring “employability” of individuals to their own benefit as well as for societal support and advancement.

However, while based on all these truths and accepting them the Bologna process does in fact add a specific note to “employability” by linking it to the “European labour market”. Although not being an EU undertaking, with the Bologna process having its origin in the Sorbonne Declaration of four EU countries it is certainly linked to a particular pan-European agenda determined to bring about free movement of people, and with them of labour and services, in Europe, encompassing everyone and of course higher education graduates. In addition, it may also be maintained that there is a deep, if not the deepest, root in the EU ambition to become the most advanced knowledge-based region in the world by 2010, which inevitably means that higher education to the benefit of Europe as a whole is an underlying key priority on the European political to-do list. It is on this backdrop that the Bologna documents focus so much on technicalities ensuring mobility and international transparency, like a common framework of grades and modularisation in general which serves to define structural interfaces, diploma supplement and ECTS, and guaranteed recognition based on assured quality.

The challenge to transfer the aspirations of the Bologna process summarized under the headline “employability on the European labour market” into reality while using the tools suggested in the Bologna process documents is the key challenge facing the European higher education area. It is the particular task of this conference to meet this challenge and provide some valid answers, or at least viewpoints for closer consideration. In order to do so, this presentation is going to highlight and correlate, in a somewhat systematic and deductive manner, the following items:

- Considering the basics: terminology, validity of topic, and challenging conflicts (A)
- Defining the approach: scope, purpose, and method of investigation (B)
- Identifying the starting point: the human being vis-à-vis the labour market, incl. self-employment – relevant features and changes (C)
- Naming and correlating: synopsis of elements and trends characteristic of the labour market and of higher education (D)
- Consequences for programme structures derived from correlated labour market and higher education features – towards a qualification framework (E)

- Formulating theses (I): programmatic consequences to ensure employability – matching features of employability and academic studies (F)
- Formulating theses (II): programmatic consequences for institutional change – achieving employability in the world of academia (G)

A. Considering the Basics: Terminology, Validity of Topic, and Challenging Conflicts

1. For the purpose of analysis definition of terminology is essential. So, what is meant by “employability” in a general sense, and what is it linked to?

Employability basically has a double-faced meaning, depending on the viewpoint, but with a common core. It means

- from the viewpoint of society: being able to fulfil a task which is meaningful enough for society or at least one of its members to be willing to pay for it;
- from the viewpoint of the individual: being able to earn one`s living by one`s own work.

To sum up, the common denominator of employability is usefulness of competences, and its yardstick is remuneration. As such, employability is rather a profane and almost trivial matter.

Obviously this definition covers both self-employment and salaried positions. It may, however, not be self-evident that “employability” must not be restricted to concepts of “professions” in the sense of traditional, possibly even legally fixed typifications of activities. Narrowing the concept of “employability” is a frequent pitfall in societies – maybe one should say: in languages – which carry notions of employability as meaning “vocation”, thus adding some mysticism to the term, or which limit it to prescribed professional core activities. It may be argued that, for instance, the German tradition is prone to that thinking, having difficulties with translating “employability” as “Beruf” and with abandoning concepts like “Berufsbild”.

Usefulness to a degree that others are prepared to pay adds mercantile elements. Hence employability means business, value for money, and depends on more or less rational choices of those who dispose of money. That is why employability means competitiveness. This is true in a double sense:

- from the viewpoint of the individual, it means being able to compare favourably as far as personal competences are concerned;
- from the viewpoint of the university as an institution, it means being attractive by offering good choice with regard to developing competences.

This understanding shows that employability and competitiveness are linked both at the individual and the institutional level. Firstly by definition, in that enhancing employability means enhancing competitiveness by developing competences from the individual`s point of view, and in that offering help to achieve this enhances attractiveness and subsequent competitiveness of a higher education institution. As a consequence, then, fostering employability is the key to competitiveness, both of a person and of the supporting academic institution.

2. Having defined employability and linked it to competitiveness, the question is why to opt for employability and competitiveness. Is there no choice, or is it the wrong choice?

Opting for “employability” as an objective of higher education is in fact inevitable. There are a number of reasons for that, which may be repeated in brief:

- The formalistic answer: the Bologna documents state repeatedly that employability on the European labour market is a major yardstick for developing the future common higher education area;
- the political answer: society is not willing to finance higher education unless it is relevant to the labour market, and justifiably so for reasons of survival at a high level of prosperity and social peace;
- the essential answer, in addition to the previous one which is equally “essential”: students want to earn a living, albeit among other things;
- the institutional answer: abandoning protected local arenas of higher education by creating a common European or even global space of higher education and research amplifies the significance of society`s and students` needs as part of switching to a concept of the “entrepreneurial university”;
- linking all these items, these objectives are understood to be met on a long-term basis, which adds the notion of caring for “sustainable employability”.

3. So, with rejection of “employability” as an educational objective not being a serious option, the challenge lies in making choices meet, if indeed choices between conflicting educational objectives are necessitated at all. These choices for academic programmes, or rather the identities to identify or the coherence to

create, are: employability, personal value, and academic quality, all three of which are more or less equally significant to society, the individual, and higher education institutions.

It may be argued that academic excellence in research and teaching on the one hand and features of employability on the other coincide, and so there is no vital conflict of choices or of interests. This is true because the essential assets for employability in fields where the ability to “break new ground” and to bring about sustainable progress in a knowledge-based society is crucial are imagination, structuring, personality, integrity, and leadership. In fact, the core purpose of this paper is the analysis and the identification of possible identities between elements of “employability” and of “good academia”, and how to ensure that any such identities can be created.

B. Defining the Approach towards “Employability”: Scope, Purpose, and Method of Investigation

1. In practice, the endeavour to bring together the four main objectives of higher education defines the method of approach used to develop the answer as to how “employability” fits into the world of academia within the framework of the Bologna process. The answer is given by following these key questions, with employability being the leading factor:

- what brings about “employability” on an academic background in modern society?
- how can such features be transformed into an academic agenda?
- bearing the answers to these questions in mind, what effects and conditions can be identified as to reshaping the university as an institution with regard to quality management and competitiveness?

2. Exploring “employability” with a view to future layout of academic study programmes must proceed as follows:

- first, describe the elements which characterize the modern labour market, including self-employment (see C below);
- then, consider these elements in two contexts, namely (vertically) as constituents of a comprehensive reality of the labour market, and (horizontally) in correlation to academic targets, skills, programmatic and didactic features (see D below);

- after that, name the consequences to be derived from these elements in their (vertical and horizontal) entirety for course structure and subsequent programmatic action (see E below);
- finally, condense the analysis thus gained into both a programmatic agenda (see F below) and an institutional agenda (see G below) addressed to institutions of higher education, to politics, and to the general public alike.

C. The Human Being vis-a-vis the Labour Market (incl Self-employment) and Society: Analysis of Relevant Features and Changes

When analysing the characteristics of the modern labour market which determine expected academic and personal competences, the following items come to mind:

1. Activities will be highly differentiated and specialized, based on high level expertise, and subject to accelerated change. This holds true in various fields and for a number of reasons:

- Progress of high-demand technology is unlikely to cease and prone to speed up, as has happened to be the case over centuries and more so in recent decades in high-standard, knowledge and research-based economies. Communication and information technology, biotechnology, medicine, energy, nano-technology are archetypal areas where this has been witnessed, but others may be equally important that may come to emerge or which have not yet transformed into a “buzzword”. However, let it not be overlooked that the same is true for the humanities, especially where there is an overlap with social sciences. Complexity calling for differentiation, and acceleration are also phenomena to be seen in law and economics, not to forget psychology or political science or the media.

2. Expectations of society concerning social standards and ethics are likely to grow, for these reasons:

- Demands on participation and fairness in complex societies based on cooperation will increase. Steering social processes will be the more essential the more vulnerable societies will be due to internal and international jobsharing. Calls for democracy, for peace, for justice and welfare, for protecting the environment and sharing resources, for ethical and realistic standards and good practice in medicine must be met, which is a serious challenge especially in the era of multi-culturalism. “Good management” and “good governance” will be issues not just for politicians but with relevance to everyday operations of business,

industry, and research both inside institutions and their opportunities in society at large.

It is the quintessential message of this feature that providing “technical” expertise in the narrow sense and safeguarding social cohesion simultaneously is essential even for the limited purpose of keeping the economy going, let alone to maintain social peace. This is true at a national level, but also at a European or even global level.

3. Internationalisation of commerce, production, research, and of people is progressing, usually summarized under the headline globalisation. Mobility is one of the reasons, as well as one of the major consequences. Some of the reasons and the consequences are:

- The emergence of world-wide markets, but also of global choice of resources, including labour. This is primarily due to the development of efficient and cheap technology in the fields of communication and of transport, but it is also due to legal deregulation and protection of international market access and capital investment as well as freer movement of people. Delocalized trading under headlines such as e-commerce and e-banking, but also migration of production supported by advanced logistics are common experience.

The essence for employability lies in the higher demands on competitiveness due to an increase in competition. Protective legal regulation, i.e. “legal standards”, may be losing relative to economic drive for competitiveness, i.e. “market standards”. It is not only products and political or economic systems that are being put to an unmitigated market test but also people as individuals and as a collective entity. In addition, there is a demand for mobility across national and cultural borders, both physically of people and virtually, of ideas and minds. Creating employability must make provisions for these expectations.

4. Need for cooperation and conviction building both in society in general and in concrete project- or job-oriented teams is on the increase. The reasons for this development are clearly linked to the previous observations:

- Where there is sharing of competences, capabilities and talents due to highly differentiated expertise there is a need to link these in order to gain results which are convincing and workable as a whole. In addition and from a political point of view, democratic societies require building conviction and rallying support. The competences required, which are therefore also part of “employability”, can be summarized under the

headlines creating motivation, ensuring cooperative understanding, and organizing teams and social processes successfully.

5. New social patterns must be catered for in the context of ensuring employability. There are at least four elements to consider:

More students in general, in particular a larger proportion of women, aspire to higher education and subsequently expect adequate employment, which requires complementing needs of society and labour markets, and vice versa. Ageing societies mean extending overall life-time in employment with subsequent necessity to ensure lasting and updated qualification. Part-time and part-of-life-time employment is on the increase, which requires maintaining and adjusting qualification and making provisions for social integration. Growth in short term employment, often coined as project work, calls for the development of openmindedness, flexibility, and mobility.

6. There is a trend towards more individuality and less typification. This trend is nourished by individual aspirations and by external demands:

- As for the individual, motivation is shifting from traditions of duty or even obedience to notions of self-motivation in what may be coined “pursuit of happiness”. Individualism, which requires adequate steering of processes inside companies and in societies, is gaining ground, with stereotyped patterns of behaviour on the retreat. At the same time this development is matched by objective external factors as described above (sub item 1 and 2), since the labour market demands for differentiation and participation both reflect and accelerate this development.

D. Naming and Correlating: Synopsis of Elements and Trends Characteristic of the Labour Market and of Higher Education

The description of features of the present and future labour market will be followed by an analysis of characteristics of academic study programmes. The latter will be subdivided into three categories, i.e. firstly learning objectives or aims, then skills that are seen as instrumental towards achieving these, and finally suitable learning methods to develop these.

However, it is essential not only to analyse study programmes along these three features but also to identify the mutual reference that exists or, if not, should be created between those elements characterizing the modern labour market and the features which characterize academic learning. In doing so, not only identities of expectations and aspirations can be indicated but also any need for more precise

focussing of study programmes in general and in particular with regard to the programme layout suggested by the Bologna process.

Naming and correlating the features of the labour market mentioned above, with the subsequent requirements and expectations of competences added, and the three steps of academic study programme design – objectives, matching skills, suitable learning experience – will be outlined in a table hereafter. It is to be read horizontally to identify correlations, indeed identities, between features of employability and characteristics of academic studies. And when reading the table vertically a synopsis of either the characteristics of employability as a whole, and as described above, will be visible, or the entirety of academic study programme features can be identified. The table looks like this:

The Labour Market and Higher Education: Elements and Correlations

to be read horizontally

and vertically

	Labour Market (incl. Self-employment): Features, Requirements and Expectations	Academic Features: Objectives/Aims	Academic Features: Skills	Academia: Programmes and Didactics
1	highly developed, differentiated technical and social standards: subject – related expertise	knowledge of facts and their interdependence	structural and matter-of-fact orientation by learning a subject	to be developed subject to the specific characteristics of academic programmes; overall and detailed design and didactics targeted at defined accomplishment of aims and development of skills; internships linking academic and practical experience
2	competition and speed of change: innovative abilities; diversification	method – orientation; imagination; open-mindedness	research-approach of learning: creativity; method, system and premises (and their alternatives)	
3	diversification and coherence of reality: comprehensive understanding	interdisciplinary approach	“windows” of choice, eligibles; “art of understanding” (history, philosophy, etc.)	
4	management of efficiency: cooperative and motivating approach; coordination	sharing and integrating expertise and talents	teamwork; social skills; organisational skills	
5	making matters work in a civil society: public understanding, transfer and interaction	expertise in presentation, adaptation, mediation	oral and written design of concepts; training human interaction (intellectual and emotional); media competence; political expertise	

E. Consequences for Programme Structures Derived from Correlated Labour Market and Higher Education Features – Towards a Qualification Framework

1. Bearing the table of characteristics and correlations in mind, obviously making provisions for employability in an academic context and maintaining intrinsic values and characteristics are not contradictory. Instead, the ability to correlate them indicates a high degree of coincidence. Fears as to sacrificing “academia” for the sake of “employability” are unfounded.

2. Serious concern, however, is raised by the attempt or misunderstanding – unfortunately a frequent one with dire consequences for identifying the right programmatic consequences – to dissociate “practice” from “theory” in the context of higher education studies. This attempt or misunderstanding may lie behind the frequently used distinction between “academic” and “professional” programmes. Any concept centred around these terms, if they are – as seems to be the case – understood as opposing concepts, is bound to be misleading, to say the least. While not embarking on linguistic considerations of the understanding of “professional” in English, which is closely linked to “academic profession” such as medicine, law, accountancy and not to “vocation”, “trade”, or “practice” as such, the concept is basically flawed when seen as opposites. Putting the concept to the test indicates its failure immediately, for instance when analysing almost all university programmes at all levels. Even in “Bologna theory” such a concept is bound to fail because it would need not identify the difference between “professional – non-academic” and “academic, yet relevant for the labour market”, with the latter characteristic, in “Bologna theory”, being a desired feature of all study programmes.

However, the essential reason why this concept is blurred lies in the essence of employability characterizing academically trained personnel. They are expected to engage in leadership and innovation. Both require, as far as academic competencies are concerned, the mental ability to break new ground. This can best be achieved by applying methodic approach in exploring novelty and system-based competence in localizing novelty inside or beyond a given set of experience and knowledge. Both of these are the essence of academe. In this sense, Immanuel Kant stated the quintessential over two centuries ago when denying the difference between “theory” and “practice” in his treatise “Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis”, stating that wherever “theory” is felt to be deficient in view of “practice” this is merely due to “too little theory”. When identifying “theory” with “academic” and “practice” with “professional”, Kant still holds true also in the “Bologna context”.

Taking up a positive interpretation of “academic” versus “professional”, those advocating this distinction probably try to characterize elements of a binary system, which in essence is independent of the structure of a given higher education system. Such a dual understanding of the link between academe and employability which makes sense can best be described as follows:

- Academic programmes in the narrow sense, which are usually attributed to universities in the traditional understanding of the term, can be characterized as: programmes designed to educate people who are able to achieve scientific, cultural, entrepreneurial, social, and political innovation and who can take up a leading role in turning such innovation into reality. To this end, there is a need to develop “meta-competence” beyond subject-related knowledge and the ability to learn independently. Such “meta-competence” comprises namely creativity and methodology required to explore novelty, understanding systems in order to localize expertise, inter- and transdisciplinary capabilities both as to intellect and as to working techniques in order to integrate expertise and social demands, awareness of premises in order to identify the limited validity of any mode of understanding and as a requirement for the opportunity or the need to transcend existing systems. These intellectual characteristics must be accompanied by personality features required to instrument social interactivity; such interactivity is necessary to create expertise and to bring about its optimal implementation in complex, job-sharing democratic societies.
- By contrast, study programmes which in binary systems are attributed to polytechnics, Fachhochschulen etc. aim at educating people who must be able to solve problems in research-based fields of activity by applying adopted research-based expertise from case to case and by incremental enhancement from case to case within a given system. Competence is largely determined by the availability of subject-related expertise based on knowledge derived from research results taken over as a given base, and by the ability to add to this expertise and to make it operational.

Describing the distinction in such a way makes sense, but the difference is fatally missed and blurred when relating it to “academic” versus “professional” seen as contrasts. Instead, it may be strongly proposed to describe the essential difference more succinctly by labelling the programmes as geared towards “research-based practice” and “research-driven practice”. In both terms, the word “practice” may also be replaced by “employability”, and “research” by “academic”.

3. Returning to concrete challenges as to precisely focussing the design of academic study programmes towards meeting the requirements and expectations

of providing “employability”, there is the issue of generic – or “soft” – skills and their role vis-à-vis subject-related competencies.

Firstly, this is true in general when considering, for instance, that study programmes have traditionally concentrated largely on developing subject-related expertise while neglecting “soft skills”. Analysing this area more closely would indeed be worth while. Any such analysis should cover both the meaning and scope of those competences that tend to be summarized under various headlines such as soft skills, social skills, personal competences, or others, and the learning devices to be put in place in order to accomplish or at least further these competences.

“Soft skills” are competences of a generic character comprising cognitive, emotive and value-oriented elements of a person`s nature and attitudes which are not specifically related to a particular academic or professional field. Obviously these “soft skills” are closely linked to “employability” in societies where motivation of oneself and of others, job sharing and integrating expertise, conviction building in democratic, often heterogenous and international contexts is essential for success in practice. Key categories are often described as follows:

- Knowledge-related competences, which bear a cognitive dimension, e.g. expertise in foreign languages, basics of law and economics, data processing and communicative devices;
- Methodological competences, which is linked to modes of managing tasks, e.g. systematic approach to problem solving, including integrative thinking, making decisions, time management;
- Personal competences, which relate to a person`s set of individual values relevant for social interaction, such as reliability, initiative, willingness to work;
- Social competences, which are concerned with skills relevant to human interaction, e.g. empathy, ability to cooperate, to lead, and to bear conflict.

When having a glimpse at this topic, it is worth noting that here again some close correlation between features constituting “employability” and those relevant for academic excellence can be identified when taking “soft skill competences” as an intermediary element. The following table indicates this triad, with “soft skills building the bridge between the world of the labour market and academia:

Aims/expectations of the labour market („employability“)	Soft skills	Aims/expectations of science and research („academic quality“)
<p>High task-related, subject-based expertise and innovative approach</p> <p>„Circular thinking“: applying a principle to a case, and revision of principles in view of cases</p>	<p>Analytical competence</p> <p>Mastering methods</p> <p>Understanding system and synthesis</p> <p>Awareness of axioms, preconceived ideas, and of limits of validity of interpretations</p> <p>Ability to transfer principles to cases, i.e. ability to make judgments/decisions</p>	<p>Subject-related knowledge</p> <p>Knowledge of terminology, system, methodology</p> <p>Identification of individual case and rules/principles („Subsuming“, making a judgment“)</p> <p>Understanding axiomatic limitations</p> <p>Creativity, yet embedded in an orderly mindset</p>
<p>Job-sharing and cooperation, in work teams and in/with society</p>	<p>Social interaction, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to communicate, orally and in writing Ability to work in teams Leadership: integrity, motivation. Delegation, constructive preparedness for conflict Project management <p>Social acceptance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Moderation Mediation 	<p>Identification of (academic) interfaces; being aware of limits of understanding due to axiomatic assumptions;</p> <p>Integration of expertise derived from different academic fields;</p> <p>Interdisciplinarity;</p> <p>Ensuring public understanding of academic findings/transfer of expertise into society</p>
<p>Global dimension of activities – at least: “European-ness”</p>	<p>Intercultural competence</p> <p>Foreign language(s)</p>	<p>Transnational reception of knowledge and its transfer</p>
<p>Maintaining quality, in particular by integrating and developing innovation</p>	<p>Ability to sustain independent life-long learning</p> <p>Self-motivation</p> <p>Ability to act independently</p>	<p>Permanent widening of insight and skills; research-oriented approach</p>

As indicated in the table, preparation for the “European” labour market, as the Bologna documents stipulate, features here in the context of intercultural competence and language skills. These competences can be fostered in local programmes but even more so in transnational learning experiences, such as in joint programmes.

However, exploring this topic extensively must be set aside here for reasons of time. This aspect, however, deserves further attention. Considering the didactic concepts required to meet these learning objectives is a central challenge indeed as far as integrating “employability” into higher education effectively and comprehensively is concerned. Teamwork, project- and problem-based learning, “guided independent learning”, and internships are just a few catchwords here that need to be analysed thoroughly.

4. Instead, returning to the Bologna process in its narrower scope concerned with what may be called “programme stratification” should be in the foreground. This indeed poses a particular challenge. It lies in attributing and distributing academic study objectives and subsequent development of skills to the two, or three, tier system in an adequate manner. It may be said that there is an issue of identifying and attributing “levels”, and of contributing elements to a “qualifications framework”.

It may be suggested here that this be done with a close view to what constitutes employability. In doing so, the question of life-long learning – which is of great importance due both to the acceleration of knowledge required and to the tendency towards part-of-lifetime employment and extended worklife – comes in as well as the existence of trainee programmes and training on the job schemes, which may at least in part be organized as academic study programmes in conjunction and cooperation with employers. Furthermore, the call for differentiation of expertise calls for flexibility of study structures, to be created by more interfaces within study programmes and making provisions for crossover opportunities. Indeed this is the key idea behind the concept of modularisation and of the two- or three-tier system, or even multiple-tier system when integrating life-long-learning schemes.

Descriptor systems, like the Dublin descriptors, undertakings by the OECD, or national ones, have tried to give an answer to this challenge, more or less convincingly. With the view focussed on employability here, the following balancing and distributing of academic endeavours within the Bologna system may be suggested and described – not prescribed, though – in the design of a table, which correlates employability features, academic characteristics, and Bologna levels with a view towards securing meaningful, sustainable employability:

The Labour Market and Higher Education: Practical Trends and their Consequences for Structural Design and Programmatic Action

	Trends	Requirements	Action
I	ad D. 1 – 5: increasing demand	developing imagination, methodology/analysis; understanding the system of (an) academic field(s) and its (their) key facts; providing specialisation	first cycle: providing general academic features; elements of research- based learning and windows on specialist detail; second cycle: specialist, or academic cross-over
II	ad D. 2 and 3: increasing significance ad D. 1: futility of striving for perfection	life-long learning (ability); short-cycle specialist courses	introducing a specialist second cycle; providing further courses throughout life
III	ad D. 2 and 3: academic subjects and spheres of work less specifically correlated; basic generalisation and added individualisation of required competence	all aspects above apply; in addition: transparency of study programmes and exams	all aspects above apply; in addition: core/basic programmes and differentiation; individual programmes; multiple “entrances” and “exits” and recognition of previous learning experience (ECTS etc); acceptance of training on the job and specific employer-oriented (joint) programmes
IV	ad D. 4 and 5: expertise-sharing and (team-work) interaction	social skills	integrating courses on project management, organisation, oral and written presentation, mediation (psychology/language/law and economics/politics)

Note (Reminder): Items referred to under chapter D, above:

1. highly developed technical and social standards: subject – related expertise
2. competition and speed of change: innovative abilities; diversification
3. diversification and coherence of reality: comprehensive understanding
4. management of efficiency: cooperative and motivating approach; coordination
5. making matters work in a civil society: public understanding, transfer and interaction

F. Theses I -- Programmatic Consequences Relating to Employability of Academics: Matching Features of Employability and Academic Studies

To sum up, the findings of this survey on the topic “employability and academic studies in the context of the Bologna process” can be put succinctly into eight theses concerned with consequences for study programme designs. These theses are as follows:

- (1) Universities and their members (must) recognize and acknowledge that there is a fair expectation of students and society alike for study programmes to be both valid academically and relevant to the labour market, including self-employment.
- (2) This expectation can, as a rule, be met not only without sacrificing core virtues of academia but by focussing on them properly; this is so because key characteristics of academic studies strongly coincide with requirements of the modern labour market.
- (3) These features and virtues of academia and of employability are:
 - (a) encouraging and developing imagination and a circumspect approach;
 - (b) working by means of hypothesis and verification;
 - (c) understanding, developing and employing method and system;
 - (d) acquiring and applying substantial knowledge;
 - (e) integrating traditional experience and novelty;
 - (f) developing a sense of social skills as to cooperation, organisation and motivation in project teams of diverse talents and expertise and in an open, democratic society.
- (4) The diversity of professional demands and job requirements, the rapidity of change, the variety of international standards, new patterns in employment and self-employment, in social strata and personal life plan make it imperative to offer flexibility and transversal opportunities in study courses in order to meet the multitude of individual aspirations and of labour market expectations.
- (5) Diversity and change cannot be met by first-degree study programmes which are intended to produce “ready-mades”; training on the job and in specialist programmes are inevitable. Primarily, diversity and change call for openness with regard to intellect and mentality, developed by targeted flexibility of programmes which feature the key elements of academic studies (as pointed out under F. 3. above).
- (6) Flexibility of academic study programmes means, and extends to:
 - providing a multi-tier structure of courses, including elements of lifelong learning and distant learning, with the latter also being media-based;

- a multiplicity of “entrances” and “exits” based on clearly defined interfaces, building “bridges” between qualifications and practical experience alike, be the latter internships or previous informal or formal yet non-university and non-polytechnic learning experiences;
- linking core academic abilities with social skills in a democratic, open society based on cooperation.
- (7) While university study programmes are to be structured in a multi-tier system, none of them may be steered by indifference and incoherence but must meet well-defined targets. In this sense, programmes need clear orientation towards “fitness of purpose”, with one key purpose being employability. In general and holistically, the purpose of university study programmes can be described as follows:
 - while fostering academic expertise and developing character to the personal benefit of the individual are indispensable aims, study programmes should, as a rule,
 - also consider transferability of academic approach and experience into the sphere of public engagement in self-employment, jobs, and in a society based on cooperation of equals.
- (8) This guideline of targeting also applies to the internal structure of study programmes. In this sense, programmes need clear orientation towards “fitness for purpose”, pertaining to each element of the programme and to the overall programme compilation. Programmes must, while matching the relevant academic level, be composed of elements which are responsive to the features outlined here under item (3) above. They must indicate to what extent each of their constituent elements contributes to realizing these features. This need to prove this applies both to the design of the structural elements of the course and to their didactic principles.

G. Theses II -- Programmatic Consequences for Institutional Change: Achieving Employability in the World of Academia

Programme orientation along the lines described above with a view towards employability bears consequences for the institutions of higher education which aspire to achieving such orientation. These consequences at the institutional level may be summarized in the following seven points:

- (1) Evaluation and, if in place, accreditation are means of safeguarding quality and diversity in lieu of state regulation, making quality transparent. Quality implies, among other objectives, an answer to the question as to how employability is viewed and aimed at. Valuators and, if applicable, the accrediting authorities must make the response

of university programmes to the expectations of an international labour market in all its aspects a decisive factor for accreditation, along with considering the academic and personal values of a study programme in the traditional sense. However, instead of any standardised understanding of employability there is scope for diverse interpretations of this objective and sympathy for differentiated course designs according to environment, institution, and specific profiling.

- (2) In general, key aspects of employability of relevance at the institutional level are:
 - offering a multi-tier, flexible yet transparent and coherent system of courses (modularisation);
 - targeting courses to qualities relevant to the labour market, based on a proper analysis of its essence and requirements;
 - target orientation of the entire programme structure and of its elements and didactics;
 - making imagination and research experience, organising minds and cooperation in teams come to life.
- (3) In redesigning study programmes accordingly, universities are aware of the fact that “client-orientation” without sacrificing academic niveau and virtues is a key factor for steering university programmes. In this context, the term “client-orientation” is understood as bearing in mind students’ and society’s expectations as described under items 1. and 2. above. It does not exclude safeguarding the principle of fair access solely based on academic potential and a partnership attitude, i.e. a discourse culture based on inclusiveness, inside higher education institutions. Instead, as is the case in business today as well, it indeed depends on close cooperation and partnership with stakeholders, including students, to explore the characteristics and requirements of employability thoroughly and continuously.
- (4) In terms of procedure, client-orientation requires at least listening to, at best apt participation of, students and society. In substance, it requires constant updating, focussing and didactic improvement of programmes and research. Thus, “universitas semper reformanda” induces competition among universities, and the freedom to compete safeguards the concept of “universitas semper reformanda”.
- (5) Client-orientation and competition require, as well as promote, mobility. Safeguarding employability on a global, labour market as an aim calls for transnationality in all aspects and by all means.
- (6) Client-orientation in open societies means, and results in, competition between higher education institutions. Competition, however, will only work when universities are permitted to be, and become, truly autonomous, responsive and flexible institutions. State regulation on admittance, on course and examination structures,

financial constraints as well as a state monopoly on university financing are incompatible.

- (7) Universities and their members as well as society as a whole (must) accept the entrepreneurial aspect of university operations and realize that this requires universities to decide and act accordingly. Universities must therefore revise their internal structures and decision-making process in order to be able to do so.