

Spring semester of 2018/2019

Period

January – March of 2019

Aim

To reveal the impact of academic mobility on graduates' career prospects.

Methods

Analysis of scientific literature and documents, written questionnaire, statistical analysis of the data obtained. The questionnaire survey was carried out through www.apklausa.lt and the results were converted into Excel format for further processing. The survey was conducted among the graduates of the Faculty of Arts and Education of KUAS, study programmes of Design, Fashion Design, Glass, ceramics, leather and textile Arts, Conservation and restoration of art works, Photography, Pre-school and Pre-primary Education, who had participated in the academic exchange programmes during the period of 2013 - 2018.

Results

In order to reveal the attitudes of KUAS Faculty of Arts and Education graduates towards the impact of academic mobility on the career prospects, a quantitative data analysis was conducted.

Graduates were asked about the benefits of studying/completing an internship abroad. The statements formulated were rated on a five-point scale (5 - strongly agree, 1 - strongly disagree): I gained new professional knowledge; I improved my knowledge of a foreign language; I gained intercultural experience; I broadened my circle of friends, etc.

The most important benefits for graduates after their studies or internships are: improved my knowledge of a foreign language (96.7 %) and intercultural experience (96.6 %).

Graduates were asked to what extent their participation in the mobility programme had influenced the development of their universal competences. The statements formulated were rated on a five-point scale (5 - strongly agree, 1 - strongly disagree): I have learned to solve problems; I have learned to make decisions independently; I have learned to work as part of a team; I have learned to show initiative; I have become more responsible; I have become more versatile in different situations; I have become more tolerant; I have gained courage in communication; I have learned to manage my personal finances; I have learned to manage my time effectively; and I have gained more confidence.

For graduates, the most significant impact of the mobility programme was on improving the following universal competences: problem-solving and independent decision-making (87.6 % each), improving personal qualities and gaining self-confidence (83.3 % each). The least improved skills were time management (50 %) and teamwork (50.3 %).

The survey showed that 76.7 % of graduates **felt more confident in their job search/recruitment experience after studying/completing internships abroad.**

Graduates were asked about the impact of their study/internship abroad on their employability. 27 % of graduates said that their academic exchange experience was considered

in the recruitment selection process and gave them an advantage over other candidates applying for the same job. 17 % of the respondents were offered a higher position and 3 % were offered a higher salary.

Graduates were asked how their study/internship abroad had influenced their job placement.

20 % of respondents said it was considered and they were able to apply for higher positions more quickly while working, 10 % of working graduates were able to apply for higher salaries more quickly, and as many as 13 % said that studying abroad and improving their universal skills had encouraged them to set up their own businesses.

The results of the survey showed that the most important benefits for graduates after their studies or completed internship were increased knowledge of a foreign language, intercultural experience, new professional knowledge and new friendships. Participation in an academic exchange programme has had a significant impact on strengthening and improving universal competences such as problem solving, independent decision-making, self-confidence, initiative and responsibility. This gave them an advantage in job interviews and job placement, they were able to apply for senior positions more quickly, and they were more likely to qualify for higher salaries. For a number of graduates, studying abroad and acquiring professional universal skills led them to set up their own businesses.