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Skills, graduates and labour market

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Skills, graduates and labour market

- Attending university students can achieve the hard skills needed to navigate their particular vocation, as well as the soft skills required to succeed in their future workplace.
- But what about the longer-term effects of the pandemic for graduates?

Skills, graduates , labour market and Covid-19

- According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) COVID-19 has had a significant impact on higher education. affecting approx. 157 millions of learners internationally since February 17, 2020
- The socioeconomic disruptions to education and work-based learning, training and finding quality jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Watterson, 2020), have a bigger effect on the youth acquiring employable skills than other age groups.
- Schools and universities adopted remote learning strategies in order to adapt teaching practices during COVID-19. Zoom, Google Meets and Microsoft Teams, are still used in higher education.
- The transition and implementation of new technology presented a significant learning curve, which has proved frustrating or even overwhelming for some students.

Impact of Covid-19 on graduates: Benefits

- Move to telework was natural for decentralised organisations that already work in a virtual setting.
- Increased inclusivity.
 - ◆ Reduce travel costs for diverse participants.
 - ◆ Meet with people worldwide.
- Better understanding of the possibilities of what can be achieved virtually.
- Culture changes in big organisations in terms of equity, empathy, and diverse knowledge systems.
 - ◆ Pandemic has demonstrated the need to support employees' wellbeing.

Impact of Covid-19 on graduates: Challenges

- Balancing work and personal life.
- Transition to 100% virtual for networking. events that are designed to be held in person.
- Time and capacity to adjust to telework meant putting other programs on hold.
- Recognise differences in access to technology for people around the world.
- Facetime is still valuable and more efficient, especially when moving projects forward, implementing actions, and working with collaborators and partners.

Recommendations for higher education institutions and career services

1. HEIs should recognise the impact that Covid-19 has had on graduate employment and opportunities for career development and the vital role that careers and employability professionals play in supporting graduates. For that reason, they should provide to them access to relevant university support and infrastructure, e.g. via career and skills development online learning resources.
2. Careers and employability services should be resourced appropriately in order to provide support to graduates most affected by the challenging labour market.
3. HEIs should ensure that careers education, information, advice and guidance and opportunities for work experience, experiential learning and skills development are considered as essential parts of the university experience.
4. HEIs should continue to promote alumni networks to support graduates, which might include support and mentoring for those experiencing the greatest challenges.

Recommendations for employers of graduates

1. Employers should commit to high-quality development programmes and on-the-job training to support graduates that will need to be agile in the challenging labour market.
2. Employers should demonstrate a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion by ensuring the job vacancies clearly asks candidates whether they require reasonable adjustments and providing structured support and mentoring for graduates who may find the transition into employment more challenging.
3. Transparent information about available openings and how they recruit graduates.
4. Employers should inform graduates if they have been unsuccessful in the recruitment process, wherever possible.

Recommendations for sector organisations and policy makers

1. Graduates should be considered separately to other groups (e.g. young people who are classed as NEET) in policy recommendations.
2. Sector organisations, should facilitate the sharing of best practice in HE careers and employability delivery, including models and initiatives that have proven value, and relevant resources across institutions.
3. This research has shown that graduates have experienced the Covid-affected labour market differently based on their personal characteristics, but it does not explore the impact of multiple intersecting identities. Funding is recommended to conduct further research to understand how personal characteristics influence the transition into the labour market and develop evidence-based interventions.
4. Funding or policy interventions should be directed through higher education careers services as experts in the career development of their graduate students.

Bibliography

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Thank you for your attention!

