

Experimental research regarding the labor market insertion of the USAMV Iasi graduates (2005 and 2009)

Mihai STANCIU¹, George UNGUREANU¹, Ciprian CHIRUȚĂ¹

e-mail (first author): mstanciu@uaiasi.ro

Abstract

The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Iasi (Romania) answered promptly to the Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCU), to get involved in the strategic project "Graduates and the Labor market. National Monitoring Study", financed by EU structural funds. The project addressed a sensitive issue of the educational activity, namely the inclusion of higher education graduates in the labor market. The project aimed at analyzing the socio-professional route immediately after graduation and after a period considered sufficient for achieving a professional level and shape of individual perceptions about training and employment needs. The initial study addressed graduates, promotions 2005 and 2009, and then subsequent promotions were also involved in the program. The main conclusions refer to the following aspects: Over 45% of the 2005 graduates promotion were employed in a corresponding domain to undergraduate program, then the percentage decreased up to the 2009 promotion, but the percentages of those who continued their studies increased substantially. Graduates from each class: Animal 2005 (65%) and Veterinary Medicine 2009 (50%) felt strongly the need for further development of skills through education after graduation. Over 70% of university graduates of all areas from our 2005 graduates are now employed. In the case of 2009 graduates there is a decrease in the number of employees of over 40%, but a significant increase (over 50%) in those who continued their studies. The findings of this study were reported to the Management Authority of the national university that has decided the activation of structures created to support career orientation of graduates, a partnership among all actors involved in career orientation of graduates, making improvement in stages practice and modernization programs of study in accordance with EU requirements (2020).

Keywords: labor market insertion, noting national research, quality of study programs, modernization of teaching and learning.

The „Europa 2020” strategy proposes three mutually supported priorities:

- Intelligence growth: development of a knowledge and innovation based economy;
- Long lasting growth: promotion of a more efficient, from the perspective of the use of resources, more ecological and more competitive economy;
- Growth in favor of inclusion: promotion of an economy with a high rate of employment that would ensure social and territorial cohesion [COM (2010) 2020 final]. To this purpose, the Commission presents seven emblematic initiatives meant to ensure the achievement of the three strategic objectives. We will approach, in this context, only two of these initiatives: „Youth in motion” and „An agenda for new abilities and new jobs”.

The European Union Council addressed in its 10-11 May 2012 reunion the problem of the increase of the graduates' employment ratio. From the “Europa 2020” strategy perspective, the

Council added a seventh reference standard in the field of education and training, considering the return to the initial 82% target for the young employment ratio till 2020.

The graduate degree has a double role: it diminishes the risk of unemployment and facilitates the access to more qualified and better paid jobs [Nauze-Fichet E., Tomasini M., ÉCONOMIE ET STATISTIQUE N° 354, 2002, p.22].

The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "Ion Ionescu de la Brad" Iasi has promptly answered the invitation of the Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI) to get involved in the strategic project "Graduates and the labor market. National monitoring study", financed from the European structural funds. The project addressed a delicate matter of the instructive-educational activity, namely that of the insertion of higher education graduates on the labor market.

¹ The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Iași

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The investigated population included all the USAMV Iasi graduates from the years 2005 and 2009: 730 from 2009 and 234 from 2005, e.g. a total of 964.

The research aimed at an update of the database concerning the graduates of both years, and the communication was accomplished by means of e-mails, post letters, telephone calls or

direct dialogue. The graduates were informed about the project objectives and about the importance of the feed-back they could provide in order to improve the learning process at the university.

The graduates filled an on-line survey (December 2010 - March 2011). The answers were managed by the founder of the project (UEFISCU) in order to ensure a higher degree of objectivity of the answers (table 1).

Table 1

Total number of students having accessed the survey

Nr.	Year	Nr.	%
1	Year 2005	127	54.27%
2	Year 2009	375	51.36%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Concerning the quality of the graduate study program (see Fig. 1), the 2005 graduates considered the program to be well balanced. The study program was known and accepted by the employers, but we noticed the fact that the students had little possibility to establish their program, irrespective of the faculty. The graduate program was considered by the 2005 graduates to have had a good academic reputation.

For the 2009 graduates we noticed an improvement at the Veterinary Medicine Faculty, where the program was considered to be demanding, but largely known by the employers. The number of graduates considering that the program had a good academic reputation is also higher. An analysis of the post graduation situation of the 2005 graduates (see Fig. 2) highlights the fact that, over 45% of every faculty graduates were employed in a work field corresponding to their study program, as well as the fact that 30% of the Faculty of Agriculture, 50% of the Faculty of Horticulture, over 30% of the Animal Breeding Faculty, and 30% of the Veterinary Medicine Faculty graduates went on with continuing their studies.

For the 2009 graduates the percentage of those employed in their study program field has diminished. (25% for the Faculty of Agriculture, 20 % for the Faculty of Horticulture, 30% for the Animal Breeding Faculty, 10% for the Veterinary Medicine Faculty), but the percentage of graduates having chosen to continue their studies increased significantly (55% at the Faculty of Agriculture,

55% at the Faculty of Horticulture, 65% at the Animal Breeding Faculty, 45% at the Veterinary Medicine Faculty).

There is an important difference between the two promotions of students in the percentage of graduates who did not succeed in finding employment – for the 2005 graduates the percentage is of 10% for all the faculties, except for the Animal Breeding Faculty, with 22%; while in 2009, the percentage increased to 22% at the Faculty of Agriculture, to 33% at the Faculty of Horticulture, to 25% at the Animal Breeding Faculty and to 15% at the Veterinary Medicine Faculty. This can be explained by the short amount of post graduation time and by the economic crisis which started in 2008.

The most important ways of finding a job for the 2005 graduates were: applying for a vacant position (33% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture); contacting the employers from their own initiative (over 30% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, over 25% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 40% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty); by the help of the family, friends and relatives (48% - of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, 45% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 33% of the graduates from the Animal Breeding Faculty, 29% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty); starting one's own business (40% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, 40% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 34% of the graduates from the Animal Breeding Faculty, 25% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty).

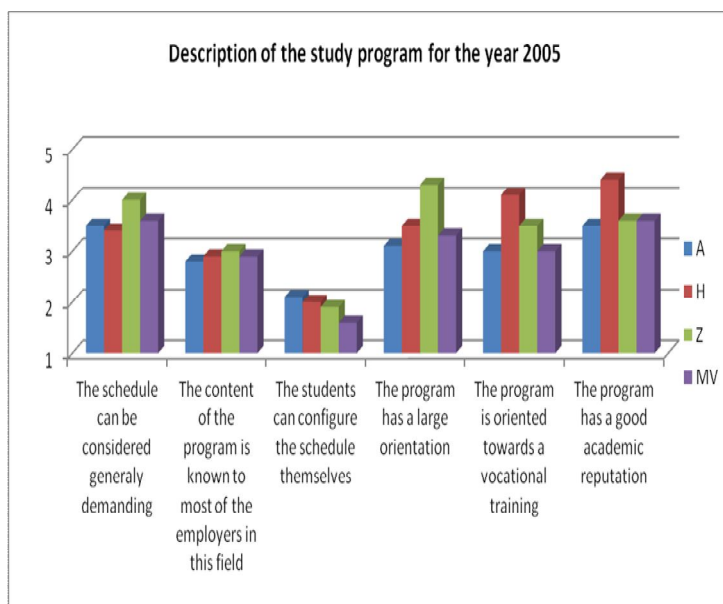


Figure 1 **Description of the study program for the year 2005** (Answer scale from 1 = slightly' to 5 = largely)

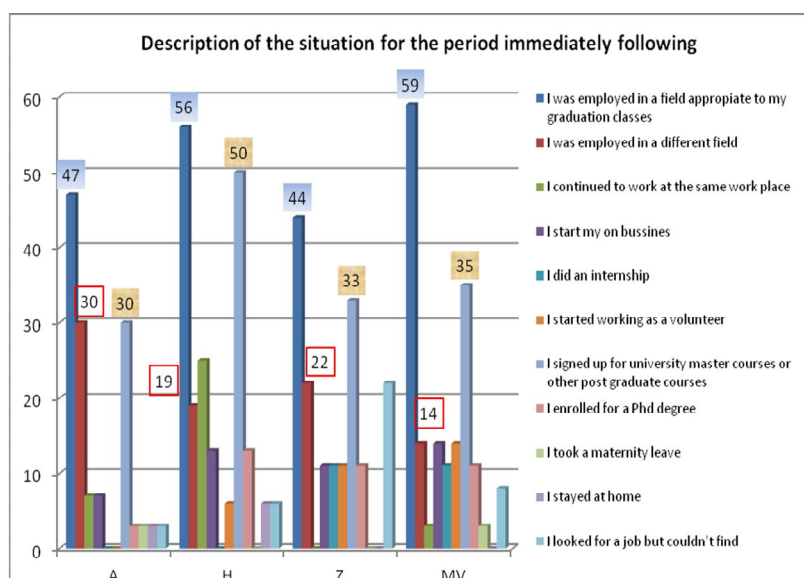


Figure 2 **Description of the situation for the period immediately following graduation**

For the 2009 graduates the most important ways to find a job were: by the help of their family, friends and relatives (45% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, 65% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 41% of the graduates from the Animal Breeding Faculty, 46% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty); by the help of career expos (30% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, 40% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 38% of the graduates from the Animal Breeding Faculty, 13% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty); through online job portals (3% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, 9% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 11% of the graduates from the Animal Breeding Faculty, 17% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty).

Concerning the average net monthly income (RON) of the first post graduation job (see Fig. 4), we noticed that for the 2005 graduates, the most common was under “600” or between “600-800”, while for the 2009 graduates we noticed an important increase, up to “800-1000” and even “1001-1500”.

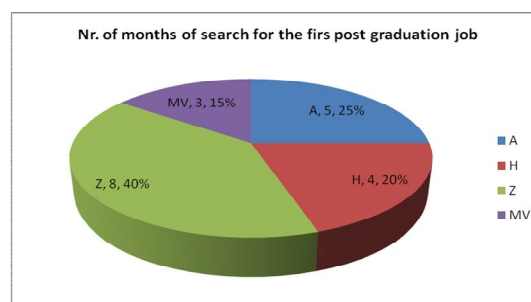


Figure 3 **Nr. of months of search for the firs post graduation job**

For the 2005 graduates, seniority brought an improvement of the net income: "600 - 800 lei" for 38% of the graduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, 46% of the graduates from the Faculty of Horticulture, 25% of the graduates from the Animal Breeding Faculty, 23% of the graduates from the Veterinary Medicine Faculty, but also "1501-2000 lei" for 23% of the graduates from the

Veterinary Medicine Faculty. Over 70% of the 2005 graduates of all fields of our university are employed. For the 2009 graduates we noticed a fall to over 40% of the employed, but a significant increase (50%) of those continuing their studies. We mentioned here the details for the Faculty of Agriculture: 37% registered as Master students, 35% employed, but also 18% unemployed.

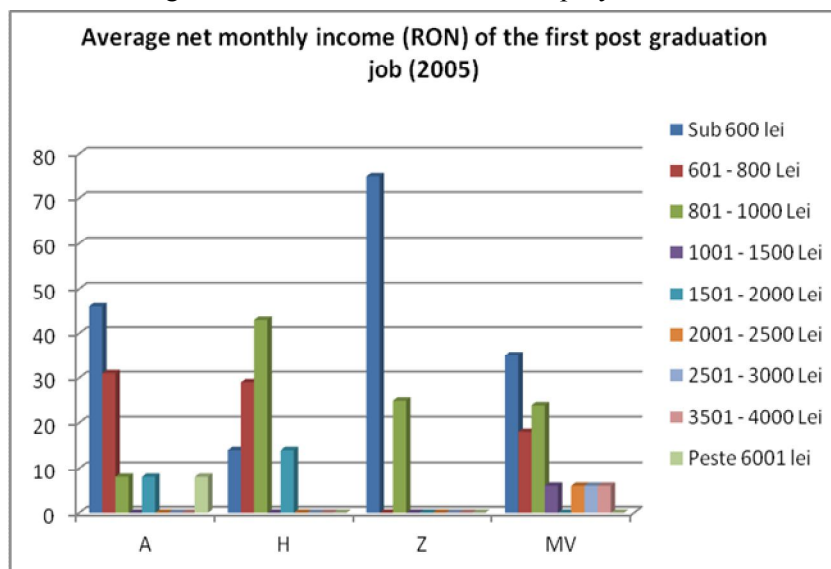


Figure 4 Average net monthly income (RON) of the first post graduation job (2005)

The 2005 graduates are fairly divided between public institutions and private companies (Faculties of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Veterinary Medicine 50%). As for the 2009 graduates, over 60% are employed by private companies, for all the faculties. Concerning the positions held by the graduates at present time (see fig. 5), we notice that the highest share is that of executing positions (60%) and a percentage of over 20% of management positions (2005 graduates); the ratio remained the same for the management positions, 20%, but the percentage of executing positions increased (75% for the Animal Breeding Faculty for the 2009 graduates). The 2005 graduates (fig. 6) are now "largely" and "very

largely" using the knowledge acquired from the studies program at their present job (fig. 7). Another question aimed at determining the study field considered most appropriate for the type of activity at the present job, and for the 2009 graduates the percentages are as follows: the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine over 70%, the Faculty of Agriculture 30%, the Faculty of Horticulture 32%. We have notice a phenomenon of over education (*le déclassement-fr*), that can be explained by „Le décalage constaté par le passé entre le rythme de progression du nombre des diplômés et celui des postes de travail qualifiés” [Nauze-Fichet E., Tomasini M., ÉCONOMIE ET STATISTIQUE N 354, 2002 p. 26-27].

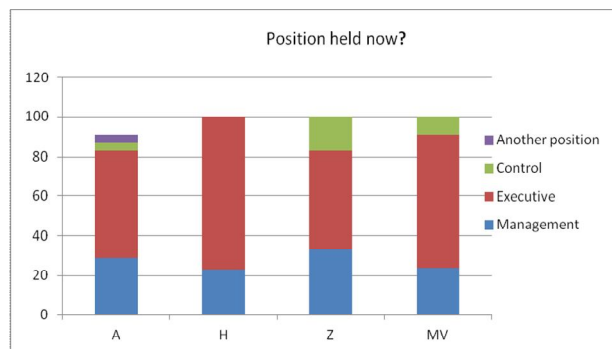


Figure 5 Position held now

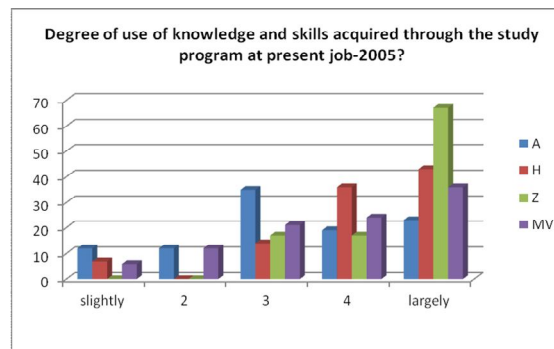


Figure 6 Degree of use of knowledge and skills acquired through the study program at present job-2005

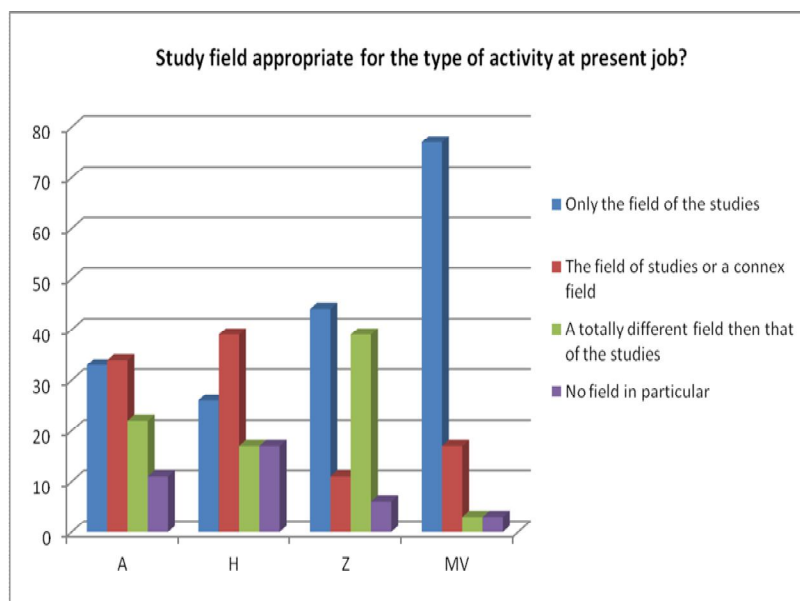


Figure 7 Study field appropriate for the type of activity at present job

CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the data from the present research, here are the activities we should undertake:

1. Encouraging partnerships between educational and professional training institutions and companies, by a closer adaptation of study programs to the needs of the labor market and by the increase in the number of company placements and the development of the entrepreneurial education. Germany and Denmark already encourage this dual system (education-work, Arnaud Chéron, 2011, p. 19).

2. Stimulating the development of entrepreneurial, creative and innovative skills in all subjects and in all three educational cycles and promoting the innovation inside the higher education system by interactive environments and the consolidation of the infrastructure dedicated to the information transfer.

3. The data regarding educational mobility and the capacity of professional insertion associated with higher education will be

permanently updated, thus creating a European register of higher education.

4. Diminishing the number of unemployed youth, as shown by international researchers (Arnaud Chéron, 2011, *Les différences internationales d'insertion sur le marché du travail des jeunes: de l'incidence des institutions*, EDHEC BUSINESS SCHOOL, PÔLE DE RECHERCHE EN ÉCONOMIE, ÉVALUATION DES POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES ET RÉFORME DE L'ÉTAT, Nice, p. 11-13).

5. Career counseling throughout their life in view of a lifelong learning.

6. Achieving a holistic approach in the counseling system for the lifelong learning [Chapter 3: Career Guidance and Counseling for Lifelong Learning in a Global Economy - Raoul Van Esbroeck].

REFERENCES

Chéron, A., 2011 - *Les différences internationales d'insertion sur le marché du travail des jeunes : de l'incidence des institutions*, EDHEC BUSINESS SCHOOL, PÔLE DE RECHERCHE EN ÉCONOMIE, ÉVALUATION DES POLITIQUES PUBLIQUES ET RÉFORME DE L'ÉTAT, Nice, p.11-13.

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2012 - Council meeting Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, Brussels, 10 and 11 May 2012, 9362/12.

European Commission, 2010 - *Europe 2020. Integrated guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States*, COM(2010) 2020 final.

Nauze-Fichet E., Tomasini M., 2002 - ÉCONOMIE ET STATISTIQUE N 354.

Van Esbroeck, R., Chapter 3: Career Guidance and Counseling for Lifelong Learning in a Global Economy. 1996.