Conditions and provisions for studying, and vocational preparation from the perspective of Bachelor graduates in Austria

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Content of presentation

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- focus: Bachelor degrees in AT
- research on graduates
    - recent Austrian survey
- some findings
    - motives and attitudes (students)
    - conditions and provisions (courses of study)
- some more findings
    - vocational preparation, matching (graduates)
- résumé

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ARUFA: design and data basis

The Working Situation of Graduates from Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences		
Contracting entity	**Federal Ministry of Science and Research, Vienna**	
Contractor, coordination	INCHER-Kassel (project leader: Harald Schomburg)	
Subcontractor	Department of Sociology (Helmut Guggenberger)	
Term	01.11.2009 to 31.08.2010 (final report presented 16.05.2011)	
Design	**full population survey; internet-based, online questionnaire**	
Field phase	12/2009 – 02/2010	
Population	**Years of graduation 2003/04 – 2007/08**	
	21 universities, 15 *Fachhochschulen*	ca. 116,000
Return rate	Cases to be analyzed	ca. 23,800
	Return rate (net)	**23 %**
Schomburg et al 2010; Guggenberger 2011, Guggenberger et al 2011		

ARUFA: topics (related)

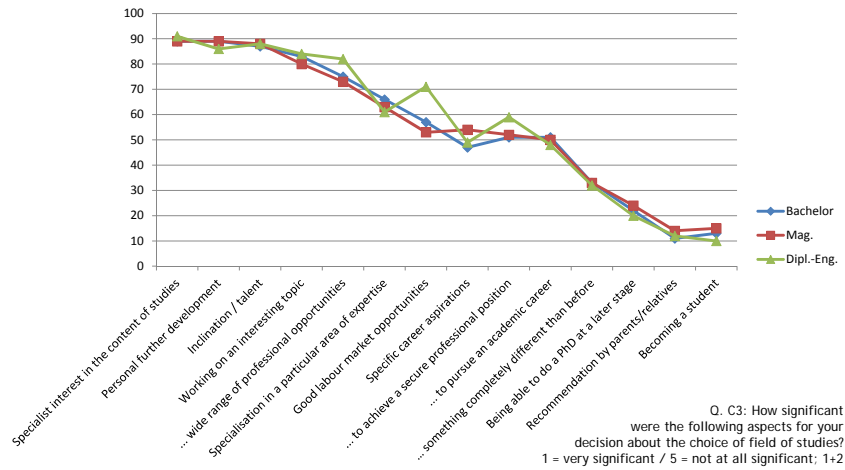|	Content of questionnaire (selected)
C	**Study decision and study experience** - situation in the last year/s of study, choice of university/ *Fachhochschule*, choice of course of study, (mandatory, voluntary) internships, work experience, stays abroad; competences at time of graduation
D	**Evaluation of study offers and study conditions** - descriptions of study, aspects of teaching and learning, offers and conditions, advice and guidance, resources, practice and occupation related elements; contact with institution of degree
E	**Course of employment** - phases of search, phases of occupation etc., working situation, stays abroad, employers; aspects of search for employment; status and conditions of occupation
F	**Employment at time of survey** - characteristics, status and conditions, place and branch, characteristics of enterprise/organisation, innovations in enterprise/organisation; influence of economic crisis
G	**Work and competencies required** - occupation, professional activity, time required to become an expert; skills and competences required; job satisfaction, professional orientation
H	**Coherence between study and employment** - use of qualifications, match, level of degree

The Bologna Process

- EMBAC Conference, Berlin 30.09.2010 (U. Teichler)
  - Major aim stated: to contribute to increasing student mobility (increased attractiveness of European countries for students from other parts of the world, and facilitating intra-European mobility)
  - **Other aims (secondary or added subsequently): among theses, most prominently "employability" (a vague term, which might be better named "professional relevance")**
  - Bologna Declaration 1999
    - **"The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification."**
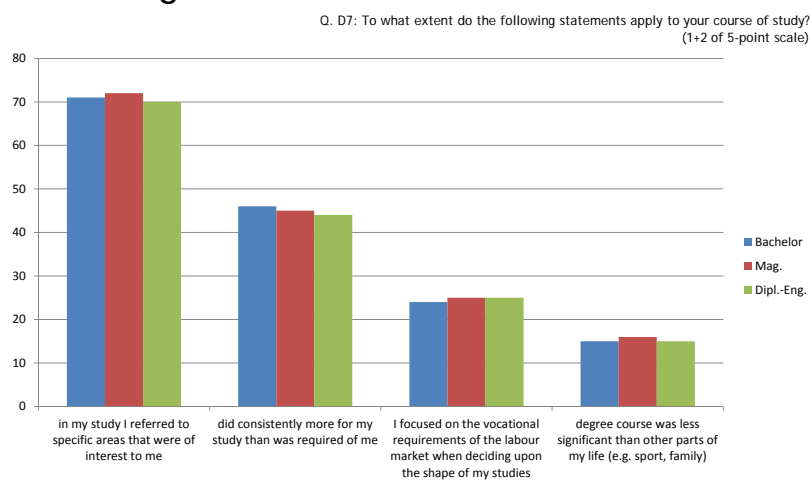

Employability

- further meanings and definitions
  - → role of university; cf. also Allen, van der Velden eds. 2011
  - fit for labour market
  - fit to meet challenges of profession
  - etc.
- improving employability as a goal
  - how to measure ?
  - traditional versus new degree programmes ?
- ARUFA data
  - some indicators for "vocational preparation"
    - horizontal and vertical match
    - job satisfaction, situation meeting expectations
    - etc

Reasons for the choice of the subject studied – first degree

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Legend:
- Bachelor
- Mag.
- Dipl.-Eng.

Categories (x-axis):
Specialist interest in the content of studies · Personal further development · Inclination / talent · Working on an interesting topic · ... wide range of professional opportunities · Specialisation in a particular area of expertise · Good labour market opportunities · Specific career aspirations · ... to achieve a secure professional position · ... to pursue an academic career · ...something completely different than before · Being able to do a PhD at a later stage · Recommendation by parents/relatives · Becoming a student

Q. C3: How significant were the following aspects for your decision about the choice of field of studies?
1 = very significant / 5 = not at all significant; 1+2

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Attitudes towards studying – first degree

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Q. D7: To what extent do the following statements apply to your course of study?
(1+2 of 5-point scale)

Legend:
- Bachelor
- Mag.
- Dipl.-Eng.

Categories (x-axis):
in my study I referred to specific areas that were of interest to me · did consistently more for my study than was required of me · I focused on the vocational requirements of the labour market when deciding upon the shape of my studies · degree course was less significant than other parts of my life (e.g. sport, family)

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Study course satisfaction

Course satisfaction - first degree (details in %)								
	Bach.	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. uni	med. uni	art. uni	UAS
Values 1 + 2	69	66	81	68	67	51	74	81
Values 4 + 5	9	9	5	8	9	16	7	5

Q. D8: From your current perspective, how satisfied are you overall
with the degree studied?
Answer scale from 1 = "highly" to 5 = "not at all"

Characteristics of study course - first degree

Q. D1: To what extent do the following statements apply to your course of study?
(1+2 of 5-point scale)
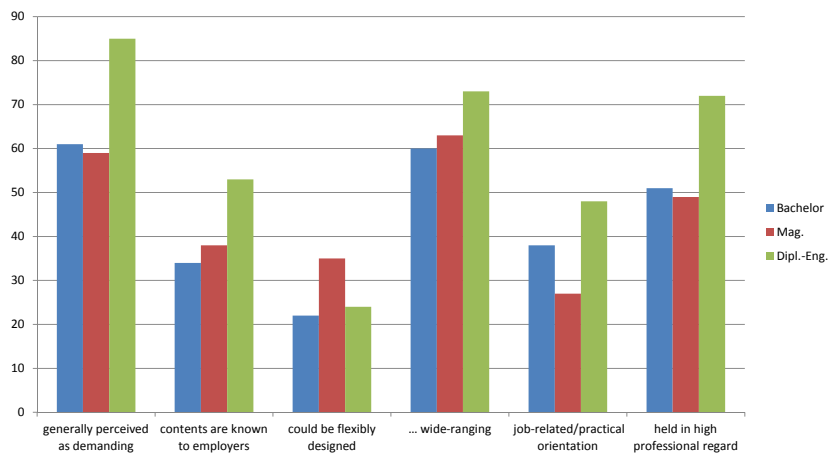
Aspects of teaching and learning
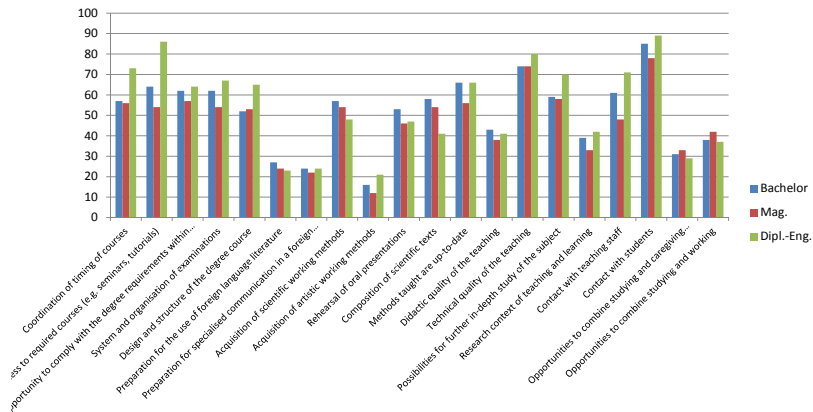## - first degree

Q. D2 To what extent were following aspects of teaching and learning emphasised in your degree course?
(1+2 of 5-point scale)
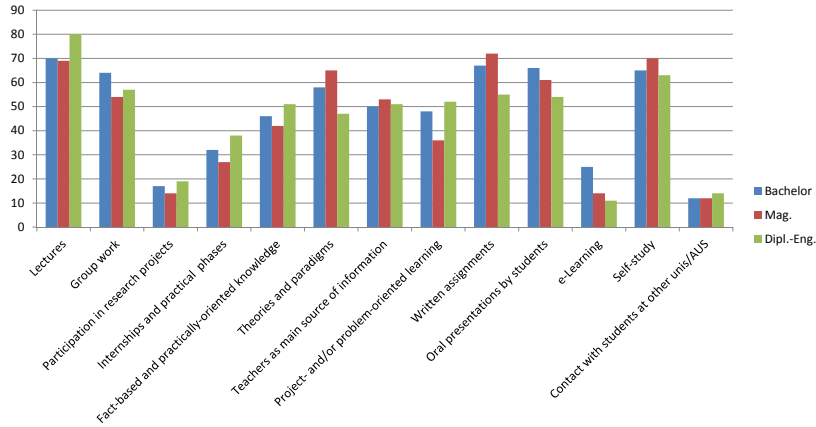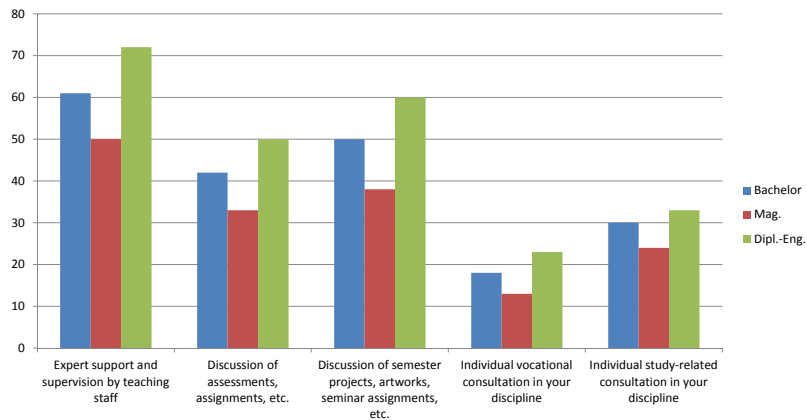

Study-related aspects
- first degree

Q. D3: How would you assess the following study-related offers and conditions in your course of study?
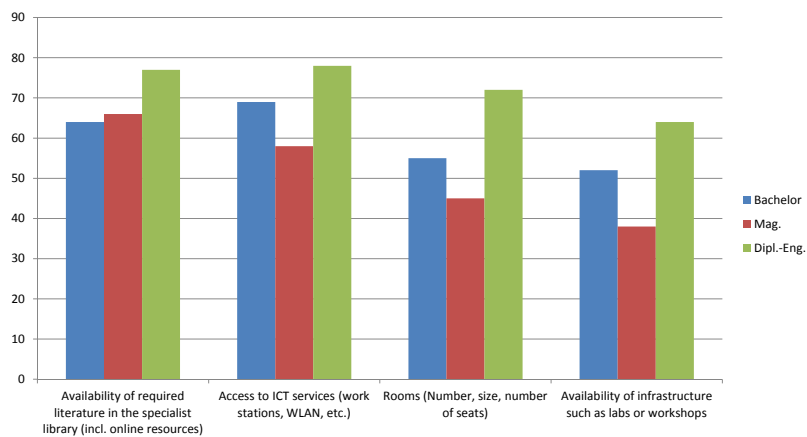(1+2 of 5-point scale)

Advice and support
- first degree

Q. D4 How would you assess the following elements of advice and support?
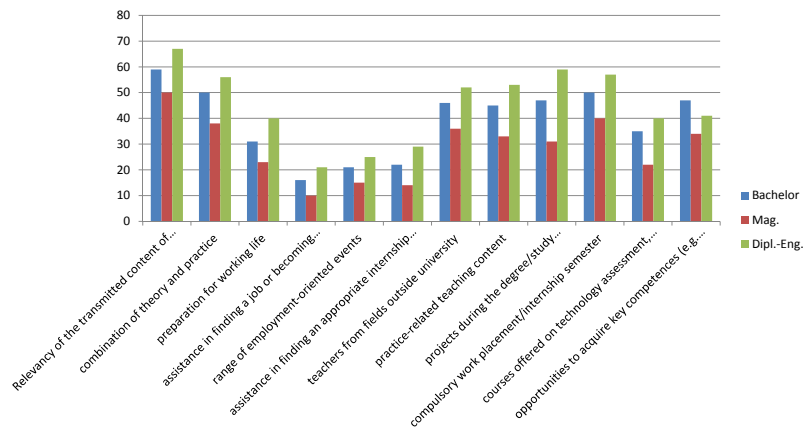(1+2 of 5-point scale)

Facilities
- first degree

Q. D5 How would you assess the facilities available during your course of study?
(1+2 of 5-point scale)

Practice- and work-related elements – first degree

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Q. D6: How would you assess the following practice- and work-related elements in your course of study?
(1+2 of 5-point scale)

Legend: Bachelor, Mag., Dipl.-Eng.

Horizontal match

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Relationship between studying and occupation – first degree, current occupation (details in %)							
	Bach.	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. univ.	med. univ.	univ. of arts	UAS
… the only one possible or the best	30	38	34	39	39	95	63	21
Some other fields of study may also have been adequate	44	38	50	39	38	3	20	57
A different field of study would be more useful for my professional duties	10	10	8	9	9	1	5	10
a particular field of study has no relevance whatsoever	16	15	8	13	14	1	12	12

Q. H2: How would you characterise the relationship between your field of study and your current professional scope of duties?

Vertical match .1

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	Bach.	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. univ.	med. univ.	univ. of arts	UAS
Vertical match - first degree, current occupation (details in %)								
My academic degree	61	70	75	70	70	82	66	71
A lesser academic degree level	9	9	9	9	9	4	8	9
A higher academic degree level	12	7	8	8	8	12	9	8
no degree required	*19*	*14*	*9*	*13*	*14*	*2*	*17*	*13*

Q. H3: In your opinion, what is the most appropriate academic degree level for your current occupation?
Answer scale from 1 = "to a high extent" to 5 = "not at all"

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Vertical match .2

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	Bach.	Master	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. univ.	med. univ.	univ. of arts	UAS
Vertical match - last degree, current occupation (details in %)									
My academic degree level	53	69	70	75	70	70	82	67	71
A lesser academic degree level	7	12	9	9	9	9	4	9	8
A higher academic degree level	15	9	7	7	8	8	12	8	8
No academic degree required	24	10	15	9	13	14	2	16	13

Q. H3: In your opinion, what is the most appropriate academic degree level for your current occupation?
Answer scale from 1 = "to a high extent" to 5 = "not at all"

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Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction – first academic degree (details in %)							
	Bach.	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. uni	med. uni	art. uni	UAS
Values 1 + 2	70	73	77	73	73	69	67	77
Values 4 + 5	12	10	7	10	10	10	13	8

Q. G5: What is the extent of your overall satisfaction
with your professional situation?
Answer scale from 1 = "very high" to 5 = "not satisfied"

Use of qualification

Use of aquired qualifications – first degree (details in %)								
	Bach.	Master	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. uni	med. uni	art. uni	UAS
Values 1 + 2	52		49	56	51	49	61	69	56
Values 4 + 5	19		18	13	17	19	10	11	12

Usefulness of aquired qualifications – last degree (details in %)								
Values 1 + 2	46	61	47	55	52	49	61	72	56
Values 4 + 5	23	13	19	14	17	19	10	10	11

Q. H1: If you look at your current occupational duties in general: To which extent do you use
the qualifications acquired by studying?
Answer scale from 1 = "to a very high extent" to 5 = "not at all"

Commensurability

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Adequacy of aquired qualifications - first degree (details in %)								
	Bach.	Master	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. uni	med. uni	art. uni	UAS
Values 1 + 2	57		61	71	62	62	61	54	69
Values 4 + 5	18		16	9	15	15	14	18	11
Adequacy of aquired qualifications - last degree (details in %)								
Values 1 + 2	50	64	60	71	62	61	63	54	68
Values 4 + 5	22	14	16	9	15	16	14	18	11

Q. H4: When considering all aspects of your professional situation (status, position, income, scope of duties etc.) related to your current occupation: To what extent is this commensurate to your studying?
Answer scale from 1 = "to a very high extent" to 5 = "not at all"

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Correspondency

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Meeting expectations - first degree (details in %)								
	Bach.	Master	Mag.	Dipl.-Eng.	total	scient. uni	med. uni	art. uni	UAS
Values 1 + 2	46		48	50	48	47	35	42	53
Values 4 + 5	17		17	12	16	17	23	21	11
Meeting expectations - last degree (details in %)								
Values 1 + 2	41	52	48	50	48	47	36	43	53
Values 4 + 5	19	14	17	12	16	17	22	21	12

Q. H6: When considering all aspects of your professional situation: How does your current occupational situation correspond to your expectation at the start of your studies?
Answer scale from 1 = "much better ..." to 5 = "much worse than expected"

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Job requirements .1

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- Ability to manage myself and my working process efficiently (total 89 % / Bachelor 86 %)
- Ability to work towards an objective efficiently (88 / 86)
- Ability to work productively with others (87 / 85)
- Ability to work well under pressure (85 / 80)
- Ability to adapt to changing conditions (84 / 81)
- Mastery of my own subject field, my own discipline (80 / 78)
- Ability to develop new ideas and solutions (total 78 %, also Bachelor 78 %)
- Ability to think across disciplines (77 / 71)
- Ability to recognise and close my own knowledge gaps (76 / 73)
- Analytical abilities (74 / 74)
- Ability to assert myself in the face of opposition (71 /Bachelor as little as 62)
- Ability to compose reports, minutes or similar texts (66 /Bachelor 62)
- Ability to question my own ideas and those of others (63 / 60)
- Ability to mobilise the abilities of others (62 / merely 56)
- Ability to think and act economically (62 / 58)
- Ability to present products, ideas or reports to an audience (56 /53)

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Job requirements .2

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- Ability to act in an intercultural context (46 /41)
- Ability to write and speak in a foreign language (surprisingly just 46 / Bachelor 48)
- Ability to apply scientific methods (35 / 35)
- Ability to act in a gender-equality-oriented manner in my own area of responsibility (e.g. gender sensitive) (34 / 31)
- Ability to assess the consequences of the theory and practice of my discipline for nature and society (32 / merely 27)

Q. G4: To which extent are the following skills / competences required in your current occupation?
Answer scale from 1 = "to a very high extent" to 5 = "not at all"; values 1+2

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Deficits and surpluses

- deficits
    - Ability to manage myself and my working process efficiently
    - Ability to mobilise the abilities of others
    - Mastery of my own subject field, my own discipline
    - Ability to assert myself in the face of opposition
    - Ability to work productively with others
- surpluses
    - Ability to present products, ideas or reports to an audience
    - Ability to act in an intercultural context
    - Ability to compose reports, minutes or similar texts
    - Ability to question my own ideas and those of others
    - Ability to write and speak in a foreign language
    - Ability to assess the consequences of the theory and practice of my discipline for nature and society
    - Ability to act in a gender equality oriented manner in my own area of responsibility (e.g. gender sensitive)
    - Ability to apply scientific methods

Q. C12: To which extent did you have the following skills / competences at time of graduation?
Q. G4: To which extent are the following skills / competences required in your current occupation?
Answer scales from 1 = "to a very high extent" to 5 = "not at all"

Selected findings

- On the whole, the Austrian university graduates involved in the ARUFA study – astonishingly similar to their predecessors from CHEERS and REFLEX – appear satisfied with their study programmes and with the associated conditions.

- The job satisfaction also appears to be very high – however, we are not in a position to establish a truly "objective" picture based on a survey of students or graduates, and we should therefore not be too certain based only on these results.

- As far as horizontal (use of qualification) and vertical (adequacy of degree) fit are concerned, no really significant problems were revealed; Bachelor graduates are only worse off to a limited extent here, as with regard to other criteria relating to (emerging) professional success.

Résumé

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- The Austrian graduates from the years 2004-2008 reported very positive conditions of employment:
  - high level of job satisfaction,
  - fit of degree level and occupation very high,
  - there is a dominance of occupations in fields that are closely related to the discipline studied.
  - There is no „*Generation Praktikum*" in sight.
  - A more detailed differentiation by gender (level of initial salary …), field of study and type of degree reveals a number of significant differences.
- In general, they seem to be well prepared for the occupations they gained.

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