



National Erasmus+ Office, Lebanon  
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# Programme Design to Address Employability

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**Auditorium of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 12th floor**

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## Concept Note

The concept of employability in higher education is multidimensional, and there is no general consensus on its meaning. Awaiting a common definition, there are three dimensions that have prompted us to put forward this theme:

- adapt the curriculum, when designed, to include competences required by the local and global markets,
- improve the employment of fresh graduates, and
- improve the relationship between higher education and labor markets.

This workshop is an invitation to Lebanese higher education institutions (HEIs) to think together and exchange experiences on how to prepare graduates for the world of work. Several questions are to be addressed: Are the required competences included in the curriculum? If the answer is no, is it intended to be amended to include them? when and how? If yes, what approaches have to be adopted to serve employability? What models are used for employability? How successful have been these models?

The multiple facets of employability touch upon a variety of issues, not least the dynamics of the labor market and the changing economic conditions. This workshop focuses on curricula and programmes design to improve employability of graduates. One would start looking at the dynamics of the needs of the labor market, particularly in terms of competencies and skills. The prediction of this dynamism, if it is possible in the well-developed and industrialized countries, is not easy in Lebanon, despite the great efforts exerted by the Lebanese National Employment Office which defines the skills and competencies needed by many professions. In this context, it is legitimate to inquire if it is possible to rely on international studies and reports to form an idea of the global evolutions of demands and how to project them on the local situation. One also must take into consideration that a significant number of our graduates seek jobs abroad.

Independently from the labor market needs and evolutions, there exist general skills that help facilitating the employability of graduates. Several institutions, like for instance, the University of Kent in UK, the Pearson report entitled “the Learning Curve”, or the USA employability skills framework (ESF), have defined such skills. The general skills can be generally grouped as communication skills, technology use skills, leadership, and entrepreneurship. It is important to reach a consensus about the general skills that have to be included in a new Lebanese higher education programme and curriculum, and to revisit the existing programmes/curricula to make sure if these skills are being included.

Improving employability may also depend on the adopted model in a programme. Knight and York identified *six* models for embedding employability. It would be important to define a list of models and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each model, especially when related to enhance employability. Afterwards, one model could be chosen per programme depending on the field and on the context. For example, shall problem based learning be adopted for technical and engineering programmes? To what extent? Shall real-life problems be considered as examples? To what extent work placements shall be adopted? What about internationalization?

The workshop will form a good occasion to address these issues. A reader is being prepared as an introductory reference.

