

von Luckwald, J. (2010): Career Service work in Germany during the Bologna Process. In: Krahulcová, B./Ralbovská, R./Jordánova, B. (Ed.): University Guidance versus Higher Education. Association of University Guidance Councillors. Institute of Education and Communication. Prag. Tschechien, pp. 52-56.

Career Service work in Germany during the Bologna Process

1. Career Service work in Germany Gains in Importance on Account of Bologna Reform

The introduction of bachelor's and master's courses of study, increased competition in the educational landscape, and changing requirements on the job market have prompted Germany to take action and revamp its higher education institutions and services. The Bologna reform continues to focus on improving job-market orientation of curricula and student employability. The idea is to better employability in both practical bachelor's programs and in more academic master's programs by imparting students with skills geared toward specific applications and careers. "Employability has been related to 'an individual's capacity to obtain and maintain fulfilling work; the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market; and the ability to realise potential through sustainable employment and knowledge, skills and attitude.'" (Kenny, English, Kilmartin 2007: p. 35; In: Wiepcke, 2009). CS are centers for information and career services that are integrated into higher education institutions. Their experience and knowledge play an important role in increasing student employability. The Bologna process has led to greater interest in CS work and its institutional establishment at German higher education institutions. The "Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft" - whose job is to provide and promote new ideas for university curriculum and research and encourage exchange with business - emphasizes the function and meaning of CS for universities: CS are not only important service providers for students and faculty; they are important partners in a university's strategic development. The more job market success and exchange with business become criteria for university performance, the more important successful CS work becomes (cf. <http://www.stifterverband.de>). The fields of activity for CS are delineated and explained below.

2. Career Service Fields of Activity

CS are university-based centers that provide a variety of services at the juncture between the worlds of education and work. Operating in complex frameworks, CS offer diverse forms of support that reflect the great variance in services and target groups in Germany. The target groups are students, doctors, graduates, instructors, and potential employers. Because the greatest focus lies on the first group, most services are designed to increase student employability during their studies, preparing them for the transition to the job market and for switching occupations later in their careers. In addition, some CS centers promote exchanges at the national and international level relevant to students' areas of study. Research services span a variety of activities, including assessments of projects, publications, conference papers as well as field-related studies such as graduate surveys and quality improvement proposals. CS provide the traditional segments to all target groups:

- information (e.g., career chances, openings, national and international events);
- consultation (e.g., career planning, career self-management);
- career qualification (e.g., training); and
- partnership management (e.g., with regard to potential employers, to qualified students or graduates, to national or international umbrella organizations).

(cf. von Luckwald 2009 (b): p. 48; Grünh 2003: p. 11)

Over time, CS has established itself more firmly at the institutional level, and CS fields of activity at German higher education institutions - which began to multiply quickly after the Bologna reform in 1999 - have gained in importance.

3. History of Career Service work in Germany

Overview of CS development in Germany:

1960: First discussion about the relation between university and world of labour.

1975: Graduate unemployment. New focus: practical training in universities.

1985: First establishment of “job preparation initiatives” - at German universities.

1989: Example: establishment of “Studierende & Arbeitswelt (S&A)”; Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Cologne (<http://www.hf.uni-koeln.de/30379>)

1999: Bologna reform: introduction of bachelor’s and master’s courses of study in Germany. Gain of importance of CS work at German universities. The increasing formation and expansion of CS at German universities was promoted by academic political referral engines.

since 1999:

Practical orientation of college and university education; “job preparation initiatives” renamed “Career Service (CS)” or “Career Center (CC)”; founding of regional task forces to trade ideas on a regular basis.

2002: By 2002 there were 43 CS integrated into German universities (Jörns, 2003: p. 14).

2003: Establishment of the “Career Service Network Germany (csnd)”. The network is a combination of centers that prepare students for the transition from school to career by providing them with core skills and additional qualifications, information on job markets and career opportunities for graduates, and contacts to potential employers.

2007: Example: competition - “career services at institutions of higher learning”; promoted by academic political referral engines: “Stifterverband für die

Deutsche Wissenschaft”, “Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK)” (cf. <http://www.stifterverband.de>).

2008: By 2008 there were 66 CS/CC integrated into German universities. (von Luckwald, 2008; pointed out in chapter 4). Example: Conference - “CS: developments, perspectives, and strategies”; promoted by “Stifterverband”, “HRK”. Example: Conference - “assuring the quality of CSs”; promoted by “csnd”.

2009: By 2009 there were 80 CS/CC integrated into German universities (von Luckwald, May 2009). First official statement “quality assurance for CS work”; by “csnd” (October 2009).

(cf. von Luckwald 2009 (a): p. 194 - 195; Grünh 2003: p. 7 - 8; Jörns 2003: p. 15).

4. Current State of Career Service work in Germany

There are 357 institutions registered in Germany’s Higher Education Compass. These can be broken down into the following types:

- a) 109 universities and Ph.D.-granting institutions
- b) 193 technical colleges and other non-Ph.D.-granting institutions
- c) 55 art and music schools

(cf. <http://www.hochschulkompass.de>).

The study von Luckwald (2008) surveyed CS centers in category a) and found 66 CS/CC in Germany. The study did not consider CS centers in categories b) and c), though it can be assumed that on account of their practical focus technical colleges will have a higher numbers of CS centers than universities. 37 universities and Ph.D.-granting institutions took part in the study. The following items were evaluated: present institutional implementation, financing, number of staff and students, target groups, relation to stage of studies, integration of offers into curriculum, and institutional cooperation. Here are some partial results of the study concerning the structural and material organization of CS work at German higher education institutions:

- Over 50% of German universities and Ph.D.-granting institutions registered with the HRK have a CS/CC.
- 60% of CS are part of the university's central structure (president's office, central academic advising, central administration). Funds for the yearly budget and personnel of CS come mostly from the president's office, the main budget, and third-parties.
- CS work is connected to all phases of study as well as alumni and post-graduates.
- 38% of CS assign credit points to students who use their services; 59% do not.
- CS has a broad spectrum of cooperation partners. The main cooperation partners are regional and transregional businesses as well as the Employment Office.
- CS lack the staff to handle the large numbers of students they are responsible for.

(cf. von Luckwald 2008: pp. 24 - 26).

Currently, the field of CS work in Germany is flourishing and expanding. This is demonstrated by the number of conferences and the establishment of CS/CC at the institutional level. The following fields of research are emerging: development and assurance of quality standards; development of career profiles and training programs for CS personnel; collecting qualification standards for BA/MA students; technology. Because of complex and heterogeneous field of CS work and the on-going reform process in higher education institutions, it will be interesting to follow developments on the quantitative and qualitative level. National and international exchange on the practical and expert level will serve to bring forward the professionalization process.

References:

GRÜHN, D. (2003): Die Entstehung von Career Services in Deutschland: Einige Anmerkungen aus „hochschulforscherischer“ und „hochschulpolitischer“ Sicht. In: GRÜHN, D.; JÖRNS, S. (Hg.): Forum der Career Services an deutschen Hochschulen. career service papers. Heft 01/03, Göttingen 2003. pp. 7 - 13.

JÖRNS, S. (2003): Career Services als neue Dienstleistungseinrichtungen an deutschen Hochschulen. In: GRÜHN, D.; JÖRNS, S. (Hg.): Forum der Career Services an deutschen Hochschulen. career service papers. Heft 01/03, Göttingen 2003. pp. 14 - 27.

VON LUCKWALD, J. (2009) (a): Stellenwert der Career Service-Arbeit an deutschen Universitäten. In: SEEBER, G. (Hg.): Forschungsfelder der Wirtschaftsdidaktik. Wochenschau Verlag, Schwalbach/Ts. 2009. pp. 192 - 200.

VON LUCKWALD, J. (2009) (b): Bedeutungszuwachs der Career Service-Arbeit an deutschen Hochschulen. Der pädagogische Blick, 17. Jg., Heft 01/09, Juventa Verlag, Weinheim 2009. pp. 48 - 50.

VON LUCKWALD, J. (2008): Bestandsaufnahme Career Services an deutschen Hochschulen. In: GRÜHN, D.; JÖRNS, S. (Hg.): career service papers. Heft 06/08, Göttingen 2008. pp. 23 - 27.

WIEPCKE, C. (2009): Employability in the Bologna Process: An Area of Tension between Society, Businesses and Students. In: International Journal of Learning, Vol. 16, New York.

Author:

Johanna von Luckwald, PhD.

johanna@vonluckwald.com

<http://www.vonluckwald.com>