

EMERGING TECH CONFERENCE – Edge Intelligence

Volume 01, 2022, Page 83 – 86

**Proceedings of Emerging Tech Conference:
Edge Intelligence 2022****The University of Patras at the service of securing the future of its graduates**

Panagiota Michalakea*, Nikolaos-Emmanouil Ioannou, Athanasios Plessas, Dimitris Mourtzis

University of Patras, Rio Patras, 26504, Greecepmihalakea@upatras.gr**Abstract**

For the University of Patras, students and graduates are at the center of its interest. The main role of the Department of Employment, Careers and Liaison (Liaison Office) is to help students and graduates identify career opportunities through strategy, proper planning and concrete actions. Many services and digital tools are available to support them both during their studies and after graduation. In other words, the University invests in enhancing the profile of graduates, which helps them pursue their desired career. All actions organized by the Liaison Office aim to upgrade/update the skills of students and graduates and to promote networking with the labor market.

1. Success in the labor market: A supportive framework for students and graduates

Success in the job search effort, in a competitive market where jobs are limited, depends on how well coordinated that effort is. The University of Patras, through the Department of Employment, Career and Liaison (Liaison Office), creates the appropriate conditions under which graduates can follow more certain paths that will lead them to professional success. In today's competitive market, the University of Patras actively contributes to the preparation of the next generation of labor market entrants, creating the right conditions under which graduates can gain access to businesses and employers, and facilitating in every possible way the transition from an academic to a work environment.

The Liaison Office of the University of Patras aims to prepare students and graduates properly and to provide high-quality services, such as educational programs and networking services, which will guarantee their inclusion in the labor market. The ultimate aim of the Department is to connect education with the labor market through the development of communication channels, networking, and cooperation with businesses, employers and the wider society. All actions aim to link higher education with the labor market effectively.

Achieving the aforementioned goals is done through:

1. Employment and career counseling services that include both individual and group sessions. These services also involve the dissemination of information on postgraduate

studies in Greece and abroad, on scholarships, professional training programs, educational seminars and conferences.

2. Professional empowerment workshops organized three times a year, with a strong emphasis on soft skills: creativity, innovation, social and intercultural skills, leadership skills, communication skills, flexibility and adaptability, self-esteem enhancement, stress management, ability to work in a team, decision-making in complex environments, problem and conflict resolution, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and empathy, showing initiative, organization, time management.

3. Educational Programs (which are organized twice a year per topic):

- a. Career Readiness Programs.

- b. Career Counseling and Career Development.

The specific educational programs aim to prepare those planning their first steps in the working world. This is achieved through creating an all-encompassing personal job search action plan. This includes guidance on preparing a good CV, writing compelling cover letters, using effective interview techniques, and utilizing modern job search procedures and methods.

4. Career Days. An effort is being made to network with professional bodies in order to facilitate the transition of students and graduates into the professional arena. Taking into account the difficult conditions due to the pandemic, the following career days were implemented:

- a. Virtual Career Day with the company Citrix(14/10/2021).

- b. E – Career Day of the University of Patras with the company Deloitte (19/10/2021).

- c. Online Career Day with Ernst & Young Greece(15/12/2021).

- d. Diversity Career Webinar with Accenture Greece(11/3/2022).

5. Organization of information events, in order to inform students and graduates on issues related to employment and access to the world of work. In this context, the following were implemented:

- a. Entrepreneurship Workshop' ' (8/6/2021)

- b. Opportunities for professional rehabilitation through the funding of the University of Patras for Research and Development (14/4/2022).

- c. Clinical Research as a career prospect in the Life Sciences" with the company Bayer Hellas(12/5/2022).

- d. Actions of the Employment, Career and Liaison Department and the new Information System (with students, graduates and employers) (30/3/2022).

2. Digital Tools to connect graduates with the labor market

The University of Patras' Liaison Office offers several digital tools to support the connection of graduates with the labor market. The new, recently deployed, web information system features two sets of tools, one oriented to the needs of students and graduates and the other oriented to the needs of businesses. Graduates and students can search for open job posts and bookmark them, create their professional profile and apply for consultation. Businesses can upload their job

posts and search the students and graduates' profiles database. A matching algorithm processes several fields from job posts and students/graduates' profiles and provides suggestions matching graduates/students to job posts. While still at the pilot phase of operation, 60 companies have already registered and use these services. The information system puts emphasis on standardization and interoperability, adopting standards such as the ESCO taxonomy [1], while at the same time respects web accessibility guidelines.

Moreover, the Liaison Office takes advantage of the available technological tools (e.g. teleconference software) to offer its services remotely, allowing for example for remote consultation sessions. This practice initially established due to COVID-19 pandemic, results in a more widespread dissemination of the offered services.

3. Graduate Tracking: The Eurograduate 2022 Initiative

The University of Patras recognizes the importance of graduate tracking and remains committed to participating in both national and European-wide initiatives. For the 2022-2023 period, this includes participation in the Eurograduate 2022 survey. The Eurograduate 2022 survey [2] is a European-wide initiative whose primary goal is to provide the groundwork for more permanent graduate tracking efforts. The survey will attempt to measure the level of satisfaction graduates have with their studies, the level of mismatch between their studies and current occupation and their experiences with studying and working abroad among other things. On the short-term, this survey aims to provide insights that higher education institutions can use to improve the quality of their programs. Long-term, the ultimate goal of the survey is twofold: First, to gauge the level of progress towards establishing the European Education Area. Second, to pinpoint areas that through strategic investment can better prepare European youths for the job market, as well as their involvement in society.

4. Conclusions

The Liaison Office of the University of Patras creates the conditions for students and graduates to acquire knowledge and skills that will allow them to claim their place in the professional arena on better terms. In addition, it provides them with the opportunity to get to know the environment of their future professional career with relevant actions and enhances these efforts with digital tools. Through graduate tracking, the Liaison Office intervenes in a targeted manner, using specialized guidance in order to ensure the graduates' successful access to the labor market. Finally, the strengthening of the University's extroversion through the promotion of partnerships is another factor that helps students - graduates to follow more certain paths to success.

Acknowledgements

The described actions are financed through the Action "University of Patras Liaison Office" (MIS 5072545), which is co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund- ESF) through the Operational Program «Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020».

References

- [1] le Vrang, M., Papantoniou, A., Pauwels, E., Fannes, P., Vandenstein, D., & De Smedt, J. 2014. ESCO: Boosting job matching in Europe with semantic interoperability. *Computer*; 47:10.

- [2] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Meng, C., Wessling, K., Mühleck, K. 2020. Eurograduate pilot survey: design and implementation of a pilot European graduate survey, Publications Office.