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## Article

# European perspectives on student mobility and competencies in tertiary education: What we have learned in the past 20 years

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# EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT MOBILITY AND COMPETENCIES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION – WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IN THE PAST 20 YEARS

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**Eva Grebe**

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## **Abstract**

The author aims to examine the literature on student mobility and competencies in tertiary education with a focus on Europe and analyse the impact of international short-term student mobility on the acquisition of competencies for employability in the 21st-century labour market. The article focuses on the Erasmus program and university education. It examines the relationship between short-term student mobility experiences, the development of soft skills, and their relevance to future employment, providing valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers. The article highlights the importance of intercultural competencies, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills in preparing students for the evolving demands of the workforce. It also emphasises the need for curriculum adaptations and closer cooperation between tertiary-level educational institutions and industry to bridge the skills gap and enhance graduates' employability. The author aims to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the relationship between short-term student mobility, competencies, and future employability.

**Keywords:** mobility, short-term, competence, education, labour market, tertiary

## **Introduction**

With the ever-increasing need for sustainability, the international mobility of students within tertiary education also faces this requirement. Tertiary institutions in the European Union currently have Erasmus+ funding to support the mobility of their students. Still, there is a need not to rely solely on the EU to support mobility in all circumstances. As the experience of being abroad has undeniable advantages for students and subsequent graduates in acquiring the soft skills that labour market actors subsequently require, there is a need to look at whether students can achieve these skills in other ways than through experience abroad. This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of international mobility on students' acquisition of soft skills and their subsequent application in their professional careers. By conducting an in-depth review of 21st-century literature on international mobility in tertiary education, the objective is to establish a solid theoretical foundation for understanding how students can effectively develop and utilise these skills. Furthermore, this analysis will explore the benefits of mobility for students, employers, and the tertiary education sector, seeking to identify key areas of collaboration among these stakeholders. The ultimate goal is to optimise the advantages of student mobility in tertiary education, ensuring that students capitalise on their educational inputs while meeting the demands of the 21st-century labour market.

## Student mobility

Short-term and long-term mobility refers to two different aspects of people's movement and migration patterns. Short-term mobility typically encompasses temporary movements (tourism, business travel, short study or work experience, or seasonal labour migration), while long-term mobility involves more permanent movement (international migration, resettlement, or pursuing higher education abroad). These two types of mobility have implications for various fields of research study, such as social sciences, economics, public policy, and also education. The research interest of this article is the student mobility at the tertiary education level, specifically short-term student mobility.

Both short-term and long-term student mobilities research face certain limitations regarding data availability. Short-term student mobility data can be relatively easier to collect through surveys, mandatory questionnaires, and university statistics. However, obtaining accurate and comprehensive data on the motivations, experiences, and impacts of short-term mobility can be challenging. Long-term student mobility research relies on various data sources, and even though they exist, there might be disparities and limited coverage, especially in countries with weak statistical systems or strict data privacy regulations.

The policy relevance of short-term and long-term student mobility research is important, especially for tertiary education institutions concerning short-term student mobility, its benefits to students (future graduates, thus its significance for entry to the labour market), and various support systems (financial contributions, etc.). Different countries might have specific educational systems influenced by factors such as population demographics, history, political systems, and economic conditions. Thus, short-term and long-term student mobility can vary across countries and regions. Policy implications of mobility are then country-specific, reflecting the priorities of each country. This article focuses on short-term student mobility within Europe.

Student mobility is the movement of students from one educational institution to another, either within their home country or internationally. International student mobility is when students cross the borders of their home country for the purpose of the educational process. This can be short-term exchanges, semester or year-long study abroad programmes, or even entire study programmes completed at an institution other than the one where the student started their studies. Short-term student mobility is **temporary** and can take the form of a study exchange or internship. Long-term student mobility refers to a **long-term** stay for the purpose of a **comprehensive** tertiary education towards a degree and is an individual mobility. Temporary short-term mobility, i.e. an exchange study placement, takes place either on the basis of student exchange partnership agreements between institutions or also outside a school-organized student mobility programme, the so-called 'Freemover' programme. However, the Freemover programme does not coincide with the principle of an exchange programme and is not reciprocal. It is individual mobility.

Teichler, Ferencz and Wachter (2011) consider mobile students to be those students who cross the national borders of their home country in the context of their studies. Mobile students can also be divided into those "who wish to spend the entire study programme in another country and those who wish to spend only part of their study programme abroad. The first type

of mobility has been defined as mobility for the purpose of obtaining a **diploma** or **degree**. ‘Diploma’, similar to the use of the term ‘diploma supplement’, has been seen to include not only programmes usually understood as ‘diploma’ programmes but also shorter or lower level programmes, if they are ‘full programmes’ and lead to a qualification. This second type of mobility was called **credit or temporary mobility**, based on the assumption that the results achieved during short periods of study abroad count towards a degree at the home institution on return.” (p. 158)

Student mobility programmes are often designed to enrich students’ academic and cultural experiences, provide them with opportunities to learn a foreign language, and expose them to new cultural environments and ideas. They can also be beneficial for building international contacts and developing essential skills such as adaptability and intercultural communication.

Temporary reciprocal exchange studentships are usually financially supported by the home institution (within the European Union by an Erasmus programme), with the financial support being a contribution to the costs of living abroad. Financial support is not an entitlement, but the participant is exempted from paying, for example, tuition fees if the receiving (also called host) institution requires it. This does not apply to the ‘Freemover’ programme, where the student pays tuition fees to the host institution. The source of the financial support then depends on whether both partner schools are located in an EU Member State, whether the school holds the so-called ECHE<sup>1</sup> (Erasmus Charter for Higher Education), or whether the partner school is outside the EU. A similar logic for financial support applies to students’ internships abroad.

Study, internship, and even a stay abroad undoubtedly positively impact a young person’s life and future and represents an investment in one’s own human capital, which, according to economic theory, increases one’s productivity and, thus, earnings. A certain competitive advantage of a graduate in the labour market is, therefore, undoubtedly the use of the Erasmus programme while still studying at university. A student’s period spent abroad is considered an academically, culturally, and linguistically valuable experience in the student’s life. It is expected to positively impact students’ future employability (Bracht, 2006).

An interdisciplinary approach to international student mobility was brought forward by Almeida (2020) when she identified that “a search of the European literature reveals significant gaps (in this area) as there are little or no attempts to collect and review studies on student mobility.” (Almeida 2020, p. 14). Based on this gap in knowledge, Almeida proposed a conceptual scheme that can help to map the variables characterising (physical) student mobility in European post-secondary education. This schema aims at an interdisciplinary description of student mobility that draws on a wide range of disciplines and subjects. Based on its approach, student mobility can be viewed from four perspectives (Almeida 2020, p. 15), taking into account its sub-aspects, see Table 1.

1 The Erasmus programme is open to Czech public, state and private higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as higher education institutions (HEIs) that hold an Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), which authorises a higher education institution to participate in the Erasmus programme.

**Table 1: Four perspectives on student mobility**

<b>Areas taught abroad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• second language acquisition/learning languages</li><li>• intercultural education</li><li>• academic education</li></ul>
<b>Variables that affect study abroad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how the training programme is designed (duration, curriculum, assessment, recognition of studies at the home institution, etc.)</li><li>• attribute variables (basic demographic and sociocultural variables characterising mobile students as a specific student population.)</li><li>• mediating and outcome variables (study abroad outcomes and variables that mediate these outcomes.</li></ul>
<b>Global student dynamics and internationalisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• flows or trends in student mobility</li><li>• push-and-pull factors (“push” factors are variables that influence individuals’ decisions to study or not to study abroad, while “pull” factors relate to the choice of country, city, and host institution)</li><li>• taxonomy of student mobility</li><li>• internationalisation of educational institutions</li></ul>
<b>Long-term effects of studying abroad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• personal development</li><li>• professional development</li><li>• migration linkage (the link between study abroad and future migration aspirations, including the decision to stay in the host country)</li><li>• the impact on the host community (to what extent host communities are affected by the presence of mobile students).</li></ul>

Source: own table based on Almeida (2020)

While mobility in tertiary education offers a number of benefits, it also brings with it a number of challenges, particularly in terms of the costs associated with mobility programmes. The costs of participating in mobility programmes can be disproportionately high for many students, especially those from low-income backgrounds. One of the most widely used forms of mobility for Czech tertiary education students is the Erasmus programme, in which the mobility participant’s study or internship abroad is financially supported by funds from the European Union and the Czech Republic.

## Competences acquired through student mobility

The impact on professional development due to student participation in Erasmus mobility is analysed in detail by Bracht (2006), who states, among other things, that students who participated in the Erasmus programme „gained not only international competences but also soft skills that are highly valued by employers thanks to their international experience. Having an Erasmus stay on the Curriculum Vitae is considered as an indicator of these competencies and can increase the chances in the selection process“. (Bracht 2006, p. 209). Those who participated in international mobility during their studies also reported that this part of their educational process positively impacted their first job. The evaluation study also

confirmed findings from previous surveys that former Erasmus students perceive their study abroad experience as beneficial for international mobility and international competencies and that they are more prepared to work on tasks with an international element. Other actors and observers interviewed believe that Erasmus also contributes to general career development (p. xxii).

In his survey of experts (employers), he also found that „they (have) a positive view of Erasmus students. The academic knowledge of Erasmus students on their return from a study abroad placement is considered by 73% to be better than that of students who did not participate in mobility, and 82% consider them better prepared for future employment and work. In addition, almost all experts report that Erasmus students have higher social-communication competencies at the end of their studies than non-participants. Around three-quarters believe that they excel in problem-solving and people management competencies.“ (Bracht 2006, p. 217). Moreover, the study confirms that those who have been mobile as part of the learning process are significantly more prepared to work on international projects than those who have not participated in mobility.

Parey and Waldinger (2011) examined the effect of the emergence of Erasmus on mobility within the international labour market. The results of this study suggest that participation in Erasmus increases the likelihood of working abroad by up to 15%. They report, for example, that the emigration rate of university graduates in England increased from 4% to 7% between 1980 and 2000. At the University of Siena, Favero and Fucci (2017) conducted research looking directly at the effect of Erasmus on earnings for graduates of this university. According to the model's estimates, participation in Erasmus increases wages by up to 9% on average. Employers also value the skills and knowledge acquired during study abroad and believe that these competencies are potentially transferable to the workplace (Franklin, 2010).

According to the findings of López (2019), intercultural competencies as in or during an international experience, or „studying or working in a foreign country, can be a key factor in the development of cultural skills. Thus, there is a need to acquire and deepen transcultural competencies. In other words, those competencies that enable individuals to function with some fluency in an unfamiliar cultural context that is distant from their own.“

Intercultural skills are also important for the development of other soft skills (Lazíková et al. 2022). When a student is exposed to different cultural experiences, it can broaden their worldview and also develop empathy, compassion, and understanding of diversity. One way of promoting intercultural competencies and thus gaining an advantage for future employability is through international mobility during studies, including internship mobility. Studies show that mobility is often an integral part of the skills acquisition process and can be considered a form of capital. Upon return to the home country, an advantage can subsequently be gained in the labour market (Hagan 2011).

The Czech Republic joined the trend of international mobility of university students later. For example, the Erasmus programme has been operating in the Czech Republic since the academic year 1998-1999 (Dům zahraniční spolupráce, 2017). Since then, the number of university students participating in international placements has been growing at a moderate pace every year.

Kahanec and Králíková (2011) identify some of the key determinants of international student mobility within the tertiary education strategy. The increase in international student mobility is certainly one of the impacts of globalisation, and the quality of tertiary education institutions and the availability of English-taught programmes are important tools to attract international students. These, in turn (especially if they are highly skilled), can contribute to the growth of the economy.

According to Levent (2016), one of the most important indicators of the internationalisation of tertiary education is student mobility, i.e. students going abroad for educational purposes. Education and an appropriate internship increase the chances of getting a job after graduation. According to the information gathered from this study, international students bring significant income to the host country's economy by covering the costs of tuition fees and educational expenses and by contributing to the production of knowledge and technology. This is why the Europe 2020 strategy has been designed with the provision of quality education as one of its main priorities.

There are many sources in the literature that explain how education and acquired competencies are important for successful entry into the labour market. Moreover, competencies are a crucial key to the economic development of modern societies (Hanushek and Woessmann 2012, 2015). However, the competencies acquired through tertiary education are often different from the expectations of the labour market.

## **Education systems and competencies for the labour market**

The competencies of tertiary education graduates should match the demand of the labour market. With the rapid changes that are typical of the 21st century, this is more urgent than in previous periods. Educational systems appear inadequate with respect to the skills demanded by today's employers (López et al. 2019). López argues that Europe's living conditions and existing functional urban infrastructure are conducive to the development of innovation and that Europe has the capacity to improve access to the labour market through relevant qualifications and access to tertiary education. Therefore, Europe is also well placed to find and identify the skills that the labour market demands and then emphasise these skills in the relevant educational programmes. The skills of the European workforce must continually reflect the changes that are emerging as a result of both new social demands and the changing work environment. At the same time, the risk of a certain group of the population not having access to skills development must be reduced, and the development of relevant competencies must always be based on sustainability. Young people, therefore, need to be taught skills, bearing in mind that their future employment is likely to be based on the digital age while operating within the framework of Smart Cities. These types of skills need to be developed at different levels of education, not excluding tertiary education, to facilitate graduates' integration into the labour market and bring future professional success.

Current education systems are unlikely to equip graduates with the skills to benefit them, nor does there appear to be a model where there is some interaction between such skills (Gilbert 2014). The Institute for the Future for the University of Phoenix Research Institute, in its 2011

paper by Davies, Fidler, and Gorbis on H2020 future job skills, identified ten competencies<sup>2</sup> (and the so-called six drivers of change<sup>3</sup>, which contribute to the identified ten competencies) that could be the ones critical to success in the future job market.

**Table 2: Ten competencies critical to success in the future job market**

Competency	Description
<b>Sense-making</b>	Having the ability to determine the deeper meaning or purpose of what is being expressed.
<b>Social intelligence</b>	The ability to make deep and direct contact with others, sense and stimulate reactions, and create the desired interaction.
<b>New and adaptive thinking</b>	The ability to think and design solutions and answers beyond those based on routines or rules.
<b>Intercultural competencies</b>	The ability to function in different cultural environments.
<b>Computational thinking</b>	The ability to convert vast amounts of data into abstract concepts and to understand data-based reasoning.
<b>New media literacy</b>	The ability to critically assess and create content using new media forms and then use these media to communicate persuasively.
<b>Transdisciplinarity</b>	Literacy and the ability to understand concepts from different disciplines.
<b>Design mindset</b>	The ability to represent and develop tasks and workflows to achieve desired results.
<b>Cognitive load management</b>	The ability to discriminate and filter information by importance and understand how to maximise cognitive function using a variety of tools and techniques.
<b>Virtual collaboration</b>	The ability to work productively, engage and express oneself as a member of a virtual team.

Source: own table based on Davies et al. (2011)

According to Davies et al. (2011), the competencies and skills are then identified as being brought about by the six drivers of change and having implications for individuals, educational institutions, the private sector, and government policymakers. (Table 3)

<sup>2</sup> See Table 2

<sup>3</sup> See Table 3



**Table 3: Six drivers of change to consider in education systems of the 21st century**

Driver of change	Description
<b>Extreme longevity</b>	changing nature of career and learning
<b>The rise of smart devices and systems</b>	automation of certain work tasks shifts the workforce away from repetitive tasks
<b>The computer world</b>	the massive increase in sensors and computing power makes the world a system that is programmable
<b>New media ecology</b>	new communication tools require new media literacy beyond text literacy
<b>Superstructured organisations</b>	social technologies are driving new forms of production and value creation
<b>Globally connected world</b>	increased global connectivity puts diversity and adaptability at the heart of organisational operations

Source: own table based on Davies et al. (2011)

In addition to job-relevant skills and competencies, general competencies for life and work are needed for the 21st century (Voogt et al. 2013). However, Voogt et al. pay particular attention to digital literacy as one of the key competencies for the 21st century. Their analysis of educational approaches found that strategies for teaching 21st-century competencies are often not well implemented in real educational practice. Reasons for this include „the lack of integration of 21st-century competencies into curricula and assessment, inadequate teacher training, and the absence of systematic attention to strategies to enable the implementation of innovative teaching and learning practices on a large scale“.

In their study, Habets et al. (2020) offer a list of generic competencies called „21st Century Skills“, which include four core skills: **collaboration**, **communication**, **problem-solving skills**, and **critical thinking**. Collaboration and communication skills can then be grouped under **social** competencies. Problem-solving and critical-thinking skills are grouped under **cognitive** competencies. Tertiary education institutions, therefore, need to update their curricula to stimulate graduates to develop 21st-century skills. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations General Assembly, in its fourth goal,<sup>4</sup> emphasises quality education, including a focus on sustainable development (Goal 4.7): „By 2030, ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education on sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, as well as through the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship as well as an appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.“<sup>5</sup>

4 Ensure equal access to inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning for all

5 *Quality education*. United Nations Czech Republic. (2022, September 5). Retrieved April 15, 2023, from <https://osn.cz/osn/hlavni-temata/cile-udrzitelneho-rozvoje-sdgs/kvalitni-vzdelani/>

Furthermore, Habets et al. (2020) investigate how students' self-perceived 21st-century skills relate to their perception of the fit between their tertiary education programme and the future labour market so that they have easy access to the labour market and that it is sustainable. Skills for the 21st century need to be continuously enhanced. Students are interested in those educational programmes that are 'work-ready', i.e. that prepare them for work (Tomlinson 2017). As Lopéz (2019) argues, interest in such educational programmes is also growing due to students' awareness that education systems cannot sufficiently educate in skills relevant for the labour market. The nature and demand of the future labour market are uncertain, individual careers are no longer lifelong or stable, and graduates must be properly prepared to enter the labour market in the new environment.

In their study, Habets et al. (2020) conclude that if the primary mission of tertiary education programmes is to ensure graduates' employability in the labour market, this can be achieved through the development of competencies, i.e. a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that should be taught in educational programmes beyond domain-specific knowledge. Educational programmes must be constantly reviewed in light of the rapidly changing labour market, and the acquisition of competencies must be taken into account in the curricula. All stakeholders in educational institutions must analyse the labour market, monitor its evolution and requirements, and continuously improve the match between the required skills of graduates and the relevant tertiary education programmes to ensure sustainable entry into this labour market.

The World Bank (2011) reports that although education, as measured by years of schooling, continues to expand in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA), where there is relatively good quality education in the early years of schooling, one of the barriers to businesses expansion in this region is the lack of skilled workers equipped with the necessary skills. Education systems need to focus on measuring what students actually learn and less on measuring inputs into the learning process under the implicit assumption that learning automatically follows. There is extensive evidence from across the ECA region that companies are looking for graduates who have not only vocational knowledge, technical and general skills but also behavioural skills, i.e. soft skills. (WB, p. 41).

One of the tools used by tertiary education accreditation bodies for feedback on curriculum improvement is the Assurance of Learning (AoL). AoL is „a systematic process of identifying and reviewing the learning objectives of a degree programme, designing, delivering and improving learning programmes to achieve the learning objectives, and demonstrating that the learning objectives of a degree programme have been met“<sup>6</sup>. For example, AoL was incorporated into the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation standards in 2003. The AoL tools and objectives are being implemented by the Prague University of Economics and Business as part of the AACSB international accreditation process, which it has been undergoing since 2016.

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6 University of South Carolina

## Education 4.0 and labour market demand for competences

The importance of acquiring the necessary competencies in education for future jobs that do not yet exist is also part of the so-called Education 4.0 of the World Economic Forum (WEF). The Education 4.0 taxonomy consists of a coherent set of competencies that are arranged in a tree-like structure. This tree-like structure is based on a core set of skills (Level 1), which is broken down into Level 2 skills and competencies, which are further clarified by the skills it emphasises (Level 3). For the three core groups of Level 1 and Level 2 skills, the WEF Education 4.0 taxonomy reaches the following conclusions (p. 8 - p. 9):

**Competencies and skills** - education systems have traditionally emphasised cognitive and analytical skills more than intrapersonal skills, while employers favour intrapersonal competencies. **Physical** competencies and skills are also included in this group.

**Attitudes and values** - these are the personal qualities that shape resilient students who are willing of life-long learning. Attitudes and values are less concerned with „how“ something should be done, but „why“ it should be done, and include a strong motivational component. Education 4.0 then breaks these down into self-regulated **intra-personal** and **extra-personal**.

**Knowledge and information** - although memorisation of information alone is likely to remain in the curricula of educational institutions for some time, technological developments are changing how people are able to process the amount of information available. Education 4.0, therefore, places less emphasis on **subject knowledge** and information per se but addresses it indirectly through the other skills listed in the taxonomy.

In his study for the Society for Human Resource Management, Wilkie (2019) found that although traditional tertiary education was designed to teach students skills that emphasise critical thinking, the ability to debate, to view problems from multiple perspectives and the ability to communicate clearly, nearly 3 in 4 employers say they struggle to find graduates with the soft skills their companies need. A 2019 report found that 51 percent of Society for Human Resource Management members who responded to the survey said education systems had done little or nothing to address the skills gap. Members cited the top soft skills lacking as: problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation and creativity, the ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity, and the ability to communicate. It is undeniable that in the near future, the most valuable job skills will be those that machines cannot yet do, which are soft skills. The survey suggested that young adults need to „learn how to learn“ to adapt to the rapidly changing world of work.

Cook (2020), in his study on the future skills of graduates, argues that against the backdrop of the necessary sustainability developments, there is a lack of clarity on what exactly is required of employees in terms of sustainability skills and what these ‚sustainability skills‘ might include. There is a clear consensus on the need for active cooperation between tertiary education institutions and the economic sector in the development of training materials and courses on sustainability, employability, and work readiness. Business leaders consider activities beyond studies and work placements very important, although graduates seem to underestimate this aspect. Communication and teamwork are often cited as essential skills. Cook (2020) also identifies gaps between how skills are perceived among tertiary graduates themselves and employers. When interviewed by potential employers, graduates lack negotiation skills, presentation skills, confidence in dealing with clients or supervisors, and professionalism.

Cook also reports that soft skills important for sustainability, such as lateral thinking, systems thinking, and creativity, were mentioned in interviews with businesses and universities as specific gaps that students and graduates lacked. As universities and businesses are aware of these particular skills gaps, this could be an area to focus on when developing training or course content. These would address these skills in a way that would meet the needs of both academia and the business sector (Cook, p. 29).

A fundamental problem has arisen in the World Bank's (WB 2011) attempt to answer the question of how to reduce the skills gap. While there are data on the number of tertiary graduates (i.e. how many diplomas are issued), there is no longer internationally comparable data on whether graduates have the right skills and competencies needed and demanded by the labour market (WB, p. 47). One way to get feedback on the structure of the educational process and curricula is to participate in international assessments/comparisons. In 2009, according to the World Bank, the Czech Republic was in the early stages of measuring and using data on student learning outcomes, with initial pilots of self-assessments and their instruments emerging and educational institutions beginning to appear on international assessments (WB, p. 10). For example, as mentioned earlier, the Prague University of Economics and Business has been undergoing the international accreditation process of the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) since 2016.

In a study by Valentine R. and Keating S. (2020), employers rated students' subject knowledge positively. Still, they placed equal weight on long-term and varied extra-curricular activities and cited work experience as one of the most important factors in recruitment, seeing it as an opportunity for students to develop employability skills and apply them in a pressurised environment.

In order to better connect tertiary education with the needs of the work environment, employers expect universities to incorporate additional methods such as practical case studies, discussion groups, presentations of business reports and client reports, and student internships into the curriculum (Low et al., 2016). Low acknowledges that tertiary institutions are bound by professional bodies to deliver the required vocational skills, but nothing should prevent the inclusion of initiatives to develop key non-technical skills that employers demand and that benefit both students and employers. These initiatives could include internships, dynamic teamwork, and better teaching of interpersonal/communication skills (p. 53).

## Summary

In conclusion, after thoroughly examining the literature on the international mobility of students in tertiary education, it has become evident that developing the competencies known as soft skills is crucial for graduates' employability. These soft skills, highlighted by employers, encompass the ability to handle unexpected situations, adapt to constant changes, communicate effectively, collaborate in teams, make independent decisions, and approach tasks proactively. In our interconnected world, having the capacity to thrive in international environments, whether in domestic entities with cross-border operations or international projects, has become indispensable. Tertiary education's emphasis on international mobility

equips students with these sought-after skills, and internships provide valuable real-world experience.

International experiences expose students to diverse cultures, perspectives, and approaches, fostering their adaptability, flexibility, and open-mindedness. These qualities are highly valued by employers, who seek individuals capable of effective collaboration in international teams. Moreover, studying abroad cultivates independence and resilience, qualities essential for success in any field. Students who have embraced international education have demonstrated their ability to navigate unfamiliar environments, think creatively, and tackle unexpected challenges head-on.

While recognising the significance of international mobility and its impact on graduates' employability, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and potential biases present in the reviewed literature. A more comprehensive conclusion requires critical reflection on the gaps and challenges identified throughout the analysis, stressing the need for further research to address these limitations. Additionally, integrating critical thinking, innovation, and adaptability into educational curricula is vital for preparing graduates to excel in today's dynamic labour market.

To effectively respond to future labour market demands, it is crucial to utilise tools that provide evidence of currently sought-after skills and those anticipated in the near future. Commonly employed tools in many OECD countries include labour force surveys, population surveys, tax data, and job vacancy data. Other approaches, such as employer surveys, worker surveys, quantitative forecasting models, sectoral studies, qualitative methods, and labour market information systems, also contribute to comprehensive analyses.

Based on the findings, future research might involve developing a questionnaire to assess the perceived benefits of international mobility in tertiary education. This questionnaire will capture the perspectives of students, graduates, and employers, including those who host interns. Focused on the Prague University of Economics and Business and the corresponding labour market sectors, my research aims to bridge the gap identified by the OECD, where employer surveys, worker surveys, and graduate surveys are not commonly utilised in the Czech Republic to identify labour market needs. By conducting a literature review and designing and implementing a questionnaire survey, we can gather valuable insights that inspire tertiary institutions to seek feedback and incorporate it into their curricula.

In summary, mobility in tertiary education plays a pivotal role in personal and professional development, promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance. Given the increasing globalisation of our society, the skills and experiences gained through studying abroad have become invaluable in the labour market. Thus, it is crucial for tertiary education institutions and government policymakers to continue supporting and promoting mobility in tertiary education, ensuring that students have ample opportunities to acquire these valuable experiences. Notably, the Erasmus program stands as a successful flagship initiative within the European Union in this regard.

## Resources

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