

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education analyses further careers of graduates more thoroughly

University candidates will soon receive an improved tool for determining which courses provide the highest chance of employment afterwards. Secondary school graduates, university authorities and labour market analysts will have at their disposal the latest version of ELA - a system monitoring the economic situation of graduates.

ELA was developed by scientists from the University of Warsaw and employees from the National Information Processing Institute. To analyse graduates' career in the labour market, its creators combined data from the POLON system with anonymised information from the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS).

By preparing reports for 2014 graduates, Poland joined the group of European countries, such as Spain, Austria, Lithuania or Scandinavian countries, which for a long time have been using administrative data to develop educational strategies. The advanced structure of ELA together with the innovative use of mass administrative data make this system one of the most modern systems of its kind in Europe.

New edition

The new edition of ELA allows comparing last year results against new reports for 2015 graduates. Observations of this group of graduates were conducted between January 2015 and September 2016. During this time, a group of over 360 thousand graduates was analysed. It included graduates of first degree studies (slightly above 203 thousand), second degree studies (ca. 145 thousand), and of long-cycle studies (nearly 20 thousand people). This data can be compared with the previous year, when nearly 380 thousand graduates were analysed.

ELA generates three types of reports:

- for individual university courses;
- for specific universities;
- Poland-wide reports.

The last two types of reports are only supplementary - the actual comparisons should be conducted mainly at the level of individual courses. In total, nearly 2 thousand more reports were created in the second edition of this survey, even though the statistical group was smaller. As the survey creators inform, over 38 thousand reports were generated this year.

The survey concerned a number of indicators, including:

- job search length;
- risk of unemployment;
- number of employers;
- remuneration.

What is interesting, the survey also distinguished different types of employment. The analysis covered employment as such, employment agreements and self-employment, which was added to the previous edition. By using ZUS data, it was possible to avoid distortion of results (resulting, amongst the others, from untrue statements of possible respondents) and statistical errors (resulting from random sampling - here the whole population is covered by the study!).

How well did the 2015 graduates do versus 2014 graduates?

Of all first degree graduates, 55% started employment during the first year after graduating - and this amount is 1 percentage point higher than for their one-year older peers. As many as 86% of second degree graduates from both years found employment. In a case of graduates of long-cycle studies, 85% and 83% (2015 graduates and 2014 graduates, respectively) found employment.

The second edition of the study also allowed collecting further information about professional development of 2014 graduates. Their average salary increases with the employment length (in the study, corresponding to a number of months from obtaining a diploma,. The number of people not able to find employment also decreased steadily.

What will happen to ELA now?

So far ELA attracted significant interest of researchers and market analysts. However, the main target group are, of course, future students. This system will help them to decide which university course guarantees them quick employment in the future.

With development of the system, monitoring of the increasing number of phenomena will be possible, including the economic activity of students during their studies, or information concerning quitting university courses and employment rates for people without a degree. In the future, ELA can also be used to monitor careers of doctoral candidates and young scientists, by analysing their scientific activity or estimating costs of entering the research field. With further development of the system and collection of more data ELA will become a tool for comprehensive evaluation of the labour market used to analyse even more variables.

