

Proposals for improvement in the education received in Psychology

The report entitled “The opinion of employers regarding the education received by graduates in Psychology” sets out the results of a survey conducted on organisations that have recruited individuals who recently graduated in Psychology. It relates to the education received and the skills acquired. Furthermore, this information is complemented by data from other surveys (on access to the labour market and satisfaction) and information from the UNEIX university system.

The key results of this report are as follows:

- The Bachelor’s degree in Psychology experiences very high demand.
- Student satisfaction with the usefulness of external training placements is low when compared to other study programmes.
- Access to the labour market experienced by psychologists is 82%, lower than the figure for the study programmes in the Catalan university system as a whole, particularly when it comes to the suitability of specific functions from the study programme to work: 31% are overqualified.
- Employers are satisfied (7.1 out of 10) with the skills of psychologists.
- Nevertheless, they point to the need for improvements in the following skills: “problem solving and decision-making” and “practical training”; however, this is also true of the remaining study programmes in the Catalan university system.
- With regard to specific skills in the field of Psychology, 60% report a need to improve the education delivered in terms of interpersonal and communication skills. 1 in every 3 employers indicate that there are shortcomings in the following skills: self-critical thought and ability for insight, intervention with people in different spheres, and integration of psychology developments into professional practice.
- Lastly, employers underline the importance of relying on professionals with specific or specialist training in the field.

In view of these results, and with the participation of faculty representatives from the Catalan universities delivering the Bachelor’s degree in Psychology, a host of proposals for improvement to this study programme have been drawn up.

- To encourage tutorial plans between peers in order to identify students who may drop out during the 1st year, determine their interests and help them to develop their identity throughout the degree.
- To enhance students’ knowledge in relation to their employment opportunities beyond the clinical sphere:
 - o To gain a better perspective during the study programme of other professional fields in which psychologists operate. This may be done by means of a tutorial plan of action, optional subjects intended for different specialisations, visits to the Professional Association of Psychologists, short placements at companies starting in the first year (for instance, a 25-hour real work training placement at a psychology-related workplace), etc.

- To design a range of more professionally-oriented optional subjects, increasing employer participation with these optional subjects.
 - To benefit from a certain common catalogue of Master's degrees would help firmly establish the idea that psychology can offer other specialist fields. The health field is already prominent and there are no exemplary Master's degrees in the other fields.
- To organise seminars with a small group of students where specific cross-disciplinary skills are developed, such as communication or self-reflection and self-critical thought.
 - To encourage entrepreneurship and training in cross-disciplinary skills in order to improve the positioning of psychologists in the labour market beyond the clinical sphere. Cross-disciplinary training in the technological sphere (big data, R/SPSS programming, etc.), for instance, may help to boost the employability of individuals who do not manage to enter the specific professional fields of psychology (which, a priori, would not require this more technological-oriented training).