

Higher education research has to identify the key actors' notions of job requirements and competences of graduates, i.e. the notions of the employers, students and academics. Therefore, research instruments are needed which mirror the character and the level of the actors' concepts, terms and perceptions; and surveys are needed which are suitable to provide feedback about the actual links between competences and work tasks. Thus, the improvement of the quality of actors' rating studies has to be a key area of research activities on competences in higher education.

Four directions of improvement are most salient. (a) Concepts are needed to overcome the "match-mismatch" paradigm: i.e. taking into account the necessary concurrent "over-" and "under"-education, the educational tasks beyond professional preparation, the varied values of graduates, the creative function of presumed "over-education", etc. (b) Methods have to become smarter in demystifying the actors' misconceptions of job requirements and competences (do employers really know what they need and graduates what their strengths and weaknesses are?). (c) Ways have to be found to create a better balance between subject-related competences (e.g. mathematical reasoning) and general competences (e.g. leadership). (d) It is still an open question how one should measure competences and job requirements in a way that the varied demands in the employment systems and the varied curricular concepts in higher education are seriously taken into consideration: how, for example, have graduate surveys to be designed that they serve a "fitness for purpose"-evaluation convincingly.