

## **Qualification mismatches among Higher Education graduates in Cyprus**

In a world with fast-paced changes and developments the demand for skills by economies around the world is also rapidly changing. Although the supply for skills/qualifications has not been short (as according to Eurostat in 2022, more than 40 % of persons aged 25-34 years in the EU had completed tertiary education), existing studies in the literature provide evidence for the increasing number of skills mismatches between the skills/qualifications the current workforce has, and the skills and qualifications required by the labour market. Thus individuals/graduates and society do not experience the highest returns since a number of graduates are not well-matched to their jobs and do not utilize their knowledge and skills acquired through Higher Education. This paper focuses on qualification mismatches of Higher Education graduates in Cyprus based on data collected in the context of the first cycle of the National Graduate Tracking Survey (NGTS) along with Eurograduate 2022. Specifically, the current study focuses on the presentation of findings related to vertical and horizontal mismatches among Higher Education graduates. Vertical mismatch and field of study mismatch (horizontal mismatch) represent two prevalent forms of misalignment between the education system and the labour market. Vertical mismatch occurs when the attained level of education differs from the level required for a specific job. On the other hand, field of study mismatch arises when the type or field of education is incongruent with the field necessary for effective job performance. The study identifies four distinct categories of mismatch: overqualification (well-matched by field of study but overqualified), field of study mismatch (vertically well-matched but mismatched by field), full mismatch (individuals who are both overqualified and mismatched by field of study), and well-matched. A multinomial logistic regression model is applied using the NGTS data, to provide a deeper understanding of qualification mismatches and their relation to socio-demographic, education, and employment variables. Multinomial logistic regression models can provide an insight to the factors that can account for high levels of qualification mismatches and the propensity of being at the risk of having a job that does not match graduates' level of qualifications and/or their field of study. Analysis is underway and findings will be presented and discussed at the conference.

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Dr. Terpsa Konstantinidou is the Director of the Department of Higher Education of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport, and Youth since 2018. The Examination Services fall under her area of responsibility as well. She served as Head of the Examination Services of the Ministry from 2009 – 2018. She has also worked in different positions in the Counseling and Career Services of the Ministry. She served as a psychologist and Director of the Patra's Psychiatric Unit at the Mental Health Center of Greece, at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center in Boston, USA and at the South-Central Community Mental Health Center of Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A.

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Dr Petridou holds a PhD in Educational Measurement and an MSc in Educational Research from the University of Manchester in UK. She has been the coordinator of various national, European, and international research projects. In the context of her research projects, she actively collaborated with policymakers to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice. Her work was published in various academic journals. Currently she is the scientific coordinator of the Department of Higher Education project in the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan entitled “Development of a National Graduate Tracking Mechanism and Design and Implementation of an Employers’ Skills Survey” .

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