EMPLOYABILITY – Internal Reflection, Definition and Clarification

A project at the University of Münster

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University of Münster: profile

› Germany's fourth-largest university

› 280 courses of study in 15 departments:
*Natural Sciences ; Life Sciences; Medicine;
Social Sciences and Humanities; Music
College, but no Engineering*

› 43,000 students; 7,500 graduates per year

› 6,900 staff, with 550 professors

Careers Service at University of Münster: facts

- Founded in 1998 as one of the first University's Career Services in

Germany

- 7,25 full time equivalents of staff and two student assistants
- Situation in Germany: approx. 75 % of all Higher Education institutions have a Careers Service, considerably different in staff and programme

Each year…

- … about 150 workshops with about 1.700 participan
- …about 1.500 individual career guidance and coach
- …continous cooperation with about 250 employers
- …study trips to employers and in-house lectures
- …Careers Service library

Careers Service at University of Münster : formats

› **Workshops** (integrated in most Bachelor and many Master courses)
  o individual profiling, soft skills, networking, CV writing and applications
  o Assessment Center trainings (with employers)
  o Practical case studies (with employers)
› **E-Learning** (blended learning workshops, webinars, tutorials)
› **Information sessions** in faculties
› **Excursions** (with employers) and study visits (to other cities and countries)
› **CV** and **cover letter check**
› **1:1-counselling**
› **psychometric testing**
› **Career fair** (with employers)
› **Online job portal**
› **Library** with manuals and labour market information

Careers Service at University of Münster : Areas of activities

(1) Cover the whole process of individual professional orientation throughout the *student life cycle*

- Entry level: support for individual profiling and course choices
- Mid level: support for internship search and application process
- Final level: support for job search and application process
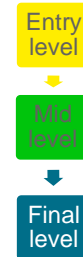
(2) Cooperation with faculties

- Goal setting and elaboration of an employability strategy
- Clarify and strengthen taught skills in the curricula
- Integrate Careers Service workshops into study programmes
- Information about subject specific labour market situation
- Evaluate the outcome of implemented measures

Project Employability at the University of Münster
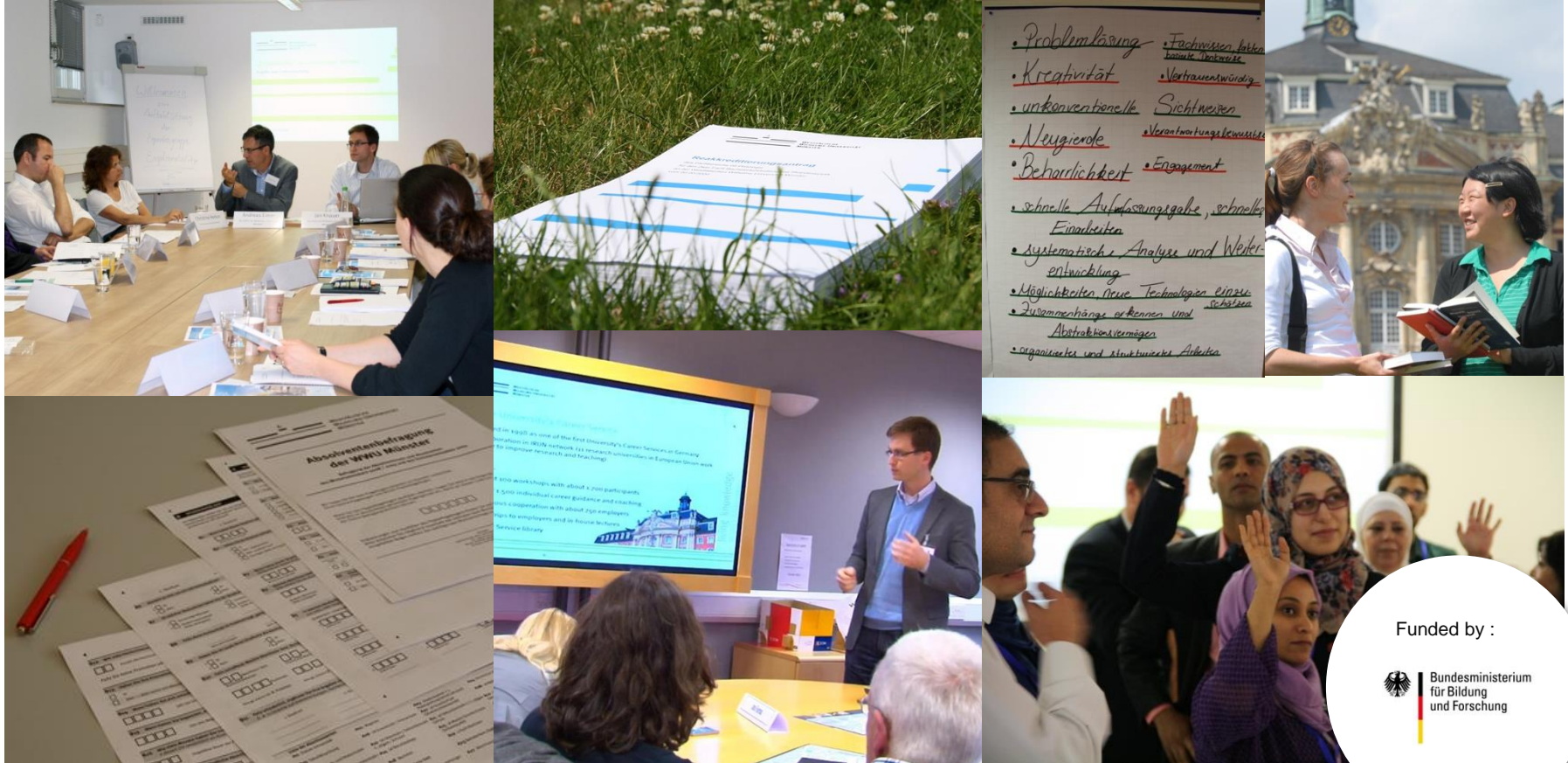
Funded by :

Why should universities actively deal with „employability"?

› Education policy (Bologna reform) and higher education law: „Employability" is set as one main goal for higher education

› But: concepts are not defined, neither by education policy nor by law

› This can open room for influence on strategies and curricula design

› Universities reactions range from sitting out, neglecting and pretending to take action

› In the meantime: external influences (e.g. employers) as well as expectations (students, parents)

Our project goal

We want to achieve that the departments and academics …

› … open up for the issue of „employability"

› … deal with the topic in a substantial and structured way

› … see that this topic opens interesting teaching and learning

perspectives

Having a clear vision on „employability" strengthens universities'
self-confidence in the field of academic teaching

Our approach: to strengthen the strengths

› Focus on existing strenghts rather than on deficits or criticism

› We do not tell the departments what their position should be, but we are the advocates for transparency and plausibility
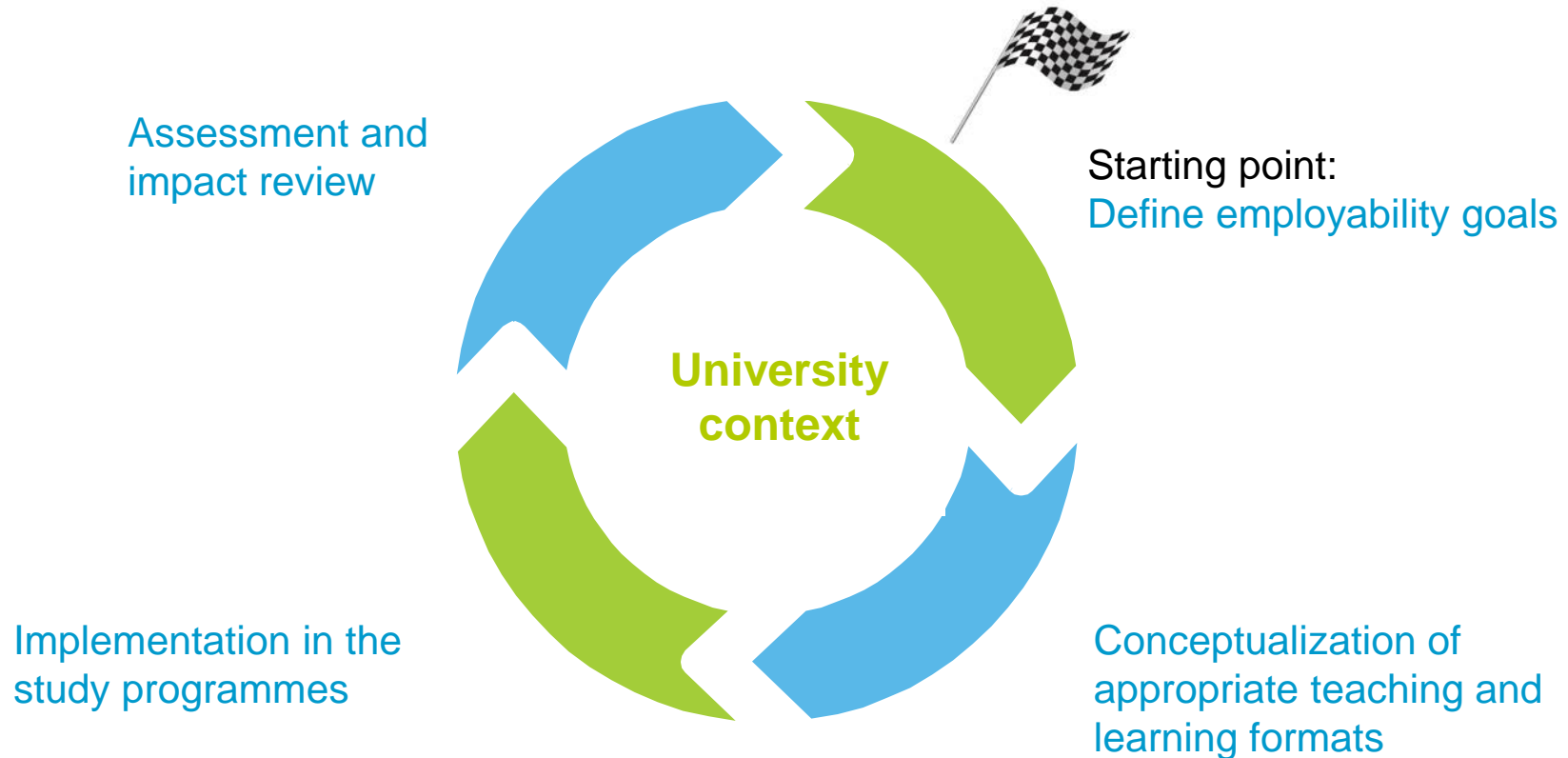
Our approach: to strengthen the strengths

Our belief:

› University education in Germany is of high quality

› University education differs from vocational education

› The differences between university education and vocational education need to be recognised

Core challenge for departments: becoming clear on what employability actually means

› We support the departments to create a plausible employability position:

- What specific profile will graduates acquire? – entrepreneurial, elitist, innovative, marketable, research-oriented, etc.?

- Define clear graduate attributes: better focusing on some well-founded strenghts than offering a little from everything

- Study modules need to fit the targeted employability position

- Consistent assessment and impact review

Our procedure: first set goals, then implement measures

Assessment and impact review

Starting point:
Define employability goals

University context

Implementation in the study programmes

Conceptualization of appropriate teaching and learning formats

The positive effects

› Prospective students are **explicitly informed** and have valid criteria for their decision

› False expectations are minimized, **study motivation increased**

› Departments can clearly **communicate their study profile**

› Departments change **from reacting to acting**

› Departments can **clearly asess their strategic goals**

How do we work with the departments?

› We <u>talk</u> with departmental staff: academic deans, study coordinators and interested academics

› We <u>analyse</u> study courses: via interviews with teachers and students; analyse teaching modules, study course information and survey results

› We <u>moderate</u> the discussions and decision making processes in the departments and support the implementation of results

The right moment to get in contact with a department

› …when the department has to react on <u>external requirements</u>: accreditations, evaluations

› …jump on <u>internal motivation</u>, when the department wants to develop new study courses

› …when the department <u>has to compete</u> with other universities and wants to highlight its unique selling points

Two exemplary project results

1

2

Developing an employability position

Clarifying a skills profile

1 Department makes clear statements on employability

| Before	Now
› Disagreement about qualification goals in the department › Statements about prospective professional fields were too general	› Description of realistic and probable professional fields (if necessary with information on further qualification needed) › Description of the individual process of professional orientation › Consensus about the goals in the department › Basis for a logical construction of the curriculum

POSITIONIERUNG DER MUSIKHOCHSCHULE MÜNSTER ZU EMPLOYABILITY
(BESCHÄFTIGUNGSFÄHIGKEIT)

Erarbeitet mit fachlicher Unterstützung des Career Service der WWU | Stand: 4. Juni 2014
⬇ Das Positionspapier kann auch hier als pdf-Dokument abgerufen werden.

GRUNDSÄTZLICHE AUSRICHTUNG DER STUDIENGÄNGE UND AUSBILDUNGSZIELE

Die Vorbereitung der Studierenden auf das Erwerbsleben als Musiker ist integraler Bestandteil aller angebotenen Studiengänge, sowohl im künstlerischen als auch im künstlerisch-pädagogischen Bereich. Die Musikhochschule Münster orientiert ihre Studiengänge an den aktuellen und voraussehbaren Bedarfen in den potentiellen

Screenshot of a department's position

2 Departments decide on core labour market skills and communicate them clearly

<table>
<tr><td style="background:red;color:white">**Before**</td></tr>
<tr><td>„Studying was nice, but what can I do with it now?"</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td style="background:green;color:white">**Now**</td></tr>
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› <u>Teachers</u> refer to the specialist and soft skills the students acquire in the courses

› <u>Graduates</u> know their strengths acquired in their studies

› <u>Employers</u> recognise graduates' skills profile

› <u>Prospective students</u> can make informed decisions

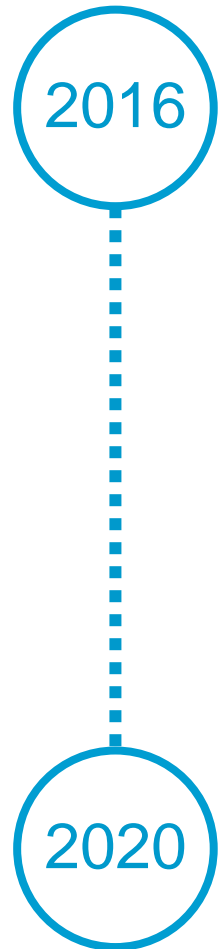› Clear teaching profile and unique selling points of the department
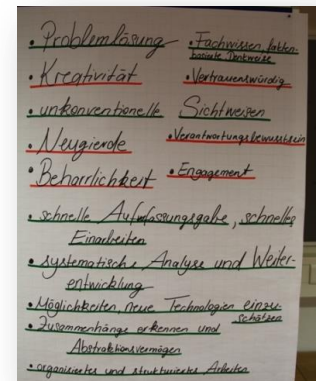
What we want to achieve over the next few years (project phase II until 2020)

Goals for the second project phase

2016

› Agree on a <u>university wide employability position</u>

› Fully benefit from findings from <u>graduate surveys</u>

› Offer <u>qualification measures for teachers</u> (workshop series)

2020

Goals for the second project phase

› Involve students in an <u>interdisciplinary practice project</u>

› Create a <u>handbook</u> with good teaching methods and formats for employability

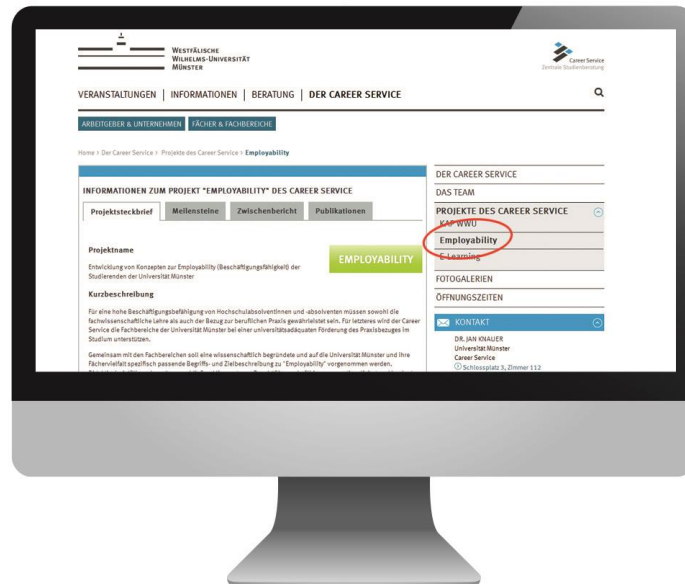› Publish a <u>collection of best practices</u> of the Münster „employability" model

2016

2020

If you want to know more

Interim report

Project website
wwu.de/CareerService/
employability

Exchange and
discussion

Many thanks for your attention!

Career Service at the University of Münster
Project „Employability"

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www.uni-muenster.de/CareerService/employability
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