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Skill Profile for Employability: Case of Agricultural Higher Education

SETYO PERTIWI*

**Bogor Agricultural University, Agricultural Engineering*

Abstract

The central issues faced by the Indonesian higher education system at this moment are, among others, quality and relevance. Due to the low quality and relevance on the one hand, and economic crisis on the other hand, unemployment of university graduates becomes a major problem. It is estimated that about 20,000 graduates are still unemployed or under-employed.

To overcome the problem, a study on skill profile for employability of graduates from several fields of study has been conducted by Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of National Education (DGHE— MNE, 2002). The study was to identify the specification of graduates' basic competence that is required by the labor market and to develop a mechanism to link employers' skill requirements with the curriculum review process at the institutional level. It was involving respondents from university faculties/departments as curriculum planner, human resources managers of employing companies as the users, and graduates employed by companies as the party who are cognizant of the need to acquire particular skills through their day to day real experience on the job. They were questioned with similar questionnaires to assess the need of acquiring a set of basic skills on entering the job market.

This paper will discuss part of the study results, especially regarding agricultural fields of study. Although to some certain extents there exists disagreement area (gap) between the three parties, a set of personal and social competencies as well as general and specific skills and competencies required by job market from the graduates of agricultural field of study has been identified. This calls for some curriculum reviews and updates. Alternative model to link higher education institutions and job market in curriculum review and update process will be discussed.

Keywords: Agriculture, curriculum review, higher education, relevance, skill profile