



## USING GRADUATE CAREER TRACK SYSTEM DATA IN THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Vera Göndör<sup>1</sup>, Zoltán Kertész<sup>2</sup>, Zoltán Koczor<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Óbuda University, Department of Quality Management and Technology,  
Budapest (Hungary)

### **Abstract:**

*As part of our graduate career track system (GCTS), we have carried out a survey based on questionnaires among our active students and the alumni. The GCTS allows that our institution can take part in the national career track surveys, the quality of education can be improved, the labour market can provide feedback for the education system, further services can be provided for graduates, and the institution can be more effective.*

*Student surveys aim to collect data about the future plans of our active students. Alumni surveys aim to collect data about the graduates' future plans, their actual job and status, and their judgment of our institution from a few years perspective. The study develops methods for the necessary changes, building them into the quality management system.*

*This paper presents the results of the 2011 survey and a case study to demonstrate how to use the data.*

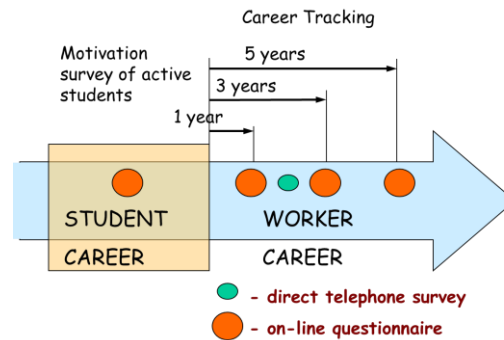
### **Keywords:**

*graduate career track system (GCTS), processing questionnaires, process development, adult education, alumni*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

We have carried out conscious quality development in our institution to maintain the values of earlier decades. Our institution is ISO 9001 certified, which provided the opportunity and the background for the developments. Today we carry out surveys in a TQM-based system adapted to the education environment. Surveys are carried out at different points of the education cycle, and serve as a basis of quality planning. The graduate career track (GCT) system and the student motivational survey are fitted into this system.

The Óbuda University implements student motivational surveys and graduate career tracking with help of standard online questionnaires. The coordination of the surveying process is the task of the Quality Management Center.



*Figure 1: Graduate Career Track System*

Students with active student status participated in our student motivation survey. The survey ranged over every university year and every major. Students received a message via the Neptun system about the survey, asking them to fill in an online questionnaire. The survey was implemented in May 2011.

For the graduate career track we ask alumni who graduated one, three or five years earlier. We gather their contact information one year prior to the actual study. As part of the survey, we ask graduates in an email to fill in an online questionnaire. In 2011, based on the data collected in the previous year, we could ask alumni who graduated one or three years earlier.

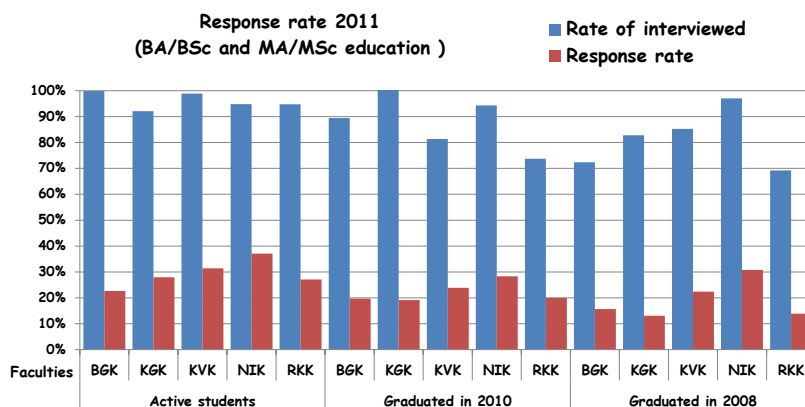
We plan to develop the GCT in the framework of the quality management system in the following fields:

- Improving the marketing processes
- Improving the conditions of education
- Improving the contents of education
- Prediction for undergraduates, supporting their preparation
- The marketing of graduates on the labour market
- Supporting Alumni processes
- Providing feedback and motivating the staff and lecturers participating in the education process

## **2 DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES BASED ON THE RESULTS OF 2011**

### **2.1 Studying the representativeness of the survey**

In case of active students, response rate was 28 per cent (the total number of active students is 9,848). This is much higher than the 19 per cent response rate of the previous year, and is also an outstanding rate in a national perspective. As for the graduates, we processed data coming from 513 people in the job market, who graduated from our institution either in 2008 or in 2010. Response rate was 19,6 per cent (total number of the sample was 2,613), which is much higher than the 14,5 per cent of last year.



Year	Active students	Graduated 1 year ago	Graduated 3 year ago	Target
<b>Rate of interviewed</b>				
2010	92,2%	88,8%	62,8%	50%
2011	96,3%	89,9%	80,1%	75%
<b>Response rate</b>				
2010	21,0%	12,3%	9%	30%
2011	27,98%	19,5%	14,1%	30%

Figure 2: Response rate 2011

Considering the specific indices and the distribution, the survey can be considered representative. The results allow us to draw conclusions mainly about full time education. The rate of students and graduates in different groups, which were segmented by our factors, do not significantly differ from the rate of responses received from the different segments.

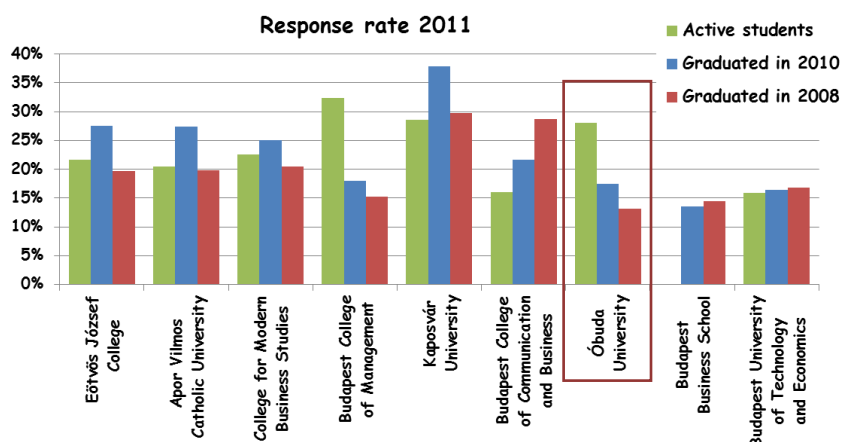


Figure 3: Comparison of higher education institutions [2]



## 2.2 Improving the marketing processes

Today's active students still remember the factors that influenced their decision when they chose our higher education institution from among the many. Our aim is to identify these factors, so that we can communicate information on our institution in a more relevant way. This is important for the institution, because we can publicize our values, and, on the other hand, useful for the students who will know what to expect if they choose us.

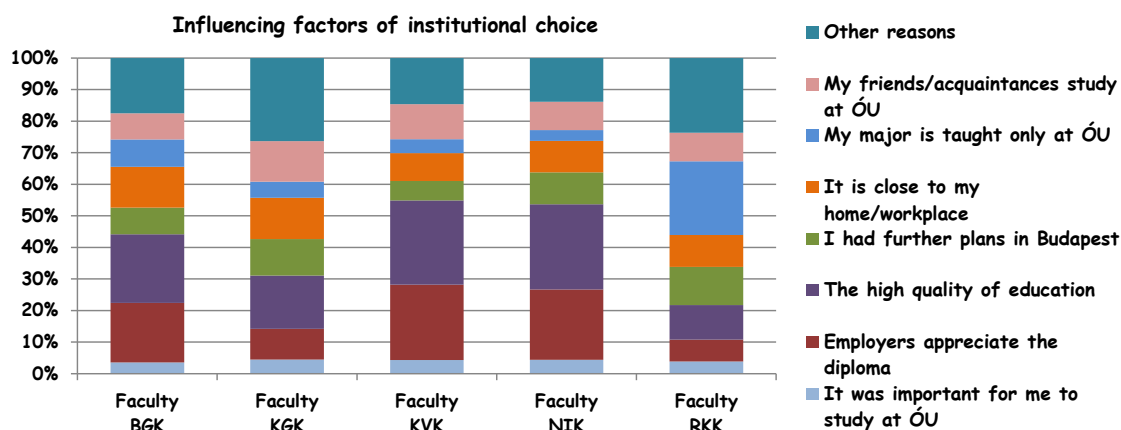


Figure 4: Which factors influenced your choice when you decided on Óbuda University (ÓU) as your higher education institution?

## 2.3 Improving the conditions of education

Part of our graduate survey was to evaluate the human factor of the education. We asked graduates to choose their level of satisfaction, and also the importance of several human factors. Development priority was defined on the basis of satisfaction divided by importance. The approach is that the level of satisfaction and the level of importance should be in proportion (that is: we expect higher satisfaction in case of higher importance).

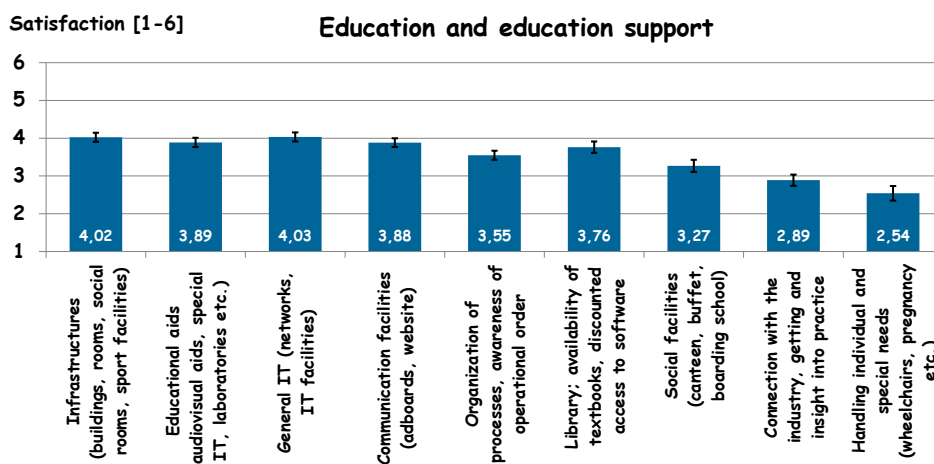


Figure 5: Please evaluate the level of education and education support in the light of your work experience.

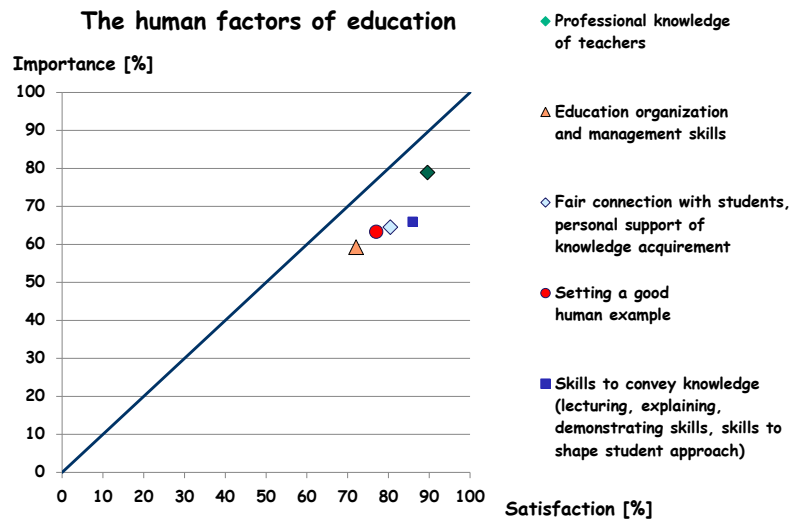


Figure 6: Please evaluate the human factors of college education from the point of view of importance and your satisfaction.

## 2.4 Improving the contents of education, prediction for undergraduates, supporting their preparation

We also asked graduates about different fields of their profession. The responses reflect two important aspects: the answers reflect both the needs for further education and the actual level of knowledge.

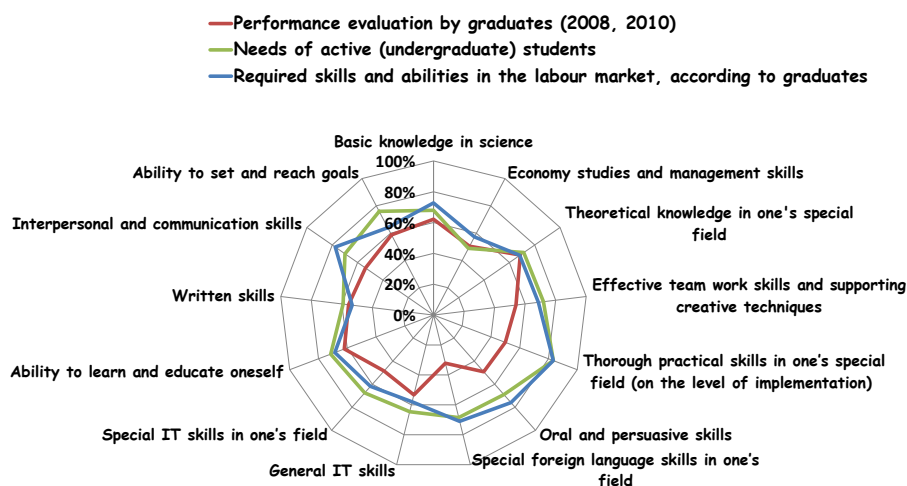


Figure 7: Skills and abilities which can be improved for the undergraduates at the Óbuda University; and the evaluation of improving skills and abilities by graduates based on their work experience

## 2.5 The marketing of graduates on the labour market

An important output of the survey is to define the job market success of our graduates compared to other higher education institutions. We can use this information in our marketing in order to attract students in the future. In respect of the marketability of the knowledge that can be obtained here, our institution is in the front line compared to other higher education institutions.

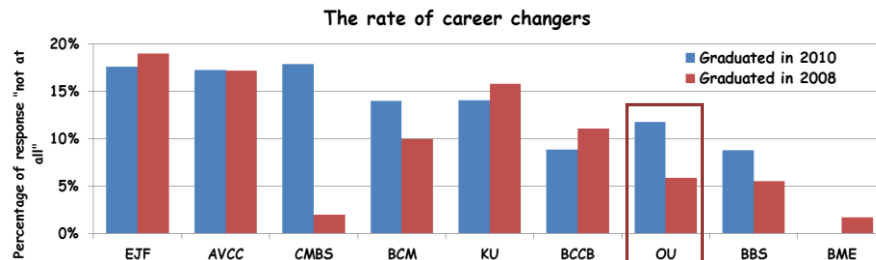


Figure 8: The rate of career changers (who never use their higher education knowledge in their careers)[2]

An important aspect of career choice for students when they enter higher education is the expected income level. The results show our strengths, nevertheless we plan further improvements to get even closer to the most distinguished institutions. We wish to give structured support to job fairs, increasing in number, in order to help our students to enter the job market. This could also raise income level.

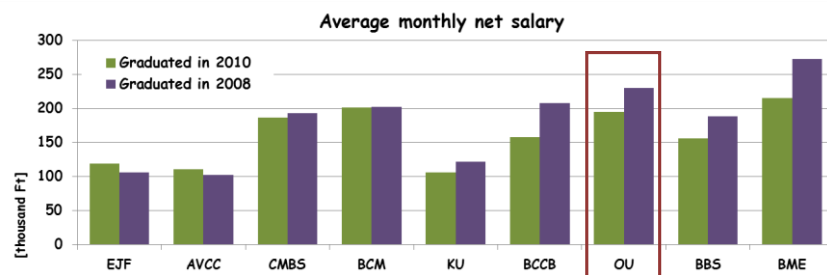


Figure 9: How much was your net income (after taxes) from your job in the previous month / when you received a typical "normal" salary? [2]

## 2.6 Supporting Alumni processes

The results serve as an important input for the institution's adult education development plans. The needs concerning the length of the courses are useful in the development the content and form of education. Based on the results, the most important are: the standardization of education forms, the development of the modular system and the acknowledgement of personal needs.

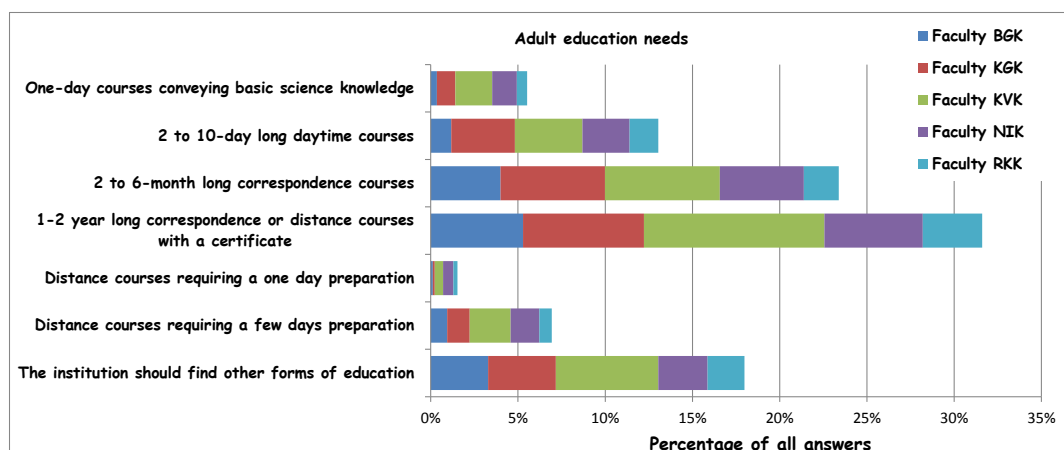


Figure 10: Mark the three most important fields in which you think the institution should provide modern further education for its graduates



## 2.7 Providing feedback and motivating the staff and lecturers participating in the education process

For obvious reasons, we consider our graduates' opinion about our teachers more objective, than our active students' ideas. We regularly measure student satisfaction. It was useful to see our graduates' evaluation about teachers whom they considered influential in their studies and their career. These answers provide important motivation for our teachers, who can get positive feedback about their work. The results can also be useful in performance evaluations and qualification processes.

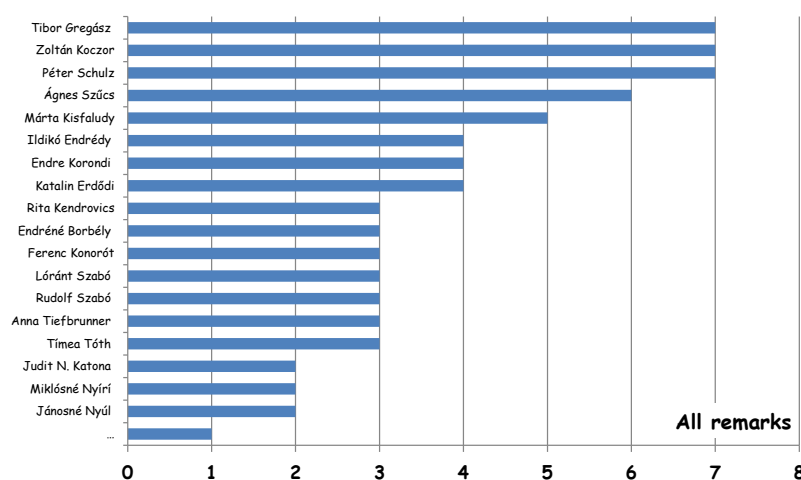


Figure 11: Influential teachers

### Handling individual comments

We asked our graduates' further comments in an open-ended question. Their ideas also provide a basis for important development fields.

- [Faculty KGK] "Demands for many of the subjects were low. It was easy to cheat at tests. Many of the teachers were overindulgent and not demanding enough. There were only a few subjects where you had to work hard to pass the exam. These things turned out only at the job interviews. ..."
- [Faculty RKK] "The college should invite more lecturers from the industry (leaders and representatives of companies), who could inform us on the latest professional developments and their professional experience. "
- [Faculty NIK] " Much more connection should be provided with future employers so that students can see real life examples. "
- [Faculty KVK] " ... The college should organize occasional one-day conferences and/or open days for graduates so that we can follow the latest developments in our ex-college. "
- [Faculty BGK] " Thank you for the education in this college! "
- " The questionnaire is too long. "



### 3 CONCLUSIONS

In 2011, we questioned people who graduated one or three years earlier. Response rate was high also in a national perspective. This proves our graduates' dedication and responsibility, for which we are grateful.

Besides the positive responses, we could identify several fields where there is a lot to be done by our staff in respect to their work, organizational efficiency and creativity. The quality management system can help as a framework to achieve these goals, but it is also necessary to have a well-defined organizational strategy and a professionally dedicated staff.

#### *Acknowledgements*

Special thanks to our responding students and graduates for providing us with useful information in the survey.

*The works aiming the developments are implemented with support of the application titled „Student and Institution Service Development in Higher Education” as part of the Hungarian Social Renewal Operational Programme (TÁMOP-4.1.1-08/2/KMR-2009-0005).*

#### *References*

- [1] KOCZOR, Z.; Némethné ERDŐDI, K., GÖNDÖR, V.; improvements realized using self-evaluation based on quality award in higher education, 45th International Congress IFKT, Ljubljana, 27-29 May 2010., pp. 215 ISBN 978-961-6045-79-7
- [2] [http://www.felvi.hu/diploman\\_tul/diplomas\\_palyakovetesi\\_adatok](http://www.felvi.hu/diploman_tul/diplomas_palyakovetesi_adatok)
- [3] KOCZOR, Z.; GÖNDÖR, V.; GÁTI, J.; KERTÉSZ, Z.: Supporting higher education marketing with quality management tools, Autex 2011, pp. 711-714, ISBN 978-2-7466-2858-8

#### **Corresponding address:**

Vera GÖNDÖR  
Óbuda University  
Department of Quality Management and Technology  
Rejtő Sándor Faculty of Light Industry and Environmental Protection Engineering  
Doberdó út 6. H-1034 Budapest, Hungary  
phone: +36 30 9644-137 fax: +36 1 4532-860 e-mail: gondor.vera@rkk.uni-obuda.hu