

Door-opener into the labour market: Empirical results of international studies on temporary student mobility

A short report of the VALERA Project

Séminaire Relations Internationales Quelles stratégies pour une internationalisation des Universités ?

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Structure

- Short introduction to the ValERA project
- Do mobile students have advantages as regards competences, transition to work, career?
 - ➔ Comparison: previous surveys, students' self assessment, employers' view
- Characteristics of the study abroad period
- Differences by subject area
- Situation of graduates from France in comparison
- Summary and possible implications

The VALERA Project

OFFICIAL TITLE:

External Evaluation of the Impact of ERASMUS Mobility and Students' Access to Employment and Career Development, and Teachers' Career Development and on Two Areas of Study to be Specified

SHORT: ValERA (The Professional VALue of ERasmus Mobility)

TIME PERIOD: Dec. 2004 – June 2006

COVERAGE: 30 European countries (23 languages)

2 PROJECT PHASES: quantitative general vs. qualitative field-specific

| | Target Population | Countries/ Languages covered | Sample | Return rate |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Expert Survey (March-May 05) | Experts with different backgrounds | 30 countries 3 Languages (FR; EN; DE) | 156 experts in 29 countries | 43 % (n=67) |
| Student Survey (Sept.05–Feb.06) | ERASMUS students of 2000/01 (N=108,505) | 30 countries, 23 languages | 20,500 students of selected HEI | Net. 45% (n=4589) |
| Teacher Survey (Oct.05–Feb.06) | ERASMUS teachers of 2000/01 (N=13,988) | 30 countries, 3 languages | Census (N= 13,988) | Net. 24% (n=755) |
| University Leader Surv. (Sept.05–Feb.06) | Uni leaders of ERASMUS HEI in 2000/01 (N=2,003) | 30 countries, 23 languages | Census (N= 2,003) | Net. 44% (n=626) |
| Employer Survey (Feb.06–May06) | Employers of former ERASMUS Stud. (plus...) | 30 countries, 23 languages | „Backpacker“ + 4500 bought addresses | Net 6% (n=312) |
| Workshops (Mar.06–May06) | Experts and stakeholders (employer, teachers, politics, former and current students) | Wide representation of countries, EN | Qualitative data | Qualitative data |

Outcome-oriented ERASMUS evaluations

ERASMUS 1988/89 Students Three Years and Five Years Later

- 1,339 and 1,234 former ERASMUS students from 12 countries
- Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler. *Study Abroad and Early Career*. London and Bristol, PA: Kingsley, 1996

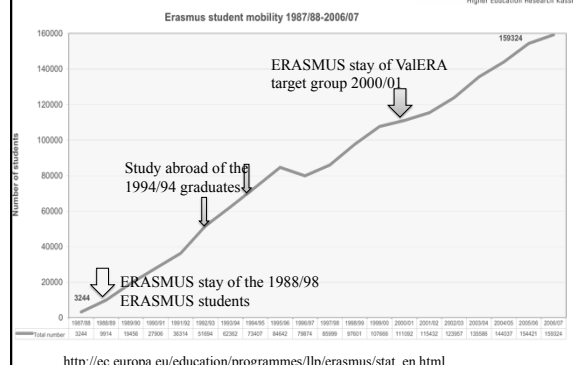
ERASMUS 1994/95 Graduates Five Years Later as Compared to Other Mobile and Non-mobile Graduates

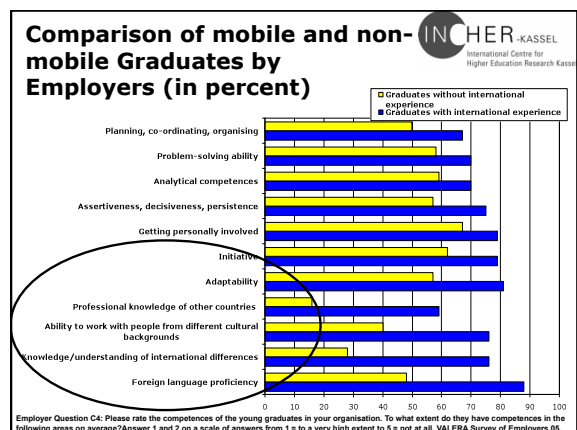
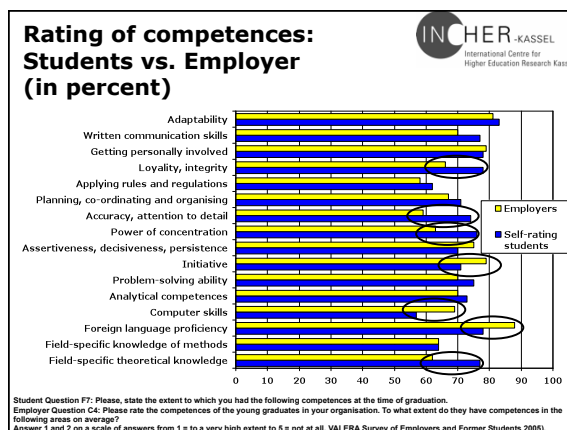
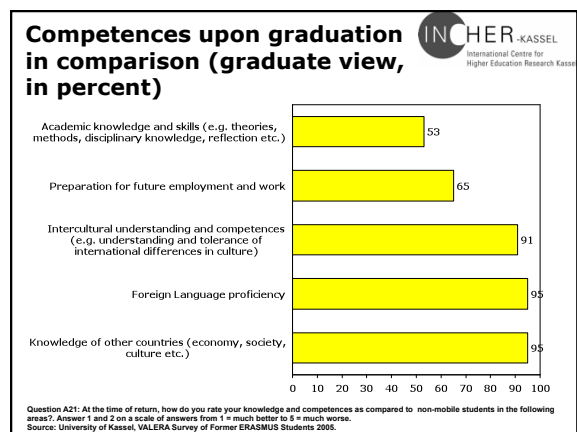
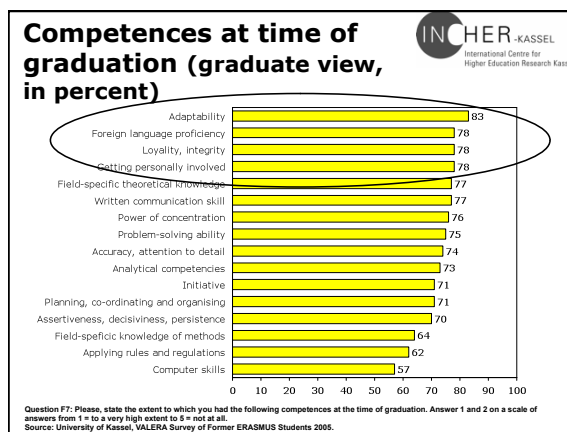
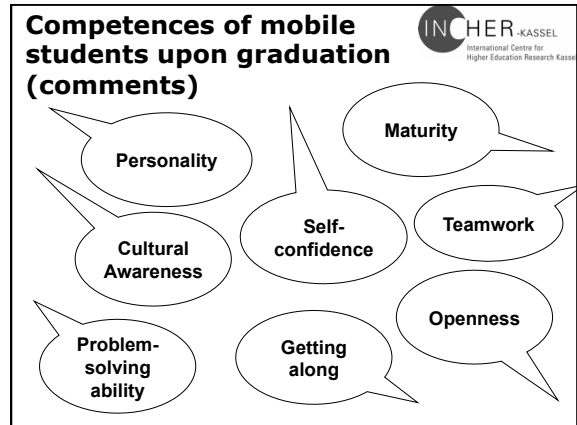
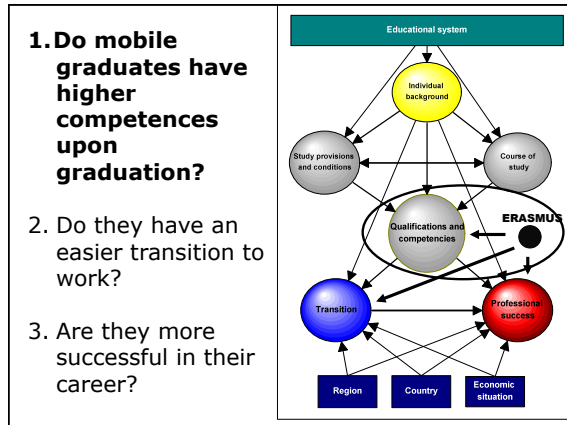
- 407 former ERASMUS students graduating in 1994/95 as compared to more than 1,000 other mobile students and more than 10,000 non-mobile students
- Ulrich Teichler (ed.). *ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme. Findings of an Evaluation Study*. Bonn: Lemmens, 2002

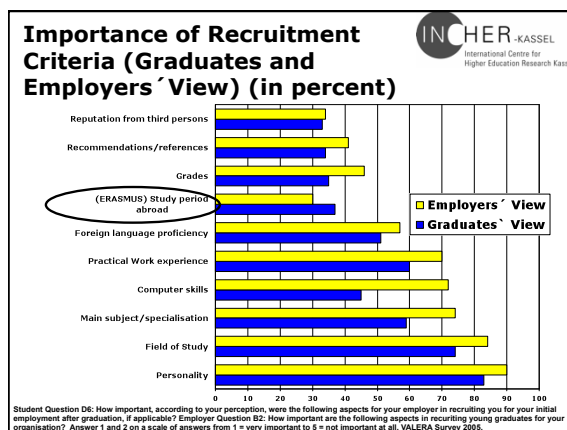
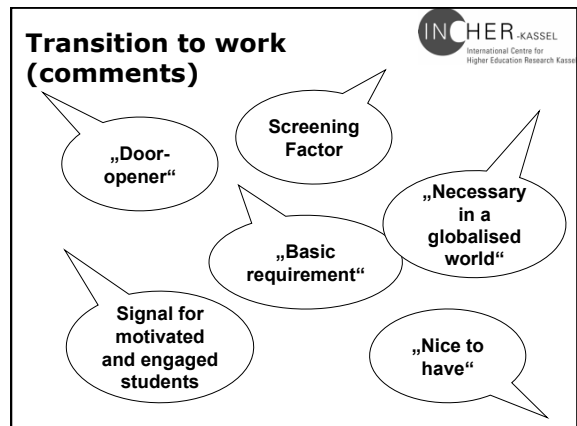
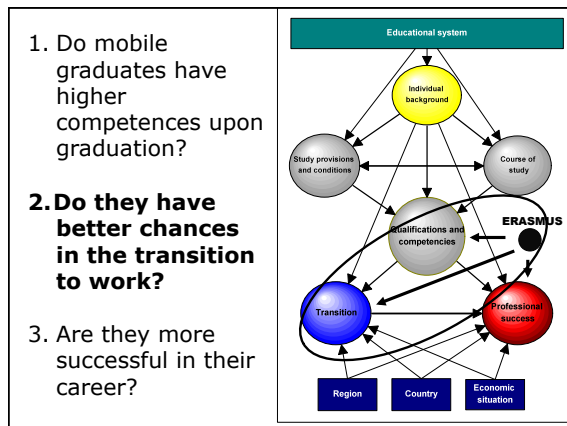
ERASMUS 2000/01 Students Five Years Later

- More than 4,500 former ERASMUS students from 25 countries
- Oliver Bracht, Constanze Engel, Kerstin Janson, Harald Schomburg and Ulrich Teichler. *The Professional Value of ERASMUS Mobility*

ERASMUS Student Mobility





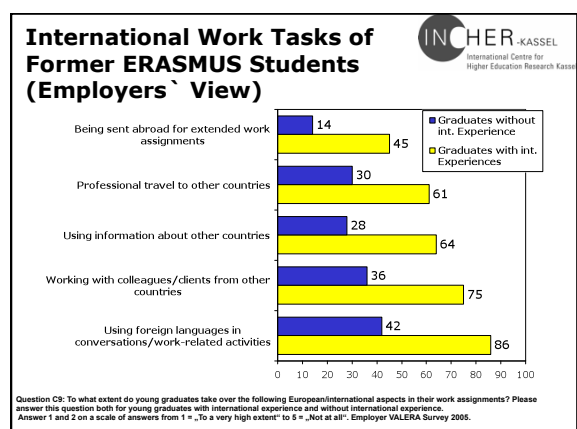
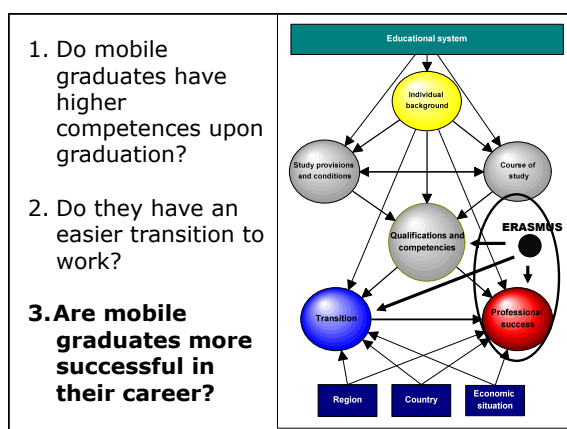


Perceived Positive Influence of (ERASMUS) Study Period on Employment and Work

| | 1988/89 | 1994/95* | 2000/01 |
|----------------------------|---------|----------|---------|
| Obtaining first job | 71 | 66 | 54 |
| Type of work task involved | 49 | 44 | 39 |
| Income level | 25 | 22 | 16 |

* Year of graduation

Question H1: What impact do you feel that your study abroad experience has had with regard to your employment? Answer 1 and 2 on a scale of answers from 1 = very positive impact to 5 = very negative impact. VALERA Survey of Former ERASMUS students 2005.



ERASMUS-Related Work Task of Former ERASMUS Students (% of employed graduates)

| | 1998/99 | 1994/95* | 2000/01 |
|---|---------|----------|---------|
| Using the language of the host country orally | 47 | 42 | 38 |
| Using the language of the host country in reading and writing | 47 | 40 | 38 |
| Using firsthand professional knowledge of host country | 30 | 25 | 25 |
| Using first hand knowledge of host country culture/society | 30 | 32 | 24 |
| Professional travel to host country | 17 | 18 | 14 |

* Year of graduation

International Dimensions of Employment and Work

- more than half each considered study abroad and foreign language proficiency as important recruitment criteria
 - more than half each work in an internationally active organisation and view knowledge and understanding of other cultures, societies and languages as important for their work
 - almost 20 percent worked abroad and more than 10 percent were sent abroad
- far more frequently reported by former ERASMUS students than by formerly non-mobile students.
- But: international dimensions of employment and work declined somewhat in recent years

Selected Problems During Study Period Abroad (%)

| | 1988/89 | 1990/91 | 1998/99 | 2000/01 (R) |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Accommodation | 22 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Financial matters | 21 | 21 | 20 | 22 |
| Administrative matters | 21 | 18 | 23 | 19 |
| Obtaining credits/credit transfer | * | 18 | 19 | 16 |
| Different teaching/learning methods | 17 | 13 | 13 | 15 |
| Teachers meeting/helping students | 15 | 12 | 11 | 13 |
| Taking courses in foreign language | 10 | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| Too high academic level | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 |

R = Retrospective view of graduates

Recognition of ERASMUS-Supported Study (%)

| | 1988/89 | 1990/91 | 1998/99 | 2000/01 (R) |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Degree of Recognition | 77 | 74 | 81 | 73 |
| Non-prolongation | 53 | 54 | 45 | 59 |

R = Retrospective view of graduates

Differences by field of study

- Often substantial differences by field of study:
- Prolongation:** prolongation most often reported from law (55%) and humanities (44%), least often from Business (27%) and Medicine (23%); average 33%
- Job search:** longest search humanities, geological sciences (5,2 months), languages (4,8 months); shortest search medicine (2,4), architecture (2,8), mathematics, education (3,1); average: 3,8
- Type of contract:** Permanent contracts in engineering and business sciences 51%, social sciences 30%, architecture 21%; average: 36%
- Experiences abroad as recruitment criteria:** business (63%), languages (62%), medicine (32%); average: 53%

Feedbacks of ERASMUS graduates from France

- Very mobile during course of study**
- High international scope of work tasks**

Characteristics of study abroad period:

- Duration of study abroad:** ERASMUS graduates of France: 7,4 months, average 6,8 months
- Additional periods abroad:** France 54%, average 40%
- Recognition of credits** upon return below average: 57% France, 73% average
- But: prolongation of study** because of study abroad: Clearly better than average; 22% France, 33% average
- Level of courses abroad:** 25% more demanding (21% average)

Feedbacks of ERASMUS graduates from France



Competences upon graduation as compared to non mobile students:

- „International competences“ (e.g. intercultural understanding, foreign language proficiency): very high, 95 to 96% state „very high competences“
- Academic knowledge and skills: 46% France, 53% average
- Preparation for future employment: 44% France, 65% average

Feedbacks of ERASMUS graduates from France



Characteristics of employment:

- Percentage of **work time with international context**: 37% graduates from France, 31% average
- Percentage of graduates who worked abroad: 30% graduates from France, 18% average
- Relevance of **international competences for current work**: above average in most aspects
- **ERASMUS related work tasks**: (language of host country, knowledge about host country, travel to host country or other countries): in all aspects clearly above average

Feedbacks of ERASMUS graduates from France



Rating of impact of study abroad period:

- **Obtaining first job**: 62% France, 54% average
- **Type of work tasks**: 41% France, 39% average
- **Income level**: 18% France, 16% average
- **Long term career prospects**: 49% France, 53% average

Feedbacks of ERASMUS graduates from France



Evaluation of study abroad period:

- **Enhancement of academic/professional knowledge**
- **Job relevance**
- **Income**
- **Career prospects**
- **New perspectives, new ways of thinking**
- **Maturity and personal development**
- ➔ **In most aspects above average**

Feedbacks of ERASMUS graduates from France



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Summarizing Results: Former ERASMUS students...



- believe to have higher academic knowledge and skills and to be better prepared for employment and work
- note often a positive effect of ERASMUS in obtaining a first job, some a positive effect on the types of work tasks and on average no positive impact on income level
- report more often about international work tasks and an international working environment
- are in a somewhat better position than non-mobile students regarding the links between education and work assignments and in general employment situation
- ➔ Educational and socio-biographic selectivity of ERASMUS students (positive self-selection)
- ➔ Other international experiences of ERASMUS students

SUMMARY

- Very positive subjective ratings of the professional outcomes of mobility
 - More work task relevance than status relevance
 - Study abroad as „door-opener“
 - Work and research in an international context
 - Differences by country and field of study (strong differences between Western and Eastern & Central European countries)
- ⇒ Comparison with former studies shows study abroad is gradually losing its uniqueness – being mobile becomes „normal“

Summary: Suggestions from the workshops (practitioners, employers, students)

- Facilitating integration into course of study (recognition...)
 - Flexible but consistent institutional support (different fields of study)
- Improved co-operation between HEI (e.g. staff mobility, learning agreements)
- Transparency and necessary information before the study abroad period (guidance, counselling) → selection of host HEI for specialisation
- Systematisation of recognition procedures (departmental instead of individual recognition)
- Consistent application of ECTS
- fostering contacts to local students (currently about 50% on average!)

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Thank you very much!

Questions?



FOR FURTHER READING:
<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/publ/evalcareer.pdf>