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Abstract

This paper reports the results of preliminary research into how Portuguese academics and employers perceive the responsibility of different higher education stakeholders—students, teaching staff, higher education institutions, employers, and policy-makers—for developing graduate employability. The study was conducted 8 years after the implementation of the Bologna Process, the reform that placed employability firmly on the agenda of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Portugal. This paper aims to assess the extent to which higher education is held responsible for developing employability, and to characterize the activities undertaken by the two actors to achieve that end. In particular, with respect to academics, we characterize curricular and other changes to study programmes, and, with respect to employers, their participation in activities undertaken by HEIs meant to ease the transition of students to the labour market. The data comes from a survey responded to by 684 Portuguese academics and 64 employers. Academics and employers alike were found to attribute high responsibility for developing employability to higher education, suggesting that the political message

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of the Bologna Process regarding the relation between higher education and the labour market has been assimilated. However, the activities reported by both types of respondents indicate only an average commitment to developing employability. Here, the low participation of employers in internal institutional activities is noteworthy, suggesting that the recognition of employers as stakeholders in higher education, as advocated by policy-makers, has yet to happen in Portugal. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Sin, Cristina, E-Mail: csin@cipes.up.pt