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**Abstract**

In higher education dual systems, graduates are qualified to apply for jobs in same professional fields along two separated educational routes. The research problem is whether the rival applicants for professional positions are treated equally in the labour market despite their different qualifications. From the graduates point of view, to be equal means to have an opportunity to be employed in accordance with one's professional skill. Applying European survey data, the article tests to what extent the 'distribution of work' between university and non-university graduates seems to be based on educational qualifications or actual competence. Among 4,000 German, Dutch, Finnish, and Swiss graduates primarily in business and administration and engineering, only slight and occasional evidence of 'status-based recruitment' was found. All in all, the research suggests that from the view of graduate employment, the European dual HE systems work very much following the principle of 'different but equal'. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kivinen, Osmo, E-Mail: osmo.kivinen@utu.fi