

## Press Release

Zurich, 24 June 2015, 11.00am

### **PET Colleges Framework Curriculum for Diploma for Business Administration Meets Objectives** **Results of first KOF survey among students and employers**

The question whether programme contents meet the objectives of the framework curriculum and are relevant to the world of work is an important one for employers, students and education experts alike. For the first time in the history of professional education and training (PET), the KOF Swiss Economic Institute at ETH Zurich has evaluated these issues with regard to the framework curriculum drawn up for the business schools at Switzerland's PET Colleges (PETC). The study confirms that the framework curriculum is up-to-date: Students are happy with their courses, expect a substantial rise in salary after graduation and have acquired skills that are relevant to the labour market, for instance in the field of communication. Detailed evaluation of the acquired skills also indicates the direction future curriculum revisions could take. The results of the study are relevant to Swiss labour market policies and shed light on the role this study programme plays in the Swiss education system.

The governing body responsible for the framework curriculum for the diploma on business administration at the PET Colleges (Höhere Fachschulen für Wirtschaft, HFW) has initiated a systematic evaluation process to gain insight into the skills students have acquired at the end of their „Dipl. Betriebswirtschafter/in HF“ programme and the relevance of these skills to the working world. The KOF Swiss Economic Institute at ETH Zurich is carrying out the annual evaluations among employers and students in their last year of study. With the aim of ensuring the graduates' future employability, the evaluation is intended to provide the HFW framework curriculum governing body ([www.rlp-hfw.ch](http://www.rlp-hfw.ch)) with research-based information regarding possible future curriculum revisions.

The first-ever survey among 500 students and 50 employers is now providing detailed information regarding the profile of the aspiring „graduates in business administration at PET Colleges. Their average age is 29, they come from a vocational training background, completed their last programme 7.3 years ago, have close to 9 years of work experience and work on an at least 80%-basis alongside their studies.

Since well-qualified employees with work experience are in high demand, the fact that the students work alongside their studies is highly relevant to Switzerland's skilled labour market. Hence, in the coming years, higher degrees acquired in part-time courses will become increasingly important as shortages of qualified staff may otherwise arise. It is therefore not surprising that the higher-qualified graduates expect an approx. 6.8% rise in their gross income during or after their studies.

### **Future investment**

The students primarily consider the „Diploma on business administration at PETC“ as preparation for their future positions and are, in particular, (very) satisfied with their course in connection with their professional future.

“All in all, the survey results show that the students’ personal skills are particularly strong in areas that are considered to be labour market-relevant, e.g. communication or customer processes. The survey also uncovered areas in which the HFWs could improve the graduates’ employability even further as well as identifying the personal skills that PET College programmes can competently impart. Communication skills, for instance, can be taught satisfactorily at university while customer process skills are better imparted at the workplace. According to the respondents, the deficit, i.e. the difference between labour market relevance and students’ personal skills is most significant where so-called overlapping processes and management processes are concerned.

The survey thus indicates the direction any future revision of the HFW framework curriculum may take. The findings relating to labour market relevance, personal skills and suitability of the PET college programme as a learning environment are particularly important since they allow detailed analysis of the individual elements of the HFW framework curriculum. In addition, the survey provides information on any gaps the curriculum may have.

This cross-section analysis does not provide any answers regarding the future trend in labour market demand for particular skills and hence the optimum timing of a revision of the HFW framework curriculum. Regular surveys conducted over the next few years will be required to provide the necessary information regarding changes in the demand for particular skills.

In Switzerland, approximately 7,000 students graduate from PET Colleges PETC (Höhere Fachschulen, HF) every year. The government is responsible for issuing regulations with minimum requirements applying to study programmes at PETCs and for approving the framework curricula for state and private educational institutions in Switzerland. A total of 37 such framework curricula are currently effective. The curriculum on which the „Diploma on business administration at PETC“ study programme is based was prepared by the HFW framework curriculum governing body and is being implemented by the HFWs.

### **Further information:**

„Evaluation des Rahmenlehrplans für den Bildungsgang «dipl. Betriebswirtschafter/in HF» - Erfüllt der Rahmenlehrplan HFW seine Ziele?“ (Evaluation of the framework curriculum for the ‘Dipl. Betriebswirtschafter/in HF’ programme – Does the HFW framework curriculum meet its objectives?“, [KOF Study No. 62, June 2015](#)).

### **Contact:**

Dr. Ursula Renold  
Head of Comparative Education System Research  
Tel.: 044 632 53 29  
[renold@kof.ethz.ch](mailto:renold@kof.ethz.ch)

Media services  
Phone: 044 632 53 44  
[kofcc@kof.ethz.ch](mailto:kofcc@kof.ethz.ch)