
Wolfgang SCHATZ & Ute WOSCHNACK¹ (Luzern / Zürich)

Are we Really Training Students to do Research? Qualification Profiles of Course Programs and their Implications for Curriculum Development

Abstract

Determining qualification profiles is one of the main tasks of the curriculum development process. Qualification profiles define either a specific field of learning, or a broader aggregation of qualification clusters with a common purpose such as applied vocational or more theoretical academic courses of study. How can one evaluate whether a planned program really empowers a student to achieve a certain qualification profile? How can a curriculum impart to graduates the profile required for an academic research career? Does this curriculum have anything in common with curricula with a vocational qualification profile?

We have developed a checklist which will help curriculum developers, program providers and external reviewers to develop curricula or evaluate them before implementing a program. One set of the checklist's criteria focuses on the qualification profile, and consists of three indices: (i) a research proximity index; (ii) a practice proximity index; and (iii) an interdisciplinarity proximity index. Here we wish to present these proximity indices for Master Programs in the sciences, and illuminate the educational concepts upon which it is based.

Keywords

Curriculum development, research proximity, practice proximity, interdisciplinarity, qualification profiles

¹ e-Mail: wolfgang.schatz@unilu.ch; ute.woschnack@diz.ethz.ch

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Authors



Dr. Ute WOSCHNACK || Didaktikzentrum || Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich || Sonneggstrasse 63, CH-8092 Zürich, Schweiz

<http://www.diz.ethz.ch/people/wute>

ute.woschnack@diz.ethz.ch



Dr. sc. nat. Wolfgang SCHATZ || Leiter Akademische Dienste || Universität Luzern || Pfistergasse 20 PF 7979, CH-6000 Luzern 7, Schweiz

http://www.unilu.ch/deu/Ansprechpartner_301481.aspx

wolfgang.schatz@unilu.ch