

UNDERSTANDING GRADUATE TRACKING AND SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION: CONCEPTS, BENEFITS AND EU DEVELOPMENTS



EU framework

- Council Recommendation on tracking graduates (2017) highlighted that ‘good quality information about what graduates do after obtaining their qualification or leaving education
- Council Recommendation on Vocational Education and Training (2020) also – role of graduate tracking to complement skills anticipation tools, to update vocational education and training curricula, programme offers and qualifications.
- Working group on graduate tracking at the EU level – consisting of all EU Member states



Research on skills demand and supply

Main instruments and policy use

Employers' surveys	Sector studies	Graduate tracking/Tracer studies
• national, local and/or sectoral level • focus on short-term skills/staff needs (e.g. occupations in demand) • feed into planning and designing short term training courses (qualification/requalification) and other active labour market measures and services	• combination of quantitative and qualitative methods; • rely on social partners involvement • Focused on economic sectors; may also focus on individual or cluster of companies • Inform qualification standards' development; skills development programmes; sector development strategies	• At national or institution level (focus on homogenous cohorts of graduates) • Graduates' labour market status, job search history, skills usage, satisfaction with education conditions and relevance of skills acquired, working conditions • Provide feedback for education and training offer, design of measures to support school to work transition, career guidance and counselling
Forecast	Foresight	Labour transition surveys
• Longer term horizons • Formal, national level, quantitative, model-based forecasts • Requires reliable long data series • Feed into major reforms with a long term impact (e.g. education, empl, ec. dev., demographic and social policies)	• Expert panels, Delphi forecasting, scenarios (may include quantitative projections) • To identify main drivers of change, scenarios for plausible evolution, disruptive factors, strategic choices • Relies on wide consultation • Can feed into long term policy planning	• show movements of individuals between employment, unemployment and inactivity, including transition from education to LM • Typically based on Labour Force Survey data or run as ad-hoc module (or separate surveys) • Can bring more understanding of the underlying causes and duration of moving from one status to another

Key questions that can be answered by graduate tracking/tracer studies

- What do graduates do after leaving education/training institutions?
- Are they able to get a paid job? How long does it take to them to secure employment?
- Do they use the skills and competences they have acquired in their education/training? If - not, why?
- What are the skills and competences demanded on the labour market?

School to work transitions / key policy implications

Career guidance and counselling

Quality education and training

Work based learning

**Labour Market Policy
(services, measures, support)**

Labour legislation and taxation

**Informality
Working conditions**

Key factors influencing post-graduation transition:

- socio-demographic and economic context
- level and field of study
- family and community ties, networks

LMP services:

Job mediation
Counselling, orientation

LMP measures: (re)training, incl. RPL, entrepreneurship support, job subsidy, public work programmes

LMP support: unemployment and other types of out-of-work benefits

YOUTH GUARANTEE / THE VALUE OF GOOD TRACKING MECHANISMS

All young **people under the age of 30**
should receive a good quality offer of:

Employment

Apprenticeship

Traineeship

**Continued
education**

within a period of **four months** of
becoming unemployed or leaving education

Must have:

- Comprehensive and integrated education, labour market and social protection information systems
- Early warning mechanisms on school drop out/risk of disengagement
- Close follow up of graduates' destinations (further studies, labour market, inactivity)

Tracer studies can provide insights on success factors and bottlenecks, contributing to an efficient design and deployment of YG schemes

EHESO pilot on a common list of indicators

Based on administrative data only (IE, IT, FI, PL, SE)

Aggregated indicators at T+1 & T+5 on

- Employment
- Earnings

With various breakdowns (ISCED level, FET-2013, NACE, mobility) at national and possibly regional level

Combined with LFS data (recent graduates)

Data collection strategies

Main strategies to collect data from graduates

Surveys

Use of education registries and administrative databases (social security registries)

Need for “institutional” home

Capacities – data management and analysis

(Access to) contacts of graduates

Administrative data collection

Linking education and social security registries through individual IDs

- Collection of accurate and standardized records
- Comprehensive coverage
- Cost-effective + up-to-date

Limited coverage (formal employment)

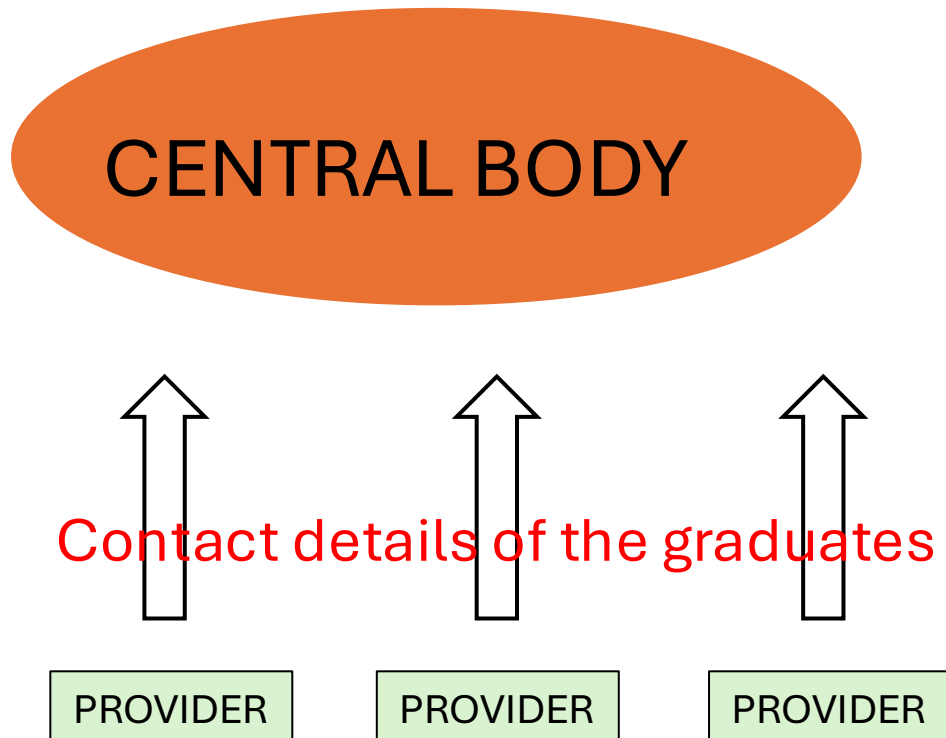
Insufficient variables (e.g. employment, wage)

Requires data interoperability and cross sectoral cooperation

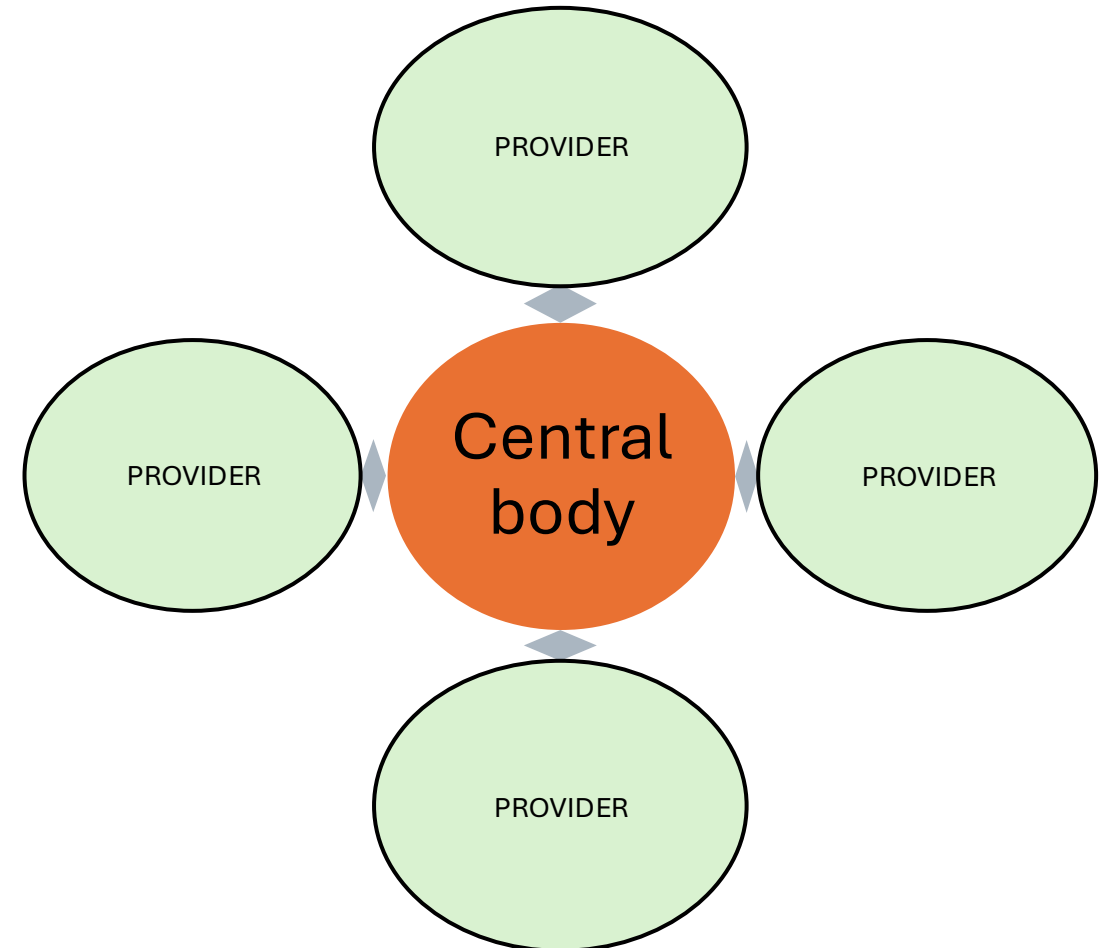
Issue of data protection and access to the data

Surveys – institutional set-up

CENTRALISED APPROACH



DECENTRALISED APPROACH



Surveys- design

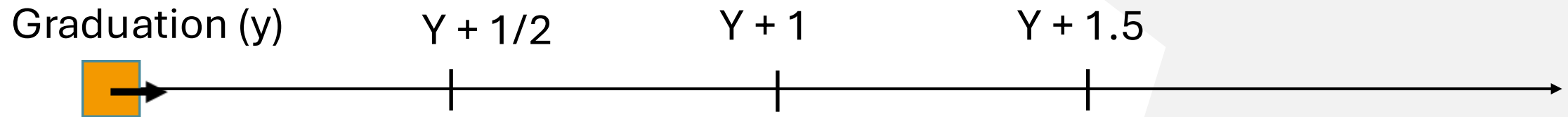
Do we target all graduates from a specific cohort?

CENSUS x SAMPLE

Do we survey each graduate only once or several times?

CROSS-SECTION x PANEL DESIGN

When do we implement a survey?



Surveys – typical information covered

Socio-demographic information
about graduates

Education of graduates (type and
specialisation)

Job search after graduation

Employment of graduates and
characteristics of their jobs

Further education of graduates

Overview of graduate tracking in the EU (higher/VET education) – WG mapping (2024)

Type of data collection	Country
Administrative data	Belgium; Poland
Survey data	Croatia; Cyprus; Germany; Luxembourg
Both administrative and survey data	Austria; Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Malta; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden

Labour transition surveys

- EU LFS – ad-hoc modules - Young people on the labour market (2024, 2016, 2009, 2000)

Education–job matching: qualification level, field of study and skills match/mismatch with current or last job.

Education interruption: incidence and level of education/training abandoned; main reasons for non-completion.

Educational pathways: vocational vs general upper-/post-secondary background among tertiary-educated youth.

Resources:

[Guides for skills anticipation](#)

[EU Eurograduate survey](#)