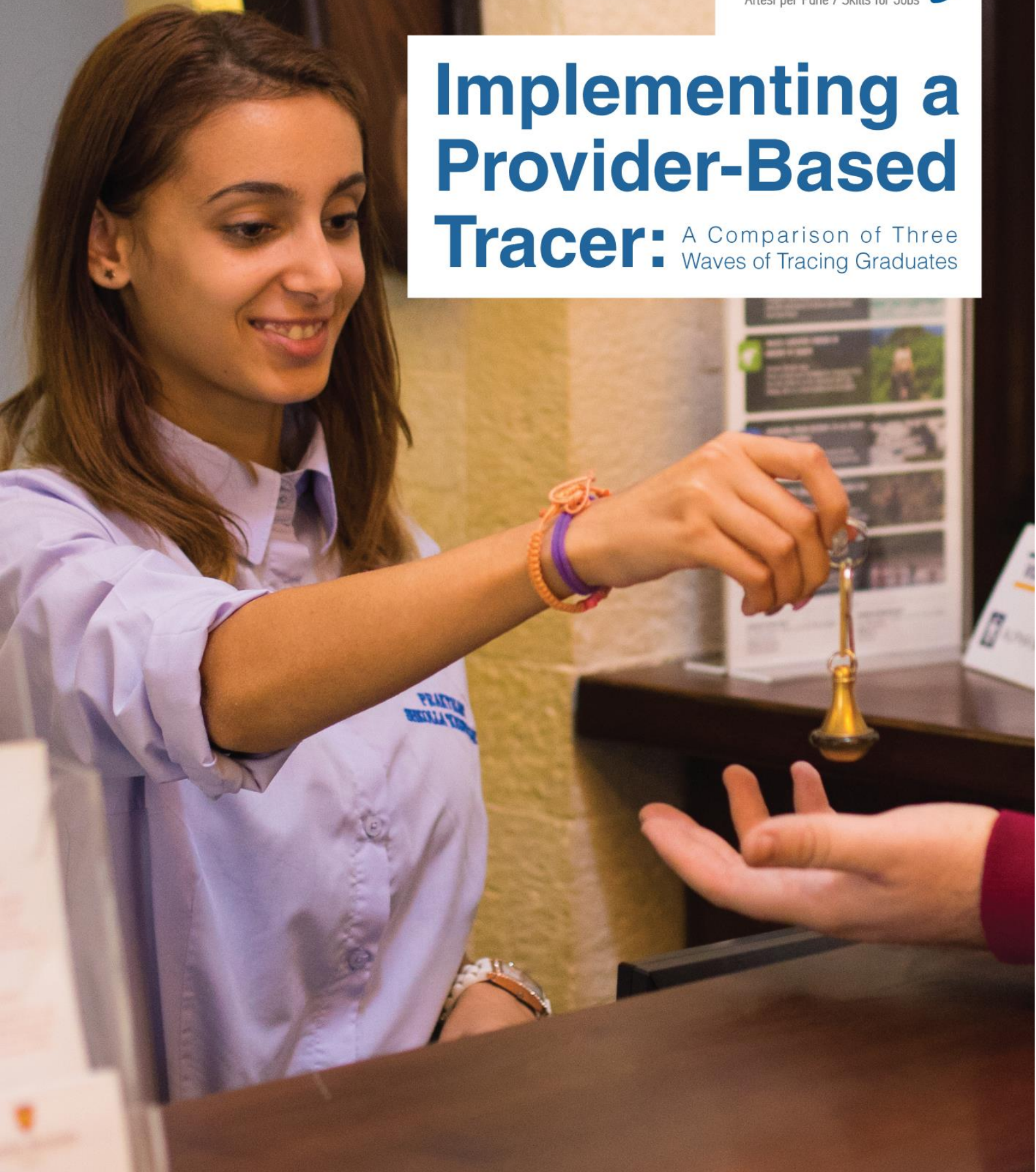


Implementing a Provider-Based Tracer:

A Comparison of Three
Waves of Tracing Graduates



Publication: Implementing a provider-based tracer: A comparison of three waves of tracing graduates

Tirana, March 2020

Acknowledgements

This publication was produced by ‘Skills for Jobs’ project (S4J), under the supervision of Fation Dragoshi, Project Manager. The report was prepared by the Monitoring and Results Measurement (MRM) department, under the supervision of Erka Caro, based on tracer data from S4J partner providers. Aleka Papa, Intervention Line Manager, was responsible for the report.

About Skills for Jobs

‘Skills for Jobs’ (S4J) is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Swisscontact Albania.

S4J addresses the main challenges of the Albanian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system by focusing on ensuring systemic change, capacity development and empowerment of key actors. Based on this approach, S4J supports partner VET providers in Albania in terms of employers’ and partners’ relations, diversification of VET offer, new ways of inclusive learning and quality, work-based learning in cooperation with employers, and organisational development.

Disclaimer

The views and conclusions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Swiss Government or the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The sole authorship of this publication belongs to ‘Skills for Jobs’ (S4J). This publication is to be accessed, reviewed, downloaded and printed for personal use only. It is strictly requested not to reproduce, distribute, share, sell or broadcast the publication without prior written consent from S4J. It is strictly requested not to modify, adapt or alter any material from this publication in any way.

Implementing a Provider-Based Tracer: A Comparison of Three Waves of Tracing Graduates

Background

6 Vocational Education (VE) schools in Albania, with the support of the Skills for Jobs (S4J) Project, are promoting annual VE offer decisions to be made on the basis of structured evidence and the involvement of their regional business sector. This approach aims to increase the relevance of their offer and contribute towards labour-market oriented skills development. This, in turn, will lead to faster labour market transitions for young men and women graduating from VE, more qualified employees and increased productivity for companies.

Tracer studies offer a better understanding of the performance of VE graduates in the labour market by measuring the productive employment that graduates find after education. They represent one of the sources for assessing and helping towards improving the quality and labour market relevance of VE. To this end, S4J has supported the implementation a provider-based tracer system in its 6 partner providers as of September 2017.

This report presents the aggregate data and results that cover three cohorts of graduates (2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018) from 6 VE schools in 5 regions of Albania. The main results are presented in line with the objectives of the tracer and cover topics regarding labour market outcomes of graduates, their transition to the labour market, information on salary and other work conditions, and a retrospective evaluation of their education institution. The report focuses on the 2018 cohort but provides comparison between the 2016 and 2017 cohorts. Schools, on the other hand, have individual reports for their decision-making processes.

List of figures

Figure 1 Targeted VET Institutions	6
Figure 2 Phases of implementing a provider-based tracer	7
Figure 3 Gender composition	9
Figure 4 Labour market outcomes one year after graduation (%).....	10
Figure 5 Employment vs. self-employment (%)	11
Figure 6 Unemployment (%)	11
Figure 7 Gender sensitivity of (self)employed graduates.....	12
Figure 8 Gender sensitivity of unemployed graduates	12
Figure 9 Gender composition of the sample (%).....	12
Figure 10 Job related to education (%)	13
Figure 11 Perceived reasons behind the mismatch (%)	13
Figure 12 Net monthly income (%).....	14
Figure 13 Months at the actual job (%).....	15
Figure 14 Full-time vs. part-time employment (%)	15
Figure 15 Company size (%).....	16
Figure 16 Type of contract (%)	16
Figure 17 Awareness if employers pay contributions (%).....	17
Figure 18 Perceived stability of the current job (%).....	18
Figure 19 Satisfaction with current job (%)	18
Figure 20 Duration of job search categorized (%)	19
Figure 21 Modes of assistance of the VET institution (%).....	21
Figure 22 Type of qualification studying towards (%).....	22
Figure 23 Reasons behind pursuing further education (%).....	22
Figure 24 Perceived main reasons behind unemployment (%)	23
Figure 25 Looked actively for a job in the past 4 weeks (%)	24
Figure 26 Extent of utilization of knowledge acquired during studies (%)	24
Figure 27 Extent of appropriateness of the actual job position to the studies (%)	25
Figure 28 % area needs improvement “to a high/very high extent”	26
Figure 29 % area needs improvement “to a high/very high extent”	26
Figure 30 Graduates’ plans for the next two years (%).....	27

List of tables

Table 1 Coverage of the provider-based tracer	8
Table 2 Directions by sample size.....	9
Table 3 Job related to education: employed vs. self-employed	13
Table 4 Duration of job search (%)	19
Table 5 Duration of job-search for self-employed	20
Table 6 Ranking of means of acquiring first-time employment (%).....	20

Contents

Background.....	3
1. Introduction	6
2. Tracer design and methodology	7
3. Sample composition	8
4. Results.....	10
4.1 Employment Status	10
4.2 Matching Level of Study	12
4.3 Salary Range	14
4.4 Work Conditions.....	14
4.5 Perceived Job Stability and Satisfaction	17
4.6 Job search duration	18
4.7 Means of Finding First-Time Employment	20
4.8 Student or Trainees	21
4.9 Unemployed	22
4.10 Use of Knowledge and Competencies Acquired	24
4.11 Proposals for Improvement	25
4.12 Future Plans	26

1. Introduction

In Albania, while there is a growing interest in graduate tracing driven by recent policy and legal changes, the number of tracing initiatives at the provider level has been sporadic and the initiatives have mostly focused at the national level¹. Whereas tracing at the national level is an important tool to reliably inform the responsible ministry and other central bodies about the labour market outcomes of VET graduates² it is not relevant for the most part to the work of individual providers. Provider-based tracing, on the other hand, represents a convenient tool that serves as a basis for determining providers' capability in preparing graduates that meet the demands of the labour market. It also complements the tracing system at the national level.³

In line with these aims, the two major objectives of the provider-based tracer are:

- To determine empirically the labour market outcomes of VET graduates (objective indicators);
- To assess the horizontal link between education and work by graduates' retrospective evaluation (subjective indicators).

Tracer data cover three cohorts of graduates (2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018) from 6 VET partner providers in 5 regions of Albania. Below the list of providers: For Gjergj Canco and Hamdi Bushati tracing data are available as of the 2017 cohort.⁴

Figure 1 Targeted VET Institutions



¹ Deasy, O. (March 2010) Tracer Study of the Graduates from the Technical Vocational Schools in June 2009. "Support to Vocational Education and Training Reform" EuropeAid/125482; Vertopi, E et al. (February 2012). Tracer Study of the Graduates from the VET Schools in June 2010.; Report on Tracer Study of Vocational Education and Training in Northeastern Albania - Phase II. Commissioned by Component 3 of VET Program of German International Cooperation (GIZ). Tiranë.

² To feed evidence-based policy-making and monitoring.

³ See Schomburg (2016) for a more detailed overview of institutional tracer studies.

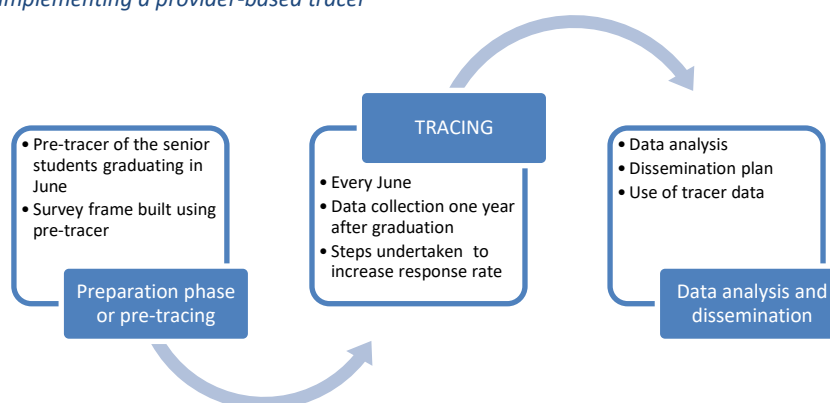
⁴ When the project started supporting the schools.

2. Tracer design and methodology

S4J tracing at the provider level adopted a cross-sectional research design and employed a quantitative approach using a standardized questionnaire survey. Given that the target population size was small at the provider level, it was opted for a census rather than a sample survey.

The implementation of each tracer study cycle entails three basic phases. During the first phase or the preparation phase, the target population (graduate cohort), and the time after graduation are determined at the start; next, the pre-tracer questionnaire is administered. The key objective of the pre-tracer is to collect baseline data of future graduates regarding their subjective career plans and expectations, socio-demographic characteristics and contact information. The main purpose of this phase is to update students contact information. Pre-tracing is conducted every May or approximately 3-4 weeks before the graduates leave their respective institutions.

Figure 2 Phases of implementing a provider-based tracer



In the tracer phase, tracing data are collected. Tracing sought to achieve the following two main objectives: to empirically determine the labour market outcomes of VET graduates and to explore the horizontal link between education and work.⁵ Kobo Toolbox is the data collection method used. It is implemented through Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI) for the case of VET partner providers.

Following the data collection phase, quantitative data are analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Data processing includes descriptive findings along with relational statistics. Following the second wave of tracing, comparative reports are prepared along with individual provider-based reports. The reports are intended to be disseminated with VET providers in individual participatory workshops.

⁵ Tracing of the 2016 graduates followed approximately 15 months after graduation, whereas of the 2017 graduates 12 months after graduation.

3. Sample composition

In total, 403 graduates of the 2017-2018 cohort from 6 partner provider schools participated in the third wave of tracing. Table 1 summarizes the response rates by VET providers. As shown, the sample size at provider level is relatively small and varies between providers. It is therefore not advised to conduct meaningful analyses regarding the situation of VET graduates from specific schools.

Table 1 Coverage of the provider-based tracer

Cohort	Region	Provider	Respondents /Graduates	Response rate	% of total
2015-2016	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	64/119	54%	49%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	40/49	82%	30%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	20/73	27%	15%
	Vlora	Tregtare	8/21	38%	6%
		SUBSAMPLE 1	132/263	50%	100%
2016-2017	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	66/80	83%	18%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	8/8	100%	2%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	59/98	60%	16%
	Vlora	Tregtare	19/19	100%	5%
	Tirana	Gjergji Canco	121/201	60%	33%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	91/102	89%	25%
		SUBSAMPLE 2	363/508	71%	100%
2017-2018	Lezha	Kolin Gjoka	46/70	66%	11%
	Berat	Kristo Isak	70/72	97%	17%
	Vlora	Pavaresia	61/126	48%	15%
	Vlora	Tregtare	45/48	94%	11%
	Tirana	Gjergji Canco	121/201	60%	30%
	Shkodra	Hamdi Bushati	60/87	69%	15%
		SUBSAMPLE 3	403/604	67%	100%

Table 2 lists the respective directions of graduates in the sample. The most represented directions for the 2018 cohort are the Tourism & Hospitality and Electrotechnics & Electronics directions which comprise together 50% of the sample.

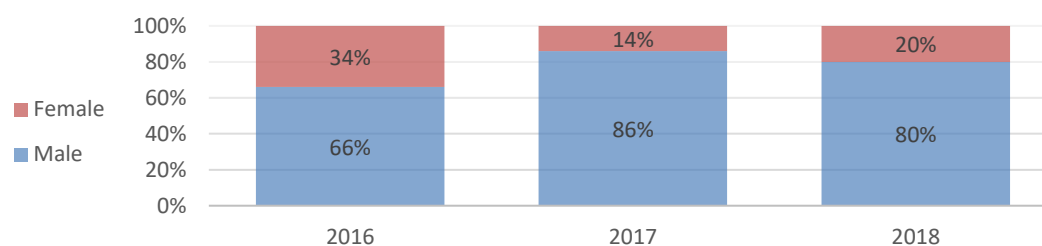
Table 2 Directions by sample size

	2016	2017	2018
Office administration	22%		2%
Agriculture			5%
Economy&Business	45%	25%	16%
Electrotechnics & Electronics	6%	22%	25%
Tourism&Hospitality	11%	14%	25%
Installing thermohydraulic panels	2%	1%	1%
Textile		4%	3%
Mechanics	1%	4%	4%
Transport Vehicle Service	3%	5%	5%
Food technology			1%
ICT	11%	18%	13%

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=132, N₂=335, N₃=400.

Regarding the gender composition of the sample, the sample for the 2018 cohort is composed of 20% females and 80% males.

Figure 3 Gender composition



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=132, N₂=363, N₃=400.

4. Results

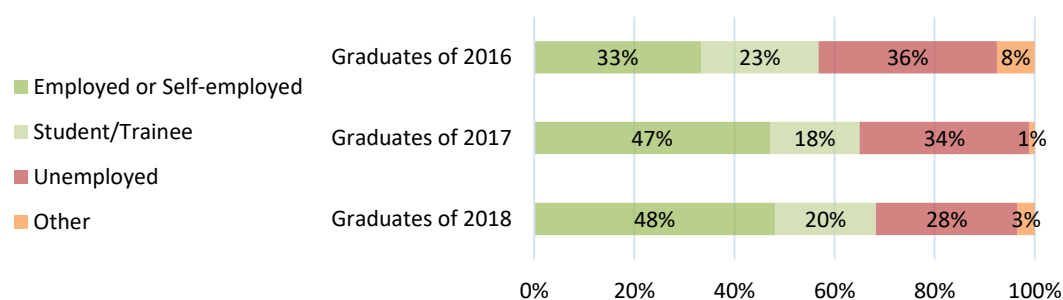
The main results are presented below organized around the objectives of the tracer and its research questions. This report will focus on the 2018 cohort, while also providing comparison between the 2016 and 2017 cohorts. For the 2016 cohort, only data for 4 partner providers are available.

4.1 Employment Status

What is the employment status of VET graduates one year after their graduation?

Less than a half of the 2018 graduates were employed or self-employed one year after graduation, while some 20% were attending higher education or further trainings. Whilst the proportion of employed graduates has remained stable over the past two years (47-48%), the proportion of unemployed has been in decline; less than one in three graduates of the 2018 cohort (28%) found themselves unemployed one year after their graduation.

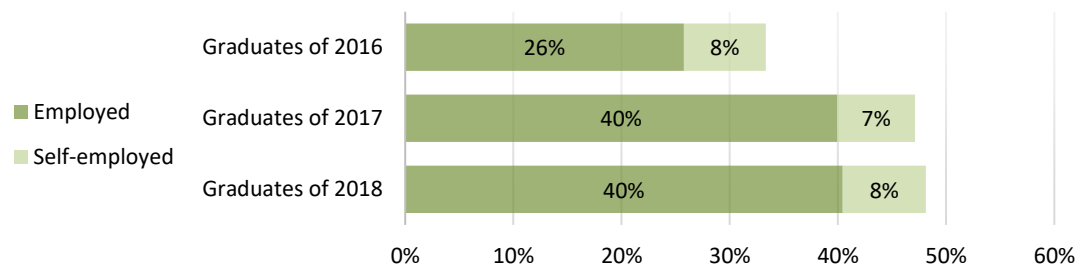
Figure 4 Labour market outcomes one year after graduation (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=132, N₂=363, N₃=403.

Less than a half of the traced 2018 graduates were employed or self-employed one year after their graduation. The proportion of employed or self-employed has remained stable following an increase of 14 p.p. for the 2016 graduates. Focusing on the employed graduates, the increase in employment rates both for the 2017 and 2018 cohorts has been driven by the increased proportion of employed graduates as compared to those self-employed. The percentage of self-employed has remained stable over the past three years at around 1 in 10 graduates.

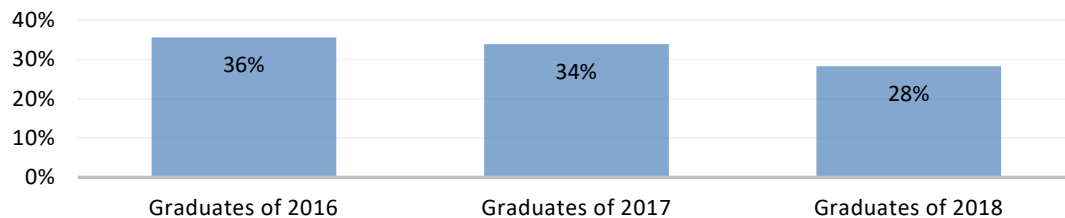
Figure 5 Employment vs. self-employment (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=171, N₃=194.

While the percentage of unemployed has remained unchanged for the 2016 and 2017 cohort, there is a decrease in the proportion of unemployed by 8 p.p. for the 2018 cohort.

Figure 6 Unemployment (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=33, N₂=100, N₃=86.

The 'other' category has mostly captured graduates planning to leave the country or already emigrated.⁶

Do labour market outcomes differ with respect to gender?

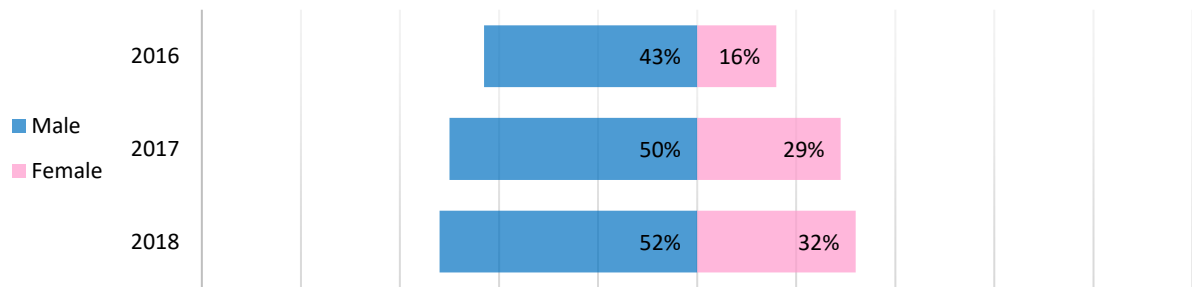
52% of the male 2018 graduates were employed or self-employed one year after their graduation compared to only a third of the females (32%).

A gender employment gap is discernible across the three cohorts of graduates, varying from 27 p.p for the 2016 cohort to 19 p.p for the 2018 cohort - though interpretation should be cautious due to the small representations of females in the sample.

Across the three cohorts, male graduates appear more likely to be employed one year after graduation in comparison to their female counterparts. As such, gender employment gap ranges from 27 p.p in the 2016 cohort to 19 p.p in the 2018 cohort. The proportion of unemployed graduates is also higher among the female population as shown by Fig.8.

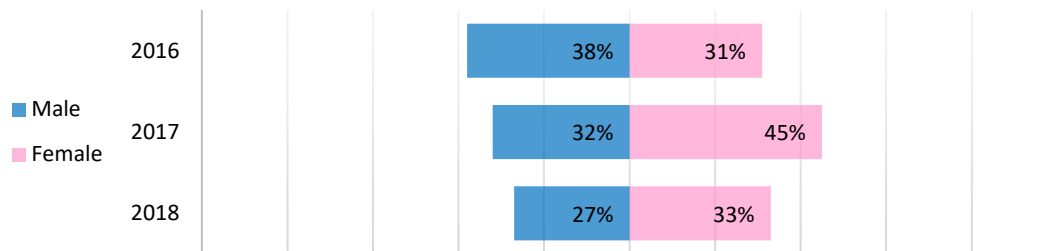
⁶ For the 2016 cohort, out of 10 respondents who chose the category 'other', while 1 was planning to leave the country, other 8 were already leaving abroad. For the 2017 cohort, there were 4 respondents who chose this category. For the 2018 cohort, out of 14 respondents, 5 were planning to leave the country, while 3 were already leaving abroad.

Figure 7 Gender sensitivity of (self)employed graduates



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=47, N₂=123, N₃=114.

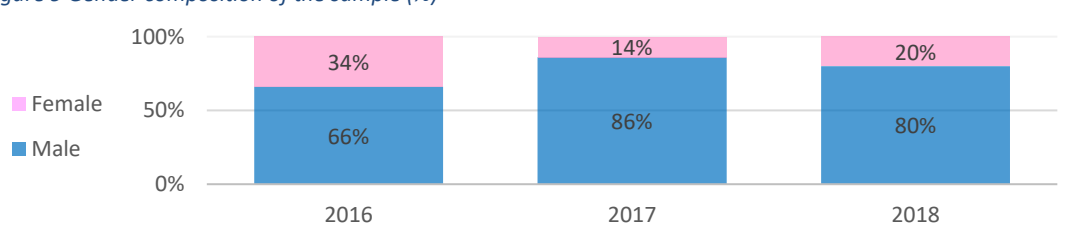
Figure 8 Gender sensitivity of unemployed graduates



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=33, N₂=100, N₃=86.

Nevertheless, data segregated by gender require cautious interpretation due to the small sample size of the female population. Regarding the gender composition of targeted VET graduates, in our sample, for the 2016 cohort 66% of the respondents were male, as compared to 34% that were female. For the 2017 and 2018 cohort, the proportion of males was larger - 86% and 80%, respectively.

Figure 9 Gender composition of the sample (%)



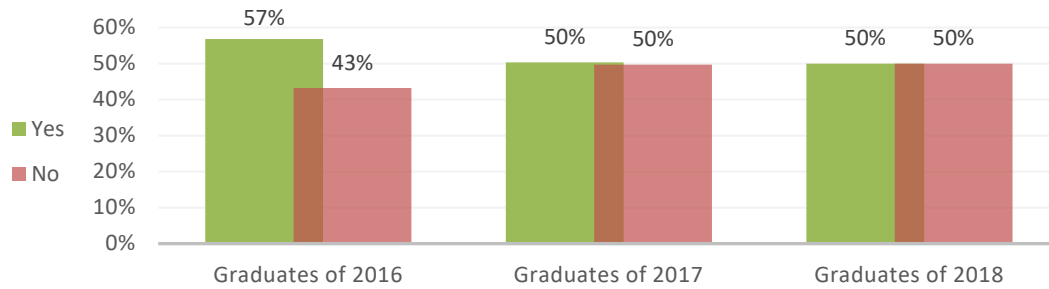
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=132, N₂=363, N₃=400.

4.2 Matching Level of Study

Are the present occupations of graduates related to their education?

Only half of both 2017 and 2018 graduates work in occupations related to their education. These data point towards problems regarding the labour-market relevance of the VET offer as the majority of 2018 graduates or 65% claimed that they either did not find a job related to their studies or there were no jobs related to their studies.

Figure 10 Job related to education (%)



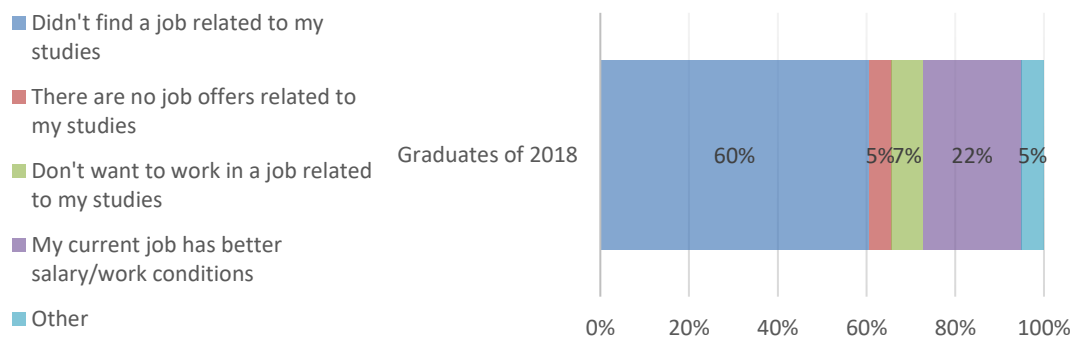
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=171, N₃=194. Data include both employment and self-employment.

Only half or about 50% of both the 2017 and 2018 graduates stated that their current job was related to their education compared to 57% of the 2016 graduates. When asked on the reasons behind this mismatch, the majority of 2018 graduates or 60% stated that they did not find a job related to their studies, whilst 5% claimed that there were no jobs related to their studies – pointing towards problems regarding the labour-market relevance of the VET offer. Only 22% of the graduates were in a job not related to their education because it offered them a better salary and work conditions (See Fig. 11).

Table 3 Job related to education: employed vs. self-employed

	2016		2017		2018	
	Employed	Self-employed	Employed	Self-employed	Employed	Self-employed
Yes	56% (n=19)	60% (n=6)	47% (n=68)	69% (n=18)	52% (n=84)	42% (n=13)
No	44% (n=15)	40% (n=4)	53% (n=77)	31% (n=8)	48% (n=79)	58% (n=18)

Figure 11 Perceived reasons behind the mismatch (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=96

4.3 Salary Range

What is the salary range of employed VET graduates one year after their graduation?

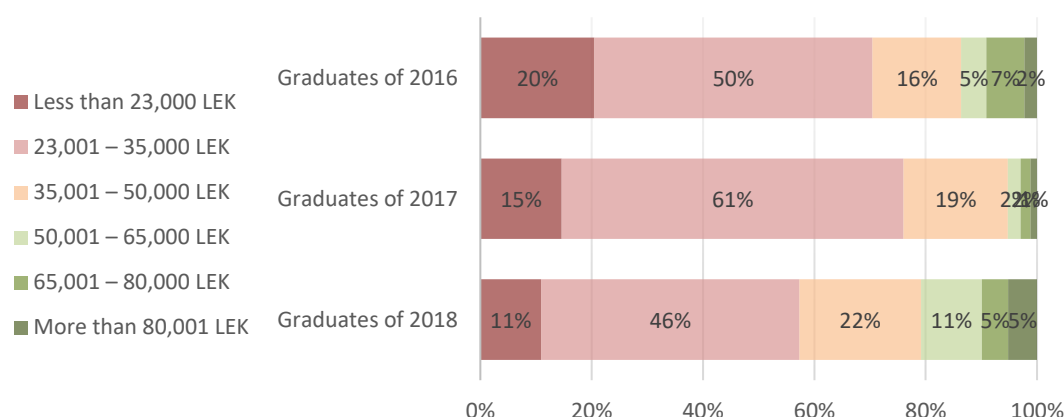
46% of 2018 graduates had salaries in the net salary range of 23,001-35,000 LEK, compared to 61% of the 2017 graduates and 50% of the 2016 graduates.

The decrease has been driven by the higher proportion of 2018 graduates earning 35,001 Lek and above per month; 43% earned 35,000 Lek and more per month, compared to 30% in 2016 and 24% in 2017.

The proportion of graduates with salaries less than the minimum wage has decreased over the years from 20% to 11%.

Whilst for both the 2016 and 2017 graduates, most of the graduates earned in the range of 21,301-35,000 Lek per month (varying from 50-61%), less than a half of the 2018 graduates (46%) had salaries in that range. Furthermore, there is a higher percentage of graduates that earned above 35,000 Lek per month among the 2018 graduates; 43% earned 35,000 Lek and more per month, compared to 30% in 2016 and 24% in 2017. Nevertheless, the employed graduates who reported to earn higher amounts are represented in very low numbers. The proportion of graduates with salaries less than the minimum wage has been decreasing over the years from 20% to 11%.

Figure 12 Net monthly income (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=171, N₃=192. Data include both employment and self-employment.

4.4 Work Conditions

What are the work conditions of employed graduates one year after their graduation?

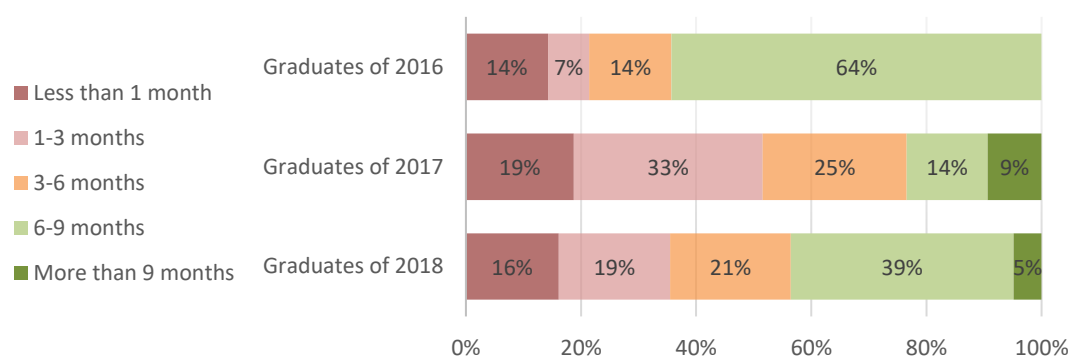
Some 39% of the 2018 graduates had been working for 6-9 months with their current employer, while 5% had more than 9 months. Nearly all employed graduates were working full-time whilst only 1 in 10 employed graduates had part-time arrangements with their employers.

Mirroring the business environment in Albania, the majority or about 6 in 10 graduates across all tracers worked in small size businesses of up to 9 employees. Medium enterprises employed around less than a third of the graduates both in the 2017 and 2018 cohort. However, only 1 in 10 graduates worked in large businesses with more than 50 employees.

80% of the 2018 graduates stated that their employer paid them insurance, a proportion 9 p.p. higher than those declaring formal employment or those reporting having a contract pointing to the need of increasing awareness towards their rights in employment standards and labour relations. The situation among the 2018 graduates appeared slightly improved compared to the 2017 cohort, where around 1 in 4 declared that their employer didn't pay any contributions.

Asked on job duration, only 16% of the employed 2018 graduates had less than a month at their actual job at the time of the interview. Around 4 in 10 graduates or 39% had 6 up to 9 months working for their current employer, while 5% had more than 9 months.

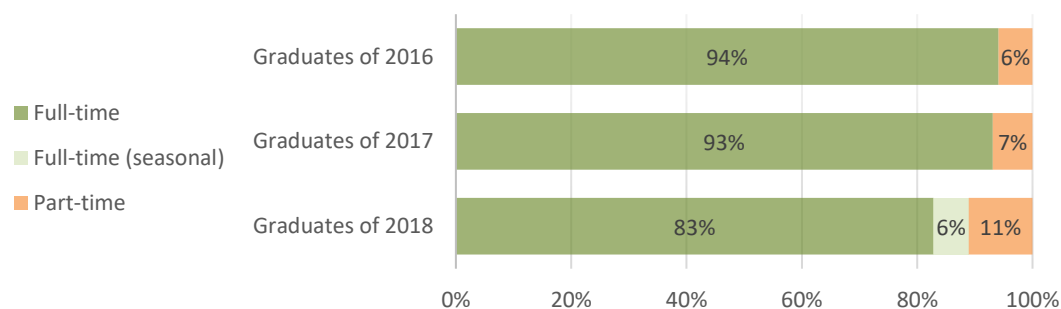
Figure 13 Months at the actual job (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=14, N₂=64, N₃=62.

The vast majority of employed graduates were working full-time and the results regarding full and part-time work appear following similar trends across cohorts. For the 2018 graduates, a new category was added to the questionnaire – ‘seasonal’ full-time arrangements – and a total of 89% of traced graduates reported to work full-time (including 6% seasonal).

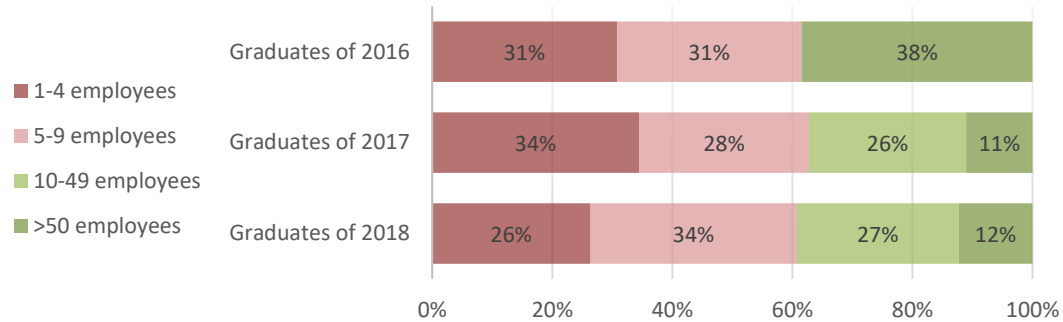
Figure 14 Full-time vs. part-time employment (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=34, N₂=145, N₃=163.

Asked on the company size, the majority or about 6 in 10 graduates worked in small size businesses of up to 9 employees and this represents a stable trend; the proportion varied from 62% in the 2016 cohort, 59% in the 2017 cohort and 60% in the 2018 cohort. Medium enterprises employed around less than a third in the 2017 cohort and 2018 cohort. However, only 1 in 10 graduates worked in large businesses with more than 50 employees.

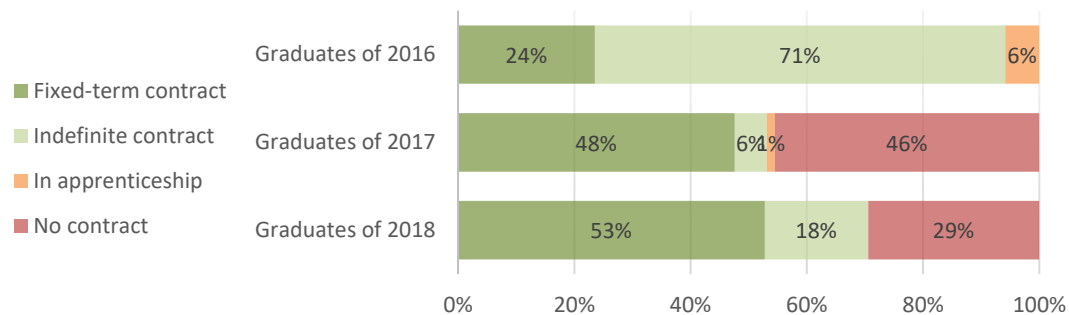
Figure 15 Company size (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=26, N₂=145, N₃=163.

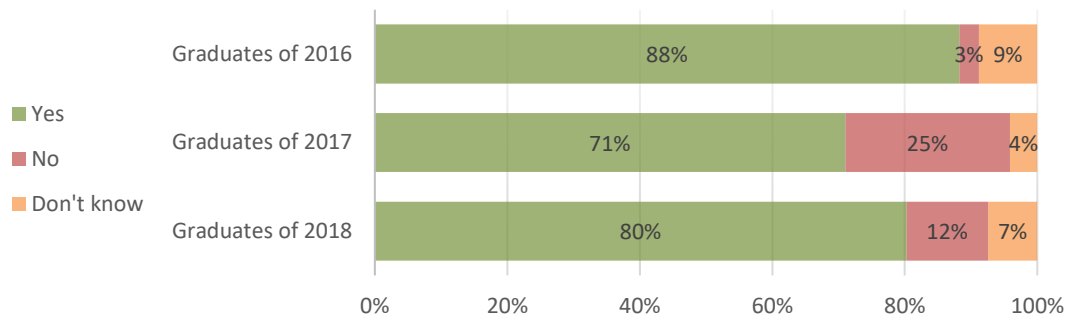
Regarding the type of employment contract that graduates had with employers, the vast majority or 71% of the 2018 graduates reported to have a work contract, either with a temporary or indefinite duration, compared to 54% in the 2017 cohort. Whilst, a considerable percentage or 46% reported to have no job contract at all in 2017, this proportion decreased to 29% or less than one in three graduates for the 2018 graduates.

Figure 16 Type of contract (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=34, N₂=145, N₃=163.

Figure 17 Awareness if employers pay contributions (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=34, N₂=145, N₃=163.

In order to crosscheck the veracity of the information regarding the type of contract and as a proxy for informality, graduates were asked about the payment of social and health insurance by their employers. 80% of the 2018 graduates stated that their employer paid them insurance, a proportion 9 p.p. higher than those declaring formal employment or those reporting having a contract. While 7% were not sure whether their employer was paying any contributions, 12% reported that they current employer didn't. The situation among the 2018 graduates appeared slightly improved compared to the 2017 cohort, where around 1 in 4 declared that their employer didn't pay any contributions.

4.5 Perceived Job Stability and Satisfaction

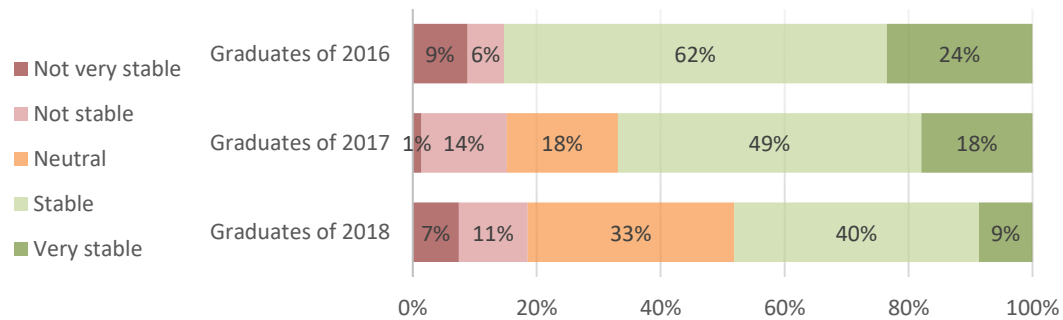
How secure and satisfied are graduates in their employment arrangements one year after graduation?

Graduates typically felt secure and satisfied with their jobs one year after graduation, even though there was an increased proportion of employed 2018 graduates having neutral perceptions to this regard.

49% of the 2018 cohort were either 'stable' or 'very stable' in their jobs compared to 67% of the 2017 cohort. Though there is correlation between perceived job security and satisfaction, perceived job satisfaction was higher among the 2018 graduates; around 56% claimed that they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their jobs, compared to 62% of the 2017 cohort.⁷

⁷ Evaluation of job stability and job satisfaction in a scale from 1 (min) to 5 (max) was transformed to a 4-point scale in the second tracer. The mid-scale option (Neutral) was added in the second tracer questionnaire in each of the questions.

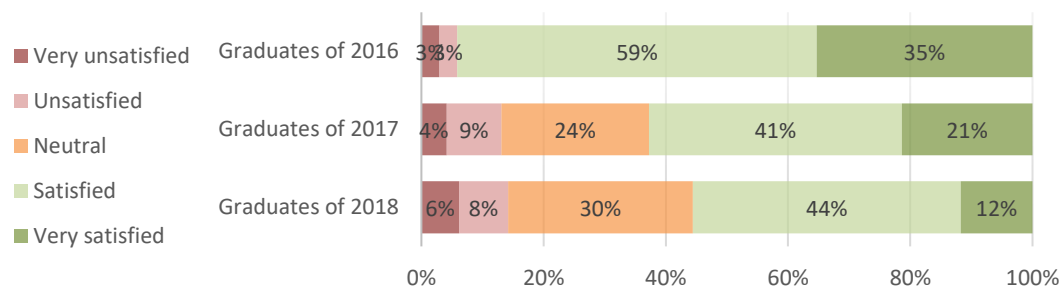
Figure 18 Perceived stability of the current job (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=34, N₂=145, N₃=162.

Asked on the stability of their current job, there is an increased proportion of employed graduates having neutral perceptions among the 2018 graduates. Whilst around half of employed graduates or 49% reported a stable perception of their job, one in three graduates (33%) had neutral perceptions on job stability. Just around 18% or less than 2 in 10 graduates reported having an instable job. For the 2017 graduates, the results were more skewed towards the right of the scale and the majority considered their job as stable (67%). 18% were neutral about their job security, while the percentage of those that perceived it as either ‘not very stable’ or ‘not stable’ was about 15%. In this narrative no comparisons are drawn with the 2016 sample since the ‘neutral’ scale was added in the tracer questionnaire starting with the 2017 cohort.

Figure 19 Satisfaction with current job (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=34, N₂=145, N₃=162.

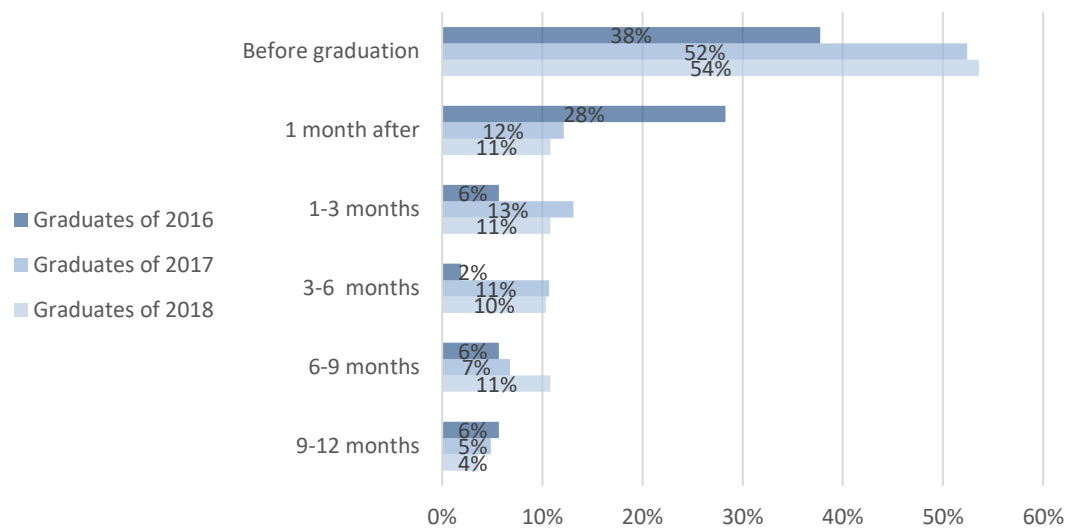
Asked on perceived satisfaction levels with their current job, 2018 graduates again reported slightly lower evaluations as compared to the 2017 graduates. More than a half or around 56% of the traced 2018 employed graduates claimed that they were either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their jobs, compared to 62% of the 2017 cohort. On the other hand, less than 1 in three graduates (30%) reported neutral levels of satisfaction or a proportion 6 p.p. higher than the 2017 cohort.

4.6 Job search duration

What are the average waiting times for first employment?

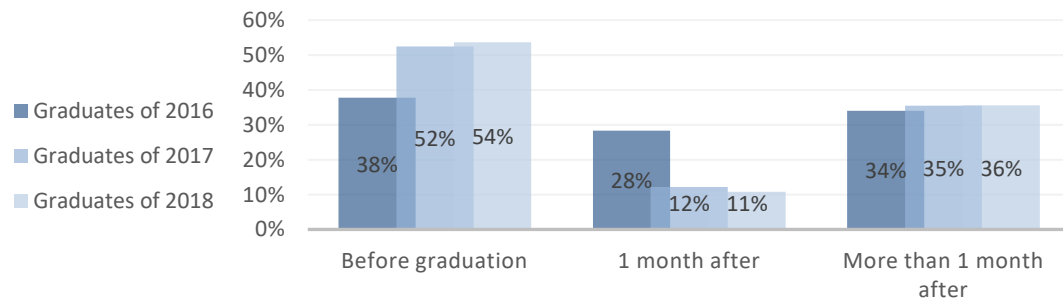
There is an increasing trend of graduates finding employment before graduating from school and first-time transition to the labour market is relatively faster across all cohorts. More than a half of 2018 graduates or 54% had already transitioned to the labour market before graduation, compared to 38% among the 2016 graduates and 52% among the 2017 graduates. Furthermore, 64%-66% of graduates had started their first job at most one month after graduation.

Table 4 Duration of job search (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=53, N₂=206, N₃=222. Data include employment, self-employment and those unemployed at the moment but with previous job experience.

Figure 20 Duration of job search categorized (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=53, N₂=206, N₃=222.

More than a half of 2018 graduates or 54% had already transitioned to the labour market before graduation, compared to 38% among the 2016 graduates and 52% of the 2017 graduates. Data show that for the employed sample transition to the labour market is relatively faster across all cohorts, with 64%-66% starting their first job at most one month after graduation. For the other 1 in 3 graduates, duration of job search was spread evenly among the other categories.

Though the sub-sample of those in self-employment has a small size for drawing meaningful analysis, Table 5 shows the available data with information on how long it took graduates to open their businesses. More than a half of those self-employed work in the family business.

Table 5 Duration of job-search for self-employed

	2016	2017	2018
Family business		62% (n=16)	53% (n=16)
Before graduation	60% (n=6)	12% (n=3)	17% (n=5)
1 month after	10% (n=1)	4% (n=1)	
1-3 months after		12% (n=3)	3% (n=1)
3-6 months after		8% (n=2)	10% (n=3)
6-9 months after	10% (n=1)	4% (n=1)	17% (n=5)
9-12 months after			
More than 12 months after	20% (n=2)		
Total	N=10	N=26	N=30

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%.

4.7 Means of Finding First-Time Employment

What are the means by which graduates acquire first-time employment?

Across all cohort, personal connections of family members and friends represent the most common mean through which graduates acquired first-time employment, though there is a decreasing trend from 77% in 2017 to 65% in 2018.

Just around 1 in 10 graduates, found first-time employment through their apprenticeships in businesses.

How does the VET institution assist them through their transition?

The most mentioned form of assistance by the school is the guidance offered on career opportunities (in 31% of cases) and in teaching on how to search and apply for a job (in 28% of cases) – with no apparent changes in both the 2017 and 2018 cohort. In 31% of cases graduates reported to have not received any assistance from their school in finding their first job.

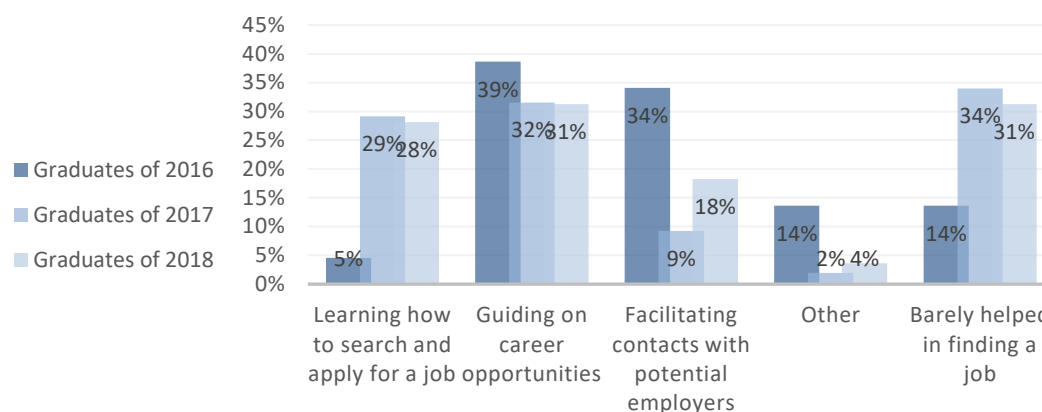
Table 6 Ranking of means of acquiring first-time employment (%)

2016	Personal connections (77%) (n=33)	Job advertisement (9%) (n=4)	Apprenticeship in the business (7%) (n=3) Through contacting directly the employer (7%) (n=3)
2017	Personal connections (69%) (n=124)	Job advertisement (9%) (n=16) Through contacting directly the employer (9%) (n=16)	Apprenticeship in the business (6%) (n=11)
2018	Personal connections (65%) (n=124)	Through contacting directly the employer (13%) (n=25)	Apprenticeship in the business (9%) (n=17)

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=43, N₂=180, N₃=192.

The vast majority of graduates still continue to acquire first-time employment using personal connections of family members and friends, though there is a decreasing trend from 77% in 2017 to 65% in 2018. Job advertisements represent the second most common way of finding first-time employment, though in 2018 there were more graduates contacting directly their employers. Graduates finding first-time employment through their apprenticeships in businesses still comprise a small proportion of the sample or around 1 in 10 graduates.

Figure 21 Modes of assistance of the VET institution (%)



Note: This is a multiple response question. Percentages do not add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=206, N₃=192.

Those who were (self)employed were asked how their school assisted them in finding their first job. The most mentioned form of help is the guidance offered on career opportunities (in 31% of cases) and in teaching on how to search and apply for a job (in 28% of cases). There are no apparent changes in the 2017 and 2018 cohort. However, compared to the 2017 cohort, graduates of the 2018 cohort mentioned that they had been facilitated contacts with potential employers more often (in 18% of cases). In 31% of cases graduates reported to have not received any assistance from their school in finding their first job.

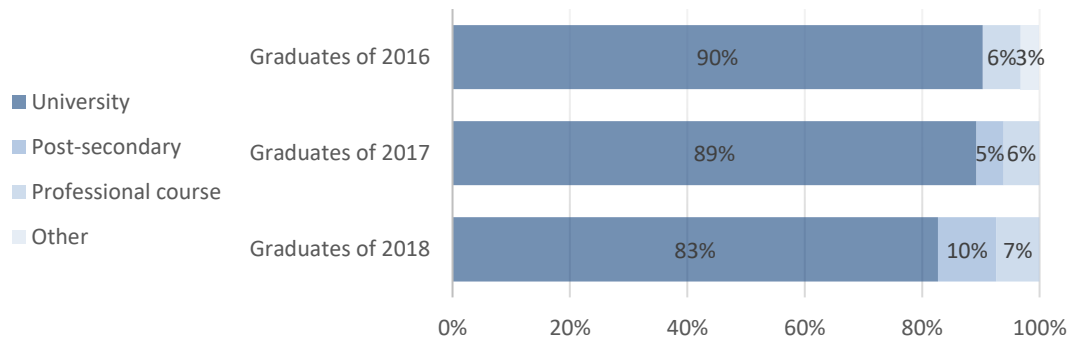
4.8 Student or Trainees

What type of further education and professional development are graduates pursuing?

In general, around 2 in 10 graduates choose to pursue further education and professional development following their graduation. Among the 2018 graduates attending further education, while 83% were attending Bachelor studies, 10% were attending post-secondary courses.

The main reason why graduates pursued further education was to achieve a higher qualification and this reasoning has remained stable over the past three cohorts (46-48%). However, there is a lower proportion among the 2018 cohort that chooses further education to improve their chances of finding a better job – 12 p.p lower than the 2017 cohort, replaced by those wanting to pursue a different career (14%).

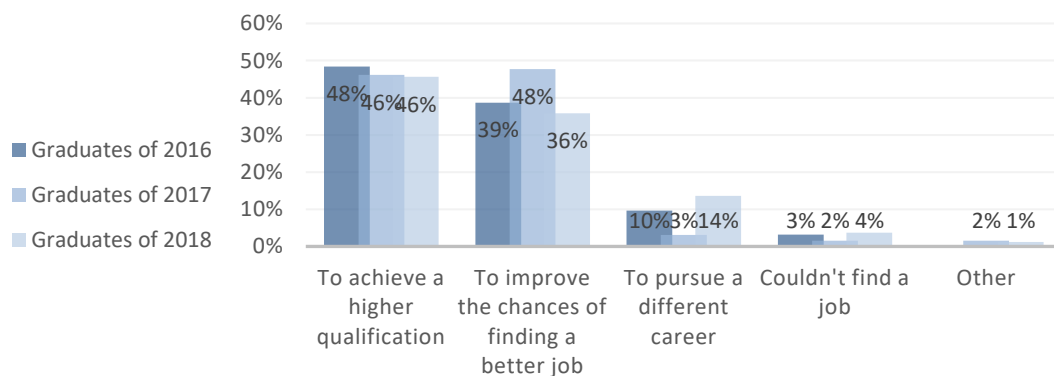
Figure 22 Type of qualification studying towards (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=31, N₂=65, N₃=81.

The vast majority of those attending further education and professional development following their graduation were attending Bachelor studies at the university level (83-90%). Among the 2018 graduates attending further education, while 83% were attending Bachelor studies, 10% were attending post-secondary courses.

Figure 23 Reasons behind pursuing further education (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=31, N₂=65, N₃=81.

Asked on the reasons behind pursuing further education, the proportion of those attending further education to achieve a higher qualification has remained stable over the past three cohorts (46-48%). However, there is a lower proportion among the 2018 cohort that chooses further education to improve their chances of finding a better job – 12 p.p lower than the 2017 cohort, replaced by those wanting to pursue a different career (14%).

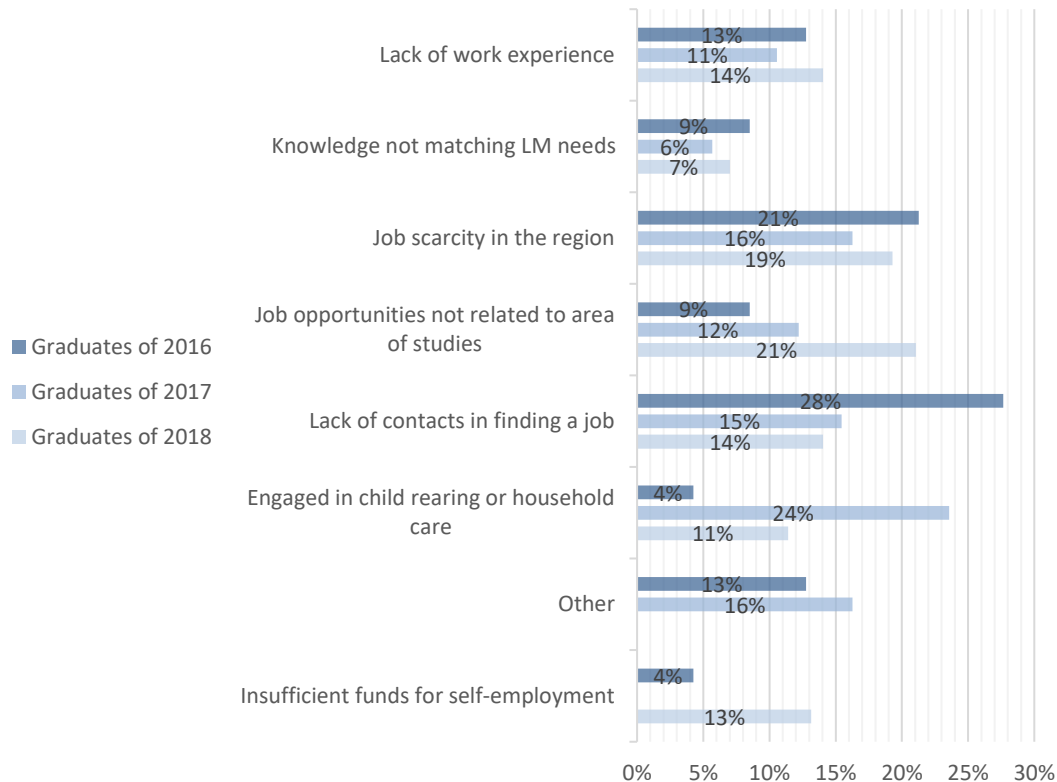
4.9 Unemployed

What are some of the difficulties encountered by those graduates that have not been able to find employment?

28% of 2018 graduates were unemployed one year after their graduation. Only 56% of them were actively looking for a job in the past 4 weeks before the tracer interview or 11 p.p higher than the 2017 graduates

The major perceived reasons behind unemployed were diverse ranging from lack of work experience to lack of contacts in a finding a job, and job scarcity in general. However, among the 2018 cohort there were more graduates perceiving that they were unemployed either because job opportunities were not related to their area of studies or that their knowledge did not match labour market needs - pointing toward problems of the labour-market relevance of their study programme.

Figure 24 Perceived main reasons behind unemployment (%)



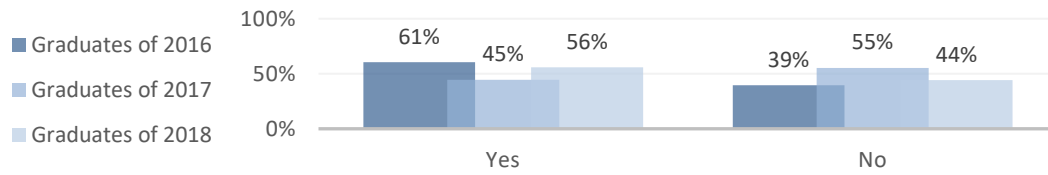
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=47, N₂=123, N₃=114.

The perceived reasons behind unemployment appear diverse and don't converge, even though around 1 in 3 graduates point toward problems of the labour-market relevance of their study programmes. 29% of 2018 unemployed graduates perceived that they were unemployed either because job opportunities were not related to their area of studies or that their knowledge did not match labour market needs.

While for the 2016 graduates lack of contacts in finding a job had the highest importance behind unemployment (28%), it has been decreasing for the 2017 and 2018 graduates to 15% and 14%, respectively.

Only slightly more than the half of the 2018 graduates (56%) were actively looking for a job in the past 4 weeks before the tracer interview or 11 p.p higher than the 2017 graduates.

Figure 25 Looked actively for a job in the past 4 weeks (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=38, N₂=121, N₃=113.

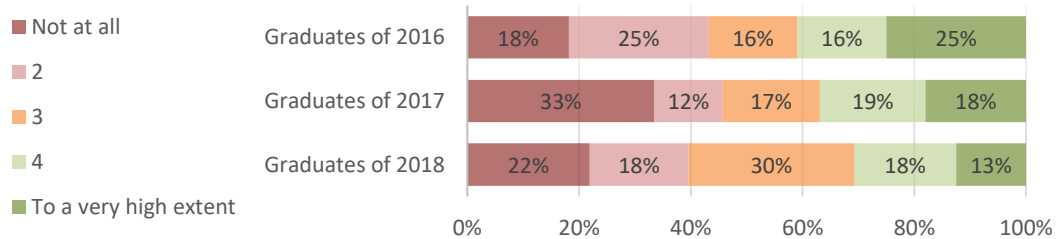
4.10 Use of Knowledge and Competencies Acquired

How are the work tasks of employed graduates related to their study programme and their competencies?

The proportion of graduates reporting to use the knowledge acquired during their studies either ‘at a high’ or ‘very high’ extent has decreased over the past three tracers - from 41% among the 2016 graduates to just 31% for the 2018 graduates.

Whilst only half of both 2017 and 2018 graduates worked in occupations related to their education, 32% of the 2017 cohort reported that their actual job position was either ‘to a high extent’ or ‘very high extent’ appropriate to their studies, compared to 27% of the 2018 cohort.

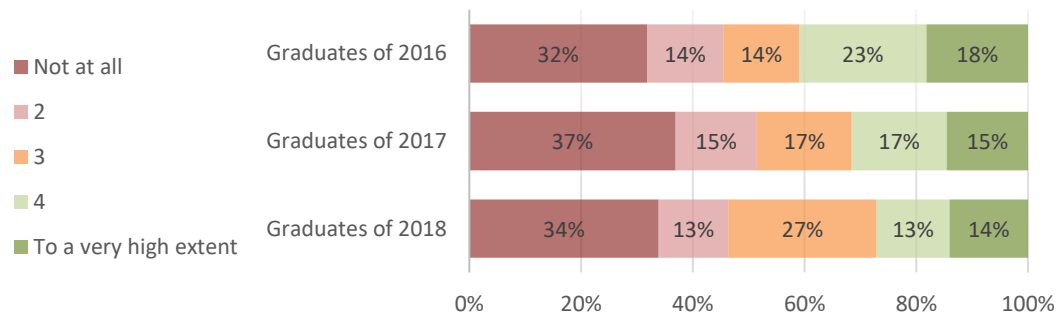
Figure 26 Extent of utilization of knowledge acquired during studies (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=206, N₃=192.

Regarding the use of knowledge acquired during the studies in their current job, the proportion of graduates reporting to use their knowledge either ‘at a high’ or ‘very high’ extent has decreased over the past three tracers - from 41% among the 2016 graduates to just 31% for the 2018 graduates. On the other hand, around 4 in 10 graduates did not use their acquired knowledge at all or used it very little – from 43% in the 2016 cohort to 40% in the 2018 cohort. However, in the 2018 cohort, there are more graduates reporting neutral evaluations (30%).

Figure 27 Extent of appropriateness of the actual job position to the studies (%)



Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=206, N₃=192.

Only half of both 2017 and 2018 graduates worked in occupations related to their education. Furthermore, when asked on the appropriateness of their actual job position to their studies, the respondents in the extremes of the scale (rating the extent of appropriateness as not at all or to a very high extent) appear similar across cohorts. However, 32% of the 2017 cohort reported that their actual job position was either ‘to a high extent’ or ‘very high extent’ appropriate to their studies, compared to 27% of the 2018 cohort. Among the 2018 cohort, the same proportion reported neutral ratings (27%).

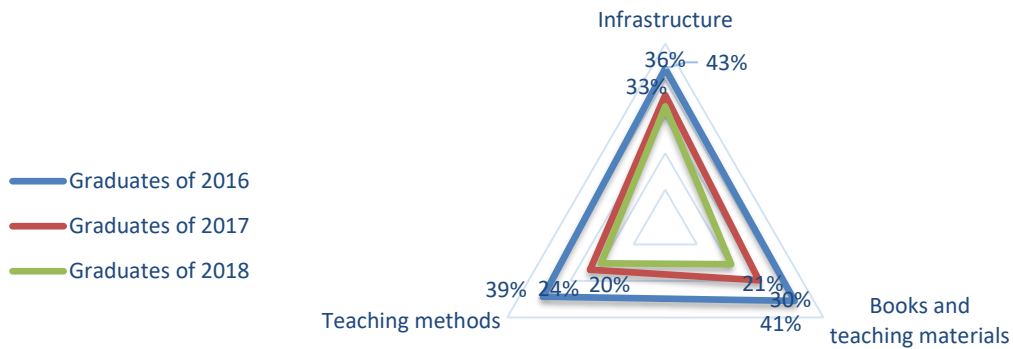
4.11 Proposals for Improvement

What areas need further improvement to better prepare the graduates for the job market?

In retrospective, there is a growing perception among graduates that their schools need less improvements regarding infrastructure, teaching methods and books and teaching materials.

However, 45% of the 2018 graduates and 48% of the 2017 graduates reported that apprenticeships near businesses needed improvement ‘to a high or very high extent’.

Figure 28 % area needs improvement “to a high/very high extent”

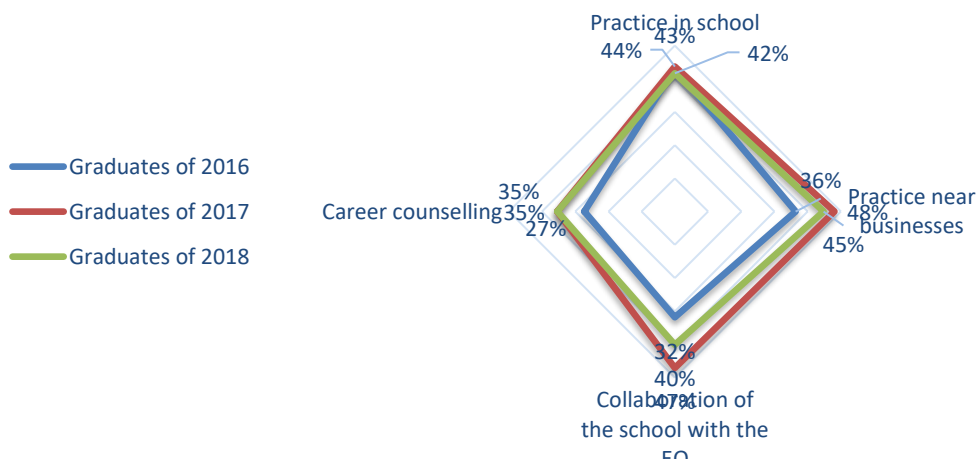


Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=206, N₃=192.

In retrospective, there is a growing perception among graduates that their schools need less improvements regarding infrastructure, teaching methods and books and teaching materials. Whilst 43% of 2016 graduates reported that infrastructure needed improvement ‘to a high or very high extent’, this proportion has dropped to 36% and 33% for the 2018 cohort. See Fig.28.

However, when asked on other aspects of the school, the situation does not appear improving. 45% of the 2018 graduates and 48% of the 2017 graduates reported that apprenticeships near businesses needed improvement ‘to a high or very high extent’. See Fig.29.

Figure 29 % area needs improvement “to a high/very high extent”



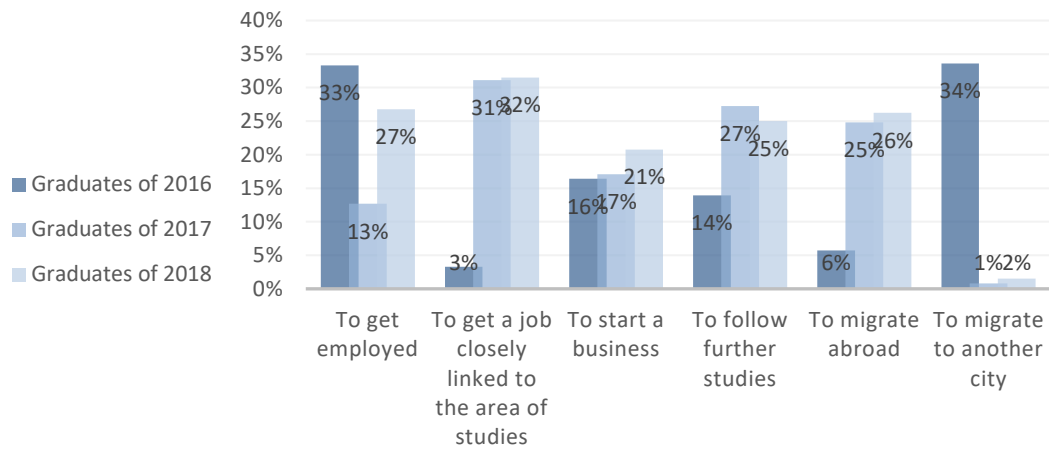
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest integer. Due to rounding, percentages may not always appear to add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=44, N₂=206, N₃=192.

4.12 Future Plans

What do graduates plan to achieve in terms of employment or further education in the future?

Graduates' plans for the next two years appeared diverse. In 32% of cases they wanted to get a job closely related to their area of studies within the next two years, while 27% to get employed. In 26% of cases graduates planned to migrate abroad.

Figure 30 Graduates' plans for the next two years (%)



Note: This is a multiple response question. Percentages do not add up to 100%. **Base:** N₁=78, N₂=363,