Colophon

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Employer Survey 2015

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Introduction

The Employer survey is part of Metropolitan University College’s quality work, the purpose of which is to ensure high quality of the individual degrees and on the university college as a whole.

Educating strong professionals require good contact with workplaces that hire graduates from Metropolitan University College. The Employer survey is one of several tools part of this contact. The survey offers i.a. insight into whether the degrees continue to educate graduates with relevant competences, and whether these competences are high-level. The knowledge, the survey provides, is used by the degrees of Metropolitan University College in a continuous process to ensure high-quality degrees that remain relevant for the parts of society the university college educate people for.

The strategy of Metropolitan University College of 2020 makes clear that the university college should educate innovative professionals with competences matching the needs of the labour market. The Employer survey contributes i.a. with feedback for the university college’s degrees whether this ambition is fulfilled, and whether they educate graduates who are ready to co-create and renew those parts of society the university college educate people for.

The results of the Employer survey are involved in the work with action plans of the degrees, where the results are involved in the analyses of the degrees on equal footing with results from teaching evaluations, subsequent strategy review, inputs from education committees etc.
Execution and Method

The Employer survey of 2015 for Global Nutrition and Health (GNH) was executed through qualitative interviews with three Employers, who, combined, had hired four newly qualified GNH Bachelors, graduated from Metropolitan University College within the last three years.

Contact to the interviewees was achieved through the management secretariat who received contact information from the degree and subsequently contacted the Employers over telephone.

The purpose of the Employer survey is to systematically investigate the Employers’ assessment of recent graduates from Metropolitan University College. For the Metropolitan University College to remain closely linked to the labour market, contact to the Employers is continuously maintained and extended.

The responses in this report might not be fully representative since the survey does not cover all Employers. For a greater elaboration of the data, see appendix at the end of the report.

The GNH Employer surveys for 2012 and 2010 have also been executed through qualitative interviews. The results from previous surveys will be referred to, where meaningful and relevant.
Main Results of the Survey

This section contains a short summary of the main results of the survey. Readers who wish to study more results of the survey in depth are encouraged to read the whole report.

Summary of results from the Employer survey of 2015:

- *In General,* the Employers’ assessment in the interviews was that the competences of the newly qualified were relevant in relation to those functions that newly qualified GNH Bachelors performed. For two of the Employers, it was mainly the graduates’ competences in relation to food that was relevant, whereas the last Employer emphasised competences of both nutrition and health.

- The Employers’ assessment of the competences from the curriculum was unclear but was highly dependent on the Employer’s workplace. In a municipal health institution, a Employer assessed all four competences to be important. In a private company, they were less important, according to the Employer, while a Employer (employee at a folk high school) was unable to assess them because they were too theoretically oriented in relation to the practical nature of the work.

- The two Employers, who answered the question, assessed that the recent graduates’ level of all four competences as either high or average.

- All Employers mentioned professionalism within the occupation as crucial when hiring newly qualified GNH Bachelors from Metropolitan University College. Furthermore, two Employers mentioned personal qualities like for example commitment and passion for the job, while one also mentioned the recent graduate’s ability to write job applications.

- *In general,* all Employers assessed that newly qualified GNH Bachelors contributed with new thinking and development within the professional field – either ‘to some degree’ or ‘to high degree’. The Employers also assessed that graduates, to some level, contribute to organising the work.
Data on the Employers of the Degree

10 potential Employers were contacted, either via email or phone, with a request for participating in interviews.¹

The three interviewees (Employers) in 2015
Three Employers were willing to participate in telephone interviews about their assessment of the newly qualified GNH Bachelors.

The three Employers combined, had hired four newly qualified GNH Bachelors, graduated from Metropolitan University College within the last three years, cf. table 1.

Table 1: Employer responses in the Employer survey 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of invitations sent via mail or phone</th>
<th>Number of interviews completed</th>
<th>Newly qualified bachelors hired (in total) by the three Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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Customer workplaces
The three Employers had widely different workplaces. One worked in a private company, named nemlig.com. Another worked at a municipal health institution, Frederiksberg Health Centre. The last one worked at a private institution, Suhrs Folk High School.

Educational background of Employers
Furthermore, their educational backgrounds were also widely different. The customer from nemlig.com had a degree from a business academy and a mini-MBA.² The customer from Frederiksberg Health Centre had a GNH Bachelor’s degree from Metropolitan University College. The customer from Suhrs Folk High School was an educated teacher of home economics, had supplementary training in adult education and educational planning and many years of experience as a kitchen manager and with teaching. The person even had experience with administrative work.

¹ A few invitations were returned because their email addresses were invalid.
² MBA = Master in Business Administration
The General Relevance of the Recent Graduates’ Competences

The Employers were asked to assess to what extent the recent graduates’ competences were relevant in relation to their job function.

In general, the Employers assessed the competences to be relevant

All three Employers assessed the recent graduates’ competences to be relevant for those functions they performed at the workplace, even though they all also mentioned areas in which the recent graduates could benefit from more knowledge.

The customer in the private company emphasised that, in the hiring process, they had not specifically searched for an applicant with a GNH degree, but instead had been looking within a wider spectre of educational and occupational backgrounds. Nevertheless, the focus of the degree fits well with the functions the applicant was to manage.

Both the customer in the private company and the customer from the folk high school mentioned that it was rather the graduate’s professionalism within food in general that was relevant for the position than, necessarily, healthcare. The customer of the folk high school also stressed that, before GNH, the graduate had worked as a chef for many years and that the chef capabilities also makes up an important part of the graduate’s competences.

On the other hand, the customer in the health centre viewed the competences as very relevant, also the health-promoting aspect. She explained the relevance of the graduate’s competences:

‘They work on prevention and health promotion and you could almost say she is practically tailored for it. In any case, to be the one who convert strategies and project descriptions to reality, that is into society and out to citizens. That is my impression.’

Since the education focus on global health and nutrition and the Employers work at Danish workplaces with non-global work areas, naturally, the Employers’ view, on which of the competences are relevant and which are not, differ.
Importance and Level in Relation to Competences from the Curriculum

One of the central purposes of the customer survey is to investigate whether newly qualified GNH Bachelors are equipped for the subsequent work within the profession, including that their acquired competences are important for the work and that they are high-level.

The Employers are asked to assess the importance of the four competences from the GNH curriculum, as well as the recent graduates' level within the four competences. That part of the interview was relatively structured, since there already were five response categories (including 'do not know') in relation to importance, together with six response categories (including 'do not know') in relation to level.

**Mixed customer assessments**

To a high degree, there was a connection between the Employers' assessment of the importance of the competences and the tasks the customer had assigned the recent graduates to.

The customer from Surhs Folk High School hired the graduate on the basis of the person's chef training, instead of the GNH degree. Therefore, it did not appear meaningful or relevant for the customer to assess the educationally specific competences from the GNH curriculum. In the following, it is therefore only the other two Employers' assessment of the competences that are included.

**Competence 1**, to analyse problem areas within global nutrition and health in an interdisciplinary perspective, was less important for the customer from the private workplace. For the customer from the municipal health institution, however, competence 1 was one of the most important. The customer emphasised that it was important to be able to analyse the problems, but the topic of the tasks was not global nutrition and health but more local.

**Competence 2**, to handle, implement and assess interventions within global nutrition and health, was assessed as 'less important' by the customer from the private company, where the two recent graduates were hired because of their professionalism within food – not necessarily health. The company does not directly take a stand on the health part, in spite of the newly qualified work with developing recipes for the website. Once again, the customer from the health institution did not agree and viewed this competence as being
an important part of the job. However, the customer elaborated that neither, for this competence, was it relevant that the interventions were global, for solving tasks on her workplace.

**Competence 3**, to *interact professionally with people of different cultural, socioeconomic and educational background*, was, like the two above-mentioned competences, less important for the customer from the private company. He emphasised that it was very important to be able to act in a team, but less important when you started to specify what kind of persons the recent graduate should be able to interact with. The customer from the health institution briefly stated that this competence was also important to have in relation to their workplace.

**Competence 4**, to *train and support competences of individuals and groups to promoting health*, again, was ‘less important’ for the customer in the private company. He explained:

> ‘The part about supporting other people in their work is not the idea. The idea is that they have their own work and should support themselves. And they are also able to contribute with knowledge to help others in their project, if they need knowledge about food.’

The customer in the health institution explained that this competence was important at their workplace but that it was not a competence the recent graduate spends time on at the workplace.

**The most important competences, according to the Employers**

The two Employers, who answered on all four competences in the interview, also answered very differently, when they were asked to select the most important competences. The customer from the health institution answered that the first three competences in the curriculum were the most important and prioritised them in such a manner that competence 1 was most important, competence 2 was the second most important and competence 3 was the least important, of the three most important competences.

The customer in the private company did not think that any of the competences of the curriculum were most important for the positions the recent graduates occupied. Instead, he explained that it was most important to know which food themes stir the market, and to know how to sell a product. Thus, focus in the private company was not promoting health but business acumen and sales. This also became apparent in the customer’s assessment of the importance of the competences.

The competences were mainly assessed as important by the Employers in the customer survey of 2012 – however, in varying degrees, depending on the recent graduate’s job function and workplace. Competence 3 was by many Employers even assessed as ‘very
important'. Likewise, competence 1 was assessed as important, however, without global focus.

In the graduate survey of 2013, the starting point of the questionnaire was other competences, wherefore a comparison between this survey and the customer survey from 2015 is meaningless.

In general, the Employers assessed the level as high or average

Two Employers from 2015 primarily assessed the recent graduates' level as high within all four competences from the curriculum. The customer from the folk high school did not answer these questions because she had primarily hired the graduate for his/her experience as a chef, and therefore she assessed herself unable to consider the competences of the curriculum – they were too theoretically oriented in relation to the graduate’s work assignments.

The recent graduate’s level within competence 1, to analyse problem areas within global nutrition and health in an interdisciplinary perspective, was assessed as high or above average by both respondents. In the customer survey of 2012, the assessment of the recent graduate’s level varied between satisfactory and high.

The customer from the health institution assessed that the recent graduate was good at handling, implementing and assessing interventions within global nutrition and health, i.e. competence 2. To the customer in the private company, this competence was less important, as mentioned earlier, and furthermore, he was not familiar with the graduate’s level within the competence. In 2012, the level with the recent graduates was assessed as both satisfactory and high by those Employers, with whom the competence was also assessed as important.

In relation to competence 3, to interact professionally with people of different cultural, socioeconomic and educational background, the Employers partly agreed that the level of the recent graduates’ level was high. The customer from the health institution responded that the recent graduate was ‘very good at it’. The customer in the private company assessed that the recent graduate’s level was high in relation to interacting professionally with people of different cultural background, but that this was not a frequent type of interaction at the workplace, wherefore the competence, as mentioned earlier, was less important. In 2012, the Employers were also satisfied with the graduates’ level within competence 3.

Finally, both Employers also assessed that newly qualified GNH Bachelors had a high level within competence 4, to train and support competences of individuals and groups to promoting health. However, the customer in the private company elaborated in his statement that the recent graduates were good at helping others at the workplace with
their professional knowledge of food – even though the job was not about improving the health of certain persons or groups. In 2012, the Employers’ assessment was also that the recent graduates’ level was high.

Coherence between the importance of the competences and the recent graduates’ level within these

The tendency in the Employers’ responses is that the recent graduates’ level within all competences is assessed as ‘good’ or ‘high’.

This is also true for the competences the customer from the private company assessed as less important for doing the job. However, there was one competence that this customer was unable to assess because the competence was irrelevant for the workplace.

For the customer in the municipal health institution, there is apparently a good coherence between the importance of the competences – they were all important – and the recent graduate’s level, who as a minimum was ‘satisfactory’ within all competences.

In 2012, there was, according to the Employers, good coherence between the importance of the competences and the recent graduates’ level within the competences. This supports the finding from this customer survey, i.e. that the newly qualified GNH Bachelors, in general, have a high level within the competences but that the importance of the competences depend on which trade, and thereby job function, the recent graduate is hired for.
Other Important Competences for Recent Graduates

To achieve a satisfactory image of which competences are important in job functions held by GNH Bachelors, the Employers have had the opportunity to add other important competences (than the four competences that already appear in the curriculum).

Only the customer from the municipal health institution answered this question, and she answered that recent graduates should improve their skills in writing job applications. This could for example be achieved through a crash course in writing job applications. The customer emphasised that this also includes graduates from Nutrition and Health.

Decisive for the Employment Situation

In 2015, the Employers were asked to assess which competences were decisive when hiring newly qualified GNH Bachelors from Metropolitan University College.

All three Employers emphasised that the professional knowledge and level within the trade of the recent graduate were the decisive reason for their employment. For the Employers of the folk high school and the private company it was predominantly professionalism in relation to food, recipes and the like, where the customer in the municipal health institution thought it decisive that the applicant had a background within health care.

That same customer also emphasised that it, in general, was beneficent that the applicant had a professional bachelor. This was due to the fact that the customer expected the newly educated:

‘... didn’t have the need to be in a place where you devoted yourself a lot to research and something like that, and that you were able to convert parts of the project description to practice.’

This customer also emphasised that the recent graduates had written a good motivated application – the same customer had earlier sought stronger competences in writing job applications with newly qualified GNH and Nutrition and Health bachelors.
Both the customer from the folk high school and the private company also emphasise the personal competences of the recent graduate as decisive for employment. The customer in the private company expressed it like this:

‘The other part, important to me as well was the personal part. Because, even though they have to be professionally competent, they also have to have personality and show they are passionate. And I had no doubt; I could really feel that they were very passionate about (...) what they had trained for. This way of combining food, this way of putting food together that they had been taught from their education; it was important for them to realise it [in the company].’

The customer survey of 2013 also showed that the newly qualified are very much employed on the background of their professional knowledge within different areas. Personal qualifications are also mentioned in the survey, which supports the results from this customer survey. In 2012, the Employers also mentioned the graduates’ other educational or job-related background, which is consistent with the customer mentioning the applicant’s background as a chef as very decisive in the employment situation.
The Recent Graduates’ Contribution to New Thinking and Development

All three Employers were asked to assess the recent graduates’ contribution to new thinking and development at the workplace within, respectively, the professional field and within *organising the work* (e.g. changes in procedures, work routines, or similar processes at the workplace).

**The recent graduates’ contribution within the professional field**

The Employers agreed that the recent graduates contribute within the professional field. Their answer varies from ‘to some degree’ to them contributing with everything within their specific field.

The customer, from the folk high school, pointed out that the newly qualified employee contributes a lot, especially because the employee is relatively young at a workplace with a lot of older colleagues and is therefore able to contribute with a set of ‘fresh eyes’ in professional matters.

The customer from the health institution answered ‘to some degree’ because the recent graduates had to work on a project with a fixed framework, where there was no room for new thinking and independence. However, the customer assessed that the graduate would be better equipped for new thinking within the professional field if the job function had offered the possibility.

In the private company, the recent graduates were hired as the first full time employees in their field. This has meant that they have helped shape 90% of their assignments themselves, the customer assessed, and elaborated that it was also part of the job title. He answered:

‘*In relation to their own work area, they are contributing in every direction. It’s not like we’ve had anyone working specifically with making these recipes, and coming up with new ones, collaborating with chefs etc. In that sense, they are contributing with everything that’s new.*’
The Recent Graduates’ Contribution within Organising the Work

The Employers’ assessment of the recent graduates’ contribution with new thinking and development within organising the work is more mixed.

The customer from the private company pointed out that the recent graduates have not been used to working in a private company and therefore have had to spend energy learning the new context. However, he emphasised that they are good at being curious about it and ‘being open and not closed in around their professionalism’.

The two other Employers assessed that the recent graduates contribute with new thinking and development within organising the work, to a high degree — e.g. with ideas for changes of work routines or methods. The customer of the folk high school mentioned how the recent graduate, independently, has contributed to new thinking of IT tasks and more practical tasks at the work place. The customer from the health institution assessed that the recent graduate, to a high degree, has contributed. She explained:

‘She (the graduate) was good at spotting when there was something we hadn’t thought through. Once in a while, she asked some questions that led us to discover flaws in our work routines. At least, that’s how I remember it. So it is true that it was a great help to have her as an extra pair of eyes.’
The Recent Graduates’ Contribution to Inter-professional Collaboration

A large focus area for Metropolitan University College is inter-professional collaboration. GNH Bachelors from Metropolitan University College are supposed to be experts of their own subject area and at the same time be skilled inter-professional collaborators.

Therefore, the Employers have also been asked to what degree the newly qualified GNH Bachelors contribute to the inter-professional collaboration at the department or workplace.

The three Employers assessed, in general, the recent graduates’ competences within inter-professional collaboration as good. The Employers are all located at workplaces where it is important that employees know about other professional groups at the workplace.

At the folk high school, however, the ‘core’ of employees have the same educational background like for example a degree in domestic science etc., but, at the same time, the customer still emphasises that the recent graduate is good at contributing to the inter-professional collaboration – both on an organisational level and in relation to engaging the students at the folk high school.

The customer from the private company mentioned that it has been a managerial task to introduce the employees to the new work environment and, thereby, the functions of other employees. He explained that the recent graduates are good at working across different groups.

The final customer, from the municipal health institution, mentioned that five to seven different professional capabilities are in play in the department. Inter-professional collaboration is a fundamental premise at the workplace, which is consistent with the recent graduate’s ‘excellent understanding of the workday of physiotherapists, ergotherapists and nurses’.

Fundamentally speaking, the Employers’ responses indicate that the newly qualified GNH Bachelors contribute to the inter-professional collaboration, understand the work area of other employees and commit themselves to collaboration.
Fulfilling the Users’ Needs

The Employers have been asked to assess to what degree the recent graduates fulfil the users’ needs. The ‘users’ depend on the workplace – in a private company it may be clients, at a folk high school it may be the students.

The recent graduates have varying contact to the users because of the diversity of their tasks. This means that Employers have different conditions for assessing the recent graduates on this parameter.

At the folk high school, the customer assessed that the recent graduate, to a great extent, live up to the students’ needs for being introduced to food, which is part of the recent graduate’s job function. The customer explained that the graduate both draw on his practical experience and training as a chef, together with his more theoretical knowledge from the degree, and that he provides them with challenges, learning and knowledge.

With the two other Employers, the recent graduates' hands-on tasks are less prevalent. In the health institution, the recent graduate has had responsibility for some groups, where the customer assessed that she was good at fulfilling the users’ need for these particular activity groups. So in spite of the recent graduate’s contact face with the users not being particularly big, the recent graduate is good at solving tasks, where this is relevant.

In the private company, the recent graduates have no direct contact with the clients; they upload recipes to the website for the clients to download. Thereby, the recent graduate indirectly fulfils the clients’ need and the customer mentioned that the company receives positive feedback, on the function the recent graduates help manage in the company.
This Element of the Degree Should Have a Higher Priority

In the course of ensuring that the GNH Bachelor’s Degree meets the needs of the labour market, the Employers have been asked to elaborate on what element of the degree should be prioritised.

All three Employers answered the question. Their answers were characterized by the reason for hiring and the type of workplace.

The customer from the folk high school had no ideas to what should be prioritised higher in the degree. The reason was that the recent graduate was not hired specifically because of his GNH Degree.

The customer from the private company emphasised competences and knowledge of sale of food, online and in shops, together with focus on the client and sale to specific target groups as elements of the degree, as elements to give higher priority, to target the private business community better.

Finally, the employer from the health institution mentioned a long row of areas, which, advantageously, could be given higher priority in the degree, with regard to working within healthcare. The customer mentioned workplace specific things like knowledge of mental illness, a holistic view on patients and knowledge of the issue between somatic illness and mental illness. Furthermore, the customer also mentioned project management – with reference to the fact that an increasing part of the tasks take the form of project work, wherefore, knowledge of the ‘project world’ is useful. The customer assessed that it is also useful to have had contact with citizens while taking the degree. Finally, the customer mentioned knowledge of the healthcare system, its organisation, actors, purview and legislature as elements recent graduates often are not that familiar with and therefore could be given higher priority.

In general, the Employers refer to topics that are relevant for the specific function they have the graduates working with. This was also true for the customer survey of 2012. This find is not remarkable, since the degree educates for a multitudinous field of Employers.

In the graduate survey of 2013, the recent graduates mostly mentioned health (including public health and pathology), together with nutrition, subjects relating to natural sciences, psychology and guidance methods and internship.
This is What the Workplaces Need in Five Years

The Employers have been asked to make a suggestion of what will be especially needed at their workplace in five years.

The three Employers we interviewed mentioned different things. Thus, there was no clear tendency in their replies.

The first customer (in the private company) answered in very general terms that the workplace always need knowledge – both now and in five years – both within sale and foodstuffs.

The other customer (at the folk high school) emphasised the professionalism within food and not necessarily nutrition, as very important at the workplace in five years. An ‘old-fashioned’ way of thinking about food was emphasised – including ecology, foodstuff and so-called common sense. Finally, the customer also mentioned a ‘hands-on’ approach to food, and the ability to put food into both a theoretical and practical context.

The third customer (at the health institution), again, mentions project management and professional knowledge about mental health, the span between somatic and mental illness, together with a wider understanding of the health services in general.

In 2012, the Employers’ replies also depended on the workplace. In the private companies, they sought after more knowledge of health, work environment and CSR, competences with talks with persons with mental problems, an eye for macro trends and focus on exercise and fitness. The public institutions (nurseries and a university department) mentioned guidance and counselling for parents, cooking a greater variation of food together with international orientation, interdisciplinarity and the ability to perform evidence-based work.
Appendix

The appendix describes the data of the survey.

The target group for the survey is Employers who have hired newly qualified GNH Bachelors graduated from Metropolitan University College. The three Employers in the survey have combined hired four recent graduates, who have graduated in the period spring/summer 2012 – spring/summer 2015 – of a total number of 114 graduates in the period 1 March 2012 – 29 February 20153.

Not all graduates have entered the labour market, as factors like graduate unemployment rate and further education influence the number of job appointments. The graduate unemployment rate among newly qualified GNH Bachelors of Metropolitan University College has, for example, been approximately 20 % the last few years4. Furthermore, the graduate survey of 2013 showed that 43 % of the 21 graduated respondents were enrolled in further education5.

Based on the above-mentioned analysis, the assessment is that this survey has been answered by a minor segment of the target group. Thus, the survey provides insight into how the individual customer assesses a minor segment of graduates from the degree.

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3 The two periods for, respectively, job appointments and graduation are not completely identical – but, to a great extent, overlap.
4 Graduate unemployment rate has been extracted from: https://www.uu.dk/vaerktoej/uddannelseszoom (Danish link). Recent graduates are defined as persons, who completed their degree at least six months ago. The unemployment rate covers the period 2011-2013.
5 Graduate Survey 2013: Bachelor’s Degree in Global Nutrition and Health. Metropolitan University College.