



Project Burnout at Universities

Barbara Covarrubias Venegas, Gudrun Gaedke, Gerald Janous

barbara.covarrubias@fh-wien.ac.at, gudrun.gaedke@fh-wien.ac.at, gerald.janous@fh-wien.ac.at,

FHWien University of Applied Sciences of WKW (Austria)

Abstract

This study investigates, in a three-year qualitative and quantitative longitudinal research design, the burden of part-time students. Previous studies on the life circumstances of students relate mainly to students of public universities (not Universities of Applied Sciences). In particular for part-time students of Universities of Applied Sciences, there is no empirical evidence, and since the proportion of full-time to part-time students has increased due to the establishment of master degree programs according to the Bologna Declaration 1999, there is also increasing need for systematic knowledge about the burden of this student group. The aim of the quantitative research is to identify the different student groups and the factors influencing them.

What can be observed is that studying while holding full-time or part-time employment means a threefold pressure for students: jobs, studies and private life. This stress situation often leads to discontinuation or longer interruptions of studies or to harmful effects on the students. To identify the factors that can negatively affect academic success, data have been systematically collected over a three-year time span, so that measures concerning the lectures and the central university organization can be taken. The major findings of the quantitative research show us that a little reduction in working hours per week leads to a proportionately high relief for part-time students. Further, the project team could identify three clusters of students with different perceptions of burden.

Based on the evaluation of the quantitative data of the last two years and the first results of the qualitative interviews, a burn-out guide is going to be developed to serve as prevention information explaining patterns for students, colleagues and lecturers. The project is funded by the City of Vienna, Municipal Department 27, EU Strategy and Economic Development.