

Abstract

In Finland, the quality of university teaching is monitored, for example, based on feedback from university students and through career monitoring surveys. Students who have completed a bachelor's degree provide feedback on the education they received through a national bachelor's graduate survey. For holders of master's degrees and doctoral degrees, career monitoring is carried out through national career monitoring surveys. In addition to numerical questions, all surveys also include open questions, and the answers to these questions have so far hardly been analysed.

This report includes an analysis of the feedback submitted for the bachelor's graduate survey and the career monitoring survey for master's degree holders for 2017–2019 and the feedback submitted for the 2018–2019 career monitoring survey for holders of doctoral degrees. The objective of the study is to provide information on what types of topics can be found in the free-form answers submitted for the various surveys. The free-form feedback was grouped under various topics by using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modelling. Topic modelling means automatic grouping of large sets of text by using unsupervised machine learning. This method has previously been found to work very well when student feedback is analysed. The study therefore focuses mainly on the analysis of free-form feedback, but it also deals with numerical feedback regarding questions that provide additional information on the topics identified based on the free-form feedback.

For bachelor's graduates, the study shows that even though bachelor's graduates are, on average, very satisfied with their well-being, learning and university studies, and even though the only problem highlighted by numerical feedback seems to be the lack of feedback, free-form answers include several other areas where the bachelor's graduates would like to see universities to improve. Shortcomings experienced by the bachelor's graduates in relation to study guidance and support as well as problems resulting from major changes that took place at universities or study programmes can be deemed to be the most important ones. These two topics emerged from the answers to two separate open questions alongside with the lack of feedback.

On average, the holders of master's degrees and doctoral degrees are very satisfied with their degree at least in terms of their careers. However, criticism of career counselling and the working life skills obtained through the degree were highlighted in the free-form answers of the holders of master's degree. Both the holders of master's degree and doctoral degree recommend that current students bridge the gap between studies and working life by obtaining, in particular, a wide range of so-called soft skills needed in working life and comprehensive know-how related to other fields than one's own field of studies.