

Current Developments of Tracer Studies – the Case in Germany

Plenary Presentation

2nd DEHEMS International Conference: “Employability of Graduates and Higher Education Management Systems”

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The Tracer Study Revolution in Germany

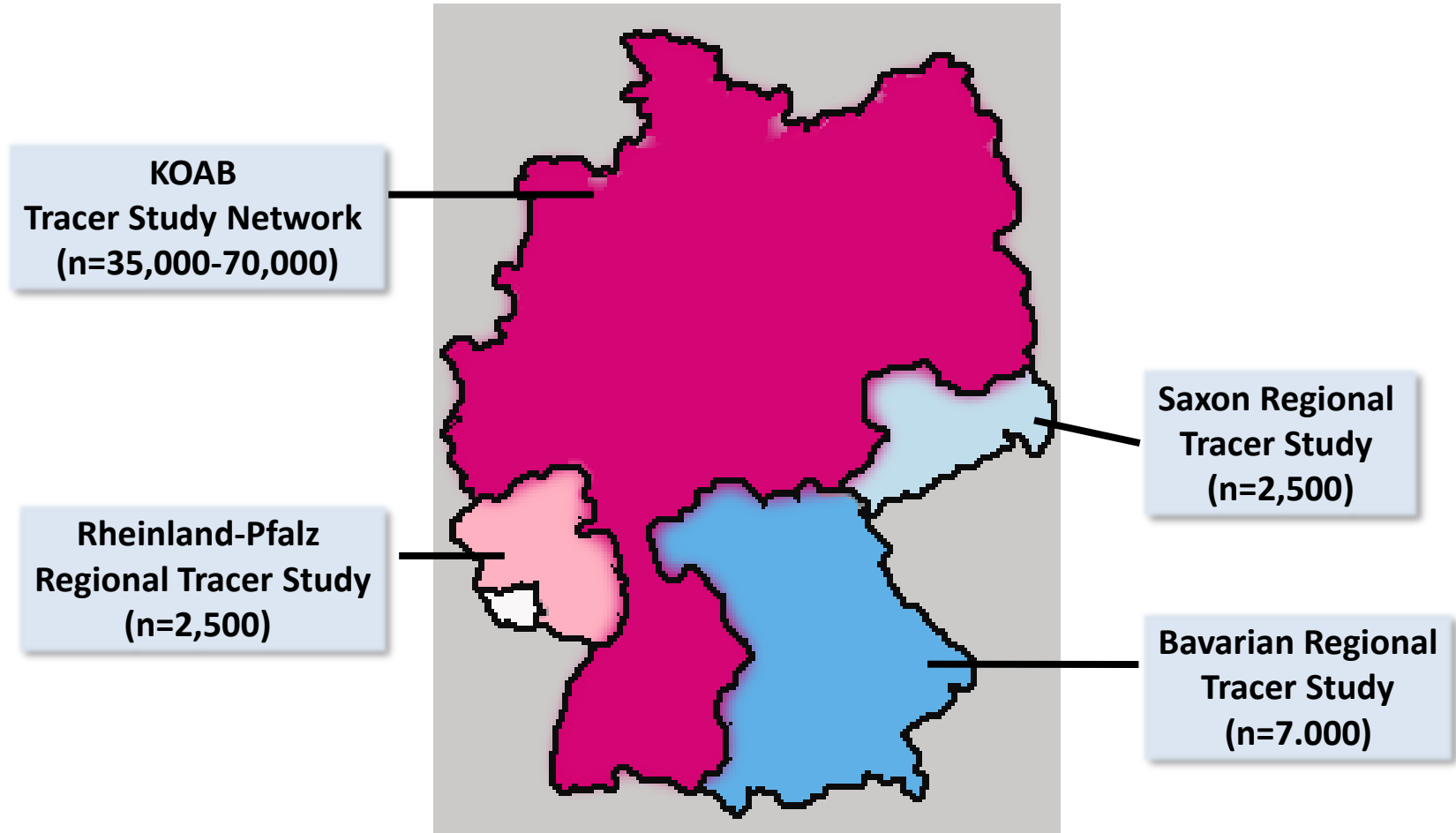
1. Coverage: almost all institutions of higher education in Germany are conducting regular tracer studies
2. A new type of tracer studies in the KOAB network



- Until 2007: only a few institutions of HE conducted regular tracer studies
- Since 2008/2009 almost all relevant institutions of HE are partners in different regional or national systems of regular tracer studies
- Coverage: about 80% of all graduates in Germany
- In the *KOAB network* about 50 % of all graduates from HE institutions in Germany are included

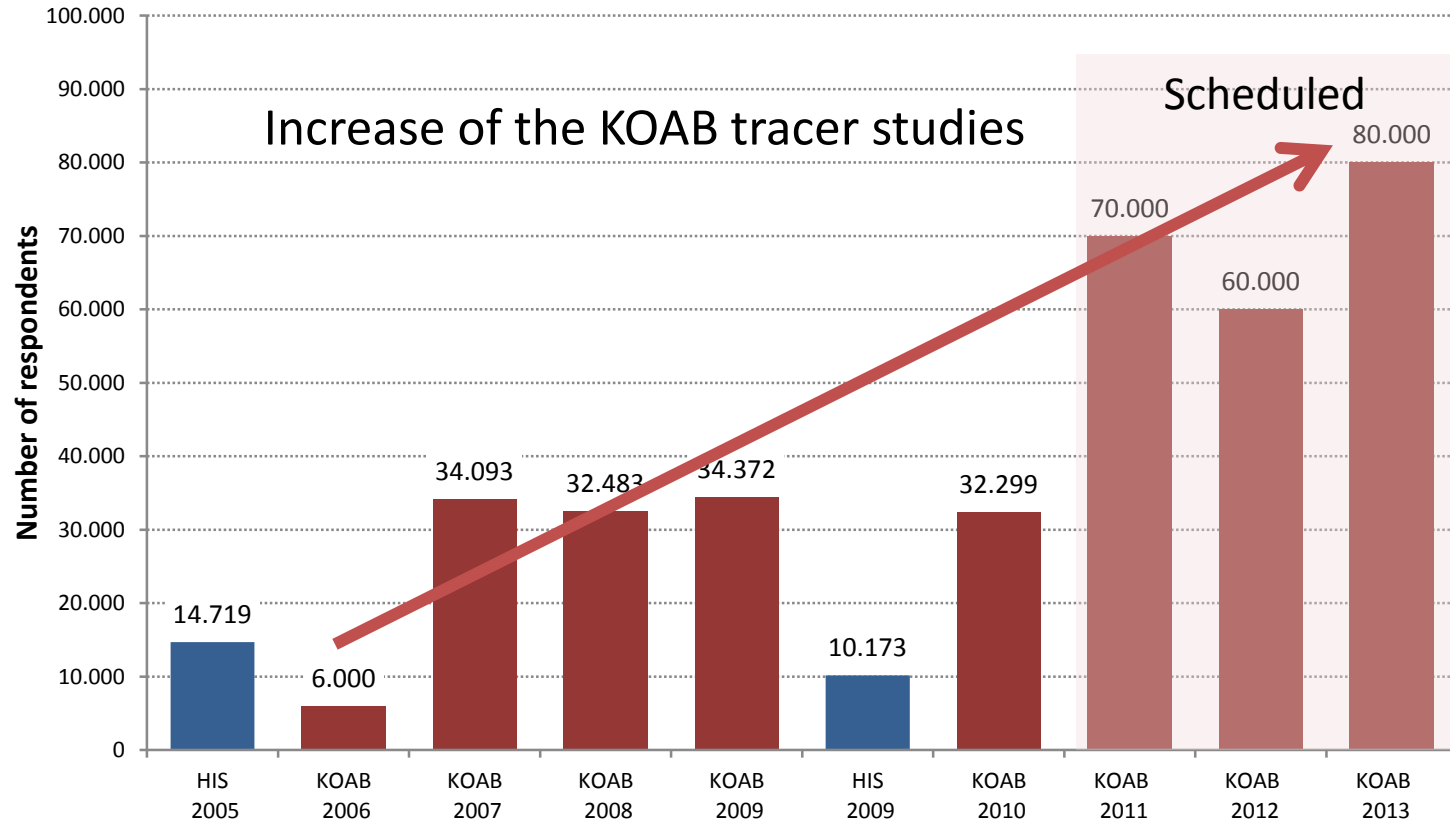
New Tracer Study Systems in Germany 2012

(Kind of systems and number of participating graduates of one cohort)



National Graduate Surveys in Germany

Graduation Cohorts 2005 – 2013 (HIS and KOAB)



National Graduate Surveys in Germany – Graduation Cohorts

■ Survey 2013 – a big shift

- 72 institutions of higher education (2012: 45)
- 170,000 graduates will be invited (2012: 80,000)

■ All institutions of HE in Nordrhein-Westfalen (**North Rhine-Westphalia**; population: 18 million) are participating in KOAB (2013-2015)

■ Special report: **North Rhine-Westphalia Tracer Study**

■ **Regional extension:** The first universities from **Bavaria** and **Austria** are participating in KOAB

- Accreditation procedures of new study programs in Germany
- Empirical evidence about the professional relevance of study programs based on graduate surveys is a formal requirement for accreditation
- 70 % of academic staff in Germany like regular graduate surveys (“reasonable”; only 10 % answered “not reasonable” in the INCHER LESSI survey 2012)

The Tracer Study Revolution in Germany

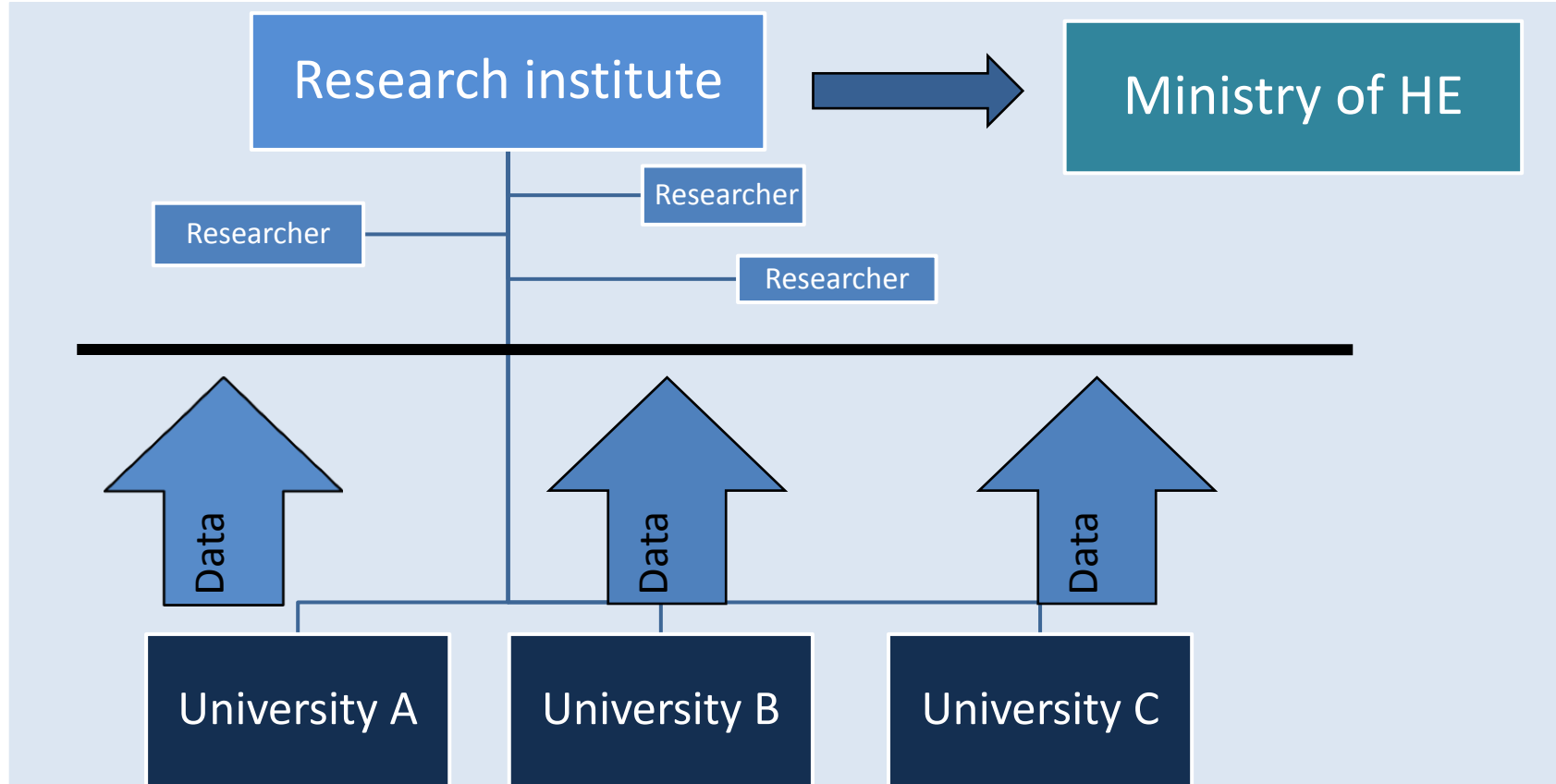
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Old and New Type of Graduate Surveys

- Old type – representative sample survey to inform the Ministry of HE and other key stakeholders
 - Since more than 30 years
 - France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland
 - **Irrelevant for individual institution**
- New type – institutional graduate surveys (all graduates from one institution of higher education)
 - (France), Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Romania
 - Combination of a National Monitor and a feedback instrument for HE institutions
 - **Relevant for individual institutions (reports for individual institutions, program level breakdown of results)**

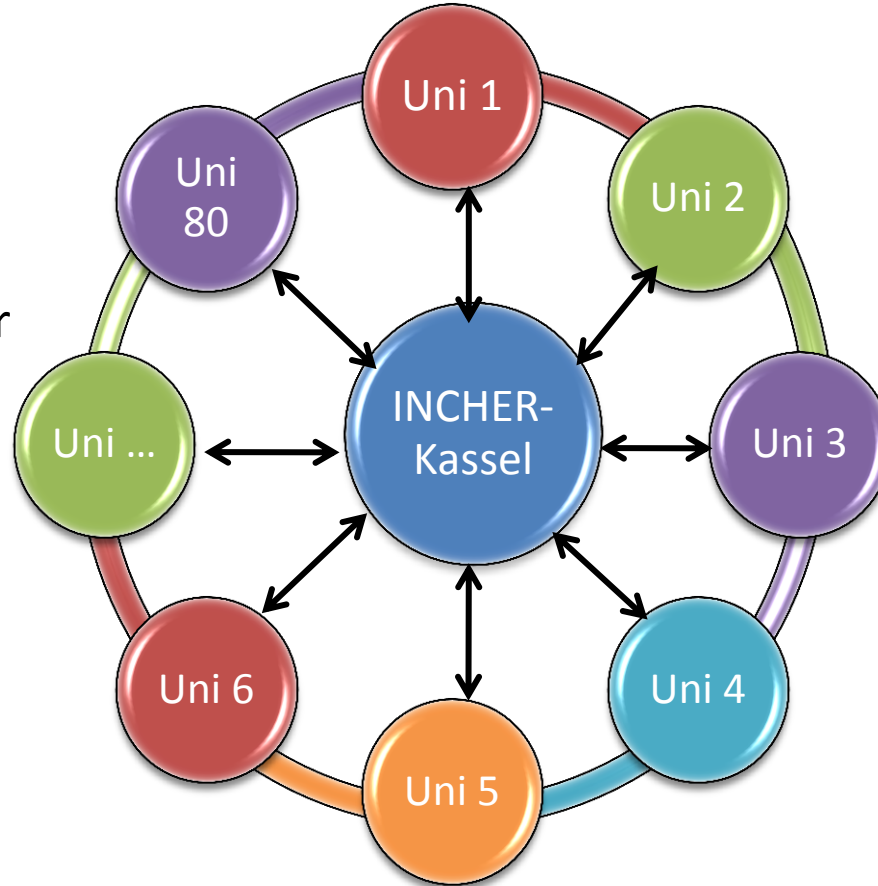
The Old Type of National Tracer Studies: the University Delivers Data (e.g. Addresses)

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The New Type of Graduate Surveys: the Network Approach (KOAB)

2012: About 80 institutions of HE in Germany are cooperating in conducting regular tracer studies



KOAB: Universities are Partners in a Joint Research Project

■ Joint research

- Universities and INCHER-Kassel are developing the core questionnaire and the methodology together
- Every university has an own questionnaire
- Every university is publishing the results of the own tracer study

■ Service

- Central data processing by INCHER – joint data base
- Every university gets customized tables reports (about 500 pages)
- Benchmarking according the needs of the universities – no ranking

■ Workshops

- INCHER provides training for university staff
- 4 workshops per year
- 1 conference per year

1. Multipurpose surveys (broad scope; about 500 variables)
2. Regularity: Every year one cohort
3. Panel: 1.5 year after graduation + 4.5 years after graduation
4. Generation survey: all kind of degrees (BA + MA + PhD)
5. Census: all graduates, no sampling
6. Standardized online + paper questionnaire
7. Every university has an own questionnaire
8. Network approach, cooperation
9. Training for network members
10. Team of about 100 researchers in Germany

Key Element: Regular Workshops and National as well as International Conferences

Project-coordinators from 35 universities and fachhochschulen during a workshop in Kassel; Sept. 2008



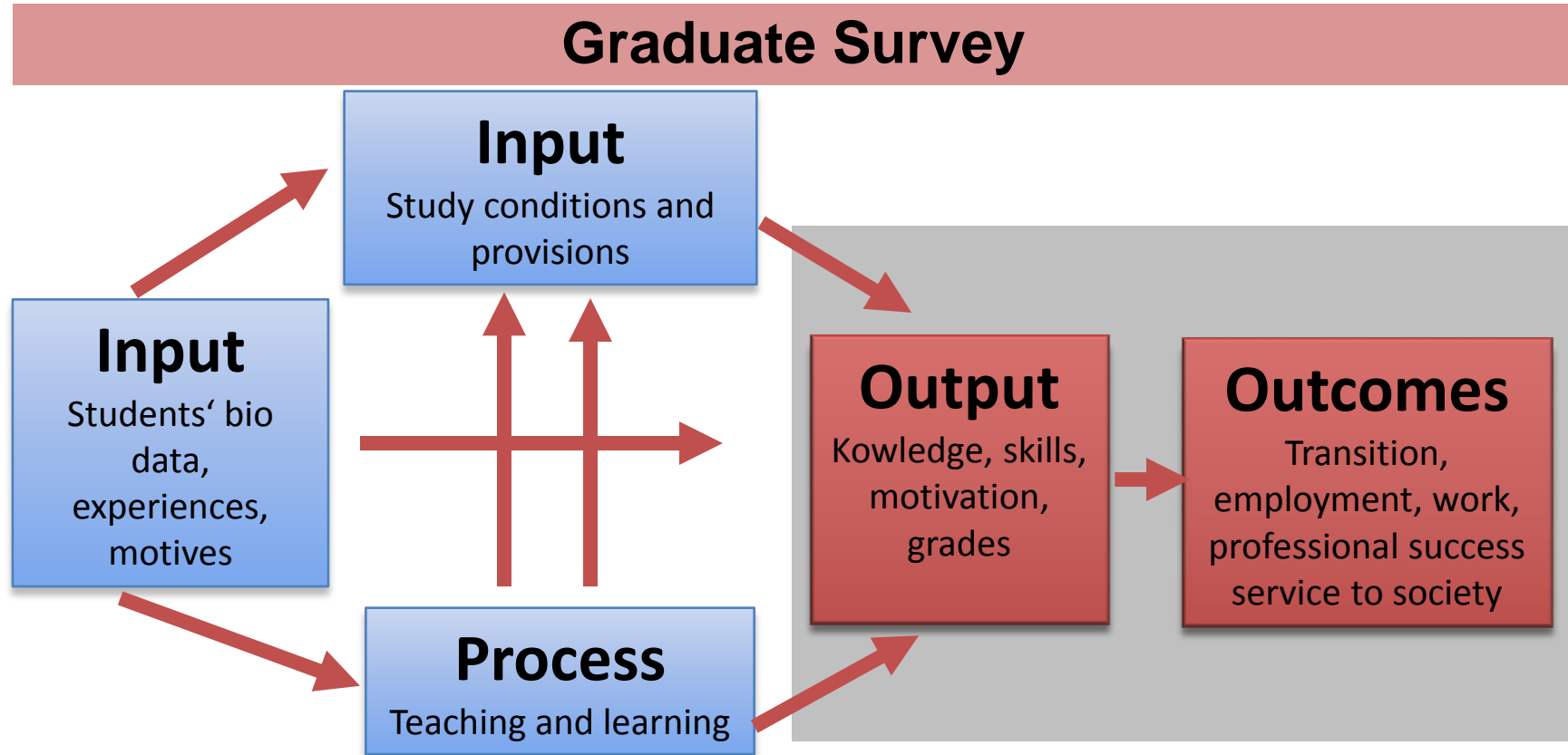
Schedule of INCHER Tracer Studies 2008 – 2020 (KOAB)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Graduates 2006	Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey					3. Survey				
Graduates 2007		Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey					3. Survey			
Graduates 2008			Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey					3. Survey		
Graduates 2009				Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey					3. Survey	
Graduates 2010					Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey					3. Survey
Graduates 2011						Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey				
Graduates 2012							Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey			
Graduates 2013								Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey		
Graduates 2014									Grad. year		1. Survey			2. Survey	

Finished

Schedule

Conceptual Framework for Graduate Surveys

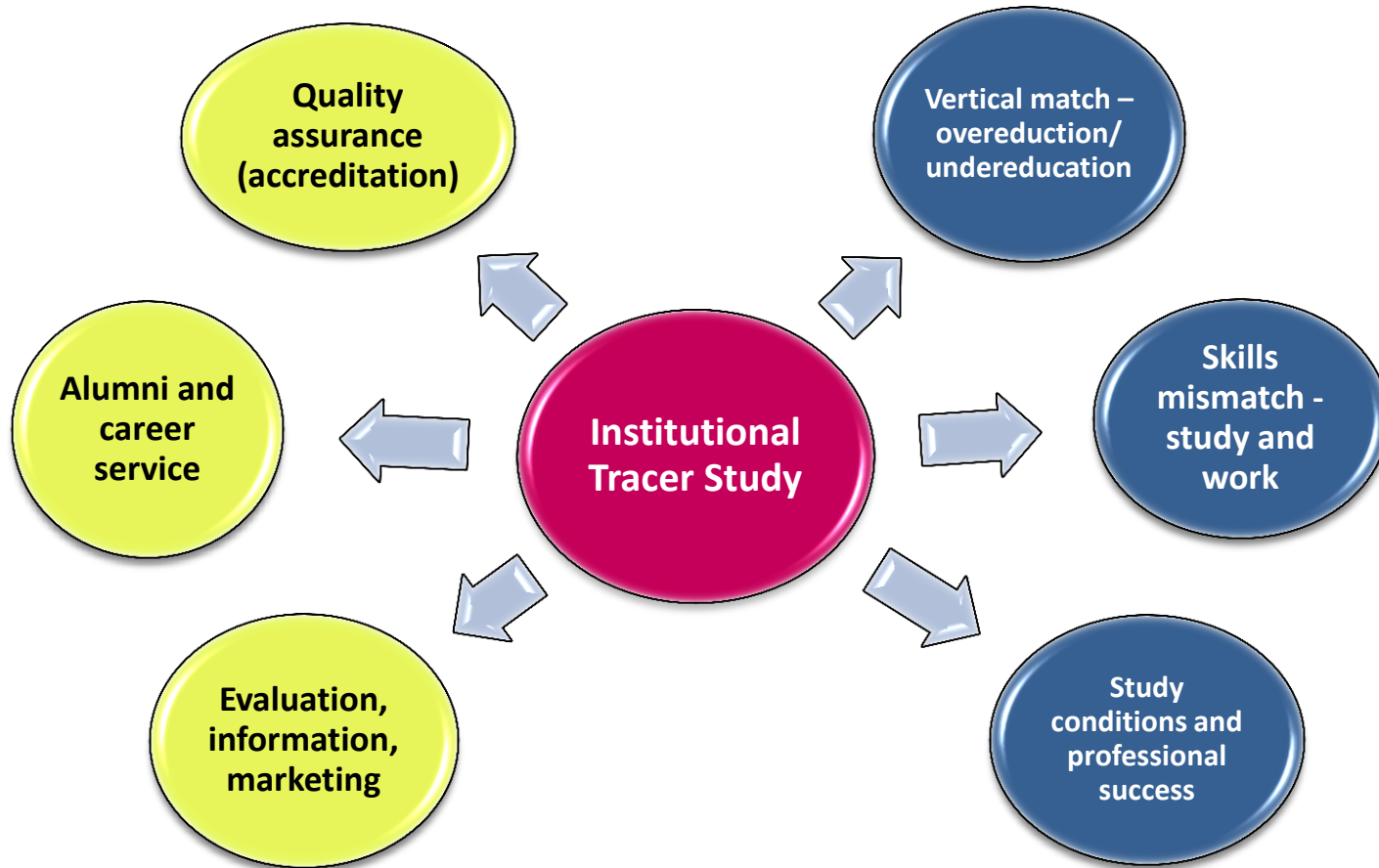


Context: Labour market – region – country; socio-economic development and personal development

1. Which indicators do we need?
2. How to measure the labour market signals?
3. Which factors are relevant to explain the success of the graduates besides higher education?
4. To what extent is the professional success/career caused by HE?
5. Which elements of HE (study conditions and provisions, etc) have an impact?

The Bridge Concept – Institutional Development and Research

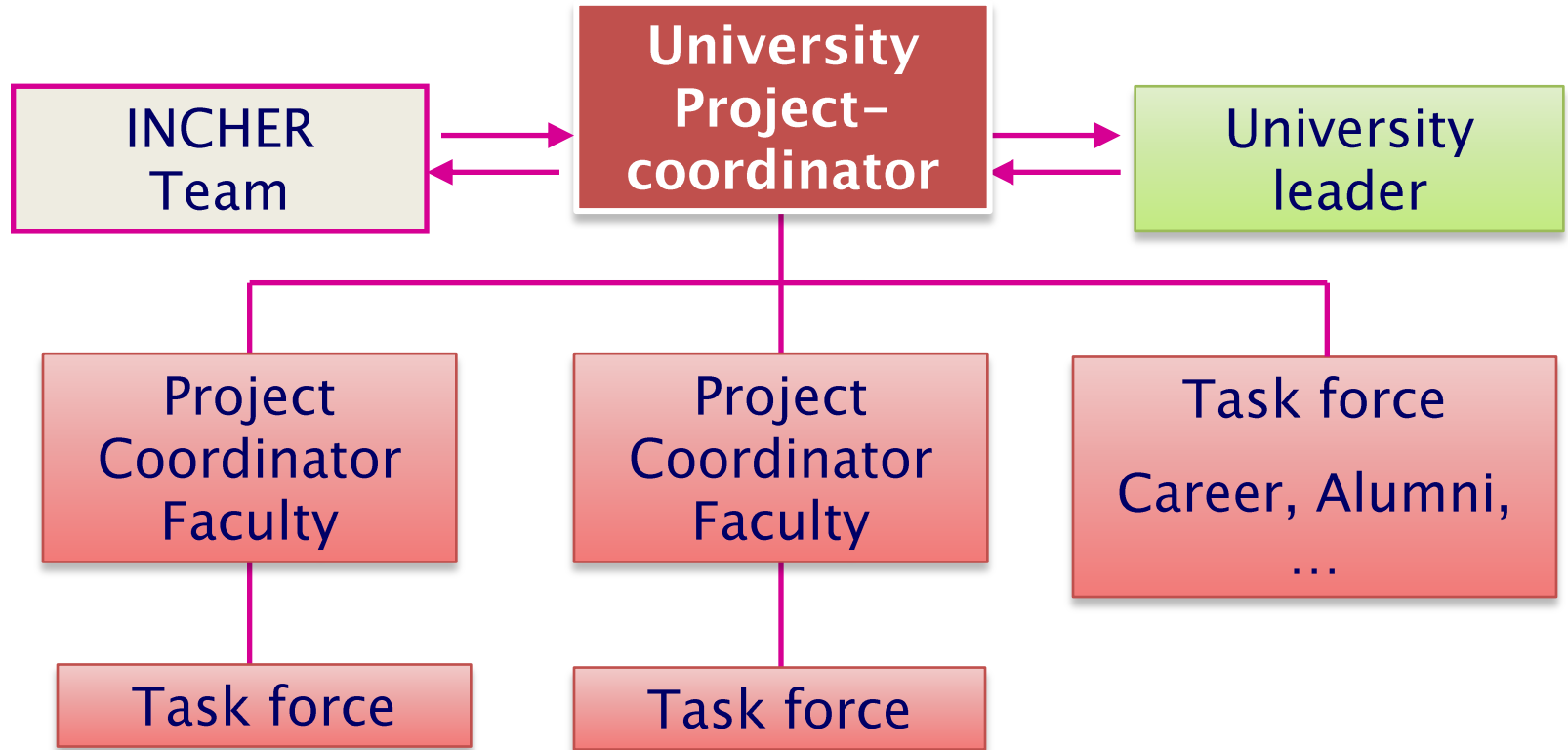
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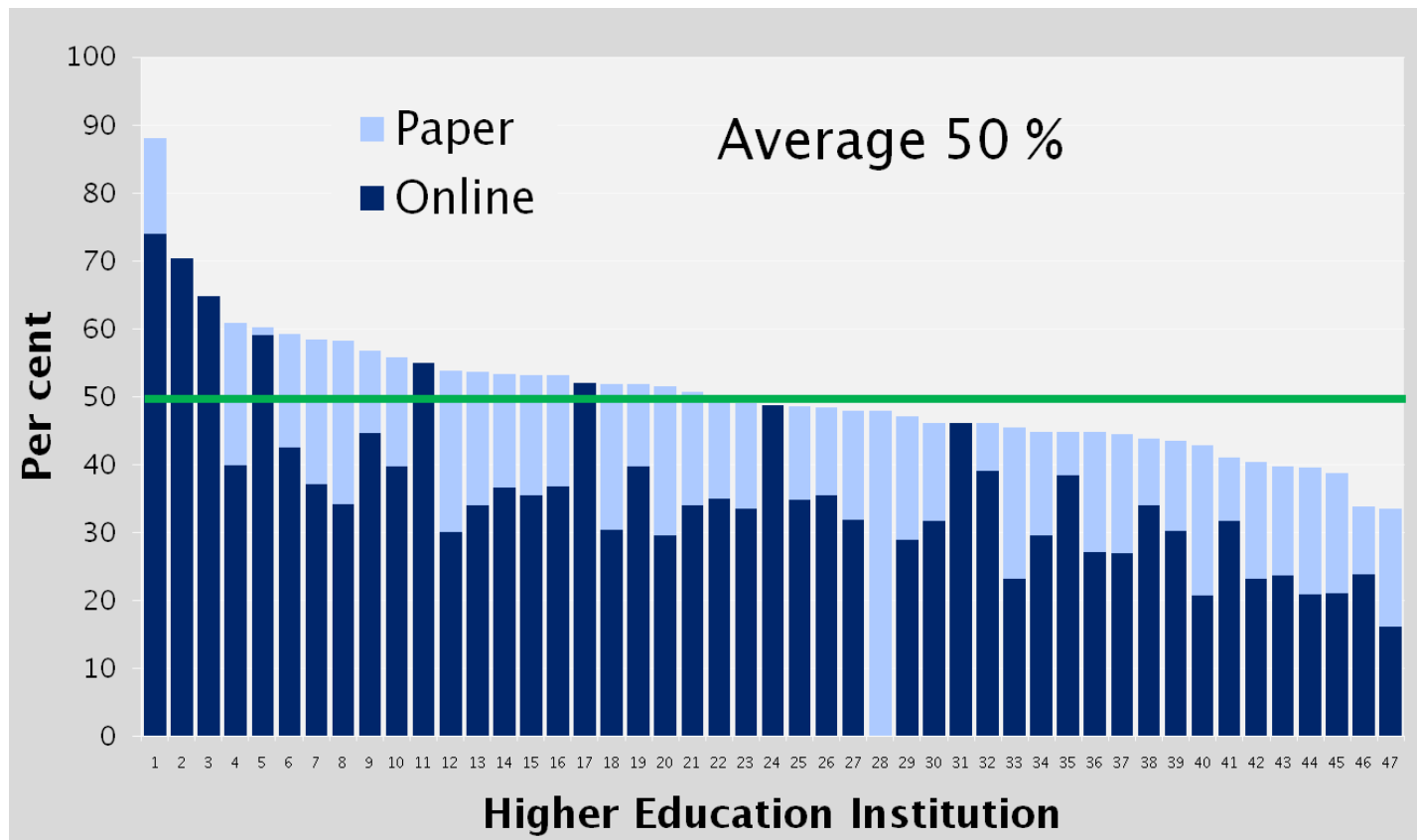
Institutional Development

Research

Organisation of KOAB at University Level



Response Rate of the KOAB Survey, by Kind of Questionnaire and Higher Education Institution (%; Survey 2009)



Source: INCHER, KOAB Graduate Survey 2009; cohort 2007

- INCHER graduate survey questionnaire (standard instrument from 1990)
- Other German questionnaires (national, regional and institutional surveys)
- International experiences (CHEERS and REFLEX)
- National and regional workshops 2007 and 2008
- Further comments and recommendations from universities 2010

Three Types of Questions

■ Core questions

- No change necessary

■ Optional questions

- Ready made modules (e.g. self-employment, international mobility)

■ Special/individual questions

- Institutional level
- Faculty level
- Study program level
- Sector level

The KOAB Team at INCHER-Kassel (Spring 2012)



KOAB Teamleaders: Prof. Dr. Georg Krücken (Director of INCHER) and René Kooij

- Very good employment conditions for graduates from HE institutions in Germany
- Very short job search duration
- Very low rate of unemployment
- No negative effect of economic crisis is visible
- High transition rate to further study of Bachelor graduates
- Often combination of study and employment

- Stability of study conditions: the Bologna process seems NOT to have dramatic effects until now
- The HE institution attended is not a very important factor for early labour market outcomes - only very small differences visible
- Vocational orientation of the study programme seems to be the most relevant aspect of the study conditions especially for horizontal match

Conclusion



- Benchmark without ranking
- Cooperation and competition
- International comparison
- Professionalisation of tracer study researchers

- Every university has an individual questionnaire (2009: 160 surveys were administrated at the same time by INCHER-Kassel)
- Every university has a project coordinator (= researcher)
- At least 6 training workshops per survey + national and international conferences
- Response rate: 50 %

- Every university received the cleaned data and ready to print table reports of about 500 pages – study program level
- Many universities published the results in the internet
- A lot of internal and external dissemination activities
- Scientific use file of the joint data base for different research objectives

Members of the KOAB-Team

(Workshop in Kassel March 2011)



More Information about KOAB → <http://koab.uni-kassel.de/>