SOCIAL WORK CURRICULA TO TODAY’S LABOR MARKET

H. Belchior-Rocha¹, J. Ferreira¹, P. Ferreira²

¹ ISCTE-IUL – University Institute of Lisbon (PORTUGAL)  
² Lusíada University of Lisbon (PORTUGAL)

Abstract

In a context marked by constant social changes with a level of complexity that requires the development of critical understanding of social issues, rethink the social work curricula becomes a priority to strengthen the training of social workers, in order to build a new society based on knowledge, skills development, research and intervention and that contributes to social development and the strengthening of the pillars of society: citizenship, culture, science and innovation. Thinking about these challenges and opportunities and how social work as a profession is responding to current social issues, we developed a training model in a public portuguese university with an integrated curriculum for the three cycles (bachelor, Master and PhD). In order to assess the relevance and adequacy of this model and how the labour market responds to the professionals needs. At the end of 2015 we created a series of indicators (a total of 42 indicators) and submitted them, initially, to a group of experts (through the Delphi’s method), and after we applied it to the students of the three cycles (through an online survey), obtaining a total of 93 responses (response rate of 71%). The results were significantly positive and showed the recognition of competences gained and also the adequacy of the training by the integration of this curricula, which leads us to expand this research to a national/international level to other universities to validate these indicators and ensure their adjustment to the social workers needs into the challenges of the labor market posed to these professionals.

Keywords: Social Work, Education, curricula.

1 INTRODUCTION

Today the education and professional training in social work faces multiple challenges related to questions of structural order and to the demands created within the profession itself that concerns its critical development.

To determine the extent to which this study can provide a helpful framework, method, model or tool for accessing the range of theory for practice, we made a literature review that has supported in the last years the Social work theory and has influenced social work education and professional practice [1].

Nowadays we must think the education/training in Social Work in a post-Bologna framework linked within a context of profound social changes, especially:

- A global economic crisis, which relaunched the debate on the capitalist model and its implications on the structures of society and the lives of citizens;
- A European single space facilitating the free mobility of people and workers;
- A European social model under debate;
- A new paradigm of society identified with social citizenship;
- A cultural and ethnic diversity with challenges posed in the field of democracy and citizenship;
- A level of complexity that requires the development of skills to ensure a critical understanding of social issues such as discrimination, oppression and social inequality and at the same time, policies and their impacts on individuals and in society.

The recognition of these social changes implies not only the necessity to a better integration between theory and practice, although we recognize that ‘such integration helps students to more closely associate the practical value of learning theoretical concepts’ [2], but also between the different contents provided in the different study cycles, creating a continuity and the possibility to develop and deepen the knowledge produced by social workers and their ability to better solve problems that come up in their professional practice.
Therefore, the first cycle of the education/training program in Social Work should be guided by «Global Standards», especially the specifics of the «Education in Social Work», published by the International Federation of Social Workers in March 2012 and of the European Association of Schools of Social Work [3].

A plan for Social Work studies aims to strengthen the technical and scientific preparation of social workers, to participate in building a new society based on knowledge and in skills development such as study, research and intervention, put at service of social, cultural and technological core values to strengthen the essential pillars of life in society: citizenship, culture, science and innovation.

This proposal includes a dimension of human rights and ethics education/training, which enable establishing mediations with the individual and between individuals, institutions and the value of social justice, theoretical training, to prepare for the society knowledge, social problems and social structures. Its framework allows a view and an interdisciplinary discourse facilitator of the understanding and of the definition of what is the meaning of the Social Work action in relation to the citizen and to social problems. Also allows an education that aims to use appropriate and effective methodologies in the response to the problems of the individual, group, community, committed to citizenship and promoting capacity and building empowerment.

The education/training in Social Work incorporates a pedagogical and scientific requirement that articulates a theoretical dimension with a practical dimension characterized by a traineeship instance. Instance that forms part of the training plan as the «Know-How», i.e. the application of knowledge in the workplace by facilitating learning and also the correction of shortcomings acquired by theoretical dimension, as reinforced by the CCETSW [4]: ‘Social work training has placed a strong emphasis on the need for students to provide evidence of the way in which knowledge underpins practice’.

The University curricula integrate structuring contents of the professional profile particularly in the areas described in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Main contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Social Work</td>
<td>Principles and concepts, ethics and deontology, methods and techniques of social work (individual and collective), theories (diagnosis) and social intervention strategies and communication skills in Social Work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public policies and social protection system</td>
<td>Social welfare measures, conceptualization and operationalization of social responses, institutional framework and administration of social services (public, private and social welfare).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Models in Social Work and contemporary social issues</td>
<td>Human development and interaction between Man and Society, Citizenship and Social Environment, equality versus inequality, dependence and social vulnerability, social structure and social and cultural diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical tools of Social Work</td>
<td>Social Assistance, systematic social monitoring, home visiting, interview, observation, social information, social report, family social characterization, supervision, social expertise, individual rehabilitation plan, promotion and protection agreement, educational individual plan, case assessment, scales and communication technologies, information and other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised practices and experiential training in Social Work</td>
<td>Courses of practical training (laboratories and Internships) in exercise where one experiences the Know-How and the skills of knowing / being, through the correlation established between theory and practice and practice and theory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of research in Social Work since the 80s of the twentieth century and the deepening of the university education with the promotion of the three study cycles (Undergraduate, Master and PhD) lead us to rise scientific production in Social Work and to the increase of publications in different languages available in journals of scientific impact and databases; to the Bologna process and its impact on the reorganization of scientific areas, including teachers and the demand for specialists in core areas of training in study plans and their contribution in the area of insertion of Social Work in the public university system; the social, political and economic changes in the contemporary society with the process of globalization and the impact on the social well-being and quality of life; the internationalization and mobility of teachers, researchers, students of social work and the promotion of International Social Work, through discussion and reflection.
The emergence of new and more complex social needs, caused by the 2008 economic and financial crisis, which had put at risk the principles of democracy and citizenship, resulted in the weakening of the welfare state and the consequent reduction of social rights that call for the urgent need of this debate. Also the evolution of an information society and the new technologies required innovation and reconfiguration in the education/training of Social Work, including the upgrading of professional practice in order to promote and generate transformation in social and human development, leading to an effective and sustainable change.

All this challenges and opportunities and how politics and social work as a profession respond to current social issues related with development of the social work curriculum, provided the opportunity to develop and renew an education/training model with an integrated curricula for the three cycles (Undergraduate, Master and PhD), in this University Social Work Department, which emphasizes the internationalization of Social Work.

The principal focus of this program is the study of theories and empirical knowledge fundamental for a professional self-conception, based on an interdisciplinary approach, combining international human rights instruments and standards with selected social sciences disciplines and the transferring of conceptual knowledge to the professional practice. A secondary focus is the development of intervention methods for the different fields of Social Work, such as: health, human rights, migration, poverty and social exclusion, gender or children’s rights.

The education for Human Rights was declared by the World Conference on Human Rights [5] as "essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and peace". Other statements are important in this analysis, namely the creation of the Education decade for Human Rights 1995 - 2004 [6]; the People’s Movement for Human Rights Learning 1989 [7]; the letter from the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Education for Human Rights 2010 [8].

Learning Human Rights should involve the knowledge of what human rights are and how they are insured; the values of participation, freedom of thought and expression and the development of skills, attitudes and values in their application in the professional practice. It requires an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to a set of intervention fields that promotes the self-confidence of the professional to express their point of views and the development of their critical thinking.

Through the internships integrated in the study plan, education in social work has a strong component of practice which provides experiential learning fields of Human Rights, their values, skills and critical thinking. ‘Human beings socially negotiate the basis on which they recognize each other needs and establish social processes by which to provide for such needs. Such social processes are what we may now define as social citizenship’ [9].

Recognizing the importance of the global and transnational dimension of social work increasingly discussed with normative references to human rights, this study plan offers the qualification to cope with the issues and problems linked to the local, national and international level.

The undergraduates will gain a solid understanding of how to implement the idea of human rights and social justice, through theory into the practice of social work, which includes a research-perspective as well as the development and realization of a practice project. Also, after complete the first two years, students have access to a diploma without degree in Social Work to facilitate the access to the labour market, especially for working students. Along the three years, theory and practice are integrated in the education/ training of social workers (see table 2).

**Table 2. Practical Training Plan – Social Work 1st cycle.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>Institutional/Organizational Analysis; Characterization of the Social Work unity; team work; assignments and actions pursuant in the context of social responses.</td>
<td>Observation Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>Social Diagnosis; Planning and preparation of intervention project.</td>
<td>Projet conception Study Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>Accomplishment of the intervention project; Professional practice evaluation (traineeship)</td>
<td>Intervention Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The practical training is built under the evolutionary principle of gaining theoretical skills and having internship continuity in the same institution/organization from the first to the third year. Table 3 shows the 1st cycle study training plan itinerary and also the evolution per year between the articulation of the training provided in the academic context and the training in the work context through experiencing social work methods and techniques.

**Table 3. Social Work 1st cycle curricular training.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Duration in weeks</th>
<th>Hours in Institution</th>
<th>Hours Student autonomous work</th>
<th>Seminar hours</th>
<th>Hours of pedagogical supervision</th>
<th>Nº of hours (total)</th>
<th>Internship beggining</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1º</td>
<td>10 (10h/S)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2º</td>
<td>12 (18h/S)</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3º</td>
<td>15 (20h/S)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Master in Social Work presents itself as an educational offer of 2nd cycle, structured to continue the training of the 1st cycle in the principle of continuity of studies according to Bologna and seeks to address the needs of study, research, innovation and internationalization, with a view to developing critical skills, reflective and analytical intervention in a research framework of knowledge and scientific research production in social work, contributing for a better articulation with social policies, social problems and professional practice.

The in-depth knowledge of the theory and research of social work, coupled with the critical understanding of public policies and social inequality, contributes to a stronger and more coordinated intervention with the current societal context. It is intended to pay special attention to the development of scientific knowledge and the acquisition of scientific and technical skills that facilitate the development of critical skills, reflective and analytical intervention in the framework of research and production of knowledge in Social Work. It is organized in an academic course of two years, oriented for the study of the subjects presented in table 4.

**Table 4. Social Work Education Plan – 2nd cycle.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Main contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights and Social Work</td>
<td>Study of the historical evolution of the concepts and values intrinsic to human rights, strengthening of legal instruments, national and international organisms and guaranteeing fundamental mechanisms of human rights, in the exercise of professional activity, such as the UN, UNICEF, international Court of law, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and Social Work</td>
<td>Study of the main ethical approaches and ethical theories, principles and values of social work, professional responsibilities related to decision-making, analysis and evaluation of social processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Social Work</td>
<td>Study and deepening of the main pillars and theoretical and epistemological foundations of social work and its relationship with the social sciences in the contemporary society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Social Work</td>
<td>In-depth study of the Social Work international network, as part of the intervention models performed in organizations and institutions that respond to international and social problems within the policy pursued in an international and supranational level, related to global and international social problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Family Policies and Social Protection</td>
<td>Role, evolution and transformation of the state in modern societies within the family and social protection) and Contemporary Social Inequalities (study of the main perspectives, theories, issues and recent debates in this field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Management and Evaluation of Public Policies</td>
<td>Study of the mechanisms underlying the design of policy measures for management, operation, effects and outcomes of public policy measures in the resolution of social problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This curricula plan is oriented towards the consolidation of knowledge on the foundations of social work, social policies, human rights, ethics and social research, in a broader context of contemporary social inequalities and social well-being.
In the Doctoral program these objectives take a step further, with a systematic process in the specific field of social work, enhancing the promotion of a theoretical and methodological construction and the expansion of the scientific *expetrum* of Social Work at a level of analysis and interpretation of social reality, in a dialectical relationship between theory and practice, through a research based practice in Social Work. During one year PhD students have a course with theoretical and research disciplines, but what is really innovative is that this 3rd cycle has the integration on an advanced training unit in Social Work research, together with a team of researchers in a national or international research center, in order to create a research culture among PhD students.

The PhD program in Social Work administered by this University consists on: (i) a PhD course in Social Work 60 ECTS, (ii) the preparation of an original thesis adequate with the nature of the knowledge field (180 ECTS). This course provides the acquisition of original scientific research skills in the area of knowledge in Social Work. In this sense, the doctoral student develops the ability to systematically understand a particular field of social work, the competence and the research method, the ability to conceive, design and carry out an investigation within the standards of quality and academic integrity. This produces the theoretical construction in Social Work in a dialectical relationship between theory and practice through a research process (Research based practice in Social Work), among others.

The PhD is constituted as a domain of science which is engaged in the production of knowledge applied to the innovation and development of the academic field and as a result of the profession and stimulates the academic debate on its (s) reason (s) as a science in the context of social sciences. We highlight that the structure of the 3rd study cycle plans give continuity not only in the theoretical aspect but also the practical component (as showed in table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Education components in Social Work in the 3 cycles.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on this framework, we established as main objective of this study to reflect and analyze Social Work education and training, supported on the principles of science and the production of scientific knowledge within an international context and as specific objectives: to contribute to the development of a training strategy in the European Social Work, as part of its fundamental principles: human rights, human dignity, self-determination, autonomy, participation and citizenship; to measure the impact of training and research in Social Work in the innovation of the professional practice.

So, in order to test the adequacy and the level of satisfaction of this curricula within this framework of competences proposed for the education of the 1st cycle of studies in Social Work (started in 2010), we developed a study with the Delphi method [10], applying a scale (in appendix), to recent graduates who attended this programme, in order to assess the minimum and appropriate content to the profession as a social worker, which is detailed in the next section and that we intend to expand to a national and international level.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the type of relevant issues concerning the adequacy of training in social work to the needs of the labour market (professional practice) and student’s satisfaction with their training we requested the collaboration of a group of seven experts (through the Delphi Method), in order to gather their inputs about the indicators to be integrated in these two scales.

These experts were selected according to the principle that an expert must have knowledge and experience updated and can make important contributions to the study [11], providing diversity of knowledge and critical thinking, ie a heterogeneous group [12].

This procedure took place throughout the month of October 2015, having been collected, in a first phase, 54 contributions made by various experts (31 for the adequacy of training and 23 for the satisfaction with training) and subsequently subjected to further consideration in order to determine the permanence, deletion or correction of the items to integrate. After this assessment by the expert group
(second phase) some indicators were eliminated (9 for suitability and 5 for satisfaction) and new ones were suggested (2 for suitability). These new lists of indicators were once again sent to the group of experts (third phase) for validation. At the end of these procedures we manage to obtain two final lists of indicators: a first one that intended to measure the adequacy of training to professional practice needs and includes 24 indicators and a second one that aimed to assess the student's satisfaction with their training plan, consisting of a total of 18 indicators. As a way to measure these indicators we used a Likert scale of seven levels for all items identified as relevant by the experts.

Formulated the questionnaire, this was subjected to a pre-test among final year students of Social Work in the three study cycles (Undergraduate, MD and PhD). We selected the finalist's students of the three study cycles due to their proximity to the labour market and for the accessibility to this educational institution, in which we work. Of the 131 students enrolled in the different cycles we obtained a total of 93 responses, with a response rate of 71%. However, observations with abnormally large residues (presenting a large distance from others observations) lead us to the exclusion of these cases, leaving with 82 valid cases. The sample validated consisted of 91.7% female and 8.3% male, distributed between the 1st cycle (59.5%), 2nd cycle (16.7%) and the 3rd cycle (23.8%) with a mean age of 32.4 years and a range of 49 years (minimum 20 and maximum of 69 years).

2.1 Data reliability

This pre-test had as its main object to determine the reliability of the data collected by establishing the internal consistency measured by the Cronbach's alpha, using for that purpose the statistical package SPSS 19. Table 6 summarizes the results obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nº of indicators</th>
<th>Alfa de Cronbach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training adequacy</td>
<td>24 .985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with training programme</td>
<td>18 .914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both scales the value of alpha showed a coefficient higher than 0.9, revealing a very good internal consistency of the data. In order to determine with greater accuracy the reliability of the items included in each scale and see if their inclusion or exclusion would affect the stability of the scale we analysed the correlation of each item against the total (corrected item-total correlation) and the value of alpha obtained with the exclusion of the same item (Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted).

Regarding the scale of adequacy of training it was verified that most of the indicators show good reliability levels (19 items exhibit an alpha higher than 0.8) Even the five indicators with lower correlation values (which registered a level between 0.7 and 0.8) when we assessed the impact of its exclusion in the total value of alpha, it appears that this was minimal. It was therefore decided to maintain these items on the scale.

In the scale of satisfaction, the level of reliability presented is lower, with 9 indicators showing a correlation value between 0.6 and 0.8 and the remaining values below this. Still, the evaluation of the impact of their possible exclusion does not appear to affect the stability of the scale, keeping the alpha values almost unchanged (minor variations).

3 RESULTS

About the training adequacy to professional needs the majority of students consider, in a scale from 1 (totally inadequate) to 7 (fully adequate), that the training obtained in the course of Social Work in ISCTE-IUL reveled to be quite adequate (with a global average 6.1) to their professional practice as a social worker in the different fields and domains.

In order to understand which areas were more relevant to their practice we aggregated the 24 indicators in three main areas, namely: theoretical and methodological training, encouragement to research practice and the promotion of social values.

According to the students inquired (figure 1) the adequacy of their training is more accentuated in the area of theoretical and methodological training (with an average of 6.2), despite the differences from
the other two areas are minimal. The low variance of opinions (translated in a global variance of 0.8) reveals that the students are very consensual on these matters and have a strong perception of their importance to their professional practice.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 1 – Main areas of training adequacy.**

These results are further corroborated when we analyze the correlations between these three areas of adequacy (table 7).

**Table 7. Training adequacy correlations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TMT</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>PSV</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical and methodological training (TMT)</td>
<td>- 0.935**</td>
<td>0.953**</td>
<td>0.403**</td>
<td>-0.028</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging research (ER)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- 0.901**</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of social values (PSV)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 0.427**</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 0.304**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Using the Spearman’s correlation test, we verify that the relation between the theoretical and methodological training and the promotion of social values is quite strong (with a 0.95 significant correlation at the 0.01 level), as the relation with the research practice (0.935) revealing a strong interface between these areas in the training plan and the reinforcement that each gives to the construction of a more sustained professional practice.

This recognition is still correlated with the student’s age, with older students revealing a stronger sense of importance to these matters than their younger colleagues. There were found no correlation between the areas of training adequacy to the cycle of study attended by the students inquired.

About the satisfaction with the training obtained in the course of Social Work in this University, the majority of students revealed, in a scale from 1 (totally unsatisfied) to 7 (fully satisfied), reasonably satisfied with their training (with a global average of 5.6).

The proposed indicators aimed to assess not only the satisfaction with the training plan or its duration, but also the satisfaction with the faculty body, the institution’s conditions and the relationship of training to the labour market. In this sense, we aggregated the 18 indicators in these five main areas using a scale from 1 (totally unsatisfied) to 7 (fully satisfied).

According to the results (figure 2), most students are mainly satisfied with the teaching body (average of 5.8), followed by the institutional conditions and the duration of plan studies (average 5.7 each) and less with connection to labour market (avg. 5.5), demonstrating that despite considering the competencies acquired in their training plan quite appropriate for professional exercise, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to promote the strengthening of the relationship between academia and the labour world. Although the differences are not significant when we analyze the averages, a brief look at the variance obtained in each area of satisfaction presents us with additional information. If there is a strong consensus in the opinion of students about the satisfaction with the training provided (with a very low variance in this matter), the same is not true with regard to the duration of the plan studies (with the biggest variance registred).
The satisfaction with the training plan is mainly correlated with the duration of the study plan and the relationship promoted between training and the labour market (with Spearman’s value around 0.7, indicating a strong correlation between these three indicators to a significant level of 0.01) as we can see in Table 8.

**Figure 2 – Main areas of training satisfaction.**

The satisfaction with the training plan is mainly correlated with the duration of the study plan and the relationship promoted between training and the labour market (with Spearman’s value around 0.7, indicating a strong correlation between these three indicators to a significant level of 0.01) as we can see in Table 8.

**Table 8. Student’s satisfaction correlations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TP</th>
<th>DSP</th>
<th>TB</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>RTLM</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training plan (TP)</td>
<td>-0.693**</td>
<td>0.598**</td>
<td>0.565**</td>
<td>0.682**</td>
<td>0.321**</td>
<td>0.204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of study plan (DSP)</td>
<td>-0.294**</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>0.512**</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching body (TB)</td>
<td>-0.574**</td>
<td>0.506**</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>0.222*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution’s conditions (IC)</td>
<td>-0.319**</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationship of training to the labour market (RTLM)</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.304**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study cycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).** *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The duration of the study plan seems to establish also an correlation with the relationship of training to the labour market (0.51), indicating the need for further reflection between the requirements imposed by Bologna (with shorter training plans) and the ability to meet the challenges and needs posed to social worker in their professional practice. In this matter, the teaching staff reveals, according to the opinion of the students surveyed, an equally important role in preparing future professionals and providing them tools to better adapt to labour market needs (with a correlation of 0.51 to the relationship to the labour market).

Only the area related to the training plan register a relationship with age, revealing the older students are more satisfied with their training than their younger colleagues. In other areas this relationship assumes no statistical value.

The results obtained with this pre-test inquiry were significantly positive and showed the recognition of competences gained during students training and the importance of assessing the relation between the training provided by Social Work courses and the needs presented by social workers in their day-to-day practice. To help in this discussion we proposed a table of competences considered crucial to professional practice and that may ensure a better adequacy between education/training plans and labour market needs.

We recognize that the validation of our proposal needs a thorough analysis, so after this first essay we will deepen the statistical analysis of the data collected in order to provide statistical validation of this scale of adequacy and confront it with the results presented in this paper.
4 CONCLUSIONS

The documental analysis applied to the three curricula plans of Social Work in ISCTE-IUL, together with the stratification of the empirical results, enabled us to analyze the degree of relationship and interaction between the education/training programs and the technical expertise required or expected for the work context and by employer’s organizations of social workers. Also to systematize the set of basic skills to be acquired in the education/training recognized as potentiating the integration in the labor market and identify formative components that need strengthening, development and adaptation to the labor market within the framework of the principles and ethical values of the profession.

The positive results obtained showed, not only, the recognition of competences gained with this integrated model, but also the importance of using this type of instruments to assess and evaluate how skills acquired in social work university education adjust to professional and organizational needs, thereby responding to the challenge presented by the Bologna declaration.

Although there is still some aspects to be improved in this model, particularly those related to the strengthening of the relationship between the university and the labour market, we consider that this instrument offers new potentialities, namely in the creation of an instrument to measure the education/training suitability to professional needs and the redesign of the curricula according to Bologna requirements.

From this idea we are already preparing to disseminate the application of this scale to other schools of Social Work (national and European wide), hopping to contribute to a better knowledge of the requirements of the different national and European study plans in Social Work and therefore to a higher degree of integration in the internationalization and commitment to cooperation programs in this area.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1

Table of adequacy indicators

My training gives me a conceptual and methodological framework capable of addressing the complex problems of today's society
My training promotes teamwork: Multi, Inter and Transdisciplinary
My training encourages the development of a practice in social work based on research
My training encourages research and innovation
My training allows me to transfer my knowledge from one context to another
My training seeks to promote internationalization and the exchange of experiences with foreign counterparts in the area
My training promotes the development of my research skills
My training gives me aware of the impact that the economic, political and organizational issues have in professional practice
My training allows me to make decisions concerning my learning process
My training promotes the interrelationship between theory and practice
My training promotes the defence of social justice and combating inequalities
My training seeks to answer to my study / learning needs
My training promotes sharing / reflection of experiences with other colleagues / professionals
My training promotes the construction of a theoretical and methodological framework of support in Social Work
My training allows me to develop a commitment to social change
My training promotes the development of critical and reflective thinking
My training promotes an intervention in defence of the interests of others
My training gives me tools to develop critical and reflective thinking
My training gives me tools to develop an analytical intervention
My training allows me to develop a commitment to the development of human well-being
My training promotes the assertion of social work in terms of analysis and interpretation of social reality
My training allows me to critically analyze social problems
My training promotes respect for human diversity
My training promotes the principle of the value and dignity of each individual

APPENDIX 2

Table of satisfaction indicators

I am satisfied with the duration of my training plan
I am satisfied with the distribution of time between the theoretical and the practical component
I am satisfied with the programmatic content of the training plan
I am pleased with the interdisciplinary dimension of the training plan (ratio of core area and other disciplines)
I am satisfied with the supervision and monitoring in tutorial Course Units
I am satisfied with the relationship between classroom training and student's autonomous work
I am satisfied with the relationship between my cycle of studies and other cycles of formation in Social Work
I am satisfied with the faculty affected to training
I am pleased with the articulation of training with the labour market
I am satisfied with the relationship between training and research
I am pleased with the international cooperation that my training allows (Erasmus +, eg)
I am pleased with the involvement of students in the training plan
I am satisfied with conditions at the host organization
I am satisfied with the conditions to support research (library, access to databases)
I am pleased with the possibility that the systems e-learning and b-learning introduced in the development of my training
I am satisfied with the social support given to my academic training
I am satisfied with the accessibility to the institution
I am satisfied with the adequacy of the training plan with the worker-student status