

## Employability of Special Education Graduates according to Indonesian National Accreditation Standard

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**Abstract:** Accreditation of the Undergraduate Program of Special Education (UPSE) in Indonesia is still carried out by the National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (BAN-PT) based on national higher education standards. One of the assessment elements is graduates employability. The aim of this research is to describe the employability of special education graduates according to BAN-PT standard. This research is a survey with a cross sectional design. Respondents were 161 graduates of the UPSE Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) spread across Bangka Belitung, Banten, DKI Jakarta, Yogyakarta, West Java, Central Java, East Java, South Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. Data were collected using online questionnaire and analyzed quantitatively. The results are: (1) the average waiting period of the graduates is 3.8 months, and (2) 88% of graduate employments have compatibility with the field of study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the employability of special education graduates has met the highest standards according to the BAN-PT. Research findings also indicate that the UPSE is able to produce quality graduates who have skills that support employability so that graduates are quickly absorbed in the world of work that match with their field of study.

**Keywords:** Employability; graduates; waiting period; compatibility.

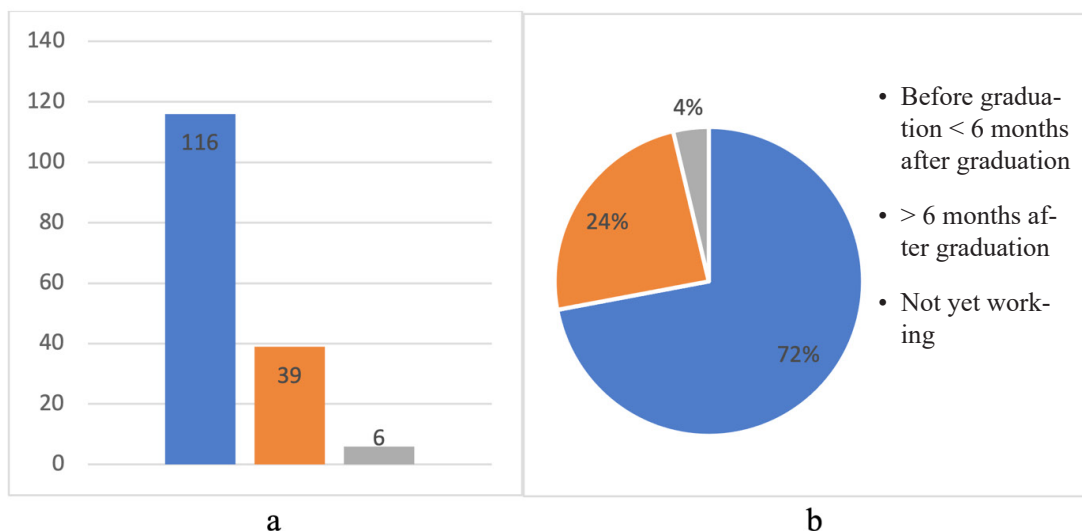
### INTRODUCTION

The concept of employability has changed from time to time. The concept of employability was first used in the early twentieth century, assuming a dichotomy between individuals who are “employable” (able and willing and/or need to work) and individuals who are “unemployable” (unable to work or need assistance) (Gazier, 1998). This concept became more widespread in the 1950s and 1960s, namely the emphasis on employability included attitudes towards work and self-image, while in the 1970s the emphasis shifted to knowledge and abilities. In the 1980s an organizational approach emerged that employability and skills development by an organization is a way to increase one’s flexibility. In the 1990s the scope of employability expanded to include the active population in general (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). The employability of graduates has been a major debate in the UK and Australia for the past two decades (Clarke, 2018).

In adaptation to changes in the concept from time to time, Guilbert, Bernaud, Gouvernet & Rossier (2016) put forward three main perspectives of graduate employability, namely education and government, organizations, and individuals. Each of these perspectives has its own goals, for example the government aims to achieve the target that all people have jobs, companies aim to find the best match between company needs and available skills, and each

individual focuses on optimizing career paths. The goals of education and governance, organizations, and individuals complement each other.

From an educational and governance perspective, graduate employability is becoming increasingly important for universities, driven by national and international institutions, as well as market demands (McCowan, 2015). Graduate employability has become one of the main drivers in tertiary institutions and is a measure of tertiary performance (Clarke, 2018). In Indonesia, since 2020 the employability of graduates has been included as one of the main performance indicators of tertiary institutions based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia Number 754/P/2020. The eligibility of graduates is also one of the indicators in the accreditation of study programs in Indonesia. Accreditation for study programs in Indonesia is carried out by the Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM) referring to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia Number 5 of 2020. However, if the LAM has not been formed, accreditation for study programs is carried out by BAN-PT, as is the case for study programs Bachelor of Ordinary Education (S1 PLB or S1 PKh). BAN-PT Regulation Number 3 of 2019 concerning Higher Education Accreditation Instruments details indicators of the eligibility of graduates included in the output criteria and achievements of the Tridharma of Higher Education with a rating scale ranging from 0 to 0. score 4.



**Figure 1. Waiting Time for Graduates to Get First Job**

**Table 1. Indicators of graduate employability**

Research focus	indicators
Graduate Em-ployability	Waiting time for graduates to get their first job
	The suitability of the graduate’s work field with the field of study

This study aims to describe the eligibility of PLB or PKh graduates according to the BAN-PT assessment standards, consisting of: (1) the length of time waiting for graduates to get their first job, and (2) the suitability of graduates' work fields with fields of study.

**METHOD**

This research is a survey research with cross sectional design. The survey research procedure adapted from Creswell (2012) is explained as follows. (1) identify research problems, (2) identify research subjects, (3) determine survey design and data collection techniques, (4) develop instruments, (5) collect data, and (6) analyze data.

The study population was 165 alumni of the PLB S1 Study Program who graduated in 2019 and 2020. The sampling technique used saturated sampling, in which all members of the population were sampled. However, the respondents who completed filling out the survey were 161 graduates (97.58%). There were 38 male respondents (23.60%), while 123 female respondents (76.39%). Respondents were spread across several regions in Indonesia, including the provinces of Bangka Belitung, Banten, DKI Jakarta, Yogyakarta, West Java, Central Java, East Java, South Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara and Papua.

The research instrument was a questionnaire developed by the research team by taking into account the standard BAN-PT 9 accreditation indicators.

Indicators of graduate employability in this study can be seen in Table 1. The data collection method was carried out through a questionnaire sent to the graduate's personal email.

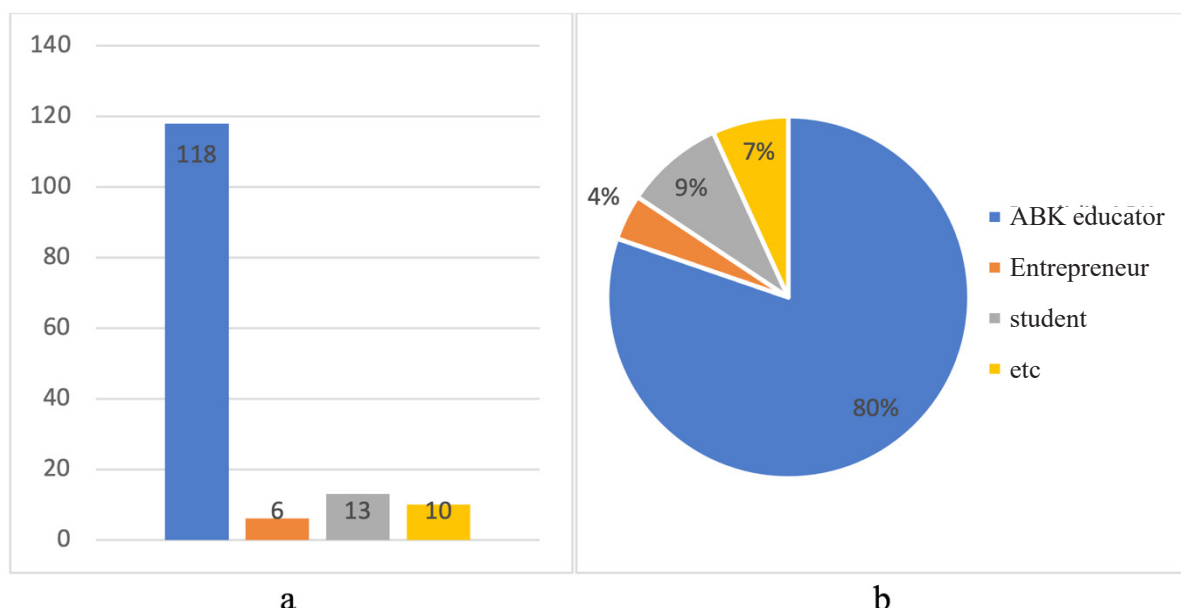
The collected data is classified and tabulated for analysis. Data analysis was carried out in a quantitative descriptive manner, in which the average was used to analyze the waiting time for graduates to get their first job, and percentages were used to analyze the waiting time for graduates to get their first job and the suitability of the field of work and the field of study.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

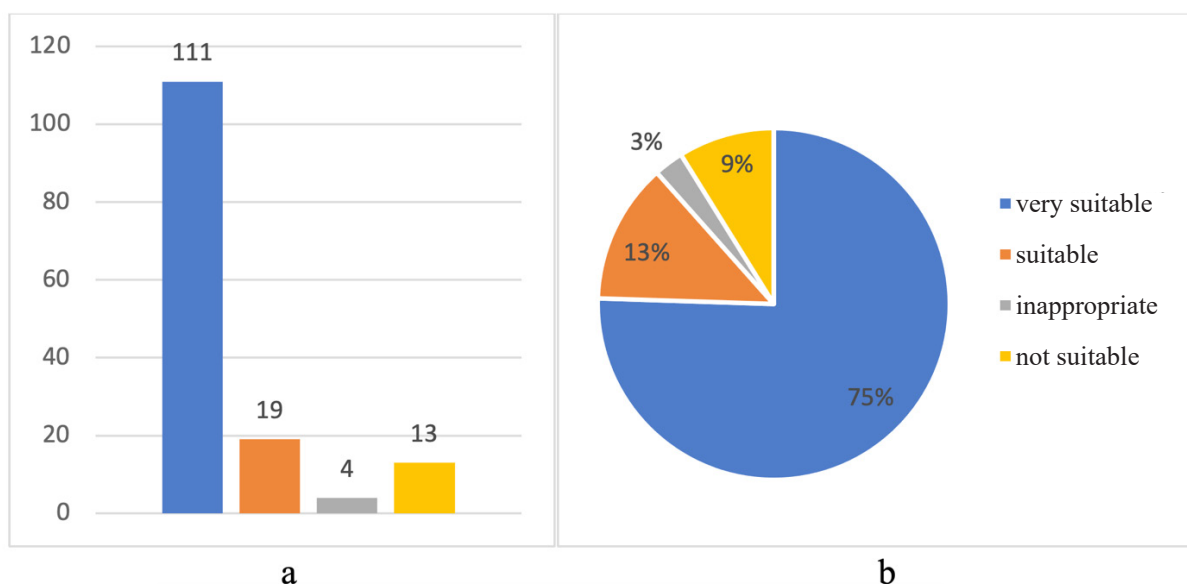
**Result**

The first focus is on the waiting time for graduates to get their first job. The results of the following research describe the first jobs obtained by Unesa PLB bachelor graduates. The job in question is working at an agency, entrepreneurship, or further studies. Alumni who got a job, entrepreneurship or further study within <6 months after graduation (including working before graduation) were 116 people, while alumni who got a job/entrepreneurship/further study within >6 months after graduation were 39 people, and those who reached currently not working as many as 6 people. These results can be seen in Figure 1a. The average waiting period for the 161 participants in getting their first job was 3.8 months. Referring to the BAN-PT accreditation assessment standard, this result obtained the highest score on the rating scale.

Figure 1b shows the percentage of waiting time for graduates. Based on Figure 1b, it appears that the majority of alumni got jobs, started businesses, or further studies within <6 months after graduation (including working before graduation), which is as much as 72%. The remaining 24% got a job, self-employed, or further studies within > 6 months after graduation, and 4% were not yet working.



**Figure 2. Professions of Graduates**



**Figure 3. Conformity between the Field of Work and the Field of Study**

Several reasons have not worked due to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic and are still waiting for a call from the agency to which they are applying.

The second focus is on the suitability of the graduate's field of work with the field of study. Based on current work, the status of PLB FIP Unesa alumni who are working, entrepreneurship, or further studies is 147 people. The current employment status data is different from the first job data because there are some graduates who decide to resign from their previous jobs due to various reasons, including getting married, managing the household, moving domiciles, and taking care of sick parents.

Alumni who work as educators with special needs are 118 people, 6 entrepreneurs, 13 masters

students, and 10 others (Figure 2a). Other occupational professions include content moderator, administrative staff, marketing personnel, and marching band trainer. Figure 2b shows the percentage of each profession, namely educators with special needs by 80%, entrepreneurs by 4%, Masters students by 9%, and others by 7%.

Based on the professional data mentioned above, it was further traced regarding the suitability of the alumni's work with the field of study, namely very suitable as many as 111 people (75%), as many as 19 people (13%) suitable, as many as 4 people (3%) not suitable and not suitable a total of 13 people (9%). The results can be seen in Figure 3. So it appears that the work of graduates according to the field of study is 88%, which is a number between very suitable and

appropriate. Referring to the BAN-PT accreditation assessment standard, this result received the highest score.

## Discussion

The BAN-PT decision to include graduate waiting time as an indicator of employability assessment is in line with Thang & Wongsurawat's research (2015) which defines employability as the ability of graduates to get their first job. Buenviaje, del Mundo, Anonuevo, & Martinez (2015) also conveyed the same thing that employability can be related to how quickly graduates find work. The waiting time to get the first job can indicate whether or not an institution is able to produce quality graduates for the job market.

Linayage, Kumara, & Withanawasam (2015) stated that the time between graduation and the first job is an important aspect, because this can reveal various aspects, such as the importance of other skills needed by graduates to enable graduates to reduce waiting time in getting the first job. Several influential factors in shortening the duration of the first job search include work experience, social experience, academic qualifications, academic performance, competency certificates, English language skills, soft skills, adaptability skills, job readiness, interpersonal skills, and verbal communication skills (Thang & Wongsurawat, 2015; Dissanayake, 2016).

Garrouste and Rodrigues (2014) support this opinion in their research on employability after one to three years of graduation that having a job during the study period has a positive impact on the likelihood of obtaining a permanent contract immediately after graduation. In addition, it was also identified that graduates from social sciences, business and law, engineering are more likely to have permanent and full-time employment than graduates from other fields. Thus it can be interpreted that the S1 PLB study program is able to produce quality graduates and have skills that support employability so that graduates are quickly absorbed in the world of work. However, the research results also show that there are graduates who are not yet working due to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic and are still waiting for a call from the agency they applied for.

Linayage, Kumara, & Withanawasam (2015) stated that several things slowed down the waiting time for graduates, including: (1) the formal recruitment process by agencies, and (2) requests from agencies regarding previous work experience from graduates.

The suitability of the field of work and field of study is an important indicator of job eligibility because it describes job satisfaction (Lee & Shabarwal, 2016) and is significantly related to the intention to change jobs (Ju & Li, 2019). Employees who have a match between the fields of education and the field of work can last longer in the company than those who are not suitable.

Universities have a role in preparing a suitable workforce. Boholano (2012) stated that the main function of tertiary institutions is to prepare graduates to meet the demand for labor and skills requirements. Therefore, educational institutions must design curricula that prepare workers for job suitability. Employers need graduates with education other than a diploma. Employers need people with the right job skills for a job (Ayua, 2019).

University programs that develop entrepreneurial skills help individuals find suitable jobs (Kucel, Robert, Buil & Masferrer, 2016; Kucel & Vilalta-Bufi, 2019). In contrast, at the contextual and labor market level, Santos' findings (2019) reveal that the economic and experiential crisis severely limited graduates' opportunities to find jobs that match their academic qualifications and career aspirations. Other factors can make it difficult to get a suitable job, namely increasingly fierce competition, so that academic credentials and performance are no longer enough capital (Chan, 2015). Thus, the findings of this study indicate that the S1 PLB can provide a curriculum that accommodates skills to support suitability for the world of work.

## CONCLUSION

Berdasarkan temuan penelitian, dapat disimpulkan Berdasarkan the research findings, it can be concluded that the eligibility of graduates of the PLB Bachelor Study Program has met the highest standards according to BAN-PT. In addition, the research findings also indicate that the PLB S1 study program is able to produce quality graduates and have skills that support employability so that graduates are quickly absorbed into the world of work according to their field of study. Research related to the eligibility of graduates of PLB or PKh study programs is still wide open, especially from the point of view of higher education Key Performance Indicators (IKU) or aspects of the skills needed in the world of work.

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