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Teaching and Beyond: Graduate Destinations and Educational Alignment as Evidence for Curriculum Evaluation in English Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the post-graduation destinations of Undergraduate English Education graduates and how closely those destinations aligned with the program's intended graduate profiles, field of study, and educational level. A descriptive quantitative tracer-study design was used to describe patterns across graduating cohorts. The analysis covered five consecutive cohorts from 2019 to 2023 at Universitas Negeri Surabaya and included 376 graduates who were employed, self-employed, or pursuing further study. Three forms of alignment were analyzed: formal graduate-profile alignment, horizontal alignment, and vertical alignment. Overall, 61.4% of graduates followed the program's formal profiles. Most entered the main profile of English teaching or further study (57.4%), while only 4.0% pursued entrepreneurship in English language education. Formal alignment was lower in the 2019 and 2020 cohorts and increased from 2021 onward. Horizontal alignment was generally stronger in later cohorts, with 74.1% of the 2023 cohort reporting destinations that were closely or very closely related to their field. Vertical alignment was consistently high, ranging from 91.9% to 96.3% across cohorts. These findings show that graduates may move beyond the formal profiles while still entering careers related to English Education and appropriate to their qualification level. The results are based on self-reported data from a single institution and do not establish that the curriculum caused these outcomes. For curriculum review, they suggest maintaining the linguistic and pedagogical core while providing broader opportunities to develop transferable, digital, professional communication, and entrepreneurial skills.

Keywords: Curriculum Evaluation, Educational Alignment, English Education, Graduate Employability, Tracer Study

INTRODUCTION

Universities are increasingly expected to show how well their graduates move into employment or further study. This expectation has grown as labor markets respond to technological change, new forms of work, and shifting skill demands. Graduate outcomes therefore offer a practical test of whether a study program still prepares students for the roles available to them. Employers and students may also rate graduate skills differently, which makes the move from study to work a question for institutions as well as for individuals (Succi & Canovi, 2020). Tracer studies address this question systematically by documenting where graduates work or study after leaving university and how they judge the relevance of their programs (Maxilom-Mangompit & Alcisto-Augusto, 2022).

From a curriculum perspective, graduate evidence matters because intended outcomes do not always appear in the form a program expects. Indonesian teacher education programs are expected to align their curricula with the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (Fauzan, 2022). This expectation raises the question of whether stated graduate profiles still describe the pathways that graduates actually take. Tracer data do not evaluate individual courses or classroom practice. They do show whether the pathways a program anticipates remain recognizable after students have left university. Outcome-level evidence of this kind can therefore complement other sources of curriculum information without replacing them.

The question is particularly relevant to English Education, whose graduates are trained as teachers but do not always remain in classrooms. A qualitative study of 133 final-year Indonesian teacher education students found that some had entered their programs with no intention to teach, or with plans to teach only briefly, and that career possibilities outside teaching were a key reason for enrolling (Suryani & George, 2021). Research on graduates who use English at work shows that entering professional settings is not automatic. Chan (2021) investigated how three recent Hong Kong graduates learned to use English for work and found that a vulnerable sense of professional identity sometimes prevented them from seeking help with communication problems. A study of business English graduates likewise described employability as a multidimensional construct combining professional knowledge, generic competencies, and career management (Tong & Gao, 2022).

Whether a graduate's destination fits the program's formal profile is only one way of judging relevance. The labor economics literature distinguishes horizontal alignment, which concerns the correspondence between field of study and occupation, from vertical alignment, which concerns the correspondence between educational level and job requirements. Horizontal mismatch has been defined and measured in several ways, and each measure yields a different incidence rate (Somers et al., 2019). Field-of-study mismatch can also occur while graduates work at their formal qualification level, which shows that the two dimensions may diverge (Salas-Velasco, 2021). Their consequences differ as well, since a study of highly educated employees in Japan found that vertical mismatch was more likely than horizontal mismatch to lower annual earnings (Takeuchi, 2023).

A graduate may therefore work outside a program's formal profile and still hold a job that is related to the field of study and suited to the qualification level. Tracer evidence that separates these possibilities appears limited in English Education, particularly evidence that follows several consecutive cohorts rather than a single graduating class. Without such evidence, a program may read a low share of graduates in its formal profiles as a sign of weak relevance when their destinations are in fact related to the field. This study addresses that gap by examining formal graduate-profile alignment, horizontal alignment, and vertical alignment together across five consecutive cohorts.

Accordingly, this study examines graduates of the Undergraduate English Education Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya from the 2019 to 2023 cohorts who were employed, self-employed, or pursuing further study. It addresses three research questions: (1) To what extent do graduates' post-university destinations align with the program's formal graduate profiles? (2) To what extent are those destinations horizontally aligned with graduates' field of study? (3) To what extent are graduates' employment destinations vertically aligned with their educational level? In answering these questions, the study provides outcome-level evidence that can inform curriculum review and help the program judge whether its stated graduate profiles still reflect the paths its graduates take.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND EDUCATIONAL ALLIGNMENT

Graduate employability is broader than the ability to obtain a job. A study of business English graduates described it as a multidimensional construct made up of professional knowledge, generic competencies, and career management (Tong & Gao, 2022). Employers and students also differ in how they rate such skills, which means that graduates' own view of their preparation cannot be assumed to match what workplaces expect (Succi & Canovi, 2020). Workplace exposure may narrow this gap. Graduates surveyed by Jackson and Bridgstock (2021) considered embedded and extra-curricular internships important for employability, and they rated internships organized as extra-curricular activities more highly than those delivered as work-integrated learning. Jackson and Dean (2023) likewise examined how different types of work-integrated learning contribute to graduate employability. Employment status alone therefore gives only a partial account of graduate outcomes.

Educational alignment provides a more specific lens. Horizontal alignment concerns the relationship between field of study and occupation, whereas vertical alignment concerns the match between educational level and job requirements. Field-of-study mismatch can occur even when graduates work at their formal qualification level, so the two forms need not coincide (Salas-Velasco, 2021). Their labor-market consequences also differ (Takeuchi, 2023). Indonesian evidence shows how common the field-based form can be. Using the 2018 national labor force survey, Hasibuan and Handayani (2021) reported that field-of-study mismatch affected 68.4% of workers, compared with 27.9% for overeducation and 4.6% for undereducation. The present study works at the level of graduates' career destinations and their reported educational alignment. It does not measure how far graduates use specific competencies in their jobs.

ENGLISH EDUCATION GRADUATES AND CAREER DIVERSIFICATION

English Education graduates do not necessarily remain in teaching. Some Indonesian teacher education students enter their programs with no intention to teach, or with plans to teach only for a short period, partly because they see career possibilities outside teaching (Suryani & George, 2021). Moving into another field does not by itself show that a university education has lost its relevance. It does, however, place new demands on graduates. In a study of recent Hong Kong graduates, Chan (2021) found that the participants had to learn workplace communication on the job and that language-related challenges persisted after they had entered employment. Skills acquired during study may therefore be carried into settings that the program never listed as expected pathways, but they are rarely sufficient on their own.

Expectations also widen as career options widen. Employers' reports on English-major students during an industrial practicum indicated that the students needed more practical experience to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses (Phuong et al., 2023). The employability framework proposed by Tong and Gao (2022) points in the same direction, since it places generic competencies and career management alongside English language skills. Such findings suggest that the transition from study to varied careers depends on abilities that classroom learning alone may not fully develop.

For English Education programs, this does not imply that linguistic and pedagogical preparation should give way to general vocational training. Those areas remain central to the

discipline. The question is how students are given opportunities to apply them beyond the traditional classroom. In an Indonesian qualitative study, 11 EFL lecturers identified digital competence, an interdisciplinary approach, and more opportunities to practice applied skills as important for teaching in the era of Industry 4.0 (Habiburrahim et al., 2022). Preparing graduates for more varied careers may therefore call for a balance between preserving the core strengths of English Education and widening the settings in which those strengths are practiced.

GRADUATE PROFILES AND ACTUAL CAREER DESTINATIONS

A graduate profile gives a general picture of the career paths a study program expects its graduates to follow. Actual trajectories are usually more varied. Some graduates take jobs that the formal profile does not list but that still draw on knowledge related to their field, and others work in different sectors at a level appropriate to their education. Being outside the intended profile should therefore not be treated automatically as a mismatch. The prevalence of horizontal mismatch also differs by discipline. In a national survey of Russian university graduates, about one third were horizontally mismatched, and mismatch was more likely in fields that generate general human capital and less likely in specialized fields such as medicine (Rudakov et al., 2022).

For this reason, graduate outcomes need to be viewed from more than one angle. In this study, formal alignment refers to whether graduates enter the career pathways officially defined by the program. Horizontal alignment refers to the relationship between a graduate's field of study and the job performed, and vertical alignment refers to the match between the graduate's educational level and the qualification the job requires. Indonesian labor-market research similarly separates mismatch in educational level from mismatch in field of study (Hasibuan & Handayani, 2021). The three forms are related, yet each captures a different part of the transition from education to work. Takeuchi (2023) found that vertical mismatch lowered the earnings of highly educated employees in Japan more consistently than horizontal mismatch did. Considering all three forms together therefore offers a fuller view of graduate outcomes than employment status or job titles can provide.

TRACER STUDY AND CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Curriculum evaluation does not have to end with what is taught in class. It can also ask whether the outcomes a program designed still make sense after students have graduated. Graduate destinations help answer this question by showing where alumni go, whether into work or further study, and how closely those paths match the intended profiles. Indonesian teacher education programs are evaluated against the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (Fauzan, 2022), and graduates' own assessments of program relevance have been used elsewhere as feedback on how well a program serves work demands (Maxilom-Mangompit & Alcisto-Augusto, 2022).

Evidence on employability in Indonesian higher education suggests that outcomes depend on more than the educational process itself. In a survey of 500 instructors and students from 31 universities, Nugraha et al. (2023) found no significant relationship between the educational process and employability, while practical activities and research activities mediated the effect of facilities on employability. Findings of this kind caution against reading graduate destinations as direct proof of curriculum quality. This study takes that perspective. It does not judge individual parts of the curriculum. It uses three indicators, namely formal graduate-profile alignment, horizontal alignment, and vertical alignment, to examine how far

graduates' actual destinations reflect the outcomes the program intended. Observing five cohorts also shows whether these patterns remain stable or change over time. The findings are treated as evidence for curriculum review and not as proof that the curriculum alone determines where graduates eventually work.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive quantitative tracer-study design to examine the post-graduation destinations of Undergraduate English Education graduates at Universitas Negeri Surabaya and the alignment of those destinations with the program's intended graduate profiles, field of study, and educational level. A tracer-study approach was chosen because it provides systematic information on graduates' employment and further-study pathways, and graduates' own evaluations of program relevance can serve as feedback for program improvement (Maxilom-Mangompit & Alcisto-Augusto, 2022). The tracer analysis was positioned as an outcome-oriented component of curriculum evaluation. It did not assess curriculum content, classroom implementation, or the effectiveness of individual courses. It examined instead whether the program's intended graduate profiles and educational preparation were reflected in where graduates went after completing their degrees, in line with the Indonesian practice of evaluating teacher education programs against the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (Fauzan, 2022).

Three dimensions of alignment were examined. Formal graduate-profile alignment referred to whether a graduate's destination corresponded to the profiles officially defined by the program. The main profile covered graduates who became English teachers or continued to further study, and the additional profile covered entrepreneurship in English language education. All other occupations were classified as outside the formal profiles, a category that did not imply that the competencies gained in the program were irrelevant to the job. Horizontal alignment referred to the relevance of a graduate's employment or further study to the undergraduate field and was recorded on a five-level scale from very closely related to not related at all. Vertical alignment referred to the correspondence between the educational level the job required and the graduate's undergraduate qualification, and it was recorded as one level higher, the same level, one level lower, or higher education not required. The analysis was descriptive rather than inferential and focused on frequencies, percentages, and cohort-level patterns.

The institutional tracer study covered graduates from the 2019 to 2023 cohorts. Of the 417 graduates, 416 completed the survey, which gave a response rate of 99.76%. Not all respondents were included in the present analysis. Only graduates who had entered an identifiable post-graduation pathway were retained, namely those who were employed, self-employed, or pursuing further study. Graduates who were unemployed or still seeking employment were excluded because their employment or educational alignment could not yet be assessed. This left a final analytical sample of 376 participants, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Tracer Study Respondents and Participants Included in the Analysis

Cohort	Total Graduates	Tracer Respondents	Included Participants	Excluded
2019	75	75	61	14
2020	111	110	91	19
2021	76	76	75	1
2022	90	90	85	5
2023	65	65	64	1
Total	**417**	**416**	**376**	**40**

Note. Excluded respondents were graduates who were unemployed or still seeking employment at the time of data collection.

The data came from the institutional tracer-study questionnaire developed by Universitas Negeri Surabaya. The questionnaire contained 12 items on personal and academic information and 27 items on post-graduation status, employment, occupation, entrepreneurship, further study, and related career information. For this study, the analysis drew on the variables for post-graduation destination, occupation, further-study status, field-of-study relevance, and the educational level required by the job. The data therefore represent graduates' self-reported experiences and not employer assessments or objectively measured workplace performance.

Tracer records were first organized by graduation cohort and screened against the inclusion criteria. Graduates who were employed, self-employed, or pursuing further study were retained, and those who were unemployed or still seeking employment were removed. The retained records were then classified according to the three forms of alignment described above. The horizontal and vertical analyses used the records that contained valid responses for the relevant items, so the number of cases per cohort in those analyses is smaller than the number of included participants. Percentages were calculated within each cohort from 2019 to 2023, and no inferential statistical test was conducted. The three indicators were interpreted together because they describe different aspects of graduate outcomes. A graduate may, for example, work outside the formally defined profiles while holding a job that relates to English Education and suits a bachelor's degree. The findings were therefore used to describe patterns of destination and alignment across cohorts and to identify possible implications for curriculum development.

Several corrections and additions are worth checking before submission. The original sentence "Of 417 graduates completed the survey" was inconsistent with Table 1, which shows 416 respondents, so I wrote "Of the 417 graduates, 416 completed the survey." I also added the sentence about valid responses because the horizontal and vertical tables in the Results use smaller case counts (51, 86, 60, 67, and 54) than the 376 included participants, and I assumed that this reflects missing data on those items. Please confirm that assumption and consider stating the number of excluded cases for each. I added a one-line description of the horizontal and vertical response scales so the Method matches the Results tables. Reviewers for a Scopus Q3 journal will likely expect the data collection period and mode, the ethical clearance or institutional permission for using tracer records, and a note on how the questionnaire was validated. You did not give me these details, so I left them out instead of inventing them.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

GRADUATE PROFILE ALIGNMENT ACROSS COHORTS

The first analysis examined whether graduates followed the career pathways formally identified by the English Education Program. The main graduate profile covered English teaching and further study, and entrepreneurship in English language education was classified as an additional profile. Graduates working in other areas were grouped as being outside the formal profiles. Table 2 presents the distribution for each cohort.

Table 2 Alignment of Post-Graduation Destinations with Graduate Profiles

Cohort	N	Main Profile n (%)	Additional Profile n (%)	Total Formal Alignment n (%)	Outside Formal Profiles n (%)
2019	61	31 (50.8%)	2 (3.3%)	33 (54.1%)	28 (45.9%)
2020	91	46 (50.5%)	2 (2.2%)	48 (52.7%)	43 (47.3%)
2021	75	45 (60.0%)	3 (4.0%)	48 (64.0%)	27 (36.0%)
2022	85	55 (64.7%)	4 (4.7%)	59 (69.4%)	26 (30.6%)
2023	64	39 (60.9%)	4 (6.3%)	43 (67.2%)	21 (32.8%)
Total	**376**	**216 (57.4%)**	**15 (4.0%)**	**231 (61.4%)**	**145 (38.6%)**

Note. Main profile = English teacher and further study; additional profile = entrepreneurship in English language education. "Outside formal profiles" does not necessarily mean that competencies developed in the program are irrelevant to the occupation.

Across the five cohorts, formal alignment ranged from 52.7% to 69.4%. The two earliest cohorts recorded the lowest proportions, at 54.1% in 2019 and 52.7% in 2020. The proportion rose to 64.0% in 2021 and reached its highest level in 2022 at 69.4%. The 2023 cohort stayed at a similar level, with 67.2% of graduates falling within the formal profiles, although this was slightly below the 2022 figure. The movement was therefore an increase between the first two and the last three cohorts and not a steady year-on-year climb. The share of graduates outside the formal profiles followed the opposite course, falling from 45.9% in 2019 and 47.3% in 2020 to between 30.6% and 36.0% in the later cohorts.

In total, 231 of the 376 graduates (61.4%) followed either the main or the additional profile. The main profile accounted for nearly all of them. Of the 216 graduates in this profile, 180 (47.9% of the full sample) worked as teachers and 36 (9.6%) continued to further study. The main-profile share was around 50% in the 2019 and 2020 cohorts and between 60.0% and 64.7% in the three later cohorts. Entrepreneurship in English language education remained a much smaller destination, with 15 graduates overall (4.0%) and no more than four in any cohort. Its share nevertheless rose from 2.2% in 2020 to 6.3% in 2023, although the absolute numbers are too small to describe a trend with confidence.

HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT BETWEEN FIELD OF STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT

The second analysis examined whether graduates' employment or further study was related to their undergraduate field. Unlike formal profile alignment, this measure allowed a wider range of destinations, provided that graduates considered them relevant to English Education. Table 3 reports the responses for the graduates with available data in each cohort.

Table 3 Horizontal Alignment between Field of Study and Employment by Cohort

Level of Alignment	2019 (n = 51)	2020 (n = 86)	2021 (n = 60)	2022 (n = 67)	2023 (n = 54)
Very closely related	27 (52.9%)	37 (43.0%)	34 (56.7%)	31 (46.3%)	28 (51.9%)
Closely related	3 (5.9%)	14 (16.3%)	5 (8.3%)	19 (28.4%)	12 (22.2%)
Moderately related	11 (21.6%)	16 (18.6%)	9 (15.0%)	8 (11.9%)	8 (14.8%)
Slightly related	3 (5.9%)	13 (15.1%)	6 (10.0%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (3.7%)
Not related at all	7 (13.7%)	6 (7.0%)	6 (10.0%)	5 (7.5%)	4 (7.4%)

Note. Values are presented as n (%). Percentages are calculated within each graduation cohort. The table includes graduates with available data on the perceived relationship between their field of study and their employment or further-study destination.

Field relevance became more pronounced in the later cohorts. The combined proportion of graduates who described their destinations as very closely or closely related to their field was 58.8% in 2019 and 59.3% in 2020. It rose to 65.0% in 2021, then to 74.6% in 2022 and 74.1% in 2023. The increase between 2021 and 2022 came mainly from the closely related category, which grew from 8.3% to 28.4%, while the very closely related category declined from 56.7% to 46.3%. The proportion reporting little or no relationship (slightly related or not related at all) was 19.6% in 2019 and 22.1% in 2020, and it fell to 13.4% in 2022 and 11.1% in 2023. The share reporting no relationship at all declined from 13.7% in 2019 to 7.4% in 2023, although it did not decrease consistently, since it stood at 10.0% in 2021. Pooled across the five cohorts, 210 of the 318 graduates with data (66.0%) reported destinations that were very closely or closely related to their field, 52 (16.4%) reported moderate relatedness, and 56 (17.6%) reported slight or no relatedness.

Comparing this measure with formal alignment shows that the two do not coincide. In every cohort, the proportion reporting a closely or very closely related destination was higher than the proportion in the formal profiles: 58.8% against 54.1% in 2019, 59.3% against 52.7% in 2020, 65.0% against 64.0% in 2021, 74.6% against 69.4% in 2022, and 74.1% against 67.2% in 2023. The difference was largest in 2023 (6.9 percentage points) and smallest in 2021 (1.0 point). These comparisons are descriptive, because the horizontal analysis rests on fewer cases than the formal analysis.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND EMPLOYMENT

The third analysis concerned qualification level. It examined whether graduates worked in positions that required an educational level comparable to their undergraduate degree, and Table 4 shows the results by cohort.

Table 4 Vertical Alignment between Educational Level and Employment by Cohort

Level of Alignment	2019 (n = 51)	2020 (n = 86)	2021 (n = 60)	2022 (n = 67)	2023 (n = 54)
One level higher	6 (11.8%)	9 (10.5%)	10 (16.7%)	7 (10.4%)	7 (13.0%)
Same level	42 (82.4%)	70 (81.4%)	47 (78.3%)	55 (82.1%)	45 (83.3%)
One level lower	2 (3.9%)	7 (8.1%)	2 (3.3%)	3 (4.5%)	2 (3.7%)
Higher education not required	1 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)	2 (3.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Note. Values are presented as n (%). Percentages are calculated within each graduation cohort. Vertical alignment refers to the correspondence between the educational level required by graduates' employment and their undergraduate qualification.

Vertical alignment was high in every cohort. Between 91.9% and 96.3% of graduates with available data worked in positions that required the same or a higher educational level than their degree. The highest proportion appeared in 2023 (96.3%) and the lowest in 2020 (91.9%), where seven graduates (8.1%) reported jobs one level below their qualification. Most graduates, between 78.3% and 83.3% in each cohort, held positions at the same level as their undergraduate degree, and between 10.4% and 16.7% held positions requiring one level higher. Pooled across cohorts, 298 of the 318 graduates (93.7%) were in jobs requiring the same or a higher level, 16 (5.0%) were in jobs requiring one level lower, and 4 (1.3%) were in jobs that did not require higher education. Lower-level jobs were uncommon in every cohort, never involving more than seven graduates.

Taken together, the three indicators showed a consistent ordering. In every cohort, vertical alignment was the highest, horizontal alignment (very closely or closely related) was next, and formal profile alignment was the lowest. In 2023, for example, 67.2% of graduates were in the formal profiles, 74.1% reported closely or very closely related destinations, and 96.3% held jobs at an appropriate educational level.

FORMAL GRADUATE PROFILES AND CAREER DIVERSIFICATION

The findings show that the program's teacher-education identity remains strong. Teaching was the most common destination, accounting for 180 of the 376 graduates, and more than half of all graduates (57.4%) followed the main graduate profile once further study was included. The program's central career pathway is therefore still clearly visible in its graduate outcomes. The picture is not limited to teaching, however. Nearly four in ten graduates (38.6%) were outside the formal profiles. That figure could seem high if formal profile alignment were the only measure of relevance, but using it that way would oversimplify the graduates' situation.

A destination outside the profile is not necessarily evidence that the education has become irrelevant. Among Indonesian teacher education students, career possibilities outside teaching have been reported as a reason for entering teacher education in the first place, and some students entered with no intention of teaching or with plans to teach only briefly (Suryani & George, 2021). Some of the graduates outside the formal profiles may therefore have followed routes they anticipated when they enrolled. In addition, employability in language-related fields is multidimensional. It combines language skills with generic competencies and career management, which graduates can carry into occupations that a formal profile does not name (Tong & Gao, 2022). Graduates who use English at work also develop workplace communication practices as they move into employment (Chan, 2021). The 38.6% outside the profiles should accordingly be read as a mixed group in which relevance varies, a point the horizontal results confirm.

Cohort differences deserve careful reading. Formal alignment was lower among the 2019 and 2020 graduates than among those who graduated from 2021 onward. Several explanations are possible. Earlier graduates have had more time to change jobs, move between sectors, or reconsider their original plans, and labor-market conditions may also have differed across the period. The two earliest cohorts also had the largest shares of respondents excluded as unemployed or still seeking work (18.7% in 2019 and 17.3% in 2020, against between 1.3% and 5.6% in later cohorts), so the groups on which their alignment percentages are based were composed differently. These possibilities are reasonable, but the available data cannot confirm them, and the differences should not be read as causal effects.

Entrepreneurship deserves separate attention. Its share rose slightly over time but stayed small in absolute terms, with no more than four graduates in any cohort. If entrepreneurship in English language education remains an intended graduate profile, the program may need to examine how visible this pathway is in students' learning experiences. Low participation does not mean that the curriculum is its cause. Career choices are influenced by many factors, and tracer data cannot separate them.

HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT AND THE BROADER RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

The horizontal results add an important layer to the formal-profile findings. Many graduates who were outside the official pathways were still working or studying in areas they regarded as related to English Education, and this was especially clear in the later cohorts. In every

cohort, the share of graduates reporting a closely or very closely related destination exceeded the share in the formal profiles. In 2023, formal alignment stood at 67.2%, while 74.1% of graduates with horizontal data reported closely or very closely related destinations. This gap suggests that some careers sit outside the formal profile without being disconnected from the degree. The same distinction is made in the literature on field-of-study mismatch, which treats work outside one's field as separate from work below one's qualification level (Salas-Velasco, 2021).

The size of the horizontal figures should be placed in context, with caution about comparability. Using a normative method on national labor force data, Hasibuan and Handayani (2021) found that 68.4% of Indonesian workers were in a field-of-study mismatch. Here, 66.0% of graduates reported closely or very closely related destinations and only 17.6% reported slight or no relatedness. The two figures are not directly comparable, because the national estimate covers workers of all fields and levels and rests on a different definition, whereas the present measure is based on graduates' own judgments. Horizontal mismatch also depends heavily on how it is defined and measured, and different measures can yield substantially different incidence rates (Somers et al., 2019). The present results should therefore be read as graduates' perceptions of relevance and not as an objective count of field matching. Rudakov et al. (2022) additionally showed that mismatch varies across fields of study, and that fields with a more specific professional orientation tend to show more matches. The pooled results here are consistent with English Education retaining relevance beyond its formal profiles, although the present design cannot test this directly.

Even so, a transferable skill is not the same as complete workplace readiness. In Chan's (2021) study of Hong Kong graduates who used English at work, the participants still had to learn workplace communication practices after entering employment and met language-related challenges along the way. Employers' reports on English-major students during an industrial practicum similarly indicated that the students needed more practical experience to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses (Phuong et al., 2023). A strong English background clearly helps, but it does not by itself prepare graduates for every setting. For the program, this distinction matters. The findings do not suggest that English Education should become less focused on language or pedagogy. They suggest that students may need more chances to use those strengths in settings that resemble the wider range of careers that graduates actually enter.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT AND QUALIFICATION-LEVEL FIT

The vertical-alignment findings present a consistent picture. In every cohort, more than nine out of ten graduates with available data worked in positions requiring the same or a higher level of education than their degree, and the pooled figure was 93.7%. This is one of the clearest findings in the study. It also changes how the formal-profile results can be understood. A graduate may work outside teaching or English-language entrepreneurship, but that does not necessarily mean the job is below bachelor's level, and for most graduates in this study it was not. Only 6.3% of graduates with data held jobs that required a lower level of education or none at all. For comparison, Hasibuan and Handayani (2021) reported overeducation among 27.9% of Indonesian workers nationally, although again their normative measure and broader population limit direct comparison.

This is why horizontal and vertical alignment should remain separate. They describe different relationships between education and employment, and their consequences can differ. In Japan, vertical mismatch was more likely than horizontal mismatch to lower the annual earnings of highly educated employees (Takeuchi, 2023). Someone can work outside the

original field and still hold a position that is appropriate to their educational level, which is what many graduates in this study appear to have done.

There is, however, a limit to what vertical alignment can show. A bachelor-level job is not necessarily one in which every competency learned at university is being used. Škrinjarić (2023) found that a gap between the competences graduates acquired and those employers required was associated with a lower probability of employment and lower wages among economics and business graduates in Croatia. The present study does not measure competency fit directly. The high vertical alignment should therefore be interpreted as a match in qualification level and not as evidence of a complete match between graduate competencies and job demands.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

When the three forms of alignment are considered together, the picture is more balanced. Formal alignment shows how often graduates follow the pathways the program states explicitly. Horizontal alignment shows whether other destinations are still related to the field, and vertical alignment adds the qualification-level dimension. Each answers a different question. Together, they do not point to a need for major curricular change. The teacher-education pathway remains strong, and most graduates report either good field relevance or an appropriate qualification level. The program's linguistic, pedagogical, and communication foundations should therefore remain central.

What may need to change is how broadly those foundations are applied. Graduates enter varied professional environments, and employability depends on communication, generic competencies, and career management alongside language skills (Tong & Gao, 2022). Employers may also rate soft skills differently from students (Succi & Canovi, 2020). These abilities do not all require new stand-alone courses, and many can be developed within existing ones. Internships, collaborative projects, workplace simulations, case-based tasks, professional presentations, and authentic assignments are practical options. Graduates in an Australian study considered internships important for employability (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021), and work-integrated learning has been examined as a contributor to graduate employability more broadly (Jackson & Dean, 2023). Indonesian EFL lecturers likewise identified digital competence, an interdisciplinary approach, and more opportunities for applied skills as important in the era of Industry 4.0 (Habiburrahim et al., 2022). Such opportunities depend in part on the resources and practical activities a program provides, since practical and research activities mediated the effect of facilities on employability in a national study of Indonesian universities (Nugraha et al., 2023).

Workplace communication is one area where this approach could be especially useful. Graduates who use English at work can still face unfamiliar professional genres, specialized vocabulary, and workplace routines (Chan, 2021). Digital competence is equally relevant, since it supports teaching but also matters in content development, administration, communication, and digital education.

The entrepreneurial profile may need more visible support as well. Students could, for example, be introduced to tutoring-service development, educational content production, digital language-learning products, or basic business planning. Even so, entrepreneurship should not be treated as a curriculum problem alone. Personal interests, available opportunities, and long-term goals also shape career decisions, as research on Indonesian teacher education students' career decision making indicates (Suryani & George, 2021). Overall, the findings favor broadening the existing curriculum over replacing it. The program has a clear teacher-

education identity and there is little reason to abandon it. A more useful direction is to preserve that core while giving students more opportunities to apply their linguistic, pedagogical, digital, entrepreneurial, and transferable competencies in a wider range of professional contexts.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several limitations should be kept in mind. The data are graduates' self-reports from a single institutional tracer study, so they reflect perceived relevance and not employer assessments or measured performance. The analysis excluded the 40 respondents (9.6%) who were unemployed or still seeking work, so the alignment figures describe graduates who had identifiable destinations. The horizontal and vertical analyses rested on 318 of the 376 included participants because data were available for fewer graduates on those items. The study was descriptive, and no inferential test was used, so the cohort differences are patterns to be interpreted cautiously and not demonstrated effects. Future research could combine tracer data with employer feedback, curriculum mapping, direct measures of competency use, and longer follow-up of graduates' careers. Comparisons across several institutions, together with inferential analysis of the factors associated with each form of alignment, would also show whether these patterns hold beyond one program.

CONCLUSION

This study traced the post-graduation destinations of 376 English Education graduates from five consecutive cohorts (2019 to 2023) and examined them through three forms of alignment: formal graduate-profile alignment, horizontal alignment, and vertical alignment. Overall, 61.4% of graduates followed the formally defined graduate profiles. Most of them were in the main profile of English teaching or further study (57.4%), while only 4.0% entered entrepreneurship in English language education. Formal alignment was lower in the 2019 and 2020 cohorts, reached 69.4% in 2022, and remained relatively high at 67.2% in 2023. Horizontal alignment was generally stronger in the later cohorts, and 74.1% of the 2023 graduates reported destinations that were closely or very closely related to their field. Vertical alignment was consistently high, ranging from 91.9% to 96.3% across cohorts. Teaching was clearly the main career destination, whereas entrepreneurship remained a much smaller pathway.

These results show that formal graduate profiles describe only part of where graduates go. About 38.6% of graduates entered destinations outside those profiles, but this did not necessarily mean that their work was unrelated to their field or below their qualification level. Many graduates moved beyond the officially designed pathways while still holding careers that were related to English Education and appropriate to a bachelor's degree. For curriculum evaluation, the three indicators together provide useful outcome-level evidence. The program's linguistic, pedagogical, and English communication foundations remain relevant, and the findings point to refinement and not fundamental redirection. Areas that could be strengthened include transferable skills, digital competence, professional communication, problem solving, teamwork, workplace experience, and support for entrepreneurship.

These findings should be read as one component of curriculum evaluation and not as a comprehensive judgment of curriculum effectiveness. The study identifies where graduates went and how their destinations correspond to the intended profile, field of study, and qualification level. It does not establish that the curriculum caused those outcomes, and it does not evaluate individual courses, learning outcomes, graduate competencies, or employer

satisfaction. The data are self-reported, come from a single institution, and were analyzed descriptively. A more comprehensive evaluation should therefore combine tracer data with curriculum mapping, assessment of learning outcomes, employer feedback, and longitudinal evidence on graduates' career development.

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