



BOLOGNA PROCESS REPORTS

**for the Bergen ministerial
conference**

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May 2005



FROM BERLIN TO BERGEN

GENERAL REPORT OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION,
BERGEN, 19-20 MAY 2005

REPORT

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“FROM BERLIN TO BERGEN”

Executive Summary of the General Report of the Bologna Follow-up Group to the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19-20 May 2005

Halfway towards 2010

Halfway in the Bologna Process towards 2010, we start to see the contours of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is not a single, unified higher education system, but a group of more than forty national systems developing according to jointly agreed principles.

For many countries, “Bologna” is an inspiration and a recipe for highly needed reforms in their higher education systems. At the same time we are jointly building a common framework to turn into reality the idea that students and staff shall be able to move freely within the EHEA, having full recognition of their qualifications. Priority has been given to developing

- a three-cycle degree system in each participating country,
- national quality assurance systems cooperating in a Europe-wide network,
- mutual recognition between participating countries of degrees and study periods.

Each of these elements has a national dimension and a European Dimension. So has the concept of qualifications frameworks now introduced in the Bologna Process, with national frameworks fitting into an overarching framework for the EHEA. Agreed standards and guidelines introduce a European dimension also in quality assurance.

Developments

As the Bologna Process has been developing, its ten action lines have tended to overlap or merge and new concepts have been introduced. The action lines have been imperative for the dynamics of the Bologna Process, but they do not explicitly define the final goal.

Recommendations from the fourteen *Bologna Follow-up Seminars* included in the BFUG Work Programme have fed into the stocktaking project, into the development of the overarching framework for qualifications and into the joint efforts in quality assurance, and have also directly influenced the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué.

All participating countries have produced National Reports. These reports have given information on planned reforms as well as on what has already been accomplished.

An overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA

The report from the Working Group established by the BFUG provides a series of recommendations, among them the following:

- the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within the first cycle;
- the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points. It is proposed that the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area;
- *guidelines* for the credit range typically associated with the completion of each cycle:
 - Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualifications: 120 ECTS credits;
 - First cycle qualifications: 180-240 ECTS credits;

- Second cycle qualifications: 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle;
- Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Bologna Follow-up Group has advised Ministers that they may adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including the possibility of shorter higher education linked to the first cycle), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges for the first and second cycles.

The BFUG has also advised Ministers to commit themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007.

The BFUG has further advised Ministers to underline the importance of complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the broader European framework of qualifications for lifelong learning now being developed within the European Union.

European cooperation in quality assurance

In Berlin, Ministers called upon ENQA, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance and a peer review system for quality assurance bodies. The main results and recommendations are:

- There will be European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies.
- European quality assurance agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review within five years.
- A European register of quality assurance agencies will be established.
- A European Register Committee will act as a gatekeeper for the register.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has advised Ministers that the proposed standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA and the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies may be introduced and tried out on a national basis in the participating countries.

The BFUG has welcomed the establishment of a European Register of quality assurance agencies and asked ENQA to develop rules and regulations for such a register. The BFUG has advised Ministers that the practicalities of implementation of the Register and the Register Committee may be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB.

Recognition of degrees and study periods

In June 2004, a Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees was adopted as a subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Governments should review their legislation and introduce legal provisions that would facilitate recognition of joint degrees.

By April 2005, 31 of the 40 participating countries in the Bologna Process and all five applicant countries had ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has advised Ministers to urge participating countries that have not already done so to ratify the Convention without delay. They should ensure the full implementation of its principles,

and incorporate them in national legislation. Ministers may call on all participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the ENIC/NARIC networks. Ministers should express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA.

Higher education institutions and others should improve recognition of prior learning including non-formal and informal learning for access to and as elements in higher education programmes. The development of national and European frameworks for qualifications may be an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education.

Stocktaking

To conduct the stocktaking exercise asked for by Ministers in Berlin, a Working Group was established by the BFUG. At the request of the Working Group, the EURYDICE report "*Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*" extended its review beyond the 31 countries normally covered by its network in order to provide a uniform analysis of the 40 "Bologna" countries. Along with the material prepared by EURYDICE, the National Reports represented the main source of information.

Scorecards have been developed for each participating country as well as average scores for the forty countries. The analysis indicates that overall, participating countries have made good progress in the three priority action lines. However, the strength of the Bologna Process has been its voluntary and collaborative nature. The increased membership underlines the need to ensure consistency of progress, and participating countries should be prepared to take responsibility to assist each other as we all move towards 2010.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has noted that substantial progress has been made in the three priority areas. It is important to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries, and the BFUG will advise Ministers that there is a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and government level.

The BFUG has noted that the two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, with more than half of the students being enrolled in it in most countries. However, there are still some obstacles to access between cycles. Ministers may see the need for greater dialogue, involving governments, institutions and social partners, to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including posts within the public service.

The BFUG has noted that almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking. However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation.

With reference also to the follow-up of the Lisbon Recognition Convention mentioned above, Ministers are advised to draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Five new participating countries

The criteria for admission of new participating countries (members) to the Bologna Process were set by the Berlin Communiqué, saying that

“countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education.

A document consolidating principles and action lines of the Bologna Process made it clear to potential newcomers that the EHEA can only be achieved by incorporating the “Bologna” principles in the higher education system of each country. Just as all participating countries were asked to produce a National Report, newcomers were asked to produce a report in a similar format, with a special focus on the three intermediate priorities.

By the deadline applications had been received from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine. Later, Kosovo also applied. All applications were in accordance with the prescribed procedure; however, Kazakhstan and Kosovo are not signatories to the European Cultural Convention.

Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

Based on the applications and reports received, the BFUG has advised Ministers to welcome Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as participating countries (members) in the Bologna Process at the Bergen conference.

2010 and beyond

The Bologna Process is a process of voluntary cooperation between different national systems overseen by the BFUG and associating the various partners. There are no legally binding provisions except for the Lisbon Recognition Convention; the cooperation is based on mutual trust. Participating countries have adapted their legislation to the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process, and higher education institutions are committed to implementing them.

The Follow-up Group has had preliminary discussions concerning 2010 and beyond, as the vision of the European Higher Education Area is gradually being translated into reality. Within the overarching framework for the EHEA, all participating countries should have developed by 2010 a national framework of qualifications based on three cycles in higher education, and national quality assurance arrangements implementing an agreed set of standards and guidelines. All higher education institutions in participating countries will recognise degrees and periods of studies according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The social dimension of the Bologna Process will be a constituent part of the EHEA: Higher education should be equally accessible to all and students should be able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. The EHEA will encompass the principles of public responsibility for higher education, institutional autonomy, and the participation of students in higher education governance.

1 HALFWAY TOWARDS 2010

Halfway in the Bologna Process towards 2010, we start to see the contours of the European Higher Education Area. It is not a single, unified higher education system, but a group of more than forty national systems developing according to jointly agreed principles. As additional countries will join when Ministers meet in Bergen in May 2005, the Bologna Process can be seen as a truly pan-European Process.

For many countries, “Bologna” is an inspiration and a recipe for highly needed reforms in their higher education systems. At the same time we are jointly building a common framework to turn into reality the idea that students and staff should be able to move freely within the EHEA, having full recognition of their qualifications. There are limitations to free movement in the form of legal and financial restrictions outside the competence of Ministers of Education, but building a Europe of Knowledge, we must strive to overcome these problems.

At the previous Ministerial Conference in Berlin in September 2003, priority was given to the further development of three central elements in the Bologna Process,

- a three-cycle degree system in each participating country with degrees at bachelor, master and doctoral level,
- national quality assurance systems cooperating in a Europe-wide network,
- mutual recognition between participating countries of degrees and study periods.

Each of these elements has a national dimension and a European Dimension. So has the concept of qualifications frameworks, with national frameworks fitting into an overarching framework for the European Higher Education Area. The Follow-up Group will report on the development of an overarching framework for higher education that may be a first element in a European educational framework also spanning vocational education and training.

Ministers have also asked for the development of an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance to be used in national quality assurance systems. The Follow-up Group can report that agreement on key points has been reached, thus introducing a European dimension in quality assurance.

There already exists an international legal instrument for mutual recognition of degrees and study periods: the Lisbon Recognition Convention. By April 2005 the Lisbon Recognition Convention has been ratified by 31 of the 40 countries participating in the Bologna Process and by all the five applicant countries. Formal difficulties related to the ratification procedure should not keep participating countries from practising the principles of the Lisbon Convention, thus recognising degrees and study periods from the other countries as equivalent to degrees and study periods in their own educational system. Correspondingly, higher education institutions in all participating countries should recognise courses from partner institutions in the other countries as equivalent to their own courses.

The stocktaking exercise shows that substantial progress has been made in the three priority areas. However, to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries, there is a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and government level.

3 May 2005
Germain Dondelinger
Chair, Bologna Follow-up Group

Per Nyborg
Head of the Secretariat

2 THE BFUG WORK PROGRAMME 2004-2005

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers asked the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to co-ordinate activities in the Bologna Process as indicated in the themes and actions covered by the communiqué and to report on them in time for the next Ministerial Conference in 2005.

The recommendations of the Berlin Communiqué were directed at national authorities, institutions and organisations. Countries and organisations have launched relevant follow-up activities in accordance with the Communiqué. This active participation of all partners is of great importance to the long-term success of the Bologna Process.

To co-ordinate activities, the BFUG developed a Work Programme for the period from Berlin to Bergen, decided in its final form in March 2004. Members and consultative members of the BFUG have initiated most of the actions included in the Work Programme, and as such, it is basically a bottom-up process. However, the Follow-up Group has ensured that the Work Programme related in the best possible way to the Berlin Communiqué as a whole and that it had a reasonable balance between the various action lines of the Bologna Process.

Seminars were the main vehicle for the follow-up of the Prague Communiqué, and have also been important in the follow-up after Berlin. The European Commission has supported a number of Bologna Follow-up Seminars in priority areas under the Socrates and Tempus programmes. Fourteen Bologna Follow-up Seminars were included in the BFUG Work Programme. Responsibility for organising these seminars was widely spread among participating countries and organisations. Condensed reports from the seminars have been included in this report.

The intermediate priorities defined in the Berlin Communiqué have been central in the Work Programme.

It was clear from the Berlin Communiqué that the Ministers wished for the BFUG to take responsibility for actions in the following areas:

- monitoring the ENQA project on quality assurance;
- developing an overarching framework of qualifications;
- carrying out the stocktaking exercise.

As may be seen from separate chapters in this general report, these projects have received special attention from the BFUG. For each project a Working Group was established: For the quality assurance project ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB worked together in the “E4” group. For the qualifications framework project and for the stocktaking project the BFUG appointed separate Working Groups. The work of these groups has been essential to the success of the projects.

This report contains an overview of the activities carried out and decisions taken under the responsibility of the BFUG up to the Ministerial Conference in Bergen in May 2005. The report has been written by the Secretariat of the Bologna Process set up by Norway as the host country of the upcoming conference, and has been discussed by the BFUG in the process of writing. Under the mandate given by the BFUG, the final version has been authorised by the BFUG Board.

All documents and reports referred to in this general report are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>.

3 THE BOLOGNA ACTION LINES

Six action lines were introduced in the Bologna Declaration:

- 1 Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
- 2 Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles;
- 3 Establishment of a system of credits;
- 4 Promotion of mobility;
- 5 Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance;
- 6 Promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

Three more were introduced in the Prague Communiqué:

- 7 Lifelong learning;
- 8 Higher education institutions and students;
- 9 Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

A tenth action line was introduced in the Berlin Communiqué:

- 10 Doctoral studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the ERA.

In the follow-up after Prague and Berlin, *the social dimension of higher education* has been seen as an overarching or transversal action line.

When the Follow-up Group made a selection of seminars for inclusion in the BFUG Work Programme 2004-2005, a reasonable coverage of the various action lines was sought. This supplemented the selection according to the explicit priorities of the Berlin Communiqué.

As the Process has been developing, action lines have tended to overlap or merge and new concepts have been introduced. The system of two degree cycles from Bologna (action line 2) was supplemented by a third cycle (action line 10) in Berlin. Action lines 1, 2, 3 and an important part of 10 may now be described within *a framework of qualifications for higher education*, and the ambition is that action line 7 may also be included in *a general framework of qualifications* that may span both higher education and vocational education and training, and also possibly other parts of the educational system. Establishing an *overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area* will be essential also for action line 6, the European dimension.

A concept implicit in action lines 1 and 4 has turned out to be central to the Bologna Process: *recognition of degrees and study periods*. The legal instrument has been with us from the start, in the form of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, saying that all States party to the Convention shall recognise degrees and study periods from other parties as equivalent to degrees and study periods in their own system, provided there are no substantial differences. Hence the appeal from Ministers in Berlin that all participating countries should ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Action line 5 *Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance* has been central in the follow-up after Berlin. With the development of an agreed set of standards and guidelines for quality assurance, a common basis for recognition is introduced. The cooperation and trust developing in the quality assurance sector may also be seen as yet another element of the European dimension of higher education (action line 6).

Action line 8 keeps reminding us of the importance of higher education institutions and student organisations as partners in the Process. The active participation of institutions and their staff and of students in the *implementation* of the European Higher Education Area will be vital to the

success of the Bologna Process. This implies that the basic principles for this partnership between national authorities and the higher education sector must be clearly visible also in the description of the EHEA, first of all the principle of autonomous institutions and the principle of student participation in the governance of higher education institutions.

Action line 8 also initiated after Prague the discussion of higher education as a public good and a public responsibility. The public responsibility for higher education encompasses the structural elements of the Bologna Process such as a national framework, degree structure, quality assurance and recognition. The public responsibility for the structure of higher education is defined in all countries by national legislation. A seminar was organised by the Council of Europe in September 2004 to look more closely into the public responsibility for higher education and research, and another seminar organised by UNESCO/CEPES in November 2004 studied the legislation for higher education in a large group of participating countries in the Bologna Process (see chapter 4 on seminars).

Student and staff mobility is at the heart of the Bologna Process, and *mobility* has been defined as a separate Bologna action line (action line 4). However, several seminars and also discussions in the Follow-up Group have shown that mobility is indeed a transversal subject. Many challenges must be met to further increase mobility between different groups of participating countries, and further studies and endeavours will be necessary relating to its various elements, including the recognition issue, social and linguistic issues, financial issues, immigration and social security issues and the legislative framework.

A tentative conclusion regarding action lines may be that they have been imperative for the dynamics of the Bologna Process. However, this does not necessarily imply that they should also be parameters for the description of the European Higher Education Area which will be the *outcome* of the Process: The action lines have shown the way to go, but they do not explicitly define the final goal.

4 BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP SEMINARS

Seminars were the main vehicle for the follow-up of the Prague Communiqué, and they have also been important elements in the follow-up after Berlin. *Bologna Follow-up Seminars* have been organised by BFUG members and consultative members in accordance with their own priorities and objectives, taking account of criteria approved by the Follow-up Group. Fourteen Bologna Follow-up Seminars were included in the BFUG Work Programme 2004-2005, reflecting the priorities set by the Ministers in Berlin and having the potential of contributing to making the European Higher Education Area a reality.

The seminars have been open to participants from all the participating countries as well as the applicant countries, to representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB and to other interested parties. All seminars have consisted of plenary sessions and workshops, giving the opportunity for active participation and for elaboration of various aspects of the seminar themes. In a number of cases surveys and background documents were prepared by the organisers. This material is available on the Bologna-Bergen web site at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no> together with complete reports and recommendations from each seminar.

The seminars have been important in increasing the awareness of the Bologna Process in the participating countries and also in other countries. The Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES have both been very active in their support of new and prospective participating countries. EUA and ESIB have been co-organisers of a number of seminars, also reaching out to national rectors' conferences and national student unions in participating countries and stimulating the dialogue between Bologna Partners at the national level.

Recommendations from Bologna Follow-up Seminars have fed into the stocktaking project, into the development of the overarching framework for qualifications and into the joint efforts in quality assurance. Recommendations from seminars have also directly influenced the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué.

4.1 “Joint Degrees – Further Development”, Stockholm, 6-7 May 2004

50 participants from 18 countries and a number of organisations attended this seminar organised by the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. General Rapporteur was professor Pavel Zgaga. The seminar built on previous activity in the field. Two seminars were held in the preceding period related to joint degrees: in May 2002, also in Stockholm, and in Mantova in April 2003, focussing on integrated curricula. In addition, a survey in 2002 and a project on joint master's degree programmes, both conducted by the EUA, had pointed to a number of problems. In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers undertook to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to such degrees.

The seminar considered the situation against this background. In most Bologna countries, degrees are regulated in national legislation. Many higher education institutions co-operate in developing and delivering joint study programmes and joint degrees, but few joint diplomas are awarded. Most countries do not make explicit legal provision for the awarding of joint degrees and joint diplomas. The seminar reiterated the importance of joint degrees for achieving the Bologna objectives, underlining that the process of developing and offering joint study programmes is the core activity, and discussed aspects such as the use of the Diploma Supplement and ECTS and quality assurance. In a lifelong learning perspective it was pointed out that the possibilities for all

types of students to participate should be taken into account when developing joint study programmes and joint degrees.

It was recommended that the Bologna Follow-up Group should map the experience of higher education institutions and students with joint study programmes and joint degrees and if possible report conclusions and recommendations to the Bergen ministerial meeting. Further, each country should report on the progress made in removing legal obstacles to joint degrees as agreed in the Berlin Communiqué. As a result of the latter recommendation a question about this was included in the template for the national reports.

The seminar made the following recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting:

- The possibility of awarding joint degrees with national and foreign higher education institutions should be clearly referred to in national legislation. Every country should report on the progress of their work in time for the ministerial meeting in 2007.
- The format of the Diploma Supplement should be adapted to facilitate the description of joint degrees. The Diploma Supplement should include a cross-reference when double degrees are issued.
- Ministers should encourage the development of incentives for higher education institutions to participate in joint study programmes leading to joint degrees. Higher education institutions should give proper recognition to students and staff who participate in joint degree programmes.

4.2 “Bologna and the challenges of e-learning and distance education”, Ghent, 4-5 June 2004

The main focus of the seminar, organised by the Ministry of the Flemish Community (Belgium) and the University of Ghent in cooperation with several academic partners, was on the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education. In particular the seminar explored the issue of widening access to higher education, e.g. for a more mature student public that combines studies with other responsibilities. General Rapporteur was professor Jef Van den Branden.

The seminar was attended by 100 policy makers, representatives of the academic world and specialists both in international relations and in e-learning from a large variety of countries and organisations participating in the Bologna Process.

The seminar discussed how non-classical teaching and learning forms can be of use in an emerging European Higher Education Area the cornerstones of which are quality assurance and recognition as well as mobility and social issues. The challenges which distance education at the higher education level poses in this perspective were explored accordingly.

The following recommendations were made for the further development of the Bologna Process:

- To make the EHEA an *Open* Higher Education Area by fully integrating the dimension of flexible learning paths supported by e-learning and other non-classical learning and teaching forms.
- To extend quality assurance, accreditation and qualifications frameworks to e-learning and other non-classical modes of delivery in an integrated approach encompassing the full range of higher education.
- In the context of widening access, to develop leadership in higher education institutions in order to integrate a lifelong learning-for-all strategy in joint responsibility with staff, students and the local and international community.
- To explore how the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention may be used to establish a common understanding and shared standards on the validation of prior learning experiences

in both formal and non-formal settings as a concrete step to the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education.

- To acknowledge the contribution of so-called “virtual mobility” to international academic exchange and joint curriculum development and to take it on board in the design of international mobility schemes.
- To promote a broad approach to all “Bologna tools” (as for instance ECTS and the Diploma Supplement) to include e-learning and non-classical teaching and learning.

4.3 “Using Learning Outcomes”, Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2004

The seminar, organised by the Scottish Ministry responsible for Higher Education together with national partners, brought together some 160 participants from 28 countries and from partner organisations. A background report had been commissioned from Professor Stephen Adam, examining the concept of learning outcomes both from a theoretical point of view and in relation to current practice.

Considerable activity was found to be taking place across Europe, but relatively few countries or higher education institutions had implemented learning outcomes in a systematic way. One conclusion in the report was that learning outcomes may enhance all the Bologna action lines. They were seen as part of a shift in emphasis from the teacher to the learner, and in this connection students pointed out that for learning to be genuinely student-centred, the students must also be included in the process of formulating the learning outcomes.

There was general agreement on the usefulness of moving towards an outcomes-based approach in the description of modules/units, study programmes and qualifications. Such an approach lies at the centre of the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA, and the seminar provided important input to this work. Descriptions in terms of learning outcomes also facilitate comparison of knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in informal or non-formal learning with formal qualifications, and hence contribute to flexible learning paths in a lifelong learning perspective. In the same way they may facilitate mobility between vocational education and training and higher education.

The seminar discussed the role of learning outcomes in relation to issues such as transparency, mobility, recognition and quality assurance, underlining that they are not the solution to all problems, but a useful tool at both the conceptual and practical levels. Unresolved issues e.g. in relation to credits were pointed out. Also, the concept is used in different ways in different contexts, sometimes in a very technical way, and a common understanding therefore needs to be developed, taking into account the importance of diversity and flexibility.

The seminar recommended that the BFUG should take a leading role in ensuring coherence across the different strands of development of the Bologna Process affected by learning outcomes, and more broadly between the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.

The seminar further recommended that the following themes should be considered for inclusion in the Bergen Communiqué:

- The importance of learning outcomes for the future development of Diploma Supplements, ECTS and qualifications frameworks, as a tool to promote transparency and mobility, while supporting flexibility and diversity across the European Higher Education Area.
- The need to accept that the pace and nature of change will not be uniform across all countries or all disciplines. Such flexibility will protect the diversity inherent in the European Higher Education Area and lead to greater ownership of the final outcome.
- The need for continuing dialogue to achieve a common language and a shared understanding of that language.

4.4 “Assessment and accreditation in the European framework”, Santander, 28-30 July 2004

The seminar organised by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation was attended by approximately 125 policy makers, representatives of the academic world and specialists both in international relations and in assessment and accreditation.

The main objective was to move forward in the development of common methodological tools for quality evaluation and accreditation of higher education within the European framework of the Bologna Declaration, with a view to identifying tools that are generally accepted as suitable and effective. Additional objectives were to compare processes and to analyse the networking of evaluation agencies and bodies with a view to the mutual recognition of their decisions. General Rapporteur was director Leonardo M. González.

It was confirmed that the networks of agencies will have an important role to play in the establishment of common accreditation criteria and methodologies that may lead to the mutual recognition of their decisions, in particular by means of their efforts to push for more and better knowledge of good practices and exchange of information and experience.

At the same time it was made clear that in defining these common criteria and methodologies it is necessary to take into account the diversity of the various systems and traditions that will go into the construction of a comparable framework.

There is a clear need to establish a glossary of terms that will make it possible to interpret the main features of each institution in the light of common but flexible principles and points of reference agreed at the European level.

For the implantation of an effective culture of quality, it is essential that governments, higher education institutions, quality agencies, teachers and students all participate, in view of the expectation that this process will benefit not only the involved agents but also society at large.

It will only be possible to establish common criteria and methodologies if mutual trust among institutions and agencies is achieved on a basis of greater transparency in accreditation processes. To that end it is essential to promote a peer review process among agencies.

Accreditation is viewed as an essential tool for the promotion of quality assurance in higher education systems. The accreditation process should be linked to the implementation of specific recommendations for the improvement of the evaluated qualifications and institutions. It was recommended that a concrete accreditation scheme be set up within the Bologna Process.

4.5 “Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research”, Strasbourg, 21-22 September 2004

Approximately 80 participants from 36 countries and a number of organisations participated in this seminar organised by the Council of Europe. General Rapporteur was IAU Secretary General Eva Egron Polak. Recommendations were addressed to public authorities in States Party to the European Cultural Convention and some directly to Ministers in Bergen:

Public responsibility for higher education and research should be understood as a multidimensional concept that includes the establishment and maintenance of the required legal

infrastructure, elaboration of policy, provision of funds and the further development of the social dimension, to meet current and future needs of the Knowledge Society.

Public responsibilities should be exercised throughout the European Higher Education Area with due regard for the need of higher education and research institutions and systems to act freely and efficiently in the pursuit of their mission.

For universities to meet society's requirements for research and respond to public interests, public authorities must provide adequate funds and, together with the research community, design policies to regulate conditions under which private resources can best be used.

To respond to increased pressure for cost-sharing in higher education, public authorities should stimulate further research and debate on the impact of different instruments such as tuition fees, student grants, bursaries and loans etc. on aspects such as equality of opportunity, system efficiency, social cohesion and public funding as a basis for future action.

Public authorities should ensure that appropriate bridges exist between higher education and the world of work. Such bridging includes a coherent qualifications framework at national and European levels, transparent mechanisms for recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, and two-way information flows between the labour market and higher education.

Public authorities should establish cost-effective quality assessment mechanisms that are built on trust, give due regard to internal quality development processes, have the right to independent decision-making and abide by agreed-upon principles.

Recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Conference:

- Ministers were asked to affirm their commitment to making equal opportunity in higher education a fundamental building block of the European Higher Education Area. They were asked to undertake actions that will allow the development of systemic and institutional responses to enable all individuals to realise their full potential.
- Ministers were also asked to acknowledge that funding, motivating and stimulating the development of higher education and research is as important a part of public responsibility. Ministers were asked to stimulate a comprehensive analysis of various approaches that would lead to increased funds for higher education and research, meeting equity, effectiveness and efficiency objectives as well as those of quality and autonomy.

Building a Knowledge Society that is democratic, inclusive, equitable and competitive is a shared responsibility in which an examination of the responsibilities of public authorities must be completed by an analysis of the public responsibility of all other stakeholders. Participants urged that such corresponding analyses be undertaken as well.

4.6 “Designing policies for mobile students”, Noordwijk, 10-12 October 2004

Approximately 130 participants from 30 countries and a number of organisations participated in this seminar organised by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. General Rapporteur was professor Pavel Zgaga.

The participants in the seminar concluded that structural cross-border cooperation between institutions and high-quality mobility of students and staff make an indispensable contribution to creating a well-educated and internationally oriented work-force and strengthen the intellectual, cultural, social, scientific and technological dimensions of the European knowledge-based society. When designing policies to facilitate and further mobility, this is to be taken into account. A

sustained and continued attention to the implementation of already agreed policies and principles in the field of student mobility is required.

Regarding external quality assurance and requirements by national governments the seminar appealed to national authorities to standardise criteria or mutually recognise each other's accreditation decisions and organise trust.

To increase the transparency of Europe's more than 3000 institutions of higher education, a pilot for a *European typology of institutions* had been started with the purpose of trying out a draft typology. The seminar asked that the pilot should take into consideration related work carried out by the UNESCO-OECD activity on Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. The results of this pilot study could be reported to the Bologna Process.

The *portability of students' loans and grants* is an important instrument in the promotion of mobility. The various systems of student support are basically designed for the students that study in their country of origin. Portability of student grants ought to be studied more closely within an EU context. This should be done in relation to, among other things, fees and maintenance costs.

The participants in the seminar concluded that a European fund for student support could reduce some obstacles to mobility, and that a network of student support experts from the countries participating in the Bologna Process should be founded.

Participants affirmed that issues relating to the portability of student support are a complex area, where education policy as well as income politics and social welfare are intertwined, and with national and supra-national interests at stake. In the light of the wish to increase mobility, student support is an important subject to be taken up in the context of the European Union, because of the tension between national policies and EU jurisprudence. These legal issues are linked with political, social and administrative issues. The participants called on all parties involved to take the necessary steps to reach a satisfactory solution for the problems identified.

4.7 “The employability and its links to the objectives of the Bologna Process”, Bled, 22-23 October 2004

Approximately 115 participants from 24 countries and a number of organisations attended the seminar. General Rapporteur was Martina Vukasović.

This was the first Bologna Seminar to discuss employability. One major step forward was that the participants agreed on a definition on the term “employability”:

A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

The participants concluded that there are problems in many countries getting acceptance for the first degree in the labour market. This implies that there are challenges in fulfilling the Bologna action line *Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate*. It is a goal in the Bologna Process that the degree awarded on completion of the first cycle shall be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification.

To achieve the goal of strengthening employability, several measures must be taken. Employers, trade unions and professional associations must be involved in the development and creation of

new types of qualifications and new curricula. The BFUG must strengthen the participation of these stakeholders.

The seminar participants also recommended that the notion of employability is included as a reference point in further Bologna Seminars and other activities, in particular those dealing with learning outcomes and an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA.

4.8 “New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process”, Warsaw, 4-6 November 2004

The conference was attended by 40 international participants from 22 different countries and from partner organisations, 20 participants from Poland, and two observers from the USA. The main objective was to analyse how laws on higher education are reflecting progress towards the objectives of the Bologna Process. Professor Hans de Wit served as General Rapporteur.

Presentations were made on the theme of the conference from 11 different national perspectives, followed by a session featuring comparative perspectives on policy and legislative initiatives for higher education. A comparative analysis was also presented. The presentations and analysis provided relevant information on legal reforms in Europe in the context of the Bologna Process.

Notwithstanding the fact that different countries are at different stages of implementation, there was agreement that most countries have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, legislation enabling achievement of the Bologna goals in the agreed timeframe. At the same time it was recognised that national agendas play a key role in the implementation of the Bologna objectives and in the elaboration of new higher education legislation. Current reforms in national higher education legislation cannot be attributed solely to the Bologna Process. Some were already initiated prior to 1999; in other cases the Bologna Declaration is used as a ‘lever’ for national policy and to solve national problems.

Following the presentations and discussions, one could observe on the one hand a *growing convergence* in line with the Bologna goals (regarding degree systems, credits and accreditation), and on the other hand a *continuation of diversity* that will remain. The latter might even be reinforced, in that higher education is still a national responsibility and is defined foremost by national contexts, constraints and priorities.

Participants agreed that the approach to higher education legislation reform by general framework laws is most appropriate. Regulating in detail not only results in inflexibility, it is also in contradiction with the trend to deregulate and provide more autonomy. While legislation is an important aspect of implementation, it cannot take the place of commitment, interaction and trust among the different stakeholders.

It was recommended to the participating countries in the Bologna Process that they implement general framework legislation for higher education instead of detailed regulatory legislation. It was also recommended that they translate their national policy documents and higher education legislation into English or another major language of the EHEA.

It was recommended to the Bologna Follow-Up Group that it supplements the present stock-taking exercise with one on higher education legislation. This will help to better understand the legal implications of the Bologna Process in different countries, to get a better picture of convergence and diversity in European higher education, to exchange experiences and expertise, and to assist those countries still in the preparatory stage of legislative reforms.

4.9 “Bachelor’s Degree: What Is It?” St. Petersburg, 25-26 November 2004

The seminar was jointly organised by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, the Committee for Education and Science of the State Duma, St. Petersburg State University and the Council of Europe. It was attended by around 150 participants from Russia and 30 participants from 13 other countries. The working languages were English and Russian. General Rapporteur was Sverre Rustad from the BFUG Secretariat.

The seminar had a double focus, in that part of the discussion was concerned with general characteristics of the bachelor’s degree and the benefits and possible disadvantages of a two- (three-) cycle structure, whereas another part was concerned more particularly with the situation in Russia. In the general part, employability and the relation to the labour market was a special theme. There was consensus that bachelor programmes should have a balance between generic and specialist skills, with an emphasis on learning to learn, and that the relations between higher education institutions and employers need to be strengthened. Not least is this the case in Russia, where the bachelor’s degree is not well known or accepted and where employers tend to favour traditional integrated programmes. In general more emphasis should be placed on stimulating the creative development of the student, and all bachelor programmes should therefore be research-based.

With regard to the situation in Russia, focus was on the extent and pace of change. It was argued that moving too quickly would risk throwing over board valuable elements of the existing system and thus reducing standards. At present the two-cycle degree structure is voluntary for the institutions, and there were different views on whether it should be made obligatory. On the other hand there seemed to be a general consensus that the bachelor’s degree in Russia should have a duration of 4 years due to the low entry level (11 years of school) compared with many other countries.

The following conclusions and recommendations were submitted to the BFUG:

- Taking into account the significant role played by the humanities and social sciences in curricula in terms of ensuring generic competences, and at the same time widely divergent views and practices concerning the number of credits allocated to the humanities in different study programmes, the seminar recommended to set up a special working group for the study of the role to be played by the humanities in higher education.
- Proceeding from the general agreement that bachelor-level programmes are meant to ensure sufficiently broad competences, programme designers are recommended to pay special attention to interdisciplinary and field-specific modules. Based on existing descriptors the structure of competences would then be as follows: generic competences, interdisciplinary competences, field-specific competences and subject-specific competences.
- In designing bachelor-level study programmes for higher education, the designers should pay more attention to labour-market requirements and challenges.
- It was recommended to amend the position taken by the Bologna Declaration to make it clear that access to doctoral studies shall require a completed master’s degree.

4.10 “Improving the recognition system of degrees and study credit points in the European Higher Education Area”, Riga, 3-4 December 2004

This seminar, organised by the Latvian authorities in co-operation with the Council of Europe, was attended by approximately 160 participants from 30 different countries and from partner organisations. Professor Stephen Adam served as General Rapporteur.

Many Bologna action lines have direct links to recognition. Without effective processes for recognition, important Bologna objectives will not be achieved. However, the Riga seminar indicated what can be achieved and generated a strong agreement about the way forward.

Ministers in Bergen were urged to:

- Amend national legislation to incorporate the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and adopt effective measures to ensure their practical implementation at all appropriate levels;
- Recognise that reaching the goals of the Bologna Process requires defining ‘recognition’ as positioning a holder of a foreign qualification in the host country’s education or employment system, and therefore to:
 - emphasise the benefits of national qualifications frameworks and endorse the creation of the overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA on the grounds of their contribution to recognition, mobility and transparency;
 - promote an intensive national and international dialogue, informed by ENICs and NARICS, to exchange good practice.
- As a matter of urgency, launch a campaign to convey accurate and pertinent information on the Bologna Process to other parts of the world.

At the level of ENIC and NARIC networks it was recommended that:

- The existing cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks should be further strengthened. It needs to be acknowledged that recognition and quality assurance are intimately related;
- It is explored how the emerging qualifications frameworks and usage of learning outcomes can be applied for improving recognition practices, including the recognition of lifelong learning and other non-traditional qualifications, and how they relate to the legal framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- The networks take an active part in informing on the Bologna Process in the wider world, using their long-standing contacts and information exchange channels.

At national level it was recommended that:

- Effective measures are taken in respect of non-traditional providers to offer them access to state recognition procedures and ongoing quality assurance monitoring.
- The contribution of learning outcomes to recognition in higher education and lifelong learning is acknowledged and a strategy for their implementation developed.
- Steps are taken to monitor the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, with a view to encouraging fair and equal treatment of applicants within countries.

In *higher education institutions* steps should be taken to develop institutional recognition policies and practices and to disseminate information on the legal framework for recognition and best practice at the level of faculties and study programmes.

4.11 “The Framework of Qualifications of the EHEA”, Copenhagen, 13-14 January 2005

Approximately 120 representatives from 28 countries participated in this seminar, organised by the Danish authorities. General Rapporteur was Sjur Bergan, Council of Europe. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the report of a Working Group appointed by the BFUG to develop an overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA as a central element in the follow-up of the Berlin Ministerial Conference, see Ch. 6 of this report. The participants recommended:

That Ministers, meeting in Bergen in May 2005

- adopt the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area as proposed by the BFUG Working Group;
- mandate the BFUG to elaborate criteria and procedures for a self-certification system for national frameworks of qualifications where quality assurance is included and to submit it for final adoption to the Ministerial meeting in 2007;
- delegate responsibility for the maintenance and development of the overarching framework to the BFUG and any successor executive structure;
- commit to elaborating national frameworks of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA by 2010;
- commit to taking adequate account of the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA, as well as to consulting all parties to the Bologna Process, in any future development of frameworks for other parts of the education system.

That public authorities responsible for national education systems

- in elaborating and maintaining their national qualifications be guided by and ensure compatibility with the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA;
- involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside of higher education;
- identify a nationally agreed set of purposes for their national qualifications framework;
- ensure that their national framework link academic standards, quality assurance systems and public understanding of recognised qualifications;
- ensure that the description of each qualification within their national framework of qualifications explicitly states:
 - to which further qualification(s) that particular qualification gives access;
 - the relationship of the qualification in question to the three generic cycles of the overarching framework;
- ensure that their national framework associate the relevant transparency instruments, such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS and Europass;
- ensure that their national framework facilitate learning paths that integrate non-formal and informal learning as well as various entry and exit points.

That higher education institutions as well as students and their organisations continue to contribute as active stakeholders to the development and maintenance of national frameworks of qualifications as well as the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA.

That ENIC and NARIC Networks and individual recognition centres provide clear and adequate information on the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA as well as on national frameworks to recognition networks and centres and higher education institutions in other parts of the world.

That appropriate international bodies review current transparency instruments, such as ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, in the light of the development of qualifications frameworks.

4.12 “The social dimension of the European Higher Education Area and world-wide competition”, Paris 27-28 January 2005

The seminar was organised by the French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research in co-operation with ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe. General Rapporteur was Vera Stastna, Chair of the Council of Europe’s Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research. There were more than 180 participants from 33 European countries and 2 countries outside Europe (Australia and Argentina).

The General Rapporteur observed that the social dimension will be one of the values which would make the EHEA truly European. The social dimension includes all provisions needed for having equal access, progress and completion of higher education. Enlarging the existing gap between different parts of Europe should be avoided, and at the national level the gap between those who benefit from higher education and come back later in life and those who never make use of this possibility should be closed.

Participants agreed that:

- strengthening the social dimension of higher education is one of the conditions for making real a knowledge society, which implies increasing the number of graduates from higher education through lifelong learning;
- social and economic background should not be a barrier to access to higher education, successful completion of studies and meaningful employment after graduation;
- taking into account the social dimension of the EHEA both at the national level and the European level contributes to the creation of a coherent, balanced and competitive European Higher Education Area.

Participants recommended that:

- the process of building the European Higher Education Area prove its social dimension and set it as a priority;
- in that perspective, a specific analytical survey, built on existing initiatives and under the authority of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), focused on the social and economic situation of students, including obstacles to access and mobility and taking into account the lifelong learning objectives, should be carried out by 2007 in all the participating countries in the Bologna Process;
- decisions on financing in the European Higher Education Area take into account social cohesion objectives regarding access to higher education, living and studying conditions, financial and material support, services for students such as information, guidance and advice, and also mobility support at the European level and the national level alike;
- quality assurance mechanisms which are developing both internally and externally integrate as a must the social dimension in all aspects dealing with living and studying conditions and relate it to the multiple purposes of higher education and long-term results;
- beyond Bergen, in order to make the social dimension of the EHEA a reality, it is vital to secure the full involvement and the working together of national authorities, higher education institutions and students, which is the only guarantee for effectiveness.

4.13 “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society” Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005

270 participants from 35 countries and from partner organisations participated in this seminar, organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and the European University Association.

From the discussions in Salzburg a consensus emerged on a set of ten basic principles:

- 1 The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. At the same time it is recognised that doctoral training must increasingly meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia.
- 2 Embedding in institutional strategies and policies: universities as institutions need to assume responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral programmes and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities.

- 3 The importance of diversity: the rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe, including joint doctorates, is a strength which has to be underpinned by quality and sound practice.
- 4 Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers: should be recognised as professionals – with commensurate rights - who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.
- 5 The crucial role of supervision and assessment: in respect of individual doctoral candidates, arrangements for supervision and assessment should be based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (and where appropriate including other partners).
- 6 Achieving critical mass: doctoral programmes should seek to achieve critical mass and should draw on different types of innovative practice being introduced in universities across Europe, bearing in mind that different solutions may be appropriate to different contexts.
- 7 Duration: doctoral programmes should operate within an appropriate duration in time (three to four years full-time as a rule).
- 8 The promotion of innovative structures: to meet the challenge of interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills.
- 9 Increasing mobility: doctoral programmes should seek to offer geographical as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility and international collaboration within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners.
- 10 Ensuring appropriate funding: the development of quality doctoral programmes and the successful completion by doctoral candidates require appropriate and sustainable funding.

Participants recommended to the BFUG that the ten principles outlined above should provide the basis for the further work of the BFUG and thus feed into the drafting of the Bergen Communiqué, and that the Ministers in Bergen should then call on the EUA through its members to prepare a report to be presented to Ministers in 2007, under the responsibility of the BFUG, on the further development of these principles.

4.14 “Cooperation between accreditation committees/agencies”, Warsaw, 14-16 February 2005

58 participants from 23 countries participated in this seminar, organised by the Polish State Accreditation Committee in collaboration with the Polish Ministry of National Education and Sports. The majority of the participants were representatives from quality assurance/ accreditation agencies. Ministries, partner organisations and higher education institutions were also represented.

General Rapporteur was professor Włodzimierz Siwiński and Mieczysław W. Socha from the Polish State Accreditation Committee.

The Seminar focused on experiences in quality assurance in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Spain.

The discussions showed that there has been a major development in quality assurance and accreditation since the beginning of the Bologna Process. They also showed that the speed and direction of the development were somewhat different from country to country. There are major challenges in mutual recognition of degrees and study programs.

Participation of major stakeholders was also discussed. The discussions showed, for instance, that there were major differences concerning what would be seen as adequate student involvement. The seminar did not manage to bring the discussion on this item to any conclusion.

Although not unanimously, the seminar participants recommended that:

- 1 Mutual recognition of education and diplomas can be supported by mutual acquaintance of quality assurance systems. Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions should be encouraged.
- 2 As a necessary condition of building an agreement between participating countries of the Bologna Process, it should ensure and provide for:
 - o regular, mutual sharing of information about education and accreditation systems,
 - o mutual visits, joint training of experts,
 - o promotion of mutual mechanisms of recognition,
 - o promotion of similarities in higher education systems.
- 3 The national system of accreditation should apply for all higher education institutions established within each country. Preference should be given to accreditation committees or agencies established or recognised under the laws of the state. A higher education institution might apply for accreditation from an accreditation body from outside the country. This external quality assurance can be accepted and recognised if the external accreditation body is recognised by national authorities.

The EU Commission had reservations concerning the third recommendation, advocating that higher education institutions should have the freedom of choice of accreditation agency as long as the agency chosen is listed in the European Register of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agencies.

5 NATIONAL REPORTS 2004-2005

Leading up to the Berlin Conference in September 2003, the participating countries were asked to present country reports. It was suggested that the reports should be organised along the six action lines of the Process from the Bologna Declaration and the three from the Prague Communiqué. The reports are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>. They are different in length and contents, ranging from 1 to 33 pages. The level of detail varies, with some pitched at the level of individual institutions, while others focus on the national picture.

5.1 A common outline

The BFUG decided that National Reports should also be produced before Bergen. The National Reports offer the opportunity for the participating countries to present information which complements other data sources. The respondents were asked to give information on planned reforms as well as on what had already been accomplished. The reports should have a special focus on the challenges of the Process.

To ensure that the National Reports would have the same basic structure, it was recommended that they should be organised under a standard set of headlines. As Ministers in Berlin stressed items of special concern, transversal to the action lines, and given the need to coordinate with other tasks assigned by them, especially the stocktaking exercise, the proposed headlines for the 2005 National Reports derived mostly from the Berlin Communiqué. In order to avoid duplicated efforts, the Working Group on Stocktaking included a number of questions in the template for the National Reports.

5.2 National Reports from all participating countries

All participating countries have produced National Reports based on the prescribed common structure. As requested they contain information on planned reforms as well as on what has already been accomplished. Information relating directly to the stocktaking has been fed into the stocktaking process. The Stocktaking Report (see chapter 9) gives an overview of results in the participating countries for the three priority action lines. The National Reports give more information and can be read as complementary to the Stocktaking Report.

All National Reports are available at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>.

6 AN OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EHEA

In Berlin, Ministers encouraged participating countries to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, describing qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertook to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA.

Meeting in March 2004, the BFUG approved the establishment of a Working Group to coordinate the work on the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA. The Working Group was joined by a number of experts.

The report from the Working Group was presented in December 2004 for discussion at the Bologna Follow-up Seminar in Copenhagen in January 2005, cf. chapter 4, section 4.11. The Working Group has since revised the report and presented it to the BFUG in March 2005 for advice to the Ministerial Conference in Bergen.

The Working Group has drawn upon work done by others, especially that of the Joint Quality Initiative who formulated and further developed the “Dublin Descriptors”. It has drawn on experiences from countries that have already established qualifications frameworks for their national higher education systems, and conducted a comparative study of existing national frameworks. It has also consulted other organisations and taken into account other policy areas, including those within the Copenhagen Process and the wider Lisbon Agenda.

6.1 Conclusions

The report builds on the assumption that qualifications are primarily a matter of national concern and articulated in national qualifications frameworks, and that such national frameworks can be inter-connected through linkage to the overarching framework of the EHEA. The Working Group and its experts provide a series of recommendations and proposals regarding the framework for qualifications of the EHEA, and advice on good practice in developing national (or equivalent) frameworks.

It is recommended that:

- the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within the first cycle.
- the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points. *It is proposed that:*
 - the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each Bologna cycle.
- responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow-up Group and any successor executive structures established by the Ministers for the furtherance of the EHEA.
- all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

It is proposed that:

- *guidelines* for the range of ECTS typically associated with the completion of each cycle include:
 - Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualifications may typically include / be represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits;
 - First cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 180-240 ECTS credits;
 - Second cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle;
 - Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.

- *criteria* for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework include:
 - The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education
 - There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
 - The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS credits
 - The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent
 - The national QA system refers to the national framework of qualifications and is consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqués agreed by Ministers in the Bologna Process
 - The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
 - The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published

- each country should certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework, and that details of this self-certification be published, with the following *procedures* used for self-certification of compatibility:
 - The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework
 - The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the QA bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process
 - The self-certification shall involve international experts
 - The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out
 - The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process
 - The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently

- National frameworks shall include awards that integrate recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences.

Advice on good practice to facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications includes:

- the development and review process for producing good national frameworks are most effective when they involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside higher education. Higher education frameworks naturally link to vocational education and training and secondary education and as such are best viewed and treated as a national initiative. This

also makes possible the inclusion of, or links to, other areas of education and training outside higher education.

- a framework for higher education qualifications should identify a clear and nationally agreed set of purposes. Frameworks for higher education qualifications benefit from the inclusion of cycles and /or levels, and articulation with outcome-focused indicators and/or descriptors of qualifications. Higher education frameworks of qualifications can also benefit from being directly linked to credit accumulation and transfer systems.
- frameworks for higher education qualifications should explicitly link academic standards, national and institutional quality assurance systems, and public understanding of the place and level of nationally recognised qualifications. Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by different higher education qualifications and titles.

The report stresses the importance of national authority in the development of national frameworks, and the importance of considering the EHEA framework, the Dublin descriptors, and the guideline ranges on ECTS credits as ‘reference points’.

6.2 The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

	Outcomes	ECTS Credits
Short cycle (within the first cycle) qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the higher education short cycle (within the first cycle) are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle; • can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts; • have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; • can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; • have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy. 	Approximately 120 ECTS credits
First cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; • can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; • have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; • can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; • have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy. 	Typically include 180-240 ECTS credits

Second cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context; • can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study; • have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments; • can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously; • have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous. 	Typically include 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2 nd cycle
Third cycle qualification	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; • have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; • have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication; • are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas; • can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise; • can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society. 	Not specified

6.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Bologna Follow-up Group discussed the revised report from the Working Group in its meeting in March 2005 and after further discussions in April decided to advise Ministers that they may adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including the possibility of shorter higher education linked to the first cycle), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles.

The BFUG also advised Ministers to commit themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to have started work on this by 2007.

Furthermore, the BFUG advised Ministers to underline the importance of complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the broader European framework of qualifications for lifelong learning encompassing general education as well as vocational education and training as it is now being developed within the European Union. Ministers may ask the European Commission to consult all parties to the Bologna Process as work progresses.

7 EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers committed themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stressed the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies for quality assurance. They also stressed that the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and that this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.

Ministers agreed that by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.
- Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.
- A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.
- International participation, co-operation and networking.

At the European level, Ministers called upon ENQA through its members, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in 2005. Due account should be taken of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks.

7.1 The ENQA Report

The report from ENQA - the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - was sent to the BFUG on 21 February 2005. *The main results and recommendations of the report are:*

- There will be European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies.
- European quality assurance agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review within five years.
- There will be an emphasis on subsidiarity, with reviews being undertaken nationally where possible.
- A European register of quality assurance agencies will be established.
- A European Register Committee will act as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register.
- A European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will also be established.

When the recommendations are implemented:

- The consistency of quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will be improved by the use of agreed standards and guidelines.
- Higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies across the EHEA will be able to use common reference points for quality assurance.
- The register will make it easier to identify professional and credible agencies.
- Procedures for the recognition of qualifications will be strengthened.
- The credibility of the work of quality assurance agencies will be enhanced.
- The exchange of viewpoints and experiences among agencies and other key stakeholders (including higher education institutions, students and labour market representatives) will be enhanced through the work of the European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- The mutual trust among institutions and agencies will grow.
- The move toward mutual recognition will be assisted.

7.2 European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance:

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

3 Assessment of students:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

4 Quality assurance of teaching staff:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved in the teaching of students are qualified and competent with regard to teaching. The methods and procedures for ensuring that this is the case should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

5 Learning resources and student support:

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

6 Information systems:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

7 Public information:

Institutions should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

7.3 European standards for the external quality assurance of higher education

1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures:

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

2 Development of external quality assurance processes:

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

3 Criteria for decisions:

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

4 Processes fit for purpose:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

5 Reporting:

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to their intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

- 6 *Follow-up procedures:*
Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.
- 7 *Periodic reviews:*
External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.
- 8 *System-wide analyses:*
Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

7.4 European standards for external quality assurance agencies

- 1 *Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education:*
The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.
- 2 *Official status:*
Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
- 3 *Activities:*
Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.
- 4 *Resources:*
Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.
- 5 *Mission statement:*
Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.
- 6 *Independence:*
Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.
- 7 *External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies:*
The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:
 - a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
 - an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
 - publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
 - a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.
- 8 *Accountability procedures:*
Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

7.5 A European Register and a European Register Committee

The report proposes that a European register of quality assurance agencies should be established and that a European Register Committee should act as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register. The register will make it easier to identify professional and credible agencies, thus providing useful information to national quality assurance agencies and to institutions.

The report assumes that the European Register Committee will decide on admissions to the European Register. The proposal is to establish a light, non-bureaucratic construction with nine members nominated by ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESIB and other organisations representing employers, unions and professional organisations plus government representatives. The members are assumed to act in an individual capacity and not as mandated representatives of the nominating organisations. It is proposed that ENQA will perform secretarial duties for the committee. The European Register Committee should as one of its first implementation tasks formalise the ownership of the register. It is further suggested that the Committee will establish an independent appeals system. Legal advice should be sought by the organisations proposing to establish the European Register Committee *before* the Committee is established.

7.6 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

In its March 2005 meeting the BFUG decided to advise Ministers that the proposed standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA and the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies may be introduced and tried out on a national basis in the participating countries.

The BFUG also welcomed the establishment of a European Register of quality assurance agencies based on national review and asked ENQA to develop rules and regulations for such a register. The BFUG advised Ministers that the practicalities of implementation of the Register and the Register Committee may be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. Ministers may underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions.

8 RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

8.1 The Lisbon Recognition Convention

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers underlined the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process, and called on the ENIC and NARIC networks along with the competent national authorities to further the implementation of the Convention. They also made recognition an element of the stocktaking exercise, see chapter 9 of this report.

Main points of the Lisbon Convention are:

- Holders of qualifications issued in one country shall have adequate access to assessment of these qualifications in another country.
- No discrimination shall be made on any ground such as the applicant's gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political opinion or national, ethnic or social origin.
- Each country shall recognise qualifications from other countries as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless there are substantial differences.
- All countries shall provide information on the institutions and programmes belonging to their higher education systems.
- All countries shall appoint a national information centre, one important task of which is to offer advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications.
- All countries shall encourage their higher education institutions to issue the Diploma Supplement to their students to facilitate recognition.

The national information centres co-operate through the ENIC Network (for the relation between ENIC and NARIC, see section 12.2.1).

In most participating countries, it is the responsibility of the higher education institutions to consider the inclusion of study periods from foreign institutions as elements in their own study programmes. It follows from the Lisbon Recognition Convention that the higher education institutions should recognise courses at Bologna partner institutions on equal terms with their own. Recognition decisions should be fair, fast and transparent, as a direct result of the comparability and transparency introduced by Bologna-related reforms.

The Riga seminar on recognition in December 2004 (see chapter 4, section 4.10) recommended that at the Bergen Conference the Ministers should be urged to amend national legislation to incorporate the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and adopt effective measures to ensure their practical implementation at all appropriate levels.

By April 2005, 31 of the 40 participating countries in the Bologna Process and all five applicant countries had ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention also implies acceptance of the subsidiary texts to the Convention, such as the *Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications* and the *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*.

8.2 Recognition of joint degrees

In Berlin, Ministers agreed to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and to actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to such degrees.

The Stockholm seminar on joint degrees in May 2004 (see chapter 4, section 4.1) was a follow-up of two previous seminars related to joint degrees. It was reported in Stockholm that many higher education institutions cooperate in developing and delivering joint study programmes and joint degrees, but that few joint diplomas were awarded, as most countries had not yet made explicit legal provision for the awarding of joint degrees and joint diplomas.

In June 2004, the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region adopted a *Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees* as a subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The recommendation states that governments should review their legislation with a view to removing any legal obstacles to the recognition of joint degrees and introduce legal provisions that would facilitate such recognition. A joint degree is understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the institutions. A joint degree may be issued as

- A joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas;
- A joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma;
- One or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.

Competent recognition authorities should recognise foreign joint degrees unless they can demonstrate that there is a substantial difference between the joint degree for which recognition is sought and the comparable qualification within their own national higher education system. They should recognise these degrees with the greatest flexibility possible.

They may make recognition conditional on all parts of the study programme and/or the institutions providing the programme being subject to transparent quality assessment or being considered as belonging to the education system of one or more participating country.

In order to facilitate recognition, candidates earning joint degrees should be provided with a Diploma Supplement, and study programmes leading to joint degrees should make use of the ECTS system. The Diploma Supplement issued with a joint degree should clearly describe all parts of the degree, and it should clearly indicate the institutions and/or study programmes at which the different parts of the degree have been earned.

8.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG has advised Ministers to urge participating countries that have not already done so to ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention without delay. Ministers may commit themselves to ensuring the full implementation of its principles, and to incorporating them in national legislation as appropriate. Ministers may call on all participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the ENIC/NARIC networks. Ministers may express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA.

Higher education institutions and others should improve recognition of prior learning including non-formal and informal learning for access to and as elements in higher education programmes. The development of national and European frameworks for qualifications may be an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education.

9 THE STOCKTAKING PROJECT

9.1 Introduction

At the Berlin meeting in September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education agreed to the conduct of a stocktaking exercise, in order to establish the level of progress being made in the implementation of certain reforms within the European Higher Education Area. Specifically, the Berlin Communiqué stated:

With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process. A mid-term stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate.

Ministers charge the Follow-up Group with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005 and undertaking to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set for the next two years:

- *quality assurance*
- *two-cycle system*
- *recognition of degrees and periods of studies*

In March 2004, the Follow-Up Group agreed to the establishment of a Working Group which would undertake this task. At the outset, the Working Group was anxious to build on many existing data resources; it consulted with partners such as the EUA, ESIB and EURYDICE in order to ensure that

- 1 the benchmarks did not repeat questions they intended to raise as part of their own surveys;
- 2 they (the partners) were willing to raise the questions with their constituents as part of their surveys;
- 3 in the event of similar questions being raised, it was agreed to share the results in order to build a complete picture of the benchmark.

As part of the preparations for the Berlin ministerial meeting in 2003, EURYDICE prepared a report called “*Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*”. Building on the success of the 2003 report, EURYDICE had planned a similar report for the 2005 Bergen meeting. The Working Group requested EURYDICE to extend their review beyond the 31 countries normally covered by the EURYDICE network in order to provide a uniform analysis of the European Higher Education Area. All 40 participating countries in the Bologna Process completed EURYDICE questionnaires in the required format.

Along with the material prepared by EURYDICE, the National Reports (cf. Chapter 5) represented the main source of information for the stocktaking exercise. The National Reports offered the opportunity for members to give more discursive or qualitative commentary on progress on the priority action lines. A series of benchmarks were developed which sought to measure progress on each of the three priority action lines. Based on an interpretation of the National Reports and EURYDICE questionnaires, scores were assigned to each country.

ESIB also pursued a number of issues on behalf of the Working Group. However, the scope to use the results of their survey was limited on the basis that it only covered some 32 countries. The Council of Europe provided the source for material on the Lisbon Recognition Convention. While the EUA did not directly contribute to the stocktaking, there are many issues in the *Trends IV* report which also surface in the stocktaking report.

It is important to note that with the diverse range of material presented to the Ministers at the Bergen meeting, it is quite possible that differences in outcomes may arise. Where this arises, it should be noted that the stocktaking exercise drew on a variety of data sources, representative of a broad stakeholder community.

9.2 Considerations by the Stocktaking Working Group

The analysis indicates that overall, participating countries have made good progress in the three priority action lines, and as such, real progress is being made in the work to establish the European Higher Education Area.

9.2.1 Good progress on Quality Assurance

In Berlin, Ministers acknowledged the importance of quality assurance in the establishment of the EHEA. More than half of the participating countries have quality assurance structures in place. Critically, almost half have systems built on the criteria of the Berlin Communiqué. International participation and networking feature in many of the systems. This evidence, combined with the consensus which underpinned the work of ENQA, augurs well for continued progress in this area.

However, this progress should not mask a deficit on quality assurance, and in particular the absence of student participation in quality assurance procedures. Four levels of participation were identified – governance structures, external review teams, consultation/ involvement during external reviews and involvement in internal evaluations – and less than 14% of participating countries have involvement at all four levels. This is also borne out by the EURYDICE analysis. In material provided by ESIB to the Working Group, ESIB noted that the majority of good practices on student participation are based on the individual and voluntary effort of higher education institutions.

The *EUA Trends IV* report identified as a challenge for the future the risk that excessive emphasis on the process could actually displace the end objectives of quality assurance, being the enhancement of quality. It is important, therefore, to view progress in this area as evidence of establishment of a system – it is not evidence that the culture of quality assurance has filtered through all strands of the higher education life. The ultimate success of this objective relies on the willingness of institutions, their staff and their students to embrace systematic quality assurance as central to their respective roles in the delivery of higher education.

9.2.2 Good progress on the Two-Cycle Degree System

The adoption of the two-cycle degree system is seen as critical to the future of the EHEA, and its implementation throughout the area is well underway. Already by 2005, at least 54% of the participating countries have the system in place on a wide scale, with a further 19% having it in place in a more limited capacity. More importantly, the percentage of students covered by the two-cycle degree system is also increasing. It is safe to predict that the objectives of this action line will be achieved by 2010. Access between cycles is available for all students in 42% of the participating countries; while some minor ‘structural’ or procedural problems exist in a further 28%.

It is on the issue of access, perhaps, that some controversy exists. In line with the terminology used in the Berlin Communiqué, access was defined in terms of the ‘right to apply for admission’ – the so-called Lisbon Recognition Convention meaning. However, ESIB in their submission to the Working Group looked at access in the meaning of “admission”. Transitional difficulties, and consequently, options for students looking to escalate between cycles, were subject to factors such as the need to undertake ‘bridging courses’ when moving between the university and the ‘non-university’ sector, as well as restrictions being placed on opportunities to progress to the next

cycle, including limits on numbers, enrolment exams and selection procedures. ESIB also cite restrictions on movement between different fields of study in different cycles and finally, tuition fees. Clearly, such analysis extends the definition of access into areas which could potentially create difficulty for stakeholders in many participating countries. It also extends the impacts of the Bologna Process into other public policy domains, many of which lie outside the remit of Ministers with responsibility for higher education. Equally, it is clear that any extension of the definition of access must be done with a clear vision of the issue to be addressed. Moreover, it should be done in a manner which can be agreed within the BFUG.

The *Trends IV* report (see chapter 12, section 12.5) highlights a key objective of the emerging two-cycle degree system. On completion of the first cycle, it is acknowledged that this should have different orientations, in order to accommodate a diversity of needs including academic, individual and labour market needs. It is a matter of concern that qualifications issued by authorities that have carried out a qualifications reform in accordance with the Bologna principles have failed to secure support and suffer from a '*lack of credibility among students and employers*'.

A process of engagement must be opened with social partners, and specifically employer representative organisations, to explain the developments within the EHEA and to make them receptive to the employability of bachelor graduates. This may also serve to illustrate the need for representatives other than from academia to participate within the governance and decision-making structures of the higher education system.

9.2.3 Good progress on Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

The ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention by 31 of the participating countries signals a genuine will to recognise foreign qualifications unless there is a substantial difference. Many of the graduates of 2005 will have the Diploma Supplement issued automatically and free of charge, and to the extent that it assists mobility, this is a welcome development. The continued development of ECTS as the 'common currency' will also facilitate mobility. This progress will undoubtedly assist the implementation of other complementary policy initiatives such as EUROPASS.

However, the analysis of the Working Group did not review certain issues such as the quality of the Diploma Supplement. Again, in its contribution, ESIB noted that not all countries followed the format as recommended by the UNESCO/ Council of Europe guidelines, and thus, this detracted from the usefulness of the document issued by the higher education institutions. Similarly, *Trends IV* illustrates a number of difficulties associated with the Diploma Supplement, including demands on students' records systems, costs of translation and the substantial effort to put the technology in place.

While many of the above may be classified as 'implementation difficulties', *Trends IV* also highlights some difficulties associated with recognition, which is the purpose of tools such as the Diploma Supplement and ECTS. For example, it highlights difficulties associated with foreign degrees, including the existence of a variety of validation procedures. It was also interesting to note that despite the existence of inter-institutional learning agreements, individual professors continued to question the acceptability of qualifications. While the level of awareness is increasing, ENIC/ NARICs remain underutilised in terms of co-operation with higher education institutions. All of these issues serve to illustrate that notwithstanding progress with regard to the structural dimension of recognition, a substantial body of work remains to be undertaken to convince all stakeholders to take the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into the higher education institutions – it would seem that a disconnection exists between the aspirations

of Ministries to promote mobility and associated recognition and the exercise of academic autonomy by individual staff members.

Some of the issues identified by the Working Group, along with ESIB and the EUA, emphasise the need for progress on the emerging framework for European qualifications. The report of the Working Group for the European Qualification Framework highlights the contribution that it will play in assisting and facilitating recognition.

9.2.4 Some general considerations

Given the benchmarks developed, Ministers in Bergen can take satisfaction on three particular action lines. It is also important to note that it was not possible for this analysis to measure the scale or rate of progress, which has been dramatic, particularly in the case of late entrants to the Bologna Process. But the strength of the Bologna Process has been its voluntary and collaborative nature. Since the original declaration, an additional 11 countries have joined the Process, and it is likely that this will increase further. However, while increased membership brings richness in diversity to the Process, it emphasises the need to ensure consistency of progress – a chain is as strong as its weakest link. It would do a disservice to the vision of the Bologna Process to develop on the basis of a two- or three-tier speed model, and therefore, participating countries should be prepared to take responsibility to assist each other as we all move towards 2010. Some examples already exist, and the Council of Europe has played a strong role in assisting applicant countries. However, once in the Process, participating countries must be prepared to continue with this support through study visits, receipt of delegations etc. It is also important that a repository of information is built which would promote sharing of experiences and networking. Membership of the Bologna Process must mean more than the opportunity to visit other countries or institutions – it must serve as a catalyst of change, not only for the higher education institutions or the student, but for society in its widest context.

In the mandate given to the BFUG, Ministers requested the identification of possible corrective action where deficiencies were identified. The picture is a positive one, and while the Working Group identifies a series of recommendations, there is nothing new in them. For many countries, they formalise the acknowledged concerns which exist with any major reform process. Based on the report from the Working Group, the BFUG has recommended that action should be taken on a number of issues (see below).

9.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG discussed the preliminary report of the Stocktaking Working Group in its April 2005 meeting. The BFUG noted that substantial progress has been made in the three priority areas. It is important to ensure that progress is consistent across all participating countries, and the BFUG will advise Ministers that there is a need for greater sharing of expertise to build capacity at both institutional and government level.

The BFUG noted that the two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, with more than half of the students being enrolled in it in most countries. However, there are still some obstacles to access between cycles. Ministers may see the need for greater dialogue, involving governments, institutions and social partners, to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including posts within the public service.

The BFUG noted that almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking. However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation. Higher education institutions may enhance the quality

of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal quality assurance mechanisms and a direct correlation of these to external quality assurance.

With reference also to the recommendations regarding the follow-up of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (see chapter 8, section 8.3), Ministers are recommended to draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Some doubts were raised at the BFUG meeting concerning elements in national scorecards, and the stocktaking Working Group was asked to look into these matters. The final decisions relating to the stocktaking report were delegated to the BFUG Board. The Board underlined that the methodology of the stocktaking project can be further developed and that national scorecards should be seen as progress charts and not as absolute measures. Comparison between participating countries would have limited value. The Board also made some further recommendations based on the report from the Working Group:

- Having regard to national competences, a process of formal engagement should be initiated with employer organisations at the national level. The objective of such engagement should be to communicate the process of reform, combined with ensuring the employability of bachelor graduates. This process of engagement should also take place at the European level;
- A Working Group may be established to prepare a report on the issues associated with equitable access, and its conclusion should, if possible, recommend a series of benchmarks to measure action in this area;
- The BFUG should encourage bilateral and multilateral support mechanisms to assist participating countries in the implementation of the various action lines of the Bologna Process;
- The stocktaking process should continue to report on progress for each Ministerial Conference. The process should be resourced appropriately, and mandated to address the actions lines as approved by the BFUG.

10 FIVE NEW PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The criteria for admission of new participating countries (members) to the Bologna Process were set by the Berlin Communiqué:

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.

10.1 Procedures and requirements

As applicant countries sought guidance on the procedures and requirements for joining the Bologna Process, a document explaining the requirements and procedures was developed by the BFUG Secretariat and approved by the BFUG Board in June 2004. The document was made available to interested parties at the Bologna-Bergen web site.

The purpose of this document was to meet the objective of providing guidance in a fair and transparent manner. It also consolidated the principles and action lines of the Bologna Process into a single document. The document made it clear that although the ten action lines are the main focus of participating countries, it is equally important to observe the underlying principles of the Bologna Process. The establishment of the European Higher Education Area can only be achieved by incorporating these principles in the higher education system of each country:

- International mobility of students and staff;
- Autonomous universities;
- Student participation in the governance of higher education;
- Public responsibility for higher education;
- The social dimension of the Bologna Process (also described as a transversal action line).

Applicant states were requested to confirm their respect for these principles in their applications. Regarding the ten action lines, interested parties were referred to the BFUG Work Programme 2004-2005. The deadline for applications was set to 31 December 2004.

As all participating countries were asked to produce a national report before the Bergen Ministerial Conference, applicant countries were asked to produce a report in a similar format, with a special focus on the three intermediate priorities. Regarding procedures for application, it was made known that the decision to accept new participating countries to the Bologna Process would be taken by the next Ministerial Conference. The role of the BFUG would be to make a recommendation, having satisfied itself of the credentials and commitment of the applicants.

Interested countries were asked to send an application to the Minister responsible for higher education in the host country of the next Ministerial Conference, with a copy to the BFUG Chair. The application, signed by the (national) Minister responsible for higher education, should declare the country's commitment to pursue and implement the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process in its own system of higher education.

10.2 Applications

By the 31 December 2004 deadline, the following states had applied for participation (membership) in the Bologna Process: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and

Ukraine. All applications were in accordance with the prescribed procedure. After the deadline, Kosovo also applied.

10.2.1 Applicants party to the European Cultural Convention

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are all party to the European Cultural Convention. All five countries have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Ukraine started its preparations for joining the Bologna Process before Berlin. Considerable changes have since been made in legislation to adapt to the Bologna goals, and a number of seminars relating to the Process have been organised in cooperation with international partners, notably the Council of Europe, UNESCO-CEPES and the EUA. An international seminar in May 2004 gave strong support to the Ukrainian efforts.

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia made known their intentions to join the Bologna Process at a Council of Europe Ministerial Conference for the countries of the South Caucasus in May 2004. Since then they have been working actively to adjust their legislation to the Bologna goals, and further seminars have been/will be organised in each country in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Moldova announced its intention to join the Bologna Process in June 2004 and has since worked actively to prepare for participation, adjusting legislation in active dialogue with the national rectors' conference and organising seminars in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

For all five countries, Bologna has served as a model for reforms in their higher education systems. For all of them the Bologna Process also means a bridge to Europe. All the countries have sent reports giving the information asked for in a satisfactory manner. The necessary national framework for Bologna participation is in place.

Weak points can be found in all the applicant countries, notably old-fashioned teaching methods and possibly uneven standards due to weak national economies. Weak economies also have implications for the social dimension. Quality and quality assurance must be further developed. However, this does not differ from the situation before Berlin, where countries facing similar challenges were welcomed to the Bologna Process.

10.2.2 Applicants not party to the European Cultural Convention

Kazakhstan is not within the group of states that have ratified the European Cultural Convention. According to the criteria laid down in the Berlin Communiqué, the country is therefore not eligible for membership of the EHEA. However, as Kazakhstan is reforming its higher education system along the general lines of the Bologna Process, its interest in the Process is understandable. Organisers of Bologna Seminars may decide at their own discretion to invite representatives from Kazakhstani authorities and institutions.

International negotiations on the future status of *Kosovo* may start in 2005. In the present situation, Kosovo is not eligible for direct membership of the Bologna Process as it is not a state that has ratified the European Cultural Convention. With assistance from the Council of Europe, the EUA and other organisations, the higher education system in Kosovo has been reformed along the lines of the Bologna Process. For higher education in Kosovo, cooperation with European partners is very much needed for further development.

10.3 Considerations by the Bologna Follow-up Group

Based on the applications and reports received, the BFUG decided to advise Ministers in Bergen to welcome Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as participating countries (members) in the Bologna Process.

11 2010 AND BEYOND

Under the Luxembourg Chair, the Follow-up Group has had preliminary discussions concerning 2010 and beyond, as the vision of the European Higher Education Area is gradually becoming a reality. It can now be seen that the EHEA will be built on the following structural elements:

- Within the overarching framework for the EHEA, all participating countries will have a national framework of qualifications based on three cycles in higher education, where the levels have a double function: to prepare the student for the labour market and for further competence building. Each level builds on the preceding level, and the qualification obtained will give access to higher levels.
- All participating countries will have national quality assurance arrangements implementing an agreed set of standards and guidelines for the EHEA.
- All higher education institutions in participating countries will recognise degrees and periods of studies according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

As first laid down in the Bologna Declaration, the rationale behind the Bologna Process has been to promote lasting employability for European citizens and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system. The Prague Summit has added a further dimension by supporting the idea that higher education should be considered a public good and that it will remain a public responsibility.

The social dimension of the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for its attractiveness and competitiveness. Higher education should be equally accessible to all, and students should be able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background.

Built on these fundamental objectives the European Higher Education Area will encompass the following principles:

- Public responsibility for higher education;
- Institutional autonomy;
- Participation of students in higher education governance;
- Cooperation and trust between the participating countries and organisations.

From an EU perspective, the Bologna Process fits into the broader Lisbon agenda, including the goal that the European education and training systems should become a “world quality reference” as stated by the Barcelona summit. In areas like quality assurance, recognition of degrees and study periods and the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework the European Commission plays both a supportive and a complementary role. In other policy areas the two directives on the mobility of students and researchers promote mobility across European higher education.

However, the Bologna Process has its own identity, as can be seen from the perception of the Process outside Europe. This also means that it should be able and willing to share its discoveries and experiences with those countries in its geographical proximity that are willing to engage in quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and descriptors, or curricula for a changed degree structure. In line with the organising principle of the Bologna Process, providing this type of assistance and, in a more general way, giving information is a communal effort made by all participants. In order to make European higher education attractive in other regions of the world, it is furthermore important to support universities that encourage quality in Europe and the perception of that quality outside Europe.

11.1 The governance of the Bologna Process

The Bologna Process started off as a process of inter-governmental cooperation, the Bologna Declaration having been signed by 29 ministers of education. However, from its inception the Process has relied heavily on the participation of the academic community and student representatives. It is thus based on cooperation and trust between the partners.

Moreover, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO have taken part in the shaping and implementation of the Process. The European Commission has increasingly contributed to organising and supporting various activities and seminars through its programmes.

The Bologna Process is thus based on voluntary cooperation between different national systems overseen by the Bologna Follow-up Group, and involving a number of partners. There is no legally binding provision except for the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the arrangement being based on mutual trust. Participating countries have adapted their legislation to the principles and objectives of the Process, and higher education institutions are committed to implementing them. The European Higher Education Area consists of 40/45 individual systems.

However, developments in higher education will not stop in 2010. As the EHEA should be seen as a common framework for the time after 2010, Ministers may ask the Follow-up Group to explore appropriate arrangements needed to support the continuing development of the European Higher Education Area.

12 PARTICIPATING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

12.1 The European Commission

The Bologna process coincides with Commission policy in higher education supported through European programmes and notably Socrates-Erasmus. From an EU perspective, the Bologna process fits into the broader *Lisbon Strategy*, launched in March 2000. In March 2002 the European Council concluded that the European education and training systems should become a “*world quality reference*”. In March 2005, the Council confirmed that knowledge is at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy. A new Commission Communication “Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” of April 2005¹ will stimulate debate on how to enable universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy.

From an EU perspective, there is an obvious link between the Bologna Process and the *Copenhagen process* on enhanced European co-operation in Vocational Education and Training, launched in December 2002. The Commission has taken several initiatives to establish synergies between the two processes in important fields such as transparency of qualifications (EUROPASS), credit transfer, quality assurance and the European Qualifications Framework.

12.1.1 Quality Assurance

The Commission has actively supported the realisation of the ENQA Mandate (cf Chapter 7) and the networking activities of ENQA.

The Commission adopted in October 2004 a proposal for a Parliament and Council *Recommendation* on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education². In this proposal, the Commission suggests giving universities the freedom to choose registered agencies according to their profile and calls upon Governments to accept assessments made by such agencies as a basis for funding and licensing decisions.

The Commission supports higher education institutions building up their own internal quality assurance capacity through pilot schemes, organised by the EUA. The Commission helps setting up *quality labels* in special highly internationalised fields, such as Engineering and Chemistry. The Commission also supports pilot projects on the evaluation of *Joint Masters*, both internally (EUA) and externally (ENQA). The pilot helps institutions to introduce internal quality assurance mechanisms, improve their quality levels and being better prepared for external evaluations. It has also demonstrated the need for strong university leadership and university autonomy in developing a quality culture.

12.1.2 Towards a European Qualifications Framework

The Commission supports initiatives enhancing the comparability and compatibility of qualifications and notably the university project “Tuning Educational Structures in Europe” in which professors from 135 universities seek to describe the content of qualifications in up to 25 different subject areas in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. Templates with short descriptions of bachelor and master level competences in a first series of disciplines will be made public in springtime 2005 and will be made subject to an external validation process.

¹ COM (2005) 152 final, 20.04.2005

² COM(2004) 642 final Brussels, 12.10.2004

The Commission has supported the design of the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area against which national frameworks would articulate cf. chapter 6.

As part of its Lisbon mandate, the Commission has started work on the design of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning, taking into account of the work done in the Bologna and Copenhagen context. A Commission Consultation Document on EQF will be published in June 2005.

12.1.3 Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

The Commissions has taken several initiatives to promote ECTS, including an ECTS Label for institutions which use ECTS in all first and cycle degree programmes.

In parallel, the institutions may apply for a Diploma Supplement label. EUROPASS integrates different transparency instruments developed for vocational training and brings them together into a single European Framework for Transparency of Qualifications and Competences, which includes the Diploma Supplement, used in higher education.

The Commission continues to support the NARIC Recognition Information network of credential evaluators, cooperating closely with the parallel network of ENIC centres coordinated by the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES. The two networks have adopted an *ENIC/NARIC Charter*, outlining the Terms of Reference of a fully operational Recognition Information Centre. They have also established a list of *persistent recognition problems* to be addressed by the competent authorities.

12.1.4 Promotion of Mobility

The Commission will seek to increase mobility figures even further, based on the use of both public and private funding. The Commission supports activities aiming at mapping student and teacher mobility, eliminating obstacles to mobility and enabling the portability of national loans and grants. The proposal for a new Integrated Program for Lifelong Learning 2007-2013 (succeeding Socrates and Leonardo) aims at tripling the European mobility figures.

12.1.5 European Higher Education Area and European Research

In July 2003, the Commission adopted a Communication "Researchers in the European Research Area, One Profession, Multiple Careers"³, which recommends that doctoral programmes take into account broader needs of the labour market and integrate structured mentoring as an integral part. In March 2005, the Commission adopted the European Charter for Researchers⁴ which defines roles and responsibilities of researchers, including of doctoral candidates.

As a concrete step, the Commission has supported in 2004-2005 a pilot project examining the status of doctoral candidates, the functioning of doctoral programmes in Europe, ways to improve them and to promote pooling of resources in cross-border activities and programmes.

12.1.6 Promotion of the European Dimension in Higher Education

The Commission helps universities develop integrated study programmes through Socrates-Erasmus Curriculum Development Projects. The implementation of integrated programmes is supported through Socrates-Erasmus student and staff mobility and Intensive Programmes (like summer courses). Special support for the implementation of Joint Masters is provided as from 2004 through the programme Erasmus Mundus, with 36 joint master courses, involving 140 universities and more to come.

³ COM(2003) 436 final of 18.07.2003

⁴ COM (2005)576 final of 11.03.2005

12.1.7 Promoting the Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

The Commission will award up to 8000 scholarships to students and scholars from other continents and from Europe in the framework of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Through this programme, the Commission will also support a marketing strategy for European higher education, bringing European quality and distinctiveness higher up the attention scale of the best partners, students and scholars world-wide.

12.1.8 Stocktaking

The Commission, through the Eurydice Network, has helped undertake the stocktaking exercise (cf. chapter 9) in close cooperation with the Bologna Board and the Bologna Secretariat. The Commission also supported the EUA survey (Trends IV) and the student survey by ESIB.

12.1.9 Bologna Promotion, Seminars and Conferences

The Commission supports National Teams of Bologna Promoters, the production of Bologna information and a series of Bologna events, seminars and conferences, including the Glasgow Higher Education Convention of EUA and the Bergen Ministerial Conference.

12.2 The Council of Europe

12.2.1 Contributions to the overall process

The Council of Europe has organised or co-organised Bologna seminars on the Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research (Strasbourg, September 2004), on New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education (Warsaw, November 2004) and Improving Recognition Systems of Degrees and Periods of Studies (Riga, December 2004). Members of the Council's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR), of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC Network, and of the Council of Europe Secretariat have contributed to the Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks as well as to a number of Bologna Seminars as rapporteurs and speakers.

The CDESR has considered issues of relevance to the Bologna Process and constitutes a unique pan-European forum of both academic and government representatives.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC and NARIC Networks⁵ are the most important forums for the development of recognition policies within the European Higher Education Area. In 2004, the Convention Committee adopted the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees as a subsidiary text to the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention as well as the ENIC/NARIC Charter, while the ENIC and NARIC Networks adopted a new information strategy aimed at making it easier for learners, employers and others to obtain relevant information on recognition. The ENIC and NARIC Networks adopted the Strasbourg Statement on their contributions to the Bologna Process.

12.2.2 Building bridges to new and future members

The Council of Europe has taken on a special responsibility for building bridges between the Bologna Process and countries that have joined the Process recently or that have yet to do so. This has been done through conferences, seminars and policy advice. The events have in general included representatives of Ministries, higher education institutions (mostly through the EUA) and ESIB among international experts as well as from the host country.

⁵ The European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility is served jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO; the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres by the European Commission. The ENIC and NARIC Networks hold joint annual meetings. See <http://www.enic-naric.net>.

Such events include:

- A regional conference for the four South East European countries that acceded to the Bologna Process in 2003 (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”), held at Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg in December 2003;
- An informal conference of the Ministers of Education of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, held at Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg in December 2003;
- A regional conference on student participation for 7 countries, held at the Russian University of Peoples’ Friendship in July 2004 with participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.
- Extensive advice on legislation and higher education policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Education Unit of the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo and international experts;
- Advice on higher education legislation in Armenia;
- National conferences and seminars in countries party to the Bologna Process: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”;
- Projects on the reform of law faculties in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- National conferences and seminars in countries applying for accession to the Bologna Process in 2005: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

12.2.3 Publications

The Council of Europe Higher Education Series was launched in 2004.

The first two volumes:

1 *The University as Res Publica* (November 2004),

2 *The Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research* (April 2005),

both address key issues in the Bologna Process. Future topics will include recognition and higher education governance as well as a compilation of the Council of Europe/ UNESCO Convention and its subsidiary texts.

12.3 UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES)

12.3.1 Addressing issues relevant to the Bologna Process

UNESCO-CEPES has promoted co-operation in European higher education which contributed to the implementation of the objectives and principles of the Bologna Process, while also paying attention to the external dimension of the process. In this respect, UNESCO-CEPES has organised or co-organised seminars on *Doctoral Degrees and Qualification in the Context of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area* (Bucharest, September 2003), on *Ethical and Moral Dimensions for Higher Education and Science in Europe* (Bucharest, September 2004), and on *New Generations of Policy Documents and Laws for Higher Education: Their Thrust in the Context of the Bologna Process* (Warsaw, 4-6 November 2004). These events were based on thorough surveys, case studies and debates, and have been concluded with statements or declarations that included mobilising recommendations for new policy initiatives, as well as with informative publications that were widely distributed to those concerned. At the same time, UNESCO-CEPES has co-operated closely with various partners in the monitoring of developments specific to transnational or cross-border provision of higher education in the UNESCO Europe Region.

UNESCO-CEPES and the Council of Europe serve as Co-Secretariats of the ENIC Network, which co-operates with the NARIC Network of the European Union in addressing academic recognition matters at the European level. In this context, and also in view of the implementation of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention, appropriate recognition

policies within the European Higher Education Area have been developed. The ENIC and NARIC Networks adopted the ENIC/NARIC Charter and the Strasbourg Statement. The networks have also developed their co-operation with ENQA, and are further exploring appropriate ways for building up a stronger partnership on matters of common interest related to the implementation of the Bologna Process.

12.3.2 Support to the Countries Applying for Accession to the Bologna Process

UNESCO-CEPES promoted and assisted, together with the Council of Europe and the European University Association (EUA), the organisation of the international seminar on *Higher Education in Ukraine and the Bologna Process* (13-14 May 2004, Kiev, Ukraine). UNESCO-CEPES contributed to the elaboration of the report on the state of the Ukrainian system of higher education from the perspective of the objectives of the Bologna Process and to the elaboration of a set of recommendations with a view to the further reform of Ukrainian higher education. A monograph on Ukrainian higher education has also been published in order to provide updated information to credential evaluators and to all those interested. UNESCO-CEPES, through its representatives, has also participated in conferences or seminars and provided policy advice to other countries that have joined recently or plan to join the Bologna Process.

12.3.4 Publications and Information

UNESCO-CEPES has acted as a clearinghouse for information on issues related to higher education in general and the Bologna Process in particular, and has published monographs on certain national higher education systems, research papers, documents and studies. In this context mention should be made of:

- Monographs on *Higher Education in the Republic of Moldova* (2003), *Ukraine* (2005), *Turkey* (2005);
- Papers on Higher Education: *Quality Assessment and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions* (2004);
- Studies on Higher Education: *Doctoral Studies and Qualifications in Europe and the United States: Status and Prospects* (2004), and *Indicators for Institutional and Programme Accreditation in Higher/Tertiary Education* (2004);
- Quarterly review *Higher Education in Europe* with the following topics: *The External Dimension of the Bologna Process: Higher Education in South East Europe and the European Higher Education Area in a Global World* (Vol. 28, No. 3, 2003); *Public Relations: An Instrument for the Transformation and Development of Higher Education* (Vol. 28, No. 4, 2003); *Thematic Reflections on Higher Education* (Vol. 29, No. 1, 2004); *Entrepreneurial Studies in Higher Education* (Vol. 29, No. 2, 2004); *Brain Drain and the Academic and Intellectual Labour Market in South-East Europe* (Vol. 29, No. 3, 2004).

12.4 ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe

12.4.1 Spreading information / raising awareness

Since Berlin, ESIB's Bologna Process Committee has organised training for member unions on several occasions. For the Socrates countries, financial support has been made available by the EU Commission. Two training events have taken place and a third is planned for July 2005. Members were divided into groups according to the state of implementation of the Bologna reforms in their respective countries. The training focused on the various action lines of the Process (degree structure, recognition, quality assurance, etc.) but also on ongoing or future developments (qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes, etc). Training has also been organised in connection with events of regional networks of members (Nordic, South-Eastern Europe, Benelux, etc.) and for student representatives in countries where no national union of students exists.

A seminar will be organised in May 2005 to prepare for the Bergen Ministerial Conference and to discuss the future of the Bologna Process amongst student representatives. All members of ESIB are invited and 130 participants are expected.

Members of the Bologna Process Committee have been invited to a number of meetings organised by the member unions of ESIB. Advice has been sought, especially when member unions were involved in the process of developing higher education legislation, but also when they wanted to contribute to a better implementation of Bologna-related reforms.

In order to spread information and to keep the members and the partners up to date with ESIB activities relating to the Process, electronic newsletters have been produced. For the members, an internal newsletter is regularly produced. ESIB's partners have been informed of the activities by external newsletters, the "European Student Voice" and the "Link". The ESIB web site has continuously been updated with a number of relevant documents

12.4.2 Promoting the views of the students in Europe

As a consultative member, ESIB has taken an active part in the work of the BFUG and its Board. Policies adopted by the members of ESIB were promoted during meetings. ESIB has also contributed to the activities of various BFUG Working Groups.

ESIB produced, with the contribution of its members, the "Luxembourg Student Declaration", which outlines the students' position towards the Bergen summit.

12.4.3 ESIB participation in Bologna Follow-up Seminars

Representatives of ESIB participated and made contributions in almost all the Bologna Follow-up Seminars and co-organised two (with Slovenia on employability in October 2004 and with France on the social dimension in January 2005). In this way ESIB contributed to the deepening of the work of the BFUG and the areas related to the Bologna Process. ESIB representatives have also participated in other Bologna-related seminars.

12.4.4 Surveys

Surveys covering all action lines carried out by ESIB among its members will give a student perspective of the Bologna reforms all over Europe. The results will show the impact on the life of students around Europe but also the problems that still remain. Such surveys have also given input to the BFUG stocktaking process.

12.5 The European University Association (EUA)

12.5.1 From Graz to Glasgow: Strong Universities for Europe

Assisting members with the implementation of the Bologna Process has been a key issue for EUA during the period that has spanned the Berlin to Bergen ministerial conferences. Based upon the 2003 Graz Declaration, the EUA Action Plan 2004/2005 set the framework for EUA to explore emerging issues and develop policy on behalf of its 753 members in key areas, and to provide support to its members in the implementation of the Bologna reforms.

This work has been carried out through pilot projects and programmes, member services, studies for publication, conferences, seminars, and workshops on key Bologna Action Lines. EUA has also made a particular effort to support the integration of institutions in new Bologna participating countries.

Bologna Engagement

Since 2003, awareness of and engagement with the Bologna reforms has been raised considerably across Europe's universities through the dissemination of the report *Trends 2003: Progress towards the European Higher Education Area*. Building on the opportunity that this interest offered, EUA has worked to support universities to enhance European cooperation, and promote exchange of knowledge through its activities. EUA has also represented the academic community in the various Bologna seminars held during this period, acting as co-organisers and speakers on numerous occasions, and widely disseminated the results.

Quality

EUA's involvement with the European higher education quality theme continues on two levels. Firstly, EUA maintains active engagement with the policy debates on the development of the European dimension to quality assurance, and has contributed through the work of the E4 in preparing the ENQA report. Secondly, EUA continues striving to assist members to improve their own institutional quality enhancement processes and to develop beneficial relationships with national quality assurance agencies building on the recognition by ministers in the Berlin Communiqué of the primordial role of universities in this process. Expertise along thematic lines of internal quality processes has been developed and shared through three rounds of Quality Culture projects (involving in total over 141 higher education institutions in 38 countries) as well as in EUA's own Institutional Evaluation Programme that celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2004. In addition, a new project was launched to develop an evaluation methodology for internal quality assurance procedures of Joint Master programmes.

Research

The need to promote closer links between the EHEA and the ERA, acknowledged by Ministers of Education in Berlin, has correspondingly led to a period of heightened activity by EUA in relation to European research policy debate and to ensuring that the link between teaching and research be maintained and its implications better understood. EUA has concentrated much of its efforts in exploring the special position of universities for conducting research and training the new generation of researchers. Issues such as the structure and organisation, financing and innovative practice in doctoral programmes in European universities have been explored in EUA's Doctoral Programme Project. The results of this project were fed into the Salzburg seminar (chapter 4, section 4.13). One of EUA's three conferences in 2004, "Research Training as a Key to a Europe of Knowledge", hosted by the University of Maastricht, further considered the changing nature of researcher careers and the unique role of universities in training researchers. EUA also included analysis of these issues in the *Trends IV* report (see below) in addition to the three stocktaking priorities to which reference is made in the Berlin Communiqué.

Other projects

EUA has acted as a conduit for its members' concerns in the Bologna discussions on the development of a European Qualifications Framework, and continues to encourage good use of ECTS and coherent curriculum development in line with the Bologna structural changes and shift towards student-centred learning. Work on these issues and broader issues of institutional governance has been undertaken particularly in South-East Europe, where EUA makes a conscious effort to disseminate knowledge and experience in institutions facing specific challenges of post-Communist transition and post-conflict regeneration. South-East Europe continues to be a geographic region of specific priority in EUA's Action Plan.

Preparation of the Glasgow Convention and the Glasgow Declaration

EUA organised three conferences in the course of 2004 as preparation for the Glasgow Convention. In addition to the Maastricht conference mentioned above, these were the conference "University and Society: Engaging Stakeholders" (June 2004) at the University of Turin, focusing

on the implications for academic values of massification, globalisation and competition, and the conference “University and Society: Engaging Stakeholders” (April 2004), hosted by the Université de la Méditerranée (Aix-Marseille II), which explored the need to increase stakeholder engagement in universities. Discussions in Glasgow were based upon these conference discussions, as well as the results of EUA’s pilot projects and the findings of *Trends IV*. The participation of more than 600 universities and partners demonstrated the commitment of the academic community to making the Bologna reforms a success while at the same time allowing Europe’s university leaders to discuss the Bologna reforms in the wider debate on the role of the university in society, and to draw conclusions and make recommendations both to governments and higher education institutions for the coming period.

12.5.2 Trends IV: Assessing Implementation in Universities

The *Trends IV* report provided important input to EUA’s Glasgow Convention discussions and represents EUA’s contribution to the stocktaking process. The production of the *Trends IV* report has required a collective effort of Europe’s higher education institutions to gain information on the ways in which institutions are responding to the Bologna reforms. The findings are based on 62 institutional site visits in 29 countries and analyse progress made hitherto with the implementation of the Bologna reforms inside institutions, as well as presenting the impact of reforms on other institutional development processes. While the research findings contained in the report are qualitative in nature, and therefore do not provide statistical certainty, *Trends IV* provides an in-depth and the most up-to-date snapshot of the state of implementation of Bologna reforms in Europe’s universities.

Embracing Reform

The findings regarding attitudes to reform in universities contrast sharply with the views expressed by institutional leaders only two years ago through the *Trends III* questionnaires. General acceptance of the need for reforms seems to be widespread in universities. Indeed, many institutions have made great efforts to “internalise” the reform process, incorporating Bologna issues into their own institutional strategies and activities. In many cases, reforms are recognised as an opportunity to address problems which have long been known to exist. The overwhelming perception from the site visits is that actors in institutions are now facing and tackling the challenges of implementation with commitment and energy.

Coping with Reform

Criticism of the reforms from within universities tends not to focus on the purpose of reform – there is considerable consensus that change is needed - but rather upon the extent to which reforms are, or are not, being supported. Often implementation is being hindered by lack of the necessary institutional autonomy to make key decisions or the additional financial resources for universities to cope with such a major restructuring exercise and the new tasks which have emerged as part of the reforms. At the same time, the role of leadership within universities is also critical: wherever the leadership is providing strong and positive support to the process, allowing enough space for internal deliberation, progress is smoother.

The introduction of three cycles

Considerable progress has been made in introducing three-cycle structures across Europe, although there are still some legislative obstacles to structural reform in a few countries five years after the signing of the Bologna Declaration. Many institutions, however, have now reached the heart of the transition process. Structural change must be matched with proper redevelopment of the curricula, and often this has not been completed. Confusion sometimes exists regarding the objectives of the first cycle degree (which many mistakenly regard as a compressed version of former long-cycle programmes), and in many cases there has not been adequate time for

institutions and academics to address reforms in a comprehensive way and to benefit from the opportunities offered through restructuring of the curricula.

The impact of structural reforms

All too often, Bologna is still conceived as essentially a process of harmonising degree structures. *Trends IV* illustrates that, although much progress is being made, the process of moving towards a comprehensible three-cycle system throughout Europe is a highly complex cultural and social transformation that has set off a chain of developments with their own dynamics in different contexts. While changes to the length of studies can be described easily, measuring their significance and their impact requires much greater and more sophisticated analysis: for example, the acceptance of new first-cycle qualifications in society, the extent to which these new qualifications meet the needs of the labour market, and the implications of a pedagogical shift to student-centred learning.

Employability of first cycle graduates

In the majority of universities visited concerns were expressed about the employability of first cycle graduates. Indeed, in countries moving away from a long first cycle, many academics are not ready yet to trust fully the new first cycle qualifications, and are frequently advising their students to remain in higher education until the end of the second cycle. On the other hand, institutions in countries where the structural reforms began earlier report far fewer problems of labour market acceptance of first cycle graduates – indicating that countries experiencing difficulties are perhaps simply at an earlier stage of a normal transition. However, significant differences do exist between the disciplines. The findings also show that more public debate on the reforms is needed and suggest that public authorities are lagging behind in adapting their own career structures to accommodate new first cycle qualifications. Professional bodies – especially in regulated professions – also play an important role. The report includes both examples of areas in which professional bodies encourage new programmes, and others where there are major obstacles. Meanwhile, many institutions themselves are also still not addressing seriously the needs of local, regional, national and international employers when constructing their new study programmes.

Enhancing quality

The study's findings show that universities are increasingly aware of the importance of improving the quality of their activities, and this is expressed in a wide range of processes that go far beyond formal and obligatory responses to the requirements of external quality assurance. While the need for improved cooperation between institutions and quality assurance bodies is undisputed, *Trends IV* points to a range of other factors, including student participation, which have a very direct impact on quality improvement. Notably there is clear evidence that success in improving quality within institutions is directly correlated with the degree of institutional autonomy. Institutions which display the greatest ownership of internal quality processes are also those with the most functional autonomy.

Recognition of qualifications

Improved quality is regarded as one of the keys to more automatic recognition of qualifications across Europe. The site visits show that considerable progress in recognition is being made, but again there is a need to do more to ensure a systematic use of the commonly agreed Bologna transparency tools, in particular ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement is certainly being introduced in all the countries visited, in line with the commitment of the Berlin Communiqué, but in addition to technical problems, the challenge of providing clear information about learning outcomes remains. Meanwhile ECTS is being widely used for “student transfer”, and generally seems to work well. However, it is still often perceived as a tool to translate national systems into a European language, rather than as a central feature of curriculum design.

Thus, strengthening efforts to mainstream these European tools in institutions across Europe continues to be a priority.

The link between higher education and research

In relation to their teaching and research missions institutions and individual academics often experience a pull in different directions by the conflicting demands placed upon them. According to many academics, the necessary focus upon re-structuring curricula and the challenges of designing new study programmes and putting in place additional counselling and support for more flexible learner-centred teaching have meant that they have less time than before to devote to their research activities. This is a particular cause for concern in view of the growing awareness at European level of the need to enhance the attractiveness of research careers, and underlines the importance of linking the higher education and research agendas. There is so far little evidence that such discourse has been translated into concrete action and prioritised in universities.

Conclusions

Trends IV shows that continuous reform and innovation is already a reality - and the only serious option - at many universities, and that many factors are combining to affect the nature and success of these complex processes. If reforms are to be successful, there needs to be a much greater awareness throughout society that this current period represents a major cultural shift which is transforming long-accepted notions of higher education and that implementing the reforms in a sustainable way needs time and support. Governments must be sensitive to the fact that the goals will not be achieved simply by changing legislation. Institutions need more functional autonomy as a fundamental condition for successful reform, and accept that this implies strengthening governance structures, institutional leadership and internal management. The question of the funding of reform has to be addressed and with it the broader issues of investment in higher education as a means of meeting the demands of Europe's developing knowledge societies. After all, Europe's strength derives from the conception of higher education as a public responsibility responding to societal needs, and this requires the commitment to a long-term and sustainable public funding base.

13 THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP (BFUG)

13.1 Meetings of the BFUG

The Follow-up Group has met once under each of the successive chairmanships of Italy, Ireland and the Netherlands, and three times during the chairmanship of Luxembourg (the last meeting being held on 18 May 2005 in Bergen). Norway has been Vice-Chair in the whole period from Berlin to Bergen.

13.1.1 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Rome, 14 November 2003

- Short debriefing after the Berlin Conference
- The ENQA work plan in view of the work to be accomplished in accordance with objectives defined in the Berlin Communiqué
- The EU Commission Communication “From Berlin to Bergen, the EU contribution”
- Discussion and approval of a draft document tabled by the Chair:
 - responsibilities and composition of the Board
 - tasks of the Secretariat
 - priority issues for the work programme 2003-2005
 - deadline for submission of proposals for Bologna events
- Deadline for candidatures for General Rapporteur to the Bergen Conference
- Deadline for candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference in 2007
- Communication of the Norwegian delegation on the Bergen Ministerial Conference

13.1.2 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Dublin, 9 March 2004

- BFUG Work Programme 2003-2005
- Bologna Follow-up Seminars 2003-2005
- An Overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA
- Organisation of the Bologna Process Stocktaking 2005
- Reporting to the 2005 Ministerial Conference
- Supporting new Member Countries
- Progress report from ENQA
- Contributions from the EU Commission
 - EUROPASS
 - Report on European co-operation in quality assurance
 - Financing activities of the BFUG Work Programme
 - Promoting Bologna
- Information from partners in the Bologna Process

13.1.3 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Noordwijk, 12-13 October 2004

- ENQA project on quality assurance (status report)
- Working Group on Stocktaking (status report)
- Working Group on Overarching Qualifications Framework (status report)
- BFUG follow-up of seminars in the BFUG Work Programme
- Further Accessions to the Bologna Process: Procedures for evaluation of applications and reports from potential new members
- Invitations to the Bergen Ministerial Conference
- Programme outline for the Bergen Ministerial Conference
- A first discussion on issues for the Bergen Communiqué
- Deadline for candidatures for the following Ministerial Conference
- Contributions from BFUG members and consultative members (for information)

13.1.4 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Mondorf, 1-2 March 2005

- ENQA project on quality assurance
- Project on an Overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA
- The Stocktaking Project
- National Reports 2004-2005
- General report “From Berlin to Bergen”
 - Outline of the report
 - Bologna Follow-up Seminars
- Challenges regarding mobility
- Applications for participation in the Bologna Process
- Possible Bologna Partnership with other regions
- Criteria for new consultative members and BFUG Partners
- The Bergen Ministerial Conference
- Drafting the Bergen Communiqué
- Draft discussion document for the Bergen Conference (The EHEA beyond 2010)
- Contributions from BFUG members and consultative members (for information)

13.1.5 Meeting of the Bologna Follow-up Group in Mondorf, 12-13 April 2005

- A European Quality Assurance Register Committee
- General report “From Berlin to Bergen”
- Applications for participation in the Bologna Process
- New consultative members and BFUG Partners
- The Bergen Ministerial Conference
- Draft discussion document for the Bergen Conference (The EHEA beyond 2010)
- The Stocktaking Project
- Drafting the Bergen Communiqué
- Preliminary discussion on possible Ministerial Conferences 2007/9/10
- Procedure for election of new Board members

13.2 The Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Berlin Ministerial Conference decided that a Board chaired by the EU Presidency shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. The Board is composed of the Chair, the next host country as Vice-Chair, the preceding and the following EU Presidencies, three participating countries elected by the Follow-up Group for one year, the European Commission and, as consultative members, the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB. For the first period after Berlin, Austria, Belgium and Finland were elected Board members, and for the second period, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia.

The BFUG Board was given a more detailed mandate by the BFUG meeting in Rome on 14 November 2003. The Board shall support the BFUG in its activities and provide efficiency to the management of the Bologna Process, at the same time assuring its continuity. As such, the responsibilities of the Board consist in coordinating and monitoring the effective implementation of the Work Programme. The BFUG may also delegate to the Board to carry out tasks which it deems to be appropriate and necessary to achieve the objectives of the Bologna Process. In line with these responsibilities, the Board shall prepare matters for discussion in the BFUG. If urgent decisions have to be taken on specific issues, the Board will consult the BFUG members by e-mail before taking any decision.

The BFUG Board met on 15 November 2003 in Rome, 29 January 2004 in Oslo, 14 June 2004 in Dublin, 13 September 2004 in The Hague, 9 December 2004 in Oslo (Ask), 25 January 2005 in Brussels, 11 April 2005 in Mondorf, 26 April 2005 in Luxembourg and 18 May 2005 in Bergen.

13.3 The BFUG Secretariat

In their work between Berlin and Bergen, the Follow-up Group and the BFUG Board have been assisted by a Secretariat set up by Norway as host country of the Bergen Ministerial Conference. The Secretariat has assisted the Chair in the preparation of documents for the successive Board and BFUG meetings, and has assisted the host country in the preparations for the Bergen Conference.

All documents and reports referred to in this general report are available on the web page operated by the Secretariat at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>.

Working documents for the BFUG and the Board in the period from 2003 to 2005 have been available “Behind the Curtain” at <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/b/hind.htm>. When the Norwegian Bologna Secretariat ceases to exist on 30 June 2005, the web page will be “frozen” and will constitute the archives for the Bologna Process for the 2003-2005 period, available for all interested parties.



BOLOGNA PROCESS STOCKTAKING

REPORT FROM A WORKING GROUP APPOINTED BY THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION,
BERGEN, 19-20 MAY 2005

REPORT



UTDANNINGS- OG
FORSKNINGSDEPARTEMENTET
Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research



Education and Culture

Socrates

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Executive Summary

Context of the stocktaking report

At the Berlin Ministerial Meeting in September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for higher education requested the Bologna Follow-up Group to undertake a stocktaking exercise on the progress made in three priority action lines – *quality assurance, the two-cycle degree system and recognition of degrees and periods of study*. They also requested the group to identify corrective action where appropriate.

In March 2004, the Bologna Follow-up Group established a working group to carry out the stocktaking exercise. The working group has prepared this report for the May 2005 Ministerial Meeting in Bergen.

Findings of the stocktaking exercise: good news for the Bologna Process

This report concludes that there is good news for the countries involved in the Bologna Process: the collective and voluntary inter-governmental process is a success.

Common goals are being pursued and targets are being met by the great majority of countries. There is also good news for higher education institutions, who are working hard to implement the Bologna actions, and who can now see their achievements made visible. Finally, there is good news for students, because the Bologna Process is creating a better and more open world of learning, with enhanced mobility, transparency, transfer and recognition of qualifications.

Recommendations of the Working Group on Stocktaking

The Working Group on Stocktaking believes that additional mechanisms should be put in place to strengthen further the progress on the three action lines included in the stocktaking exercise, and makes the following five recommendations:

1. Initiate a process of formal engagement with employer organisations at national and European level
2. Establish a working group to identify the key issues associated with equitable access, and to develop possible benchmarks to measure action in this area
3. Each participating country should prepare an action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with recognition of foreign qualifications
4. Develop support mechanisms to assist participating countries in implementing the Bologna Process
5. Continue the stocktaking exercise, in collaboration with the Bologna Follow-up Group and with participating countries.

Methodology used in the stocktaking

This report presents the *Bologna Scorecard*, which the working group developed as a way of giving a “big picture” overview of progress on the three priority action lines. The scorecard is based on objective criteria and benchmarks, and it is a good way to show collective achievement of the targets set by the Ministers in Berlin. It also provides a useful set of baseline data against which progress can continue to be measured in the future. The scorecard for each country is intended as a progress chart, not as an absolute measurement. It is not designed to make comparisons between countries.

The Working Group on Stocktaking is confident that this report will assist Ministers in their deliberations in Bergen and will contribute to the further development of a collaborative model of stocktaking for the future.

Content of this report

Chapter 1 sets the context of the stocktaking exercise, and describes how the relevant stakeholders were involved in the process.

Chapter 2 explains the ten criteria and the colour-coded benchmarks that were used to determine the level of progress made by participating countries on the three priority action lines.

Chapter 3 analyses the results for each of the criteria and indicates the areas where progress has been especially strong or weak.

Chapter 4 reviews the outcomes of the stocktaking exercise, and identifies a series of recommendations that will further strengthen the implementation of the Bologna Process.

The terms of reference of the working group and a list of the data sources are included in Appendix A and Appendix B. The Annex to the report includes the scorecards for each of the participating countries.

Acknowledgements

This work was made possible as a result of financial support from the European Commission through the Socrates Programme. Thankfully, their support was not only financial, but was evident in their willingness to facilitate analysis of data from the 'non-Socrates' countries by EURYDICE. In addition, the Council of Europe generously supported the participation of representatives from Croatia and the Russian Federation in the working group meetings. The working group would like to pay particular tribute to Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter, Head of Unit, EURYDICE European Unit who not only endured 'constant adjustments' to their questionnaire at our behest, but who provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of this exercise. Similarly, the working group was fortunate to have an expert of the calibre of Cynthia Deane, whose experience and excellence guided the emergence of the objective criteria.

As chair of the Working Group on Stocktaking, I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues on the group whose contributions, energy and good humour made this innovative and challenging task feasible. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Sverre Rustad of the Secretariat in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

Finally, I would like to thank the Bologna Follow-up Group representatives from each of the participating countries who provided the material in the National Reports, which in turn forms the basis of the stocktaking report.

I am confident that the working group has produced a report which provides an objective statement of the level of progress made on the three priority action lines between Berlin and Bergen, and identifies some key issues to address as we move forward to 2010. I also believe that, while this first exercise has been a learning experience for all of us, the report provides a clear methodology for the next phase of stocktaking.

Ian McKenna
Chair, BFUG Working Group on Stocktaking

April 2005

Chapter 1

The Bologna Process and Stocktaking

Background to the stocktaking exercise

At the Berlin meeting in September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for higher education agreed that a stocktaking exercise should be conducted, to measure the progress made in implementing certain reforms within the European Higher Education Area. Specifically, the Berlin Communiqué stated:

With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process. A mid-term stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate.

Ministers charge the Follow-up Group with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005 and undertaking to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set for the next two years:

- *quality assurance*
- *two-cycle system*
- *recognition of degrees and periods of studies.*

Participating countries will, furthermore, be prepared to allow access to the necessary information for research on higher education relating to the objectives of the Bologna Process. Access to data banks on ongoing research and research results shall be facilitated.

The Working Group on Stocktaking

At its meeting in Dublin on 9 March 2004, the Bologna Follow-up Group established a Working Group on Stocktaking to undertake this task. The members of the working group were:

Ian McKenna (Ireland), Chair
Jan Levy (Norway)
Aleksa Bjeliš (Croatia)
Peter van der Hijden (EU Commission)
Germain Dondelinger (Luxembourg)
Marlies Leegwater (Netherlands)
Victor Chistokhvalov (Russia).

The working group meetings were also attended by Mirjana Polić Bobić, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Croatia; Sverre Rustad, Norwegian Secretariat, and Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter, Head of Unit, EURYDICE European Unit.

The terms of reference for the working group are included in Appendix A.

The working group met five times:

21 April 2004 – Amsterdam
15 June 2004 – Dublin
26 January 2005 – Brussels
17–18 February 2005 – Dubrovnik
30–31 March 2005 – Glasgow.

In late 2004, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research engaged an expert, Cynthia Deane, to assist the working group in undertaking the analysis which forms the basis of this report.

Methodology adopted by the working group for the stocktaking exercise

The Working Group on Stocktaking wanted to ensure that its work would draw on a number of existing data sources, so that the completion of a questionnaire would not represent too great a burden in each country. The group spent its first two meetings determining the indicators to be used in the stocktaking process. When these were established, the working group consulted with partners including the European University Association (EUA), the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) and EURYDICE to ensure that

- questions these bodies intended to raise in their surveys would not be repeated in the stocktaking;
- the partners were willing to raise the stocktaking questions with their constituents as part of their own surveys;
- where similar questions were asked, the results would be shared to build a complete picture of progress on the priority action lines.

Arising from these discussions, the working group identified the various sources of data for the stocktaking, as outlined in Appendix B.

National Reports

Along with the material prepared by EURYDICE, the National Reports represented the main source of information for the stocktaking exercise. To ensure clarity of response, a standard report template was developed, which was posted on the Bologna Process website (http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/01BFUG/040614-B/BFUGB3_6_NReports-Template.doc). The National Reports allowed members to provide discursive or qualitative commentary on their progress on the priority action lines to complement the information in the EURYDICE report.

All forty participating countries in the Bologna Process completed their National Reports in accordance with the standard format. It is important to emphasise, however, that the working group relied upon each participating country to respond accurately to the questions in the structured report format. The group had neither the remit nor the resources to validate the content of National Reports.

EURYDICE Questionnaire

As part of the preparations for the Berlin Ministerial Meeting in 2003, EURYDICE prepared a report, *Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*. The detailed and quantitative analysis in this report was acknowledged as being particularly helpful in giving a sense of the scale of reform taking place in the European Higher Education Area. Building on the success of the 2003 report, EURYDICE had planned a similar report for the 2005 Bergen meeting.

The working group requested EURYDICE to extend its review beyond the 31 countries normally covered by its network, to provide a uniform analysis of the European Higher Education Area. With the acknowledged support of the EU Commission, EURYDICE generously agreed to undertake the analysis of data for the remaining nine participating countries, by issuing similar questionnaires to the respective Bologna Follow-up Group representatives in these countries.¹ The working group, through the Secretariat, supported the representatives in their efforts to complete the material. EURYDICE has indicated that a degree of caution must be exercised with regard to the outcome of the analysis for these participating countries, given that they were not familiar with EURYDICE verification and other procedures.

All forty participating countries of the Bologna Process completed EURYDICE questionnaires in the required format.

Other data sources

The Working Group on Stocktaking drew upon the expertise and information provided by a number of other partners as appropriate. As noted in Appendix B, ESIB agreed to pursue a number of issues with its members on behalf of the working group. However, since the ESIB survey covered only 32 countries, the scope to use its results was limited. Notwithstanding this, the results of the ESIB survey were incorporated into the initial scores issued to the relevant countries as part of the review stage.

¹ Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland, and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

The Council of Europe provided the information on the Lisbon Recognition Convention. In addition the EUA, which did not directly contribute to the stocktaking exercise, raised many issues in its *Trends IV* report (prepared by the EUA for its convention in Glasgow, March 2005) which complement the findings in Chapter 3 of this report. This also applies to the general conclusions of the survey conducted by ESIB.

It is important to note that with the diverse range of material presented to the Ministers at the Bergen meeting, it is quite possible that there will be differences in outcomes or emphasis. This is to be expected given the variety of data sources and the differing perspectives represented within each report. However, the working group wishes to emphasise that such minor differences should not detract from the essential messages of this report or of any other report to the Ministerial Meeting.

Procedures used in the analysis of data

It was clear to the working group that the Ministers required an objective measurement of progress in the Bologna Process, and this represented a very real challenge for the stocktaking process. The group formed the opinion that an analysis based only on the National Reports might create an unduly optimistic picture. On the other hand, there are very few examples of the application of rigorous scoring methodologies in the area of higher education policy reform. In seeking a solution, the working group had three overriding aims:

- (a) The report must provide an **objective** basis for Ministers to judge the level of progress within the EHEA;
- (b) Members of the Bologna Follow-up Group must have the confidence that the procedures adopted are **fair** and **representative**;
- (c) The conclusions should be **independently** determined.

The working group agreed that these objectives could best be achieved by developing a scorecard as the main stocktaking instrument. This is an effective methodology for establishing a broad comparative picture according to objective criteria. The approach is based on similar models, for example the *Lisbon Scorecard* developed by the Centre for European Reform and the *balanced scorecard* approach, which combines qualitative

(National Reports) and quantitative (EURYDICE statistical material) measures and can be applied in a range of organisational contexts.

At the beginning of 2005 the working group, together with the independent expert, developed a set of criteria and benchmarks for a scorecard, which would measure progress on each of the three priority action lines. At the meeting in Dubrovnik in February 2005, this work was completed. The methodology and procedure for the stocktaking process was agreed by the Bologna Follow-up Group at its March 2005 meeting in Mondorf, Luxembourg. The scorecard criteria and benchmarks are described in Chapter 2 of this report.

Based on an interpretation of the data from the sources mentioned above, initial scores on each criterion were assigned to each country. In March 2005, the initial scorecards were issued to country representatives, who reviewed the material to ensure that the interpretation accurately reflected the national picture. Where a country sought to adjust its initial score, it was required to provide appropriate supporting material, and the expert, in consultation with the working group where necessary, assigned final scores on the basis of this material.

Chapter 2

Criteria and Benchmarks for Stocktaking

Developing the Bologna Scorecard

The focus of the stocktaking exercise was to take account of the progress on the three priority action lines at the beginning of 2005. The data gathered also provide a useful benchmark against which future trends and progress in the Bologna Process can be measured. As mentioned in the previous chapter, during the early part of 2004 the Working Group on Stocktaking drew up a list of questions for the stocktaking process, linked to the main action lines identified in the Berlin Communiqué. For each of the questions, data sources were identified, and the process of gathering data began in autumn 2004. (Appendix B includes the consolidated list of questions and the data sources.)

Elaboration of scorecard criteria

The working group reviewed each of the three actions lines, and elaborated key criteria for each one. Each criterion was further expanded on the basis of five benchmarks, which would serve to measure the extent of progress. These were subsequently colour-coded, as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Explanation of Colour Codes used in Bologna Scorecard

Green	Excellent performance
Light Green	Very good performance
Yellow	Good performance
Orange	Some progress has been made
Red	Little progress has been made yet

Criteria for *Quality Assurance*

At their meeting in Berlin, Ministers acknowledged that the quality of higher education is a central factor in the establishment of the EHEA. In particular, they stressed the need to develop mutually-shared criteria and methodologies for quality assurance.

The Berlin Communiqué continued:

They also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.

Therefore, they agree that by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved*
- Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results*
- A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures*
- International participation, co-operation and networking.*

Based on this statement, the working group established the following criteria for this action line:

1. Stage of development of quality assurance system
2. Key elements of evaluation systems
3. Level of participation of students
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking

The benchmarks for each of these criteria are shown in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Benchmarks for Quality Assurance (Criteria 1-4)

	1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	2. Key elements of evaluation systems	3. Level of participation of students	4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking
Green (5)	<p>A Quality Assurance system is in operation at national level and applies to all Higher Education*, with responsibilities of bodies and institutions clearly defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully functioning dedicated QA agency in place, OR ▪ Existing agencies have QA as part of responsibility <p>(*As defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention²)</p>	<p>The following five elements of evaluation systems listed in the Berlin Communiqué are fully implemented in all Higher Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>internal assessment</i> ▪ <i>external review</i> ▪ <i>participation of students</i> ▪ <i>publication of results</i> ▪ <i>international participation</i> 	<p>Students participate at four levels of the evaluation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the governance of national bodies for QA ▪ Within teams for external review ▪ Consultation or involvement during external reviews ▪ Involvement in internal evaluations 	<p>International participation at three levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the governance of national bodies for QA ▪ In teams for external review ▪ Membership of ENQA or other international networks
Light green (4)	<p>QA system is in operation, but it is not applied to all programmes</p>	<p>All of the above elements are in place, but are not in operation in all Higher Education</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Four of the five elements are in operation</p>	<p>Students participate at three of the four levels</p>	<p>International participation at two of the three levels</p>
Yellow (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislation or regulations prepared, awaiting implementation, OR ▪ Existing system is undergoing review/ development in accordance with Bologna action lines 	<p>Implementation of an evaluation system including two or three of these elements has begun</p>	<p>Students participate at two of the four levels</p>	<p>International participation at one of the three levels</p>
Orange (2)	<p>Preliminary planning phase</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No QA system in place yet, but initial debate and consultation has begun</p>	<p>Implementation of an evaluation system including one of these elements has begun</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Preliminary planning is in progress for implementing an evaluation system including these elements</p>	<p>Students participate at one of the four levels</p>	<p>Involvement in other forms of transnational co-operation in executing QA</p>
Red (1)	<p>No QA system in place and no plan to initiate</p>	<p>There is no evaluation system in place</p>	<p>No student involvement yet</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No clarity about structures and arrangements for student participation</p>	<p>No international participation yet</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No clarity about structures and arrangements for international participation</p>

² The Lisbon Recognition Convention defines higher education as: *all types of courses of study, training or training for research at the post-secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities of a Party as belonging to its higher education system.*

Criteria for the Two-cycle Degree System

In 2003, Ministers noted the progress made on this action line as evidence of the wide scale and comprehensive restructuring of the European higher education landscape. The Berlin Communiqué stated that:

All Ministers commit themselves to having started the implementation of the two cycle system by 2005.

Ministers also noted that the objective of this reform programme was to offer improved access for students to the second and third cycles. Specifically, Ministers stated that:

First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Against this background, the working group developed the following criteria for this action line:

5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system
6. Level of participation in two-cycle system
7. Access from the first cycle to the second cycle.

As already described above, the data for these criteria were sourced in the National Reports, and in the EURYDICE data. In addition, the ESIB survey provided some material on the third criterion, which was later validated by the countries as part of their review of the initial scorecards. The benchmarks for each of these criteria are shown in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Benchmarks for *Two-cycle Degree System* (Criteria 5-7)

	5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	7. Access from first cycle to second cycle
Green (5)	A two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a wide scale in 2005	81-100 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005	There is access* for all students to at least one second cycle programme without major transitional problems (*Access means having the right to apply for admission)
Light green (4)	A two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a limited scale in 2005 ³	51-80 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005	There is relatively smooth access for the majority of students with minor structural or procedural problems
Yellow (3)	Legislation or regulations prepared, awaiting implementation OR Existing system is undergoing review/development in accordance with Bologna action lines	25-50 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005	There are a number of first cycle programmes that do not provide access to the second cycle
Orange (2)	Preliminary planning or pilot phase is being conducted	1-24 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005	Access is limited for the majority of students because of structural or procedural obstacles
Red (1)	A two-cycle degree system is not yet in place	No students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005	There are currently no arrangements for access from the first cycle to the second cycle

³ Note: A score of *Light green(4)* on this criterion can correspond to a score of 4, 3 or 2 on the next criterion.

Criteria for Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

The Berlin Communiqué was very specific on the critical role played by various recognition instruments in the promotion of student mobility. On the Diploma Supplement, Ministers set the objective that

... every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge. It should be issued in a widely-spoken European language.

The *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* – known as the ‘Lisbon Recognition Convention’ – has provided the legal framework for the recognition of other countries’ qualifications. Ministers regarded the convention as a critical instrument for students wishing to take up mobility opportunities. The Berlin Communiqué contained the following specific commitment:

Ministers underline the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process, and call on the ENIC and NARIC networks along with the competent National Authorities to further the implementation of the Convention.

Similarly, Ministers have acknowledged the role of credit systems, and have emphasised the important role of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in this area. The Berlin communiqué stated that:

Ministers stress the important role played by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in facilitating student mobility and international curriculum development. They note that ECTS is increasingly becoming a generalised basis for the national credit systems. They encourage further progress with the goal that the ECTS becomes not only a transfer but also an accumulation system, to be applied consistently as it develops within the emerging European Higher Education Area.

The working group identified the following criteria for this action line:

8. Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement
9. Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS.

The benchmarks for these criteria are shown in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Benchmarks for Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study (Criteria 8-10)

	8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	10. Stage of implementation of ECTS
Green (5)	Every student graduating in 2005 will receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, issued in a widely-spoken European language	Convention has been signed and ratified and a national information centre (ENIC/NARIC) is in operation	ECTS credits are allocated in the majority of Higher Education programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation
Light green (4)	Every student graduating in 2005 can receive the Diploma Supplement on request and free of charge, issued in a widely spoken European language	Convention has been signed and ratified but a national information centre is not yet in operation	ECTS credits are allocated in a limited number of programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation
Yellow (3)	The Diploma Supplement will be issued to some students or in some programmes in 2005	Convention has been signed and the process of ratification has begun	A national system for credit transfer and accumulation is in place, which is compatible with ECTS OR The national credit transfer and accumulation system is being gradually integrated with ECTS
Orange (2)	There are plans to begin implementing the Diploma Supplement in 2006 OR Preliminary planning/pilot testing, or initial debate/consultation has begun	Convention has been signed but the process of ratification has not begun	A national system for credit transfer and accumulation is in place, but it is not compatible with ECTS OR There are plans for future implementation of ECTS
Red (1)	There are currently no arrangements for implementing the Diploma Supplement	The Convention has not been signed	There is currently no credit system in place and no plans to introduce it

Applying the Bologna Scorecard

The working group used the scorecard to analyse the information in both the National Reports and the EURYDICE reports. The benchmarks were applied with equal rigour to each participating country. As previously indicated, the initial scores were issued to country representatives in the Bologna Follow-up Group, who were invited to review the material in consultation with appropriate stakeholders. The working group considered this to be an important part of the stocktaking process. Not only did it ensure that the scores were valid, but it also addressed concerns that some countries had expressed about the methodology.

Thirty-four (34) countries responded to the working group, either requesting changes to their scores or verifying that the scores were correct. The expert revised scores on the basis of additional information provided, with the exception of ten (10) cases which were considered by the group. This resulted in an adjustment to the scores in seven (7) cases. In the remaining three (3) cases, the countries were advised of the reason why their scores were not changed. Table 2.5 below shows an example of how the scorecard was applied and how the “average” values were calculated.

Table 2.5: Example of Application of Bologna Scorecard

	Country A	Country B
QUALITY ASSURANCE	4.75=19/4	4.75=19/4
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	5	5
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	5	5
3. Level of participation of students	5	4
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	4	5
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	5.00	5.00
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	5	5
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	5	5
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	5	5
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	4.00=12/3	3.67= 11/3
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	4	3
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	5	5
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	3	3
TOTAL	4.58	4.47
Calculation of average score	$\frac{4.58 \sim 5}{=(4.75+5+4)/3}$ (Green)	$\frac{4.47 \sim 4}{=(4.75+5+3.67)/3}$ (Light green)

Added value of the Bologna Scorecard

The working group considers that the Bologna Scorecard adds value to the stocktaking process for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a systematic and effective framework of analysis that enables us to see the “big picture”, and to answer the question: how are we doing on these priority action lines? Secondly, it integrates quantitative and qualitative measures, with a five-point scoring system based on descriptive rubrics allowing a focused analysis of the different action lines. Thirdly, the scorecard is a good method for dealing with large amounts of material from different sources, and for taking stock of collective progress against objective criteria. Finally, it also generates baseline data that can be used to measure progress in the future.

However, the working group recognises that there are also certain risks in using such a methodology. For example it is inevitable that participating countries will compare their position relative to their neighbours or that some observers will seek to develop ‘league tables’. The working group was very conscious of this aspect, and it cannot preclude such actions. However, it urges that all should remain focused on the key objective – namely, making the EHEA a reality. Each participating country has voluntarily subscribed to this objective. The methods of implementation and the required legislative processes vary between countries. As such, the pace of implementation may differ from one country to the next. The outcome of this analysis merely reflects this.

The Working Group on Stocktaking is confident that it has made the best possible use of the available resources, both human and financial, and that the methodology adopted has brought appropriate transparency to the stocktaking process. For the future, however, the working group suggests that the stocktaking process should be integrated in parallel with the implementation of the Bologna actions, and that countries should be encouraged to use the scorecard as a self-monitoring tool.

Chapter 3

Analysis of Results

This chapter presents an overview of the scores for the three priority action lines and the ten scorecard criteria that were described in the previous chapter. An “at a glance” summary of all scores is shown on pages 40-41 below. The detailed scorecard for each country is included in the Annex.

The Bologna Process is working

Table 3.1 gives a summary of the number of countries that scored in each colour category for the three priority action lines: quality assurance, the two-cycle degree system and recognition of degrees and periods of study.⁴

Table 3.1: Summary of Average Scores for the Three Priority Action Lines

Action lines	Number of countries in each colour category				
	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Quality assurance	15	13	7	8	0
The two-cycle degree system	18	13	4	6	2
Recognition of degrees and periods of study	14	20	9	0	0
Score for all three action lines	10	19	11	3	0

⁴ While there are 40 countries, there are two separate scores for three of the countries: Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, and the United Kingdom.

The key message is that the Bologna Process is working. Almost all participating countries have embarked upon the reform process along the lines articulated by Ministers in Bologna in 1999. The great majority of countries fall within the categories of 'Excellent Performance' or 'Very Good Performance' as defined within the stocktaking exercise. In that respect, Ministers can be confident that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is beginning to take shape.

While there is a more detailed analysis of each criterion later, it is worth highlighting here the aspects of the Bologna Process where participating countries have made most progress. The following criteria recorded the highest average scores:

- Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
- Implementation of the two-cycle degree system.

It is also important to reflect on the criteria where participating countries had the lowest rate of progress:

- Participation of students in quality assurance processes
- Level of student enrolment in the two-cycle degree system
- International participation in quality assurance.

Measuring progress on *Quality Assurance*

The great majority of countries have made excellent or very good progress on developing and implementing their quality assurance systems.

The most important message is that there has been very good progress on the development of quality assurance systems. This is supported by a detailed analysis of each criterion. Table 3.2 gives a summary of the scores of the countries on the four quality assurance criteria.

Table 3.2: Summary of scores for *Quality Assurance* (Criteria 1-4)

	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Average for Quality assurance	15	13	7	8	0
Criteria 1-4	Number of countries in each colour category				
Stage of development of quality assurance system	22	6	13	2	0
Key elements of evaluation systems	18	8	9	7	1
Level of participation of students	6	9	14	7	7
Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	12	16	6	9	0

Criterion 1 - Stage of development of quality assurance system

Almost all countries have a quality assurance system in place for higher education.

In 22 countries, a Quality Assurance (QA) system is in operation at national level and is applied throughout higher education. Allied to this, there is a clear definition of the responsibilities of agencies and institutions. In these countries, there is either a fully functioning dedicated QA agency in place, or existing agencies have QA as part of their responsibility. A further 6 countries have a QA system in operation, but it is not applied to all higher education programmes.

In 13 countries, the process of development is at an advanced stage, with either legislation or regulations awaiting implementation. Equally, it is possible that the existing system is being reviewed or developed in accordance with Bologna action lines. In 2 countries, planning for the establishment of a QA system is at a preliminary stage, or initial debate and consultation on the matter has begun within the higher education system.

Based on an analysis of National Reports, it is clear that there is a range of organisational models in QA agencies. Many are entirely independent agencies, set up specifically for the purpose of managing quality assurance across all higher education institutions. Others have evolved from existing agencies, and have had their functions or mandate expanded to include quality assurance along the lines suggested in the Bologna Process. In some countries, the quality assurance agency is located within a Ministry or other Government agency with responsibility for overseeing higher education.

Most QA agencies appear to have an inclusive and representative structure, especially in the composition of their governing body. They have a range of reporting relationships, usually involving some form of liaison between the Ministry of Education and other Government Ministries, the national rectors' conference, and other non-governmental organisations.

The nature of responsibilities undertaken by QA agencies usually include those that were described in the ENQA study of 2003:

- quality Improvement/ quality assurance
- disseminating knowledge and information
- accreditation.

In introducing and implementing quality assurance systems in higher education, countries mention in their reports some of the issues they have encountered, for example stakeholder support, availability of the required resources and expertise, and the difficulty in some cases of involving international peers because of language problems.

Many countries mention membership of ENQA, or participation in its activities as an observer by non-members, as being especially helpful in establishing QA policies and practices. This emphasises the value of promoting continued networking between countries as a way of promoting good practice and the sharing of experience.

Criterion 2 - Key elements of evaluation systems

Most countries have QA systems that match the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué.

In the Berlin Communiqué, the following five elements were identified as important elements in evaluation systems:

- internal assessment
- external review
- participation of students
- publication of results
- international participation.

In 18 countries, all five elements are fully implemented in all higher education. In a further 8 countries, either all of the elements are in place but they are not yet in operation in all higher education, or four of the five elements are in operation.

In 9 countries, implementation of an evaluation system including two or three of these elements has begun, and in 7 countries, implementation of an evaluation system including one of these elements has begun, or preliminary planning is in progress for implementing an evaluation system including these elements. In just one country, there is no evaluation system in place.

Student participation is the element that is most often missing, followed by publication of reports. In many countries, the structures for student participation are not yet fully developed. This indicates the need for enhanced collaboration between student organisations and QA agencies, both at national and international levels.

A further issue emerges with regard to the publication of results – this is critical to the openness and transparency of QA systems. In some countries, there is already a very open culture of making the reports of evaluations available to the public. In other countries, universities and other higher education institutions have traditionally operated independently, without public scrutiny, so the requirement to publish QA reports will require a level of culture change.

Criterion 3 - Level of participation of students

Many countries have made some progress in involving students in quality assurance.

Notwithstanding the earlier observation on student participation, many countries have made some progress in involving students in quality assurance. However, a small number of countries have not yet begun to involve students at any level in QA.

The working group reviewed this criterion, and determined that it was possible to measure student participation at four levels:

- in the governance of national bodies for QA
- within teams for external review
- consultation or involvement during external reviews
- involvement in internal evaluations.

In 6 countries, students participate at all four levels, and in another 9 countries, they participate at three of the four levels. Fourteen (14) countries involve students at two of the four levels, and in 7 countries they participate at only one of the four levels.

In 7 countries, there is either no student involvement yet, or there is no clarity about structures and arrangements for student participation.

An analysis of the National Reports indicates that students are most likely to participate in internal reviews. Only a small number of countries have students as members of the governing bodies for QA agencies. There is a need for the recognition of students as full partners in the QA process, with the capacity to contribute a unique and valuable perspective at all stages.

Criterion 4 - Level of international participation, co-operation and networking

The level of international participation, co-operation and networking is excellent or very good in the great majority of countries.

All countries have at least begun to introduce an international dimension to their QA systems. Formal international participation in QA is possible at three levels:

- in the governance of national bodies for QA
- in external review teams
- membership of ENQA or other international networks.

Twelve (12) countries have international participation at all three levels, and 16 countries have international participation at two of the three levels. In 6 countries, there is international participation at one of the three levels. Nine (9) countries are involved in other forms of transnational co-operation in undertaking QA, for example pilot projects or informal international networks.

Only a small number of countries have international participation in the governance of national bodies for QA. In some cases, legal or statutory reasons prevent it, while language may also present an obstacle in many cases.

It is also important to note that since 2003, ENQA has been reviewing its criteria for membership, and during this time it has not processed any applications for membership. (This situation is likely to change soon with its evolution into the European Association for Quality Assurance.) However, this criterion could also be met through participation in other international networks, such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). It was acknowledged by many countries that such networking had a significant influence on the development of their QA policies and practice.

The nature of international participation in governing bodies for QA is worthy of comment. In most cases, a small number of people (usually only one or two) from another country are invited to become members of the governing body. They attend meetings, participate in policy making and perform an advisory role. A more active and meaningful form of collaboration is shown in the case of the joint agency that has been set up by the Netherlands and the Flemish Community of Belgium. In this case, the QA agency is jointly governed by the two Ministries, with full exchanges of practice at all levels of the process. This is a model which could be more fully explored by other countries, especially small countries and those that have a shared language.

Measuring progress on the *Two-cycle Degree System*

The great majority of countries have made excellent or very good progress in implementing the two-cycle system by 2005.

The target set by Ministers to have begun implementing the two-cycle degree system by 2005 has largely been met. With one exception, all participating countries have embarked on this process. In the remaining country, some experimental attempts have been made at introducing the two-cycle degree system. Table 3.3 gives a summary of the countries' scores on the criteria for the two-cycle degree system.

Table 3.3: Summary of scores for the *Two-cycle Degree System* (Criteria 5-7)

Scorecard criteria	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Average for the two-cycle degree system	18	13	4	6	2
Criteria 5-7	Number of countries in each colour category				
Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	24	9	4	5	1
Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	17	6	7	10	3
Access from first cycle to second cycle	19	12	3	7	2

Criterion 5 - Stage of implementation of two-cycle system

The two-cycle degree system is being implemented in the great majority of countries in 2005.

In 24 countries, the two-cycle degree system is being implemented in 2005 on a wide scale, while in 9 countries it is being implemented on a limited scale. Implementation in this instance should be taken to mean that countries have completed the legislative process and are introducing the two-cycle system in their higher education institutions in 2005 (i.e. either for the academic year 2004-2005 or for 2005-2006).

In 4 countries, either legislation or regulations have been prepared and are awaiting implementation, or existing degree structures are undergoing review or development in accordance with the Bologna action lines. Five (5) countries are engaged in a preliminary planning or pilot phase which will lead to the implementation of the two-cycle degree system, while only one country has not yet started work on putting the two-cycle system in place.

The level of change that was necessary to implement the two-cycle system in some countries has been considerable, while in others it was minimal. It has not been possible within this stocktaking exercise to measure the scale of effort required, and this should be borne in mind in any analysis of the results.

Some fields of study remain outside the two-cycle system in a number of countries: in particular, medicine and related fields, engineering, architecture and law.

Criterion 6 - Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system

In most countries, more than half of the students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005.

In 17 countries, 81-100 per cent of students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005, and in 6 countries, 51-80 per cent are enrolled. A further 7 countries have 25-50 per cent enrolment, and 10 countries have 1-24 per cent. In just 3 countries, no students are enrolled in the two-cycle system in 2005.

It should be noted that these figures are broad estimates based on the limited information that was available in the National Reports and in the EURYDICE summaries. While EURYDICE requested data for students enrolled in the autumn term of 2004, many countries have provided information that relates to estimated figures for 2005-2006. The scores for this criterion are therefore based on enrolments in 2005 - either for the academic year 2004-2005 or 2005-2006. Allowing for this wide definition, the fact remains that this criterion reflects the substantial progress being made with regard to the implementation of the two-cycle degree system.

Criterion 7 - Access from first cycle to second cycle

The great majority of countries have arrangements to allow access for all students to at least one second-cycle programme.

In the Berlin Communiqué, the principle of access is based on the definition in the Lisbon Recognition Convention – that is, having the right to apply for admission. In 19 countries, there is access for all students to at least one second-cycle programme without major transitional problems. In 12 countries, there is relatively smooth access for a majority of students with minor structural or procedural problems. Three (3) countries offer a number of first cycle programmes that do not provide access to the second cycle. Access to second cycle programmes is limited for the majority of students in 7 countries because of structural or procedural obstacles. In 2 countries, it is currently not possible to speak of access from the first cycle to the second cycle, as the relevant structures are not yet in place.

The scores on this criterion are based on the National Reports and on the information provided by ESIB. The National Reports provide information only on the position in principle, based on policy or legislation. The stocktaking exercise has gathered no information on the actual level of access and transfer of students from the first cycle to the second cycle.

Measuring progress on *Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study*

There is good progress in almost all countries on recognising degrees and periods of study.

Of the three priority action lines, this records most progress, reflecting primarily the number of countries that have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Table 3.4 gives a summary of the scores on the three criteria for recognition of degrees and periods of study.

Table 3.4: Summary of scores for *Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study* (Criteria 8-10)

Scorecard criteria	Green	Light green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Average for Recognition of degrees and periods of study	14	20	9	0	0
Criteria 8-10	Number of countries in each colour category				
Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	17	10	12	2	2
Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	29	5	5	1	3
Stage of implementation of ECTS	20	12	9	2	0

Criterion 8 - Stage of Implementation of Diploma Supplement

Almost all countries have introduced the Diploma Supplement in at least some programmes in 2005.

In 17 countries, every student graduating in 2005 will receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, issued in a widely-spoken European language – these conditions were identified very specifically by the Ministers in Berlin. The remaining countries are at various stages of implementation. In 10 countries, it can be issued to every student on request. In 12 countries the Diploma Supplement will be issued to some students or in some programmes in 2005. Two (2) countries either plan to begin implementing the Diploma Supplement in 2006, or have begun preliminary planning, pilot testing or initial debate and consultation about its introduction. Only 2 countries currently have no arrangements in place for implementing the Diploma Supplement.

While it is acknowledged that there are various approaches to implementing the Diploma Supplement throughout the countries participating in the Bologna Process, it should be possible for the 26 countries that do not yet meet all of the conditions outlined in the Berlin Communiqué to adjust their processes so that they will comply with these conditions in the near future.

Criterion 9 - Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention

The great majority of countries have signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention and also have a national information centre in operation.

Twenty-nine (29) countries have signed and ratified the Convention and have a national information centre (ENIC/NARIC) in operation. In a further 5 countries, the Convention has been signed and ratified but a national information centre is not yet in operation. The Convention has been signed and the process of ratification begun in 5 countries, and in one country, it has been signed but the process of ratification has not yet begun. Finally, 3 countries have not yet signed the Convention.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention is the one legal instrument specifically acknowledged within the Bologna Process, and it is clear that

all countries attach due importance to it. However, as noted in Chapter 4, it alone cannot facilitate recognition – this requires a culture change within national higher education systems.

Criterion 10 - Stage of implementation of ECTS

The great majority of countries are implementing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in at least some programmes.

In 20 countries, ECTS credits are allocated in the majority of higher education programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation, and in 12 countries ECTS credits are allocated in a limited number of programmes. In 9 countries, there is either a national system for credit transfer and accumulation that is compatible with ECTS, or the national credit transfer and accumulation system is being gradually integrated with ECTS.

Two (2) countries have either a national system for credit transfer and accumulation which is not compatible with ECTS, or they plan to implement ECTS in the future.

The pattern here is similar to the Diploma Supplement, with many countries in transition from a national credit system to ECTS. As a way of promoting further development, it might be useful to examine more closely the practice in countries which have already successfully adapted their national system to integrate it with ECTS.

Stocktaking confirms that there is good progress in the three priority action lines

The findings emerging from the detailed analysis in this chapter confirm the extent of progress being made by participating countries within the Bologna Process. This portrays a positive picture, and given that these action lines are central to the success of the process, this should come as no surprise. However, it is important that the results of this stocktaking exercise should be considered in the wider context of the various contributions to the Ministerial Meeting in Bergen. The implications of the findings for the future development of the process are discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

Bologna Scorecard Summary

Bologna Scorecard Summary

	Quality Assurance					2-cycle				Recognition				Total Score
	Development	Evaluation systems	Participation of students	International participation	Score QA	Implementation	Student enrolment	Access	Score 2-cycle	Diploma Supplement	Lisbon Rec. Convention	ECTS	Score Recognition	
Albania	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Andorra	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Orange
Austria	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Belgium (Flemish Community)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Belgium (French Community)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange
Bulgaria	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Croatia	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Cyprus	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Czech Republic	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Denmark	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Estonia	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Finland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
France	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Germany	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Greece	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
Holy See	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green
Hungary	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Iceland	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Ireland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Italy	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Latvia	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green

Bologna Scorecard Summary

	Quality Assurance					2-cycle				Recognition				Total Score
	Development	Evaluation systems	Participation of students	International participation	Score QA	Implementation	Student enrolment	Access	Score 2-cycle	Diploma Supplement	Lisbon Rec. Convention	ECTS	Score Recognition	
Liechtenstein	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Lithuania	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
Luxembourg	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Malta	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green
Netherlands	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Norway	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Poland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Portugal	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Romania	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	Red	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Russia	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Serbia and Montenegro/Serbia	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Orange
Serbia and Montenegro/Montenegro	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Slovakia	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Slovenia	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Spain	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Sweden	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Switzerland	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Turkey	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
UK - England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
UK - Scotland	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
Scores for criteria	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Good progress on achieving the targets set in Berlin

The three priority action lines that the Ministers identified in the Berlin Communiqué set tangible targets for participating countries to achieve in the two-year period before the Bergen meeting. The goals of enhancing quality, promoting reform of degree structures and improving recognition for periods of study are critical factors for the successful realisation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The very good progress made on achieving these targets as measured in this stocktaking exercise represents real commitment on the part of all participating countries to making the European Higher Education Area a reality.

Good progress on *Quality Assurance*

In Berlin, Ministers acknowledged the importance of quality assurance in the establishment of the EHEA. More than half of the participating countries have quality assurance structures in place. Critically, almost half have systems built on the elements identified in the Berlin Communiqué. It is also encouraging to note that international participation and networking feature in many of the systems. This evidence, combined with the consensus which underpinned the work of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), augurs well for the continued progress in this area.

Students are not yet fully involved

However, this progress should not mask a deficit in quality assurance, and in particular the absence of student participation in quality assurance procedures. Four levels of participation were identified – governance structures, external review teams, consultation or involvement during external reviews, and involvement in internal evaluations – and less than 14% of participating countries have involvement at all four levels. This is

also borne out by the EURYDICE analysis. In material provided by ESIB to the working group, ESIB noted that the majority of cases of good practice with regard to student participation are based on the individual and voluntary effort of higher education institutions (HEIs), and conversely, other institutions make conscious decisions not to promote student involvement. While the working group would not go as far as ESIB – after all, most quality assurance systems have at least one level of student participation – there is a need to move as quickly as possible to accommodate student representation in keeping with the principles of good practice.

Quality assurance systems must lead to real quality improvement

Finally, while good progress has been made on establishing quality assurance systems, this is just the first step. Systems or processes will drift in the absence of committed ownership. *Trends IV* identified this as a challenge for the future. There is a risk that excessive emphasis on the process could actually displace the end objective – namely, the enhancement of quality in higher education. It is important, therefore, to view progress in this area as evidence of establishment of a system – it is not evidence that the culture of quality assurance has filtered through all strands of the higher education life. The ultimate success of this objective relies on the willingness of institutions, their staff and their students to embrace systematic quality assurance as central to their respective roles in the delivery of higher education.

Good progress on the Two-Cycle Degree System

The adoption of the two-cycle degree system, with its origins in the Sorbonne Declaration, is seen as critical to the future of the EHEA, and its implementation throughout the area is well under way. Already by 2005, at least 55 per cent of countries have the system in place on a wide scale, with a further 21 per cent having it in place in a more limited capacity. More importantly, the percentage of students covered by the two-cycle degree system is also increasing. It is safe to predict that the objectives of this action line will be achieved by 2010. The stocktaking analysis also indicates that access between cycles is available for all students in 44 per cent of participating countries, while some minor structural or procedural problems exist in a further 28 per cent of countries.

Some issues identified by students

It is on the issue of access that some controversy exists. The terminology used in the Berlin Communiqué defined access in terms of the 'right to apply for admission' – the definition provided in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. However, ESIB in their submission looked at access in the meaning of "admission" and factors influencing student choice. They cited transitional difficulties for students seeking to progress between cycles, for example the need to undertake bridging courses when moving between the university and non-university sector. They also mentioned restrictions that are placed on progression to the next cycle, including limits on numbers, enrolment examinations and selection procedures. Finally, they indicated that there were restrictions on movement between different fields of study in different cycles and that tuition fees also posed a barrier.

Clearly, such an analysis extends the definition of access into areas which could potentially create difficulty for stakeholders in many participating countries. It also extends the impact of the Bologna Process into other public policy domains, some of which lie outside the remit of Ministers with responsibility for higher education. Equally, it is clear that any extension of the definition of access must be done with a clear vision of the issue to be addressed. Moreover, it should be done in a manner which can be agreed and accepted by all within the Bologna Follow-up Group.

Need for engagement of social partners

Trends IV highlighted a key objective of the emerging two-cycle degree system. It is acknowledged that the degree awarded on completion of the first cycle should have different orientations, in order to accommodate a diversity of academic, individual and labour market needs. It is a matter of concern that qualifications issued by the authorities that have undertaken a programme of qualification reform in accordance with the Bologna principles have failed to secure support and suffer from a 'lack of credibility among students and employers'. Such perceptions clearly damage the reform process, and perhaps, more importantly, create wrong impressions for those outside the EHEA. It is vital that these issues are tackled as a matter of urgency, and while institutions and governments may pursue the line proposed within *Trends IV*, this goes deeper and must

be tackled at an appropriate level. A process of engagement with social partners, specifically employer representative organisations, must be initiated, to explain the developments within the EHEA. It is in the interest of all that there should be genuine choices, including employment, available to the student on completion of the first cycle. This may also illustrate the need for broader representation within the governance and decision-making structures of the higher education system.

Good progress on *Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study*

This action line records the most successful progress of all, with the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention by the great majority of the participating countries signalling genuine attempts by all to recognise other countries' qualifications. Many of the graduates of 2005 will have the Diploma Supplement issued automatically and free of charge, and to the extent that it assists mobility, this is a welcome development. The continued development of ECTS as the 'common currency' will also facilitate mobility. This progress will undoubtedly assist the implementation of other complementary policy initiatives such as EUROPASS.

Issues in implementing recognition tools

The stocktaking analysis did not review certain issues such as the quality of the Diploma Supplement. However, in its contribution ESIB noted that not all countries followed the format as recommended by the UNESCO/ Council of Europe guidelines, and this detracted from the usefulness of the document issued by the HEIs. Similarly, *Trends IV* illustrates a number of difficulties associated with the Diploma Supplement, including demands on student records systems, costs of translation and the substantial effort required to put in place the technology, such as software applications.

While many of the above may be classified as implementation difficulties, *Trends IV* highlights some difficulties associated with recognition, which is the purpose of tools such as the Diploma Supplement and ECTS. For example, a variety of validation procedures exist. It is also interesting to note that despite inter-institutional learning agreements, some individual academics continue to question the acceptability of qualifications awarded

by other institutions. While the level of awareness is increasing, ENIC/NARICs remain under-utilised in terms of co-operation with HEIs. All of these issues serve to illustrate that, notwithstanding progress on the structural dimension of recognition, more work needs to be done to convince all stakeholders to take the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into the HEIs: it seems that there is a gap between the aspirations of Ministries to promote mobility and recognition and the exercise of academic autonomy by individual staff members.

Some of the issues identified by the Working Group on Stocktaking, ESIB and the EUA emphasise the need for progress to be made on the emerging European Qualifications Framework. The report of the Working Group on the European Qualifications Framework highlights the contribution that the framework will make in assisting and facilitating recognition.

Good progress overall, but....

Halfway towards 2010, the colour of overall progress for participating countries is 'light green'. This means that given the benchmarks developed, the Ministers in Bergen can be satisfied with progress on the three priority action lines. It is important to note however, that it was not possible to make a comparative analysis of progress over time, which has been dramatic, particularly in the case of late entrants to the Bologna Process. The working group also emphasises that even those countries in the 'green' category still have some work to do.

The strength of the Bologna Process has been its voluntary and collaborative nature. Since the original declaration, an additional eleven countries have joined the Process, and it is likely that this will increase further. However, while increased membership brings a richness in diversity to the Process, it emphasises the need to ensure consistency of progress – a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It would do a disservice to the vision of the Bologna Process to develop on the basis of a two- or three-speed model, and therefore, members should be prepared to take responsibility to assist each other as we all move towards 2010. Some examples already exist, and the Council of Europe has played a strong role in applicant countries, such as Ukraine and Georgia. This support is also evident with other countries in the Bologna Process. However, all participating countries have responsibilities in this area, and it is vital that

new members, as well as those engaged in complex and major reform processes, are supported. This may take the form of study visits or receipt of delegations, for example. It is also important that a repository of information is built to promote sharing of experiences and networking. Membership of the Bologna Process must mean more than the opportunity to visit other countries or institutions – it must serve as a catalyst for change, not only for the HEI or the student, but for society in its widest context.

Good progress, but will it be sustained?

This is the first time that the Bologna Follow-up Group has ever objectively measured progress – prior to this, it relied on national reports as the means of assessing the current situation. In Ireland, there is a story of a lost visitor trying to find his way to his final destination, only to be told by the local villager that “if I were going there, I would not start here!” The journey of the Working Group on Stocktaking is similar. The work presented in this report should serve as an incentive to increase the level of sophistication of future exercises. In the first instance, it is the firm recommendation of the working group that this exercise should be repeated, with the data already collated serving as the basis for measuring future progress. However, it should not be an exercise of climbing the scale or changing the colour. If that becomes the case, the exercise loses validity and is reduced to the level of language and nuance rather than action.

It is also important that attention be given to developing benchmarks for the other action lines of the Bologna Process – after all, the three that we have measured represent only a third of the action lines. The next exercise needs to probe further the implications of the issues identified in this report, along with an analysis of other action lines.

Good progress, but what can we do to increase impact?

In the mandate given to the Bologna Follow-up Group, Ministers requested the identification of possible corrective action where deficiencies were identified. The picture is a positive one, and while the working group identifies a series of recommendations, there is nothing new in them. For many participating countries, the observations in this

report reflect the acknowledged concerns that exist in any major reform process. The Working Group on Stocktaking puts forward five recommendations for action, with a view to a report being prepared for the next meeting of Ministers in 2007.

Recommendation 1

Initiate formal engagement with employer organisations

While many governance structures in HEIs provide for representation of employer or business interests, it is clear that there is a need to communicate the objectives of the various cycles to a wider audience of employers. If the qualifications on completion of the first cycle do not lead to the prospect of employment for the graduate, then the reform process is not worthwhile.

The Working Group on Stocktaking recommends that, having regard to national competences, a process of formal engagement should be initiated with employer organisations at national level. The objective of such engagement should be to communicate the process of reform, combined with ensuring the employability of the bachelor graduate. This process of engagement should also take place at the level of the Bologna Follow-up Group.

Recommendation 2

Establish a working group on equitable access

While the Lisbon Recognition Convention provides a definition of access which can easily be incorporated within a legislative framework, it is clear that access means different things to different people. This debate will continue, and the issue may cause controversy within the Bologna Process. Equally, it is important to have clarity on precisely what is being measured.

The Working Group on Stocktaking recommends that a working group should be established to prepare a report on the issues associated with equitable access, and its conclusions should, if possible, recommend a series of benchmarks to measure action in this area.

While the composition of the working group is a matter for the Bologna Follow-up Group, it is important to have representatives of the EUA, EURASHE, ESIB, the EU Commission and the Council of Europe, along with a number of participating countries.

Recommendation 3

Promote action on recognition of foreign qualifications

Ministers have repeatedly committed themselves to increasing the mobility of students. The recognition of qualifications is a key factor in achieving this goal. The Working Group on Stocktaking notes that a large number of participating countries have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. However, as reported in *Trends IV*, implementation is critical to achieve the smooth operation of recognition processes. It is clear that decisive action in this area can only be effected where all stakeholders are committed to the objective.

The Working Group on Stocktaking recommends that each participating country should prepare an action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

This plan, which should form part of the country's National Report for the next Ministerial Meeting in 2007, should detail the processes in place in HEIs, along with the identification of key measures to improve the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Recommendation 4

Develop support structures for the Bologna Process

It is evident that a substantial level of reform has been required in some countries to achieve the objectives of the Bologna Process. It was not possible for the stocktaking exercise to measure the scale of such effort. Yet, we must ensure that all of the participating countries reach 2010 with a consistent level of progress across all the action lines. This requires providing increased support to the newer members and to countries that are undertaking an extensive reform process. The need for such support is

likely to increase as new instruments, such as national frameworks, are introduced.

The Working Group on Stocktaking recommends that the Bologna Follow-up Group should encourage bilateral and multilateral support mechanisms to assist participating countries in the implementation of the various action lines of the Bologna Process.

Recommendation 5

Continue the stocktaking exercise

This stocktaking exercise has been enlightening for all who were involved, and while the approach may have generated certain concerns, the outcome has identified a number of issues that would not necessarily have emerged from a 'free-form' National Report. Within the limits of the resources available, it has laid the foundation for future exercises, and with further development it will undoubtedly assist Ministers in achieving the Bologna goals.

The working group would like to point out that the focus on the three priority action lines may to some extent distract the participating countries from the remaining and equally important action lines of the Bologna Process.

The Working Group on Stocktaking recommends that the stocktaking process should continue to report on progress for each Ministerial Conference. The process should be resourced appropriately, and mandated to address the action lines as approved by the Bologna Follow-up Group.

Conclusion: Realising the Bologna Vision

The Bologna Declaration stated that

A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth, and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.

The millennium is now with us, and these aspirations remain as real as they did when they were first expressed in June 1999. This stocktaking exercise is a contribution to realising the Bologna vision, and with the above recommendations, it can assist in moving the Process forward in the coming years.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference for the Stocktaking

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BFUG WORKING GROUP ON STOCKTAKING

INTRODUCTION

In Berlin, 19th September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education stated:

" With a view to the goals set for 2010, it is expected that measures will be introduced to take stock of progress achieved in the Bologna Process. A mid-term stocktaking exercise would provide reliable information on how the Process is actually advancing and would offer the possibility to take corrective measures, if appropriate.

Ministers charge the Follow-up Group with organising a stocktaking process in time for their summit in 2005 and undertaking to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set for the next two years:

- *quality assurance*
- *two-cycle system*
- *recognition of degrees and periods of studies*

Participating countries will, furthermore, be prepared to allow access to the necessary information for research on higher education relating to the objectives of the Bologna Process. Access to data banks on ongoing research and research results shall be facilitated."

BFUG RESPONSE

The Secretariat developed a working paper on the stocktaking process, which was submitted as a draft to the BFUG Board meeting in Oslo in January 2004. The Board approved the thrust of the draft paper, which subsequently formed the basis of the document submitted to the BFUG meeting in Dublin in March 2004. The issues were progressed by an interim group, which comprised of the Chair, and Vice-Chair of BFUG and representatives from the EU Commission and EUA. The Secretariat supported this group.

This group charged with the responsibility of identifying data sources and scoping the stocktaking exercise. It identified a number of key documents and processes central to the stocktaking exercise, which are conducted by organisations such as EURYDICE, EUA, ESIB, ENQA and ENIC/ NARIC. It is important that the Working Group can work with these groups in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Notwithstanding approval of the terms of reference, the BFUG meeting of 9th March 2004 approved the establishment of a Working Group, to coordinate the work on the stocktaking. Its decision was:

Decision:

The BFUG takes responsibility for the conduct of the stocktaking exercise. Detailed reports will be prepared on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities set in the three priority areas defined for the period 2003-2005: quality assurance, the two-cycle degree system and recognition of degrees and periods of study.

The BFUG appoints the following members to a working group to carry out the stocktaking and report back to the BFUG:

*Ian McKenna, Ireland
Marlies Leegwater, Netherlands
Germain Dondelinger, Luxembourg
Jan Levy, Norway
Aleksa Bjeliš, Croatia
Victor Chistokhvalov, Russia
Peter van der Hijden, EU Commission*

The Working Group is asked to report on progress to the BFUG meeting in October 2004, and to prepare its final report in time for the BFUG meeting in March 2005. The final report should describe the progress of the Bologna Process by January 2005.

The Working Group will draw on expertise as appropriate, and will be assisted in its task by the BFUG Secretariat. (In this regard, it is important that the members of the BFUG undertake to give the Working Group access to all relevant national information resources as specified in the Berlin Communiqué).

The report of the Working Group will form the basis for a report by the Bologna Follow-up Group to the Ministerial Conference in Bergen in 2005. In line with previous conferences, the consultative members may present their own reports to the conference.

The Working Group will take as its starting point Document BFUG2 6 with the modifications agreed on in the meeting.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

In order to realise the objectives set by the Ministers, the Working Group shall:

1. Identify the key measurements to be part of the stocktaking exercise
2. Collaborate with partner and other organisations in order to maximise use of data sources;
3. Define, where appropriate, the structure of separate questionnaire to be used in the stocktaking should this be required;
4. Prepare a structure for the national contributions to the stocktaking to be submitted by member States;
5. Prepare a report for approval by the BFUG in advance of the Bergen Conference

The Working Group will be supported in its task by the Secretariat, and shall draw on expertise as it considers appropriate.

The Group will submit reports to the BFUG, and shall have its working papers accessible for all BFUG members on the web.

Ian McKenna
Chair, BFUG

26th April 2004

Appendix 2

Consolidated List of Questions

BOLOGNA PROCESS STOCKTAKING – CONSOLIDATED LIST OF QUESTIONS

The questions are grouped according to the three priority areas defined by Ministers in Berlin as the focus for the stocktaking. A brief introductory text is provided for each heading to place the questions in context. References to the goals set in the Berlin Communiqué are given in italics. For each question the relevant data source is indicated.

1. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European higher education area. Ministers commit themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level.
(Berlin Communiqué)

Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance is defined as an objective in the Bologna Declaration. The primary responsibility for quality assurance rests with the higher education institutions themselves. As stated in the Prague Communiqué, quality assurance systems play a vital role in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. Cooperation between quality assurance agencies and the proposed development of agreed standards, procedures and guidelines will increase transparency and build trust across national borders and thus facilitate student mobility and recognition of qualifications, which is essential to the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education.

<i>National quality assurance systems should include a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.</i>	Data source
1. Does the country have a national quality assurance system? Is the system based in law?	EURYDICE
2. Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.	National reports
<hr/>	
<i>National quality assurance systems should include evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.</i>	
3a. Does the national system include evaluation of programmes ?	EURYDICE
3b. If so, do evaluations include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - internal assessment? - external review? - participation of students? - publication of results? - involvement of international peers? 	EURYDICE

4a. Does the national system include evaluation of <i>institutions</i> ?	EURYDICE
4b. If so, do evaluations include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - internal assessment? - external review? - participation of students? - publication of results? - involvement of international peers? 	EURYDICE
5. At what level(s) do students participate in evaluation processes?	ESIB survey
6. Is there a national system for following up the evaluations?	EURYDICE
<i>National quality assurance systems should include a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.</i>	
7. Describe the system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, if any.	National reports
<i>National quality assurance systems should include international participation, co-operation and networking.</i>	
8. Are international peers included in the governing board(s) of the quality assurance agency(ies)?	National reports
9. What are the main networks of which the national quality assurance agency(ies) is a member?	Secretariat*

2. THE TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM

Harmonisation of degree structures is a central element in making European higher education systems more compatible, comparable and transparent and thus in promoting the ultimate goals of mobility, employability and attractiveness. In the Bologna Declaration adoption of a degree system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, was therefore defined as one of six action lines (later expanded to ten).

<i>Implementation of the two-cycle system should have begun by 2005 in all member states.</i>	Data source
10. Is a two-cycle degree system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in place? - being implemented? - on the point of being implemented? (with relevant dates) 	EURYDICE
11. To what extent is the implementation of the two-cycle system applicable to ISCED 5a and ISCED 5b?	EURYDICE
12. Are two-cycle degrees optional or obligatory for the institutions?	EURYDICE
13. What is the proportion of students in higher education enrolled in two-cycle programmes vis-à-vis programmes that do not conform to	EURYDICE

* On the basis of information from web sites, reports, etc.

the two-cycle model? Figures should be for the autumn term of 2004, with the census date specified.	
14a. Do first cycle degrees exist which do not give access to second cycle programmes?*	EURYDICE
14b. Do second cycle degrees exist which do not give access to third cycle studies?*	EURYDICE
15. Do students experience transitional problems between the different cycles?	ESIB survey

3. RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY

Recognition of degrees and periods of study including the possibility of credit transfer is a prerequisite for student mobility, the development of integrated study programmes leading to joint degrees and thus promotion of the European dimension in higher education. Recognition of degrees is also a prerequisite for employability. Several transparency tools have been developed at the European level to facilitate recognition, including the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement. In the Berlin Communiqué, the Ministers “encourage further progress with the goal that ECTS becomes not only a transfer but also an accumulation system, to be applied consistently as it develops within the emerging European Higher Education Area”. They further “underline the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process.”

<i>Every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, issued in a widely spoken European language.</i>	Data source
16. Will all students graduating as from 2005 receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, issued in a widely spoken European language?	EURYDICE
17. Are students experiencing problems in relation to the DS?	ESIB survey

* Needless to say, a bachelor’s degree in one subject does not give access to a master’s programme in another, nor a master’s degree to a doctoral programme. The question therefore applies to programmes *in the same field*. “Access” is to be understood in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, i.e. “The right of qualified candidates to apply and to be considered for admission to higher education.” It does not, of course, imply any automatic right to admission. In countries with binary systems of institutions it is of particular interest to know whether a degree from one type of institution *precludes* admission to another, e.g. if candidates with a bachelor’s degree from a college or polytechnic are ineligible to apply for a master’s programme at a university.

<i>The Lisbon Recognition Convention should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process.</i>	
18. Has the Convention been ratified?	Council of Europe
19. If not, what is the time schedule for ratification?	Council of Europe
20. Has a national information centre, as prescribed in Article IX.2 of the Convention, been established?	Council of Europe
<i>A system based on ECTS should be in use for credit transfer and accumulation.*</i>	
21. Has a credit transfer system based on ECTS been implemented by national regulation?	EURYDICE
22. If not, what is the time schedule for implementation?	EURYDICE
23. Is the system also used for credit accumulation?	EURYDICE

* No standard definitions exist for credit transfer and credit accumulation. In the report from Phase 1 of the *Tuning* project (see <http://www.relint.deusto.es/TUNINGProject/>), the difference between the two is explained as follows (excerpt):

ECTS was originally tested and perfected as a **transfer** system in order to make it possible for Universities in different European countries to describe the amount of academic work necessary to complete each of their course units and hence to facilitate recognition of students' work performed abroad.... Credits were allocated, for the purpose of transparency in description, to each assessed (i.e. marked or graded) activity on the basis of a judgement as to the proportion it represented of the complete year's workload. Hence credits were allocated on a **relative** basis....

In several countries ECTS or analogous national systems are used as official **accumulation** systems. This means that entire courses of study leading to recognised qualifications are described using ECTS credits. The basis for allocation of credits is the official length of the study programme: for example the total workload necessary to obtain a first cycle degree lasting officially three or four years is expressed as 180 or 240 credits. The single course units which must be taken to obtain the degree each can be described in terms of workload and hence of credits. Credits are only obtained when the course unit or other activity has been successfully completed and assessed (i.e. marked or graded)....

When ECTS or analogous credit systems become official, credits receive **absolute** and no longer relative value. That is to say, credits are no longer calculated on an *ad hoc* proportional basis, but on the basis of officially recognised criteria. We should note that national credit accumulation systems based on ECTS principles allow not only national transfer, evaluation and recognition of work performed but also international transfer....

Annex

Country Scorecards

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Albania	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Albania joined the Bologna Process in 2003. In the same year, the act on higher education was amended to pave the way for a two-cycle degree structure. The new structure has been introduced in some study programmes, with the intention to extend it to all fields (with a few exceptions) by the academic year 2005-2006. In electrical engineering and agricultural studies, the two-cycle structure has existed since 2001/2002 as a result of cooperation between Albania and Italy.

A national quality assurance agency was established in 1999, and a number of programmes have been evaluated. All higher education institutions have to be accredited within a four-year period. Following a national seminar on the introduction of the Diploma Supplement in 2004, practical steps for the implementation of the supplement have begun in the academic year 2004/2005. Transcripts of records accompanying qualifications from all study programmes will indicate both national credits and ECTS from the end of this academic year.

The above-mentioned reforms have been accompanied by a considerable increase in the state investment in higher education, with a corresponding rise in student numbers.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Andorra	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Andorra joined the Bologna Process in 2003. It so far has no national quality assurance agency, but the question is under consideration. Some of the studies of the Universitat d'Andorra have been reviewed by the Spanish quality assurance agency located in Catalonia, AQU. Legislation establishing a Bologna-type degree structure is in preparation. At present the offer of second-cycle degrees is limited, but some are offered by e-learning. Andorra is not party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and only official degrees from France, Spain, Portugal and Quebec are recognised on the basis of legislation (France and Spain) or bilateral conventions (Portugal and Quebec). ECTS and the Diploma Supplement are in use from the academic year 2004/2005, and the latter can be issued in Spanish, French, Portuguese and English in addition to Catalan, which is the standard language.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Austria	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Austria was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Around 85% of students in the country are enrolled at public universities, which are not required by law to undergo accreditation at institutional or programme level. However, measures for quality assurance will be specified in the performance agreements concluded between the universities and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Universities of applied science (Fachhochschulen) are accredited by the FH Council, and private universities by the Accreditation Council, both on a five-year basis. The Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA) is responsible for the development of standards and procedures for quality assurance and coordination of evaluation procedures. Students are usually involved in internal quality assurance processes, and are represented on the management board and general assembly of AQA.

The two-cycle degree system is being gradually introduced (since 1999). Medicine and higher secondary-school teaching programmes are exempted by law and may only be offered as "old-style" diploma studies. Around 10% of university students and 3% of Fachhochschule students were in two-cycle programmes in the academic year 2003/2004, as well as the students at the private universities.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Belgium (Flemish Community)	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Belgium was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. The Higher Education Act adopted in 2003 for the Flemish Community distinguishes between professionally-oriented bachelor's degrees obtained in non-university higher education institutions and university bachelor's and master's degrees. Holders of professionally-oriented bachelor's degrees may have access to master's programmes through bridging courses.

The Flemish Community introduced both Diploma Supplements and a credit system based on ECTS in the first half of the 1990s. Belgium signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention in March 2005, and the ratification process has been set in motion.

An interesting feature of the Flemish system is the close cooperation with the Netherlands both in the form of a joint accreditation agency (NVAO) and a transnational university (transnationale Universiteit Limburg).

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Belgium (French Community)	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Higher education in the French Community of Belgium is currently undergoing major changes following the adoption of a new decree in March 2004, complemented by other statutory provisions. From the academic year 2004/2005, all first-year students follow two-cycle degree programmes. ECTS credits are awarded for all programmes (but so far used for credit transfer only), and the Diploma Supplement has been adopted for general use and made compulsory.

An Agency for Higher Education Quality Evaluation has been operational since January 2004. The Agency is chaired by the Director General responsible for higher education in the Ministry of the French Community. There is no accreditation system in the strict sense of the word, but only institutions that comply with the relevant regulations may be recognised by the French Community, which fixes the list of diplomas that can be offered by decree. The establishment of new programmes thus requires a modification of the law.

Belgium signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention in March 2005.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Bosnia and Herzegovina	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Bologna Process in 2003. Immediately following the Berlin Ministerial Conference, a draft Framework Law on Higher Education was prepared laying the basis for implementation of "Bologna" reforms in the country, such as the two-cycle degree system, establishment of a quality assurance agency/ENIC/NARIC and implementation of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. The law has yet to be adopted. In the meantime a Bologna handbook has been prepared and widely distributed, and a national seminar involving all major stakeholders is being planned.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Bulgaria	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Bulgaria was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Amendments made to the Law on Higher Education in 2004 introduced a number of reforms in Bulgarian higher education, modifying the already existing three-cycle degree system and introducing the Diploma Supplement and ECTS on a legal basis. At the same time changes were introduced to the system of quality assurance, with institutional accreditation now explicitly linked to evaluation of the effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes and structures, rather than just compliance with state requirements. All higher education institutions are accredited on a cyclical basis by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Croatia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Croatia joined the Bologna Process in 2001. The country is currently implementing a major reform that will bring its higher education system in line with Bologna principles and objectives. The Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, passed in 2003 and further amended in 2004, establishes the three-cycle degree system as the national standard, introduces a number of changes aimed at strengthening the quality assurance system, makes ECTS obligatory for all higher education institutions and makes provisions for the Diploma Supplement. Many of the changes will take effect from the academic year 2005/2006. A lot of activity is going on at the national level, with wide stakeholder involvement, in order to provide information about the Bologna Process and support the implementation of the reform.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Cyprus	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Cyprus joined the Bologna Process in 2001. The country currently has one university, the University of Cyprus. Legislation is in preparation to establish two more public universities, the Technological University of Cyprus and the Open University of Cyprus, and furthermore to enable private institutions of higher and tertiary education to be upgraded to university level. More than 50% of the Cypriot student population study abroad, and the country also has a relatively large number of incoming foreign students.

The existing quality assurance agency, the Council of Educational Evaluation-Accreditation covers only private institutions of tertiary education. The establishment of a national quality assurance agency covering all higher education is being prepared. Proposed amendments to the legislation regulating higher education will make ECTS and the Diploma Supplement obligatory for all higher education institutions and programmes.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Czech Republic	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

The Czech Republic was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. It passed the law laying the basis for Bologna-related reforms already in 1998, with amendments in 2001. Since then the two-cycle degree structure has been gradually introduced and the new study programmes accredited. Traditional long master's programmes still exist, but no new students are admitted. The percentage of students in two-cycle programmes will thus continue to increase.

All study programmes are subject to accreditation. The national quality assurance agency, the Accreditation Commission, carries out external evaluations as the basis for accreditation. The evaluations also serve the purpose of quality improvement through feedback to the institutions. With regard to recognition, ECTS is not laid down in law, but all public higher education institutions have ECTS or ECTS-compatible credit systems. The Diploma Supplement was issued on request until 2004, but will be issued automatically to all students from 2005. The institution will decide on the language, but a bilingual Diploma Supplement is strongly recommended.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Denmark	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Denmark was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. It had already introduced a two-cycle degree structure from the end of the 1980s, and legislation adopted in 2003 and 2004 made it mandatory in all study programmes. The use of ECTS has been mandatory since 2001, and the Diploma Supplement since 2002. The Danish Institute of Evaluation is the body responsible for external quality assurance, at all levels of education. The institute was a founding member of ENQA. Since 2000, the implementation of the Bologna action lines has been coordinated by a national Bologna follow-up group.

A main priority at present is strengthening the internationalisation of higher education as part of a national strategy for enhanced internationalisation of Danish education and training in general. For higher education this will include enhancing the international mobility of staff and measures to make Danish higher education more attractive to foreign students.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Estonia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Estonia was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. It adopted the two-cycle structure for university education in 2002. Admission to old-style master programmes will cease after 2005. From the academic year 2005/06, not only universities but also professional higher education institutions will be able to offer master's level programmes in certain fields. A national credit system exists alongside ECTS, but ECTS will become mandatory from the 2006/07 academic year.

An accreditation system has been in operation since the mid-1990s. Accreditation is not required by law, but is necessary for an institution to acquire the right to issue officially recognised higher education credentials. A proposal for further development of the quality assurance system includes the introduction of measures geared more towards quality improvement.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Finland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Finland was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. It introduced a two-cycle degree system in the university sector in the 1990s, but integrated master's programmes continued to exist. Following amendments to the Universities Act in 2004 the two-cycle degree system will be obligatory from 1 August 2005 except in the fields of medicine and dentistry. The reform has been supported by earmarked funding from the Ministry of Education. Polytechnics offer bachelor-level degrees. Postgraduate degrees requiring intervening work experience will be introduced on a permanent basis from 1 August 2005 following a pilot phase. ECTS will be mandatory for all higher education programmes from the academic year 2005/2006, replacing the previous national credit system. In the polytechnics ECTS was implemented from January 2005.

All Finnish higher education institutions have undergone institutional evaluation. In addition programme and thematic evaluations have been carried out. An evaluation system based on audits of the institutions' internal quality assurance systems is being introduced from 2005.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
France	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

France was one of the four countries that signed the Sorbonne declaration in 1998, and has participated in the Bologna Process from the beginning. A decree adopted in April 2002 established the three-cycle *Licence/Master/Doctorat* degree structure, which has since been gradually implemented. Shorter, vocationally oriented higher education programmes continue to exist, with bridges having been developed to the *Licence* level. ECTS is seen as an important tool for making learning paths more flexible. All higher education institutions have to be periodically accredited, but based on an evaluation-type methodology. In general the Bologna Process is seen as an important trigger for national change, with higher education institutions taking an active role.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Germany	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Germany was one of the four countries that signed the Sorbonne declaration in 1998, and has participated in the Bologna Process from the beginning. The country has a federal system, with higher education being the responsibility of the *Länder*. The legal basis for a two-cycle degree structure was established in 1998, and in 2003 the *Länder* agreed in principle to implement it as the standard system. For certain fields with state examinations (law, medicine, pharmacy) the necessary regulations have not yet been introduced. A Bologna Information Centre (*Servicestelle Bologna*), run by the national rectors' conference with backing from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, provides online services, publications and events to support higher education institutions in implementing the Bologna Process. Germany aims to ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2005.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Greece	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Greece was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Most of the Bologna action lines are currently the subject of active development. A three-cycle degree structure has been in place since the 1980s, and there has been particularly positive feedback about the access arrangements for students from one cycle to another. Priority is being given to establishing a quality assurance agency, with new legislation being implemented. Use of the Diploma Supplement is becoming more widespread, and a credit system based on ECTS is in place in many higher education institutions.

An extensive consultation process is currently being conducted by the Ministry of Education to disseminate information and to promote the Bologna targets among all partners, especially higher education institutions and students.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Holy See	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

The Holy See joined the Bologna Process in 2003. In addition to its two pontifical universities in Rome, it is a transnational provider of higher education both inside and outside the European Higher Education Area. Institutions in other countries conferring academic degrees under the authority of the Holy See go through an advance approval procedure and are then evaluated every three years with the assistance of national boards, e.g. bishops' conferences. A proposal to establish a separate body responsible for quality assurance is being discussed. A two-(three-) cycle degree structure is provided for in the basic legislative document "Sapientia christiana" of 1979. Special norms exist for certain fields of particular importance to the Holy See. A decision to implement both ECTS and the Diploma Supplement was taken in 2004.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Hungary	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Hungary was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. A national strategy for implementing the Bologna reforms was developed. On the basis of amendments to the Act on Higher Education adopted in 2003, implementation of the two-cycle degree structure has started and will be extended to all fields of study, with a few exceptions, by the academic year 2006/2007. The Diploma Supplement has been issued on request since 2003 and will become mandatory for bachelor's and master's degrees from 2005. An accreditation system encompassing all higher education institutions has been in operation since 1993.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Iceland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Iceland was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. A national Bologna follow-up group with representation of higher education institutions and students was established in 2003 to coordinate the process and make proposals for possible legislative reforms and regulations. The two-cycle degree system is well established, with an exception for medicine and related fields. A separate division in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for external quality assurance.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Ireland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Ireland was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. The country has a binary higher education system, with a two-cycle degree structure. ECTS has so far been implemented mainly in the non-university sector. The Diploma Supplement is being introduced since 2004 on the basis of a National Template.

There is no single national quality assurance system. Universities are required by law to establish quality assurance procedures, and cooperate in developing their quality assurance systems, since 2003 through the Irish Universities Quality Board. The Higher Education and Training Awards Council is responsible for agreeing and reviewing the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures in the non-university sector. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland has a similar role in relation to the Dublin Institute of Technology. All institutional quality assurance procedures must include regular evaluation. A national Higher Education Quality Network was established in 2003.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Italy	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Italy was one of the four countries that signed the Sorbonne declaration in 1998, and has participated in the Bologna Process from the beginning. Implementation of a new two-cycle degree structure began in 1999. Any study programme may be designed and delivered in cooperation between Italian and foreign universities, and the regulations provide explicitly for the possibility to award joint degrees. ECTS and the Diploma Supplement have been adopted by national law and are in the process of being implemented.

A national evaluation system for higher education is not yet in place. All universities are obliged to have Internal Assessment Units, which report annually on indicators defined by the National Committee for Assessment of the University System, including results of questionnaires submitted to students. The national rector's conference has organised assessments of bachelor courses at 70 of the country's 80 universities since 2001. An accreditation system has been established for new programmes.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Latvia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Latvia signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999, by which time a number of reforms in line with the Bologna objectives had already been initiated. A degree structure based on two main cycles was introduced in academic programmes from 1991 and in professional education from 2000. A small number of first-cycle programmes leading to professional diplomas with no bachelor's degree temporarily remain. A national credit system compatible with ECTS has been in use since 1998. A quality assurance system based on accreditation of both programmes and institutions has been in operation since 1996, with the first cycle of accreditations completed in 2002.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Liechtenstein	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Liechtenstein has participated in the Bologna Process from the beginning. Amendments to the legislation regulating higher education adopted in 2004 provide the legal basis for the bachelor/master structure, ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. Higher education institutions are required to undergo external evaluations at least every six years. Liechtenstein cooperates extensively with other countries, particularly Switzerland and Austria, both in the provision of higher education and with regard to quality assurance.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Lithuania	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Lithuania was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. The country has a binary system of higher education. Following adoption of the Law on Higher Education in 2000, university studies conform to the two- (three-) cycle structure, whereas the colleges offer diplomas and professional qualifications. Long integrated study programmes continue to exist in medicine and related fields as well as law. A national credit system compatible with ECTS is in operation. The Diploma Supplement has been made mandatory by law and will be issued on request from 2005, and automatically to all students from 2006.

Study programmes are evaluated on a regular basis, and from 2004 a process of institutional evaluations has been instigated. New study programmes and institutions have to be accredited.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Luxembourg	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Luxembourg was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. The University of Luxembourg was created by Act of Parliament in 2003. The Act refers explicitly to the Bologna Process, establishing a two- (three-) cycle degree structure and defining programmes in terms of ECTS. Existing two-year courses are being redefined to meet the Bologna criteria. A quality assurance system based on international networking is about to be put in place.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Malta	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Malta was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. A two-cycle degree system already existed in most fields. ECTS has been implemented since 2003, and the Diploma Supplement will be issued from 2006. Quality assurance is so far limited to internal quality assurance at the only university, the University of Malta.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Netherlands	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

The Netherlands was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. A binary system of higher education exists which distinguishes between academic and professional degrees. Introduction of a two-cycle degree structure with programmes described in ECTS credits started from 2002/2003. Old-style integrated degrees will continue to exist until 2007-2009. The Diploma Supplement is widely in use and is in the process of becoming mandatory. Ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention is in process, and the higher education institutions have been encouraged to implement the convention.

A supranational Dutch/Flemish accreditation organisation, NVAO, was established in 2004. All study programmes have to be accredited. NVAO bases its accreditation decisions on external reviews carried out by validation/evaluation organisations. The Inspectorate for education, which is an independent part of the Ministry of Education, is responsible for overseeing the quality of the entire education system.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Norway	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Norway was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Most provisions of the Declaration have been incorporated in a general legislative reform of higher education, which was fully implemented in 2003. A new three-cycle degree structure has been introduced, and will apply to most programmes from 2006-2007. A quality assurance agency has been established, and is fully functioning. Use of the Diploma Supplement is compulsory, and a credit system based on ECTS has been introduced. The reform has also focussed on improving counselling of students, changing from a system oriented towards final examinations to one oriented towards teaching and learning, increased institutional autonomy, new forms of assessment and increased internationalisation.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Poland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Poland was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. A two-cycle degree structure has been gradually introduced since 1990. A draft new Act on Higher Education will introduce it also in vocational education. Integrated studies will continue to exist in medicine and related fields as well as law. The Act will also give the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement a legal basis. The Diploma Supplement is mandatory from 2005.

A State Accreditation Committee accredits all new study programmes and institutions and evaluates the quality of education. Accreditation of existing institutions on a voluntary basis is organised by the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland. Recognition of foreign degrees and diplomas is based on bilateral agreements and nostrification in addition to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Portugal	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Portugal was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Comprehensive legislative changes are currently being made in order to implement the Bologna principles in Portuguese higher education. In order to prepare the transition to a two- (three-) cycle degree structure, reports have been drawn up for the different fields of study, with wide involvement of stakeholders. The necessary legislation is expected to be adopted in the course of 2005. Financial support has been made available to assist higher education institutions in applying and adapting to the changes. A system of parallel short courses at post-secondary, post-first cycle and post-second cycle levels is being developed with a view to lifelong learning and with possibilities for bridging to the three-cycle structure.

A law concerning the application of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement has been approved by the Council of Ministers and is in the process of promulgation. A quality assurance system based on internal and external evaluations is in operation and is being further developed. In addition, some professional associations have implemented accreditation schemes.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Romania	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Romania was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. New legislation adopted in 2004 will lead to full implementation of a two- (three-) cycle degree structure from the 2005/2006 academic year. At the same time ECTS and the Diploma Supplement will become mandatory. ECTS has been in use as a recommended system since 1998.

All higher education institutions undergo periodic institutional assessment at 5-year intervals. In addition all new study programmes must be accredited. A new law on quality assurance in education, proposing to set up a new national agency for quality assurance at all levels of the education system, is currently being debated.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Russia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003, and a series of national and regional thematic seminars have since been held to make higher education institutions familiar with the principles and trends of the Process. A two-cycle degree structure was introduced on a limited basis in 1989 and has existed at the national level since 1992 in parallel with integrated 5-year programmes. Bachelor's degree programmes in Russia have a duration of 4 years. The application of the two-cycle structure is optional for the institutions.

Preparations for implementation of an ECTS-based credit system began in 2002, and a pilot project was launched in 2003. Institutions are recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science to use the system. A pilot project for implementation of European-type Diploma Supplements was also launched in 2003, and several seminars and workshops have been held.

An accreditation system is in operation at the institutional level. Quality assurance and evaluation are the responsibility of the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Research, created in 2004.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Serbia and Montenegro/Serbia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Serbia and Montenegro joined the Bologna Process in 2003. However, activities related to the reform of the higher education system in the Republic of Serbia began in 2000. The universities of the Republic have entered a process of reform in accordance with the Bologna Process. Reforms of the curriculum were undertaken, a system of self-evaluation has begun and work has begun on introducing ECTS.

Since November 2004, the Ministry of Education and Sports has prepared a draft law on higher education, which is expected to be passed before the Bergen conference. This law is completely harmonised with the principles of the Bologna Process. It will introduce a system of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education, restructure degree courses in three cycles, extend the implementation of the Diploma Supplement and promote recognition of qualifications in accordance with the Lisbon Convention.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Serbia and Montenegro/Montenegro	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Serbia and Montenegro joined the Bologna Process in 2003. In October of that year, the assembly of Montenegro adopted the new law on higher education, which was created in accordance with the Bologna objectives. The government is in the process of comprehensively restructuring the entire education and training system according to its strategic plan for education reform. The first generation of students have been enrolled in the academic year 2004-2005 according to the new rules. The Diploma Supplement and ECTS are widely implemented.

Work on the establishment of a quality assurance system is well advanced. However, it is not proposed for the time being to set up a national agency for accreditation. Rather, it is intended to enter into collaboration with other countries to explore the possibility of setting up a joint agency.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Slovakia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

The Slovak Republic was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Since then there has been extensive reform of higher education to implement the principles of the Bologna Process. In recent years, new legislation has been introduced which enables the Bologna principles to be implemented in higher education institutions. The government has established the Accreditation Commission as an advisory body to monitor, assess and independently evaluate the quality of educational, developmental, artistic and other creative activity of higher education institutions and to promote its improvement.

The Diploma Supplement is currently available at the request of graduates. All students who start a study programme in the academic year 2005-2006 will receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge when they graduate.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Slovenia	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Slovenia was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. In 2004, the country adopted three Acts of Parliament which implemented the legislative priorities set out in the Berlin Communiqué. The Acts also enable the implementation of other developments in higher education in Slovenia. The two-cycle system will be implemented in all institutions and programmes starting in the 2005-2006 academic year. The new legislation also introduced important features in the area of quality assurance. It extended the composition of accreditation and evaluation bodies to include representatives of students and employers, introduced new procedures including regular external evaluations and established a new Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education.

ECTS has been implemented since 1998 for graduate programmes and since 2002 for undergraduate study programmes. From 2005 onwards, the Diploma Supplement will be issued in an EU language automatically and free of charge to every graduate.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Spain	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Spain was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Two royal decrees were approved in January 2005 to establish and define a new framework for degree structures in conformity with the Bologna principles. Higher education institutions are currently working on concrete proposals to implement the new structures from the academic year 2006-2007 onwards. The Council for Universities Co-ordination is currently preparing a proposal for the government including a complete catalogue of undergraduate official degrees, which will start in 2006-2007.

The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) was established in 2002 to co-ordinate quality assurance policies in universities. There are also eight regional agencies that undertake quality assurance activities in their respective geographical areas. A co-ordination committee was set up in 2003 to ensure transparency and co-operation between the national and the regional agencies.

The government has allocated specific funding in its 2005 budget to cover universities' activities for the development of the Bologna Process. The governments of the regions have also made allocations in their budgets to facilitate the process of adaptation to the new legal framework.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Sweden	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Sweden was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. In 2002, a working group was appointed in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to review higher education degree structures in accordance with the Bologna Process. The group also addressed the issue of adapting the Swedish credit point and grading scale systems to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The review group proposes that degrees within higher education should be formally divided into three cycles, with clear procedures for access between cycles. The government will shortly decide on the proposals put forward by the review group, and it is estimated that new legislation and regulations could come into force in 2007.

Sweden has a high level of participation of students in quality assurance processes. However, Swedish legislation does not permit international representation in the governing bodies of public organisations such as the National Agency for Higher Education, which is the agency responsible for quality assurance.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD Switzerland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Switzerland was a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. The implementation of the Bologna Process in the country is part of a wider reform currently under way in the higher education sector, which will be put in place by 2008. From the beginning of the academic year 2004-2005, a considerable number of study programmes are structured in two cycles and a large percentage of first year students is currently entering the new system. By 2010 all institutions and study programmes will be completely renewed.

Efforts are being made at the national level to ensure co-ordinated implementation of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement so that they become effective transparency tools, inside and outside higher education institutions. The use of ECTS in particular is being supported by providing information, training and examples of good practice.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” joined the Bologna Process in 2003, having started to change its higher education system from 2000 when the Ministry of Education and Science passed a new law on higher education. The law requires universities to start introducing ECTS and to design study and subject programmes according to the principles of the Bologna Process. It also provides the legal basis for establishing a national quality assurance system.

In 2005, the Ministry will prepare updates of the law concerning the degree structure, increased involvement of students and recognition of degrees. Some study programmes, predominantly in the technical disciplines, have been restructured according to the two-cycle degree system. Higher education institutions have accepted ECTS as a standard for a system of transfer and accumulation of credits. The system is being gradually implemented in the universities. Financial constraints are currently hindering the preparation of the Diploma Supplement, but interventions will be undertaken so that this task can be successfully completed.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
Turkey	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

Turkey joined the Bologna Process in 2001. Higher education in Turkey is structured in two cycles, and the Diploma Supplement has already been introduced for some programmes. From the 2004-2005 academic year, all universities will issue the Diploma Supplement to all students, free of charge, in English and/or in Turkish.

Work on the establishment of a national quality assurance system has begun. Universities and programmes have already performed several assessment and accreditation exercises. It is the target of the Council of Higher Education to establish a national quality assurance agency in 2005 and to have a reasonable number of evaluations completed before the ministers' meeting to be held in 2007.

BOLOGNA SCORECARD	
United Kingdom - England, Wales and Northern Ireland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

The United Kingdom was one of the four countries that signed the Sorbonne declaration in 1998, and has had a high level of involvement in developing the Bologna Process. The basic structure of UK degrees already conforms to the Bologna model of three main cycles. Higher education institutions are beginning to implement the Diploma Supplement. The introduction of the Diploma Supplement has been encouraged by conferences and other events offered in collaboration between the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council, the UK NARIC and the Europe Unit.

The Burgess Report, published in November 2004, made a number of recommendations on measuring and recording student achievement in higher education, including the development of the European Credit Transfer System and the integration of the Diploma Supplement with other developments in describing, measuring, recording and communicating achievement.


BOLOGNA SCORECARD United Kingdom - Scotland	
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
1. Stage of development of quality assurance system	
2. Key elements of evaluation systems	
3. Level of participation of students	
4. Level of international participation, co-operation and networking	
TWO-CYCLE DEGREE SYSTEM	
5. Stage of implementation of two-cycle system	
6. Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system	
7. Access from first cycle to second cycle	
RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND PERIODS OF STUDY	
8. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement	
9. Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention	
10. Stage of implementation of ECTS	
TOTAL	

The structure of Scottish degrees already conforms to the Bologna model of three main cycles, and there is a comprehensive national credit and qualifications framework that is consistent with the emerging European qualifications framework. The recently introduced Quality Enhancement Framework focuses on both teaching and learning, recognises the role of students in quality assurance and places an emphasis on providing clear public information about quality and standards.

Credit accumulation and transfer within Scotland is based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, while ECTS is used for cross-border recognition. Higher education institutions are working towards introduction of the Diploma Supplement automatically for all students in 2005.



qualifications



A Framework for Qualifications of The European Higher Education Area



Ministry of Science
Technology and Innovation

Framework for Qualifications
of the European Higher
Education Area

Bologna Working Group on Qualifications
Frameworks

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A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

Bologna Working Group on
Qualifications Frameworks

Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
February 2005

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Executive summary



This report concerns the elaboration of qualifications frameworks as called for by ministers in the Berlin Communiqué; it makes recommendations and proposals for an overarching **Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, and offers advice on good practice in the elaboration of national qualifications frameworks for higher education qualifications.

The report includes six chapters that cover:

1. The context – higher education qualifications in Europe
2. National frameworks of qualifications in higher education
3. The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
4. Linking frameworks of qualifications in higher education
5. Frameworks for higher education and for other educational areas
6. Conclusions

Chapter one draws the lines from the Bologna declaration of 1999 to the Berlin Communiqué of 2003 in the development of describing qualifications and frameworks. It also demonstrates the impact of this development on the action lines of the Bologna Process. Finally it points to the underlying goals, priorities and assumptions of higher education, which have to be taken into account when developing qualifications frameworks, namely: preparation for the labour market, preparation for life as active citizens in a democratic society, personal development and the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

Chapter two examines the nature, development and effectiveness of existing national frameworks for qualifications encompassing ‘new style’ higher education. It reveals a wide pattern of different experiences from which a number of good practice recommendations can be identified. Some useful aspects that can facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications are mentioned, including:

- > the development and review process for producing good national frameworks are most effective when they involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside higher education.
- > a framework for higher education qualifications should identify a clear and nationally-agreed set of purposes. Frameworks for higher education qualifications benefit from the inclusion of cycles and /or levels, and articulation with outcome-focussed indicators and/or descriptors of qualifications. Higher education frameworks of qualifications can also benefit from being directly linked to credit accumulation and transfer systems
- > frameworks for higher education qualifications should explicitly link academic standards, national and institutional quality assurance systems, and public understanding of the place and level of nationally recognised qualifications. Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by different higher education qualifications and titles.

Chapter three explores the possibilities for formulating a framework for EHEA and recommends that:

- > the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within or linked to the first cycle.

>

- > the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points.
- > the Dublin Descriptors developed by the Joint Quality Initiative are proposed for adoption as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle.
- > responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow-up Group and any successor executive structures established by the ministers for the furtherance of the EHEA.

Chapter three also includes guidelines for the range of ECTS typically associated with the completion of each cycle:

- > Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications - approximately 120 ECTS credits;
- > First cycle qualifications - 180-240 ECTS credits;
- > Second cycle qualifications - 90-120 ECTS credits– the minimum requirement should amount to 60 ECTS credits at second cycle level;
- > Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.

Chapter four discusses how national frameworks of qualifications need to articulate in a transparent way with the overarching European framework for qualifications. The process of articulation should involve the careful mapping of national qualifications (their levels, learning outcomes and descriptors) with the cycle descriptors identified for the European overarching framework.

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The following criteria are proposed for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework:

- > The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education
- > There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
- > The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS credits
- > The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent
- > The national quality assurance system for higher education refer to the national framework for higher education qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent Ministerial Communiqués in the Bologna Process
- > The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
- > The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published

It is proposed that each country should certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework according to the following procedures

- > The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework

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- > The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies of the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process
- > The self-certification process shall involve international experts
- > The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall address separately each of the criteria established and shall be published
- > The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process
- > The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework

The frameworks of qualifications have been identified as a key tool for the realisation of the European Higher Education Area. Therefore it is recommended

that all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

Chapter five looks at the framework and related initiatives outside of higher education. It takes into account wider European developments in lifelong learning, of which higher education is an intrinsic part, developments in the Lisbon process and the linked future objectives process, as well as development in the Copenhagen process on increased European co-operation in vocational education and training.

The change agenda being advanced through much of this work relates closely with the sorts of changes required by the Bologna process, as reflected through the introduction of national frameworks of qualifications, and an overarching

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framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. It is proposed that:

- > national frameworks should include awards that integrate recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences.

This chapter also notes that an increasing focus on the individual learner rather than learning systems and institutions, which challenges the traditional boundaries within and between different levels of education and training, is also relevant.

The development of the plans of the European Commission towards a European Qualifications Framework is regarded as a helpful and important, and it is anticipated that the approaches developed in this report will support and be compatible with such a framework.

Chapter six provides a summary of conclusions of the report.

Introduction

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The conclusions of the Berlin conference (September 2003) of the ministers in charge of higher education included:

***Degree structure:** ‘Ministers encourage the member states to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile.*

They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

This report was commissioned by the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) in furtherance of these undertakings.

The report includes five chapters that cover:

- > The context – higher education qualifications in Europe
- > National frameworks of qualifications in higher education
- > The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
- > Linking frameworks of qualifications in higher education
- > Frameworks for higher education and for other educational areas

Meeting in Dublin in March 2004, the BFUG approved the establishment of a Working Group to coordinate the work on the development of an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA, and appointed the following to that Working Group: Mogens Berg (Denmark) as chair, the BFUG Chair (Ian McKenna (Ireland) until 1 July 2004, and Marlies Leegwater (The Netherlands) from 1st July), Jacques-Philippe Saint-Gerand (France), Éva Gonczi (Hungary), and Andrejs Rauhvargers

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(Latvia). The Working Group was joined by a number of experts (listed in Appendix 1 to this report).

The terms of reference BFUG (Appendix 2) provided for the Working Group were to:

- > identify reference points for national frameworks of qualifications (in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile), which may assist Member States in establishing their frameworks;
- > elaborate on an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area;
- > establish key principles for frameworks of qualifications, both at national and European levels.

The Working Group took into account other policy areas, including those within the Copenhagen Process and the wider Lisbon Agenda as articulated in "Education and training 2010"¹. The Working Group, with its experts, met 6 times; in Dublin, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Stockholm, Budapest and Riga. Prior to this a preparatory group was set up by Denmark, Ireland, the UK (including Scotland), and the President of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. This preparatory group undertook some coordinating work prior to the formal appointment of the Working Group.

The Working Group has drawn heavily upon work done by others, especially that of the Joint Quality Initiative² who formulated and further developed the 'Dublin Descriptors' and organised an introductory conference in London in January 2004. It has also drawn on experiences in countries that have already established qualifications framework for their national

¹ Title: www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir_council_final.pdf

² www.jointquality.org

higher education systems, and conducted a comparative study of existing national frameworks.

The Working Group has consulted other organisations and networks that have contributed to the discussions; these include the European University Association (EUA) (which has also acted as coordinator of the ECTS counsellors), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB), the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC), and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The European Commission (EC) contributed both through their interests in the Bologna process and as coordinator of the Copenhagen process and of the Lisbon process as articulated in “Education and training 2010”.

In widening input into the deliberations, the Chairman presented interim findings of the Working Group at various conferences of important European organisations and networks such as ESIB, EURASHE and the ENIC and NARIC. He also conducted a seminar in Vienna attended by Austrian officials and organisations with regard to their Bologna and EU Presidency (2006). Members of the Working Group have presented reports to Bologna seminars in Edinburgh, Santander and Riga, and attended the Closing Conference on “Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. Phase 2”.

The report was discussed in detail at a Bologna seminar in Copenhagen³ on 13-14 January 2005 and the report was revised following the comments at the seminar. The revised report, taking account of the conclusions and recommendations from the seminar, will be given to the BFUG, who commissioned the work. It will be available for the ministerial Bologna Conference in Bergen in May 2005.

³ Appendix 7

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The work was made possible thanks to financial support from the European Commission through the Socrates Programme. The Council of Europe has contributed to the work through the participation of the President of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee.

1 Context – higher education qualifications in Europe

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1.1 The Bologna Process, European Higher Education Area and qualifications systems

The identification of first and second cycle studies, within the Bologna Declaration (1999), was the first step towards developing an over-arching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). By creating this initial division between cycles the first elements of a qualifications framework were established.

The next steps were several national and international initiatives, including the development by the Joint Quality initiative (JQI) of the ‘Dublin descriptors’, the Trans-European Evaluation Project (TEEP), the Tuning project, and developments in national qualification frameworks for example Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, with separate qualifications frameworks for Scotland and the rest of the UK. Various Bologna seminars, e.g. in Helsinki, Lisbon, and Zurich, also provided additional discussion of context and detailed information. These initiatives were followed by the Danish Bologna seminar on *Qualification Structures in European Higher Education*, held in Copenhagen on 27-28th March 2003. This seminar was informed by a background report⁴ that explored alternative approaches for clarifying the cycles and levels in European higher education qualifications. The report and the seminar examined the issues and debates associated with concepts useful for describing qualifications. They also focussed on current European approaches to qualifications structures, alternative methodologies and their theoretical foundations for conceiving different educational levels for all higher education qualifications, including lifelong learning.

⁴ The report, *Qualifications Structures in European Higher education – Consideration of alternative approaches for clarifying cycles and levels in European higher education qualifications* can be downloaded from: <http://www.bologna.dk>

The 2003 Danish seminar resulted in a series of detailed recommendations to higher education stakeholders that were taken up by the ministers at their meeting in Berlin; these are summarised in Appendix 3. Their Berlin Communiqué (2003) called for the creation of an overarching framework for the European Higher Education Area. The following statements are of particular importance in this connection:

Degree structure: *‘Ministers encourage the member states to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile.*

They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Ministers invite the Follow-up Group to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area”⁵

Lifelong learning: *‘Ministers furthermore call those working on qualifications frameworks for the European Higher Education Area to encompass the wide range of flexible*

⁵ Berlin Communiqué 2003,

*learning paths, opportunities and techniques and to make appropriate use of ECTS credits.*⁶

Additional actions: ‘...Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education to include a doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna process.’⁷

The challenge was thus to create a European qualifications structure that facilitates the connection between national frameworks of qualifications, in order to provide the basis for introducing more precision to the relationship between different higher education qualifications with Europe. As qualifications originate and exist within national or related systems, the framework should more properly be called a Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA.

An effective overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA is necessary for many reasons. Primarily it should help the Bologna Process establish real transparency between existing European systems of higher education through the development of a shared basis for understanding these systems and the qualifications they contain. This should improve the recognition of foreign qualifications, enhance the mobility of citizens and make credential evaluation more accurate. The overarching framework should also provide guidance to those countries developing their national frameworks. Last, but not least, it provides a context for effective quality assurance.

There are significant direct and indirect connections between the full Bologna agenda and the creation of effective systems for the description and location of qualifications in Europe. The overarching framework for qualifications should play a vital role in the EHEA. The majority of the ten action lines identified

⁶ Berlin Communiqué 2003,

⁷ Berlin Communiqué 2003

in the policy documents of the Bologna Process will be affected fundamentally and positively by the development of clear, outcomes-focussed qualifications frameworks that share common methodological descriptors. The adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, that aids recognition, requires these common and clear descriptors. Links to the action lines are provided through:

- > The adoption of a system essentially based on three⁸ main cycles presupposes some agreement about the nature and role of degrees at different cycles/levels and is already the basis for such a framework.
- > The establishment of a system of credits is itself one approach to help describe and quantify qualifications and make them more transparent.
- > The promotion of mobility, of staff, students and researchers, can only be facilitated by a common understanding and the fair recognition of qualifications.
- > The promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance requires transparent and, if possible, common European approaches to the expression of qualifications, qualification descriptors and other external reference points for quality and standards.
- > The promotion of the European dimension in higher education, especially integrated study programmes and joint degrees, can be helped by more transparency between existing courses, curricula and 'levels'.
- > Regarding lifelong learning, any consensus for describing degrees and levels must have beneficial implications for

⁸ The Bologna Declaration formulated this goal with regard to the first and second cycles; while the Berlin Communiqué added the doctoral degree as a third cycle

qualification structures, other higher education qualifications, alternative pathways and degrees, and thus all stages and types of learning.

- > Higher education institutions and students are paramount stakeholders who gain by the creation of effective national and European frameworks. The autonomy of higher education institutions can be strengthened through qualifications frameworks that provide for enough flexibility and are not too rigid.
- > National and European frameworks that provide various transition points, facilitate access for non-traditional learners and thus promote greater social cohesion and strengthen the social dimension.
- > Promoting the attractiveness of the European higher education area would be made easier as the transparency and comparability of European higher education degrees is made real by the development of a common framework of qualifications. Refining of ways to describe degrees and levels in higher education is fundamental to the Bologna Process.
- > A transparent and well-articulated overarching framework, supported by national frameworks, will also be of considerable importance to the recognition, in other parts of the world, of qualifications resulting from the Bologna reforms.

The development of conceptual approaches for describing qualifications is currently an important priority for many countries as they undertake educational reforms in the light of the Bologna process. These developments are not restricted to Europe, or indeed to higher education, and can be seen in other areas of education and training and in other parts of the world as shown by the experiences in, for example, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Unfortunately, the situation is complicated by the existence of several alternative and

competing approaches. Some stakeholders in the European higher education sector have been aware of the problems associated with the current situation and there are a number of ongoing national and international attempts⁹ designed to resolve these problems and move towards a more common understanding.

There are different ways to express and measure study programmes, including time-based (years) approaches, credit points, identification of learning outcomes and competencies, qualifications and level indicators, subject benchmarks¹⁰.

Traditional models and methods of expressing qualifications structures are giving way to systems based on explicit reference points using learning outcomes and competencies, levels and level indicators, subject benchmarks and qualification descriptors. These devices provide more precision and accuracy and facilitate transparency and comparison. Without these common approaches, full recognition, real transparency and thus the creation of an effective European Higher Education Area, will be more difficult to achieve.

1.2 Qualifications frameworks and the purposes of higher education

The elaboration of a qualifications framework, whether an overarching framework for the EHEA or a national framework, cannot be divorced from the underlying goals, priorities and assumptions of higher education. The Working Group has therefore found it both useful and necessary to briefly sketch the

⁹ For example, the Joint Quality Initiative (JQI), European Network of Quality Assurance (ENQA), Tuning, etc.

¹⁰ Subject benchmark statements is a UK approach that provides the academic community with a means for describing the nature, standards and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject. This approach has also been adopted by the '*Tuning educational structures in Europe*' project.

assumptions on which it has based its work. The issues covered in this chapter have, at least to some extent, been addressed in the Bologna Declaration, as well as the Prague and Berlin Communiqués. They have also been addressed in a number of Bologna seminars, most prominently in the Greek seminar on the social dimension of higher education (February 2003), the Danish seminar on qualifications structures (March 2003), the Czech seminar on lifelong learning (June 2003), and the Council of Europe/Portuguese seminar on recognition (April 2002)¹¹. They were also addressed by the Council of Europe seminar on the public responsibility for higher education and research (September 2004), and were considered at the Slovenian, EUA and ESIB seminar on employability (October 2004), and at the seminar on recognition organised by the Latvian authorities and the Council of Europe in Riga in December 2004¹².

As the Bologna Declaration has been implemented, there has been debate among various stakeholders at national and European levels, particularly within the Council of Europe, and a common understanding of the multiple purposes of higher education is emerging. Broadly speaking, one may identify four main purposes of higher education:

- > preparation for the labour market;
- > preparation for life as active citizens in a democratic society;
- > personal development;
- > the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

¹¹ For these seminars see http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/bologna_seminars/index.htm

¹² For these seminars see <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

For the purpose of discussion, it may be convenient to separate the four elements. It should nevertheless be underlined that the distinction between the elements is not clear-cut, and the four elements are interlinked. It may also be noted that while for the first three elements, the main emphasis will most likely be on the individual earning the qualification, for the fourth element emphasis may be at the level of society, not least in relating qualifications to employability and other social objectives. Nevertheless, all four elements have individual as well as societal dimensions.

Preparation for the labour market

Preparation for the labour market is the dimension that has over the past generation been most dominant in public discourse on education. Employers have complained that the current education systems of many European countries provide students with insufficient preparation for the labour market, and this concern was one of the driving forces behind the Bologna Process.

Preparation for life as active citizens in a democratic society

While democratic institutions and laws are indispensable to democratic societies, they can only function in societies marked by a democratic culture that is tolerant and accepts diversity and open debate. Democracy ultimately depends on the active participation of educated citizens. Education at all levels thus plays a key role in developing democratic culture. In addition to transferable (transversal) skills, the active participation of citizens requires a broad education in a variety of fields as well as the nurture of democratic attitudes and values and the ability to think critically. This aspect of higher education was referred to in the Bologna Declaration and brought much more explicitly into the Process through the Prague and Berlin Communiqués.

Personal development

This aspect of higher education has not been explicitly addressed so far in the policy texts of the Bologna Process. While personal development may have been a more explicit goal of education and higher education in earlier generations, it is still an underlying assumption of education in Europe. The assumption may appear to have been challenged through the development of mass education, but it should nevertheless be made explicit that whilst preparation for the labour market is an important purpose of education, the aim of personal development has far from disappeared.

The development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base

For society as a whole, it is important to have access to advanced knowledge in a broad range of disciplines. At the most advanced levels of knowledge, this relates to research and research training. It is, however, not limited to research, as advanced knowledge and the transmission of such knowledge play important roles in a wide range of areas and at levels below that of research. Thus, whilst knowledge of advanced skills and methods of, for example welding, as well as the ability to develop them further, may not be characterised as ‘research’, these skills and their transmission are likely to be of considerable importance to a modern, technologically advanced society. This aspect of higher education was addressed by the Berlin Communiqué, in the context of the synergy between the EHEA and the European Research Area and the inclusion of the doctoral degree as the third ‘Bologna cycle’.

1.3 Qualifications frameworks at national and European levels and for different areas of learning

A qualifications framework provides a systematic description of the full range of qualifications within a given education system, as well as the ways in which learners can navigate between them. Qualifications therefore have to be described in such a way as to cover the full purpose of education, so the framework must be multi-dimensional.

This is true for both national frameworks and the emerging framework for the EHEA. The latter will be less detailed than national frameworks, but one of its purposes will be to provide an overarching framework that will simplify mobility, transparency and recognition between national systems. At the same time, it is important to recognise that national frameworks will reflect the respective national discussions on the purposes of higher education and different agendas in higher education policy. To find the right balance between the diversities of national frameworks and the benefits of a close linkages between them is the main challenge for constructing an overarching framework.

Developing qualifications frameworks is a task not only for higher education and the Bologna process. The Copenhagen process aims to develop instruments to enhance the transparency of vocational qualifications and competences, and to increase co-operation in vocational education and training. This is to be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training.

Few countries have developed comprehensive frameworks covering both higher education and vocational education and training, and such a framework does not exist at the European level. The European Commission and the European Council of

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Education Ministers have expressed the view that the European labour market cannot function effectively and smoothly without a European Framework to stand as a common reference for the recognition of qualifications. They call for the development of such a framework within the Lisbon process¹³. These questions are dealt with in chapter 5.

¹³ Joint Interim Report: Education and Training 2010 (February 2004)

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2 National frameworks of qualifications in higher education >

2.1 Introduction

There are a number of concepts associated with and essential to an understanding of national frameworks of qualifications, but there is unfortunately no widespread international agreement on the accepted use of such terms as level, cycle, workload, learning outcome, qualifications framework, etc. Differences in the use of these terms makes an explanation of national frameworks and their co-ordinated development problematic. In order to overcome these difficulties the followings definitions (see box below) are employed in this chapter and throughout the whole report:

Credit: *a quantified means of expressing the volume of learning based on the achievement of learning outcomes and their associated workloads.*

Cycle: *the three sequential levels identified by the Bologna Process (first cycle, second cycle and third cycle) within which all European higher education qualifications are located.*

Europe/European: *Europe/European refers to those countries that are signatories to the Bologna Declaration, whilst 'national' is used to describe the contexts within each of those countries or education systems.*

Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area: *an overarching framework that makes transparent the relationship between European national higher education frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks.*

Learning outcomes: *statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.*

Levels: represent a series of sequential steps (a developmental continuum), expressed in terms of a range of generic outcomes, against which typical qualifications can be positioned.

National framework of qualifications (higher education): the single description, at national level or level of an education system, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between higher education qualifications.

Profile: either the specific (subject) field(s) of learning of a qualification or the broader aggregation of clusters of qualifications or programmes from different fields that share a common emphasis or purpose (e.g. an applied vocational as opposed to more theoretical academic studies).

Qualifications (higher education): any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting that particular learning outcomes have been achieved, normally following the successful completion of a recognised higher education programme of study.

Qualification descriptors: are generic statements of the outcomes of study. They provide clear points of reference that describe the main outcomes of a qualification often with reference to national levels.

Reference points: non-prescriptive indicators that support the articulation of qualifications, learning outcomes and/or other related concepts.

Workload: a quantitative measure of the learning activities that may feasibly be required for the achievement of the learning outcomes (e.g. lectures, seminars, practical work, private study, information retrieval, research, examinations).

2.2 Systems of higher education and national frameworks of higher education qualifications

All countries in the Bologna Process necessarily have a system of higher education that includes an understanding of the roles of higher education, of higher education institutions, and of various stakeholders, such as learners, staff in higher education institutions, and social partners. The elements of such national higher education systems are often formally defined, however there may be many aspects of higher education systems that are not precisely defined but are understood within the society in which they operate. Within higher education systems, higher education qualifications themselves are a key element and are often not clearly separated in their definition from the programmes of study leading to them.

In recent years, there has been an increasing national and international debate on higher education qualifications, and in particular how they are organised, recognised and related to each other on national and trans-national bases. In particular, the emerging developments within the Bologna Process have been key factors in stimulating such debates. The OECD has made some advances in this area with its project entitled *The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning*. Emerging from this debate has been recognition of the need to have a specific policy focus on the higher education qualifications attained by learners who have successfully participated in programmes of various types.

In simple terms a national framework of higher education qualifications is defined here as:

the single description, at national level or level of an education system, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which

defines the relationship between higher education qualifications.

Such national frameworks typically have a number of elements; these are discussed in detail in this chapter, and include sets of specific framework criteria, levels of learning outcome and descriptors for qualifications. Some such frameworks encompass many areas of learning whilst others are confined to higher education. Some frameworks may have more design elements and a tighter structure than others; some may have a legal basis whereas others represent a consensus of view of social partners.

2.3 The purposes of national higher education frameworks of qualifications

A comprehensive restructuring of the European landscape of higher education is underway, and qualifications themselves are becoming the focus of more attention as their meaning and relevance are being considered in relation to the realities of the 21st century. Part of this process is a pronounced tendency to create more explicit systems that map and explain the purpose and relationship between different qualifications.

There are various forms of national qualification frameworks; some include all levels and types of qualifications whilst others, for example, specifically separate higher education qualifications from other types of qualifications. There are thus some national systems that employ a single framework whilst others have multiple frameworks that are generally integrated in a more or less formal way. Frameworks differ greatly in the detail of their purposes and components.¹⁴

¹⁴ For example, some are credit-based using the ECTS system, some use other credit systems and some use no credits at all.



Some frameworks have a strong regulatory function based in law, whilst others are descriptions and have evolved by agreement between stakeholders.¹⁵ Modern national qualification structures invariably involve much more than a simple distinction between two cycles and commonly include a range of qualifications, intermediate qualifications and levels. The development of any over-arching European model will need to be flexible enough to encompass such variations.

National frameworks of qualifications in higher education can act in two distinct ways: firstly, by directly achieving certain things; and secondly, by enabling and encouraging other developments. This latter role has been shown to be important as it helps to drive change and improvement within educational systems. These different dimensions can be illustrated by separating and identifying them. National frameworks of qualifications can achieve the following; they:

- > make explicit the purposes and aims of qualifications - by their clear description through the articulation of the learning outcomes, and by clarifying any rights to professional practice and recognition associated with them;
- > delineate points of integration and overlap between different qualifications and qualification types - thereby positioning qualifications in relation to one another and showing routes (and barriers) for progression;
- > provide a nationally agreed framework that guides and reflects the agreement of stakeholders;
- > provide a context for the review, articulation and development of existing qualifications

¹⁵ For example, in Scotland the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is a detailed agreement between stakeholders that entails no legislation.

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- > provide a context for the design of new qualifications.

National frameworks of qualifications can act as drivers of change in that they can help to:

- > promote the attainment of qualifications - by indicating their role and benefits for citizens, employers and all members of society;
- > nationally and internationally, raise the awareness of citizens and employers in relation to qualifications - by clarification of the various national roles and relationships between qualifications and the opportunities, recognition and mobility that are possible;
- > facilitate and support learners and clarify all of the educational opportunities available to them - by encompassing all higher education qualifications and providing a comprehensive listing of all qualifications including intermediate qualifications and, where appropriate, their credit values;
- > improve access and social inclusion - by creating a variety of alternative routes, with entry and exit points that acknowledge attainment;
- > influence the reform of qualifications to reflect changing societal needs, including the introduction of new qualifications;
- > facilitate curricular change;
- > support (autonomous) higher education institutions in meeting their responsibilities to learners and other stakeholders

promote the attractiveness of the higher education from outside of the country.

There is no precise pattern to the way that national frameworks of qualifications develop. It is quite common for them to be created by bottom-up or top-down approaches or, a fusion of both. Their very development, by consultation between stakeholders (see section 2.6), is often a cathartic procedure which itself is a dynamic learning experience for all concerned. The ownership, control and development of national frameworks of qualifications do not follow a single pattern and this reflects the reality that such frameworks are, quite properly, an area of national autonomy and political decision-making. However, there is a need to explore the adoption of some elements of shared European methodologies and terminology to describe and express qualifications and frameworks of qualifications. This does not, and should not, mean that the content, purpose, organisation and delivery of qualifications should be standardised. Furthermore, it is essential to recognise that national frameworks of qualifications are dynamic structures that need to develop as the national situation and priorities change.

National frameworks of qualifications are important parts of the academic architecture within which autonomous higher education institutions can flourish and be supported. They facilitate the creation of academic independence within a system of responsibility and external reference points. Higher education institutions are provided with clear parameters for the development and validation of their own qualifications. They can thus be held responsible and accountable for their activities (by internal and external quality assurance processes) whilst retaining real ownership of their curricula. Autonomous higher education institutions can then demonstrate that each of their qualifications is allocated to the appropriate level in any national framework.

In Europe a number of countries have, as a means of reform, pioneered new outcomes-focussed approaches to their national higher education frameworks of qualifications as well as the qualifications they contain. They have gone beyond traditional

systems by emphasising not only input factors and formal course characteristics but by also identifying output factors based on learning outcomes. These countries share similar tools and methodological approaches. It is this kind of approach that is important for the development of national frameworks and Framework for qualifications of EHEA. Such frameworks employ clear external reference points (learning outcomes, subject reference points/benchmark statements, levels/cycle descriptors, workload, qualification descriptors, etc.) and provide a context for qualifications that are themselves expressed with greater clarity and precision with regard to their nature, function and skills that they certify.

2.4 Elements of national frameworks

National frameworks of qualifications are typically constructed using similar elements to those indicated in the Berlin Communiqué. Qualifications themselves benefit from being described clearly, and are defined for this report as:

*any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting that particular learning outcomes have been achieved, normally following the successful completion of a recognised higher education programme of study.*¹⁶

The award of a qualification indicates that the student has completed a range of studies to a given standard and/or indicates a level of achievement by an individual who is deemed fit to perform a particular role, set of tasks or job. Qualifications are increasingly expressed in terms of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate on the successful completion of the approved programme of learning.

¹⁶ This definition is adapted from article 1.1 of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention, Lisbon 1997

Higher education qualifications benefit from detailed description that reflect their purpose and function and facilitate their international comparisons and recognition. In ‘new style’ qualifications frameworks, qualifications are typically described in terms of workload, cycle or level, learning outcomes, competence and profile. These elements are explored in the following sections. It is these elements that provide the transparency and ultimately the improved recognition required by the EHEA.

2.4.1 Learning outcomes, including competences

Learning outcomes represent one of the essential building blocks for transparency within higher education systems and qualifications; they were the subject of a Bologna Conference held in Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2004, where all aspects of their application were examined in the context of Bologna developments. A background study and the conference report provide detailed information on the implementation of learning outcomes across Europe. Learning outcomes have been defined above as:

*statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.*¹⁷

Learning outcomes have applications in many locations: (i) the individual higher education institution (for course units/modules and programmes of study¹⁸); (ii) nationally (for qualifications, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance

¹⁷ Source: the UK ‘Using Learning Outcomes’ background report for the Edinburgh ‘Bologna seminar 1-2 July 2004, section 1.2. This section explores a number of definitions of learning outcomes. The use of the verb ‘do’ in the definition used above underlines the aspect of competence or ability rather than the way in which this ability is demonstrated.

¹⁸ This includes all the study leading to a particular qualification.

regimes); and (iii) internationally (for wider recognition and transparency purposes). They are important for the understanding of qualifications in society, for example by learners and employers.

Learning outcomes statements are typically characterised by the use of active verbs expressing knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, etc. With ‘outcomes-based approaches’, they have implications for qualifications, curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment, as well as quality assurance. They are thus likely to form an important part of 21st century approaches to higher education (and, indeed, to education and training generally) and the reconsideration of such vital questions as to what, whom, how, where and when we teach and assess. The very nature and role of education is being questioned, now more than ever before, and learning outcomes are important tools in clarifying the results of learning for the student, citizen, employer and educator.

In terms of curriculum design and development, learning outcomes are at the forefront of educational change. They place a focus on the coherence and aims of the qualification, the judgement of the designer and how the qualification fits within the traditions of the discipline. They represent a change in emphasis from ‘teaching’ to ‘learning’ typified by what is known as the adoption of a student-centred approach, as opposed to the more traditional, teacher-centred viewpoint. Student-centred learning produces a focus on the teaching - learning - assessment relationships and the fundamental links between the design, delivery, assessment and measurement of learning.

Learning outcomes are not just an isolated tool at the level of curriculum design but also represent an approach that plays a significant role in a much wider context that includes: the integration of academic and vocational education and training (VET); the assessment of prior experiential learning (APEL);

the development of qualifications frameworks that accommodate lifelong learning; the development of credit transfer and accumulation systems.

Achieving learning outcomes

The concept of learning outcomes implies that the manner of the achievement of a qualification is not as important as the achievement of the qualification itself. This is very relevant to the recognition of prior learning, which is enhanced by the increased use of learning outcomes. A broad understanding of the recognition of prior learning in relation to qualifications is that this can be for the purposes of:

> entry to a programme leading to a qualification;

and also

> allocation of credit towards an qualification, or exemption from some programme requirements

> eligibility for a full qualification

The recognition of prior learning can also be directly relevant in terms of facilitating employment. Making a full qualification on the basis of the recognition of prior learning is a relatively new concept. Many countries are seeking to encourage the continuation, expansion and further development of processes for the recognition of prior learning. In France, a national system has been in place for some time; this is explained in Appendix 4. Whilst many higher education institutions within the UK also recognise and accredit prior learning, national guidelines have only recently been published¹⁹.

In June 2004 the Council of European Ministers, and the representatives of the Member States meeting within the

¹⁹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/apel/guidance.htm>

European Council, adopted Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning²⁰.

It is important to the development and implementation of a European framework that the broad connections between learning outcomes, levels, level descriptors and credits, and teaching, learning and assessment are recognised. Learning outcomes have been described as a basic educational building block and as such they have direct and powerful links with a number of other educational tools. They make possible much more than the simple identification of learning achievements. They have a direct relationship to levels and level indicators. When learning outcomes are written they are created in the context of the institutional/national/international reference points that aid the maintenance of standards and quality. The development of curricula in terms of learning outcomes does not, therefore, happen in a vacuum. Appropriate reference points guide the application of module/unit and programme learning outcomes.

Descriptors of learning outcomes

In the context of the above descriptor of learning outcomes (statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand, and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning), there is a need to consider the extent to which common approaches to the understanding and definition of learning outcomes between countries should be explored.

In the Tuning project, the description of competences embraces three strands, ‘knowing and understanding’ (theoretical knowledge of an academic field, the capacity to know and understand), ‘knowing how to act’ (practical and operational application of knowledge to certain situations), ‘knowing how

²⁰ Council 9600/04

to be' (values as an integral element of the way of perceiving and living with others and in a social context). Several countries, including Ireland²¹ and Denmark²² have subtle variations in their approaches to, and definitions of, learning outcomes.

Furthermore, a general distinction can be made between generic outcomes associated with all holders of an qualification and specific outcomes associated with disciplines and fields of learning and their particular qualifications. Both the Tuning project, and the shared qualification descriptors (Dublin descriptors) that were developed within the Joint Quality Initiative (JQI), include generic competences (skills and knowledge) and include attributes such as the capacity to learn, the capacity for analysis and syntheses etc. The Tuning project identified a list of 30 generic competences and has also identified specific outcomes in each of the fields of learning that it has examined.

There has been much discussion about the nature of learning outcomes in higher education and in education generally. So far, there is no agreed approach to describing them in a generic sense. For the purposes of this report, learning outcomes are understood in their broadest sense and, in the case of the Dublin Descriptors and the Tuning project, include competences. Within some discourses competences may have a more precise meaning, for example, in some assessment contexts they are associated with the performance of work-related tasks.

In developing frameworks of qualifications the associated descriptors of learning outcome statements need to be explicit about whether they are, for example, written to represent minimum threshold statements (showing the minimum requirements to obtain a pass), or written as reference points

²¹ See annex 5

²² See annex 5

describing the typical (showing the normal level of achievement of successful learners). Either approach is legitimate but it is important, for the purpose of national and international understanding, that each national framework makes its approach absolutely clear.

2.4.2 Levels and typical/generic qualifications

Levels are traditionally the key structural elements on which many national frameworks of qualifications are built. Levels can be understood as:

representing a series of sequential steps (a developmental continuum), expressed in terms of a range of generic outcomes, against which typical qualifications can be positioned.

Levels are pragmatic constructs; they have been developed over the years. Different countries take different approaches in determining the number of levels, the ways in which levels are described, the range of outcomes spanned by levels, and the width and depth of levels.

Some national frameworks while having levels in which qualifications are placed, do not explicitly set out the range of outcomes specifically associated with a level (for example the framework for England Wales and Northern Ireland). Others have what are described as *level descriptors* or *level indicators* (for example Ireland) that set out the range of learning outcomes associated with each level. Where there are no indicators or descriptors these can be understood in the context of the typical qualifications contained within them.

The majority of national frameworks of qualifications employ their own systems of levels, within the broad Bologna cycles, in order to increase the understanding and transparency between their qualifications. These levels need not be directly related to

years of full-time study, in either qualifications or/and credit frameworks e.g. in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) each of the 12 identified levels across all learning is the location of one or more typical qualification and each level is distinguished in terms of the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding, degree of independence and creativity involved, general cognitive skills, the range and sophistication of practice, etc. The expression of clear levels is an important feature of any qualifications frameworks. They directly facilitate the realisation of the common purposes that qualifications frameworks are created to achieve.

The concept of typical/generic types of qualifications is also one that is incorporated in many national frameworks. The level indicators/descriptors act to assist in the positioning of typical/generic qualifications at levels.

These typical/generic qualifications are the principal class of qualifications made within each level. For most levels, such typical/generic qualifications capture a typical range of achievements in a typical qualification at the level – there may be more than one such typical qualification. They include the learning outcomes as they have been defined in a national framework. For example, many national frameworks incorporate first, second and third cycle degrees, as typical/generic qualifications.

Typical/generic qualifications act as a guide (for curriculum designers and learners) as to the kinds of demand it is appropriate to make of learners. The generic qualifications themselves often have descriptors that define the learning outcomes associated with them; these are normally generic in nature and can be applied across subject disciplines and modes of learning. In higher education they are primarily used by: course designers (developing learning outcomes and assessment criteria); those involved in quality assurance (validating, reviewing and approving programmes of learning); credential

evaluators (nationally and internationally, as reference points to help make accurate recognition judgements).

2.4.3 Credits and workload

The Bologna signatory states identified ECTS as an important component of the European Higher Education Area and encouraged states to employ ‘a system of credits’ to facilitate international student mobility and international curriculum development. A large number of countries have already adopted ECTS by law as an accumulation system. Furthermore, the Zurich Conference on credit transfer and accumulation, held by the European Universities Association (EUA) in October 2002, stressed the central role of ECTS in higher education, which was endorsed by the ministers in Berlin.

A credit framework is a way of valuing, measuring, describing and comparing learning achievement, and credits themselves are a quantified means of expressing the volume of learning based on the achievement of learning outcomes and their associated workload. Credits and levels are tools used to represent learning and measure learning volume. National credit frameworks can provide the broad underlying principles to be shared by higher education institutions and their stakeholders, whilst individual credit schemes can exist at the institutional level and detail the procedures and rules of progression established within them.

The drive to use credits is primarily because they support more flexibility within education systems. They can link diverse forms and types of education. The contribution of credits to national and the overarching European framework of qualifications is that they can provide an additional dimension, an added value, to further improve mobility (student, staff and programmes of learning), recognition and transparency.

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The national role of credit frameworks varies between different countries just as their frameworks of qualifications and national systems of higher education vary. Similarly, the detailed nature, purpose and rules behind national credit framework are diverse, and matters of domestic concern and autonomy - as are national frameworks of qualifications. At the national level credits are introduced to achieve a range of objectives including any or all of the following:

- > to promote student mobility (within and between institutions as well as internationally);
- > to improve curriculum design (and innovation) and encourage flexible routes and pathways within and between qualifications;
- > to facilitate the creation of diversity in national higher education qualifications and institutions;
- > to promote the development of multiple higher education entry and exit points;
- > to help encourage widening participation and lifelong learning;
- > to improve the recognition of learning achievements including different modes, locations and types of learning (e.g. distance education and work-based APEL approaches);
- > to provide a reference point for the purpose of quality assurance
- > to provide a reference point for funding;
- > to assist in the clarification of information to all stakeholders;

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- > to prevent overloaded curricula and undue burden on learners

Currently, many European countries are adopting, or have already adopted national, regional or local credit frameworks/schemes to facilitate the modernisation of their education systems. Increasing numbers of these are based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) using a tariff of 60-credits per full time year. This development has resulted in a shift in ECTS from its traditional role as a credit transfer, mobility system primarily concerned with the recognition of periods of learning for students who take part of their studies in another country. It is now evolving into a wider pan-European credit accumulation and transfer system which impacts on all higher education programmes of learning.

In the development of national frameworks of qualifications there is a need to show that they are supported by credit systems which are compatible with ECTS and that credits and qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes, levels and associated workloads. Workload is defined for this paper as:

a quantitative measure of all learning activities that may feasibly be required for the achievement of the learning outcomes (e.g. lectures, seminars, practical work, private study, information retrieval, research, examinations).

The time required for an average student to undertake the workload should inform the national credit system. The feasibility of attaining the learning outcomes required for credit within programmes is important for the credibility of the framework and its helpfulness to learners. It is important, in order to avoid confusion, that there is consistent use of credits in both national and European contexts.

2.4.4 Profile

National frameworks typically include references to ‘profile’; this is an important element for consideration when building any national framework of qualifications. Profile can refer either to the specific (subject) field(s) of learning of a qualification or to the broader aggregation of clusters of qualifications from different fields that share a common emphasis or purpose, for example on applied vocational as opposed to more theoretical academic studies.

Fields of learning are central to the European tradition of higher education. Students typically obtain a degree in some field. The work of the Tuning project has demonstrated how much common ground can be identified by trans-national collaborative efforts within fields of learning. This work will continue and inasmuch as higher learning is by definition always changing, the work is unending. Even the boundaries between fields are evolving. The level of detail with which the boundaries are drawn varies across fields. In some cases there are professional reasons for being quite precise about whether a qualification is or is not within a field, whereas for others some measure of ambiguity about which field a qualification belongs in may be acceptable. Various taxonomies of fields of learning exist. Recent years have also seen the development of a number of trans-disciplinary study programmes and it is recognised that, at least in many fields, a learner’s competence and attractiveness to the labour market may be enhanced by supplementing a concentration or core competence in a given area (e.g. economics or political science) with more limited competence in other areas, such as foreign languages, law, statistics, history, etc.

Profile, in the sense of clusters of qualifications sharing a purpose, is a prominent feature of some qualifications systems and is absent in others. In many cases the origins of the distinctions are rooted in binary (or even more complex) systems of provision. In some cases these distinctions have

been translated into outcomes terms and are a feature of the new post-Bologna system. Other systems have reduced or eliminated these distinctions. The existence of these differences in profile is relevant to the framework objectives as they sometimes influence mobility between cycles, even within countries.

2.5 Quality assurance and national frameworks of qualifications within national contexts

Quality assurance has a double aspect: the internal quality assurance and development at higher education institutions and the external quality assurance undertaken by independent bodies.

In recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on the development and use of explicit criteria and processes for quality assurance that are open to external scrutiny, and the majority of Bologna countries now have quality assurance bodies linked to higher education. Within the Berlin Communiqué, the ministers committed themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stressed that ‘consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework’. They committed themselves to have national quality assurance systems in place by 2005 meeting four minimum criteria²³. At the European level they stressed the

²³ National quality assurance systems should include:

- A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.
- Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.
- A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.
- International participation, co-operation and networking.

need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance.

A set of common and shared principles for quality assurance is emerging; this is recognised as underpinning quality assurance irrespective of the various national approaches which must, if they are to be effective, reflect local context and culture in the detail of their application. These shared bases for quality assurance are described in detail within the ‘standards and guidelines’ being developed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB under the mandate from the ministers in their Berlin communiqué.

Within the EHEA there are however significant differences in approach to quality assurance. Some countries include direct ministerial accreditation of individual programmes, whilst other systems accredit institutions. In yet others the quality assurance processes involve either the review of individual programmes and / or the audit of the institutions responsible for delivering the programmes of study. However, all systems include an element of ‘externality’, whether by external inspectors or by academic peers. There is also a general trend towards increasing the input of students and other stakeholders within quality assurance.

Increasingly, quality assurance involves procedures that are more clearly defined, and it thus relies upon the use of explicit criteria including, where they have been developed, national frameworks of qualifications. Greater transparency of quality assurance procedures is also being supported through inclusion of a wider range of external, and in some cases international, reference points.

In all cases where national frameworks of qualifications have been developed, whether for general, vocational, and/or higher education, they are primarily intended to provide information on qualifications and in particular their inter-relationships; but

they can be and are also used in quality assurance. There are, however, differences in the ways in which the frameworks are used, and intended to be used. Where the delivery of programmes is formally regulated, either by a ministry or other organisation external to the delivering institutions, the framework and its components may be used to establish and/or identify whether specified minimum standards have been met. Such can be the basis of accreditation, although regulation of programmes is not necessarily linked to minimum standards. Elsewhere, and in particular in those countries where the academic institutions have autonomous powers to design their own programmes and set academic standards themselves, qualification frameworks are used as a ‘point of reference’ for both general guidance and within a quality assurance system. In such cases the components of the framework tend to be expressed within a less prescriptive context.

‘Externality’ is increasingly recognised as an essential part of quality assurance, and so it should be within the development and application of new national qualifications frameworks. For such frameworks to be of benefit to stakeholders, including intending and current students, and their employers, the frameworks need to be expressed in terms that are understandable and relevant. These may not always sit comfortably with the precise and detailed language often used or thought to be necessary for regulation.

For pedagogical reasons and to address the needs of stakeholders, the descriptors used within national frameworks are increasingly concerned with identifying ‘achievements’, or the outcomes of learning, rather than referring primarily to ‘input measures’. The inclusion of such an achievements/outcomes based approach will be essential if national frameworks are to meet the needs of all stakeholders and interested parties. This shift in emphasis has a direct impact on quality assurance processes and provides both the rationale and the need to move away from the application of merely mechanistic

approaches, particularly where these are based primarily on ‘input measures’ (e.g. delivered material, time, etc.).

Traditionally within higher education, and largely irrespective of national agendas, programmes have been predominantly planned by the provider(s), with the coherence of the programme setting the context for any quality assurance, whether this is based on implicit/subjective or explicit/objective criteria. With the aspirations of the lifelong learning agendas being promoted at national levels throughout the EHEA, there is increasing emphasis on the role of the stakeholder (student and employer) in programme planning. To accommodate such changes new approaches to quality assurance will be required, including some that can cope with a primary interest in units of study and their combination.

With different emphases in purpose, and marked diversity in quality assurance practices it is inevitable that the application of national frameworks within quality assurance will vary with regard to emphasis and detail of process. Nevertheless, all are essentially concerned with “trust building” and establishing mutual confidence both within national and international contexts. National frameworks have and can continue to provide the stimulus for greater clarity about qualifications and their quality assurance, and progression between them. There is no single model for the application of national frameworks of qualifications within quality assurance whether for assessing the standards of those qualifications or the quality of the provision that leads to them. Experience in those countries that have developed national frameworks has clearly demonstrated that they can be, and are a vital component of the quality assurance environment. It is important to recognise that for national frameworks to fulfil their roles most effectively in supporting effective confidence and “trust” in qualifications, their form, components and application will need to reflect the characteristics of the national context in which they work, including the ‘quality culture’ of the HE community and how it addresses the needs of stakeholders.

2.6 The role of stakeholders in national frameworks

Qualifications are tools for the promotion of trust between the various parties who use these qualifications. There are many elements that go into building up trust. Historically qualifications may have relied for their currency on trust built up among relatively narrow groups of users. For example, such groups include those within a single professional or occupational sector, or those concerned with certain stages of education or training. In the era of lifelong learning, the community of trust surrounding qualifications must be broadened without undermining the strength of the trust itself. There are mechanisms to support the development of trust, such as provisions for setting standards and assuring quality, but it is fundamentally a social and political process as well as a technical one.

The centrality of trust to qualifications was well expressed in the Report of the Study Team on the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework in South Africa in April 2002.

‘The success of a qualifications framework may be measured by the extent to which its standards and qualifications are valued and used. Unless providers offer them, and unless committed employers understand and demand them, standards and qualifications per se will be inert and disregarded. Thus a qualifications framework cannot stand on its own but needs to be embedded in both the provider community and the communities of users. Trust, which is closely allied to credibility and acceptance, is an essential attribute of successful qualifications anywhere, whether conventional or otherwise. If outcomes-based qualifications are too far removed

from the contexts where learning is done or where qualifications are put to use they will be rejected or ignored'.²⁴

The development of any framework of qualifications must take into account the need to develop trust among the various stakeholders and confidence in the integrity of the resultant framework.²⁵ It is vital to identify the stakeholders and advance consensus-building mechanisms in framework development. An important way to build trust and acceptance is to ensure that any top-down approach is fused with a bottom-up process. There is no perfect way to achieve this and different states have adopted different techniques. Whatever the approaches adopted, it is important to include a variety of stakeholders and a number of ways to build a consensus.

The stakeholders may include: learners/students; providers of education and training; government and appropriate government agencies; awarding bodies; higher education professors/teachers; employers and the business sector; trade unions; community and voluntary organisations; professional bodies; etc. The cooperation of governments, higher education institutions and students based on partnership is an underlying principle of the Bologna Process. Consensus-building mechanisms in the development of national frameworks of qualifications may include a number of measures such as: the broad composition of any statutory body and its executive staff; a publicly advertised consultation phase; publication of papers and submissions, on the internet; international research and consultation; formal survey work with learners and employers; a broadly-based consultative group that meets regularly to

²⁴ Report of the study team on the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework in South Africa, April 2002, page 58.

²⁵ The concept of 'zones of mutual trust' has also been considered extensively in a recent report for CEDEFOP carried out in support of Copenhagen process for VET: Mike Coles and Tim Oates: European reference levels for education and training, March 2004.

produce extensive, supporting documentation; an open approach by all to questioning the purposes of qualifications and standards; sector meetings (e.g., to consider employment, community, and voluntary sector perspectives); bilateral meetings with stakeholder organisations; the securing of ongoing political support for the initiative; consultation outside the state, particularly with neighbouring jurisdictions; and participation in European and international organisations and meetings.

2.7 Conclusions: good practice for the development of national frameworks of qualifications

An examination of the nature, development and effectiveness of existing ‘new style’ higher education national frameworks of qualifications reveals a wide pattern of different experiences from which a number of good practice recommendations can be identified. The following list indicates some of the most useful aspects that can facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications.

- > The development and review process for producing good frameworks is most effective when it involves all relevant stakeholders both within and outside higher education. Higher education frameworks naturally link to VET and post-secondary education and as such are best viewed and treated as a national initiative. This also makes possible the inclusion of, or links to, other areas of education and training outside higher education.
- > The framework for higher education qualifications should identify a clear and nationally agreed set of purposes (section 2.3 of this report explores a range of possibilities).
- > Frameworks for higher education qualifications benefit from the inclusion of cycles and /or levels, and articulation

with outcome-focussed indicators and/or descriptors of qualifications.

- > The use of learning outcomes in describing units, modules, and whole qualifications aids their transparency, recognition and subsequent student and citizen mobility. The identification of formal links to learning outcomes should play an important role in the development of national frameworks of qualifications.
- > More flexible higher education frameworks of qualifications have the benefit of promoting multiple pathways into and through higher education, and thus through encouraging lifelong learning and the efficient use of resources promote greater social cohesion.
- > Higher education frameworks of qualifications benefit from being directly linked to credit accumulation and transfer systems. Credits are student-centred tools that can enhance the flexibility, clarity, progression and coherence of educational systems when they are expressed in terms of learning outcomes, levels/cycles and workload. Credit systems facilitate bridges and links between different forms, modes, levels and sectors of education and can be instrumental in facilitating access, inclusion and lifelong learning.
- > Higher education frameworks of qualifications should explicitly link to academic standards, national and institutional quality assurance systems, and public understanding of the place and level of nationally recognised qualifications.
- > Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by different higher education qualifications and titles. This confidence and understanding is enhanced by the publication of appropriate institutional audits and/or subject review reports.

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- > The development and application of ‘new style’ national frameworks of qualifications facilitates the development of autonomous higher education institutions by creating clear external reference points that help to promote high quality, responsible and responsive institutions.
- > National frameworks of qualifications need to articulate in a transparent way with the overarching European framework for qualifications. The process of articulation should involve the careful mapping of national qualifications (their levels, learning outcomes and descriptors) with the cycle descriptors identified for the European overarching framework (see section three for a discussion of appropriate protocols).

3 The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area >

3.1 Purposes and nature of the framework of qualifications of the EHEA

A framework for qualifications can fulfil many purposes and the various national frameworks already in existence or development embody diverse purposes. The framework for the EHEA derives its distinctive purposes from the objectives expressed through the Bologna Process. The most directly relevant of these objectives are international transparency, recognition, and mobility.

- > International transparency is at the heart of the Bologna Declaration's call for a system of easily readable and comparable degrees. While other devices, such as the Diploma Supplement, also have a role to play in this objective, it will be difficult to ensure that qualifications can be easily read and compared across borders without a simplifying architecture for mutual understanding, through the construction of a framework. Moreover the relatively rapid success in the introduction of the two-cycle model through much of the EHEA has in some ways already served to underline that comparable structure of qualifications is not in itself sufficient for genuine comparability and transparency. This realisation led to the call in the Berlin communiqué for an overarching framework to link the national frameworks together in a coherent way.
- > International recognition of qualifications builds on transparency. A framework, which provides a common understanding of the outcomes represented by a qualification rather than a mere assertion of comparability, will greatly enhance the usefulness of qualifications across the EHEA. There are a variety of purposes for the recognition of qualifications – including employment and access to continuing education – involving different stakeholders. The development of a common overarching framework through the collaborative efforts of stakeholders

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across Europe will enhance the other actions being made to improve recognition for all of these purposes.

- > International mobility of learners and graduates depends on the recognition of their prior learning and qualifications gained. Learners moving between qualifications or cycles require recognition in order to access more advanced programmes. Students moving within their studies, and their advisors, can benefit from the clarity that may be provided through the specification of the level and nature of the study programmes. These support mobility since learners can have greater confidence that the outcomes of study abroad will contribute to the qualification sought in their home country. A framework will be of particular help in supporting the development and recognition of joint degrees from more than one country.

An overarching European framework has some distinctive objectives, which differ from those of national frameworks. As a meta-framework, it is intended to assist in the identification of points of articulation between national frameworks. It also serves as a point of reference for those developing or reviewing national frameworks of qualification.

The framework for qualifications of the EHEA should be regarded as an overarching framework. That is to say, it provides a meta-framework within which to develop national frameworks and, in broad terms, it stipulates the outline and boundary of national frameworks, and is a device, which helps to provide clearer understanding of how the various qualifications made within the European higher education area, are related to each other and articulate with each other. It expresses how the qualifications systems of the various states in the area are related to each other, especially where these national systems have themselves been incorporated into formal national frameworks. It offers a common set of cycles and levels, with descriptors for those cycles. Much of the detail expressed in national frameworks is neither necessary nor

desirable in an overarching framework. Indeed, one would expect that as national frameworks evolve they would introduce elements that reflect national needs. These may include qualifications for partial completion of cycles or attainment within a cycle. The framework for qualifications of the EHEA does not replace national frameworks. It augments them by providing a series of reference points whereby they can demonstrate their mutual compatibility.

The overarching framework does not prescribe the content or form of national qualifications systems. They are a matter for the competent national authorities and may be achieved through the specification of national frameworks of qualifications.

Not all qualifications included in national frameworks will necessarily correspond to the completion of one of the major cycles in the overarching European framework. Some qualifications fall within cycles. The framework will however also provide some implicit guidance for the assessment of such qualifications. There may also be specialised and minor qualifications, which do not correspond to one of the cycles.

The dimensions and features of some qualifications within national frameworks do not have counterparts in other countries. The overarching European framework will not refer to such features but neither will it exclude them from national systems. One example of such a feature is ‘profile’, as discussed in section 2.4.4, which is an important element in some national qualifications systems but not in others. The overarching framework will not refer to such features; it has no intentions or competence to influence inclusion/exclusion of such features from national frameworks.

3.2 Cycles and levels

A fundamental question for any framework of qualifications concerns its structure and the number of divisions it contains.

For the EHEA framework this question is already largely answered. The Bologna Declaration asserts that there will be two main cycles and the Berlin Communiqué elaborates upon this to specify a third (doctoral) cycle linked to research. The successful completion of the first cycle gives access to programmes of the second cycle. The successful completion of the second cycle gives access to programmes of the third cycle. “Access” is used here in the same sense as in the Lisbon Recognition Convention, namely the right to apply and be considered for admission to a programme of higher education. It does not necessarily imply an automatic right of admission or entitlement to a place on a programme.

In addition, the Berlin communiqué requests that the Bologna Process Follow-up Group explore whether and how shorter programmes within higher education may be included. The short cycle qualifications of interest are those within or linked to the first cycle.

Some national frameworks include further sub-divisions within the three main Bologna cycles, but such sub-divisions are not widely shared across the area. The relationship of qualifications in such subdivisions to those corresponding to the main cycles within the respective national frameworks can and probably will be used informally to indicate their approximate position in relation to the EHEA framework. Such qualifications may also be awarded credit that can contribute towards qualifications of another cycle. The overarching framework of qualifications should play an important role in facilitating fair recognition of such qualifications within national frameworks that do not have similar qualifications by a process of partial recognition.²⁶

²⁶ For Partial recognition see the Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in 2001.

The concept of “cycle” has been used in the Bologna Process to refer to stages in higher education, incorporating qualifications, programmes, and phases of learning. The term “level” is more commonly found in documentation on national frameworks of qualifications.

Level is also used to refer to the provision of education, for example in UNESCO’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Unlike the framework, which has the variety of purposes already discussed, ISCED is primarily a tool for statistical classification.²⁷

The Berlin communiqué refers to basing the framework on “levels”. It is not intended that the EHEA framework would specify conventions on naming qualifications. It is unlikely that conventions such as “bachelor’s level” or “master’s level”, which are used in some though by no means all national systems, would be acceptable. A simple numeric designation such as “level 1”, “level 2” would risk confusion, especially where some national framework have numbered level systems starting well ‘below’ higher education. The link with study programmes suggested by “cycles” is however not inappropriate given that the specifications of the framework must take workload into account. Therefore it is proposed that the three principal divisions in the framework be identified by reference to qualifications corresponding to completion of the cycle:

²⁷ ISCED 1997 recognises that while it is desirable to classify levels on the basis of educational content, the diversity of programmes, curricula and structure make this impossible to do on a worldwide scale without employing additional criteria such as entrance requirements, duration and national qualification structure. ISCED Level 5 and 6 refer to tertiary education. Level 5 is defined as tertiary education not leading to an advanced research qualification. It is further divided in 5A and 5B, using a set of subsidiary criteria. Level 6 refers to tertiary education leading to an advanced research qualification.

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- > First cycle (higher education) qualifications
- > Second cycle (higher education) qualifications
- > Third cycle (higher education) qualifications

The Berlin communiqué asked that shorter higher education linked to the first cycle be considered. For the purposes of this report this is referred to as the short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle). Qualifications corresponding to successful completion of the short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) can be identified. Such short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications are not universally employed, and comparable qualifications do not exist in all national systems. There is no intention to mandate the creation of such a qualification where the national system does not see fit to include it. However, since short cycle qualifications are found in many countries it is important to give them a place in the framework. This will help for the mutual recognition of the qualifications between those states that have them. It will also help to develop recognition of short cycle qualifications in those states which do not use them in their national systems but who receive holders of such qualifications. At the same time it is recognised that some states have a variety of qualifications in or about this level, with diverse purposes and structures. Some are part of higher education and some are classified as being outside of higher education. The short cycle descriptor is not intended to cover all of the diversity of qualifications that fall within, but do not complete, the first cycle.

Programmes leading to a first cycle qualification (or a short cycle within or linked to the first cycle where it is used) have a 'start point'. This is sometimes spoken of as an entry route. Strictly speaking this is not a qualification and is thus not part of the framework for qualifications of the EHEA. Moreover there are diverse pathways into the various forms of higher education within some states, which make it difficult to define a

‘level’ for entry in higher education; indeed, ‘level’ may not be the most appropriate concept to apply. However, it is thought useful that some reference is made to the starting point(s) for the framework. For the purposes of the EHEA framework it is generally considered sufficient to refer to Article IV of the Lisbon Recognition Convention concerning qualifications giving access to higher education:

“Each Party shall recognise the qualifications issued by other Parties meeting the general requirements for access to higher education in those Parties for the purpose of access to programmes belonging to its higher education system, unless a substantial difference can be shown between the general requirements for access in the Party in which the qualification was obtained and in the Party in which recognition of the qualification is sought.”

3.3 Descriptors of learning outcomes, including competences

A key element in contemporary qualifications frameworks is the specification of outcomes. There are various ways in which the range of outcomes can be categorised and specified. Traditionally higher education was relatively explicit about the knowledge (outcomes) to be achieved, or at least the knowledge covered by the curriculum. It was however somewhat less explicit on the skills or competences required for the award a given qualification. Competences, such as those of critical evaluation, were and are embedded or implicit in the assessment values and practices. It is becoming increasingly widespread practice that as wide a range of the outcomes as possible are specified. Such explicit specification facilitates the comparison of qualifications.

The generic outcomes for a qualification, that is the learning outcomes common to all holders of a particular type of qualification, may be expressed in a ‘qualification descriptor’.

The descriptors for a European framework must of necessity be quite general in nature. Not only must they accommodate a wide range of disciplines and profiles but they must also accommodate, as far as possible, the national variations in how qualifications have been developed and specified. For practical purposes, the descriptors should be short and easy to understand. They should avoid technical language, bearing in mind that they will be used in reference to national qualifications systems expressed in a variety of languages.

After the Prague Ministerial Conference (2001), it became increasingly clear that the structure of cycles introduced through Bologna would have to be supplemented by more detail on the outcomes of these cycles if the objectives of transparency, recognition and mobility were to be met. An informal group of higher education specialists from a variety of countries met under the umbrella of the Joint Quality Initiative (www.jointquality.org). This grouping developed a set of descriptors that have come to be referred to as the 'Dublin Descriptors'. The initial descriptors for the first and second cycle were commended to the ministers' meeting in Berlin by the Amsterdam Consensus. Subsequently the group has developed a descriptor for the third cycle. Recently, a descriptor for a short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle), following the pattern of the other three cycles, has also been produced. These descriptors (especially for the first and second cycles) have been found to be useful in various ways by national quality assurance agencies, developers of higher education standards, and designers of higher programmes. So far, no significant revisions have been proposed.

Qualification descriptors are usually designed to be read as general statements of the typical achievement of learners who have been awarded a qualification on successful completion of a cycle. The concept of typical qualification cycle descriptors was developed within the Joint Quality Initiative. This concept found wider acceptance and applicability than possible use of broader level descriptors. Level descriptors are typically more

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comprehensive and attempt to indicate the full range of outcomes associated with a level.

The Dublin descriptors have been developed as a set and are intended to be read with reference to each other. They are primarily intended for use in the alignment of qualifications and hence national frameworks. National frameworks may themselves have additional elements or outcomes, and may have more detailed and specific functions.

The Dublin descriptors were built on the following elements:

- > knowledge and understanding;
- > applying knowledge and understanding;
- > making judgements;
- > communications skills;
- > learning skills.

The Dublin Descriptors offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle. They are not meant to be prescriptive; they do not represent threshold or minimum requirements and they are not exhaustive; similar or equivalent characteristics may be added or substituted. The descriptors seek to identify the nature of the whole qualification. The descriptors are not subject specific nor are they limited to academic, professional or vocational areas. For particular disciplines the descriptors should be read within the context and use of language of that discipline. Wherever possible, they should be cross-referenced with any expectations/competencies published by the relevant community of scholars and/or practitioners. In adopting the Dublin descriptors the Working Group recognise that further elaboration of the existing elements and/or introduction of new elements will be part of the evolution of them as reference

points to the framework for higher education qualification of the EHEA.

The Dublin descriptors (December 2004) include:

*Qualifications that signify completion of the **higher education short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle)** are awarded to students who:*

- > *have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education²⁸ and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle;*
- > *can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts;*
- > *have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems;*
- > *can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients;*
- > *have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy.*

*Qualifications that signify completion of **the first cycle** are awarded to students who:*

- > *have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education²⁷, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported*

²⁸ General secondary education also includes vocational education with a sufficiently general component.

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by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;

- > *can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional²⁹ approach to their work or vocation, and have competences³⁰ typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;*
- > *have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;*
- > *can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;*
- > *have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.*

*Qualifications that signify completion of **the second cycle** are awarded to students who: [det efterfølgende skal være i kursiv]*

- > *have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or*

²⁹ The word ‘**professional**’ is used in the descriptors in its broadest sense, relating to those attributes relevant to undertaking work or a vocation and that involves the application of some aspects of advanced learning. It is not used with regard to those specific requirements relating to regulated professions. The latter may be identified with the profile / specification.

³⁰ The word ‘**competence**’ is used in the descriptors in its broadest sense, allowing for gradation of abilities or skills. It is not used in the narrower sense identified solely on the basis of a ‘yes/no’ assessment.

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opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research³¹ context;

- > *can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;*
- > *have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;*
- > *can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;*
- > *have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.*
- > *Qualifications that signify completion of **the third cycle** are awarded to students who: [disse linier er ikke i bullit]*
- > *have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;*

³¹ The word ‘**research**’ is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional ‘scientific method’.

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- > *have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;*
- > *have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;*
- > *are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;*
- > *can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;*
- > *can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.*

The Joint Quality Initiative has also compared the descriptors and identified the step changes found between cycles in each of these elements. See Appendix 6.

3.4 Credit and workload

The advantages associated with national credit systems can to some extent be replicated at the European level. Furthermore, there would be additional benefits in the adoption of a suitable common credit system that could support the qualifications framework and could potentially:

- > provide national frameworks of qualifications with a common credit language (based on learning outcomes and student workload) for describing and locating diverse national qualifications;

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- > help promote the widespread development and implementation of learning outcomes and competences with credits used as a method of quantifying and expressing learning achievement;
- > build upon a wide existing European base of experience amongst institutions associated with the international credit developments;
- > facilitate the precise location of learning by linking credits to national systems of levels and the overarching Bologna cycle descriptors;
- > act as an additional set of reference points to facilitate Europe-wide quality assurance and the understanding of national frameworks of qualifications;
- > provide a seamless bridge between higher education and other education, particularly enabling the development of a consistent and common European framework for lifelong learning that integrates all forms and modes of learning;
- > aid the development and construction of international joint degree programmes and programme collaborations by facilitating flexible learning paths and a range of different qualification profiles;
- > facilitate the global articulation of the European Higher Education Area (and the recognition of its qualifications) with other credit-based systems.

The Berlin communiqué noted that “ECTS is increasingly becoming a generalised basis for the national credit systems.” ECTS was initiated in 1989 as a credit transfer system but is now developing as a system for credit accumulation as well as for transfer. Additionally, and importantly, although ECTS was initially conceived of as a measure of work load, it has also been further developed to include the concepts of learning outcomes, and in some of the national implementations of

ECTS there are examples of the use of ‘notional learning time’ to relate ECTS to volumes of learning outcomes.

While some national frameworks are styled as frameworks for credit and qualifications, in which it is possible to assign units of learning directly to the framework without regard to a specific qualification, such an approach is not necessary or feasible for an overarching European framework. The overarching framework for the EHEA is intended to facilitate the comparison of qualifications as awarded within national qualifications systems, or less frequently jointly between two or more national systems under a joint degree arrangement.

It is proposed that credits are assigned to qualifications within national systems, and credit systems developed and implemented within national qualifications frameworks should be compatible with the ECTS.

The discussions in recent years about the first and second cycle qualifications, notably the Bologna Process seminars of 2001 and 2003 in Helsinki, have discussed qualifications in terms of the range of ECTS credits associated with them. Approaches to ECTS weightings for the short cycle, were considered in the work of the JQI and EURASHE. There has not been any detailed consideration of ECTS and the third cycle. This topic was considered at the Austrian-German-EUA Seminar in Salzburg in February 2005 but a conclusion was not reached³².

Building on these discussions, the following are proposed as guidelines for the association of credits with qualifications within national frameworks:

³² A joint statement by the Rector’s Conferences in Austria, Germany and Switzerland indicates that an appropriate limit on the time to doctorate is, as a rule, three years. UK, France and Denmark have the same limit.

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- > Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications may typically include / be represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits;
- > First cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 180-240 ECTS credits;
- > Second cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 90-120 ECTS credits – the minimum requirement should amount to 60 ECTS credits at second cycle level;
- > Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.

3.5 Profile

Profile is used here to refer to the specific field of learning of a qualification. Fields of learning are central to the European tradition of higher education, with learners typically obtaining their degree in a particular field. The work of the Tuning project has demonstrated how much common ground can be identified by trans-national collaborative efforts within various fields of learning. Such work will continue and, in as much as higher education is by definition always changing, the work is unending. Even the boundaries between fields are evolving, and the level of detail with which the boundaries are drawn in itself varies across fields. In some cases, there are professional reasons for being quite precise about whether a qualification is or is not within a field, whereas for others some measure of ambiguity about which field a qualification belongs in may be acceptable. Whilst various taxonomies of fields of learning are available, notably that of ISCED, it does not appear useful at this stage to specify that such a taxonomy should be a feature of the framework.

There have been a number of developments within the EHEA, where academic and professional bodies have come together and shared expertise to ‘tune’ their curricula and in some cases harmonise them. While these developments can be helpful in promoting recognition and mobility, it must be noted that professional profile is a matter for national sovereignty. Developments within a discipline on a voluntary basis at European level cannot supplant the competent national responsibility for standard setting. The function of recognition is also a matter for each state and is facilitated through the ENIC/NARIC network.

3.6 Further development

The ownership of the overarching framework rests collectively with the ministers of the signatory states. Responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow-up Group and any successor executive structures established by the ministers for the furtherance of the EHEA. Ongoing tasks following the establishment of the framework could include the development, monitoring and revision of the criteria and procedures to link national frameworks with the overarching framework, periodic review of the framework structure, including the descriptors, and liaison with groups working across Europe more widely on vocational education and training and (other) integrated frameworks.

3.7 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter has set out and supported the objectives of a framework for qualifications of the EHEA. It is important that all members recognise that such a framework will contribute to transparency and mobility but only if it is underpinned by commitment and trust. Whilst such a European framework is ‘overarching’ it must have the capacity to influence the developments of national frameworks. Compatible elements of

good practice for the development of national frameworks are set out in section 2.7, and where national frameworks are built on such principles it will greatly facilitate the role of the European framework as an important element within the EHEA.

Recommendations:

The framework for qualifications of the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within or linked to the first cycle.

The framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors to be used as reference points.

The Dublin Descriptors are proposed for adoption as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle.

Guidelines are proposed for the range of ECTS typically associated with the completion of each cycle.

4 Linking frameworks of qualifications in higher education >

4.1 Introduction

Forty different independent national frameworks, which are not linked together in a coherent way, would not fulfil the learners' expectations of a European Higher Education Area of transparency and mobility where qualifications are easily recognised across borders. The way in which the national frameworks are aligned to the overarching framework is therefore of outmost importance.

In order to facilitate fair recognition it is necessary for foreign partners to trust that national qualifications also in practice correspond to the levels to which they are attached. In this context, the quality assurance system, however it is organised nationally, has a role to play.

There are already many transparency instruments at the disposal for learners, higher education institutions, employers and recognition centres. They might be rendered more effective by the introduction of qualifications frameworks nationally and internationally.

4.2 Quality assurance and national frameworks of qualifications within the context of the EHEA

Although higher education has, to a large extent, historically reflected national cultural contexts it has also always included an international dimension in the establishment of its qualifications and their standards. Similarly, the mobility of staff and students has introduced an international element to quality assurance although again this is generally based predominantly on national contexts. In both areas the contribution of such an international element may have been somewhat implicit and there has until recently been little use of clear and explicit, internationally recognised criteria for supporting quality assurance processes or making objective

assessments. ‘Trust’ has to a large extent been based on personal knowledge within a limited community and ‘reputation’.

The development of the Bologna process brings with it increased expectations around an international ‘marketplace’ for students, employees and employers. If the process is to be successful it will inevitably need to address ‘trust’ within a much wider context, and particularly increased expectations of greater transparency about (national) qualifications, their standards and their quality assurance.

The roles of national frameworks for qualifications in the description and assurance of standards has been described above (chapter 2.5), but they can also have particular roles where there is international interest in the nature of qualifications. It is perhaps inevitable however that the greater international interest is likely to be in comparison *between* frameworks and the qualifications they include. Comparability is an important element particularly where students are seeking to utilise their qualifications within an international arena.

The Bologna process provides a platform for supporting such trust through improving knowledge and understanding; the national frameworks are integral and essential elements within this. Their value is reinforced through the establishment of an overarching European framework that can provide a reference point to establish comparabilities between national frameworks and their component qualifications.

Such an overarching European framework can provide a mechanism through which national frameworks and particularly their qualifications can, at a somewhat generic level, be compared. Neither a European framework nor indeed national frameworks can by themselves be expected to provide discipline specific detail, but they can provide a guide (and in some cases depending upon national contexts perhaps also a guarantee) of the range and extent of competencies that holders

of particular types of qualification can be expected to have. Qualifications frameworks help provide the basis for confidence in whether an applicant has the relevant skills for employment or further study at a particular level.

In addition to providing a template for national frameworks, a European framework can provide a means for building international confidence in the standards of qualifications by setting quality assurance within trans- and inter-national contexts. It is not possible for a qualifications framework to do this by itself. In addition this requires an understanding and application, perhaps only within a national context, of a series of principles for quality assurance that are agreed within an international context.

Such a set of common and shared principles is emerging within the Bologna Process. These principles are recognised as underpinning quality assurance irrespective of the various national approaches. These shared bases for quality assurance are described in detail within the ‘standards, procedures, and guidelines’ being developed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB under the mandate from the ministers in their Berlin communiqué.

4.3 Criteria and procedures for verifying the compatibility of frameworks with the framework for qualifications of the EHEA

The regulation of qualifications is linked to the education system within which the qualifications are issued. The EHEA framework is not a regulatory instrument. It serves as a reference point to help national authorities (and other agencies, institutions and individuals) in determining how their qualifications might be compared to others within the EHEA. The development or formalisation of national frameworks in a way that takes note of the overarching framework will greatly

facilitate the objectives of transparency, recognition and mobility in the future. It is for national authorities to determine which qualifications are included in national frameworks. While the linking of qualifications to Frameworks is a national matter, it is vital for the development of mutual trust on an international basis that the manner in which this happens at national level is rigorous and transparent. Furthermore, for the functioning and reputation of the Framework for the EHEA as a whole, it is also important that there will be a clear and demonstrable national process for aligning national frameworks within the European Framework. Thus, it is proposed that criteria should be put in place for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA Framework. Furthermore it is proposed that the criteria adopted should set out the minimum requirements that a national framework must fulfil, before it is likely to be considered acceptable to its peers in other signatory states, by the other stakeholders for the European Higher Education Area. It is also important to note that section 2.7 of this report sets out a list of the most useful aspects identified by the working group to facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications and the review of existing such frameworks.

A number of criteria are proposed below for the verification process. A primary criterion is that the national ministry with responsibility for higher education must designate a body or bodies who are responsible for the development of the framework. This is important because it is necessary that the national ministry establishes who is responsible and that the framework development process can be initiated in this way. Furthermore, it is vital that there is a clear and demonstrable link between qualifications in national frameworks and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European Framework (Dublin descriptors). Another important element is that the framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and linked to ECTS or ECTS compatible credits. While it is recognised that it will take some time to fully implement a learning outcomes based approach for all higher

education qualifications, it is considered necessary that the national framework itself will be demonstrably based on such learning outcomes and that there are links to credit arrangements. The manner in which qualifications are included in national frameworks will vary depending on the national arrangements and may, for example, involve an accreditation arrangement that in future should establish the compliance with the criteria mentioned below. It is important to note that the responsibilities with the various domestic parties to the National Framework need to be clearly determined and published and this will help in the transparency.

It is considered important that the National Framework refers to the national quality assurance system for higher education that is in place in the jurisdiction to which the Framework relates. At the time of the writing of the report, the advice of ENQA to the Bologna Follow-Up Group on the implementation of the quality assurance requirements in the Berlin Communiqué had not been made³³. It is not the intention in this report to second-guess such advice, but rather to set out that there is a need to ensure that national quality assurance systems are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent ministerial communiqués in the Bologna Process. These arrangements will ensure the link between the Framework and quality assurance. It is also important that the Framework links with other instruments of the Bologna Process, such as the diploma supplement and that these are incorporated into the criteria for national frameworks.

Accordingly, building on this rationale, the following criteria are proposed for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework:

- > The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are

³³ See chapter 2.5 for Berlin Communiqué on quality assurance.

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designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education

- > There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
- > The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS compatible credits
- > The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent
- > The national quality assurance system for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqués agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process
- > The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
- > The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published

It is considered that there is no necessity for the creation of a new trans-national agency to validate and certify the fulfilment of the compatibility of criteria listed above. Furthermore, from the consultation undertaken by the working group, there is no desire that any such arrangement be put in place. Indeed, the general view is that there should be as little additional administrative burden as possible on existing resources and networks should be used where possible, rather than to deploy new ones.

It is important to consider the process by which each country will certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework. Furthermore, it is considered that the manner in which each country does this should be published. Accordingly, it is proposed that procedures of such compatibility will apply for self-certification by each country. A number of elements are proposed for such a self-certification of compatibility procedures.

A primary procedure, which is proposed is that the competent national body or bodies shall oversee the self-certification process. This parallels the recommendation that a criterion be established that national ministries will identify the body or bodies responsible for the development of a National Framework. It is also important that all national quality assurance agencies in the jurisdiction to which the Framework relates which are recognised through the Bologna Process will be involved in the self-certification of compatibility process. While the precise outcome of the ENQA work has yet to be determined, it is envisaged that a peer-review process will be put in place, which will identify national quality assurance bodies and that it is necessary that all such national bodies in any jurisdiction be involved in the self-certification process. A further key element is that the self-certification process should not only be a national one and should involve international experts.

It is also important that the evidence supporting the self-certification process should identify each of the criteria proposed and that this should all be published. Where needed, translations of this evidence into English should be provided. It is through the publication of the evidence that greater trust can grow among countries about the developments. It is envisaged that the evidence will involve addressing each of the criteria in turn and will involve the inclusion of the formal record of the decisions and arrangements that are put in place in relation to the Framework. It is important that this will not result in a single short letter from a ministry signing off that all of the

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arrangements be put in place. Rather, a much more detailed procedure is envisaged which will address each of the elements and give specific evidence in turn, for example, including templates for diploma supplements which reference the national framework and the alignment with the European Framework.

A further key element is that it is proposed that the ENIC and NARIC networks will maintain a public listing of states that have confirmed that they have completed the self-certification process. Also, paralleling the criteria for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework, it is proposed that the completion of the self-certification process should be noted on diploma supplements by showing the link between the National Framework and the European Framework.

Accordingly, building on this rationale, the following procedures are proposed for self-certification of compatibility:

- > The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework
- > The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process
- > The self-certification process shall involve international experts
- > The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out
- > The ENIC and NARIC networks shall maintain a public listing of States that have confirmed that they have completed the self-certification process

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- > The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.

Only following the self-certification process should any link be made between section 8 of the Diploma Supplement “information on the higher education systems” and the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA.

The framework of qualifications has been identified as a key tool for the realisation of the European Higher Education Area. Therefore it is recommended that all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010 and that ministers recommend this in their Bergen communiqué.

4.4 National frameworks of qualifications and recognition and transparency instruments

National frameworks of qualifications obviously interface with the existing array of European instruments, which include legal instruments but which also serve the purpose of increasing transparency, in particular:

- > the Council of Europe / UNESCO Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts
- > EU Directives

as well as transparency instruments such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS, Europass, the ENIC and NARIC networks, and national recognition centres.

These tools differ in nature, application and impact but all share a common aim to promote good practice and improve the national and international recognition and understanding of study components, qualifications, higher education institutions



and education systems. They are designed to advance transparency and improve the mobility of qualified citizens.

The interaction between transparency instruments and national frameworks of qualifications is complex. They are all designed directly and indirectly to help learners and holders of qualifications as well as all relevant stakeholders including employers, credential advisers, academics, civil servants, etc. The Bologna process has strongly supported the implementation and development of these instruments and it is useful to explore how they impact on new national frameworks of qualifications and the European framework of qualifications, and how they relate to the individual.

In any national system the individual learner (as well as employers, parents, prospective students, etc.) need to know, understand and judge the nature, achievements and attributes represented by different qualifications (and higher education institutions). The individual needs to make informed choices and feel confident that there is worth, value and subsequent recognition in what they study. In addition, detailed information is needed to assist the learner in identifying potential progression routes that they might utilise as they progress through a series of qualifications. In this way national frameworks of qualifications support learners by clarifying the learning opportunities available to them. Furthermore, once a qualification has been obtained the learner is aided, by reference to the frameworks, when they seek fair local, national or international recognition of their achievements.

The various transparency instruments play an important role as they interact with both national and the European Framework of Qualifications. The main role of transparency instruments is that they help:

- > record and transmit detailed information about the individual's achievements (e.g. Diploma Supplement, Certificate Supplement);

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- > interpret and explain the place and role of qualifications (e.g. NARICs, ENICs);
- > provide good practice to credential advisors and evaluators (e.g. Lisbon Recognition Convention);
- > identify where information and recognition advice can be obtained as well as act as a main source of information (e.g. NARICs, ENICs);
- > improve curriculum comparability in valuing, describing and comparing learning achievement by employing credits as a quantified means of expressing learning equivalence (e.g. ECTS);
- > aid the recognition and recording of learning wherever it takes place (e.g. Mobilipass).

In fulfilling such roles these tools often serve to empower the learner. They also have an important mediating role between the learner and often complex, and sometimes non user-friendly education systems.

New-style national frameworks of qualifications will strengthen existing transparency instruments by simplifying what they have to transmit. The value of Diploma Supplements will be reinforced, as they will be able to locate qualifications against precise national and European frameworks of qualifications. They will also be strengthened when they can refer to nationally and internationally understood learning outcomes, levels and qualifications descriptors. In this context the part of the Diploma Supplement describing the national education system is particularly important; it should describe the national or other relevant system in terms of its qualifications framework. Similarly, the ECTS Information Packages will become more transparent as modules, units and programmes of study are expressed in terms of outcomes.

The Diploma Supplement already requests issuing bodies to place the qualifications covered by the Diploma Supplement within the context of the ‘the national higher education system’ (section 8 of the Supplement). This information is designed to help guide credential evaluators. Obviously the creation of national frameworks of qualifications will provide a further context within which to place any qualification. Furthermore, following the self-certification process it is sensible that the national framework is directly cross referenced to the framework of qualifications for the EHEA – in particular to the Bologna cycles. The inclusion of such information can serve as evidence that the self-certification process has taken place. This is one concrete example of the way a transparency instrument can benefit from qualifications frameworks.

The use of a common language and approach to express frameworks of qualifications will improve mobility, transparency and recognition. Existing transparency tools, as well as qualifications frameworks, benefit from this mutually reinforcing process. This was recognised by the Riga recognition seminar 3-4th December 2004, ‘Improving the recognition system of degrees and study credit points in the European Higher Education Area’³⁴. This seminar explored a number of strong links between recognition, transparency and qualifications frameworks. The international recognition of qualifications builds on transparency. Frameworks, which provide a common understanding of the outcomes represented by a qualification rather than a mere assertion of comparability, will greatly enhance the usefulness of qualifications across the European Higher Education Area.

The international mobility of learners depends on the recognition of their prior learning and qualifications gained.

³⁴ The full conference report and recommendation of the Riga seminar can be obtained from: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>.



Learners moving between qualifications or cycles require recognition in order to access more advanced programmes. Students moving within their studies, and their advisors can benefit from the clarity that may be provided through the specification of the level and nature of the study programmes. Learners can have greater confidence that the outcomes of study abroad will contribute to the qualification sought in their home country. A framework will be of particular help in supporting the development and recognition of joint degrees from more than one country. Improved international recognition has benefits for employment, access to further qualifications, exemptions from parts of study, access to continuing education, etc.

It is clear that qualifications frameworks are likely to have a large impact on existing recognition tools and practices. The potential benefits to recognition from qualifications frameworks can be summarised as follows. Qualifications frameworks:

- > improve the transparency of qualifications, make credential evaluation easier (for higher education institutions and other stakeholders) and judgements more accurate;
- > act as a common language/methodological approach that internationally can improve recognition and understanding between educational systems;
- > facilitate the recognition of prior experiential learning and lifelong learning between states;
- > simplify our understanding and improve the expression of the curriculum between countries through the use of common reference points;
- > facilitate the application of the 1997 Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon ‘Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education’.
- > ease the pressure of work on the ENIC-NARIC network;

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- > make European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) based on learning outcomes and levels more effective;
- > allow higher education institutions and credential evaluators to move away from measurement indicators that focus on formal procedures (admissions criteria, length of studies, qualification titles, years/hours of study undertaken) to focus on the results of learning.

4.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Criteria for verifying the compatibility of national frameworks with the overarching framework for qualifications of the European higher Education Area are recommended. A set of procedures for the transparent self-certification of compatibility by member states is recommended. It is proposed that all signatories will have completed this self-certification by 2010, the target date for the establishment of the European Higher Education Area.

Recommendations:

The following criteria are proposed for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework:

- > *The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education*
- > *There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework*

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- > *The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS compatible credits*
- > *The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent*
- > *The national quality assurance system for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin communiqué and any subsequent communiqués agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process*
- > *The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements*
- > *The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published*

It is proposed that each country should certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework, and that details of this self-certification be published.

The following procedures are proposed for self-certification of compatibility:

- > *The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework*
- > *The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies of the country in question recognised through the Bologna process*
- > *The self-certification process shall involve international experts*

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- > *The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out*
- > *The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process*
- > *The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.*

The framework of qualifications has been identified as a key tool for the realisation of the European Higher Education Area.

Therefore it is recommended that all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

It is important that national frameworks be developed or revised to provide detail and clarity regarding the qualifications within national systems and how they correspond to the cycles described in the European framework.

All qualifications should be subject to appropriate systems of quality assurance.

The development and use of a shared and common language and approach is recommended for expressing frameworks of qualifications to improve mobility, transparency and recognition.

5 Frameworks for higher education and for other education areas

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5.1 Context – Lifelong Learning perspective

Whilst lifelong learning was referenced in the Bologna Declaration, when Ministers met in Prague in 2001 they included a strong reference to lifelong learning in the communiqué that followed:

Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life.

At their subsequent meeting in Berlin (2003), the communiqué again stressed the relevance of lifelong learning:

Ministers underline the important contribution of higher education in making lifelong learning a reality. They are taking steps to align their national policies to realise this goal and urge Higher Education Institutions and all concerned to enhance the possibilities for lifelong learning at higher education level including the recognition of prior learning. They emphasise that such action must be an integral part of higher education activity. Ministers furthermore call those working on qualifications frameworks for the European Higher Education Area to encompass the wide range of flexible learning paths, opportunities and techniques and to make appropriate use of the ECTS credits. They stress the need to improve opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher education.

The concept of lifelong learning as set out in the two communiqués indicate the Ministers' view that lifelong learning is an inclusive way to define all learning activity and, within this, that higher education has a vital role. This understanding is very much in line with developing thinking within the European

Union. Whilst looking at European Union developments, it should be noted that 15 countries, which participate in the Bologna process are not members of the European Union. There are currently forty countries participating in the Bologna process, including the 25 member-states of the European Union. It is further noted that an additional five countries party to the European Cultural Convention have applied for accession to the Bologna Process, and that the Bergen Ministerial meeting will decide whether to accept these applications.

In the mid 1990s there was, within the European Union, a revival of the concept of a continuum of lifelong learning; first mooted in the 1970s, the EU designated 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning. Despite separate legal bases for education and vocational training in the EU Treaty, distinctions between parts of the education and vocational education and training systems were, by this stage, becoming more blurred. There was greater integration between general and vocational curricula, and provision and increased “bridging” between education and vocational education and training pathways. In addition, there were emerging approaches to training and competences in economic sectors, for example in the information and communications technology.

The EU definition of lifelong learning covers learning from pre-school age to post-retirement and includes formal, non-formal and informal learning. It encompasses all activities in life that improve knowledge, skills and competences, regardless of where and how they are acquired. The concept of lifelong learning places the focus on the individual learner rather than learning systems and institutions. This challenges the traditional boundaries within and between different levels of education and training. It also challenges the principles underlying the development, packaging, delivery and evaluation of knowledge and know-how, the nature of institutions, the teaching and learning processes and how learning is valued. The concept of qualifications is precisely that which links peoples’ learning achievements with the recognition of these in a formal way for

society and all of its dimensions. This might mean that there is a need for some re-thinking of the nature of qualifications. While we must broaden our understanding of the range of qualifications and the variety of learning outcomes associated with these, it is important that there is a need for a sign-off on behalf of society that such learning outcomes have been attained and this is the value-added that having a qualification brings.

The focus on lifelong learning began to influence systemic reform processes, mainly due to its relevance to the changing profile and needs of learners. It also gave rise to the emergence of new sub-sectors at the interfaces between basic education and vocational education and training, and between higher education and vocational education and training. This was accompanied by a growing trend to recognise learning which had taken place in less formalised environments, creating new challenges concerned with how learning is assessed and validated and by whom. It also increased the need for improved learner support mechanisms, including the provision of information about learning opportunities, and guidance and counselling to assist learners to make suitable choices. In the late 1990s EU Member States recognised the necessity to develop and support the principles of lifelong learning and began the process of introducing the necessary reforms to help make it a reality.

This report has been drafted from a lifelong learning perspective. National Frameworks of Qualifications have a key role in encouraging lifelong learning within countries. Indeed, National Frameworks, and their related features such as the links to credit accumulation and transfer, moving towards a learning outcomes based approach and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning that is enabled by a real learning outcomes approach, all facilitate and encourage increased lifelong learning and international research shows that these are important elements of many countries approaches to encouraging lifelong learning. Bringing all of the frameworks

together within the Framework for the EHEA, brings all of these developments together on a European basis and enables countries' qualifications systems to relate to each other.

5.2 Initiatives inside “Education and training 2010” (the Lisbon Strategy)

In the Lisbon conclusions of March 2000, the EU Heads of State and Governments set out the strategic goal that the European Union should, by 2010, have become the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Education and training are considered to be key factors in achieving this goal. In order to develop, sustain and benefit from this evolving economic and social order, and to become a world-class workforce, EU citizens needed to acquire and update, on an ongoing basis, the requisite knowledge, competences and skills. As part of its strategy the EU aims to make its education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010 and has undertaken a commitment to provide access to new and enhanced learning opportunities throughout life for all of its citizens.

Responding to the challenge set at Lisbon requires major efforts to strengthen co-operation on education and training policy. At the request of the Stockholm European Council in 2001, a set of future objectives for education and training systems was defined, and a work programme agreed, the fulfilment of which will constitute a large step towards the Lisbon goal. The Barcelona European Council in March 2002 underlined these ambitions by pointing out that education was one of the bases of the European "social model" and that Europe's education systems should become a "world quality reference" by 2010. An important part of the objectives process is the definition of indicators and benchmarks which can measure the progress of each country and of Europe as a whole towards the objectives set for 2010.

The Council of EU Education Ministers and the European Commission agreed a Joint Interim Report on 26 February 2004; 'Education and Training 2010' reviewed progress in implementing the working programme on the future objectives and set out a number of priority areas for future work. The report called for the establishment of a European framework to stand as a common reference for the recognition of qualifications. The Report further indicated that, given the diversity across Europe in structures and organisation, it is the learning outcomes and competences acquired through the programmes or training periods that should be regarded as important reference levels for the description of qualifications. The report also indicated that a framework of this kind for Europe should naturally be based on national frameworks, which themselves must be coherent and cover higher education and vocational education and training.

While elements of the Bologna Process are broader than the Lisbon strategy, and the Bologna process involves many countries outside the European Union, there are many parallels between the two processes. Furthermore, the Lisbon Strategy has had regard to developments in the Bologna Process in its own development. The Lisbon goals of making European Union education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010 very much parallel the goals of the Bologna Process for all countries within the process by 2010. There has already been extensive reform within the Bologna process, notably quality assurance initiatives, transparency developments, developments in relation to the recognition of international awards, the setting up of National Frameworks of Qualifications and now the establishment of an overarching Framework of Qualifications. These will do much to enhance the European labour market across all countries in the Bologna Process. In many ways, it could be argued that the Bologna process has been a major contribution to the implementation of the Lisbon agenda on a broader basis than just within the European Union.

5.3 Initiatives inside the Copenhagen Process

At the European Union political level, the Education Council adopted, on 12 November 2003, a Resolution on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. In addition, the Copenhagen Declaration was adopted at the informal ministerial meeting on 29-30 November 2003, taking up the same principles and priorities for enhanced cooperation as the Resolution. The Declaration commits the 31 countries and the Social Partners to giving priority to

Investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training

In addressing this priority, a technical working group on credit transfer in vocational education and training was set up in November 2002. The group was, inter alia, asked to make proposals on common reference levels for vocational education and training. The group has developed a number of important concepts in relation to the reference levels as follows:

- > a vertical dimension of eight levels each divided into three sub-levels. The sub-levels seem to be designed as an operational tool to allow for an assessment of the extent of compliance of an qualification with a reference level to support a pragmatic “best-fit” approach;
- > a horizontal dimension, which will be occupied by prototype descriptors of knowledge, skills and competences, linked to broad occupational profiles or work processes, which are in the process of being developed;
- > general descriptors in relation to existing qualifications structures.

It is of note that the reference levels incorporate a broad understanding of vocational education and training which includes many people's understanding of higher education qualifications, expressed from a vocational perspective.

A major stock taking review of the Copenhagen process took place in autumn 2004 and was completed before the Ministers of the states involved met in Maastricht in December 2004. The stocktaking report includes progress reports of national, vocational and education training systems towards Lisbon objectives, and covers innovations in teaching and learning and progress towards building competences for a European labour market. When meeting in Maastricht, the Ministers issued a communiqué that reviewed progress and indicated the areas to which priority should be given in the next two years. Among these, the Ministers agreed to give priority to the development of an open and flexible European Qualifications Framework, founded on transparency and mutual trust. Furthermore, the ministers agreed to prioritise the development and implementation of the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training.

5.4 Towards a European Qualifications Framework for the EU

The call of the Council and Commission, in its Joint Interim Report, 'Education and Training 2010', for the development of a European framework to stand as a common reference for the recognition of qualifications, is referenced above.

In addition, the Irish Presidency conference (March 2004) on "common themes in higher education and vocational education and training" recommended that a European Qualifications Framework be taken forward within the framework of the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme, with a view to linking together the common reference levels framework for vocational education and training and the Qualifications

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Framework currently being developed for the European higher education area.

On the basis of the mandate in the Joint Interim Report, in November 2004 the European Commission established an expert group on a European Framework for Qualifications (EFQ) which is to build on the results of the Bologna process in higher education and the Copenhagen process in vocational education and training, and to take into account existing qualification and competence frameworks at national, European and international levels with a view to:

- > clarifying the conceptual basis for a EFQ;
- > assisting the Commission in the collection and analysis of information relevant to the development of a EFQ;
- > identifying the main components of a EFQ, and in particular address the functions and links between common reference levels, learning outcomes, guiding principles and supporting instruments;
- > supporting the Commission in formulating a draft proposal by mid-April 2005 for a EFQ, to be used as a basis for an extensive consultation of relevant stakeholders throughout Europe;
- > assisting the Commission in the planning and organising of a consultation process on a EFQ to be carried out in 2005.

The establishment of this expert group with a view to assisting the Commission in preparing a European Framework for Qualifications is seen as a very helpful development. It is anticipated that the broad and deep consensus represented in this report will be reflected in the approaches that are developed by the European Commission in its proposals for the European Framework for Qualifications. This report intends to make an important and valuable contribution to these developments, and should serve as a model for the European Commission's

proposals. It is important that this synergy continues as the European Commission continues its work in this area. At this stage, an initial proposal from the Commission is anticipated in advance of the Ministers' meeting in Bergen. The plans of the Commission are that there would be an extensive consultation process prior to the establishment of the European Framework for Qualifications in 2007.

5.5 Conclusion

In the drafting of this report the working group has taken into account wider European developments in lifelong learning, of which higher education is an intrinsic part, developments in the Lisbon process and the linked future objectives process, as well as development in the Copenhagen process on increased European co-operation in vocational education and training. The change agenda being advanced through much of this work inter-relates closely with the sorts of changes required by the Bologna process and reflected through the introduction of national frameworks of qualifications, and an overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The change agenda also gives rise to the need for national frameworks to include qualifications that result from the recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences. In addition, the increasing focus on the individual learner rather than learning systems and institutions, which challenges the traditional boundaries within and between different levels of education and training, is also relevant.

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6. Conclusions

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This report concerns the elaboration of an overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It builds on the assumption that qualifications are primarily a matter of national concern and articulated in national qualifications frameworks and that such national frameworks can be inter-connected through linkage to the overarching framework of EHEA.

The Working Group and its expert panel, who were invited by the Bologna Process Follow-up Group to undertake the work, provide a series of recommendations and proposals regarding the framework for qualifications of the EHEA, and advice on good practice in developing national (or equivalent) frameworks.

It is recommended that:

- > the framework for qualifications in the EHEA should be an overarching framework with a high level of generality, consisting of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle within or linked to the first cycle;
- > the framework should include cycle descriptors in the form of generic qualification descriptors that can be used as reference points. It is *proposed that*:
 - > the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle.
- > responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow-up Group and any successor executive structures established by the ministers for the furtherance of the EHEA.

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- > all signatories will complete the self-certification process by 2010.

It is proposed that:

- > *guidelines* for the range of ECTS typically associated with the completion of each cycle include:
 - > Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications may typically include / be represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits;
 - > First cycle qualifications may typically include / be represented by 180-240 ECTS credits;
 - > Second cycle qualifications normally carry 90-120 ECTS credits -- the minimum requirement should amount to 60 ECTS credits at second cycle level;
- > Third cycle qualifications do not necessarily have credits associated with them.
- > *criteria* for the verification that national frameworks are compatible with the EHEA framework include:
 - > The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry with responsibility for higher education
 - > There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors of the European framework
 - > The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS credits
 - > The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent

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- > The national quality assurance system for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqués agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process
- > The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements
- > The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published
- > each country should certify the compatibility of its own framework with the overarching framework, and that details of this self-certification be published, with the following *procedures* used for self-certification of compatibility:
 - > The competent national body/bodies shall self-certify the compatibility of the national framework with the European framework
 - > The self-certification process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance bodies in the country in question recognised through the Bologna Process
 - > The self-certification process shall involve international experts
 - > The self-certification and the evidence supporting it shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out
 - > The ENIC/NARIC network shall maintain a public listing of States that have completed the self-certification process

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- > The completion of the self-certification process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework
- > national frameworks should include awards that integrate recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences.

Advice on good practice to facilitate the creation of successful new national frameworks of qualifications includes:

- > the development and review process for producing good national frameworks are most effective when they involve all relevant stakeholders both within and outside higher education. Higher education frameworks naturally link to vocational education and training and post-secondary education and as such are best viewed and treated as a national initiative. This also makes possible the inclusion of, or links to, other areas of education and training outside higher education.
- > a framework for higher education qualifications should identify a clear and nationally-agreed set of purposes. Frameworks for higher education qualifications benefit from the inclusion of cycles and /or levels, and articulation with outcome-focussed indicators and/or descriptors of qualifications. Higher education frameworks of qualifications can also benefit from being directly linked to credit accumulation and transfer systems.
- > frameworks for higher education qualifications should explicitly link academic standards, national and institutional quality assurance systems, and public understanding of the place and level of nationally recognised qualifications. Public confidence in academic standards requires public understanding of the achievements represented by different higher education qualifications and titles.

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The report stresses the importance of national authority in the development of national frameworks and their associated instruments, and the importance of considering the EHEA framework, the Dublin descriptors, and the guideline ranges on ECTS credits as *'reference points'*.

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Appendices

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1. Working Group and experts
2. Terms of reference
3. Bologna Seminar on Qualification Structures in Higher Education in Europe,
27-28 March 2003, Copenhagen Denmark:
Recommendations
4. La validation des acquis de l'expérience.
L'expérience française (with a summary in English)
5. Some National Qualification Frameworks in Europe
6. Dublin Descriptors ("step changes")
7. Bologna Conference on Qualifications Frameworks,
Copenhagen 13 – 14 January 2005.
Report by the General Rapporteur
8. The Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA

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Appendix 1 Working Group and experts

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	Eva Gönczi	Hungary
	Ian McKenna	Ireland
	Jacques-Philippe Saint-Gérand	France
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	Séamus Puirseil	Higher Education and Training Awards Council Ireland
	Nick Harris	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK
	David Young	Universities UK
	David Bottomley	QAA, Scottish Office
	Gerard Madill	Universities Scotland
	Anne-Kathrine Mandrup	Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications
	Tue Vinther-Jørgensen	Danish Evaluation Institute
	Albin Gaunt	Ministry of Education, Sweden
	Bastian Baumann	ESIB
	Sjur Bergan	Council of Europe
Peter van der Hijden	European Commission EAC	
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CONSULTANTS	Stephen Adam	University of Westminster, UK
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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR WORKING GROUP ON OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATION FOR THE EHEA

Introduction

In Berlin, 19th September 2003, Ministers with responsibility for Higher Education decided to “encourage the member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Ministers invite the Follow-up Group to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area”.

In the context of Life Long Learning, Ministers furthermore called “those working on qualifications frameworks for the European Higher Education Area to encompass the wide range of flexible learning paths, opportunities and techniques and to make appropriate use of the ECTS credits.”



Terms of Reference

In order to realise the objectives set by the Ministers, the Working Group shall:

Identify reference points for national frameworks of qualifications (in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile), which may assist member States in establishing their frameworks

Elaborate on an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area;

Establish key principles for frameworks of qualifications, both at national and European levels.

The Working Group must take into account other policy areas, including those within the Copenhagen Process and the wider Lisbon Agenda as articulated in "Education and training 2010"

The Group will submit reports to the BFUG, and have its working papers accessible for all BFUG members on the web.

MEMBERS OF WORKING GROUP

The members of the Working Group are:

Mogens Berg, Denmark (chair),
BFUG Chair

Ian McKenna, Ireland (after 1 July)

Jacque-Philippe Saint-Gerand, France

Éva Gonczi, Hungary

Andrejs Rauhvargers, Latvia.

BOLOGNA SEMINAR ON

QUALIFICATION STRUCTURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE

27-28 March 2003

Copenhagen Denmark

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants in the conference on Qualification Structures in European Higher Education, organized by the Danish authorities in Copenhagen on March 27 – 28, 2003 recommend:

1. The Ministers meeting in Berlin in September 2003 should encourage the competent public authorities responsible for higher education to elaborate national qualifications frameworks for their respective higher education systems with due consideration to the qualifications framework to be elaborated for the European Higher Education Area.
2. The Ministers' meeting should also be invited to launch work on an overarching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area, with a view to providing a structural framework against which individual national frameworks could articulate with due regard to the institutional, historical and national context.
3. At each appropriate level, qualifications frameworks should seek to describe the qualifications making up the framework in terms of workload, level, quality, learning outcomes and profile. An EHEA framework should seek to describe qualifications in generic terms (e.g. as first or second cycle degrees) rather than in terms specific to one or more national systems (e.g. Bachelor or Master)

4. Qualifications frameworks should also seek to describe these qualifications with reference to the objectives or purposes for higher education, in particular with regard to four major purposes of higher education:
 - (I) preparation for the labor market;
 - (II) preparation for life as active citizens in democratic society;
 - (III) personal development;
 - (IV) development and maintenance an advanced knowledge base.
5. While at national level, qualifications frameworks should as far as possible encompass qualifications at all levels, it is recommended that, at least as a first step, a framework for the European Higher Education Area focus on higher education qualifications as well as on all qualifications giving access to higher education. As far as possible, an EHEA framework should also include qualifications below first-degree level.
6. Within the overall rules of the qualifications frameworks, individual institutions should have considerable freedom in the design of their programs. National qualifications frameworks, as well as an EHEA framework, should be designed so as to assist higher education institutions in their curriculum development and design of study programs. Qualifications frameworks should facilitate the inclusion of interdisciplinary higher education study programs.
7. Quality assurance agencies should take the aims of the qualifications frameworks into account in their assessment of higher education institutions and/or programs and make the extent to which institutions and/or programs implement and meet the goals of the qualifications framework of the country concerned, as well as an EHEA framework, an important element in the overall outcome of the assessment exercise. Higher education institutions should also take account of the qualifications frameworks in their internal

quality assurance processes. At the same time, the qualifications frameworks should define their quality goals in such a way as to be of relevance to quality assessment.

8. While an EHEA qualifications framework should considerably simplify the process of recognition of qualifications within the Area, such recognition should still follow the provisions of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention. The Ministers meeting in Berlin in September 2003 should therefore invite all states party to the Bologna Process to ratify this Convention as soon as possible.
9. The main stakeholders in higher education within the EHEA should be invited to contribute to a dialogue on a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area as well as give consideration to how such a framework could simplify the process of recognition of qualifications within the framework. Considerations of national frameworks could benefit from taking into account experience with other frameworks.
10. Transparency instruments such as the Diploma Supplement and the ECTS should be reviewed to make sure that the information provided is clearly related to the EHEA framework.
11. Whether at national level or at the level of the European Higher Education Area, qualifications frameworks should make provision for the inclusion of joint degrees and other forms of combination of credits earned at the home institution and other institutions as well as credits earned through other relevant programs or experiences.
12. Qualifications frameworks, at national level as well as at the level of the European Higher Education Area, should assist transparency and should assist the continuous improvement and development of higher education in Europe.

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LA VALIDATION DES ACQUIS DE L'EXPERIENCE L'EXPERIENCE FRANÇAISE PRÉSENTATION & ÉVALUATION

1. AVANT LA LOI DU 17 JANVIER 2002 EXISTAIT LA VALIDATION DIPLOMANTE DES ACQUIS PROFESSIONNELS

La validation des acquis professionnels, instituée par la loi n° 92-678 du 20 juillet 1992 qui complétait d'autres dispositions propres à l'enseignement supérieur et fixées par des décrets de 1985, figure à l'article L 335-5 du *Code de l'éducation*. Avant la *loi de modernisation sociale*, un diplôme ne pouvait être obtenu par la seule validation des acquis professionnels. Or, il existe deux modes d'attribution de diplôme :

- > l'un *par l'État*, par exemple par le Recteur, du CAP au BTS,
- > et l'autre *au nom de l'État* par des établissements habilités à cet effet.

Dans l'enseignement supérieur, le diplôme est délivré *au nom de l'État* par le président de l'université ou le directeur de l'école qui a été habilité pour le faire pour un diplôme donné.

Dans les faits, la validation existe dans l'enseignement supérieur depuis 1934 avec le titre d'ingénieur diplômé par l'État (*Commission du titre d'Ingénieur*). Actuellement, il est délivré environ une centaine de titres par an.

2. LA VALIDATION DES ACQUIS DE L'EXPERIENCE DANS LA LOI DE MODERNISATION SOCIALE

Fort de l'expérience acquise depuis 1994-1995, principalement par l'Éducation nationale, la loi n° 2002-73 du 17 janvier 2002,

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dite de *modernisation sociale* et le décret n° 2002-590 du 24 avril 2002, visent d'une part à instituer le droit pour tous, d'une part à demander la validation des acquis de son expérience et à en étendre le principe à tous les titres et diplômes, d'autre part à aménager certains aspects de la procédure.

La validation des acquis est prononcée par un jury spécifique, particulier pour chaque diplôme, au vu d'un dossier réalisé par le candidat et à l'issue d'un entretien complémentaire.

Les candidats peuvent bénéficier, s'ils le souhaitent, d'un accompagnement proposé par les dispositifs universitaires de formation continue. Il s'agit d'une aide apportée aux personnes pour leur permettre :

- > de mieux entrer dans la démarche,
- > de déterminer plus sûrement le diplôme adapté à leur parcours et à leur expérience professionnelle, et
- > d'identifier les points forts de leur expérience, avant l'entretien avec le jury qui reste souverain en matière de validation.

La nouvelle loi reprend donc les principes fondamentaux de la loi du 20 juillet 1992 mais en modifie nettement certains aspects, et notamment les suivants :

- > La durée d'activité exigible pour prétendre à la validation des acquis professionnels est réduite de cinq à trois ans;
- > Est ouverte la possibilité de faire reconnaître des compétences professionnelles acquises dans des activités salariées, non salariées, ou bénévoles. Les activités sociales devraient également être prises en compte.
- > Un diplôme peut être obtenu en totalité par la seule validation des acquis de l'expérience;

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- > Pour l'enseignement supérieur, l'entretien avec le candidat est obligatoire et permet d'analyser l'activité professionnelle du demandeur tant en fonction de la branche professionnelle de l'entreprise dans laquelle il travaille que de l'organisation du travail de cette entreprise. Ceci est très important pour les métiers transverses.
- > Le jury détermine les épreuves complémentaires auxquelles le candidat devra se soumettre s'il n'a pas obtenu la totalité du diplôme postulé.

Ces modifications donnent un nouveau souffle à la validation des acquis de l'expérience. Elles ont, d'ores et déjà, des conséquences importantes à divers niveaux pour l'éducation nationale, notamment en ce qui concerne :

- > La mise en oeuvre des diplômes, puisque celle-ci devra intégrer totalement ce nouveau mode de délivrance,
- > Les modes de constitution et de délibération des jurys, puisque ces derniers pourront délivrer un diplôme à partir de la seule expérience d'un candidat et hors de toute épreuve d'examen;
- > La méthodologie même des examens qui permet de prendre en compte d'autres expériences que professionnelles *stricto sensu*, dans le processus de validation,
- > Les instruments et supports qui fournissent aux candidats le moyen de présenter leur expérience (travaux réalisés, dossiers analytiques, etc.)
- > L'organisation pratique et la mise en acte de la procédure, dans la mesure où la demande est rapidement devenue importante.



3. AXES PRIORITAIRES DE LA PROCÉDURE

La validation des acquis de l'expérience figure dans le *Code de l'éducation* et constitue une avancée majeure pour les systèmes de formation et de certification. Elle permet :

- > De rendre visibles et lisibles les acquis, compétences, aptitudes et connaissances issus du parcours de chacun, dans sa diversité et sa singularité,
- > De valoriser le rôle formateur que peut revêtir l'activité professionnelle,
- > D'articuler en un *continuum* l'indispensable formation initiale, la formation continue et les apprentissages issus de l'expérience, dans le cadre de la formation tout au long de la vie (*lifelong learning*);
- > D'éviter de mettre des adultes expérimentés en situation d'apprentissage de savoirs et savoir-faire qu'ils maîtrisent déjà,
- > De placer des adultes dans une situation plus adaptée à leurs parcours personnels que ne peuvent l'être des épreuves d'examen,
- > D'accroître et étendre les possibilités et les chances d'accès au diplôme et à la certification,
- > De réduire les durées, donc les coûts des formations conduisant à un diplôme.

Dans de nombreux établissements d'enseignement supérieur, des dispositifs susceptibles d'ouvrir à tous la validation des acquis de l'expérience ont été conçus, dans le but de :

>

- > Développer des systèmes de certifications lisibles et crédibles sur le marché du travail dans le cadre du LMD (licence, master, doctorat) ;
- > Inscrire les acquis de l'expérience dans la conception des dispositifs de qualification et de certification;
- > Assurer l'accessibilité aux études supérieures à des publics qui ne possèdent pas nécessairement le baccalauréat (premier grade de l'enseignement supérieur français, et non pas simple diplôme de sortie de l'enseignement secondaire);
- > Concevoir des processus qui conjuguent souplesse et fiabilité avec le système des crédits (ECTS) dans l'enseignement supérieur;
- > Concevoir des méthodologies et des instruments qui répondent à la diversité des situations;
- > Développer l'information en direction des publics potentiellement bénéficiaires;
- > Développer les partenariats avec les branches professionnelles et avec les entreprises;

Pour l'enseignement supérieur, les textes sont interministériels et concernent aussi bien les universités que les écoles d'ingénieurs et d'une manière générale l'ensemble des établissements, tant les écoles vétérinaires pour le ministère de l'agriculture par exemple que celles relevant des autres ministères.

4. PRATIQUE DES DIFFERENTES PROCEDURES DE VALIDATION D'ACQUIS

Les procédures dites de *validation des acquis professionnels* (VAP) permettent d'être dispensé :

>

- > soit du diplôme normalement requis pour s'inscrire dans une formation (décret 1985),
- > soit d'une partie des épreuves pour obtenir un diplôme ou un titre (décret 1993).

Le dispositif de validation des acquis de l'expérience (VAE), mis en place en 2002, ouvre la possibilité de se voir octroyer tout ou partie d'un diplôme par validation des acquis de son expérience (professionnelle ou bénévole).

Ainsi, à l'université et au *Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers*, 18 600 personnes environ ont bénéficié, en 2002, d'une procédure de validation de leurs acquis (dont 16 363 au titre du dispositif 1985 (VAP), et 1 171 + 1 140 au titre des dispositifs de 1993 et 2000 (VAE).

La validation des acquis professionnels dans le cadre du dispositif de 1993, sous la forme d'une dispense d'une partie des épreuves aux examens, ne représente plus que 6,2% des validations du fait du passage à la VAE. Les validations délivrées au titre des acquis de l'expérience pour obtenir tout ou partie d'un diplôme, qui s'y substituent, ont représenté dès la première année d'application 6% des validations.

Quatre demandes sur cinq ont fait l'objet d'une décision favorable. La progression du nombre de validations accordées par les universités depuis plusieurs années se poursuit : + 16,4% en 2002 contre 19,6% en 2001.

La dispense d'un diplôme pour s'inscrire à une formation et améliorer sa qualification ou développer ses connaissances (VAP) reste la procédure la plus utilisée notamment par les femmes, soit près de neuf cas de validation sur dix. Malgré le temps nécessaire à l'organisation et à la mise en œuvre des différentes phases de la nouvelle procédure de la validation des acquis de l'expérience, plus d'un établissement sur deux s'est déjà engagé dans la démarche.

Ainsi la part des actifs en emploi parmi les bénéficiaires se renforce avec la VAE.

68,3% des dispenses de diplôme pour accéder à une formation, 79,1% de dispenses d'épreuves pour accéder à un diplôme, et 83,5% des dispenses délivrées par validation des acquis de l'expérience concernent des actifs ayant un emploi.

Si les professions intermédiaires constituent la majorité des bénéficiaires, le passage de la VAP à la VAE pour l'obtention d'un diplôme semble davantage bénéficier aux cadres. Les professions intermédiaires, dont font partie les techniciens, représentent 55,5% des bénéficiaires d'une dispense d'épreuves pour obtenir un diplôme dans le cadre de la VAP, mais seulement 49,4% des bénéficiaires de validations dans le cadre de la VAE et 44,3% de ceux d'une dispense de diplôme poursuivre une formation.

Les cadres sont largement représentés parmi les bénéficiaires d'une dispense de diplôme pour suivre une formation puisqu'ils regroupent 31,1% des actifs concernés mais sont un peu moins nombreux (27,8%) parmi les bénéficiaires de l'attribution de tout ou partie d'un diplôme (VAE). Cependant, ils y occupent une place plus importante (23,8%) que parmi les bénéficiaires d'une dispense d'épreuves (VAP).

En revanche, ce n'est pas le cas pour les femmes qui sont un peu moins nombreuses parmi l'ensemble des bénéficiaires de la VAE. Les employés et surtout les ouvriers restent très peu nombreux (au regard de leur poids dans la population active) quel que soit le dispositif de validation d'acquis

Majoritaires parmi les bénéficiaires de la validation des acquis, les 30-45 ans représentent plus de la moitié des candidats à la validation. Ils sont relativement plus nombreux dans les formations suivies dans le cadre de la dispense d'épreuves pour obtenir un diplôme (décret 1993) que dans celui de la dispense

de diplôme pour suivre une formation (69,5% contre 56,6%). La prise en compte de l'expérience (VAE) dans sa globalité (y compris personnelle et bénévole) renforce légèrement leur poids (59,5%), comme celui des moins de 30 ans. La part des moins de 30 ans est en effet légèrement plus importante dans le cadre de l'attribution de diplôme par la VAE (19,5%) que dans l'ancien dispositif de la dispense d'épreuves (18,5%).

5. QUELQUES ENSEIGNEMENTS ISSUS D'UNE ENQUÊTE DE SATISFACTION

Des disparités de mise en œuvre sont observables selon les établissements.

Le développement de la validation des acquis reste inégal au sein des universités. La dispense de diplôme pour l'accès aux formations (décret 1985) continue de se développer. En 2002, seulement quatre universités françaises ont délivré moins de dix validations dans ce cadre contre une dizaine en 2000. À l'autre extrême, une quinzaine d'universités ont accordé plus de 300 dispenses de diplôme pour suivre une formation. Elles n'étaient qu'une douzaine en 2001 et six en 1998.

La VAP dans le cadre du décret de 1993 est en nette diminution avec le passage à la VAE.

Près d'une université sur trois a utilisé ces deux procédures et une quinzaine d'universités n'ont fait appel à aucune des deux.

La VAE n'a été instituée dans les universités qu'en 2002. Dans les cinquante-deux établissements qui l'ont mise en place, la moyenne des dossiers déposés est de trente, avec de grandes disparités d'un établissement à l'autre. On trouve plusieurs types d'universités, celles dont les décisions favorables attribuant tout ou partie d'un diplôme ont été plus nombreuses et ont moins donné lieu à la délivrance d'un diplôme dans sa totalité et, à l'opposé, celles dont les décisions favorables ont été moins

importantes mais qui ont permis plus souvent d'octroyer un diplôme dans sa totalité. Cependant, l'analyse des décisions favorables, par rapport d'une part aux dossiers déposés et d'autre part au pourcentage de diplômes attribués dans leur totalité, est très délicate en raison du faible nombre de dossiers concernés et d'autant plus que l'on manque d'informations sur la qualité des dossiers déposés.

Les formations suivies sont diversifiées.

Au total quatre demandes de validation sur cinq ont fait l'objet d'une décision favorable. Les bénéficiaires d'une dispense de diplôme pour accéder à une formation dans l'enseignement supérieur suivent majoritairement une formation en licence classique: ils sont 29% dans ce cas. Mais les formations spécialisées sont également très recherchées : 23% de ceux qui bénéficient de dispense de diplôme préparent un DESS ou un DEA.

Ces diplômes sont également très demandés dans le cadre de l'attribution d'un diplôme par validation des acquis de l'expérience : 22% des bénéficiaires de la VAE ont pu obtenir grâce au dispositif tout ou partie d'un DESS ou d'un DEA. Il sera intéressant de voir ce que la procédure donnera dans le cadre actuel des *Masters*, puisque ceux-ci opposent les diplômes à orientation *recherche* et ceux à orientation *professionnelle*, bien qu'à terme l'on s'oriente vers un seul type de *Master*, compte tenu de l'adossement inaliénable de la formation et de la recherche dans les études supérieures.

Parmi les 1131 bénéficiaires d'une dispense d'épreuves délivrée pour préparer un diplôme (VAP dispositif de 1993), 17,4% préparent un Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie, Diplôme d'Étude Universitaire de Sciences et Technologie ou un Diplôme National de Technicien Supérieur. Ils n'étaient que 16% en 2001.

L'unanimité se réalise ainsi sur le principe de la validation des acquis de l'expérience.

Les universités voient généralement d'un bon œil le système de validation des acquis professionnels tels qu'ils sont définis dans les textes de 1984-1985, largement mis en œuvre : *un système simple, efficace*, note l'université Paris XI - Orsay. Elles sont souvent plus critiques sur la VAP de 1992, *beaucoup plus difficile car elle exige une analyse précise des compétences des candidats en termes de modules de formation*, analyse Paris IX - Dauphine. Paris XI - Orsay se montre à ce sujet encore plus sévère : *La VAP 1992 est difficile et rebutante à mettre en œuvre car les études et diplômes ne sont pas identiques au niveau national ce qui rend la certification d'un diplôme guère négociable d'une université à l'autre et enlève toute portée au dispositif.*

Quelques établissements, comme Lille III - Charles de Gaulle, reprochent également à la VAP d'avoir été *détournée de son but premier, la validation des études l'emportant sur la validation de l'expérience professionnelle*. Et d'ajouter que *la procédure reste encore fortement liée aux "cultures pédagogiques*.

Le principe de reconnaissance professionnelle demeure cependant plébiscité : pour l'université Rennes II, la VAP a *permis de rapprocher le monde universitaire du monde professionnel et de démocratiser l'accès au savoir en ouvrant une autre voie à l'université et à ses diplômés.*

Un autre établissement pense que le bénéfice a été important pour les enseignants, confrontés à un nouveau public, celui des adultes en reprise d'études. L'Université de Cergy-Pontoise insiste sur l'amélioration des relations avec le monde professionnel : *En interne, la construction du dispositif avec les enseignants a permis d'échanger sur les métiers et sur l'organisation du monde du travail*. En externe, l'expérience de la VAP a encouragé le développement de partenariats avec des *organisations socio-économiques, mais aussi avec des*

employeurs intéressés par la gestion prévisionnelle des emplois et des compétences. Finalement, ajoute l'université, cette connaissance approfondie du monde du travail a aussi facilité l'insertion ultérieure des étudiants, qu'ils soient ou non passés par un dispositif de validation des acquis...

Paris XIII - Villetaneuse (Paris - Nord) insiste sur le rôle privilégié de la validation des acquis (professionnels ou de l'expérience) au sein de son organisation : *Un énorme travail a été effectué pour la constitution progressive d'un service à part entière et le président en a fait un axe majeur dans le contrat d'établissement.*

Une organisation stratégique réfléchie se met donc peu à peu en place dans les universités.

Dans la quasi-totalité des réponses à une enquête lancée en 2003, les services VAE des universités, lorsqu'elles existent, gèrent l'ensemble des Unités de Formation et de Recherche (UFR). Certains établissements comme Paris XI - Orsay ont adopté une organisation à deux niveaux, avec une mission centrale définissant les grandes orientations et une cellule auprès de chaque composante pour assurer l'accueil, le conseil et le montage des dossiers.

La mission VAE se situe généralement, mais pas systématiquement, dans le prolongement de la cellule VAP existante. Sa responsabilité incombe le plus souvent à la direction de la formation continue (dans une quinzaine de cas sur quarante-cinq), mais aussi à un enseignant (une douzaine de réponses), certaines universités prônant l'instauration d'un binôme enseignant-administratif.

Presque tous les établissements (deux seulement répondent par la négative) ont prévu de former leur personnel à la VAE. Les formations proposées par la *Conférence des Directeurs de Service Universitaire de Formation Continue* sont les plus fréquemment citées. Accueil, accompagnement pour

l'élaboration du dossier, formation pour les membres du jury... l'ensemble du dispositif universitaire est concerné. La majorité des établissements a déjà mis sur pied un dispositif d'accueil et de traitement des dossiers. Cette nouveauté fait apparaître la nécessité d'une solidarisation des différentes composantes administratives, pédagogiques, scientifiques des établissements pour répondre aux demandes de candidats souvent désorientés.

Dans le cadre d'un projet accompagné par le *Fond Social Européen* (FSE), Paris XII – Val de Marne (Créteil), Paris XIII - Villetaneuse (Paris Nord) et l'Université de Marne-la-Vallée ont rédigé des documents communs et organisé des journées communes d'information pour ce public. Certaines autres universités ont pris les devants et disposent déjà de *référentiels métiers* ou de *compétences* outils indispensables à l'évaluation des dossiers, mais encore rares. L'Université de La Rochelle développe actuellement *une méthodologie de reformulation des diplômés en termes de "capacité à faire"*.

L'intention générale est de poursuivre l'expérience et de la développer.

Les projets évoqués par les universités s'inscrivent principalement dans la droite ligne des réalisations déjà effectives. Il s'agit d'une part de développer les outils de référence indispensables, d'autre part, et c'est le cas le plus fréquemment rencontré, d'amplifier le flux de bénéficiaires par une meilleure communication. L'Université de Cergy-Pontoise mentionne la nécessité de *nouer des partenariats avec les acteurs économiques et institutionnels pour informer les salariés, avoir une veille sur le monde de l'emploi, trouver des membres du jury*. L'Université de Reims projette d'étendre la VAE à tous les diplômés, *sans exception*.

Laconiquement, Paris XI - Orsay indique pour seul projet : *continuer...* Certains établissements voient plus loin et tentent d'imaginer les solutions les mieux adaptées à ce public nouveau.

L'Université de La Rochelle s'interroge ainsi sur la possibilité d'abandonner *l'épreuve pour la preuve*, en validant les acquis du candidat *via* des outils plus proches du monde professionnel : projet à mener, mémoire, soutenance...

Seule université à mentionner la formation à distance, Aix - Marseille III envisage de développer de tels modules afin de favoriser les parcours individualisés après la validation.

Cependant, les moyens logistiques et financiers ne sont pas toujours au rendez-vous...

Sans surprise, nombre de difficultés mentionnées par les universités concernent une insuffisance de moyens : pour certaines, il s'agit du manque de personnel formé, pour d'autres, d'une pénurie de personnel tout court! Un des établissements de l'enquête déplore la précarité des personnels employés pour la VAE, puisqu'il s'agit essentiellement d'emplois-jeunes et de contractuels...

Sur quarante-cinq établissements ayant répondu à l'enquête, moins d'une dizaine disent avoir pu recruter du personnel spécifique pour le nouveau dispositif, l'ensemble représentant moins d'une vingtaine de postes.

Pourtant, l'Université de La Rochelle note que *l'accompagnement administratif des candidats et des jurys devient essentiel. On assiste à l'émergence d'une fonction indispensable et qui demande des compétences techniques, organisationnelles et relationnelles.*

Pour Paris II – Panthéon-Assas, *l'obligation d'entendre chaque postulant alourdit démesurément la procédure.* Les appréhensions sur la charge de travail sont récurrentes; la plupart des établissements notent un fort accroissement de la demande, à l'instar de l'Université de Tours qui parle même d'une véritable *explosion* avec une hausse des demandes de près de 100%, touchant l'ensemble des disciplines.

Seule l'Université Paris VI – Pierre et Marie Curie avoue sa déception : *Le nombre de demandes est relativement faible par rapport à nos ambitions*, et l'explique par un *manque d'attrait pour les filières scientifiques*.

D'autres critiques concernent davantage l'organisation : la VAE rend nécessaire la collaboration des différents métiers au sein de l'université. Or, les enseignants sont parfois *indifférents*, voire *réticents* devant une procédure qui remet en cause l'exclusivité de la validation académique.

Paris 6 – Pierre et Marie Curie prône les vertus de la rencontre pour résoudre la difficulté : *Les échanges entre enseignants et Professionnels dans les jurys contribuent beaucoup à l'acceptation du dispositif*. Cette concertation, clé de voûte de la VAE, pourrait aussi être la solution à l'une des autres difficultés rencontrées par les universités: la complexité d'analyser des compétences professionnelles et de définir des critères d'évaluation. *Les critères d'évaluation des candidats ne sont pas simples à déterminer*, témoigne ainsi l'Université Jean Monnet (Saint-Étienne).

Subsiste le danger de faire naître de faux espoirs de reconnaissance et de certification.

Entre candidats et universités, la rencontre autour de la VAE ne se fait donc pas toujours simplement. Certes, le public a été informé par voie de presse et y a répondu très favorablement puisque les universités notent un accroissement de la demande. Mais cette campagne, jugée *démagogique* par un établissement, aurait fait naître de *faux espoirs*. Les candidats se montrent parfois naïfs, convaincus que la délivrance du diplôme est quasi automatique. Mais *l'université n'est pas un supermarché aux diplômes!* Déclare l'Université de Bretagne Occidentale (Brest). Pour l'Université de Franche-Comté (Besançon), l'accueil a été *très (trop) favorable* : *les candidats croient souvent qu'il suffit de demander et que le diplôme leur est dû !*

Les universités de Clermont-Ferrand I et II (Auvergne et Blaise Pascal) renchérissent : *Beaucoup de candidats pensaient qu'en donnant un simple CV ils allaient recevoir un diplôme! Un simple CV... ou même une carte de visite d'après Paris IX - Dauphine, qui reconnaît tout de même que les démarches sérieuses, existent également* Ces anecdotes ont le mérite de mettre en lumière une certaine incompréhension qui peut aller jusqu'à l'abandon de la procédure lorsque le candidat en découvre la complexité (sans parler du coût !). L'Université de La Rochelle parle d'un *intérêt touristique* et note que *seuls 10% des candidats vont jusqu'au bout*. Une estimation confirmée par d'autres établissements qui constatent le fort décalage entre demandes initiales et dossiers effectivement déposés.

Face à la complexité du dispositif, l'accompagnement du public semble donc indispensable. Pour Paris XIII – Villetaneuse (Paris Nord), c'est *le seul moyen de recadrer et de faire aboutir des demandes parfois farfelues, au départ*. Cette mission d'accompagnement, très régulièrement mentionnée parmi les tâches du service VAE, est de deux sortes :

- > un accueil initial pour expliquer les grandes lignes du dispositif,
- > puis, lorsque le candidat a décidé de se lancer dans l'aventure, un accompagnement plus poussé est alors nécessaire pour l'aider à définir son projet et à remplir son dossier.

Ainsi, Paris XIII – Villetaneuse (Paris Nord) développe actuellement un projet d'accompagnement en ligne et d'organisation d'ateliers axés sur l'écriture et la connaissance des métiers. L'Université de Tours, quant à elle, estime à vingt-quatre heures la durée de l'accompagnement individuel nécessaire, un chiffre qui dit bien l'ampleur du dispositif à adopter.

Il en résulte un coût parfois dissuasif pour les deux parties.

Cet accompagnement a comme contrepartie une augmentation quasi générale de la participation financière du candidat. Pour les précédentes validations des acquis, elle se chiffrait en quelques dizaines d'euros, alors que le coût moyen de traitement d'un dossier est désormais estimé entre 500 et plus de 1 000 €. L'Université de Franche-Comté (Besançon) juge même cette somme *astronomique dans la période de mise en place*. Fort heureusement, ces montants ne sont pas toujours répercutés au candidat : les plus chanceux ne déboursent pas un centime, les frais pouvant être couverts par le *Fonds Social Européen*, par l'employeur ou par un *Organisme Paritaire Collecteur Agréé*. Mais cette situation pourrait fort bien être transitoire : nombre d'universités manifestent en effet leur projet de passer au système payant une fois la période de rodage terminée.

En sens inverse, certaines universités répercutent dès maintenant la totalité des frais sur le candidat : une somme qui peut se révéler dissuasive en cas de motivation incertaine... L'aspect financier représenterait ainsi un obstacle au-delà même de la phase de validation. Certaines universités insistent sur la difficulté à trouver des sources de financement en cas de reprise d'études : le recours à des emprunts bancaires, s'il s'avère nécessaire, pourrait alors freiner fortement la logique d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie

Ces procédures ont toutefois un impact indéniable sur la formation.

Plusieurs universités ont déjà délivré des diplômes directement, sans formation complémentaire. Seize sur quarante-cinq d'entre elles disent l'avoir fait au moins une fois. Les premiers diplômés VAE arrivent donc sur le marché de l'emploi. Quelques établissements déclarent douter de cette possibilité, peu crédible à leurs yeux, ainsi qu'à ceux des candidats et des entreprises. L'Université de La Rochelle préfère ainsi ne pas donner d'emblée un diplôme, mais opte pour *des épreuves de validation proches des situations professionnelles*. Car, explique-t-elle, *cela rassure les candidats, les entreprises et l'université*.

Les universités s'accordent davantage sur l'impact de la VAE sur leur offre de formations. Une université pose ainsi une question pertinente : est-il envisageable de pouvoir accueillir les candidats à tout moment de l'année?

A terme, la VAE devrait entraîner un profond bouleversement dans la définition des diplômes. L'individualisation des parcours doit conduire à une modularisation des programmes prenant en compte les *référentiels* métiers et compétences utilisés par les jurys VAE. Cette refonte répond en fait à un double objectif, celui de la VAE en tant que telle, mais aussi celui de l'harmonisation européenne des diplômes qui exige des descriptions sous forme d'unités de valeur capitalisables (dans le cadre de l'European *Credit Transfer System*) afin de favoriser la mobilité intracommunautaire des étudiants.

L'introduction des ECTS aura sûrement plus d'impact que la VAE sur l'organisation interne des universités et des parcours de formation, note l'Université de La Rochelle. L'Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble (INPG) mentionne pour sa part la difficulté de faire coïncider les deux logiques: *Comment faire le lien avec la notation ECTS en cas de validation partielle?* s'interroge l'établissement

En dépit des nombreuses questions soulevées par la VAE, le dispositif, cependant, est très indiscutablement lancé.

6. DÉVELOPPEMENTS RECENTS

À l'université et au Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, 17 710 personnes ont bénéficié, en 2003, d'une procédure de validation de leurs acquis: 14 930 au titre du dispositif de 1985 qui permet d'accéder à une formation par dispense du titre normalement requis pour s'y inscrire, et 2 780 au titre de la validation des acquis de l'expérience (VAE) mise en place en 2002.

Si les validations délivrées au titre des acquis de l'expérience pour obtenir tout ou partie d'un diplôme 1 progressent fortement, représentant 15.7% des validations en 2003 contre 6% l'année précédente, les validations délivrées dans le cadre de la dispense de diplôme pour suivre une formation (VAP, décret 1985) enregistrent. Quant à elles, leur première baisse depuis 1998 (- 8,8% en 2003 par rapport à 2002). Au total, le nombre de validations d'acquis accordées dans l'enseignement supérieur diminue.

La validation des acquis dans le supérieur touche avant tout les actifs ayant un emploi et non les chômeurs, 68,5% des bénéficiaires sont dans ce cas, ce qui correspond à 66% des dispenses de diplôme pour accéder à une formation et 82% des diplômes ou parties de diplômes délivrés par validation des acquis de l'expérience.

Les cadres et les professions intermédiaires constituent la grande majorité (7%) des bénéficiaires de la validation des acquis ayant un emploi, encore plus dans le cadre de la VAE. Les cadres regroupent en effet 41% des actifs qui, ayant un emploi, cherchent à acquérir un diplôme universitaire validant les compétences acquises dans leur activité professionnelle. Ils sont un peu moins représentés parmi les bénéficiaires d'une dispense de diplôme pour suivre une formation (35%). Les professions intermédiaires, dont font notamment partie les techniciens, occupent, en revanche, la première place parmi les bénéficiaires d'une dispense de diplôme pour suivre une formation.

Les employés restent très peu nombreux (au regard de leur poids dans la population active) quel que soit le dispositif de validation d'acquis: un sur quatre dans le cadre du dispositif de 1985 et un sur cinq pour la VAE. Les ouvriers sont à peine 1%.

Parmi les candidats ayant déposé un dossier de validation des acquis de l'expérience dans le but d'obtenir tout ou partie d'un diplôme, les candidats de sexe masculin sont majoritaires (près

de trois sur cinq) mais ils ne représentent que 47% des candidats ayant déposé un dossier pour dispense(s) de diplôme.

Majoritaires parmi les bénéficiaires de validation des acquis, les personnes de 30-45 ans sont relativement plus nombreuses dans le cadre de l'attribution de diplôme par la VAE que dans le cadre du décret de 1985 (66% contre 55%).

Le développement de la validation des acquis reste contrasté dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur. Dans le cadre du décret de 1985, c'est-à-dire sous la forme de dispenses de diplôme pour accéder à une formation, le nombre de validations délivrées varie fortement d'une université à l'autre. Toutefois, la baisse constatée dans le nombre de validations accordées dans le cadre de ce dispositif est quasi générale: en 2003, onze universités (auxquelles il faut ajouter le Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers) ont accordé plus de 300 dispenses de diplôme pour suivre une formation. Elles étaient quatorze en 2002. À l'autre extrême, deux universités ont délivré moins de dix validations (contre quatre en 2002).

La validation des acquis de l'expérience, quant à elle, progresse : 74 établissements de l'enseignement supérieur (hors le CNAM) ont mis en place la VAE en 2003, contre 52 en 2002.

Quarante-neuf dossiers ont été déposés en moyenne par université contre trente en 2002.

On observe cependant de grandes disparités d'un établissement à l'autre, puisque dans treize universités moins de dix dossiers ont été déposés alors que dans huit universités et au CNAM le nombre de dossiers déposés est supérieur à 100. Dans certaines universités, les décisions favorables attribuant tout ou partie d'un diplôme ont été plus fréquentes mais ont moins souvent donné lieu à la délivrance d'un diplôme dans sa totalité. Dans d'autres, au contraire, les décisions favorables ont été plus rares mais le pourcentage de diplômes attribués dans leur totalité est plus élevé.

Seuls six établissements n'ont accordé aucun diplôme dans sa totalité. L'analyse des décisions favorables par rapport aux dossiers déposés demeure toutefois très délicate en raison du décalage dans le temps entre le dépôt de dossier et son examen par un jury qui peut intervenir l'année suivante. De même, le pourcentage de diplômes attribués dans leur totalité porte encore sur un nombre trop modeste de dossiers pour en tirer des conclusions sur des politiques propres à telle université en matière de VAE.

Avec les DESS ou DEA, les licences «classiques» ou professionnelles sont les diplômes les plus demandés. Les bénéficiaires d'une dispense de diplôme pour accéder à une formation dans l'enseignement supérieur suivent une formation en licence «classique» dans 30% des cas. Mais les formations spécialisées progressent, notamment les DESS ou DEA (+ 4,9 points par rapport à 2002) : 28% de ceux qui bénéficient d'une dispense de diplôme préparent un DESS ou un DEA.

Ces diplômes sont également très demandés dans le cadre de l'attribution d'un diplôme par validation des acquis de l'expérience : 22,5% des bénéficiaires de la VAE ont obtenu tout ou partie d'un DESS ou d'un DEA. De même, les licences professionnelles, dont l'offre de formation se développe, se révèlent attractives. 13% des bénéficiaires de la VAE ont obtenu tout ou partie d'une licence professionnelle.

Le DEUG est, en revanche, de moins en moins recherché. La part de cette formation parmi les bénéficiaires d'une validation des acquis professionnels dans le cadre du décret de 1985 diminue de 3.4 points entre 2002 et 2003.

Comme on l'aura noté, VAE et VAP travaillant sur les acquis du passé d'expérience ou de profession des personnes, c'est l'ancienne terminologie française des diplômes qui est encore utilisée ici. Néanmoins, au fur et à mesure que se généralisent en France la mise en place du processus de la Sorbonne-Bologne et la mise en œuvre de la réforme du L-M-D, ce vont

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être les nouveaux niveaux de sortie diplômante qui vont être sollicités. On comprend, dans ces conditions que l'ancien DEUG ait fait l'objet de très peu de demandes et que les DEA et DESS se transforment en Masters, soit d'orientation professionnelle (le plus hautement prévisible), soit d'orientation recherche, pour être conformes aux lignes de conduite définies par la France en matière d'enseignement supérieur.

Les formations suivies par les bénéficiaires de la dispense de diplôme (décret 1985) varient selon l'âge : parmi les moins de 30 ans, 37% préparent une licence «classique» alors que ce n'est le cas que de 27% des plus de 30 ans. Ces derniers ont obtenu une dispense pour préparer un DESS ou un DEA dans plus de un cas sur trois (35%). Pour les bénéficiaires de la validation des acquis de l'expérience, les différences selon l'âge pour les diplômes demandés sont moins importantes.

VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING OUTCOMES

PRINCIPLES

The validation of prior learning outcomes is now a legal right, registered in the IXth book of the Labour Law and in the Education Statute Book.

It is an official Act, which acknowledges the results of a professional experience (VAP), or of another type of human experience (VAE), as an authorized part of a diploma in the higher education system. In some cases, this experience can be totally acknowledged and gives right to the whole delivery of a certification and diploma.

This proceedings states on a regular and prescribed apparatus :

1° The ordinance 85-906 (23rd August 1985) authorizes the free access to higher education even if the applicant does not possess the corresponding legal diploma, in as far this applicant is able to validate a professional experience, acquired during a salary or non-salary activity. In some cases, a personal experience — acquired independently of any kind of schooling or learning — can be substituted to a professional experience.

The university checks globally the knowledge, the methods and the skills of the applicant in terms of compatibility and requirements with his own academic aims.

2° The law n° 2003-73, adopted on 17th January 2002 — which is known as *the law for social modernisation* — and the ordinance n° 2002-590, published on 24th April 2002, makes officially possible to deliver part of a diploma or a total diploma to candidates giving proof of a minimum of three years of professional experience related tot the

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content of the expected diploma. Moreover, the ordinance n° 2002-529, on 16th April 2002, allows to validate higher education studies followed in France or abroad.

Those two legal devices can be jointly used in view of reducing at most the course of studies.

At last,

- > The ordinance n° 2001-274 and the decree in date on 30th march 2001, establish a special proceedings in the field of engineer studies for validating the professional outcomes of some applicants. The engineer titles is normally delivered after a five year course in a specific school; it is guaranteed in France by the State and the Commission du titre d'ingénieur gives its label to this delivery of a diploma. Applicants that have not been at school in such schools are nevertheless able to get the title of State engineer if they are at least 35 years old and can justify of a five year professional activity as « engineer » in a public or state enterprise

OBJECTIVES

The legal and political mechanism described above is intended:

- 1° To give the workers that have been obliged to enter early the active life a new opportunity of accessing to the diplomas and titles of the higher education system.
- 2° To avoid to learn again already assimilated knowledge for applicants who are starting again studies, so that they can spare time and efforts.
- 3° To better and more efficiently provide to the needs and wants of people, enterprises and society.



4° To promote a closer linkage between academic and professional teaching and learning.

As such, this device is a tool.

A TOOL FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISES

The validation of prior learning outcomes acknowledges the formative role of the professional enterprises and it valorises the knowledge and skills induced by work, independently of any kind of traditional education.

The validation of prior learning outcomes is therefore a tool for adapting the management of the human resources to individual competences.

The validation of prior learning outcomes is a way to identify and valorise individual competences in the frame of a more global professional framework.

The validation of prior learning outcomes gives individuals an assistance to follow, promote or reorientate a professional course.

The validation of prior learning outcomes allows gaining time and efficiency in the personal and economic efforts that are necessary when individuals want to valorise in a professional perspective their practical human experience as workers.

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MENESR

Some national Qualification Frameworks in Europe

Four European countries/areas have developed qualifications frameworks (QF) with a methodology based explicitly on competencies and learning outcomes. These are Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) and Denmark. Hungary is in the process of developing a QF, and Sweden has conducted a review of degrees awarded by HEI. The Swedish review is not included in the analysis.

The purpose of this analysis is to identify similarities and differences between the four national qualification frameworks. It will focus on the background and purpose of the frameworks, their scope, the structure and the elements used to build the frameworks such as cycles, levels, credits and descriptors.

Background

In EWNI and in Scotland the drive for developing a framework came from an inquiry into higher education in 1997. In Ireland the development of a qualifications framework was initiated by an act of parliament. And in Hungary and Denmark, the Bologna process has directly inspired the development of QFs.

As mentioned before, the Irish framework is established under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. The Hungarian framework is intended to be included in a new Higher Education Act. The other frameworks do not have a legal basis.

Stakeholders

In all countries/areas educational institutions have been involved in developing the frameworks. In most countries other stakeholders have been involved as well. Stakeholders such as awarding bodies, learners, quality assurance and accreditation

agencies, university associations, social partners and ministries have to different extent been involved.

Purpose

The frameworks state a number of purposes as their *raison d'être*:

- > Information to employers and the general public, e.g. about award structure and graduates' competencies.
- > Guidance to learners, e.g. about pathways and progression in the educational system.
- > Recognition of former learning, e.g. in connection with credit transfer and Life Long Learning.
- > Tool for educational institutions, e.g. in curriculum planning and programme development.
- > International comparability and mobility, e.g. in recognition of qualifications from foreign HEI.
- > Quality assurance, e.g. as points of reference in evaluations.

Scope

The Irish and the Scottish frameworks cover the whole educational sector from school education to Ph.D.-degrees. The other NQFs do not encompass qualifications outside the HE sector. Hungary intends to extend the current system to all qualifications that can be gained across the education system in the country.

There are also differences as to what types of qualifications are included in the frameworks. The Danish and the EWNI-framework include only qualifications leading to a degree or an award. The Irish framework includes all learning achievements from education and training, and the Scottish framework also

aims at recognising outcomes of learning not leading to a degree. The Hungarian framework may provide points of reference for placing qualifications gained through further professional education schemes, but at the current stage only qualifications leading to a degree are taken into account.

Structure

All frameworks are divided into levels, with growing demands to learning outcome at each level. Differences in the frameworks scope and in educational structure influence the number of levels. Frameworks, which include qualifications from schools, VET, FE and HE have more levels than those only including HE. Levels within HE differ from 4 to 6 (see table below).

Table 1, number of levels in national frameworks of qualifications

	Denmark	EWNI	Hungary	Ireland	Scotland
Non-HE levels	0	0	0	5	6
1 st cycle levels	2	3	2	3	4
2 nd cycle levels	1	1	1	1	1
3 rd cycle levels	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>12</i>

The Hungarian and the Danish frameworks relate levels to the cycles defined in the Bologna Process (first, second and third cycle). In the Hungarian framework the four levels are related to the three Bologna cycles. The original Danish framework

only operates with two cycles, as the doctoral level had not yet been identified as an independent third cycle when the framework was first developed. For the purpose of table 1, the Danish doctorate level has been placed at the 3rd cycle. As shown in table 1 it is possible to align all frameworks with the Bologna Cycles.

Level descriptors

Most frameworks have identified level descriptors, which describe expected outcomes of qualifications at this level. Some level descriptors function as common denominators for qualifications at the particular level i.e. as minimum standards. Other level descriptors describe a whole range of outcomes and it is not envisaged that every qualification will, or should, have all of the characteristics set out in the level descriptor.

In the Scottish framework each level is described in terms of its characteristic general outcomes under five broad areas: Knowledge and understanding; practice; generic cognitive skills; communication, numeracy and IT skills; and finally autonomy, accountability and working with others.

In the Irish framework, level indicators are also broad descriptors of learning outcomes. The descriptors are a range of standards of knowledge, skill and competence. 8 sub-strands have been defined: Breadth and kind (knowledge); range and selectivity (know-how and skill); context, role, learning to learn, and insight (competence).

The Hungarian framework will apply generic descriptors on the basis of the Dublin descriptors for each level. The descriptors are of two types: learning outcomes and general competencies.

Awards

All five frameworks associate one or more awards with each level in the framework. In general, most awards are associated

with 1st cycle levels, fewer with 2nd cycle levels and one award with the level corresponding to the 3rd cycle. The difference in number of awards, are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2, number of awards in national frameworks of qualifications

	Denmark	EWNI	Hungary	Ireland	Scotland
All awards	8	5	None yet*	15	?
HE awards	8	5	None Yet*	7	?

*Award-types have not yet been identified and described in the ongoing Hungarian process.

Most frameworks contain generic award-type descriptors. These are a combination of learning outcome descriptors and fact and input oriented descriptors, e.g. related to the programme of study. Some frameworks only describe the main qualification at each level and others describe all award types included in the framework.

In Ireland, descriptors have been determined and published for each of the 15 major award-types. In addition to the 8 sub-strands used to define knowledge, skill and competence at each level, award-types are described by title, class of award-type, purpose, level, volume, progression and transfer, and articulation.

In Denmark, the descriptors of learning outcomes are divided in 3 sub-strands of competencies: Intellectual competencies; professional and academic competencies; and practical competencies. In addition to the 3 sub-strands, a competency profile and formal aspects describe each award-type.

The Irish framework has a special feature with four different types (classes) of award-types:

- > Major award-types (principal class of awards);
- > Minor award-types (recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination of learning outcomes required for a major award);
- > Special-purpose award-types (for specific, relatively narrow qualifications, e.g. a Safe Pass certification);
- > Supplemental award-types (for learning which is additional to a previous award).

This detailed structure is supposed to allow for recognition of all learning, including qualifications achieved through experience in the workplace or other non-formal settings.

The other four NQFs only operate with what is called major award-types in the Irish terminology. In Scotland, plans are underway to map the qualifications of other bodies to the framework, e.g. employers' professional and statutory bodies.

Named awards in specific fields of study are not integrated into any of the national qualifications frameworks.

Progression and credits

Only the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework integrates credit transfer values into the QF. The Scottish QF not only describes the level of outcomes, but also describes the volume of these outcomes in terms of credit points. Credits can be used to assist learners to transfer between programmes, but it is the responsibility of the awarding bodies to determine how much credit can be transferred into their programmes.

Appendix 6

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From 1st cycle (e.g. Bachelors) to 2nd cycle (e.g. Masters) to doctorates: the differences / 'step changes' between the respective Dublin descriptors³⁵.

[and including 'sort cycle' qualifications within the 1st cycle]

The Dublin Descriptors offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a Bologna cycle.

They are not meant to be prescriptive; they do not represent threshold or minimum requirements and they are not exhaustive; similar or equivalent characteristics may be added or substituted.

The Descriptors seek to identify the nature of the whole qualification.

The Descriptors are not subject specific nor are they limited to academic, professional or vocational areas. For particular disciplines the Descriptors should be read within the context and use of language of that discipline. Wherever possible, they should be cross-referenced with any expectations/competencies published by the relevant community of scholars and/or practitioners.

³⁵ See: www.jointquality.org

At completion of the cycle students will have / can demonstrate:

knowledge and understanding ..

[short cycle³⁶ .. *in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks*]

1st cycle.. *[that is] supported by advanced text books [with] some aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study ..*

2nd cycle .. *provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas .. often in a research³⁷ context ..*

Doctorates .. *[includes] a systematic understanding of their field of study and mastery of the methods of research* associated with that field ..*

application of knowledge and understanding ..

[short cycle .. *often in occupational context*]

1st cycle .. *[through] devising and sustaining arguments*

³⁶ *Short cycle*: there are some awards that are made to students who have completed a programme of study within the Bologna first cycle, but which do not represent the full extent of this cycle. Such awards may prepare the student for employment, while also providing preparation for, and access to, studies to completion of the first cycle. These awards are referred to as higher education short cycle (within the first cycle). National systems may have various qualifications within the first cycle. This descriptor is intended for a commonly found type and which often approximates to 120 ECTS credits or equivalent.

³⁷ *research*: the term is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing and other arts.

It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to traditional 'scientific method'.

2nd cycle .. *[through] problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts ..*

Doctorates.. *[through the] ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research* with scholarly integrity ..*

[that has] made a contribution that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work some of which merits national or international peer-reviewed publication .

ability to make judgements ..

[short cycle .. to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems]

1st cycle .. *[through] gathering and interpreting relevant data ..*

2nd cycle .. *the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete data ..*

Doctorates.. *[through] critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas..*

ability to communicate ..

[short cycle .. their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients]

1st cycle .. *information, ideas, problems and solutions ..*

2nd cycle .. *their conclusions and the underpinning knowledge and rationale to specialist and non-specialist audiences ..*

Doctorates.. *with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise ..*

learning skills ..

[short cycle .. to undertake further studies with some autonomy]

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- 1st cycle .. *needed to study further with a high level of autonomy ..*
- 2nd cycle .. *to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous..*
- Doctorates.. *expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement ..*

Appendix 7

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København/Strasbourg, January 18, 2005

BOLOGNA CONFERENCE ON QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation

København, January 13 – 14, 2005

REPORT BY THE GENERAL RAPPORTEUR

Sjur Bergan

Council of Europe

A PRELIMINARY NOTE

I am reminded of the student newspaper at my home university³⁸, which many years ago presented the typical thank you's and caveats included in academic publications and provided translations into the vernacular. One of these generic statements was "Thanks are due to Smith for assistance and Jones for valuable discussions", which was translated as "Smith did the work and Jones explained to me what it was all about". I will certainly not try to play the role of Jones, but I will seek to adopt an analytical approach that will hopefully clarify the major issues and also outline any points on which there may be important differences of opinion. I also do not pretend to give anything like a complete overview of the presentations and the discussions at this conference, which gathered some 140 participants from 14 countries. Notwithstanding, a set of recommendations from the conference will also be proposed.

The report, then, will not enable readers who were unable to attend the conference to know all that happened there. It is, however, hoped that it will present the main outcomes of the conference in such a way that these readers will get a good understanding of the main issues, that they will want to explore the background documents and maybe that they will even regret not being present³⁹.

³⁸ *Universitas*, the student newspaper at the University of Oslo.

³⁹ Two editorial notes may also be in order. The present report adopts the US standard, as the variety with which the Rapporteur feels most comfortable. It is, of course, a personal choice and not a value judgment, any more than the choice of any other variety of English would be. Quotes are given in their original spelling. Secondly, in the belief that proper names translate no better than the names of individual qualifications, all place names are given in their original form.

WHY WE ARE HERE

Like so many things in modern life, this all began with a conference. Nearly two years ago, on March 27 – 28, 2003, many actors in the Bologna Process gathered in København for a conference on Qualifications Structures in Europe.

That conference was, of course, not the first mention of the concept of qualifications frameworks⁴⁰. As Stephen Adam’s excellent background report for that conference showed, qualifications frameworks were already operational in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. In the latter case, there were even two separate frameworks: one for Scotland and one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For many participants, however, the “first København conference” was their introduction to qualifications frameworks, and it set a lot in motion. It must certainly have convinced many participants that qualifications frameworks are a fruitful concept, because within a year of the conference, other countries like Germany, Hungary and Finland had set out to establish their own national qualifications frameworks. Indeed, European higher education gained a new acronym, as QF became almost as commonly referred to as QA, often on the assumption that neither requires further explanation.

Secondly, the “first København conference” set things moving at the level of the European Higher Education Area. The recommendations from the conference were well received by the Bologna Follow Up Group, and they gave rise to the following statement by Ministers in the Berlin Communiqué:

⁴⁰ This report will use the term “qualifications framework”. Some of the participants in the conference expressed a preference for the term “framework of qualifications”, whereas others, including the present author, believe there is no real difference between the two terms and prefer the shorter version.

“Ministers encourage the member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Ministers invite the Follow-up Group to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area”.

In other words, the Ministers committed to two distinct but interlinked tasks: to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and to set up frameworks in each of their own countries.

[Den markerede tekst skal stå nøjagtigt som den efterfølgende tekst]

Their first commitment is the main reason why we again find ourselves in København to discuss qualifications frameworks. As René Bugge Bertramsen reminded us in his opening remarks, delivered on behalf of the Danish Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Helge Sander, this conference also fulfills a promise made at the Berlin Conference in 2003. At this meeting, which was a great step forward in giving the Bologna Process more focused content, the Danish Minister promised his colleagues that Denmark would, to use the Minister’s words, “offer a special effort to bring forward developments in the

theory and practice of qualifications frameworks”. The present conference and the report elaborated under the leadership of Mogens Berg certainly fulfill the promise the Danish Minister made to his colleagues.

The Bologna Follow Up Group, which is the faithful interpreter and executor of the Ministerial will, appointed a working group to elaborate a proposal for an overarching framework of qualifications. The group was chaired by Mogens Berg of the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, who presented the report as the main document for this conference. This gets us into the heart of the matter.

While underlining the fundamental importance of the “first København conference”, it is also important to emphasize that the development of qualifications frameworks is entirely in line with and contributes to the realization of several of the action lines of the Bologna Process, and that it also builds on the outcomes of a number of other “Bologna seminars” held before and after the March 2003 conference. These include:

- > the two Helsinki seminars on Bachelor and Masters degrees, organized by the Finnish authorities in 2001 and 2003, respectively;
- > the seminar on recognition issues in the Bologna Process, organized by the Council of Europe and the Portuguese authorities in Lisboa in 2002;
- > the seminar on ECTS- a Challenge for Institutions, organized by the European University Association and the Swiss authorities in Zürich in 2002;
- > the seminar on Recognition and Credit Systems in the Context of Lifelong Learning, organized by the Czech authorities in Praha in 2003;
- > the two seminars on joint degrees, organized by the Swedish authorities in Stockholm in 2002 and 2004, as well

as the seminar on integrated programs organized by the Italian authorities in Mantova in 2003;

- > the seminar on learning outcomes, organized in Edinburgh in 2004;
- > the Russian seminar on “Bachelor’s Degree: What Is It?”, organized in Sankt Peterburg in November 2004;
- > the seminar on Improving the Recognition System of Degrees and Periods of Studies, organized by the Latvian authorities and the Council of Europe in Rīga in 2004;
- > the seminar on the Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research, organized by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 2004.

It is further important to acknowledge the contribution of a series of other conferences and initiatives, including the Joint Quality Initiative and TUNING, as well as of the countries that have already elaborated a national qualifications framework or that are in the process of doing so.

ON FRAMEWORKS AND FRAMEWORK

One cannot easily discuss an overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area without reference to national frameworks, and it is worth making the point here. National frameworks are in many ways those closest to the operational reality, and they are “owned” by the national systems responsible for them. They are the frameworks that will ultimately determine what qualifications learners will earn and how they will move between the different qualifications within a system. Incidentally, I deliberately use the term “move” rather than “progress” since the latter tends to be associated with “upward movement” only. Within a qualifications framework, however, learners may increase their competence by earning

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another qualification at the same level or even at a lower level as well as by earning one at a higher level.

The Working Group defines a national framework of qualifications (higher education) as follows:

The single description, at national level or level of an education system, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between higher education qualifications⁴¹.

National frameworks therefore describe the qualifications within a given education system and how they interlink. As described in the report by the working party and mentioned already at the “first København conference”, they will include considerations of:

- > Learning outcomes, including competences
- > Level
- > Workload and credits
- > Profile
- > Quality and quality assurance

The overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area may be less immediately operational for

⁴¹ Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks: *Report on a Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (December 2004), chapter 2.1., p. 14. References in this report will be to the “seminar version” of the report, which contains paragraph numbers. A version without paragraph numbers has also been published.

most learners than the national frameworks, but it is not less important. It is the second layer in what Mogens Berg in his presentation of the Report of the Working Group described as a two-tier architecture. This is the framework that will facilitate movement not only between different qualifications within a single system, but also between systems⁴². As Per Nyborg, Head of the Bologna Secretariat, pointed out in the plenary discussion, students will not move from a national education system to a European one, but between national systems. Not least, the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area is likely to be the “face” of “Bologna qualifications” to the rest of the world. This aspect was, alas, somewhat underdeveloped at the conference, as it is in the Bologna Process in general.

At this point, it may be worth quoting the definition of the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area given by the Working Group:

An overarching framework that makes transparent the relationship between European national higher education frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks⁴³.

Not least, the overarching EHEA framework provides the broad structure within which future “new style” national qualifications frameworks will be built up⁴⁴. It is, of course, perfectly possible

⁴² On the recognition of qualifications and the impact of qualifications frameworks on recognition, see Stephen Adam’s report from the Bologna seminar on Improving the Recognition System of Degrees and periods of Studies, organized by the Latvian authorities and the Council of Europe in Rīga on December 3 – 4, 2004, cf. <http://www.aic.lv/rigaseminar/>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.1., p. 14.

⁴⁴ It appears that at least the existing “new style” frameworks that have been published so far would not need to be amended as a consequence of the overarching framework.

to elaborate a national framework that makes no reference to credits, uses years of study as the only reference to workload, is vague on learning outcomes and stipulates one long university degrees that requires ten years of study, five of which are spent in self-study. It would, however, be a far cry from the EHEA framework, and any country establishing such a framework would be unlikely to be accepted into the “Bologna family”.

It is equally possible to design a less caricatured qualifications framework that is still vague on learning outcomes, that still expresses workload in terms of years of study rather than credits, and that stipulates five years of study for a first degree. That, until quite recently, was indeed the dominant model in what is to become the European Higher Education Area, even if the term “qualifications framework” was rarely if ever used to describe such a construct. It is, however, no more in line with “Bologna policies” than the caricature we outlined in the preceding paragraph.

The working group makes the point that the overarching framework is descriptive rather than prescriptive, and this is to a large extent true. The EHEA framework will not oblige countries - or rather education systems - to follow a certain set model.

Nevertheless, as was argued by Jürgen Kohler in the plenary debate, a framework cannot be entirely devoid of norms. The overarching framework sketches the broad outlines within which an informed observer would reasonably expect to find all the national frameworks of the 40 or more members of the European Higher Education Area. In a sense, it draws the broad outlines of qualifications frameworks within the EHEA, while allowing for considerable variations within those outlines, with flexible learning paths and various entry and exit points, something that was also underlined by Nina Arnhold in the stakeholders debate on behalf of the EUA. It also includes the use of common tools, techniques and methodologies for describing qualifications, levels and learning outcomes.

The EHEA framework, therefore, will not tell Ministers exactly what to do, but it will tell them quite a lot about what *not* to do. Diversity is one of the great strengths of Europe, and one of the key functions of the overarching framework of the EHEA is to make sense of that diversity.

It may also be worth bearing in mind the recommendation of one of the working groups to the effect that at whatever level, frameworks should be as simple as possible to fulfill their purposes.

WHY QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS?

Another question that will probably pop up in many people's minds is "what is all the fuss about"? Needless to say, it will often be phrased in much more academic terms, and it will probably often be implied that qualifications frameworks add more in terms of bureaucracy than in terms of knowledge. Academics, after all, know best the requirements of their own disciplines.

This is undoubtedly true, but academics also know that the value of knowledge is considerably enhanced if it is analyzed and given explanatory force through a coherent framework.

A qualifications framework helps in the analysis, presentation and understanding of what constitutes a qualification. This is important, because it helps shift the focus from procedures to content. In this, it supports a movement that has been underway for some time, and it provides an invaluable tool. Qualifications frameworks are perhaps a logical consequence of a number of developments. One of these is mass education, which has not only dramatically increased participation in education and higher education but also considerably broadened the scope and purpose of higher education. Another is the rapid development of knowledge and hence the rapid outdateding of knowledge. If higher education was ever a once in a lifetime experience, this

time is past. Other developments include globalization, the very creation of the EHEA, and the increasing understanding of the need for precision concerning the nature and function of qualifications.

Qualifications frameworks, then, provide the tools that make it easier for people to earn qualifications in a variety of ways, at different ages, and often in alternation between work and study – as learners become earners and *vice versa* - and to have these qualifications recognized for what they are worth. To hark back to the Bologna seminar on Recognition and Credit Systems in the Context of Lifelong Learning held in Praha in June 2003, qualifications frameworks provide the tools for taking account of the different learning paths that may all lead to similar qualifications. For higher education to further social cohesion it is important that qualifications be recognized regardless of the learning paths through which they have been earned. As Seámus Puirseil phrased it in the plenary discussion, our task is not to guard the gates of access, but to test what people have when they leave.

Qualifications frameworks are, ultimately, an expression and systematization of the aims and purposes of higher education, or at least of what higher education seeks to convey to those individuals who benefit from it. They should become a fundamental part of the structures of the European Higher Education Area, but higher education does not live from structures alone. As the Working Group reminds us⁴⁵, a successful qualifications framework should encompass and contribute to the four main purposes of higher education:

- > Preparation for the labour market;
- > Preparation for life as active citizens in a democratic society;

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, chapter 1.2, p. 11

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- > Personal development;
- > The development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

René Bugge Bertramsen, in his opening remarks on behalf of the Danish Minister, particularly underlined the importance of qualifications frameworks in preparing students for employment; in bridging the world of higher education and the world of work. As René Bugge Bertramsen rightly said, a study program should no longer just be a collection of academic disciplines but rather a coherent program leading to an agreed purpose for the program and the qualification it confers. The planning process should start with defining the purpose of the program before it enters into the details of disciplines. To use the words of the Danish Director General, if graduates do not know what they can do when they leave higher education, they will have problems presenting themselves to employers. He also underlined the importance of the other purposes of higher education.

Germain Dondelinger, Chair of the Bologna Follow Up group, in his opening remarks also underlined the need to take adequate account of dimensions like personal development and the social dimension of higher education in addition to the employment aspects. On behalf of ESIB, Bastian Baumann strongly underlined that qualifications frameworks are not just about employment, and he in particular underlined the role of higher education in promoting social cohesion. This was further echoed by Roland Vermeesch, speaking in the stakeholder panel on behalf of EURASHE, who emphasized the goal of creating an open, inclusive EHEA.

In the stakeholder panel, Helle Otte of the Danish ENIC/NARIC speaking on behalf of the ENIC and NARIC Networks, emphasized that new needs for recognition have already developed, and that they focus in large part on recognition for the non-regulated part of the labor market. The

focus on outcomes rather than procedures is particularly important in this respect, and, as Helle Otte also reminded us, these principles are already embodied in the Council of Europe/UNESCO Recognition Convention as well as in the EU Directives on professional recognition, which state as their basic rule that foreign qualifications should be recognized unless the competent recognition authority can demonstrate a basic difference between the qualification for which recognition is sought and similar qualifications in their own country.

Yet, it may also be worth emphasizing that even though qualifications frameworks should greatly facilitate the recognition of qualifications within the European Higher Education Area, such recognition is unlikely to be automatic. Someone will still have to ascertain that the qualification actually fits into the framework where it is claimed that it fits in.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

As was already underlined at the “first København conference”, all education systems have qualifications frameworks; otherwise they would not be able to function or at least to certify the achievements of their learners. However, most education systems have not been explicit about their frameworks, and to the extent that they have, they have tended to:

- > describe individual qualifications in isolation rather than within a coherent system, including the interaction between qualifications;
- > conceive of movement from one qualification to another overwhelmingly as progress from a lower to a higher level with little consideration of possibilities for movement between qualifications at similar level;

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- > and, perhaps most importantly, characterize qualifications more in terms of procedures and formal requirements than in terms of outcomes.

What will be described as qualifications frameworks in this report – and what is sometimes referred to as “new style qualifications frameworks” – represent a significant shift in focus. They:

- > describe individual qualifications *as well as* the interaction and articulation between them;
- > describe possibilities for movement among qualifications in all directions – upward, sideways or even downward – and recognize that a qualification may be obtained in more ways than one through different learning paths;
- > focus on outcomes and describe what a learner may be expected to know, understand and be able to do with a given qualification;
- > recognize that qualifications are complex and encompass subject specific as well as generic skills and competences or, in the words of the TUNING project: “knowing and understanding”, “knowing how to act” and “knowing how to be”;
- > have implications for the relationship between institutions and public authorities in that institutions will take on increased autonomy as well as increased responsibilities, whereas the role of the Ministry will also change with the use of external reference points and independent external and internal quality assurance arrangements;
- > have implications for recognition, in that considerations of “substantial differences”, in the words of the Lisboa Recognition Convention, should refer to qualifications frameworks and in particular to learning outcomes and

achievements rather than to education structures and procedures.

To quote the report of the Working Group again:

Such frameworks employ clear external reference points (learning outcomes, subject reference points/benchmark statements, levels/cycle descriptors, workload, qualifications descriptors, etc.) and provide a context for qualifications that are themselves expressed with greater clarity and precision with regard to their nature, function and skills that they certify⁴⁶.

And further:

The award of a qualification indicates that the student has completed a range of studies to a given standard and/or indicates a level of achievement by an individual who is deemed fit to perform a particular role, set of tasks or job⁴⁷.

As referred to above, national qualifications frameworks consist of a number of elements. These are described in detail in the report of the working group, and I will therefore only give a brief summary here.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.3., p. 17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.4., p. 18.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes have been defined as

*statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning*⁴⁸.

In referring to this definition, the working group makes the point – as did the background report for the Edinburgh seminar on Learning Outcomes, from which the definition is taken – that the use of the verb “do” in the definition underlines the aspect of competence or ability rather than the way in which this ability is demonstrated. Nevertheless, it is also important that learning outcomes, once and in whatever way achieved, must be described and attested in such a way that they may be considered for recognition. A clear description of learning outcomes is particularly important in recognizing prior and/or non-formal learning.

Germain Dondelinger in his introductory remarks rightly said that he was looking forward to a conference that would focus on “sense and meaning rather than structure”. It may, however, be worth noting that in spite of the emphasis the Working Group has put on assessing outcomes rather than procedures, Christoph Anz of UNICE, speaking on behalf of European employers, still found that the report focuses too much on the type of institutions at which qualifications are earned and too little on the competences of learners. He also felt that there was insufficient emphasis on the practice-oriented parts of higher education. On behalf of EURASHE, Roland Vermeesch, on the other hand, welcomed what he saw as a paradigm shift from a

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.4.1, p. 18. This definition is, however, taken from the United Kingdom “Using Learning Outcomes” background report for the Bologna seminar on Learning Outcomes (Edinburgh, July 1 – 2, 2004), section 1.2.

focus on education systems to individual learners. Helle Otte, for her part, emphasized that qualifications frameworks described in terms of learning outcomes should greatly facilitate the recognition of transnational education and prior learning.

Level

The report defines levels as

representing a series of sequential steps (a developmental continuum), expressed in terms of a range of generic outcomes, against which typical qualifications can be positioned⁴⁹.

There is little uniformity among even the limited number of existing “new style” frameworks in the number and description of levels, as each national framework uses its own system of levels. However, national frameworks may also relate their levels to what the report of the Working Group refers to as typical or generic types of qualifications, which will facilitate comparison between national frameworks.

For higher education, it may be expected that the three cycles outlined in the overarching framework of the EHEA – with the inclusion of short cycle higher education within the first cycle where such education exists - will become the generic qualification descriptors to which national frameworks will relate. It is important that the description of all national qualifications be explicit about

- > the further qualification(s) to which that particular qualification gives access;
- > the relationship of the qualification in question to the three main levels of the overarching framework.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.4.2, p. 121

As Mogens Berg rightly pointed out in his presentation, not all national qualifications will correspond to the completion of all of the generic cycles. Where they do not, it is particularly important that the competent national authorities describe what graduates can do with this qualification, how they can move within the national qualifications framework and how the qualification relates to the generic cycles.

In other words, the description of a first degree within a national framework should explicitly state that this is a first degree, as well as whether it gives access to a program leading to a second level qualification and whether this access is given to all second degree programs or only to certain strands. This is important for all national frameworks, but it is particularly important where a country has several qualifications at or within the same level, e.g. several different second degrees, or degrees situated between the generic levels, e.g. a degree situated between the first and the second degree.

Credits and workload

The shift away from considering the rather imprecise concept “years of study” or even “time of study” as the basic unit for measuring learning has been underway for quite some time and is, if not completed, at least well advanced. This is fully acknowledged in the report, which considers workload as the relevant element and defines this as

a quantitative measure of all learning activities that may be feasibly required for the achievement of the learning outcomes (e.g. lectures, seminars, practical work, private study, information retrieval, research, examinations)⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.4.3, p. 23.

Workload is now most commonly expressed in terms of credits, which is, in the words of the report,

*a quantified means of expressing the volume of learning based on the achievement of learning outcomes and their associated workload*⁵¹.

Time is of course not absent from considerations of workload, in that the definition of workload and credits rests on an assumption of the amount of work an average full time student will be able to do in an academic year. However, a credit system takes account of the fact that students work at unequal speed and intensity, and that different learners will complete a similar workload in different time.

The report recognizes that the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is the only widely accepted system for credit transfer within the EHEA, and that the ECTS is now developing into a credit transfer *and* accumulation system of potential use to many more than the mobile student. As underlined in the discussion, the ECTS is entering a period of rapid evolution in which institutions will have to express courses and modules in terms of levels and learning outcomes.

Profile

The Working Group defines profile as

*either the specific (subject) field(s) of learning of a qualification or the broader aggregation of clusters of qualifications or programmes from different fields that share a common emphasis or purpose (e.g. an applied vocational as opposed to more theoretical academic studies)*⁵².

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, chapter 2.4.3, p. 22.

⁵² *Ibid.*, chapter 2.1, p. 14.

The profile of a qualification will often be a consideration in assessing it for the purpose of access to further study as well as for employment. For instance, while a given qualification may be given recognition as a second degree, there may be additional, more specific requirements as to the profile of a qualification for access to a specific doctoral program, for example in history or mathematics. Likewise, an employer looking to hire a linguist is unlikely to hire someone with a doctoral qualification in organic chemistry. Not least, to really qualify as a higher education degree, a qualification must have a minimum of depth – an eclectic selection of 10 credits from each of a variety of subject areas will not qualify.

Therefore, profile may be an important consideration also in the elaboration of national qualifications framework. This is indeed the case in some national frameworks, whereas it is absent from others. In either case, it is important to take account of the fact that academic disciplines may be defined somewhat differently in different countries as well as over time, and that the boundaries between disciplines are less than crystal clear. In many cases, a learner's attractiveness in the labor market as well as his or her personal development may be enhanced by combining a concentration within one field with lesser learning achievements in other fields, such as a degree with a concentration in economics supplemented by a working knowledge of one or more foreign languages and an introductory course in ecology.

The issue of quality and quality assurance in the context of qualifications frameworks is considered separately, please see “Qualifications frameworks and quality”, below.

THE OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK

The overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area will have much in common with

national frameworks. Like national frameworks it will describe – at least in broad terms – typical higher education qualifications and the articulation between them, and it will focus on outcomes rather than procedures.

In the same way that national frameworks are the building blocks of individual education systems, the overarching framework will be one of the most important factors in establishing a coherent European Higher Education Area by 2010. As Nina Arnhold of the EUA reminded us in the stakeholder debate, the overarching framework builds on existing elements and patterns, but it also allows for significant new developments. She referred to the preliminary results of Trends IV, which show that European universities are implementing the Bologna Process, even if their practice and also the speed with which they implement the Bologna policies show significant variations.

This function also determines some of the distinctive features of the overarching framework. In the words of the report by the Working Group:

The framework for the EHEA derives its distinctive purposes from the objectives expressed through the Bologna Process. The most directly relevant of these objectives are international transparency, recognition and mobility.

and further:

An overarching European framework has some distinctive objectives, which differ from those of national frameworks. As a meta-framework, it is intended to assist in the identification of points of articulation between national frameworks. It also

*serves as a point of reference for those developing national frameworks of qualification[s]*⁵³.

The overarching framework will have the same components as national frameworks, with one exception: while acknowledging that the concept of profile may be important in national frameworks, the Working Group does not propose to include a description of profile in the overarching framework. For the other elements that make up a qualifications framework, the description will be less detailed for the overarching framework. The national and overarching frameworks will, however, have different functions, and the responsibility for quality assurance and qualifications will remain at national level. As Nina Arnhold very usefully reminded us on behalf of the EUA, any qualifications framework will ultimately have to be implemented by individual higher education institutions.

Two points of terminology should also be clarified. The term “level”, as used above, is most commonly used in the context of national frameworks. However, since the term “cycle” has been used both in the Bologna Declaration and subsequently in discussions within the Bologna Process, the working group uses this term for the overarching framework. One could also see “cycle” as describing a structure and “level” as describing the content of that structure. Secondly, while terms like “bachelor” and “masters” are commonly used also in the international discussion, the Working Group makes the point that the overarching framework should avoid terms that are specific to some – but far from all – national frameworks, and it therefore suggests that generic terms be used in the overarching framework.

⁵³ Both quotations *ibid.*, chapter 3.1, p. 29.

While much discussion within the Bologna Process has come to focus on three cycles⁵⁴ – which is also one of the three areas identified for the stock taking process prior to the Bergen Conference of Ministers in 2005 – an overarching qualifications framework requires a more detailed consideration, and the working group suggests that the Dublin Descriptors developed by the Joint Quality Initiative be used. The discussion at the conference showed broad support for this solution, and some participants reported that these had been successfully implemented in their countries. These, in the words of the report,

*offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of each Bologna cycle. They are not meant to be descriptive; they do not represent threshold or minimum requirements and they are not exhaustive; similar or equivalent characteristics may be added or substituted. The descriptors seek to identify the nature of the whole qualification*⁵⁵.

In view of the importance, in many countries, of short higher education qualifications, the Working Group asked the Joint Quality Initiative to develop a similar Dublin Descriptor for short higher education, which it suggests be included in the overarching framework, within the first cycle.

A complete overview of the descriptors for each cycle within the overarching framework is provided in chapter 3 of the report by the Working Group. At the risk of oversimplification, it may be summarized as follows:

⁵⁴ As of the Berlin Conference in 2003 with the inclusion of doctoral qualifications; the emphasis in the Bologna Declaration was on the first and second cycles which, strictly speaking, are the focus of the current stock taking.

⁵⁵ The report of the working group, chapter 3.3, p. 33.

The overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area will consist of three cycles, for which the association of credits with qualifications are offered as guidelines for national frameworks:

- > first cycle (higher education) qualifications, typically including or represented by 180 – 240 ECTS credits;
- > within the first cycle, short cycle higher education qualifications typically including or represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits (but see the paragraph below for the discussion around this proposal);
- > second cycle (higher education) qualifications, typically including or represented by 90 – 120 ECTS credits beyond the first cycle, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the second cycle;
- > third cycle (higher education) qualifications. No proposal has been made for associating credits with third cycle qualifications, but proposals for a description of such qualifications – in terms of credits or otherwise – may be made by the Bologna seminar on “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society”, to be organized by the Austrian and German authorities and the European University Association in Salzburg on February 3 – 5, 2005. In the stakeholder panel, Christoph Anz stated that ECTS credits should be assigned to the third cycle as well as to other learning achievements, and one of the discussion groups made the same point.

The discussions showed broad overall agreement with these genetic cycles. While all discussions underlined the need to endorse the concept of shorter higher education programs, there were, however, discussions of whether the short cycle within the first cycle should indeed be termed a “cycle”. The Working Group may wish to consider the issue of terminology in this sense. The main argument in favour of referring to short cycle higher education is perhaps that short higher education

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qualifications will enable their holder either to enter the labour market with a valued qualification or to continue their education, whereas the main argument against is that referring to a short cycle within the first cycle could cloud the view of an overall EHEA structure consisting of three main cycles. Whatever solution is in the end preferred, we must not lose sight of the fact that the conference strongly supported the reality of short higher education as an option chosen by at least 2 million students in Europe and one that corresponds to the needs of learners as well as of employers.

Some participants also felt that the description of the second cycle proposed by the Working Group goes beyond the recommendation of the Helsinki seminar on Masters' Degrees. While that recommendation may be open to some interpretation, the majority of conference participants seemed to be comfortable with the proposal by the Working Group.

In summarizing the proposal for an overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, it would be difficult to improve upon Mogens Berg's elegant summary in his presentation:

- > the EHEA framework should consist of three main cycles, with additional provision for a short cycle – or short higher education - within the first cycle;
- > the Dublin Descriptors are adopted as the cycle descriptors;
- > there are guidelines for the range of ECTS credits associated with the completion of each cycle,
- > responsibility for the maintenance and development of the framework rests with the Bologna Follow Up Group.

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND QUALITY

To become a reality, the European Higher Education Area will need national qualifications frameworks that articulate well with each other within an overarching framework as outlined in the report by the Working Group. In addition to structures that are sufficiently coherent to be compatible, the EHEA will also require that all parties trust each other's qualifications. Not least for this reason, quality and quality assurance are key elements of national qualifications frameworks as well as of the overarching framework for the EHEA. The need for transparent and reliable quality assurance was also emphasized by Christoh Anz in the stakeholder panel.

The Working Group has not gone into great detail as concerns quality assurance, in large part because another working group made up of representatives of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB are elaborating a proposal for "an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, [and] ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies."⁵⁶ This work is being carried out in parallel to the report of the working group, and the final report by ENQA and partners is expected in late February.

It therefore seems premature to go into great detail on the quality assurance component of qualifications frameworks, but on the other hand, it is important to clearly make the point that there must be such a component. An education system that would not have provision for transparent external quality assurance, as well as provision for internal quality development and assurance at its higher education institutions, would most

⁵⁶ Berlin Communiqué

likely face severe problems in having its qualifications framework valued by other partners within the EHEA.

The Working Group makes it clear that provisions for quality assurance will differ at national level and implies that this situation is likely to continue also after the Ministerial conference in Bergen. Nevertheless, it makes the point that, in the context of building trust in a qualifications framework, provision for some form of external quality assurance seems especially important. In the words of the report:

All systems include an element of “externality”, whether by external inspectors or by academic peers. There is also a general trend towards increasing the input of students and other stakeholders within quality assurance.

And further:

“Externality” is increasingly recognized as an essential part of quality assurance, and so it should be within the development and application of new national qualifications frameworks. For such frameworks to be of benefit to stakeholders, including intending and current students, and their employers, the frameworks need to be expressed in terms that are understandable and relevant. These may not always sit comfortably with the precise and detailed languages often used or thought to be necessary for regulation⁵⁷.

In the discussion, the point was made that national frameworks as well as the overarching framework of the EHEA will have implications for how quality assurance is carried out as well as for the tools it uses.

⁵⁷ Both quotes from the report of the Working Group, chapter 2.5, pp. 24 – 25.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FRAMEWORK?

At first sight, determining responsibility for a qualifications framework should not be difficult. If a qualifications framework is an essential element of an education system, it would seem obvious that responsibility for the framework rests with the public authority responsible for the education system in question. This is certainly true in a legal sense, and it is also true as concerns the ultimate *de facto* responsibility.

However, reality is often more complex than what can be expressed in a single sentence, and qualifications frameworks are no exception. In particular, four issues need to be addressed:

- > What is the involvement of stakeholders in developing and maintaining qualifications frameworks?
- > How are qualifications frameworks adopted or implemented?
- > In the absence of a “European education system” and hence of public authority responsible for it, how is the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area adopted, developed and maintained?
- > Who decides whether a given national framework is compatible with the policies of the EHEA (i.e. with the overarching framework), and how?

Stakeholders

Answering the first question requires clarifying who the main stakeholders in higher education are. Mogens Berg referred to stakeholders in his presentation of the report, and some of them were represented in the stakeholder panel at this conference: the students (or, in more general terms, the learners), the higher education institutions, the employers and those who work with

recognition and quality assurance issues on a professional basis. In addition, stakeholders include employees and those who seek employment as well as their organizations, higher education staff, professional organizations and community and voluntary organizations. Not least – and the point is worth making – the stakeholders include public authorities, and in particular those responsible for education.

Mogens Berg also made the very valid point that the responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national qualifications framework should be clearly determined and published. Of course, some stakeholders may be “more equal than others”, and views on who these are will of course differ. It is hardly surprising that Bastian Baumann in the stakeholders’ panel made the point that ESIB supports qualifications frameworks as long as they are student centred. That, however, is not “just” a student view – it is at the core of the work on qualifications frameworks.

Qualifications frameworks, then, should be elaborated in cooperation between at least the most important groups of stakeholders, and this seems to be a lesson from all the different national frameworks that have been developed so far. This requires a measure of consensus building as well as a balance between a top down approach and a bottom up approach. Exactly which stakeholders will be involved in what way, and what is seen as the proper balance of top down and bottom up will vary from one country to another, on the background of cultural, educational and civic traditions as well as the current involvement of different stakeholders in the education system. However, no successful qualifications framework has been elaborated by one group in isolation or been implemented only by decree.

Adoption/implementation

The second question, then, is how a qualifications framework, once elaborated, is actually put into practice. Again, practice varies from one country to another. In some systems, a legally binding decision by a competent authority – Ministry or even the national assembly – may be required, whereas in others, such as the two frameworks of the United Kingdom, the qualifications framework has no legal status but is efficiently implemented by the main stakeholders.

Whatever the form and legal status of the individual national framework, it may also be worth bearing in mind the words of Christian Thune, speaking on behalf of ENQA in the stakeholder debate: realism is at least as important as excessive idealism and enthusiasm in implementing qualifications frameworks.

Adopting and implementing the EHEA framework

The third question has to do with the nature of the European Higher Education Area, which is based on close cooperation and interaction between the member states and their higher education systems. Currently there are 40 member states, but a further five⁵⁸ have applied for accession, and these applications will be decided by the Ministers in Bergen. There is no provision for one common education system, and there is no authority that can enforce a common qualifications framework. As described in the report by the Working Group and discussed at the conference, the overarching framework will provide guidance for the elaboration of national frameworks and will not constitute a legally binding framework nor be a regulatory instrument. Nevertheless, the overarching framework will need

⁵⁸ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

to be validated and maintained, and at some time in the future, it may need to be revised.

If it is to be effective, the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area must be accepted by the parties to the Bologna Process, and they must take ownership of the framework. Therefore, the Working Group suggests that the framework be adopted by the Ministers in Bergen and the Ministers take responsibility for maintaining and – as needed – updating the framework. As a practical measure, the Working Group suggests that the Ministers delegate this task to the Bologna Follow Up Group and to whatever structure might replace it once the EHEA is in place. As needed, the Bologna Follow Up Group might wish to associate other stakeholders with the process of building, maintaining and updating the framework.

At this stage, it may be useful to keep in mind what Helle Otte said in the stakeholder panel: paradise is not created out of conference reports and Ministerial communiqués. Nor can qualifications frameworks be all things to all people or, as Bastian Baumann formulated it, “*eierlegende Wollmilchsau*” – an egg laying pig that produces wool and milk. Like conventions and laws, qualifications frameworks are only as their implementation. This conference is an important milestone, but the end goal is that what we have discussed here is actually put into practice.

Validating national frameworks as “EHEA compatible”

Even if the EHEA framework is not regulatory or binding, it does outline what is required for national frameworks to be considered as falling within the broad policies of the European Higher Education Area. It therefore seems necessary to establish a way to verify whether individual national frameworks are in fact compatible with the overarching framework. The Working Group proposes that this be done

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through self-certification by the country concerned rather than by peer review or a European body or agency, for which there is no mandate and that does not seem necessary⁵⁹. Since the effective acceptance of national frameworks within the EHEA will require mutual trust, it is, however, essential that:

- > the self-certification be transparent and that it address the criteria proposed by the Working Group;
- > that the self-certification and the evidence supporting it be public, and that an easily accessible public listing of the countries that have confirmed that they have completed the self-certification process be maintained. The Working Group suggests this be done by the ENIC and NARIC Networks;
- > the self-certification be completed by the time the EHEA is to be established, i.e. by 2010;
- > that adequate links be established to provisions for quality assurance, to the Council of Europe/UNESCO (Lisboa) Recognition Convention and EU Directives on professional recognition and to transparency instruments for recognition, such as the Diploma Supplement, ECTS, Europass, the ENIC and NARIC Networks and individual recognition centers.

In general, there was agreement on the principle of self-certification. However, several participants expressed doubts as to whether the process as outlined in the report was sufficient and would want to see this strengthened with regards to criteria, procedures and the link to quality assurance. Thus, in the plenary discussion, Jan S. Levy, Vice Chair for the Bologna a Follow Up Group, also raised the issue of a possible link to quality assurance, through a requirement that the self certification rest on an accepted quality assurance system in the country

⁵⁹ Report by the Working Group, para. 4.2, pp. 39 – 40.

in question. Not surprisingly, Christian Thune echoed this view in the stakeholders' panel on behalf of ENQA. He also hinted that self-certification would require a level of trust within the EHEA that may in some cases be excessively optimistic. One of the working groups made many of the same points, and in particular underlined the need to involve foreign experts in the elaboration and implementation of national qualifications frameworks, to include an element of peer review already in the development of frameworks, to describe learning outcomes at module and unit level as well as at generic level and to reflect further on the link between quality assurance and qualifications frameworks.

Ministers in Bergen could therefore ask the Bologna Follow Up Group to submit a proposal for criteria and procedures for a self-certification system for national qualifications frameworks where quality assurance is included in time for the Ministerial meeting in 2007. The Working Group, meeting after the conference to assess whether further work on the report is required in the light of the outcomes of the conference, felt, however, that postponing the decision on the self-certification for another two years would be unfortunate and resolved to elaborate a more detailed proposal for inclusion in the final version of the report. This model should, in keeping with the recommendations of the conference, contain further considerations of criteria and procedures for a self-certification system for national qualifications frameworks where quality assurance is included. The Working Group is aware that this must be done by mid-February, and that, were there to be no agreement in the Bologna Follow Up Group on the proposal put forward, continued work would require a new mandate by Ministers in Bergen.

One working group suggested that the transparency instruments be reviewed to verify whether they are compatible with the development of qualifications frameworks.

THE EHEA FRAMEWORK AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS

The Bologna Process encompasses all kinds of higher education, as does the mandate of the Working Group. It is, however, clear that, on the one hand, the need for transparent qualifications frameworks extends to all parts of the education system and, on the other hand, that it would be highly unfortunate and counterproductive if each part of the education system – at national or European level – would develop their own qualifications frameworks in isolation and without taking adequate account of each others' concerns.

One issue is of course that of entrance qualifications to higher education, but as Mogens Berg pointed out, the current labour market as well as other developments challenge the traditional boundaries of education, as well as those between education and the world of work. The issue of whether entrance qualifications should be a part of the overarching framework for the EHEA was, incidentally, one on which participants expressed quite divergent views, ranging from those who very strongly in favour of including entrance qualifications in this framework to those who were vehemently opposed. On behalf of the employers, Christoph Anz also emphasized the need to develop a common credit system – and, presumably, by extension a common qualifications framework – for higher education and vocational education and training.

The national frameworks that have been developed so far may serve as examples of good practice, since they encompass all parts of the education system of the country concerned. As an example, the Scottish framework comprises 12 levels from achievements by learners with severe learning disabilities through the various parts of primary and secondary education, vocational education and training and the first and second higher education degrees to doctoral qualifications. National frameworks will also reflect the different priorities of countries and will be designed accordingly. As is the case of national

legislation, national frameworks may also be of different complexity because of different national traditions as to how much needs to be explicitly regulated and what can be assumed on the basis of shorter, more general provisions⁶⁰.

The wider context has also been underlined by the Ministers of the Bologna Process, who in the Praha and Berlin Communiqués emphasized the important contribution of higher education in making lifelong learning a reality⁶¹.

At European level, cooperation has, it would seem, advanced further in higher education than in other parts of the education system, and the geographical context is resolutely pan-European in that the Bologna Process currently encompasses 40 countries, whereas cooperation within vocational education and training (VET) is more closely tied to the EU/EEA framework⁶². One of the working groups noted the need to broaden understanding of all ongoing processes, and it also suggested the proposed overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA is an excellent starting point that should be taken into account in a broader context.

David Coyne reminded us that the European Union has placed lifelong learning squarely on the political agenda through its Lisboa Strategy (Education and Training 2010), and it has launched the København Process comprising vocational education and training. In particular, the Commission has recently established an expert group on a European Framework

⁶⁰ Three higher education laws adopted in Western European countries between 1995 and 2001 encompass between 5 and 13 chapters, whereas in two recent draft laws from South East Europe, provisions for staff alone ran to 26 and 27 paragraphs respectively. See Sjur Bergan: "A Tale of Two Cultures in Higher Education Policies: the Rule of Law or a Excess of Legalism?" *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Volume 8, Issue 2, Summer 2004.

⁶¹ The wording is from the Berlin Communiqué, but similar wording is found in the Praha Communiqué.

⁶² These developments are covered by Chapter 5 of the Report by the Working Group.

for Qualifications (EQF), with a mandate to build on the Bologna Process for higher education and the København Process for VET. The most developed mandate, however, comes from the recent EU Ministerial meeting in Maastricht, where Ministers gave a mandate for developing a European Qualifications Framework. The mandate is remarkably similar to the mandate given to the BFUG Working Group, except for the specific reference to higher education. David Coyne also underlined the need for cross-reference between the various processes.

The reasons for the need for cross-reference is found in the very rationale for an overall framework, as presented by David Coyne: a single coherent framework is best for the users – learners and employers - and this was well illustrated by the discussion at the conference as to whether access qualifications should be apart of the overarching EHEA framework. Another reason is that it is impossible to say where advanced vocational education and training ends and higher education begins.

In fulfilling the mandate given by the EU Ministers in Maastricht, David Coyne envisaged a framework that covers all levels of education and training through 7 or 8 levels ranging from learning normally acquired through basic education and emphasizing general knowledge and skills to doctoral qualifications. The framework should focus on competences rather than structures. One could even question whether the term “qualifications framework” is the appropriate term, or whether “competence framework” would not be more suitable.

A European Qualifications Framework will and should change the way we look at learners’ qualifications. In many ways, an EQF will do this in the same ways as the EHEA framework: by enabling learners to navigate between qualifications and systems, by providing links to quality assurance, by facilitating recognition in general and recognition of prior and experiential learning in particular. Not least, it will help providers describe and situate their programs, in particular outside of the classic

higher education programs. In this sense, a qualifications framework may for example help higher education institutions design programs that are particularly adapted to their role in the region in which they are located. David Coyne, however, made an important additional point: an EQF framework will hopefully also help develop a culture of evaluation and quality in all sectors of education, in the way we have come to take it for granted in higher education.

The decision by EU Ministers in Maastricht includes a mandate to elaborate a VET credit system, and David Coyne strongly emphasized that this should not be a separate credit system. One overarching qualifications framework would require one credit system: two separate systems would be one too many. There are still tensions between various traditions, so there is need for further consultation. One issue is the relationship between competences and notional learning time, while recognizing that the notion of competence must be expressed through proxies that can be measured. Another issue is the link between levels and credits, which has already been raised by the Helsinki definition of a second cycle (“Masters”) qualification.

David Coyne outlined a timetable in which the Commission will present two recommendations to the European Parliament and Council in spring 2006, one of which will address the EQF and the other credit systems. To arrive there, the Commission will aim to present consultation documents in spring 2005, hopefully in April or May, to be followed by a substantive consultation period of 6 months, until October/November 2005. This consultation will include an active effort to seek advice from a wide variety of actors and stakeholders within the EU as well as beyond. The consultation is important also in reducing the time required for the political co-decision process involving the European Parliament and Council.

The initiative to create coherence between the various parts of the education system and between overarching qualifications frameworks at European level is laudable and necessary. It is

nonetheless important to underline, as was done in the plenary discussion, that this work must be carried out in full transparency, and that it must involve all members of the Bologna Process. This is an obvious requirement for the higher education part of the framework, but it is also important for other parts of a future overarching European Qualifications Framework to the extent that these other parts feed into and interact with higher education.

As noted, the considerable disagreement on whether it would be appropriate to include a description of qualifications giving access to higher education in the overarching framework for qualifications of the EHEA could possibly best be resolved within the context of a broader framework encompassing all or at least more kinds of education, as this is done within national frameworks. This further underscores the need to involve all parties to the Bologna Process in the development of such a broader framework. As David Coyne said in response to comments from the plenary, while the legal basis of the Bologna, København and Lisboa Processes are different, they all rest on the political will of the countries involved.

FINAL THOUGHTS

My first “final thought” is to echo the thanks expressed by Germain Dondelinger, as Chair of the Bologna Follow Up Group, to the Danish authorities for hosting this important seminar and to Mogens Berg in particular for all the excellent work he has both done and inspired to develop the concept of qualifications framework and win acceptance for it at European level.

Qualifications frameworks constitute a cornerstone of higher education policies in Europe, whether at national level or in the European Higher Education Area. They are an important concern of structural reform, and their impact is far reaching: by shifting the focus from procedures to learning achievements,

qualifications frameworks have the potential to become building blocks in enhancing the social dimension of higher education. This aspect was particularly emphasized by ESIB, but it is the concern of all, and the social dimension will be the topic of a Bologna seminar to be organized by the French authorities in Paris at the end of January 2005.

We now have a proposal for an overarching framework, the conference supported this proposal and hopefully the Ministers will adopt it. Some countries have elaborated national frameworks, and many more will do so in the next few years. This is very positive, and it is in fact an amazing development in such a short time. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that once a framework is in place, it must be implemented. I would like to echo several working groups that underlined the need for cooperation in the implementation of frameworks: cooperation among stakeholders at both national and European level, and also cooperation between countries. Those countries that feel a need for advice or even participation by foreign experts in the elaboration and implementation of their own frameworks should be assured of the support of their fellow EHEA partners, and this could be done through the appropriate international institutions, organizations and bodies.

By opening new learning paths and facilitating the recognition of non-traditional qualifications, frameworks will help opening higher education opportunities for new learners who may never have seen such possibilities before. If Europe is, in the words of the EU Lisboa Strategy, to become the world's most competitive economy by 2010, we can afford to do no less. If, in keeping with Europe's humanist tradition and social concern, even if these have at times at times been honored only in the breaking, we are also to see beyond the economic dimension, we also can afford to do no less.

France has over the past decade or two developed a very strong tradition of musicals, and one of my favourites is *Notre Dame de Paris*, based on the Victor Hugo classic from 1831. In many

ways, this musical is about qualifications frameworks and recognition, even if one might suspect the public is not always aware of the fact. But just take a closer look: *Notre Dame de Paris* is about structures and frameworks, represented by the cathedral that still draws thousands and thousands of visitors even centuries after its construction. It is about recognizing the non-traditional, represented by Quasimodo the Hunchback and Esmeralda the Gypsy. It is about rejecting dogmatism and formalism, represented by Frolon. It is about making an old cultural gem more attractive to new audiences, represented by those who prefer listening to the melodic modern version to reading the original text as well as by those who move between the two as if they were components of a single, coherent framework. It is about the European dimension, represented by the composer Richard Coccinante, who is French but obviously has Italian roots. Not least, it is about the “external dimension”, represented by the singer Garou, who is now one of the main stars of the French-speaking world - and who hails from Québec.

The last point underscores the fact that qualifications frameworks and their focus on learning achievements are vital to making “Bologna qualifications” recognized in other parts of the world – what is, for want of a better word, commonly referred to as the “external dimension”⁶³. If all the rest of the world retains of “Bologna” is that “Europe” is reducing the “bachelor” degree from 4 to 3 years, European students will have serious problems by the time the EHEA is established. These problems can only be avoided if we succeed in conveying both the contents and the methodology of our qualifications frameworks - and if we apply the same methodology of

⁶³ The “external dimension” of the Bologna Process was the topic of a major conference organized by the Academic Cooperation Organization in Hamburg on October 18 – 19, 2004, cf. <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/08events/Hamburg/HamburgConferenceOverview.htm>. A publication on the basis of the conference is forthcoming.

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recognizing learning achievements rather than procedures when assessing qualifications from other parts of the world.

Like Europe itself, the overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area balances diversity and unity. The aim is to make it flexible and diverse enough to be interesting, yet sufficiently coherent to be comprehensible. Our aspiration for the European Higher Education Area and its qualifications frameworks can perhaps best be expressed by a slogan borrowed from our US friends, which they in turn express in a language borrowed from “old Europe”:

e pluribus unum.

Out of many, one.

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Appendix 8

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The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

	Outcomes	ECTS Credits
Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) Qualification	<p><i>Qualifications that signify completion of the higher education short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) are awarded to students who:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education⁶⁴ and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle; > can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts; > have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; > can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients; > have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy. 	approximately 120 ECTS credits

⁶⁴ General secondary education also includes vocational education with a sufficiently general component.

First cycle qualification	<p><i>Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education²⁷, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; > can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional⁶⁵ approach to their work or vocation, and have competences⁶⁶ typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; > have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; 	typically include 180-240 ECTS credits
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⁶⁵ The word ‘**professional**’ is used in the descriptors in its broadest sense, relating to those attributes relevant to undertaking work or a vocation and that involves the application of some aspects of advanced learning. It is not used with regard to those specific requirements relating to regulated professions. The latter may be identified with the profile / specification.

⁶⁶ The word ‘**competence**’ is used in the descriptors in its broadest sense, allowing for gradation of abilities or skills. It is not used in the narrower sense identified solely on the basis of a ‘yes/no’ assessment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; > have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy. 	
<p>Second cycle qualification</p>	<p><i>Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research⁶⁷ context; 	<p>normally carry 90-120 ECTS credits - the minimum requirements should amount to 60 ECTS credits at the second cycle level</p>

⁶⁷ The word ‘**research**’ is used to cover a wide variety of activities, with the context often related to a field of study; the term is used here to represent a careful study or investigation based on a systematic understanding and critical awareness of knowledge. The word is used in an inclusive way to accommodate the range of activities that support original and innovative work in the whole range of academic, professional and technological fields, including the humanities, and traditional, performing, and other creative arts. It is not used in any limited or restricted sense, or relating solely to a traditional 'scientific method'.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;> have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;> can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;> have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.	
Third cycle qualification	<p><i>Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;	Not specified

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;> have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;> are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;> can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;> can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.	
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A Framework for Qualifications of The European Higher Education Area

This report concerns the elaboration of qualifications frameworks as called for by ministers in the Berlin Communiqué; it makes recommendations and proposals for an overarching **Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, and offers advice on good practice in the elaboration of national qualifications frameworks for higher education qualifications.

The report includes six chapters that cover:

The context – higher education qualifications in Europe

National frameworks of qualifications in higher education

The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

Linking frameworks of qualifications in higher education

Frameworks for higher education and for other educational areas

Conclusions



Education and Culture

Socrates

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Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education



Education and Culture

DG Education and Culture

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Foreword

In the Berlin communiqué of 19 September 2003 the Ministers of the Bologna Process signatory states invited the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) ‘through its members, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE, and ESIB’, to develop ‘an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance’ and to ‘explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Bologna Follow-Up Group to Ministers in 2005’. The Ministers also asked ENQA to take due account ‘of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks’.

This report forms the response to this mandate and comes with the endorsement of all the organisations named in that section of the communiqué. The achievement of such a joint understanding is a tribute to the spirit of co-operation and mutual respect that has characterised the discussions between all the players involved. I would therefore like to extend my thanks to the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB together with the ENQA member agencies for their constructive and most valuable input to the process.

This report is directed at the European Ministers of Education. However, we expect the report to achieve a wider circulation among those with an interest in quality assurance in higher education. These readers will hopefully find the report useful and inspirational.

It must be emphasised that the report is no more than a first step in what is likely to be a long and possibly arduous route to the establishment of a widely shared set of underpinning values, expectations and good practice in relation to quality and its assurance, by institutions and agencies across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). What has been set in motion by the Berlin mandate will need to be developed further if it is to provide the fully functioning European dimension of quality assurance for the EHEA. If this can be accomplished, then many of the ambitions of the Bologna Process will also be achieved. All the participants in the work to date look forward to contributing to the success of that endeavour.

Christian Thune

President of ENQA

February 2005

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Executive Summary

This report has been drafted by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)¹, through its members, in consultation and co-operation with the EUA, ESIB and EURASHE and in discussion with various relevant networks. It forms the response to the twin mandates given to ENQA in the Berlin Communiqué of September 2003 to develop ‘an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance’ and ‘to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies’.

The report consists of four chapters. After the introductory chapter on context, aims and principles, there follow chapters on standards and guidelines for quality assurance²; a peer review system for quality assurance agencies; and future perspectives and challenges.

The main results and recommendations of the report are:

- There will be European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies.
- European quality assurance agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review within five years.
- There will be an emphasis on subsidiarity, with reviews being undertaken nationally where possible.
- A European register of quality assurance agencies will be produced.
- A European Register Committee will act as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register.
- A European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will be established.

When the recommendations are implemented:

- The consistency of quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will be improved by the use of agreed standards and guidelines.
- Higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies across the EHEA will be able to use common reference points for quality assurance.
- The register will make it easier to identify professional and credible agencies.
- Procedures for the recognition of qualifications will be strengthened.
- The credibility of the work of quality assurance agencies will be enhanced.
- The exchange of viewpoints and experiences amongst agencies and other key stakeholders (including higher education institutions, students and labour market representatives) will be enhanced through the work of the European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

¹ ENQA’s General Assembly confirmed on 4 November 2004 the change of the former European Network into the European Association.

² The term “quality assurance” in this report includes processes such as evaluation, accreditation and audit.

- The mutual trust among institutions and agencies will grow.
- The move toward mutual recognition will be assisted.

Summary list of European standards for quality assurance

This summary list of European standards for quality assurance in higher education is drawn from Chapter 2 of the report and is placed here for ease of reference. It omits the accompanying guidelines. The standards are in three parts covering internal quality assurance of higher education institutions, external quality assurance of higher education, and quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies.

Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

- 1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance:** Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.
- 1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards:** Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.
- 1.3 Assessment of students:** Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.
- 1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff:** Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.
- 1.5 Learning resources and student support:** Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.
- 1.6 Information systems:** Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.
- 1.7 Public information:** Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

Part 2: European standards for the external quality assurance of higher education

- 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures:** External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.
- 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes:** The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.
- 2.3 Criteria for decisions:** Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.
- 2.4 Processes fit for purpose:** All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.
- 2.5 Reporting:** Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.
- 2.6 Follow-up procedures:** Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.
- 2.7 Periodic reviews:** External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.
- 2.8 System-wide analyses:** Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

Part 3: European standards for external quality assurance agencies

- 3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education:** The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.
- 3.2 Official status:** Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
- 3.3 Activities:** Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

- 3.4 Resources:** Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.
- 3.5 Mission statement:** Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.
- 3.6 Independence:** Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.
- 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies:** The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:
- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
 - an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
 - publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
 - a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.
- 3.8 Accountability procedures:** Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

1 Context, Aims and Principles

In the Berlin communiqué of 19 September 2003 the Ministers of the Bologna Process signatory states invited ENQA ‘through its members, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE, and ESIB’, to develop ‘an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance’ and to ‘explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Bologna Follow-Up Group to Ministers in 2005’. The Ministers also asked ENQA to take due account ‘of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks’.

ENQA welcomed this opportunity to make a major contribution to the development of the European dimension in quality assurance and, thereby, to further the aims of the Bologna Process.

The work has involved many different organisations and interest groups. First, ENQA members have been extensively involved in the process. Members have participated in working groups, and draft reports have been important elements in the agenda of the ENQA General Assemblies in June and November 2004. Secondly, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) and the European Commission have participated through regular meetings in the ‘E4 Group’. Thirdly, the contacts with and contributions from other networks, such as the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (CEE Network), have been particularly valuable in the drafting process. Finally, ENQA and its partners have made good use of their individual international contacts and experiences and in this way ensured that relevant international perspectives were brought into the process.

Quality assurance in higher education is by no means only a European concern. All over the world there is an increasing interest in quality and standards, reflecting both the rapid growth of higher education and its cost to the public and the private purse. Accordingly, if Europe is to achieve its aspiration to be the most dynamic and knowledge-based economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy), then European higher education will need to demonstrate that it takes the quality of its programmes and awards seriously and is willing to put into place the means of assuring and demonstrating that quality. The initiatives and demands, which are springing up both inside and outside Europe in the face of this internationalisation of higher education, demand a response. The commitment of all those involved in the production of these proposals augurs well for the fulfilment of a truly European dimension to quality assurance with which to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA’s higher education offering.

The proposals contained in this report are underpinned by a number of principles which are described in more detail in the two chapters which cover the two parts of the Berlin mandate. However, some fundamental principles should permeate the whole work:

- the interests of students as well as employers and the society more generally in good quality higher education;
- the central importance of institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities;
- the need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives.

The EHEA with its 40 states is characterised by its diversity of political systems, higher education systems, socio-cultural and educational traditions, languages, aspirations and expectations. This makes a single monolithic approach to quality, standards and quality assurance in higher education inappropriate. In the light of this diversity and variety, generally acknowledged as being one of the glories of Europe, the report sets its face against a narrow, prescriptive and highly formulated approach to standards. In both the standards and the guidelines, the report prefers the generic principle to the specific requirement. It does this because it believes that this approach is more likely to lead to broad acceptance in the first instance and because it will provide a more robust basis for the coming together of the different higher education communities across the EHEA. The generic standards ought to find a general resonance at the national³ level of most signatory states. However, one consequence of the generic principle is that the standards and guidelines focus more on what should be done than how they should be achieved. Thus, the report does include procedural matters, but it has given a priority to standards and guidelines, especially in Chapter 2.

Finally, it must be emphasised that reaching agreement for this report is not the same thing as fulfilling the Bologna goal of a quality assurance dimension for the EHEA. Ahead lies more work to implement the recommendations of the report and secure the implied quality culture among both the higher education institutions and the external quality assurance agencies.

³ Throughout the report, the term “national” also includes the regional context with regard to quality assurance agencies, national contexts and authorities etc.

2 European Standards and Guidelines

The Ministers' mandate to develop 'an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance' raised a number of important questions. 'Quality assurance' is a generic term in higher education which lends itself to many interpretations: It is not possible to use one definition to cover all circumstances. Similarly, the word 'standards' is employed in a variety of ways across Europe, ranging from statements of narrowly defined regulatory requirements to more generalised descriptions of good practice. The words also have very different meanings in the local contexts of national higher education systems.

Moreover, the drafting process itself has made evident that, within the quality assurance community itself, there are some quite fundamental differences of view of the appropriate relationship that should be established between higher education institutions and their external evaluators. Some, mainly from agencies which accredit programmes or institutions, take the view that external quality assurance is essentially a matter of 'consumer protection', requiring a clear distance to be established between the quality assurance agency and the higher education institutions whose work they assess, while other agencies see the principal purpose of external quality assurance to be the provision of advice and guidance in pursuit of improvements in the standards and quality of programmes of study and associated qualifications. In the latter case a close relationship between the evaluators and the evaluated is a requirement. Yet others wish to adopt a position somewhere between the two, seeking to balance accountability and improvement.

Nor is it just the quality assurance agencies that have different views on these matters. The interests of the higher education institutions and student representative bodies are not always the same, the former seeking a high level of autonomy with a minimum of external regulation or evaluation (and that at the level of the whole institution), the latter wanting institutions to be publicly accountable through frequent inspection at the level of the programme or qualification.

Finally, the standards and guidelines relate only to the three cycles of higher education described in the Bologna Declaration and are not intended to cover the area of research or general institutional management.

Background of the standards and guidelines

This section of the report contains a set of proposed standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA. The standards and guidelines are designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located. As mentioned earlier, it has not been considered appropriate to include detailed 'procedures' in the recommendations of this chapter of the report, since institutional and agency

procedures are an important part of their autonomy. It will be for the institutions and agencies themselves, co-operating within their individual contexts, to decide the procedural consequences of adopting the standards contained in this report.

As their starting point, the standards and guidelines endorse the spirit of the 'July 2003 Graz Declaration' of the European University Association (EUA) which states that 'the purpose of a European dimension to quality assurance is to promote mutual trust and improve transparency while respecting the diversity of national contexts and subject areas'. Consonant with the Graz declaration, the standards and guidelines contained in this report recognise the primacy of national systems of higher education, the importance of institutional and agency autonomy within those national systems, and the particular requirements of different academic subjects. In addition, the standards and guidelines owe much to the experience gained during the ENQA-coordinated pilot project 'Transnational European Evaluation Project' (TEEP), which investigated, in three disciplines, the operational implications of a European transnational quality evaluation process.

The standards and guidelines also take into account the quality convergence study published by ENQA in March 2005, which examined the reasons for differences between different national approaches to external quality assurance and constraints on their convergence. Further, they reflect the statement of Ministers in the Berlin communiqué that 'consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework'. In these standards and guidelines, therefore, an appropriate balance has been sought between the creation and development of internal quality cultures, and the role which external quality assurance procedures may play.

In addition, the standards and guidelines have also benefited particularly from the 'Code of Good Practice' published in December 2004 by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and other perspectives included in ESIB's 'Statement on agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines at a European level' (April 2004) and 'Statement on peer review of quality assurance and accreditation agencies' (April 2004), EUA's 'QA policy position in the context of the Berlin Communiqué' (April 2004) and the EURASHE 'Policy Statement on the Bologna Process' (June 2004). Finally, an international perspective has been included by comparing the standards on external quality assurance with the "Guidelines for good practice" being implemented by the international network INQAAHE.

Introduction to Parts 1 and 2: European standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance of higher education

The standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance, which follow, have been developed for the use of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies working in the EHEA, covering key areas relating to quality and standards.

The purpose of these standards and guidelines is to provide a source of assistance and guidance to both higher education institutions in developing their own quality assurance systems and agencies undertaking external quality assurance, as well as to contribute to a common frame of reference, which can be used by institutions and agencies alike. It is not the intention that these standards and guidelines should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable.

In some countries of the EHEA the ministry of education or an equivalent organisation has the responsibility for some of the areas covered by the standards and guidelines. Where this is the case, that ministry or organisation should ensure that appropriate quality assurance mechanisms are in place and subject to independent reviews.

Basic principles

The standards and guidelines are based on a number of basic principles about quality assurance, both internal in and external to higher education in the EHEA. These include:

- providers of higher education have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- the interests of society in the quality and standards of higher education need to be safeguarded;
- the quality of academic programmes need to be developed and improved for students and other beneficiaries of higher education across the EHEA;
- there need to be efficient and effective organisational structures within which those academic programmes can be provided and supported;
- transparency and the use of external expertise in quality assurance processes are important;
- there should be encouragement of a culture of quality within higher education institutions;
- processes should be developed through which higher education institutions can demonstrate their accountability, including accountability for the investment of public and private money;
- quality assurance for accountability purposes is fully compatible with quality assurance for enhancement purposes;
- institutions should be able to demonstrate their quality at home and internationally;
- processes used should not stifle diversity and innovation.

Purposes of the standards and guidelines

The purposes of the standards and guidelines are:

- to improve the education available to students in higher education institutions in the EHEA;
- to assist higher education institutions in managing and enhancing their quality and, thereby, to help to justify their institutional autonomy;
- to form a background for quality assurance agencies in their work;
- to make external quality assurance more transparent and simpler to understand for everybody involved.

Objectives of the standards and guidelines

The objectives of the standards and guidelines are:

- to encourage the development of higher education institutions which foster vibrant intellectual and educational achievement;
- to provide a source of assistance and guidance to higher education institutions and other relevant agencies in developing their own culture of quality assurance;
- to inform and raise the expectations of higher education institutions, students, employers and other stakeholders about the processes and outcomes of higher education;
- to contribute to a common frame of reference for the provision of higher education and the assurance of quality within the EHEA.

External quality assurance

The standards and guidelines proposed in this report envisage an important role for external quality assurance. The form of this varies from system to system and can include institutional evaluations of different types; subject or programme evaluations; accreditation at subject, programme and institutional levels; and combinations of these. Such external evaluations largely depend for their full effectiveness on there being an explicit internal quality assurance strategy, with specific objectives, and on the use, within institutions, of mechanisms and methods aimed at achieving those objectives.

Quality assurance can be undertaken by external agencies for a number of purposes, including:

- safeguarding of national academic standards for higher education;
- accreditation of programmes and/or institutions;
- user protection;
- public provision of independently-verified information (quantitative and qualitative) about programmes or institutions;
- improvement and enhancement of quality.

The activities of European quality assurance agencies will reflect the legal, social and cultural requirements of the jurisdictions and environments in which they operate. European standards relating to the quality assurance of quality assurance agencies themselves are contained in Part 3 of this chapter.

The processes carried out by quality assurance agencies will properly depend upon their purposes and the outcomes they are intended to achieve. The procedures adopted by those agencies that are concerned to emphasise principally the enhancement of quality may be quite different from those whose function is first to provide strong ‘consumer protection’. The standards that follow reflect basic good practice across Europe in external quality assurance, but do not attempt to provide detailed guidance about what should be examined or how quality assurance activities should be conducted. Those are matters of national autonomy, although the exchange of information amongst agencies and authorities is already leading to the emergence of convergent elements.

There are, however, already some general principles of good practice in external quality assurance processes:

- institutional autonomy should be respected;
- the interests of students and other stakeholders such as labour market representatives should be at the forefront of external quality assurance processes;
- use should be made, wherever possible, of the results of institutions' own internal quality assurance activities.

The 'guidelines' provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards. Although the guidelines are not part of the standards themselves, the standards should be considered in conjunction with them.

Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance

Standard:

Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

Guidelines:

Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.

The policy statement is expected to include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the institution;
- the institution's strategy for quality and standards;
- the organisation of the quality assurance system;
- the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality;
- the involvement of students in quality assurance;
- the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

The realisation of the EHEA depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes; that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes; and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication. All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

Standard:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

Guidelines:

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

1.3 Assessment of students

Standard:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

Guidelines:

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is

carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff

Standard:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

Guidelines:

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

1.5 Learning resources and student support

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

Guidelines:

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

1.6 Information systems

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

Guidelines:

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates;
- employability of graduates;
- students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the student population;
- learning resources available and their costs;
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

1.7 Public information

Standard:

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

Guidelines:

In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

Part 2: European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education

2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures

Standard:

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Guidelines:

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met.

If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

Standard:

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

Guidelines:

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.

As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

2.3 Criteria for decisions

Standard:

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

Guidelines:

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

2.4 Processes fit for purpose

Standard:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

Guidelines:

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes. Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance.

Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;

- the use of international experts;
- participation of students;
- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

2.5 Reporting

Standard:

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

Guidelines:

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone.

In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers.

Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

2.6 Follow-up procedures

Standard:

Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

Guidelines:

Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: It should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

2.7 Periodic reviews

Standard:

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

Guidelines:

Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not “once in a lifetime”. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

2.8 System-wide analyses

Standard:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

Guidelines:

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

Introduction to Part 3: European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies

The growth of European external quality assurance agencies has been expansive since the early 1990s. At the same time cooperation and sharing of best practices among agencies have been an integrated element in this development. Already in 1994/95 the so-called European Pilot Projects initiated by the European Commission resulted in the mutual recognition by agencies of the basic methodology of quality assurance: independent agencies, self-evaluations, external site visits and public reporting, laid down in the 1998 EU Council Recommendation on quality assurance in higher education. The creation of ENQA in

2000 was therefore a natural formalisation of this development in cooperation, and ENQA has been able to build on the state-of-the-art consensus arrived at during the 1990s.

The European standards for external quality assurance agencies, which follow, have been developed on the premises of this development in the young history of European external quality assurance. Moreover it is the conscious ambition that the standards should be neither too detailed nor too prescriptive. They must not reduce the freedom of European quality assurance agencies to reflect in their organisations and processes the experiences and expectations of their nation or region. The standards must, though, ensure that the professionalism, credibility and integrity of the agencies are visible and transparent to their stakeholders and must permit comparability to be observable among the agencies and allow the necessary European dimension.

It should be added that in this way the standards do also contribute naturally to the work being done towards mutual recognition of agencies and the results of agency evaluations or accreditations. This work has been explored in the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA) and is part of the ‘Code of Good Practise’ by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

Several ‘guidelines’ have been added to provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards. Although the guidelines are not part of the standards themselves, the standards should be considered in conjunction with them.

Part 3: European standards for external quality assurance agencies

3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

Standard:

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Guidelines:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

3.2 Official status

Standard:

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

3.3 Activities

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

Guidelines:

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

3.4 Resources

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

3.5 Mission statement

Standard:

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

Guidelines:

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

3.6 Independence

Standard:

Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

Guidelines:

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- Its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts).
- The definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence.
- While relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

Standard:

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.

These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Guidelines:

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

3.8 Accountability procedures

Standard:

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

Guidelines:

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

3 Peer Review System for Quality Assurance Agencies

In Berlin the Ministers called ‘upon ENQA, through its members, in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE, and ESIB, to ... explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies’.

ENQA and its partners have met this call by building on the interpretation of the mandate that a system of peer review of agencies must include not only the peer review process itself, but also a careful consideration of the quality standards on which a review could build. Further, there has been agreement in the process that peer review of agencies should be interpreted as basically the means to achieve the goal of transparency, visibility and comparability of quality of agencies.

Therefore, this report has as a major proposal the creation of a register of recognised external quality assurance agencies operating in higher education within Europe. This proposal is in essence a response to expectations that there is likely soon to be an increase of quality assurance bodies keen to make a profit from the value of a recognition or accreditation label. Experience elsewhere has shown that it is difficult to control such enterprises, but Europe has a possibly unique opportunity to exercise practical management of this new market, not in order to protect the interests of already established agencies, but to make sure that the benefits of quality assurance are not diminished by the activities of disreputable practitioners.

The work on these proposals has principally taken into consideration the European context and demands. At the same time there has been awareness in the process that similar experiences and processes are developing internationally. This chapter therefore opens with a brief analysis of the international experiences and initiatives relevant for the drafting of this part of the report. It then outlines the proposed peer review system based on the subsidiarity principle and the European standards for external quality assurance agencies. This outline leads to a presentation of the recommended register of external quality assurance agencies operating in Europe. The peer reviews and the agencies’ compliance with the European standards play a crucial role in the composition of the register. Finally, a European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education is proposed.

International context

Europe is not the only area where dynamic developments in the field of higher education quality assurance are currently taking place. This section describes some of the experiences and initiatives of organisations such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation

tation in the United States (CHEA), OECD and UNESCO. The work of these organisations in relation to quality assurance have been found useful during the drafting of this report. Even though these international experiences have not been directly included in the specific recommendations, some key international elements are presented below in a manner that relates to the recommendations in this chapter.

The identification of good quality and good practices of external quality assurance agencies has also been on the international agenda for several years. INQAAHE discussed in 1999 and onwards a quality label for external quality assurance agencies, an idea originally initiated by the IAUP, in order to meet the need for higher education institutions to identify which agencies are qualified to fulfil the external quality assurance role. The quality label met widespread opposition and instead INQAAHE has focused on formulating good practice criteria for agencies. The result is a set of principles that presents common denominators of good practice while at the same time recognising the international diversity of agencies in terms of purposes and historical-cultural contexts.

In terms of the recommendations on peer review of agencies, the work done by CHEA is relevant. CHEA is a non-governmental organisation functioning as an umbrella body for the US regional, specialised, national and professional accreditation agencies. Accrediting organisations that seek recognition by CHEA must demonstrate that they meet CHEA recognition standards. Accrediting organisations will be expected to advance academic quality, demonstrate accountability, encourage improvement, employ appropriate procedures, continually reassess accreditation practices and possess sufficient resources. CHEA will demand that members undergo so-called recognition reviews every six years. There are basic similarities and compatibility between the CHEA approach and the proposals of this report, for instance in terms of cyclical reviews. However, this report has given a priority to a distinct focus on the quality assurance of agencies.

A separate initiative has been taken jointly by OECD and UNESCO to elaborate guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education. The OECD-UNESCO guidelines will be finalised in 2005, but the drafting process has identified the contrast between the need to regulate the internationalisation of higher education and the fact that existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions. Therefore, it is posed as a challenge for the current quality assurance systems to develop appropriate methodologies and mechanisms to cover foreign providers and programmes in addition to national providers and programmes in order to maximise the benefits and limit the potential disadvantages of the internationalisation of higher education.

The proposed OECD-UNESCO guidelines recommend that external quality assurance agencies ensure that their quality assurance arrangements include foreign and for-profit institutions/providers as well as distance education delivery and other non-traditional modes of educational delivery. However, the drafting process of the guidelines also recognises that the inclusion of foreign providers in the remit of national agencies will in most cases require changes in national legislation and administrative procedures.

This report recognises the importance and implications of internationalisation for the quality assurance of higher education institutions. Although it has been considered too early to include a reference to this in the proposed European standards for external quality assurance, the proposal for a European regis-

ter does explicitly include agencies from outside Europe operating here as well as European agencies with cross-border operations.

It should also be recognised that the continuing European process fully meets the OECD-UNESCO recommendation that agencies should sustain and strengthen the existing regional and international networks.

Cyclical reviews of agencies

The field of external quality assurance of higher education in Europe is relatively young. However, it may be considered an element of growing maturity among agencies that recent years have evidenced an interest in enhancing credibility of agency work by focusing on internal and external quality assurance of agencies themselves. An ENQA workshop in February 2003 in Sitges, Spain, had quality assurance of agencies as its theme. The participants discussed existing experiences of external evaluation of agencies and one conclusion of the workshop was a recommendation that ENQA should work towards making cyclical external reviews of member agencies. Accordingly, ENQA received the Berlin mandate at a time when discussion of external reviews of agencies had already begun in ENQA and been an element in E4 meetings.

This report recommends that any European agency should at no more than five-year intervals conduct or be submitted to a cyclical external review of its processes and activities. The results should be documented in a report which states the extent to which the agency is in compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies (see Chapter 2, Part 3).

In the EHEA the map of providers and operators in external quality assurance of higher education will no doubt be more complicated in the future. Therefore, it is important that non-ENQA members are included in considerations on quality assurance of agencies. And it is even more important that agencies from outside Europe have an open opportunity, if they want it, to measure themselves against the recommended European standards. Therefore, the report does not wish to confine the focus of this recommendation to nationally recognised European agencies and thus by implication only actual or potential ENQA members. On the contrary, agencies from outside Europe, but operating in Europe, or European agencies that are not nationally recognised, must also be allowed to opt for a review that assesses its compliance with the European standards.

The general principles for cyclical reviews are proposed to be as follows:

- External quality assurance agencies established and officially recognised as national agencies by a Bologna signatory state should normally be reviewed on a national basis, thus respecting the subsidiarity principle – even if they also operate beyond national borders. These European national agencies may on the other hand also opt for reviews organised by ENQA rather than internal nationally based reviews. The reviews of agencies should include an assessment of whether the agencies are in compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.
- Agencies not established and officially recognised in a Bologna signatory state may on their own

- initiative opt to be reviewed against the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.
- The reviews should follow the process comprising a self-evaluation, an independent panel of experts and a published report.

An external review will typically be initiated at the national or agency level. It is therefore expected that reviews of agencies will usually follow from national regulations or from the internal quality assurance processes in place in the agency. This report wishes strongly to emphasise the importance of respecting the subsidiarity principle, and it is therefore proposed that ENQA, in respect of its own members, takes the initiative toward an agency only in the case where after five years no initiative has been taken nationally or by the agency itself. In case the agency is a non-ENQA member and after five years no initiative has been taken nationally or by the agency itself, the European Register Committee is responsible for initiating the review.

When national authorities initiate reviews, the purpose could obviously be quite broad and include the agency's fulfilment of the national mandate, e.g. However, it is a core element in this proposal that reviews – regardless of whether they are initiated at a national, agency or ENQA level – must always explicitly consider the extent to which the agency conforms with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies. The ENQA General Assembly decided at its meeting in November 2004 that the membership criteria of ENQA should conform with the proposed European standards for external quality assurance agencies. Accordingly, the review of an agency will not only make evident the level of conformity with the European standards, but also at the same time indicate the level of compliance with ENQA membership criteria.

Finally, the report stresses that the involvement of international experts with appropriate expertise and experience will provide substantial benefit to the review process.

The follow-up of a cyclical review will first and foremost be the responsibility of the national authorities or owners of the agency and, of course, of the agency itself. ENQA will have a role in the follow-up only in the case of member agencies where ENQA must certify the degree to which the member agency meets the European standards for external quality assurance agencies according to the review. ENQA regulations will specify the consequences if this is not the case.

An illustrative outline of an exemplary process of an external review of an agency is shown in the annex to this report.

Register of external quality assurance agencies operating in Europe

ENQA committed itself before the Berlin Ministerial meeting of 2003 to develop in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders a European register of quality assurance agencies, covering public, private, and thematic agencies, operating or planning to operate in Europe.

The register would meet the interest of higher education institutions and governments in being able to identify professional and credible quality assurance agencies operating in Europe. This interest has

firstly its basis in the complicated area of recognition of non-national degrees. Recognition procedures would be strengthened if it were transparent to what extent providers were themselves quality assured by recognised agencies. Secondly, it is increasingly possible for higher education institutions to seek quality assurance from agencies across national borders. Higher education institutions would of course be helped in this process by being able to identify professional agencies from a reliable register.

The most valuable asset of the register would thus be its informative value to institutions and other stakeholders, and the register could in itself become a very useful instrument for achieving transparency and comparability of external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

The register must make evident the level of compliance of entrants with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies. However, it is important to stress that this report does not aim at proposing the register as a ranking instrument.

The register should be open for applications from all agencies providing services within Europe, including those operating from countries outside Europe or those with a transnational or international basis. The agencies will be placed into different sections of the register depending on whether they are peer reviewed or not, whether they comply with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies or not, and whether they operate strictly nationally or across borders.

A possible structure for the register is therefore:

Section 1. Peer reviewed agencies, divided into the following categories:

- European national agencies that have been reviewed and fulfil all the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.
- European national agencies that have been reviewed, but do not fulfil all the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.
- Non-national and extra-European agencies that operate in Europe, have been reviewed and fulfil all the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.
- Non-national and extra-European agencies that operate in Europe and have been reviewed, but do not fulfil all the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.

Section 2. Non-reviewed agencies

- European national agencies, non-national agencies and extra-European agencies that have not been reviewed and are therefore listed according to information gained from their application for inclusion in the register.

Presented in a grid, the structure of the register is this:

PROPOSED REGISTER STRUCTURE		Reviewed		Not reviewed
		Compliance with European standards	Non-compliance with European standards	
European national agencies	National operators			
	Cross-border operators			
European non-national agencies				
Extra-European agencies operating in Europe				

A European Register Committee will decide on admissions to the European register. The committee will use agency compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies as identified in the cyclical review as one criterion for placement in the register. Other criteria should be developed which will take account of the diversity of the higher education systems.

The committee will be a light, non-bureaucratic construction with nine members nominated by EURASHE, ESIB, EUA, ENQA and organisations representing European employers, unions and professional organisations plus government representatives. These members will act in an individual capacity and not as mandated representatives of the nominating organisations. ENQA will perform the secretarial duties for the committee which will meet at least on a semi-annual basis.

The European Register Committee will as one of its first implementation tasks formalise the ownership of the register.

Another immediate task for the European Register Committee must be to establish an independent and credible appeals system to secure the rights of those that have been refused or that cannot accept their placement in the register. This appeals system should be an element in the protocol to be drafted by the committee soon after it has become operational.

European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Since the Prague meeting in 2001 the E4 group, consisting of ENQA, EUA, ESIB and EURASHE, has met on a regular basis to discuss respective views on the Bologna Process and European quality in higher education. Since the Berlin meeting in 2003 the E4 meetings have had as their major focus the implementation of the mandate of the Ministers on quality assurance in higher education.

This cooperation at the European level has proved constructive. The four organisations have therefore agreed that a European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will continue to exist building from the E4 group. The foundation of such a forum would in practical terms establish the current cooperation between ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESIB on a more permanent basis. The forum would function primarily as a consultative and advisory forum for the major European stakeholders and it would resemble the current arrangements where the four respective organisations finance their own expenses and participation without the creation of a new administrative structure. In the longer term the forum should also include labour market representatives.

4 Future Perspectives and Challenges

This report contains proposals and recommendations that have been developed and endorsed by the key European players in the world of quality assurance in higher education. The very existence of the report is a testimony to the achievement of a joint understanding in a field where such an understanding might be thought inherently unlikely, given the different interests in play. The proposals offer increased transparency, security and information about higher education for students and society more generally. They equally offer higher education institutions recognition and credibility and opportunities to demonstrate their dedication to high quality in an increasingly competitive and sceptical environment. For the quality assurance agencies the proposals enhance their own quality and credibility and connect them more productively to their wider European professional fraternity.

The proposals will remain no more than proposals, however, if they are not accompanied by an effective implementation strategy. If approved by the Ministers in Bergen, immediate steps will be taken to begin to introduce some of the key elements of this report. The register of quality assurance agencies should be envisaged as being started during the latter half of 2005 and to be ready to go on-line in 2006. The ENQA secretariat has made provision for the extra resources that will be necessary for this purpose. Following the Ministerial meeting, ENQA will take the necessary concrete initiatives towards establishing the European Register Committee. The committee will begin its work with formalising the ownership of the register and drafting a protocol based on the preliminary work done by ENQA in the spring of 2005. The first of the cyclical reviews should be expected to take place during 2005.

The European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will also be an early initiative. Thus, the outcomes of the Bergen Ministerial meeting, and the establishment of the forum will be the main theme of the next meeting between ENQA and its E4 partners in June 2005. In addition, the future cooperation with other key stakeholders such as labour market representatives will be subject to discussions. ENQA has also arranged a meeting with the other European quality assurance networks prior to the next ENQA General Assembly in September 2005.

The possibility of rapid implementation of certain of the proposals of this report should not be taken to mean that the task of embedding the rest of them will be easy. It will take longer for the internal and external quality assurance standards to be widely adopted by institutions and agencies, because their acceptance will depend on a willingness to change and develop on the part of signatory states with long-established and powerful higher education systems. What is proposed in the internal quality assurance standards will be challenging for some higher education institutions, especially where there is a new and developing tradition of quality assurance or where the focus on students' needs and their preparation to enter the employment market is not embedded in the institutional culture. Similarly, the standards for external quality assurance and for quality assurance agencies themselves will require all participants, and

especially the agencies, to look very carefully at themselves and to measure their practices against the European expectation. The new cyclical review procedure will provide a timely focus for this purpose. It will only be when the benefits of adoption of the standards are seen that there is likely to be general acceptance of them.

The EHEA operates on the basis of individual national responsibility for higher education and this implies autonomy in matters of external quality assurance. Because of this the report is not and cannot be regulatory but makes its recommendations and proposals in a spirit of mutual respect among professionals; experts drawn from higher education institutions including students; ministries; and quality assurance agencies. Some signatory states may want to enshrine the standards and review process in their legislative or administrative frameworks. Others may wish to take a longer view of the appropriateness of doing so, weighing the advantages of change against the strengths of the status quo. The proposed European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education should prove a useful place in which to discuss, debate and learn about new thinking, the experiences of other systems and the similarities and dissimilarities of national experiences.

All in all, there will be a considerable and challenging workload for ENQA, its E4 partners and other key stakeholders to get to grips with in the coming years. The report therefore makes it clear that completion of this report is not the same thing as fulfilling the Bologna goal of a quality assurance dimension for the EHEA. Ahead lies more work to implement the recommendations of the report and secure the implied quality culture among both the higher education institutions and the external quality assurance agencies. What has been set in motion by the Berlin mandate will need continuing maintenance and coaxing if it is to provide the fully functioning European dimension of quality assurance for the EHEA.

A European higher education area with strong, autonomous and effective higher education institutions, a keen sense of the importance of quality and standards, good peer reviews, credible quality assurance agencies, an effective register and increased co-operation with other stakeholders, such as employers, is now possible and the proposals contained in this report will go a long way towards making that vision a reality.

Annex:

Cyclical review of quality assurance agencies⁴ – a theoretical model

The model presented below is a proposed indicative outline for a process of external review of an external quality assurance agency. It is presented as an example of a credible process suited to identify compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies. However, note must be taken that the purpose is instructive and illustrative. Therefore, the level of detail is high and most likely higher than what will be perceived as needed in individual peer reviews of agencies. It follows from this that in no way must the process presented here be considered as a standard in itself. Further, it should be noted that in the presented example the term “evaluation” is applied to cover objectives and processes. Terms, such as “accreditation” or “audit”, might as well be applied.

The process covers the following elements:

- formulating terms of reference and protocol for the review;
- nomination and appointment of panel of experts;
- self-evaluation by the agency;
- site visit;
- reporting.

1 Terms of reference

The terms of reference must identify the goals of the review in terms of the perspectives and interests of authorities, stakeholders and the agency itself. All the main tasks and operations of the agency must be covered and in such a manner that it is evident that no hidden agendas are present.

2 Self-evaluation

2.1 Background information required from agency as basis of review

Relevant background information is necessary to understand the context in which the agency is working.

The section is expected to include:

⁴The structure of the annex approximates the one documented recently in a manual of a project on mutual recognition of quality assurance agencies in the Nordic countries.

2.1.1 A brief outline of the national higher education system, including:

- degree structure;
- institutional structure;
- procedures and involved parties in establishing new subjects, programmes and institutions;
- other quality assurance procedures;
- status of higher education institutions in relation to the government.

2.1.2 A brief account of the history of the particular agency and of the evaluation of higher education in general:

- mission statement;
- establishment of the agency (government, higher education institutions, others);
- description of the legal framework and other formal regulations concerning the agency (e.g. parliamentary laws, ministerial orders or decrees);
- the financing of the agency;
- placement of the right to initiate evaluations;
- internal organisation of the agency; including procedures for appointment and composition of board/council;
- other responsibilities of the agency than the evaluation of higher education;
- international activities of the agency, including formal agreements as well as other activities, e.g. participation in conferences, working groups and staff exchange;
- role of the agency in follow-up on evaluations: consequences and sanctions.

2.2 External quality assurance undertaken by the agency

Evidence should be produced indicating that the agency undertakes on a regular basis external quality assurance of higher education institutions or programmes. This quality assurance should involve either evaluation, accreditation, review, audit or assessment, and these are part of the core functions of the agency.

By 'regular' it is understood that evaluations are planned on the basis of a systematic procedure and that several quality assessments have been conducted over the last two years.

This evidence should include:

- a description of the methodological scope of the agency;
- an account of the number of quality assessments conducted and the number of units evaluated.

2.3 Evaluation method applied by the agency

2.3.1 Background information

An account of the overall planning of an evaluation and other fundamental issues is needed to be able to determine if the agency is working on the basis of transparent methodological procedures.

This account should include:

- the procedures for briefing of and communication with the evaluated institutions;
- the agency strategy for student participation;
- the procedures related to establishing the terms of reference/project plan of the individual assessment;
- the reference(s) for evaluation (predefined criteria, legal documents, subject benchmarks, professional standards, the stated goals of the evaluated institution);
- the extent to which the methodological elements are modified to specific reviews.

2.3.2 Elements of methodology

An account giving evidence that the methodology the agency is working on is pre-defined and public and that review results are public.

The methodology includes:

- self-evaluation or equivalent procedure of the given object of evaluation;
- external evaluation by a group of experts and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report with public results.

The agency can also work out and apply other methodologies fit for special purposes.

The agency's decisions and reports are consistent in terms of principles and requirements, even if different groups form the judgements.

If the agency makes evaluation decisions, there is an appeals system. This methodology is applied to the needs of the agencies.

If the agency is to make recommendations and/or conditional resolutions, it has a follow-up procedure to check on the results.

2.3.3 An account of the role of the external expert group

The account on the role of the external expert group should include:

- procedures for nomination and appointment of experts, including criteria for the use of international experts, and representatives of stakeholders such as employers and students;
- methods of briefing and training of experts;
- meetings between experts: number, scope and time schedule in relation to the overall evaluation process;
- division of labour between agency and experts;
- role of the agency's staff in the evaluations;
- identification and appointment of the member(s) of staff at the agency to be responsible for the evaluation.

2.3.4 Documentation

Several accounts of the agency's procedures for collecting documentation are needed to determine the procedures related to the self-evaluation of the agency and site visits:

2.3.4.1 An account of the procedures related to self-evaluation

This account should include:

- specification of content in the guidelines provided by the agency;
- procedural advice provided by the agency;
- requirements for composition of self-evaluation teams, including the role of students;
- training/information of self-evaluation teams;
- time available for conducting the self-evaluation.

2.3.4.2 An account of the procedures related to the site visit

This account should include:

- questionnaires/interviewing protocols;
- principles for selection of participants/informants (categories and specific participants);
- principles for the length of the visit;
- number of meetings and average length;
- documentation of the meetings (internal/external, minutes, transcriptions etc.);
- working methods of the external expert group.

2.3.4.3 The reports

The documentation should include the following information on the reports:

- purpose of the report;
- drafting of the report (agency staff or experts);
- format of report (design and length);
- content of report (documentation or only analysis/recommendations);
- principles for feedback from the evaluated parties on the draft report;
- publication procedures and policy (e.g. handling of the media);
- immediate follow-up (e.g. seminars and conferences);
- long-term follow-up activities (e.g. follow-up evaluation or visit).

2.3.5 System of appeal

The agency documents a method for appeals against its decisions and how this methodology is applied to the needs of the agency. It must be evident from the documentation to what extent the appeals system is based on a hearing process through which the agency can provide those under evaluation a means to comment on and question the outcomes of the evaluation.

Basically, the agency must provide evidence that the appeals system provides for those under evaluation an opportunity to express opinions about evaluation outcomes.

2.4 Additional documentation

This additional documentation should provide an account of the use of surveys, statistical material or other kinds of documentation not mentioned elsewhere. This material should be public.

2.5 Procedures for a quality system for agencies

The agency must document that it has in place internal quality assurance mechanisms that conform to those stipulated in the European standards for external quality assurance agencies.

2.6 Final reflections

An analysis of the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is needed in order to give an account of the capacity of the agency to adapt to new demands and trends and to permanently improve its actions while maintaining a solid and credible methodological framework and governance model.

3 Guidelines for the external review panel

These guidelines describe the expectations to the external review panel. They comprise guidance on:

- appointment and general organisation;
- site visit;
- drafting of the report.

As described above, the agency under review should provide a self-evaluation report according to the provided guidelines. The self-study should be sent to the external review panel no later than a month before the visit.

3.1 Appointment of the external review panel

This section concerns the appointment of the experts that should conduct the review.

The external expert group should consist of the following experts:

- one or two quality assurance experts (international);
- representative of higher education institutions (national);
- student member (national);
- stakeholder member (for instance an employer, national).

One of these experts should be elected Chair of the external review panel.

It is also recommended that the panel should be supplemented with a person who, in an independent capacity from the agency, would act as a secretary.

Nominations of the experts may come from the agencies, stakeholders or local authorities but in order to ensure that the review is credible and trustworthy, it is essential that the task of appointing the experts be given to a third party outside the agency involved. This third party could for instance be ENQA or an agency not involved in the process. The basis for the recognition of the experts should be declarations of their independence. However, the agency under review should have the possibility to comment on the final composition of the panel.

3.2 Site visit

A protocol must be available for the site visit along lines such as the following:

The visit is recommended to have a duration of two-three days, including preparation and follow-up, depending on the external review panel's prior knowledge of the agency under review and its context. The day before the visit the panel will meet and agree on relevant themes for the visit. The purpose of the site visit is to validate the self-study. Interview guides should be drafted with this perspective in mind.

The visit could include separate meetings with members from the agency board, management, staff, experts, owners/key stakeholders and representatives from evaluated institutions at management level as well as members from the internal self-evaluation committees.

3.3 Preparation of the report

Apart from fulfilling the general terms of reference the report must focus in a precise manner on compliance with the European standards for external quality assurance agencies as specified in the self-study protocol, as well as with possibilities for and recommendations on future improvements.

After the visit the external review panel assisted by the secretary will draft a report. The final version should be sent to the agency under review for comments on factual errors.



Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe 2004/05

National Trends in the Bologna Process

EURYDICE

The information network on education in Europe

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PREFACE



The aim of the Bologna process is to create greater consistency and compatibility within European higher education and enhance its international transparency and attractiveness. Building on the intellectual, cultural, social and technological strengths of Europe, the Bologna Process is entirely consistent with and contributes to the achievement of the Lisbon strategy. This strategy was recently refocused on

creating jobs and growth, where higher education clearly has a central role to play. Universities should therefore also consider what should be their contribution to this broader strategy. In order to stimulate this reflection, the Commission adopted on 20 April a Communication addressing the strategic issues of attractiveness, governance and funding of higher education.

Central to the Bologna reforms are the three intermediate priorities emphasised by the Ministers responsible for higher education at the Berlin Conference on 18-19 September 2003, namely the introduction of study programmes based on three main cycles, more effective recognition of degrees and periods of study, and the promotion of effective quality assurance systems. Implementation of these policy objectives is crucial. From this standpoint, the present Eurydice report represents an essential contribution to the mid-term stocktaking of the Bologna process, which the Ministers also called for in Berlin.

While this report makes clear the considerable progress already made in achieving more compatible and readily comparable higher education systems, it also highlights the need for further development of the Bologna process so that universities can contribute fully to 'the Europe of knowledge'. The three-cycle structure is now being introduced in most signatory countries, while implementation of the European Credit Transfer

and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement has begun in a majority. The development of quality assurance measures is also well under way. Yet it remains vital to extend these measures to all higher education institutions and programmes on a regular systematic basis and to reinforce them with additional measures such as effective quality assurance systems recognised outside national borders.

At the request of the European Commission, the present report is not limited to Eurydice network member countries but covers all 40 signatory countries to the Bologna Declaration. This is symbolic of our determination that the whole of Europe should be involved in the Bologna process and I am therefore especially pleased that so many countries have adopted its principles.

I am grateful to the European Unit and National Units of Eurydice for having worked together so well to produce this fully authoritative 2005 edition of *Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*. As in previous editions, the publication also contains clear diagrams and explanatory notes to represent the structure of higher education systems at the present stage of the Bologna reforms.

I hope that this Eurydice booklet will make a contribution to our efforts to achieve a fully integrated and coherent European Area of Higher Education by 2010, working for the benefit of Europe, its students and citizens.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ján Figel'.

Ján Figel'

Commissioner responsible for
Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism

FOREWORD

The European Commission has requested from the Eurydice Network a review of current changes in the structure of higher education in Europe. The main trends in the Bologna process have determined the subjects that should lie at the heart of the analysis, namely the three-cycle structure, the European credit system (ECTS), the Diploma Supplement and quality evaluation. A fresh survey following the one prepared by Eurydice for the Berlin conference of ministers responsible for higher education on 18-19 September 2003 has thus been produced for circulation at the Bergen conference (Norway) on 19-20 May 2005.

The Eurydice assignment has been conducted in close consultation with the *Bologna Follow-up Group* which was asked by the ministers responsible for higher education for a thorough evaluation report on implementation of the Bologna process for their Bergen meeting. Information gathered by the Eurydice National Units has thus provided input for two complementary exercises, namely the *Bologna Follow-up Group* evaluation report, for which it was one of the main sources, and the present *Focus* publication prepared by the Eurydice Network itself, which describes how the relevant measures are progressing and the current structure of higher education. Each stage, from the preparation of the questionnaire for gathering information from national sources to completion of the comparative overview, has been carried out in consultation with the *Bologna Follow-up Group* and, more particularly, its own Working Group responsible for the evaluation report. The aim of this was to avoid any duplication of effort and ensure that the data contained in the two reports were all the more complementary and consistent. Yet the purpose of each is different, namely the evaluation of implementation and recommendations in the case of the *Bologna Follow-up Group* report, and descriptive analysis of the wide variety of

national circumstances and their common features in the case of the *Focus* published by Eurydice.

Although 31 countries are represented within Eurydice, the European Commission was concerned that the survey prepared by the Network should cover the 40 countries now signatory to the Bologna Declaration. An information gathering questionnaire was sent to all national representatives, including those in the nine additional countries. The information was gathered in all countries between July and December 2004. In the case of the 31 Network countries, Eurydice followed its customary procedures for checking and official approval of data. With assistance from the *Bologna Follow-up Group* secretariat, material from national sources in the nine additional countries and the way it was interpreted was also checked. However, information on education systems in countries considered here by Eurydice for the first time and with little prior knowledge of them should be treated with some caution.

The central institutional location of the Eurydice Network in its member countries, in most cases actually within their education ministries, means that the Network mainly makes use of official information of an administrative nature (legislation, regulations, recommendations, etc.). Consequently, the resultant analytical work provides data on the intentions of policy-makers and not necessarily on the practical circumstances governing their realisation or on their effect. This needs to be especially emphasised in the case of the present report dealing both with processes whose implementation is invariably well under way and with a level of education characterised by considerable autonomy of its institutions, on which factual information is in practice difficult to centralise.

We hope that this descriptive analysis will provide greater insight into the structural changes that are currently occurring within higher education in Europe. We should like to express our warm gratitude to the Eurydice National Units, as well as to the representatives of the nine additional countries with whom we have worked closely, for providing essential information and making every effort to comply with a tight timetable. We also wish to thank the members of the working group formed from the *Bologna Follow-up Group*, as well as its secretariat, for the transparency and quality of the discussions that have typified this, our first experience of cooperating together.

Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter

Head of the Eurydice European Unit

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INTRODUCTION

In this publication, the **structure of higher education in Europe** is illustrated in a succession of **detailed diagrams**. For each country in turn, they represent the courses and qualifications most commonly offered by universities or other higher education institutions. The names of institutions and intermediate and final qualifications are indicated in their language of origin. The main fields of study, the national, regional or institutional selection procedures adopted at the point of entry and the length of courses are also shown. Furthermore, by using the ISCED 1997 ⁽¹⁾ system of classification (ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6), the diagrams illustrate clearly whether or not there is a structure based on two main cycles as encouraged in the Bologna Process.

Each country diagram is accompanied by a **brief account** of the **current situation** regarding the reforms or arrangements **associated with the Bologna Process** that have been introduced since 1999. Such measures are primarily concerned with the existence or otherwise of the model based on two main cycles, development of the third cycle (in terms of length, access and training in research methodology), adoption or general implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the introduction of the Diploma Supplement and the development of measures for quality evaluation.

In appropriate cases, there is also reference to other especially significant reforms introduced independently of measures linked to the Bologna Process or as a means of reinforcing it. They include changes in selection procedures or in the status of higher education institutions.

Where no reform has yet been implemented, the date of the most recent reform or the focus of any ongoing national debate is indicated.

Country diagrams along with their explanatory texts are arranged in the alphabetical order of the EU protocol country codes. This has been done to ensure uniformity of presentation in all language versions of the publication.

The first part of the publication contains a brief review of the **main trends** apparent from a study of these diagrams and their summaries. This **comparative overview** is preceded by a short account of the **background to the Bologna Process**. A **glossary** of codes and national abbreviations, as well as definitions of frequently used terms, are also included. Finally, an annex containing national statistics provides some insight into the level at which the various measures have been implemented.

⁽¹⁾ See the definition in the glossary at the end of the publication.

FROM THE SORBONNE DECLARATION TO THE BERGEN CONFERENCE – A DYNAMIC PROCESS

The Bologna Process may be regarded both as the product and continuation of a series of European conferences and a certain number of policy decisions aimed at establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010.

The five main stages mapping out the Bologna Process so far are those of **Paris-La Sorbonne** (25 May 1998), **Bologna** (19 June 1999), **Prague** (19 May 2001), **Berlin** (18-19 September 2003) and **Bergen** (19-20 May) ⁽¹⁾.

The premises of the Bologna Process are to be found in the Declaration of Paris-la Sorbonne on *Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System* signed in May 1998 by the education ministers of four States: France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

The 3 principles underlying Paris-La Sorbonne:

- Facilitating the mobility of students in the European area and their integration into the European labour market, as well as the mobility of teachers;
- Improving the international transparency of courses and the recognition of qualifications by means of gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study;
- Encouraging a return to studies or their continuation in the same or another institution, in a school or within arrangements for European mobility.

A year later (in June 1999), the Bologna Declaration on the *European Higher Education Area*, which was largely inspired by the Sorbonne Declaration, was signed. Besides aspects of its content, one of its novel features lay in a broadening of the debate, which then had 29 States signatories (the 15 EU Member States, 3 EFTA countries – Iceland, Norway and Switzerland – and 11 candidate countries) and included institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and associations of universities, rectors or European students.

The six principles of the Bologna Declaration:

- Facilitating the readability and comparability of qualifications;
- Implementing a system based essentially on two main cycles;
- Establishing a system of credits, such as ECTS;
- Developing arrangements to support the mobility of students, teachers and researchers;
- Promoting European cooperation in quality assurance;
- Promoting the European dimension in higher education (in terms of curricular development and inter-institutional cooperation).

In May 2001, a conference was held in Prague, which included the same categories of participant, with 33 States signatories (the newcomers were Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein and Turkey). The purpose of this conference was to assess the progress already accomplished (particularly on the basis of national reports) and identify the main principles that should drive the Bologna Process in the years ahead.

⁽¹⁾ See references at the end of the publication.

While the Prague conference confirmed the need to pursue the aims set out in the Bologna Declaration, it nevertheless attached importance to three points in particular.

Three specific points emphasised by the Prague Conference:

- Lifelong learning;
- The involvement of higher education institutions and students as active partners;
- The need to enhance the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

In September 2003, the Berlin Conference was an all-important stage in following up the Bologna process. With the inclusion of seven new States signatories (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Holy See, Montenegro, Russia and Serbia), 40 countries are now involved in it. Furthermore, the process gained in momentum by setting itself the intermediate priorities specified in the Communiqué signed on 19 September 2003.

The 3 intermediate priorities established by the Berlin Conference (which should be achieved by 2005):

- Having started the implementation of the two-cycle system;
- Automatic provision of the Diploma Supplement for all graduates free of charge in a widely spoken European language;
- Establishment of a national quality assurance system.

With a view to the Bergen Conference (19-20 May 2005), the ministers present in Berlin asked the Bologna Follow-up Group to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the priority aims contained in the Communiqué.

As this latest stage gets under way, 5 States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) may become the next States signatories in the process.

To make the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area more tangible, the Berlin Communiqué also included the establishment of the doctoral cycle in the Bologna reforms.

COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

SECTION A: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TWO-CYCLE STRUCTURE

Higher education in two cycles: a system adopted almost everywhere in Europe

The ministers of higher education in the signatory countries to the Bologna Declaration agreed on the need to establish a form of higher education structured into two cycles (*Bachelor/Master*) to consolidate the European Higher Education Area by 2010. During the Conference held in Berlin on 18-19 September 2003, the importance of implementing this structure was emphasised, and ministers from countries that had not yet established it agreed that they would undertake the task in 2005.

At the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year, the two-cycle structure had been established in all Bologna Declaration signatory countries, with the exception of Andorra, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden (except in a few courses) (Figure A1). Three of these countries have recently approved the laws aiming to introduce it. In Romania and Spain, the structure will be introduced with effect from the 2005/06 academic year. This will occur a year later in Hungary. Sweden is presenting a government bill proposing a new two-cycle structure to parliament in May 2005. Portugal has not yet established any legislative or official foundation but plans to restructure its higher education system in 2005 in accordance with the recommendations of the Bologna Declaration. Given the very limited scale of higher education in Andorra and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, no measure for the establishment of two cycles has been introduced.

In many countries, the two-cycle structure was firmly established well before the Bologna Declaration (at least in the case of certain fields of study). In the majority of eastern European countries, the structure was introduced in the 1990s at the time of the far-reaching reforms in their education systems following the fall of communism. The other systems have introduced it since they joined the Bologna Process between 1999 and 2005.

In certain countries, this structure did not correspond exactly to the Bologna requirements. The adaptations or extensions required have been made since 2000, except in Bosnia and Herzegovina in which they are the subject of debate. In Greece, a political decision for full implementation of the structure is pending. For some countries, the task was to make this structure compulsory or extend it. Latvia in 2000, the Czech Republic in 2001, Germany in 2002, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Norway in 2003, and Finland in 2004 have specified in law (which in Finland will take effect from August 2005) that their institutions are obliged to introduce the *Bachelor/Master* structure. In 2003/04, Denmark extended the *Bachelor/Master* structure to studies in medicine and related fields, engineering, surveying, music and theology. Austria has extended application of the two-cycle structure to the *Fachhochschulen* with effect from 2003/04. In Slovenia, the length of programmes and the levels of qualifications were adapted to the Bologna recommendations by law in 2004, and the changes will come into force from the 2005/06 academic year. In France, the name of *mastaire* (initially given to the second qualification introduced in 1999) was changed to *Master* in 2002, so that developments could be immediately understood at international level.

Some countries reflecting highly differing contexts (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Slovakia) still provide for long studies alongside those structured in two cycles. In the Czech Republic, this applies to programmes for which accreditation has not yet expired. In Germany, Lithuania and Poland, these long programmes will be permanently replaced by the two-cycle structure by 2010 at the latest. In Iceland, there remain very few long programmes. In Norway, the former system will be totally abolished in 2007. In Slovakia, they will be gradually abolished with effect from 2005/06.

The Flemish and French Communities of Belgium have reformed their higher education systems and provided for the new structure in their legislation in 2003 and 2004, respectively. The new structure has been established for the first year of study in all institutions and fields from the 2004/05 academic year. It will be gradually introduced up to 2006/07 and, as a result, two systems will co-exist for some years. The situation is fairly similar in Luxembourg in which the law approved in 2003 has been implemented since 2004/05.

According to the law of 2004 in Croatia on adapting the existing two-cycle structure to the Bologna recommendations, all higher education institutions are obliged to do this in 2005/06. In Albania and Serbia, certain programmes with a two-cycle structure were offered by a few higher education institutions in 2004. The introduction of legislation and extension of the structure to other programmes and institutions are planned with effect from 2005/06.

The two-cycle structure has now been adopted in almost all fields of study

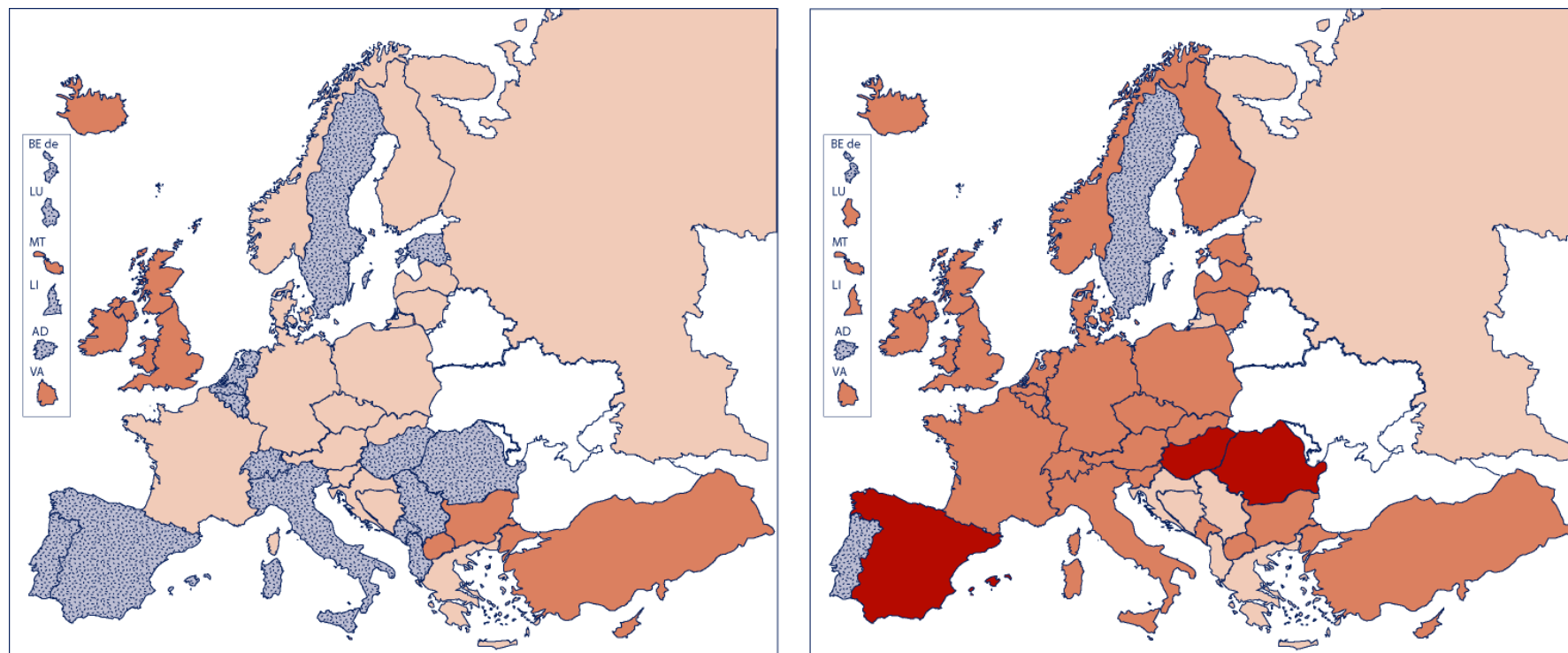
In most countries in which provision is structured in two main cycles, this structure applies solely to ISCED 5A. The two qualifications (*Bachelor/Master*) at ISCED 5A are offered by university or non-university institutions. This structure is applicable to almost all fields of study. Nevertheless, studies in architecture and engineering are exceptions in Estonia and Italy. This situation also exists in France in which studies in engineering in the schools of architecture are offered solely in one long cycle. In Russia, certain fields such as nursing and service sector subjects are not affected by the two-cycle structure. In Slovakia, studies in theology are also an exception.

Studies in medicine and related fields often remain structured in a single cycle lasting 5 or 6 years which leads directly to a Master's level qualification. They are rarely structured in two cycles each leading to a final qualification, as in the case of the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands. However, in these countries, the first *Bachelor* qualification obtained after three years, even if it is a final qualification, does not give access to the professions of doctor, dentist, etc., or other specialised training. Students must complete the second cycle (*Master*). By contrast, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom, the first cycle (*Bachelor* level) is long (5-6 years) and leads to the qualification that enables its holders to practise the profession concerned. Some further 'practical' training may be required. Completion of the second cycle is optional.

Figure A1: Existence of the two-cycle structure, 2004/05

Situation before 2000

Situation in 2004/05



■ Existence of the two-cycle structure corresponding to Bologna

■ Existence of the two-cycle structure with subsequent necessary adaptations/extensions

■ Law approved in 2004 or 2005, but has not yet come into force

■ No two-cycle structure

Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Hungary: 40 preselected programmes started as first-cycle *Bachelor* programmes in 2004/05. Full implementation of the two-cycle structure will occur in 2006/07.

Italy: The law introducing two-cycle structure was adopted in 1999 and implemented in 2001.

Programmes at ISCED 5B rarely give direct access to programmes for the ISCED 5A Master

In the majority of countries, higher education provision is characterised by a division between, on the one hand, academic or professional theoretically based programmes (ISCED 5A) giving direct access to doctoral programmes (ISCED 6) and, on the other, practically-oriented professional programmes (ISCED 5B) which do not give access to doctoral programmes. These professional qualifications ISCED 5B do provide direct access to the labour market. The students concerned are generally able to continue their studies at the same level (ISCED 5B) or embark on ISCED 5A first-cycle programmes (*Bachelor*).

In around 15 Bologna Declaration signatory countries, short ISCED 5B programmes (lasting one or two years) are offered in parallel with ISCED 5B programmes (lasting 3 years or longer). Five countries (Hungary, Iceland, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom) offer solely short ISCED 5B programmes.

Generally, the division between ISCED 5A and 5B programmes may be identified by the type of institution that organises the provision (university or non-university) and the level of qualification awarded on the completion of studies. However, this 'binary' form of organisation is becoming blurred by the tendency for university and non-university institutions to become increasingly similar. Thus in six countries (Finland, Greece, the Holy See, Malta, Norway and Russia), all recognised higher education courses are at ISCED 5A, even where they are also provided in types of institution other than universities. In the Netherlands, a few short programmes at ISCED 5B offered by the *Hogescholen* are in the process of being transformed into parts of *Bachelor* programmes (ISCED 5A).

In five countries of the European Union, namely Belgium (the Flemish and French Communities), Estonia, France except in the case of paramedical training, Italy and Portugal, programmes at ISCED 5B lasting at least 3 years give access to programmes at *Master* level ISCED 5A often subject to certain conditions. In Estonia and Portugal, students are then able to embark on a doctorate. However, in the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, this access is not direct and is conditional upon the completion of a bridging course that generally has to be taken during the first year of the *Master* at ISCED 5A.

In five countries (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia), a first programme at ISCED 5B lasting 3 to 4 years gives access to a second ISCED 5B programme. In France, short (two-year) ISCED 5B programmes offered by the IUT give access to second ISCED 5B programmes lasting one year (*licence professionnelle*).

In five countries, ISCED 5B programmes give direct access to specialisation programmes at ISCED 5A or 5B (Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein and Switzerland).

In the other countries in which occupationally oriented ISCED 5B programmes lasting one or two years are offered, their graduates – apart from being able to access the labour market – generally have opportunities for credit transfer or for facilitating their transition to ISCED 5A. They do not have to begin the entire *Bachelor* programme again. For example, graduates with an ISCED 5B qualification are often able to embark directly on the second or third year of the *Bachelor* (ISCED 5A) in Cyprus, Denmark in the case of a majority of the 2-year Academic Profession programmes (AK), Iceland, Latvia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In Hungary, ISCED 5B qualifications provide for exemption (up to 60 credits) from part of any ISCED 5A programme.

Figure A2: Introduction of the two-cycle structure in ISCED 5B programmes and access to ISCED 5A programmes, 2004/05

AD	AL	AT	BA	BE de	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CS- mon	CS- ser	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU
○	▲	□	▲	▲	●	●	□	▲	●	○	○	□	□	○	●	⊗	○	⊗	●	○	○
IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RU	SE	SI	SK	TR	UK	VA	
□	○	●	▲	○	○	○	●	⊗	○	⊗	□	●	□	⊗	○	●	○	○	○	○	⊗

- ISCED 5B with possible access to an ISCED 5A *Master* programme (irrespective of any further conditions)
- ISCED 5B with possible access to a second ISCED 5B programme
- ▲ ISCED 5B with possible access to specialisation programmes (ISCED 5A or 5B)
- ISCED 5B giving access mainly to the labour market (with the possibility of exemption from part of the Bachelor ISCED 5A)
- ISCED 5B giving access mainly to the labour market
- ⊗ No ISCED 5B programmes

Additional notes

Albania: Specialisation is possible solely in nursing.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Specialisation is possible solely in medical fields and nursing.

Germany: According to a Resolution of the Standing Conference of 15 October 2004 accredited 5B programmes at *Berufsakademien* will offer possible access to an ISCED 5A Master programme (irrespective of any further conditions).

SECTION B: THE THIRD CYCLE – DOCTORATES

In September 2003, the ministers responsible for higher education in European signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration firmly agreed to promote close links between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. They drew attention to the need to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles to add the doctoral level as the third cycle of higher education.

In all Bologna Declaration signatory countries (except Andorra, the German-speaking Community of Belgium), the structure based on two main *Bachelor/Master* cycles has been introduced or will be in the years ahead (see section A). Most of these countries consider the doctorate to be a third cycle in higher education. Some of them have confirmed this in recent legislation introduced since they formally committed themselves to the Bologna Process.

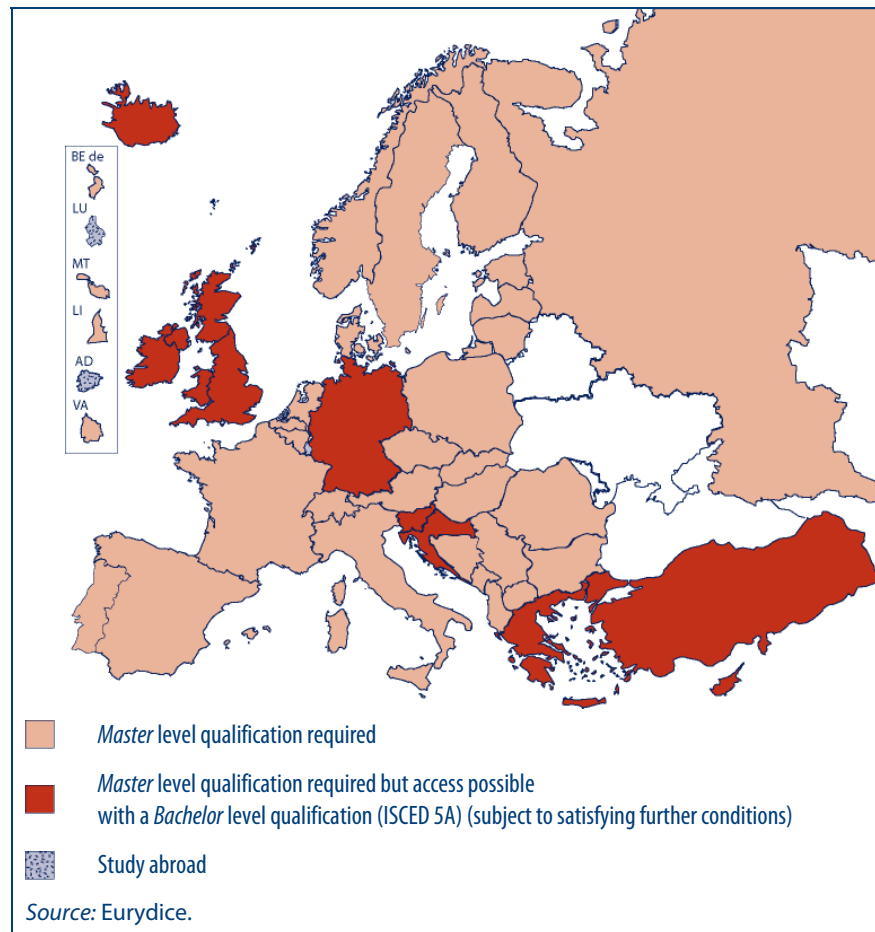
Access to the doctorate

In all countries, access to doctoral studies is generally based on possession of the qualification awarded at the end of the second cycle at ISCED 5A (*Master*) (Figure B1). Nevertheless, in some of them, other selection criteria determined generally at institutional level are also taken into account. Moreover, in France and Spain, it is compulsory for students with the *Master* level qualification to have completed a qualifying programme of high level theoretical courses (doctoral training) before embarking on individual research (Figure B2).

In nine European countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia, Turkey and the United Kingdom), students may embark on the doctorate after obtaining a first ISCED 5A qualification. In general, this possibility is subject to certain further conditions. In Cyprus, students

who have completed the first cycle may embark on the doctorate subject to undertaking special research training beforehand equivalent to 60 ECTS credits. In Germany, the possibility open to some especially talented students of undertaking doctoral studies directly after the *Bachelor* qualification is dependent on satisfactory performance in a subject-specific test as detailed in the *Kultusministerkonferenz* resolution of 2000. In Greece, the first qualification (*ptychio*) may be sufficient to secure access to doctoral studies in faculties that do not offer second-cycle studies. In Ireland, the decision to entitle a student to embark on a doctorate directly after the *Bachelor* qualification depends on each higher education institution (good results may be taken into account). In Slovenia (up to 2005/06), the most gifted students may include two years of their second-cycle studies (*magisterij*) in the programme for the doctorate. They are thus exempt from preparing and presenting the written work normally completed at the end of the *magisterij*. In Turkey, students are eligible to begin a doctorate if they perform outstandingly well in their first cycle studies. In the United Kingdom, there are some subject areas where students can enter doctoral programmes without a *Masters degree* if they have good results in a *Bachelors degree with Honours* in a relevant discipline and the agreement of a supervisor(s) to take them on. In Croatia and Iceland, a student who has not obtained the *Master* qualification may embark on the doctorate in certain fields but, in such cases, a longer period of study is entailed.

Figure B1: Qualification required to secure access to doctoral studies, 2004/05



Additional notes

Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden: In 2004/05, the two-cycle structure has not yet been introduced.

Liechtenstein: The *Master* level qualification is obtained abroad.

Luxembourg: Doctoral studies will be offered at the university from October 2005.

Slovenia: From 2005/06, access to the doctorate will be open to second-cycle graduates (*Master* level) or to graduates from a first cycle lasting at least four years, who demonstrate research skills or who are engaged in recognised professional activity corresponding to 60 ECTS credits.

Research training is included in doctoral programmes in half of all European countries

In the majority of the Bologna Declaration signatory countries, research training (theoretical courses), whether on a compulsory or optional basis, forms part of doctoral programmes and is additional to individual research (Figure B2). This training is compulsory and occurs in parallel with individual research in half of the countries, namely Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden and Turkey. In Ireland, only certain professional doctoral programmes include theoretical research training. In the United Kingdom, certain bodies which fund third-cycle studies require one year's training in research methods before or during the first part of the doctoral studies. In Slovenia, parallel research training is compulsory for those who embark on the doctorate directly after first cycle.

In France and Spain, a qualifying programme of high level theoretical research training is also compulsory but occurs prior to individual research work. In Cyprus, prior theoretical training is compulsory for those who embark on the doctorate directly after first cycle. In Germany, it may also be required under these circumstances. In Portugal, the training is necessary beforehand if the results of previous studies do not reach a certain level.

In the French Community of Belgium since 2004/05, a year of theoretical training as a high level researcher has been offered to students on an optional basis. In the Holy See, research courses may occur before

individual research or in parallel with it. In Italy, optional theoretical courses are provided for in law. The decision whether to offer them (before or during doctoral studies) is entirely a matter for each institution. In Netherlands and Switzerland, research training undertaken at the same time as individual research may be offered on an optional basis.

In the other countries, doctorates are obtained solely on satisfactory completion of an individual research undertaking.

Figure B2: Status of individual research and research training in doctoral programmes, 2004/05

	AD	AL	AT	BA	BE de	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CS-mon	CS-ser	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU
Parallel research training	⊗		●		⊗	○		●	○	●		●	●		●	●			●		●	●
Research training beforehand	⊗				⊗	○						●		●			●	●		●		
Individual research	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RU	SE	SI	SK	TR	UK	VA	
Parallel research training	●	●	○	●	●	⊗	●	●		○	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	
Research training beforehand			○			⊗							●							●	○	
Individual research	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

● Compulsory ● Required under certain circumstances
 ○ Optional ⊗ Not applicable: the doctorate is not offered

Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Cyprus: Prior research training is compulsory for first-cycle *Bachelor* graduates.

Germany: Prior research training may be required for *Bachelor* graduates.

Liechtenstein: A single doctoral programme (in philosophy) is offered.

Luxembourg: Doctoral studies will be offered at the university from October 2005.

Slovenia: In the case of the most gifted students, the second-cycle (*magisterij*) courses

may be included in the programme leading directly to the title of doctor (ISCED 6). For students who have obtained the title of *magister*, the doctorate (ISCED 6) consists solely of a programme of individual research.

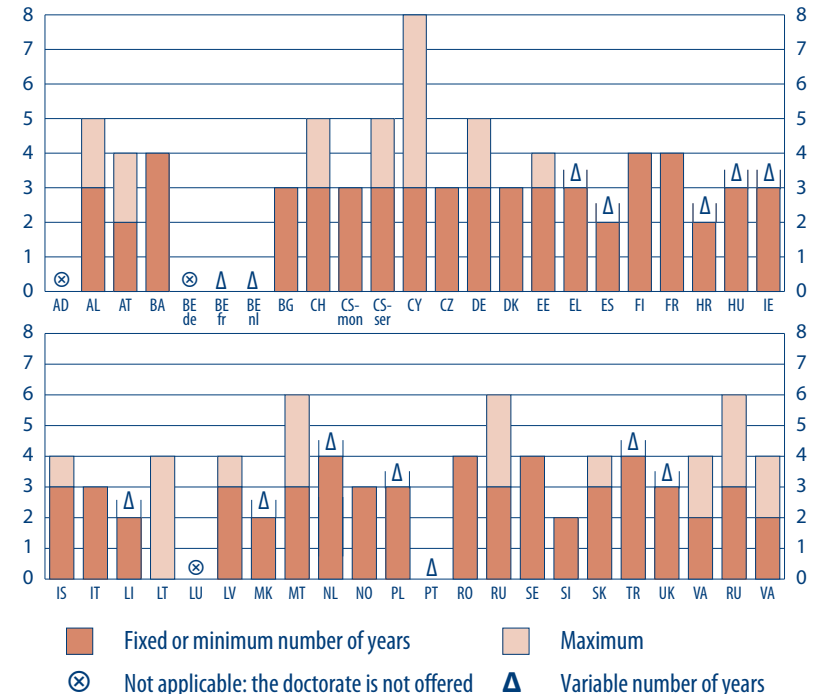
The notional length of a doctorate is often set at a minimum of three years

Six Bologna Declaration signatory countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Montenegro and Norway) have fixed three years as the notional duration of the third (doctoral) cycle. The situation in Luxembourg and Romania will be similar with effect from 2005/06. In a few countries, it is possible to complete a doctorate in a minimum period of two years (Austria, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Spain). Elsewhere, the minimum duration of the third (doctoral) cycle is three years or longer.

A maximum length is not always fixed but, in cases in which it is, the maximum is 8 years at most.

In the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium and Portugal, the minimum and maximum duration of the doctorate are not fixed.

Figure B3: The notional length of full-time doctoral studies, 2004/05



Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Croatia: For *Master* level graduates, the length of doctoral studies is a minimum period of one year if they are undertaken in the same field.

Denmark: Traditional doctoral studies (for the *doktorgrad*) are longer (generally 5-8 years).

France: The period of four years includes a year of DEA or a compulsory *Master*.

Luxembourg: The duration of the doctorate will be set at three years from 2005/06.

Slovenia: The period of individual research is set at two years for students who have first obtained the title of *magister*.

Spain: The duration is set at a minimum of two years solely for the compulsory theoretical part that precedes individual research. For the latter, there is no fixed minimum and/or maximum period.

SECTION C: THE EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER AND ACCUMULATION SYSTEM (ECTS)

Originally used essentially as a credit transfer system for student mobility in the Erasmus Programme (from 1989/90 onwards), ECTS ⁽¹⁾ has become, with the Bologna Declaration, one of the central elements in the process of making the structure of European higher education more consistent. Its importance with regard to student mobility and the development of international programmes was restated in the communiqué of the conference of ministers responsible for higher education, in Berlin on 18-19 September 2003. Noting that ECTS was increasingly becoming the general basis for national credit systems, the signatory countries were encouraged to apply it not just as a transfer system but also as a credit accumulation system.

According to the current definition, ECTS is regarded as implemented when the arrangements for its introduction are included in the legislation in force, when it applies to almost all programmes offered by almost all higher education institutions, and when it satisfies the requirements of 60 credit points based on student workload, and is used for credit transfer and accumulation. Consequently, implementation of ECTS for use solely within European mobility programmes is not taken into account in the Figures C1a and C1b.

ECTS is implemented in many countries. It has generally been introduced between 2000 and 2005 and is underpinned by legislation. A few countries or regions, namely Albania, Austria, Belgium (the Flemish Community), Germany and Romania introduced it sometimes partially before 2000.

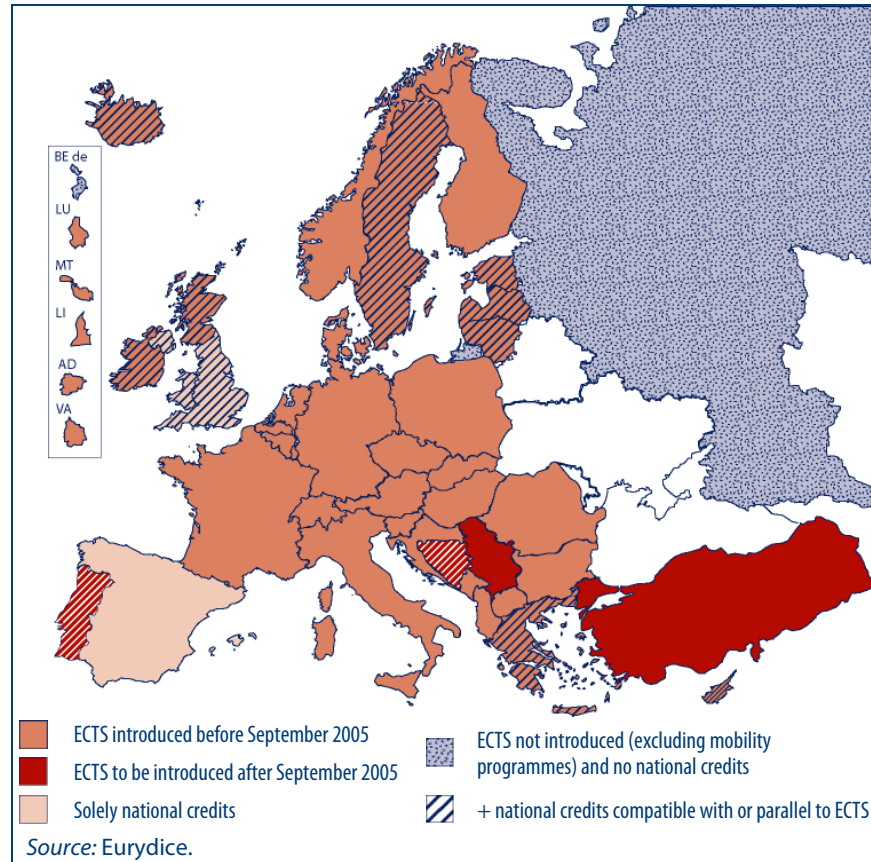
⁽¹⁾ A detailed definition is given at the end of the book.

Among the many countries or regions which had a national credit system in 2004/05, some of them have adapted it (Finland in the case of polytechnics, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway) or will soon do so (as in Estonia from 2006/07 and Finland from August 2005 in the case of universities). Portugal (in public universities), Spain and the United Kingdom (Wales) use national credit systems only, compatible or not with ECTS. In the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), there are no universal national systems, but regional credit consortia operate under nationally agreed credit guidelines. In Portugal, the law of February 2005 states that programmes should be expressed in credits with effect from 2005/06. In the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), the universal use of a national credit system and its adaptation to ECTS are the subject of a national debate. In Spain, according to the legislation of September 2003, ECTS should be applied to all programmes before 1 October 2010.

In a few countries, namely Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Ireland, Romania and Sweden, ECTS is being implemented more gradually (whether or not this is subsequent to the adaptation of a national credit system). Unlike other countries in which ECTS has to apply to all higher education programmes once it has been introduced, in the foregoing countries, it is generally being introduced first of all in university programmes (France and Romania) or in programmes offered by certain specific institutions (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ireland) and then extended on a general basis.

In Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Poland and Sweden, ECTS has been implemented in the absence of any legislative basis. In Greece, however, a law is about to be adopted. In Liechtenstein, extension of ECTS on a general basis has been regulated since the adoption of a new law in 2005.

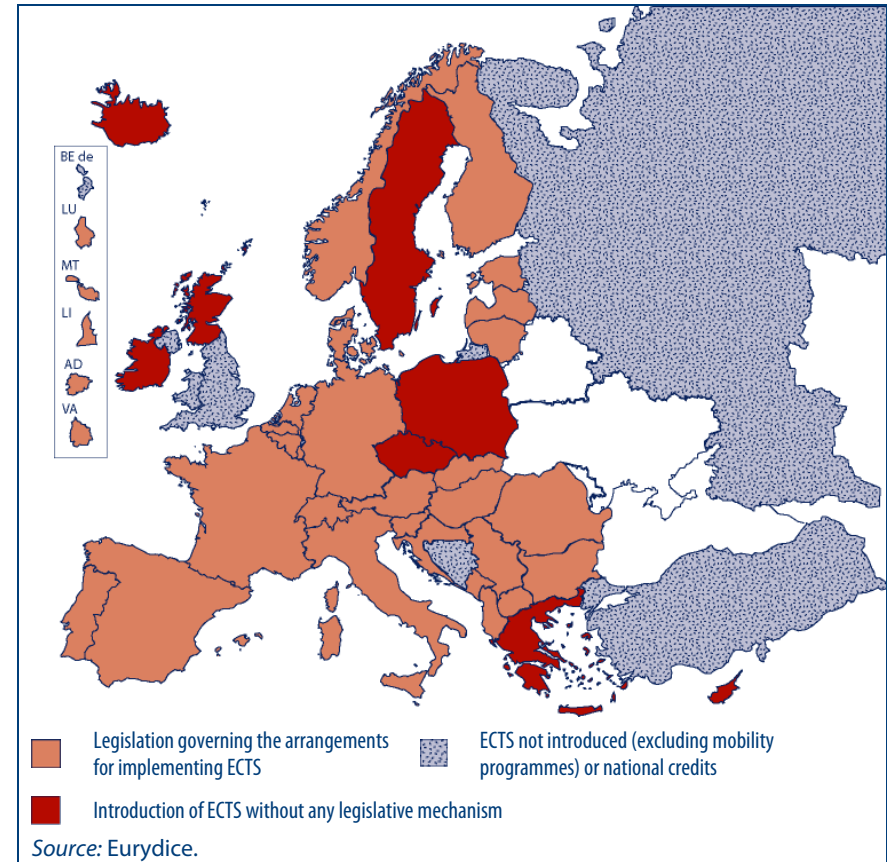
Figure C1a: Progress with implementing ECTS, 2004/05



Explanatory note (Figure C1a)

National credits regarded as compatible are based on student workload. The dates referred to indicate the period in which implementation began but do not necessarily imply that it has been completed.

Figure C1b: Legislation concerning ECTS, 2004/05



Additional notes (Figure C1a and C1b)

Bosnia and Herzegovina: A draft law indicating the need to implement ECTS exists but has not yet been adopted. Certain universities have introduced ECTS on an experimental basis in parallel with the national credit system.

Croatia: Institutions that have not yet restructured their programmes will have to introduce ECTS in 2005/06 at the latest.

Cyprus: ECTS will be fully implemented in university from 2005/06.

Additional notes (Figure C1a and C1b) (continued)

Estonia: ECTS will be introduced in all higher education institutions in 2006/07.

Greece: A law due for adoption will make ECTS mandatory.

Finland: The national credit system will be adapted to ECTS by August 2005. It is not planned for use with doctoral programmes.

Holy See: Following the legislation of 2004, ECTS is gradually being implemented.

Ireland: ECTS is used in particular within the Institutes of Technology.

Italy: The national credit system has been compatible with ECTS since 2001.

Portugal: Legislation adopted in February 2005.

Romania: ECTS has been introduced in the first and second programmes at ISCED 5A in accordance with legislation since 1998. It is being implemented in universities in 2004/05 and will be extended on a general basis from 2005/06 onwards.

Spain: According to the decree of September 2003, ECTS will have to be introduced before October 2010. In 2004/05, study programmes are still described in terms of national credits.

Turkey: ECTS has been introduced in most universities since 2001 under the European mobility programmes. It is expected to be compulsory at the end of 2005/06.

United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR): In Wales, two credits in the national systems equate to one ECTS credit. In England and Northern Ireland, where regional credit consortia operate similar systems, two credits also equate to one ECTS credit.

Only two countries or regions (the German-speaking Community of Belgium and Russia) do not have a credit system (whether national or in line with ECTS). However, this situation should change in the course of the next few years. In these countries, there have been recommendations, local experiments or working groups relating to its future implementation.

ECTS is most commonly used for both credit transfer and accumulation

In the great majority of countries in which the ECTS system has been introduced, it is used for both the transfer and accumulation of credits as advocated in the Berlin conference communiqué.

In the Holy See and the United Kingdom (Scotland), ECTS is used solely for purposes of credit transfer.

Figure C2: Implementation of ECTS as a credit transfer and/or accumulation system, 2004/05

AD	AL	AT	BA	BE de	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CS-mon	CS-ser	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU
●	●	●	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	●	(:)	●
IE	IS	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RU	SE	SI	SK	TR	UK-ENG/WLS/NIR	UK-SCT	VA
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	⊗	●	●	●	⊗	⊗	○	○

● Transfer and accumulation

⊗ ECTS not introduced (excluding mobility programmes)

○ Solely transfer

(:) Information not available

Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Croatia: ECTS will be fully implemented in 2005/06 and used both for transfer and accumulation.

Liechtenstein: The situation shown originally related solely to the *Hochschule Liechtenstein*. It has become gradually applicable to other institutions (IAP and UfH) since January 2005.

United Kingdom (SCT): The national credit system is used for transfer and accumulation.

SECTION D: THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

The Diploma Supplement – a widespread measure

The Diploma Supplement (DS) seeks to ensure that acquired knowledge and ability will be transparent and readily understood in the context of mobility. The communiqué of the conference of ministers responsible for higher education, in Berlin in September 2003, set the objective of ensuring that all graduate students receive this document automatically, free of charge and in a widely used European language, with effect from 2005.

In 2004/05, the Diploma Supplement is referred to specifically in legislation and issued by higher education institutions in the majority of countries. In most cases, its implementation got under way between 2001 and 2004. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and in Finland, the Diploma Supplement has existed for many years in a form close to the European model.

In a few systems, namely those of Albania, Andorra, Cyprus, Poland and the United Kingdom (Scotland), its implementation is very recent. It applied to graduate students for the first time in 2004/05. In Iceland, a few institutions issued it in 2003/04.

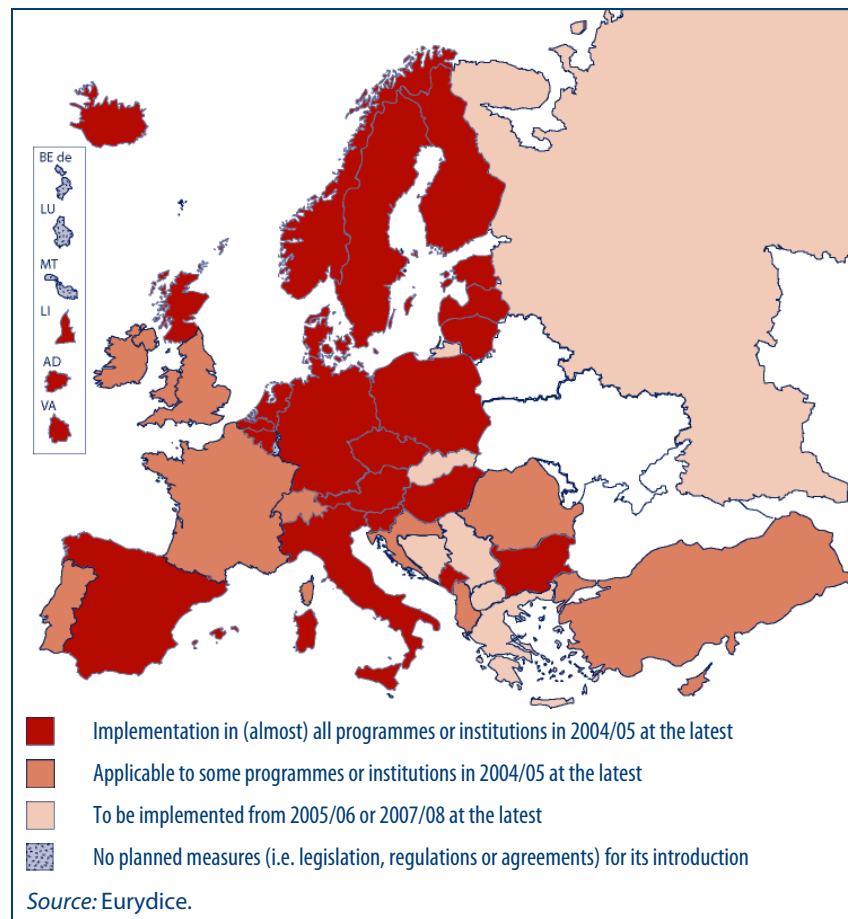
In France and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), higher education institutions have also begun to introduce the Diploma Supplement since 2004/05, but it will only be fully implemented in two years' time.

In a certain number of countries, implementation of the Diploma Supplement has gone ahead more gradually. In the Czech Republic, Germany and Italy, it was introduced (in accordance with legislation) before 2000 and is now being extended to all higher education qualifications. Liechtenstein, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey have partially introduced it since 2000/01 and it will be fully implemented in Romania and Turkey in 2005/06. In the French Community of Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands (in which it was due to become mandatory in all higher education institutions in March 2005), Portugal (in which it will be mandatory from 2005/06) and Switzerland, some institutions have initially introduced it in the absence of any legislation.

Wherever its implementation is still awaited, this will occur by 2005/06 at the latest, except in Russia which is recommending that it should be introduced on a general basis from 2007/08 onwards.

The German-speaking Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Malta are the only countries in which no date has yet been fixed for the Supplement to be incorporated into legislation or introduced in higher education institutions.

Figure D1: Progress with implementation of the Diploma Supplement, 2004/05



Additional notes

Croatia: The legislation currently in force states that issue of the DS is compulsory. It will be introduced for all students entering higher education in the 2005/06 academic year.

FYR of Macedonia and Turkey: Provision of the DS becomes mandatory with effect from 2005/06.

Netherlands: Provision of the DS has been mandatory since 1 March 2005.

Russia: A pilot project for adoption of the European type DS got under way in 2003, and is currently operational in three universities.

Switzerland: The DS has been issued in the *Fachhochschulen* since 2000 and its use is becoming increasingly widespread in universities. On the other hand, it is not yet offered by the *Pädagogische Hochschulen*.

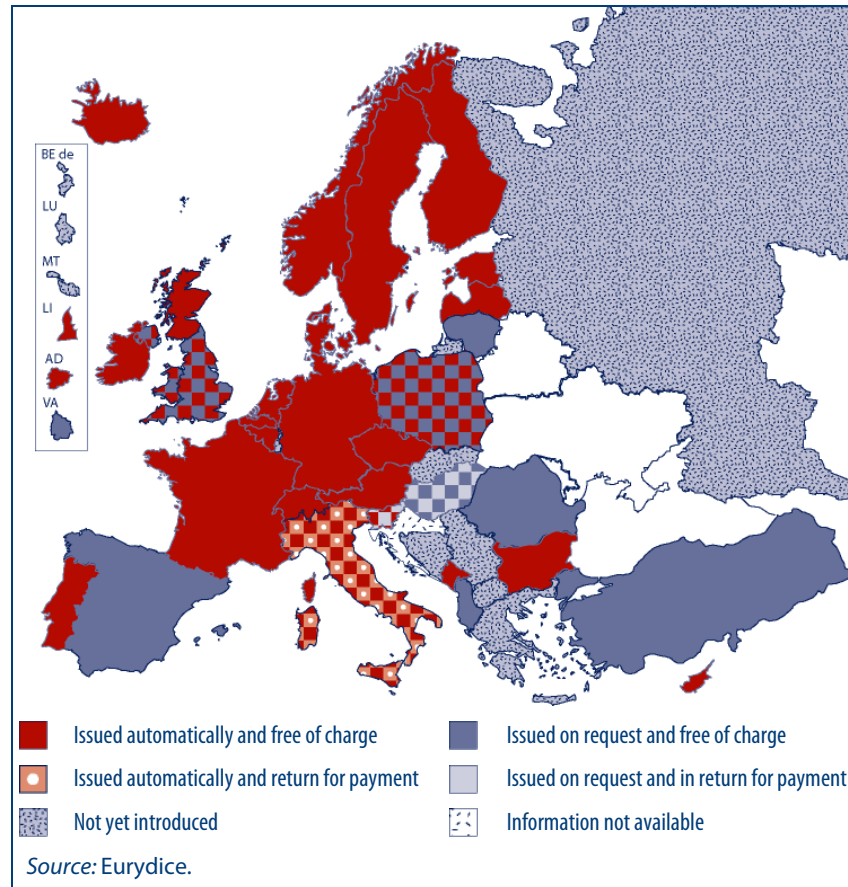
Provision of the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge in most countries

In countries in which the procedure has already been implemented in all institutions or just some of them, the Diploma Supplement (DS) is generally issued automatically and free of charge to graduates at the end of their course (Figure D2).

However, in several countries this is not the case. In 2004/05, Albania, the Holy See, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Spain and Turkey issue it only on request. The Diploma Supplement is not yet issued automatically in all institutions in the United Kingdom. The English language version of the document is issued on request in the Flemish Community of Belgium and Slovenia. In Poland, the Supplement is provided on request in languages other than Polish.

The Diploma Supplement is issued free of charge almost everywhere, but it may sometimes have to be paid for when provided in a language other than the language of instruction, as in Hungary or Slovenia.

Figure D2: Compliance with the conditions that the Diploma Supplement be issued automatically and free of charge, 2004/05



Additional notes

Czech Republic: The DS was issued on request and free of charge before 2004/05.

Estonia: The DS is issued automatically in most cases and on request to holders of a Bachelor.

FYR of Macedonia: The DS will be issued on request and in return for payment from 2005/06.

Hungary: The DS is issued on request and free of charge in Hungarian and on request and in return for payment in English.

Italy: Institutions may choose whether they will issue the DS free of charge or in return for payment.

Netherlands: The DS has been issued automatically since March 2005.

Poland: The DS will be issued on request in languages other than Polish.

Slovakia: The English language version may be provided in return for payment depending on the institution concerned.

Slovenia: The DS is issued automatically and free of charge in Slovene and on request and in return for payment in another European language. From 2005/06, it will be issued automatically and free of charge irrespective of the language chosen.

However, from 2005/06 this will no longer be the case in Slovenia, in which the document will be issued automatically and free of charge irrespective of the language chosen.

In Italy, higher education institutions are free to issue it either free of charge or in return for payment.

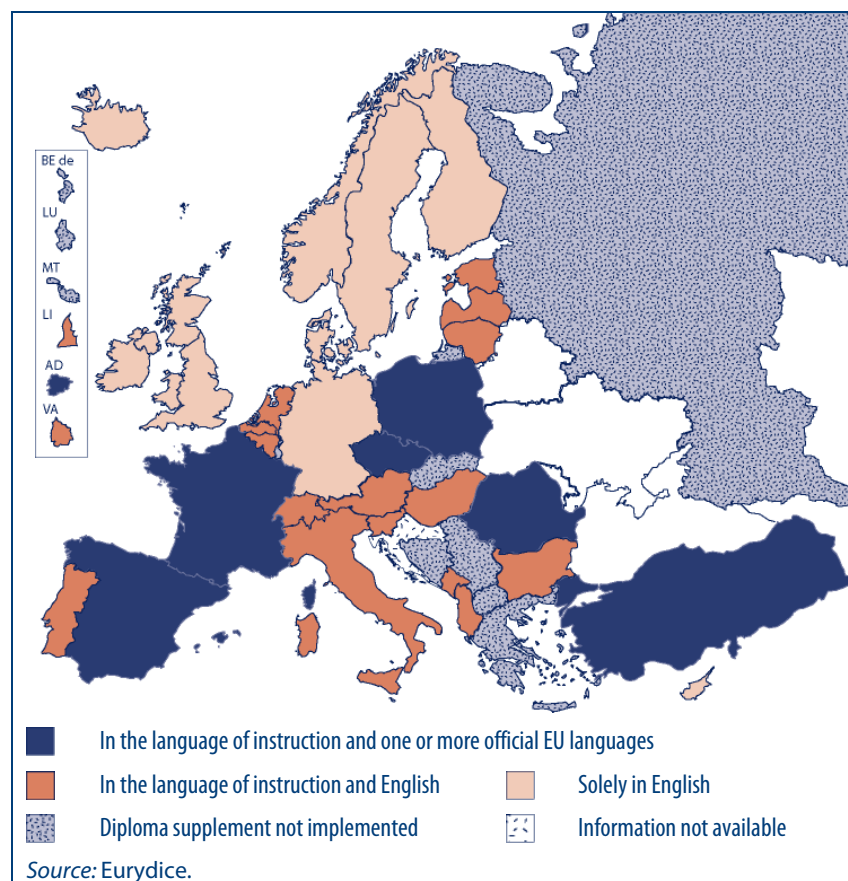
Among the countries that will introduce it with effect from 2005/06, Bosnia and Herzegovina will issue it on request; Greece and Slovakia will do so automatically. In Lithuania, it will be issued automatically from 2006 onwards.

In 2005/06, only Hungary (in the case of the English language version) and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (in the case of the versions in English or the language of instruction) will issue the Diploma Supplement both on request and in return for payment.

The Diploma Supplement is generally issued in English or in the language of instruction and in English

Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom issue the Diploma Supplement (DS) solely in English.

Figure D3: Language(s) in which the Diploma Supplement is issued, 2004/05



Additional notes

Belgium (BE fr): The English version may be issued by certain institutions on a voluntary basis.

Croatia: The legislation does not specify either the terms on which it is issued or in which one or more languages.

Czech Republic: Issue of the DS in a language other than the language of instruction is at the discretion of the higher education institution concerned.

FYR of Macedonia and Lithuania: The DS will be issued in the language of instruction and in English with effect from 2005/06.

Iceland: Certain higher education institutions also issue the DS in Icelandic.

Netherlands: The DS is issued in English or French as the student wishes.

Slovakia: The DS will be issued in the language of instruction and in English from 2005/06 onwards.

United Kingdom (WLS): Plans are in place to issue the DS in Welsh as in English.

Around 15 countries or regions (Albania, Austria, Belgium (the Flemish and French Communities), Bulgaria, Estonia, the Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovenia and Switzerland) issue it in the language of instruction and in English. The situation will be similar in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 2005/06.

Andorra, France, Poland and Spain, appear noteworthy for the range of different languages in which the Diploma Supplement may be made available. Depending on the wishes of the student and the choices offered by the institution, the Supplement is available in the first two countries in the language of instruction and one of the official languages of the European Union. Andorra issues the document in Catalan, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. In Poland, it may be issued in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

SECTION E: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Mutual recognition in quality evaluation in education calls for the development of clearly defined criteria and methodologies. To achieve this objective, according to the conclusions of the conference of the ministers in Berlin in 2003, national quality evaluation systems should not just include the bodies responsible for this evaluation but also specify their composition and fundamental goals. It is also essential for institutions themselves to undertake internal evaluation in a way that fully upholds their autonomy and to ensure that students are involved. It was also agreed that besides publication of the findings of evaluation, an accreditation system involving authorisation or recognition for a specific renewable period could round off quality assurance measures.

Quality assurance is coordinated by an independent national agency in the great majority of countries

In 2004/05, the majority of the signatory countries to the Bologna Declaration possess an independent national body for evaluation or accreditation. Such bodies often combine both functions. However, in Germany the *Akkreditierungsrat* is responsible solely for accreditation. In Cyprus (the private sector) and Estonia, external evaluation is not organised aside from the accreditation coordinated by the national agency. Conversely, in the French Community of Belgium, the Quality Evaluation Agency set up in 2004 is not involved in procedures for accreditation, which is not organised on a formal basis. In Denmark, the National Agency is also mainly responsible for external evaluation even if, since 2004, it also carries out evaluation for the accreditation of professional *bachelors* qualifications.

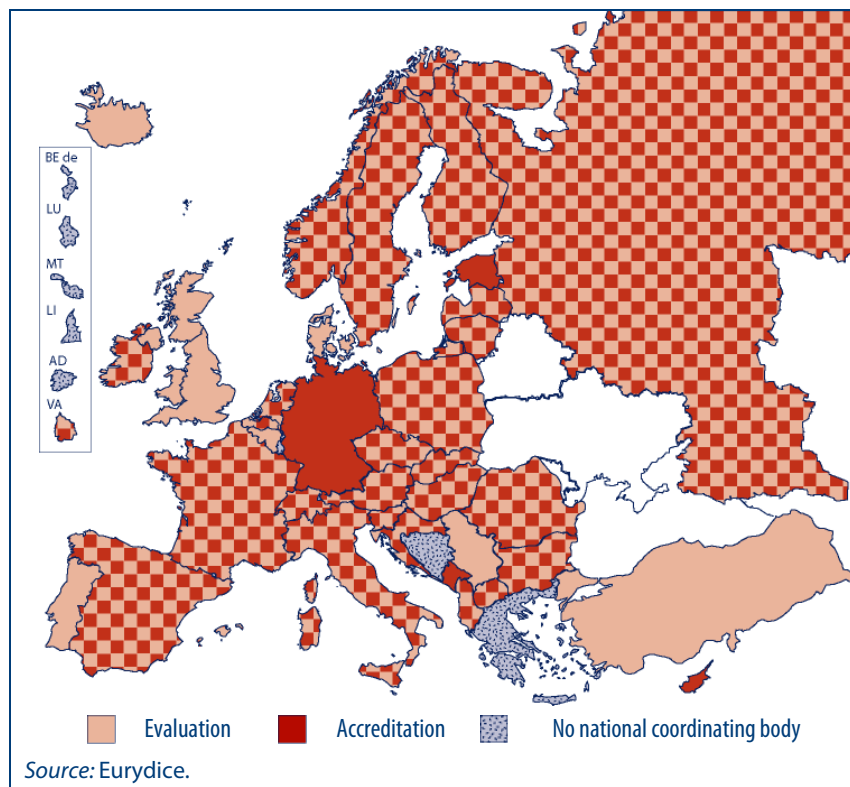
In some countries, two or three separate bodies exist alongside each other. In Austria, the national service agency AQA (Agency for Quality Assurance) was set up to assist universities and *Fachhochschulen* in creating their quality management systems. By contrast, in the case of accreditation, two separate bodies are responsible for the *Fachhochschulen* and programmes in the private sector, respectively.

In France, the *Comité national d'évaluation* (CNE) is responsible only for external evaluation of the institutions. National commissions also exist for the accreditation of certain specific programmes such as courses for the training of *ingénieurs* or in the field of management and business. In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Serbia, two national agencies have been established, one for evaluation and the other for accreditation. It is planned that both agencies in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should be merged in accordance with an amendment to the 2005 law on higher education. In Slovenia, a National Committee is responsible for external evaluation, but the Council for Higher Education (reformed in March 2005) is responsible for accreditation.

The Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands have jointly established a supranational organisation responsible for accreditation and licensing evaluation agencies since 2003.

These national bodies that perform evaluation and/or accreditation do not always have independent status. They sometimes take the form of a council, commission or agency that comes directly under the top-level public authorities (as in Albania, the French Community of Belgium, Croatia, France in the case of the accreditation commissions, the Holy See, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia). In Iceland, an evaluation department has been set up within the ministry.

**Figure E1: Existence of a national body for evaluation and/or accreditation, independent or otherwise from the ministry.
Situation prior to May 2005**



Additional notes

Austria: There are no accreditation procedures for universities in the public sector.

Belgium (BE fr): There is no accreditation system in the strict sense, but only institutions that comply with regulatory requirements are recognised and receive subsidies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: The National Centre for Information, Recognition and Quality Assurance should be set up with adoption of the framework law on higher education.

Cyprus: The SEKAP council (*Symvoulio Ekpaideytikis Axiologisis–Pistopoiisis*) is responsible for the accreditation of private higher education programmes. The establishment of an agency for the evaluation of the whole of higher education is under discussion.

Denmark: The Danish Evaluation Institute is responsible for external quality assurance. It carries out evaluations, including some that establish a basis for the accreditation of private-sector programmes with a view to providing access to study grants and loans.

Finland: The accreditation responsibilities of FINHEEC (Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council) are concerned with the continuing professional courses offered by polytechnic institutions and universities.

Germany: There is no body at national level for external evaluation, but a body in each *Land*, which carries out evaluation independently. However, inter-*Land* networks and associations are being formed.

Greece: The Agency is due to be set up in May 2005 and legislation on its composition has already been approved. It will be primarily concerned with evaluation.

Holy See: Evaluation is carried out by the Congregation for Catholic Education which has governmental status. The proposal to set up an independent separate body is under discussion.

Iceland: The evaluation department is part of the Ministry which calls on independent experts to carry out evaluations. A special committee on quality in education was set up in 2004.

Ireland: Several bodies co-exist in close association with the Department of Education and Science (Higher Education Authority – HEA, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland – NQAI and Higher Education and Training Awards Council – HETAC, which is responsible for accreditation and evaluation). In cooperation with the seven universities, it was decided to establish the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB).

Liechtenstein: The top-level public authority for higher education is directly responsible for quality control.

Lithuania: The national evaluation centre is a public administrative body, the majority of whose employees are public servants. They call on external experts. An evaluation council has existed since 2004. Accreditation was carried out for the *kolegija* in 2004/05 and will begin for universities in 2005/06.

Luxembourg: The establishment of an international consortium of external evaluators is provided for by the 2003 law.

Switzerland: Accreditation is on a voluntary basis but will become compulsory for *Fachhochschulen* programmes in 2005.

Turkey: A committee for academic evaluation and quality control was set up by the inter-university board in 2003/04 but the emphasis is currently on internal evaluation procedures except in doctoral programmes.

In Croatia and Greece, an independent public national agency should become operational in March and May 2005 respectively. In Slovenia, an agency of this kind is due to be established at the end of 2005.

In Cyprus (in the case of public-sector higher education) and the Holy See, the establishment of an independent public-sector agency responsible for quality assurance is the subject of ongoing debate. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is provided for in draft legislation now before the parliament.

Geographically small countries or regions such as Andorra, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg or Malta, have not set up a body of this kind and are not planning to do so.

Students are rarely represented in the governance of national bodies for coordination of quality assurance

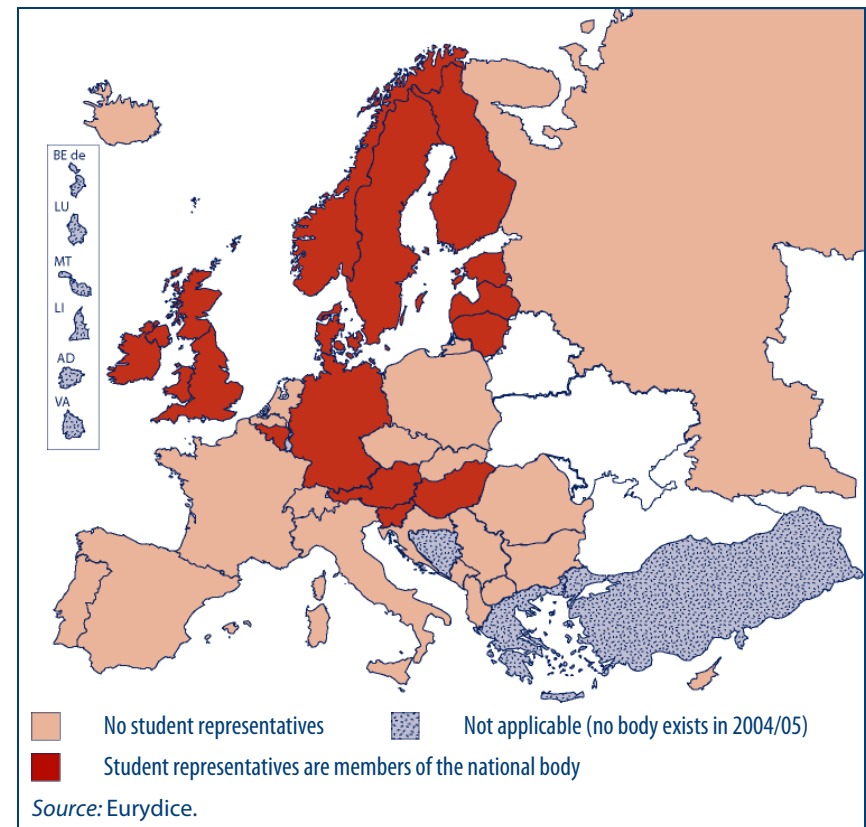
Around ten signatory countries have provided for the inclusion of student representatives within the governance of national body for evaluation and/or accreditation. This generally means two or three representatives. They are either chosen from a list of candidates in accordance with predetermined criteria, or members of student unions. This situation is especially typical of the English-speaking countries (Ireland and the United Kingdom) and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden). In Belgium (French Community), Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania, students are represented in the national agency.

In the United Kingdom, the Board of the QAA includes a student observer.

In other cases in which a national body has been set up, no student representatives are yet members. The national agency or committee

consists essentially of representatives of the academic and/or research staff in higher education institutions, specialist members appointed by the government, and administrative staff. In Serbia, university teachers become members on a voluntary basis. One or several foreign academics may be invited to become members as in the Czech Republic and Switzerland.

Figure E2: Representation of students in national bodies for evaluation and/or accreditation, 2004/05



Additional notes (Figure E2)

Austria: Situation of the national agency AQA (Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance).

Greece: The Agency is due to be set up in May 2005 and legislation on its composition has already been approved.

Students and foreign experts participate in the process of external evaluation in half of the countries

Wherever external evaluation is carried out, specialists or academics of national standing are full partners in the process. In over half of all countries, foreign experts are involved in the process, as well as students who give their opinion, or who are interviewed or reread the final report. Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Spain, neither call on foreign experts nor involve students. Hungary and Slovenia do not include foreign experts in the process. Students are not partners in Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Holy See, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal or Slovakia.

Around a third of Bologna Declaration signatory countries call on the assistance of national and foreign experts, students and professionals from the world of work. This applies to Austria, the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands and Sweden. The situation will be similar in the German-speaking Community of Belgium once the September draft decree has been approved and implemented. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the draft law provides for the involvement of foreign experts. In the Holy See and Russia, the participation of students and international experts is under discussion.

Figure E3: Partners associated in the process of external evaluation and/or accreditation, 2004/05

	Academics of national standing	Foreign experts	Students	World of work/ professionals in the field concerned		Academics of national standing	Foreign experts	Students	World of work/ professionals in the field concerned
AD	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	IE	●	●	●	●
AL	●	●	●	-	IS	●	●	●	●
AT	●	●	●	●	IT	●	-	-	-
BA	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	LI	●	●	●	⊗
BE de	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	LT	●	●	-	●
BE fr	●	●	●	●	LU	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
BE nl	●	●	●	●	LV a	●	●	●	●
BG	●	-	-	-	b	●	●	-	-
CH	●	●	●	-	MK	●	●	●	-
CS-mon	●	●	●	-	MT	●	●	-	-
CS-ser	●	-	-	-	NL	●	●	●	●
CY	●	●	-	●	NO	●	●	●	-
CZ	●	●	-	-	PL	●	-	-	-
DE	●	●	●	●	PT	●	(-)	-	(-)
DK	●	●	●	●	RO	●	-	-	-
EE	●	●	●	●	RU	●	-	-	-
EL	●	●	●	●	SE	●	●	●	●
ES	●	-	-	●	SI	●	-	●	●
FI	●	●	●	●	SK	●	●	-	●
FR	●	●	●	●	TR	●	●	●	-
HR	●	●	●	●	UK	●	●	●	-
HU	●	-	●	●	VA	●	●	-	-

● Involvement ⊗ No external evaluation - No involvement

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note (Figure E3)

The composition of the examining boards or panels that assess students at ISCED 5 or 6 is not included.

Additional notes

Albania, Belgium (BE fr): Students are interviewed by experts during visits to institutions.

Belgium (BE de): The September 2004 draft decree provides for external evaluation with the participation of academic experts of national and international standing, students and professionals from the field concerned.

Cyprus: The situation relates to evaluation of the private sector carried out by the SEKAP.

Germany: The *Akkreditierungsrat* is responsible solely for accreditation.

Latvia: (a) accreditation, (b) external evaluation.

Liechtenstein: The top-level public authority is directly responsible for quality evaluation and calls on foreign evaluation agencies to undertake so-called *peer reviews*.

Luxembourg: A plan for external evaluation of the new university is included in the 2003 law.

Sweden and Norway: For linguistic reasons, the foreign expert is often Scandinavian.

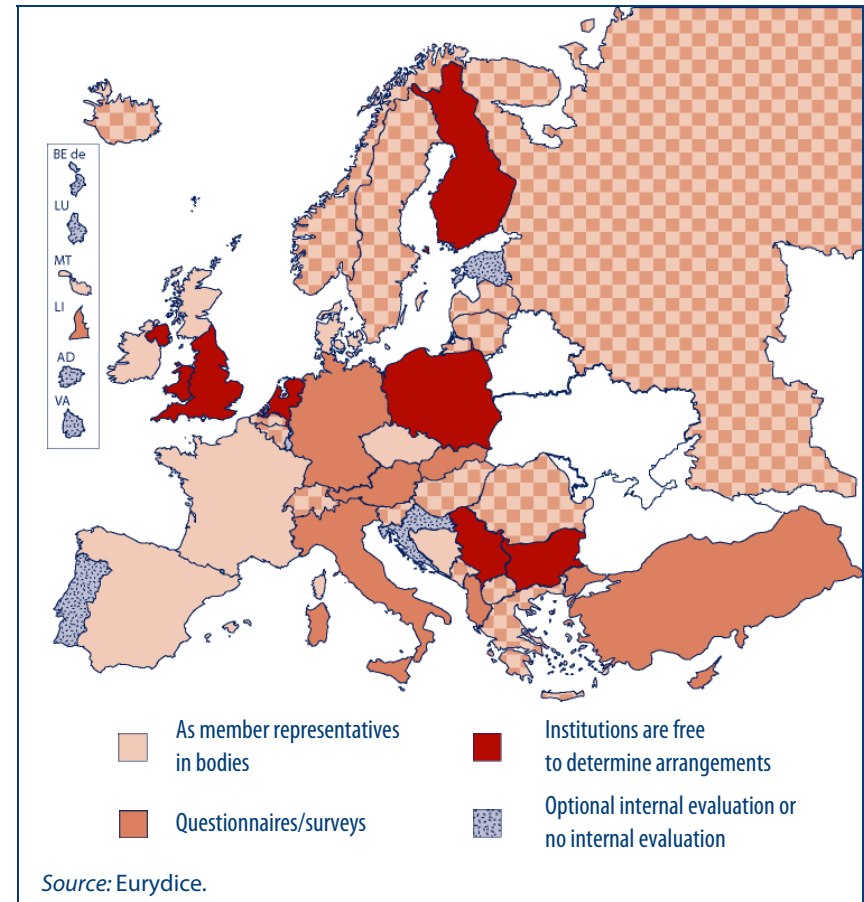
United Kingdom: The QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) does not specifically appoint foreign experts but involves them in the review of some elements of the academic infrastructure. In Scotland, foreign experts are also involved in quality enhancement.

Internal evaluation is compulsory almost everywhere and the opinion of students is sought in one way or another

Internal evaluation occurs almost everywhere and often serves as the basis for external evaluation. Institutions in a few countries are free to decide whether they will carry out internal evaluation. Students generally take part by giving their opinion in questionnaires and/or via their representative on the council responsible for this evaluation.

Compulsory internal evaluation involving students is provided for in draft legislation in the German-speaking Community of Belgium. A plan for internal evaluation of the new universities is set out in the 2003 law in Luxembourg.

Figure E4: Arrangements for student participation in compulsory internal evaluation, 2004/05



Additional notes (Figure E4)

Belgium (BE de): The September 2004 draft decree provides for mandatory internal evaluation and the participation of student representatives.

Bulgaria: According to amendments in the law (2004), student representatives in institutions have to take part in the process of internal evaluation.

Estonia: The majority of institutions use questionnaires to consult students but this is not required in practice.

Finland: The participation of students is recommended by FINHEEC and is the prevailing practice.

Greece: Internal evaluation of academic staff is compulsory. In addition, institutions are encouraged to establish internal evaluation procedures to provide a basis for external evaluation, and to involve students.

Iceland: The law on universities does not refer to student involvement. Their participation is provided for in the regulations on quality assurance.

Luxembourg: The law of 2003 includes a plan for internal evaluation of the new university.

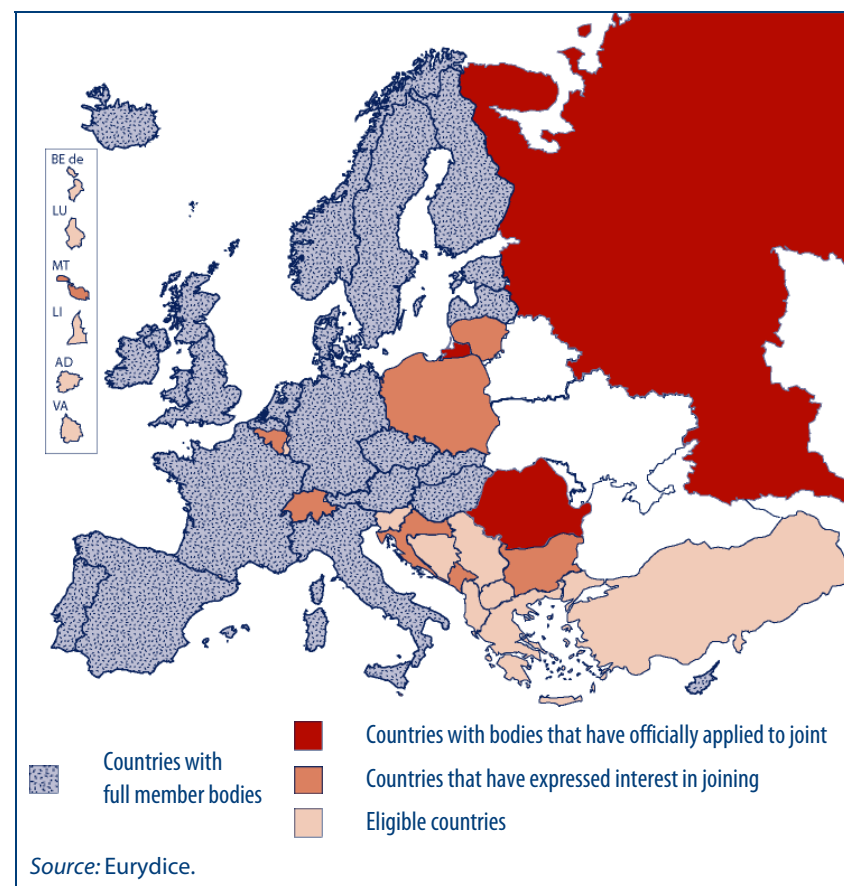
To sum up, only in some countries is student participation provided for at the three levels, namely in membership of the national body responsible for coordinating evaluation, and as partners involved in the procedures of both external and internal evaluation. This applies to Austria, French Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Scotland).

Almost all EU and EFTA countries have a national body which is a member of the ENQA European Association

Since November 2004, the national bodies of all Bologna Declaration signatory countries are eligible and may therefore become members of the ENQA Association (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), provided they satisfy the criteria. Almost all EU countries and EFTA countries have a body which is a full member. The Agencies in the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia,

Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Poland and Switzerland have expressed an interest in joining. The national agencies in Romania and Russia have each officially applied very recently.

Figure E5: Participation within the ENQA, 2004/05



GUIDE TO READING THE DIAGRAMS

The diagrams illustrate the main possible paths through higher education. Each of these paths should be studied horizontally across the page. Each diagram consists of as many graphical units (illustrations) as the number of possible paths. The length of the boxes indicates the notional length/ages corresponding to full-time studies, even though the programme concerned may also be offered on a part-time basis.

A different colour shading is used to distinguish between study programmes at ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6 ⁽¹⁾. Within a given ISCED level, fields of study are placed together in a single illustration when they have the following characteristics in common:

- entry to their courses is in accordance with similar procedures (with or without selection),
- they are offered by the same institution(s),
- their courses are of the same duration,
- their courses lead to the same type of qualification (with the same title).

Where the same institution or institutions offer different fields of study whose course characteristics vary in relation to one or more of the above-mentioned criteria, the name of the institution concerned is not repeated for each separate graphical unit. However, when these one or more institutions offer programmes at different ISCED levels (ISCED 5A and 5B), their names are repeated in the illustration for each level.

A selection procedure at the point of entry to a programme is shown by either a vertical bold or dotted line depending on whether selection is administered by the institution or by a higher (national or regional)

authority. At this latter level, the selection procedure may be concerned with limiting the number of places. Bold and dotted lines are combined wherever both 'higher' and institutional levels are involved.

Where first-cycle (ISCED level 5A or 5B) qualifications obtained on the completion of courses whose characteristics differ (for example in terms of differences in selection procedure and/or duration), provide admission to one or more identical second-cycle (ISCED level 5A or 5B) courses, the latter are duplicated in each graphical unit concerned.

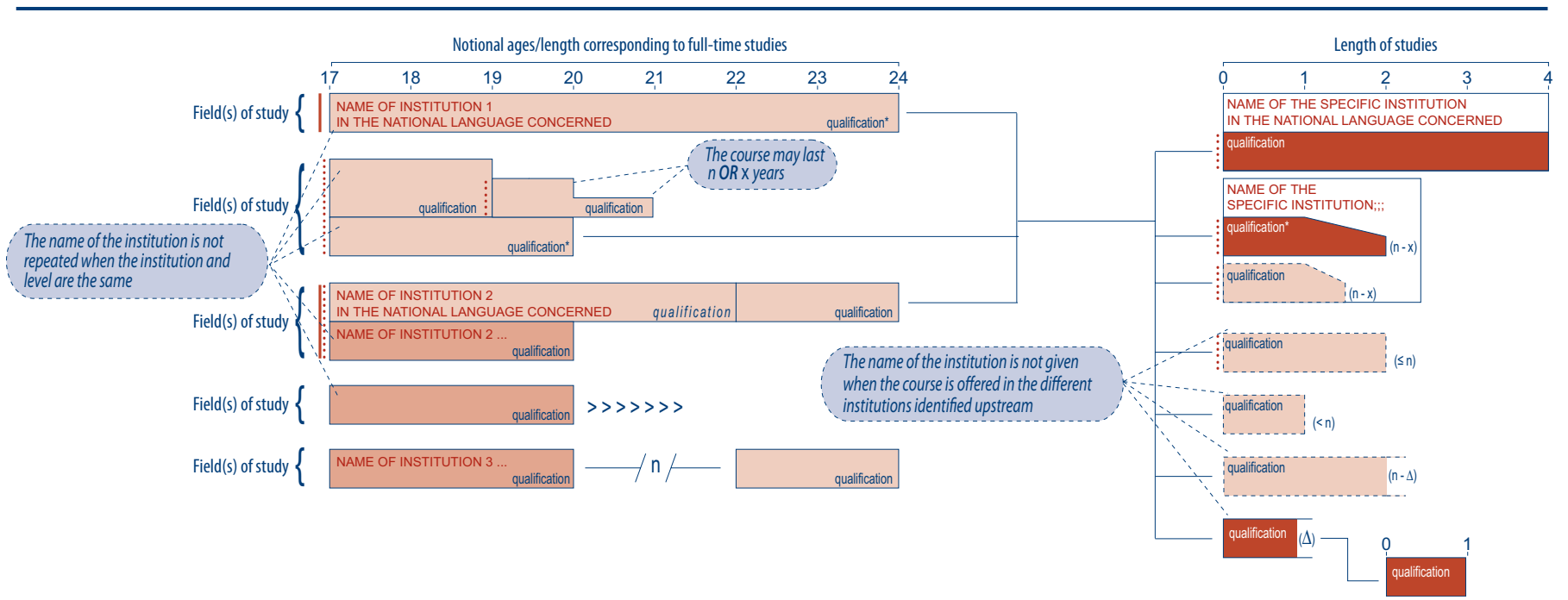
Where it is possible, on completion of the first qualifying programme, to continue with (ISCED 5A or 5B) second-cycle studies or enter the employment market, the second-cycle cell is reduced in height. However, horizontal lines extending from first-cycle or second-cycle ISCED 5A and 5B programme cells indicate that it is also possible to continue with higher studies at ISCED level 5 and/or 6.

Only links leading from one programme to another at a further level (i.e. between the first/second cycles and the third cycle) are illustrated. Consequently, the diagrams do not indicate any opportunities that may exist for students to undertake several programmes at the same level simultaneously, to embark on fresh first/second-cycle studies after obtaining a first/second qualification or to transfer between programmes each leading to a first qualification.

Where access to doctoral studies depends on the possession of a (complementary, supplementary or specialised) ISCED 5A qualification or an ISCED 6 qualification, this requirement is indicated by a line connecting the two programmes concerned.

⁽¹⁾ See the definition of ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6 on the following website: http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=5069_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC.

LEGEND



ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n - x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure /limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration
Study abroad								

ANDORRA

AD

The Act on higher education institutions was adopted in 1997. An attempt to regulate the issuing of Higher Education National Degrees was adopted in July 2004. The relevant legislative changes linked to the Bologna process are still underway. They are currently being discussed but have not yet been approved by the government. They will be concerned with the implementation of a **three main cycles** degree structure (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate's), joint degrees and also the principles of quality assurance, transparency and mobility.

Because the provision of higher education in the Principality of Andorra is currently limited (consisting of one cycle degree structure), the great majority of young people who study at this level do so in Spain or France.

ECTS began to be implemented by the University of Andorra in the 2004/05 academic year and is used both in terms of credit transfer and accumulation. ECTS will however become mandatory when the new Law on Universities is approved.

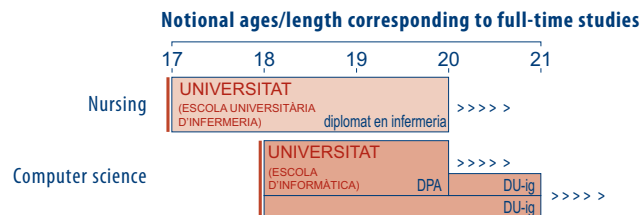
A decree regarding the **Diploma Supplement** was adopted in July 2004. From the 2004/05 academic year, all national higher education degrees are issued with the Supplement free of charge. It will be delivered automatically to all students. It is issued in Catalan, but at student request, can also be issued in Spanish, French, Portuguese or English.

No measures in terms of **quality assurance** have been implemented yet.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in national language
30 July 1997	Act on higher education institutions	Llei d'Universitats
14 July 2004	Decree regulating the issuance of the Higher Education National Degrees	Decret d'aprovació del Reglament sobre l'expedició de títols d'ensenyament superior de caràcter estatal
14 July 2004	Decree regulating the implementation of the Diploma Supplement	Decret regulador de l'expedició del suplement europeu al diploma

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

DPA *Diploma Professional Avançat* | DU-ig *Diploma Universitari en informàtica i gestió*

ALBANIA

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In July 2003, the 1999 Act on Higher Education in the Republic of Albania was amended by Parliament to pave the way for the implementation of a system of higher education based on study cycles. The third cycle of studies has been organised on the basis of criteria laid down in a decision by the Council of Ministers of December 1998, as amended by the Higher Education Act in February 1999 and the Decision of December 2004. Under an Ordinance of February 2004, a working plan was drawn up for 2004/05 and is being implemented by a fully operational team on higher education reform.

During the 2004/05 academic year, several study programmes based on **two main cycles** are being introduced in the fields of teaching, journalism, economics, psychology and nursing. In the field of electrical engineering and agricultural sciences, a two-cycle structure has been offered since 2001/02 as a result of government cooperation between Albania and Italy. Universities are currently in the process of adapting the new structure to other fields.

Doctoral studies are open to anyone holding a Master's degree or equivalent postgraduate qualification obtained either at home or abroad. Candidates with a second-cycle qualification which is not fully equivalent to the

Master's degree have to take complementary courses in order to be eligible for doctoral studies. Doctorates are devised to help specialists become more qualified and enable them to pursue independent academic research.

The national Commission for Academic Qualifications has now determined which institutions are capable of offering second-level programmes, and Master's and doctoral studies.

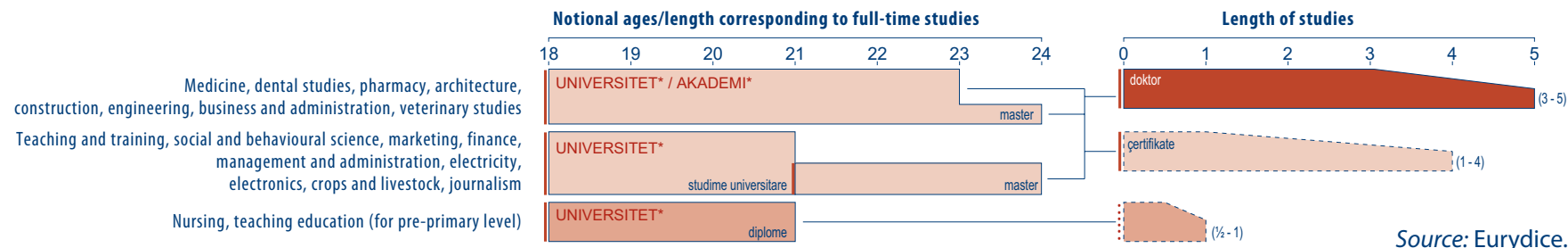
The implementation of **ECTS**, which is now being used for both credit transfer and credit accumulation, began in 1999. On the basis of a special instruction of October 2004, it will be mandatory for the transcript of records accompanying the qualification in all study programmes in higher education to indicate both national credits and ECTS credits from the end of the 2004/05 academic year.

In 2004, a national seminar on the introduction of the **Diploma Supplement** was organised and a working group was set up within the Ministry of Education and Science Directorate of Higher Education and Recognition of Diplomas, which also included university representatives. Following a special instruction by the Minister of Education and Science in July 2004, practical steps for the implementation of

the Diploma Supplement began in the 2004/05 academic year. It will be issued free of charge in Albanian or English at the student's request.

The **quality assurance** system in higher education has been based on the July 1999 Decision of the Council of Ministers. The institutions involved are the Accreditation Agency on Higher Education (AAHE) and the Accreditation Council (AC), in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science.

The AAHE is a public state-funded institution accountable to the Ministry. It drafts and draws up the criteria and procedures for higher education quality evaluation and, after consulting the higher education institutions (HEIs), submits them to the AC for final approval. All criteria and procedures drafted by the AAHE and approved by the AC have to be made available to the institutions. The AAHE consists of seven full-time and two part-time members, including the Director and four specialists who are not trained but take part in the annual meetings of the networks to which AAHE belongs. Experience has been gained thanks to the contribution of a foreign expert who between 2001 and 2004 followed and supported AAHE in the external evaluation of several qualifications. Present economic



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

NB: Figure prepared at the Eurydice European Unit on the basis of information from national sources but not approved at national level.

Further specialised ISCED 5B programmes may be taken only by students in nursing.

circumstances and language difficulties have prevented foreign experts from becoming members of the AC. In close co-operation with experts and representatives of HEIs, AAHE has compiled two manuals on self-evaluation and external evaluation respectively. The Agency has also drawn up higher education quality evaluation procedures approved by the AC. Finally, the AAHE in collaboration with national and foreign experts has prepared the report *Aspects and Indicators relevant to Higher Education Quality Evaluation*.

The Accreditation Council consists of nine high-profile personalities in various fields of education, science and the economy, who are appointed by the Minister of Education and Science following proposals from various fields. The Chairperson of the AC is appointed by the Prime Minister acting on a suggestion of the Minister of Education and Science. The AC approves requests for evaluation submitted by HEIs, and fixes the timeframe in which it is to be conducted. It also confirms the final outcome of evaluation on the basis of the AAHE written report. The outcome and any recommendations are submitted to the Ministry for a final decision on whether courses should be maintained or discontinued. The AC can ask the Council of Ministers for approval to maintain or close all types of non-public HEI.

These procedures apply to third-cycle as well as first- and second-cycle courses.

A March 2001 Council of Ministers decision regarding non-public higher education enables the Ministry of Education and Science formally to recognise non-public courses and HEIs. Recognition depends on the outcome of evaluations and accreditation and is granted for a period of five years.

External evaluation is carried out at the request of the Ministry or any particular HEI, or when scheduled by the AAHE. According to a Decree of July 1999, no HEI can function without accreditation for more than four years. If an institution does not seek evaluation within this period, the AAHE and the Ministry take steps to initiate evaluation procedures. Foreign experts have been involved in evaluation as members of external evaluation groups.

The AAHE is responsible for announcing and publishing evaluation results following their confirmation by the AC. In the case of public HEIs, the AC decides on a case-by-case basis whether and how final outcomes should be published. In the case of private HEIs, the evaluation report has to be published, with the AC deciding solely on the ways and means of doing so.

The AAHE fixes and monitors the mechanisms for internal quality assurance and evaluation and helps each HEI to establish appropriate procedures. The Agency has also drawn up a set of standards for institutions and programmes, which were approved by the AC and Ministry, following lengthy consultation with institutions.

Previous evaluations have included student ideas through various interviews administered by the external evaluation team. Reports on major and minor evaluation issues have incorporated ideas from both members and students. During the evaluation process, universities are asked whether they involve their students in the drafting of policy documents or other strategies, and to find out whether students are represented in consultative or other decision-making bodies. Evaluation examines whether student ideas contribute to the daily functioning of institutions.

From March 2005, the AAHE is circulating a questionnaire for completion by students, which will be used in all future evaluations. The questionnaire will also be put on the website for comment. At the same time efforts are being made to include students in the external evaluation group.

ALBANIA

The AAHE maintains close ties and carries out joint activities with other counterpart agencies across Europe and beyond and is a member of three international networks in the area of higher education quality assurance, namely the INQAAHE, the CEE Network and EAIE.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
17 December 1998	Decision by the Council of Ministers No. 786 on the postgraduate scientific qualification and classification of pedagogical and research employees (amended by Decision No. 897, dated 29 December 2004) and the 1999 Higher Education Act.	Vendim i Këshillit të Ministrave nr. 786, datë 17.12.1998 "Për kualifikimin shkencor pasuniversitar dhe për klasifikimin e punonjësve pedagogjike e kërkimorë" (i ndryshuar me Vendimin nr. 897, datë 29.12.2004).
25 February 1999 (amended on 28 July 2003)	Law No. 8461 on Higher Education in the Albanian Republic	Ligji nr. 8461, "Për arsimin e lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë" (I ndryshuar më 28.06.2003)
1 July 1999	Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 303, based on the 1999 Higher Education Act	Vendim i Këshillit të Ministrave nr. 303, datë 01.07.1999 "Për Krijimin e sistemit të akreditimit në arsimin e lartë"
22 March 2001	Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 156, on non-public HEIs in the Republic of Albania	Vendim i Këshillit të Ministrave nr. 156, datë 22.03.2001 "Për arsimin e lartë Jopublik në Republikën e Shqipërisë"
6 May 2003	Ordinance No. 114 issued by the Minister of Education and Science	Urdhëri nr. 114, datë 6.5.2003 i Ministrit të Arsimit dhe të Shkencës "Për ngritjen e Grupeve të Punës për reformimin e arsimit të lartë".
6 February 2004	Ordinance No. 23 issued by the Minister of Education and Science	Urdhëri nr. 23, datë 6.2.2004 i Ministrit të Arsimit dhe të Shkencës "Zbatimin e planit të veprimit për periudhën 2004-2005 Përafrimi i sistemit të arsimit të lartë shqiptar me atë europian sipas kërkesave të Deklaratës së Bolonjës".
February 2004	Ordinance on a Working Plan for the period 2004-2005 entitled <i>Approximating the higher education system to the European one in compliance with the criteria of the Bologna Declaration.</i>	
29 July 2004	Instruction No. 20 of the Minister of Education and Science	Udhëzimi nr. 20, datë 29.07.2004 "Për organizimin e studimeve në shkollat e larta (për sistemin me kohë të plotë)".
5 October 2004	Instruction No. 28 from the Ministry of Education and Science	Udhëzimi nr. 28, datë 05.10.2004 "Për disa ndryshime në Udhëzimin nr. 20, datë 29.07.2004 "Për organizimin e studimeve në shkollat e larta".

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

University type higher education institutions are established, organised and run their activities in accordance with the Federal Act on the Organisation of Universities and their studies (Universities Act 2002), which became fully effective in 2004. The Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) are organised in accordance with the 1993 *Fachhochschul* (FH) Study Act.

In universities, it has been possible to offer a degree structure based on **two main cycles** (Bachelor's/Master's) since 1999. At *Fachhochschulen*, the 2002 amendment to the *Fachhochschul* Study Act provides a legal basis for the Bachelor's/Master's degree structure.

Doctoral programmes have their main legal basis in paragraph 54 of the 2002 Universities Act. They comprise either 120 ECTS credits or – where universities offer Ph.D. type programmes in certain fields – 240 ECTS credits. Each programme consists of compulsory taught courses (involving mainly science oriented seminars) and a thesis. The amount of time allocated to each is laid down in the respective curriculum and there are no centralised regulations. A doctorate may also be awarded by several universities, including foreign institutions as is the case in some joint degree programmes.

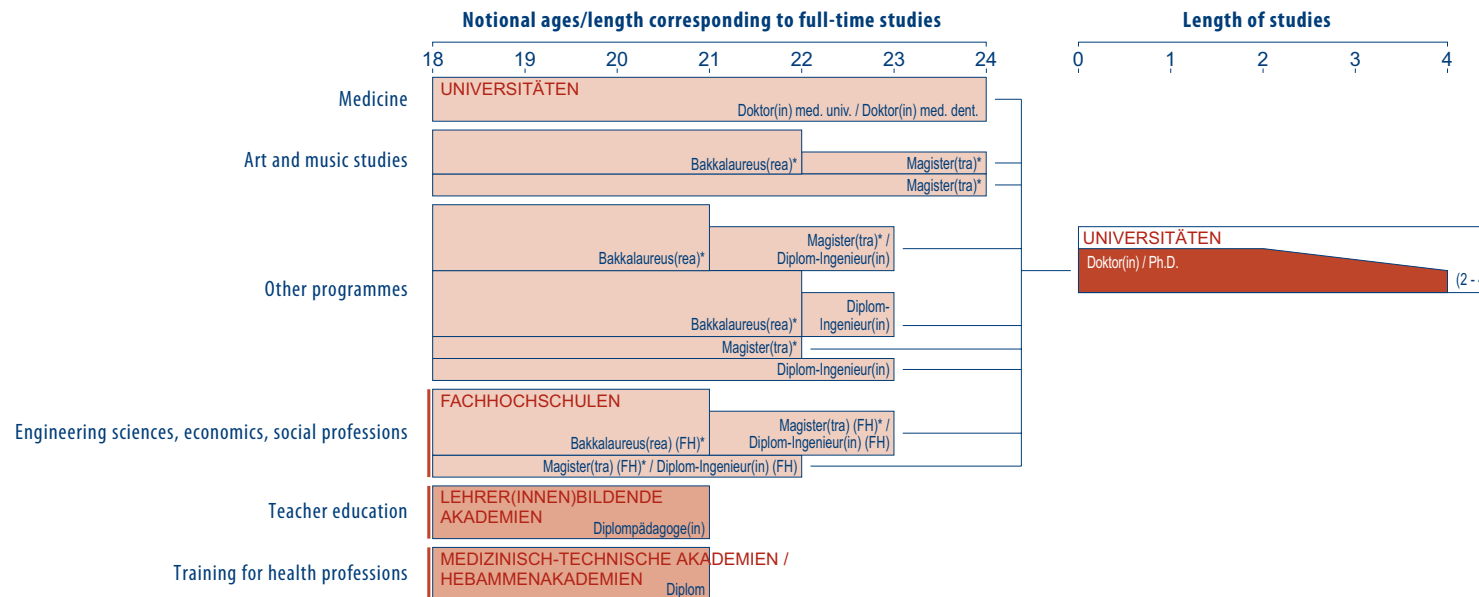
Since 1999, implementation of **ECTS** has been compulsory for Bachelor and Master level programmes and, in universities, for doctoral programmes. ECTS is used for credit transfer as well as for credit accumulation. It is fully implemented at universities and *Fachhochschulen*. In accordance with the Academies Studies Act of 1999, it has also been compulsory in the case of diploma studies at *Lehrer/innenbildende Akademien* (teacher training colleges).

The University Studies Evidence Decree which came into force in August 2002, regulates implementation of the **Diploma Supplement**. The *Lehrer/innenbildende Akademien* have been issuing Diploma Supplements since the 2003 summer term. Since October 2003, Diploma Supplements have been issued free of charge in German and English to all graduates. In *Fachhochschulen*, they are issued automatically. From July 2005, all universities will also be obliged to issue the Diploma Supplement automatically to all graduates.

Action has been taken to develop a unified national approach to **quality assurance** in higher education. The Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA) was founded in late 2003 and became effective in the spring of 2004. The Agency is a joint initiative of the

Austrian Rectors' Conference (ÖRK), the Austrian *Fachhochschule* Conference (FHK), the Association of Private Universities (PU), the Austrian Students Union (ÖH) and the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK). AQA is a service agency set up to assist the universities and *Fachhochschulen* in creating their quality management systems. The Agency's responsibilities include the development of standards and procedures for quality assurance in higher education, the coordination of evaluation procedures for study programmes and institutions, counselling and supporting higher education institutions in the development and implementation of internal quality assurance processes, as well as the certification of quality management processes. In accordance with international standards for quality assurance and evaluation agencies, AQA publishes a summary of the results of evaluations with the agreement of the higher education institutions concerned. The scientific council (*Wissenschaftlicher Beirat*) of the AQA includes a majority of foreign experts.

The independent *Fachhochschul*-Council (FHR) is the accrediting body of the *Fachhochschulen* sector (universities of applied sciences). Its duties are regulated by the FH Study Act and comprise accreditation, advice to the ministry,



Source: Eurydice.

□ ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	■ ISCED 6 programme	⋮ Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
□ ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	□ Further qualification	▮ Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

FH Fachhochschule

and the promotion of the quality of teaching and learning, innovation and further education, as well as the monitoring of the FH sector. A summary based on the evaluation report is published on the website of the FH Council with the agreement of the institution. The findings – and especially the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the follow-up – contribute to the re-accreditation decisions of the FHR. According to the 2004 Evaluation Decree of the FH Council, at least one member of a review team in *Fachhochschulen* must come from a similar higher education institution abroad.

The independent Austrian Accreditation Council (AR) is the accrediting body for the private university sector. Its main activity is the accreditation of new higher education institutions or of study courses within already accredited private universities. In addition, it monitors the private university sector and the maintenance of general standards. The findings of site visits by external experts are used for accreditation and re-accreditation decisions by the AR, the majority of whose members are international experts. The results are not made public.

The 1999 University Accreditation Act regulates the accreditation procedures for private

universities (accounting for around 1 % of students in higher education) and establishes the responsibilities and decision-making powers of the AR. Under the regulations of the Act, private universities have to submit an annual development report, as well as documentation and the results of evaluation procedures in the areas of teaching and research carried out by the university. Accreditation, which lasts for five years, is based on a site visit by an expert panel. The AR decision must be approved by the responsible federal minister.

The evaluation procedures which are applied in a similar manner by all the accreditation and evaluation bodies are based on three general stages: self evaluation/documentation, external evaluation including peer review and a follow-up.

In general, all higher education institutions in Austria practice continuous evaluation of courses and teaching by means of student surveys. Students are often involved in self-evaluation processes prior to external evaluations. The Austrian Students Union (ÖH) is a member organisation of AQA, and represented on its management board and in its general assembly.

The Universities Act 2002 (Art. 14) lays down the obligation on the part of universities to establish an **internal quality** management system. Several elements are further specified: continuous internal evaluation, evaluation of the activities and performance of university teachers and external evaluation initiated by the university council, the rector or the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK). Performance agreements (*Leistungsvereinbarungen*) are a key concept in establishing profiles and services and provide a basis for the funding of public universities (comprising around 90 % of students in higher education). University responsibilities and the achievement of stated goals are taken into consideration in the negotiation process. Evaluations and quality assurance measures are considered in the performance agreements and are normally conducted in accordance with international standards and generally accepted procedures. There is no legal obligation to accredit public universities or their study programmes.

The 1993 Study Act founding the *Fachhochschulen* (accounting for around 8 % of students in higher education) contains regulations for their internal quality assurance procedures (e.g. regular evaluation of courses through student surveys). It also prescribes an

AUSTRIA

obligation for accreditation and re-accreditation of study programmes (after a maximum period of five years) by the FHR. The 2004 Evaluation Decree specifies the procedures for the external evaluation of study programmes and institutions with a view to their re-accreditation. The decision to re-accredit is generally taken on the basis of external evaluation, which is co-ordinated by an independent quality assurance agency. The external evaluation process follows three main

stages: (1) self-evaluation and a report, (2) a site visit by an expert team of at least three members, and (3) an evaluation report and follow-up.

The AQA is a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and has observer status with the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (CEEN). The FHR and AR are full members of the

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and INQAAHE, as well as founder members of the D-A-CH Network (a regional network of accreditation agencies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland). They are also members of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) and of the CEEN. The FHR is a member of the Joint Quality Initiative.

Legislation and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
1993 (amended on 1 May 2002)	Fachhochschul-Study Act	Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz
1999	University Accreditation Act	Universitäts-Akkreditierungsgesetz
1999	Academies Studies Act	Akademien-Studiengesetz
2002	University Act 2002	Universitätsgesetz
August 2002	University Studies Evidence Decree	Universitäts-Studienevidenzverordnung
2003	Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance – Statutes	Österreichische Qualitätssicherungsagentur – Vereinsstatuten des FHR
2004	Evaluation Decree of the FH Council	Evaluierungsverordnung des FHR

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

BA

Following the 2003 Berlin Conference, the drafting of the Framework Law on Higher Education was initiated under the auspices of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The draft was completed on 18 December 2003 and was submitted for parliamentary procedure and is still to be adopted. The Framework Law on Higher Education incorporates the main principles of higher education which have been or are being established in the European Higher Education Area.

According to current laws and regulations dating from 1999, higher education institutions are financed by entity ministries of the Republic of Srpska (RS) or cantonal ministries of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). All activities related to higher education are based on entity (RS) or cantonal (FBiH) legislation on higher education. The role of the state-level Ministry of Civil Affairs is to coordinate activities between the entities.

Over the past 30 years, a **two-cycle** structure has existed in all the countries of former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, not all faculties and departments have second-cycle studies. Furthermore, the third cycle (**doctoral studies**) has still not been revised pursuant to the Bologna rules. The preparation of a doctorate only entails

independent research for the purpose of a doctoral thesis. There are no organised doctoral studies. Doctoral candidates are considered to have acquired adequate experience during the preparation of their Master's thesis (which is compulsory in order to proceed with a doctoral thesis) and are expected to make an individual contribution to knowledge in a given area through independent research.

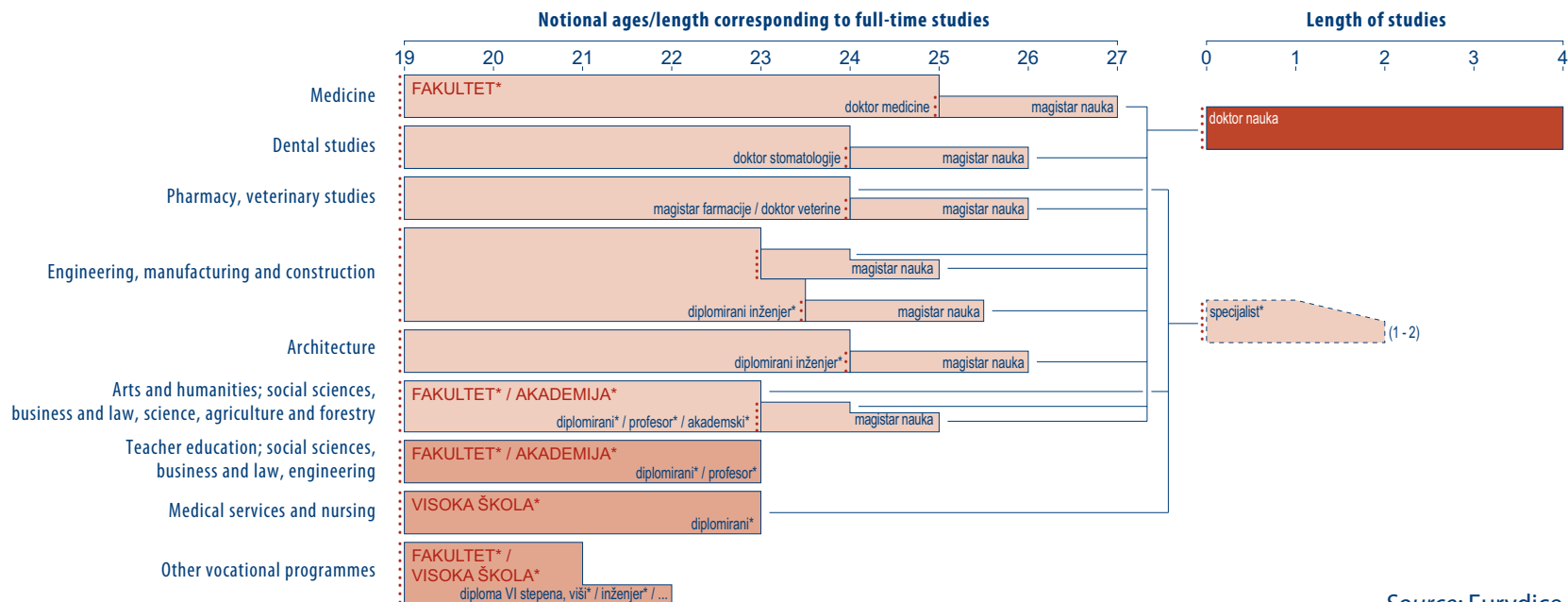
The establishment of **ECTS** is underway at universities and is referred to in Articles 52-54 of the Framework Law on Higher Education. Moreover, the acceptance of this system is anticipated in the quality assurance documents of some universities and in their new statutes. Two out of eight universities have introduced the ECTS system into their statutes for their graduate programmes (60 credits per academic year based on the total random load per student), although it is still not in force. Some of them have also begun an experimental phase of ECTS in the current academic year, with the two systems existing in parallel.

The obligation to introduce the **Diploma Supplement** is also included in the Framework Law on Higher Education and most universities and many faculties have prepared drafts of this document. Its widespread application is

expected as of the 2005/06 academic year. It will be issued free of charge and on request, in English and the local language.

The overall **quality assurance** process at state/entity (FBiH and RS) level is described in Article 49-54 of the Framework Law on Higher Education. These Articles focus in particular on the quality assurance process and procedures in the higher education institution itself (i.e. the university) which, according to the Framework Law, 'bears primary responsibility for the quality of its study courses and programmes' (Article 51).

In Articles 46-49, the Framework Law on Higher Education provides a legal basis for the establishment of the Centre for Information, Recognition and Quality Assurance (CIRQA) which is, in essence, the BiH ENIC/NARIC centre. Its operations and activities are described in Article 43-48 of the Framework Law on Higher Education. CIRQA will be a state-level institution with responsibilities including, inter alia, conditions and criteria for establishing quality assurance in higher education. The Centre will approve common licensing norms for higher education institutions and establish clear, transparent and accessible criteria governing procedures for **accreditation**, quality audit and quality assessment of higher



Source: Eurydice.

	ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)		ISCED 6 programme		Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
	ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)		Further qualification		Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

education institutions. It will also appoint committees of experts including international experts, and conduct procedures of accreditation, quality audit and quality assessment of higher education institutions.

The Framework Law on Higher Education does not specify the composition of the governing boards of quality assurance agencies. It stipulates that as part of international assistance to higher education, it is possible to

appoint a foreign national as director for a term of office which may not exceed two years (Article 47 of the Framework Law). CIRQA should be established when the Framework Law on Higher Education is adopted.

All eight universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have carried out their **internal evaluations** under EUA supervision. The **external evaluation** of seven of the universities (i.e. all

except the one which became independent in 2004) was carried out by EUA in 2004.

Representatives of the students' union were included in the process of internal evaluation.

There is no participation within the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) because an accreditation agency does not yet exist.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
21 July 1993 amended last time in 2004	Law on University in Republic Srpska	Zakon o Univerzitetu u Republici Srpskoj
1998 amended last time in 2004	Law on University in Bihać	Zakon o Univerzitetu u Bihaću
14 July 1999 amended last time on 26 June 2004	Higher Education Law of Zenica-Doboj Canton	Zakon o visokom obrazovanju Zeničko-Dobojskog Kantona
19 July 1999 amended last time in 2004	Higher Education Law of Tuzla Canton	Zakon o visokom obrazovanju Tuzlanskog Kantona
4 October 1999 amended last time in 2004	Higher Education Law of Sarajevo Canton	Zakon o visokom obrazovanju Kantona Sarajevo
18 December 2003 in parliamentary procedure (not yet adopted)	Framework Law on Higher Education	Okvirni zakon o visokom obrazovanju

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

BELGIUM – GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

The most recent reform concerned with the organisation of higher education dates from 3 July 1984. It dealt with teacher education (extending the period of study from two to three years) in the *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (higher teacher training institutes).

Because the provision of higher education in the German-speaking Community of Belgium is not at all widespread, the great majority of young people who study at this level do so in the French Community of Belgium or in Germany. No tangible reform associated with the aims of the Bologna Process has therefore been initiated.

ECTS has not been introduced. However, a draft decree of September 2004 concerned with the establishment of an autonomous Institute for Higher Education has been

discussed within parliamentary committee since March 2005. Debates deal among other things with the organisation of curricula on the basis of ECTS, aiming at using it both for transfer and accumulation.

The **Diploma Supplement** has not been implemented.

No plan in terms of **quality assurance** has been introduced, but a section of the draft decree dated September 2004 deals with measures to promote and monitor quality assurance.

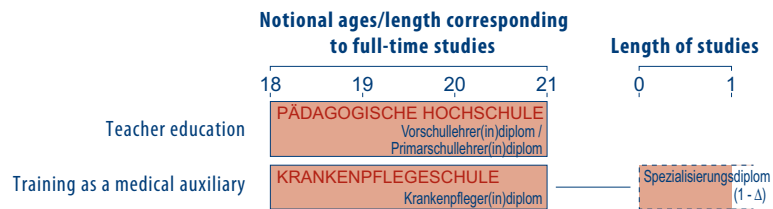
A decree of 30 June 2003 for the implementation of urgently required measures in education has expanded paramedical training in higher education by introducing scope for specialisation in a further one-year of training for graduate nurses which leads to the

qualification of *spezialisierter graduierter Krankenpfleger* (specialist graduate nurse).

The planned reform (draft decree of September 2004) will mainly aim at bringing together in a single higher education institute the three institutes existing today in the German-speaking Community more particularly by fusing the two *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (higher education institutes for teacher training). The first step of this reform was launched in February 2005 with the adoption of a special decree on the establishment of a higher education institution. The second step will consist of the adoption of a decree dealing with aspects on content, organization and financing of studies, recruitment and status of staff, etc. Completion of this project is put forward as 1 September 2005 by the Ministry of Education.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
3 July 1984	Ministerial circular amending the duration of initial teacher education in the related higher education institutions	Ministerielles Rundschreiben, durch das die Lehrer-Erstausbildung in den Pädagogischen Hochschulen (Tertiärbildung kurzer Studiendauer) von 2 auf 3 Jahre verlängert wird.
30 June 2003	Decree on urgently required measures in higher education	Dekret über dringende Maßnahmen im Unterrichtswesen
21 February 2005	Special decree on the establishment of an autonomous higher education institution	Sonderdekret zur Schaffung einer autonomen Hochschule



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

BELGIUM – FRENCH COMMUNITY

The Bologna reform is above all apparent in the adoption of the decree of 31 March 2004, which specifies the remit of higher education, facilitating its inclusion within the European Higher Education Area and providing fresh funding for universities.

The decree governs the structure of (full-time) university and non-university higher education, as well as that of social advancement courses corresponding to full-time non-university higher education.

The pattern in which courses are structured into **two basic cycles** and then a **third research-oriented cycle** is gradually being introduced with effect from the 2004/05 academic year for all types of higher education, except in the case of short courses. At present, this mainly applies to the first year of studies. Higher education is currently in a transitional period in which two systems will co-exist until 2009.

Entry to third-cycle programmes is possible after obtaining a Master's qualification (120 credits). These programmes consist of doctoral courses (60 credits) which lead to a research training certificate and offer graduates a high-level academic and professional qualification. They may also consist of research for a doctoral thesis (at least 180 credits) which,

if successfully defended, leads to the qualification of doctor. They are provided in *écoles doctorales* (doctoral 'schools') belonging to one or several *académies universitaires* (university associations).

Since the 2004/05 academic year, all programmes (including doctoral programmes) are offered with **ECTS** credits (1 year of study equals 60 credits). The system is used for both credit transfer and accumulation.

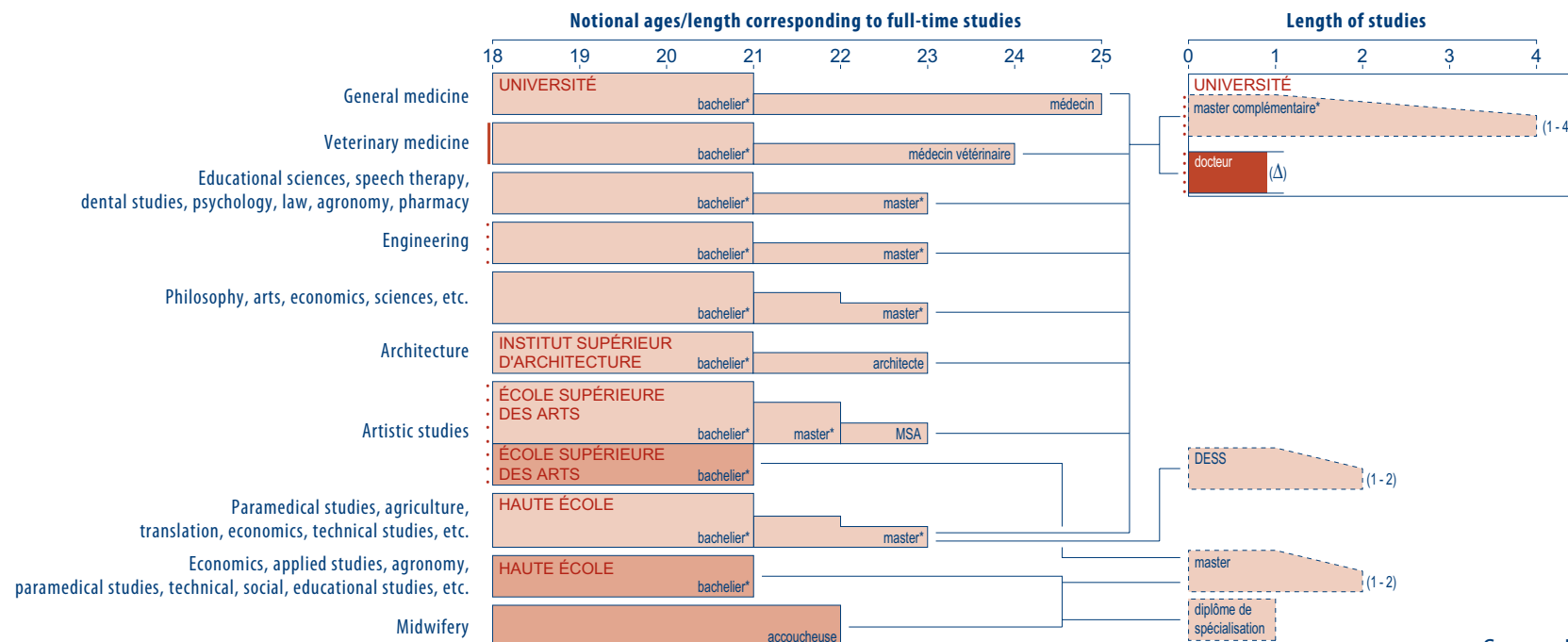
The **Diploma Supplement** was adopted in 2004/05 and was made compulsory by law in all types of higher education. The example used at *Hautes Écoles* and *Écoles supérieures des Arts* is regulated by government, while the one used at universities is established by the CIUF (Interuniversity Council of the French Community). Universities already began issuing the Supplement in 2002 on an optional basis, and certain *Hautes Écoles* followed suit in 2003/04. It is issued in French automatically and free of charge to all students. Institutions may choose to issue it in English.

Following the November 2002 decree concerning the introduction of **quality evaluation** in higher education, the *Agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur* (Agency for Higher Education Quality

Evaluation) was established, and has been in official operation since January 2004.

Apart from representing the French Community vis-à-vis national and international bodies in the area of higher education quality evaluation, the Agency facilitates co-operation among all parties in higher education as a means of encouraging practices to improve quality at each institution. It is also responsible for ensuring the evaluation of higher education by drawing attention to good practice, as well as to inadequacies and problems that must be overcome. Finally, it must submit proposals to policy-makers for improving the overall quality of higher education. Students participate in the activities of the Agency, with three representatives chosen from a list put forward by student bodies. The Agency selects experts for purposes of **external evaluation**. The committee consists mainly of a representative from the professional world and academics from the discipline undergoing evaluation. There is a preference for foreign specialists who are not involved in any way with the institutions being evaluated. Students are interviewed by the experts during the visits.

The expert committee drafts a confidential report on each institution visited, which is communicated solely to its management and



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

DESS *Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées*

MSA *Master spécialisé artistique*

Only the new system introduced in 2004/05 is shown in the diagram. Higher education is at present in a transitional phase in which two systems will coexist until 2009. Under the decree of 8 May 2003, a competitive entrance examination has been introduced for veterinary medicine in the 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06 academic years. In the case of doctors, dentists and physiotherapists, the federal government of Belgium has set limits on the number of places.

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the president of the Agency. On completing an evaluation, the Committee drafts a 'horizontal' report which includes general comments and information regarding all institutions, without naming them. It is forwarded to the management of all the institutions concerned and to members of the Agency. The latter comment on the report, which is then passed on to the minister responsible for higher education for submission to the government.

The November 2002 decree states that higher education institutions must set up their own **internal evaluation** committees. In addition, each institution must nominate a resource person to act as an intermediary between the Agency and the institution itself in order to

pass on information and encourage the participation of institutions.

Strictly speaking, there is no **accreditation** system for higher education institutions in the French Community. However, it is reasonable to think in terms of an 'ex ante' accreditation system, as only institutions that satisfy criteria established by the regulations may be recognised and subsidised by the French Community. Recognised institutions may provide courses only in subjects for which authorisation has been granted under the regulations. They alone may award qualifications which are recognised academically or in law (in the case of those giving access to regulated professions in

particular). Universities may have their authorisation to offer certain *master complémentaire* programmes (specialised programmes open to holders of a first *Master's* qualification) temporarily withdrawn if the number of students enrolled is not sufficient. Given their autonomy, higher education institutions are free to seek the accreditation of professional or sectoral bodies, but this has no legal implications (for example with regard to funding). There is no accreditation procedure for totally private institutions.

The Agency has expressed an interest in joining ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
14 November 2002	Decree establishing the Agency for Higher Education Quality Evaluation	Décret créant l'Agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur
31 March 2004	Bologna Decree specifying the remit of higher education in the French Community	Décret de Bologne définissant l'enseignement supérieur en Communauté française

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

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The most recent arrangements linked to the Bologna Process are specified in the Higher Education Act of 4 April 2003, which reforms the structure of higher education.

The degree structure based on **three main cycles** constitutes the core of the Act, which introduced this new structure for all programmes in the 2004/05 academic year. The transitional period between the previous system and the new one should end in 2006. For longer programmes, it may last until 2010.

The old system is transformed into a binary system consisting of professionally-oriented Bachelor's degrees in non-university higher education and two-tier Bachelor's and Master's degrees in universities, as well as non-university higher education institutions. By means of the mechanism of bridging courses (*schakelprogramma*), holders of professionally-oriented Bachelor's degrees may have access to Master's programmes.

The Higher Education Act also offered the opportunity to establish associations between universities and non-university institutions (*Hogescholen*). An association is the officially registered cooperation between a university and one or more *Hogescholen*.

Doctorates (*Doctor*) as the highest level of specialisation in scientific research are based on an original research project resulting in the public presentation of a doctoral thesis. The Higher Education Act does not specify any minimum or maximum duration for this kind of programme (although the average duration is 6½ years). This degree is only offered at the six universities and at two by virtue of the law on registered higher education institutions (theological institutions). Joint and double doctoral degrees in co-operation with foreign universities are possible in law. Doctoral programmes are open to graduates with a relevant foreign Master's degree, in some cases after a preliminary examination depending on the field of study.

A credit system based entirely on **ECTS** has been applied to university programmes (both in terms of transfer and accumulation) since 1991 and to non-university higher education programmes since 1994. The new Higher Education Act endorses the compatibility of the existing credit system with ECTS.

A compulsory **Diploma Supplement** has been awarded automatically to all students regardless the programme followed, at university level since 1991 and at non-university level since 1994. The new Higher

Education Act endorses the concept of a Diploma Supplement and the Flemish one is now adapted to the international one. The Diploma Supplement is free of charge. It is automatically delivered in Dutch and upon students' request in English.

As regards **quality assurance**, compulsory **external quality** control, based upon a self-assessment report and a site visit by a panel of peers, world of work/professionals and (international) experts, results in a public report on each programme and the state of the art of that programme in the Flemish Community. Together with the stakeholders, the NVAO has worked out a frame of reference, which will be used to evaluate and accredit programmes.

Internal quality control derives from the autonomy of higher education institutions and the report is used in the first stage of external evaluation. This quality control is the starting point for all evaluation.

The concept of **accreditation** has been incorporated into the Higher Education Act. As accreditation will be organised in close cooperation with the Netherlands, an independent Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Body (*Nederlands-Vlaams Accreditatie Orgaan*, or NVAO) has been set up since 3 September 2003. This co-operation initiated the Joint

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Quality Initiative and played an important role in the establishment of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). ECA functions as a platform for automatic and mutual recognition of the accreditation decisions of its members and has produced a

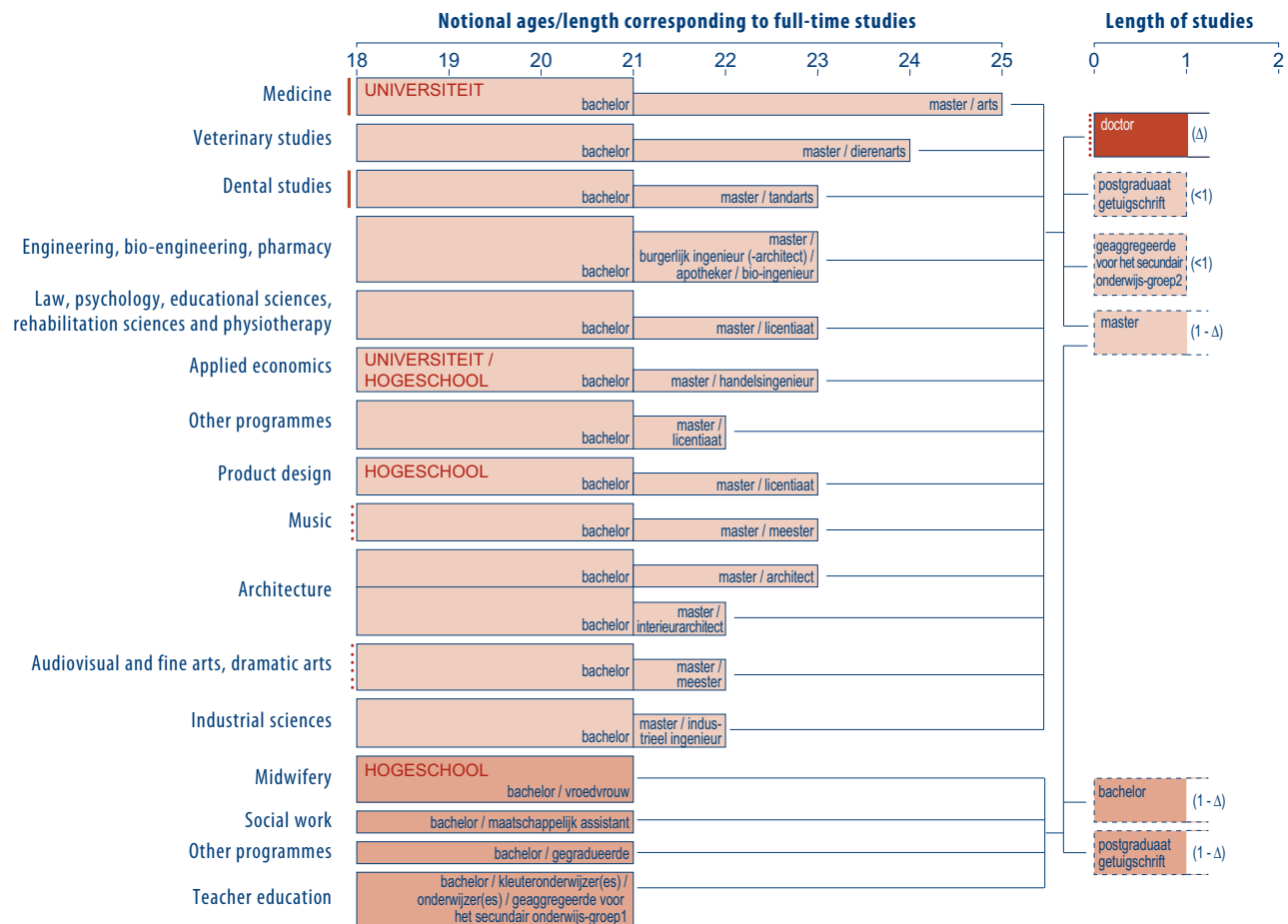
code of good practice. Accreditation is the final step in the programme quality control system used by all Flemish Community higher education institutions. Students are involved at every stage.

The Flemish Community of Belgium is a member since 2000 of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) through the VLIR (Flemish Inter-university Council) and the VLHORA (Flemish Council of *Hogescholen*).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
4 April 2003	Higher Education Act restructuring higher education in Flanders	Decreet betreffende de herstructurering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen
21 April 2004	Higher Education Act on the flexible organisation of education	Decreet betreffende de flexibilisering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

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In June 2004, the Parliament adopted the last amendments to the 1995 Higher Education Act.

The degree structure based on **three main cycles** was first implemented under the 1995 Higher Education Act. After the adoption of the Bologna Declaration (1999), the structure was reshaped, and holders of a Bachelor's degree were given the right to apply for doctoral studies. After the Berlin Conference (2003), the legislation was accordingly amended, thus only a Master's degree gives access to **doctoral studies** whose course of instruction lasts a minimum of three years (full-time) or four years (part-time). The higher education institution may offer provision for the third degree in listed fields of specialisation for which it has been accredited. Doctorands are trained according to individual curricula (including training and research activities) and have to prepare and defend a dissertation. Training is carried out under the guidance of a scientific supervisor appointed by the Faculty Council of the higher education institution concerned. Doctorate training can also be undertaken by research organisations such as the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Centre for Agrarian Studies in the fields for which these organisations are accredited. No special compulsory preparatory programmes or courses lead to these studies. The doctorate is

conferred on doctorands who have passed the examinations specified in the curriculum and who have defended their dissertation in accordance with the requirements of the Scientific Degrees and Scientific Titles Act.

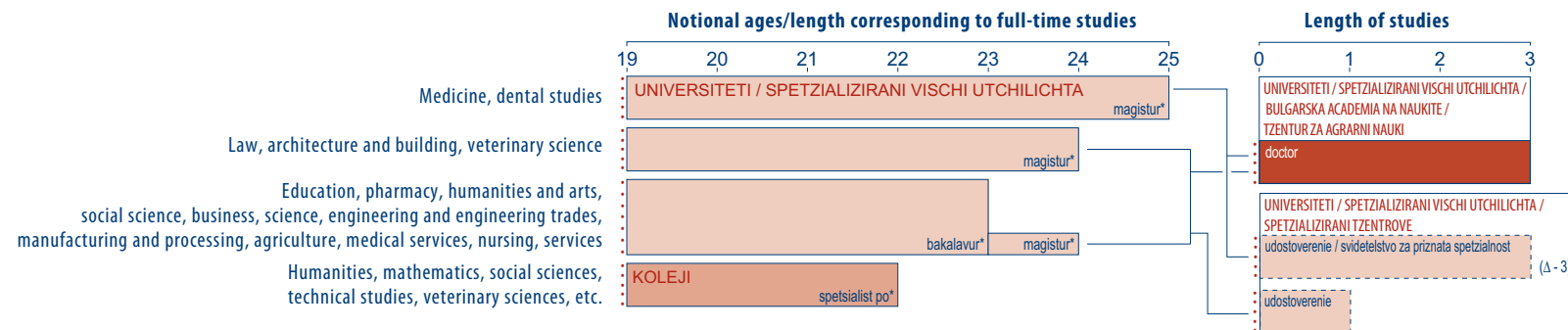
The amendments to the Higher Education Act adopted in June 2004 and the ordinance for the implementation of **ECTS** in higher education institutions for credit accumulation and transfer (October 2004), provide the legal framework for its practical implementation. The system is mandatory for all institutions and study programmes for students admitted in 2004/05.

The **Diploma Supplement** was introduced in accordance with the amendments to the Higher Education Act adopted in June 2004. The secondary legislation related to the use of the Supplement is the ordinance on state requirements regarding the content of basic documents issued by higher education institutions, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers' Decree in August 2004. The Diploma Supplement has also been promoted by a variety of means (including seminars at national and university level, information brochures, meetings, etc.) in order to assist institutions with these activities. With effect from 2004/05, all graduates receive the

Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge in one of the widely spoken languages in the EU and in Bulgarian.

In recent years, the **evaluation and accreditation** system in Bulgaria has undergone considerable fresh development in terms of its scope and framework, and the methods and structure of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency established in 1995 have been subject to change and innovation. As a result, the Agency and higher education institutions hope to improve the transparency and comparability of the system for both students and employers. All such changes reflect widespread concern within the Bulgarian academic community regarding the quality of higher education and the need to develop, maintain and improve high quality academic programmes for its students and other stakeholders. The changes call for the creation of efficient and effective organisational structures within which programmes can be provided and supported, and are motivated by greater respect for institutional autonomy and the understanding that quality is primarily the responsibility of institutions themselves.

In 2003/04, the Agency made a considerable effort to develop and improve its evaluation



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n - x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

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and accreditation methods. Many of its proposals were incorporated into the new amendments of the Higher Education Act (in effect since June 2004). A number of paragraphs had been reworded, with a shift towards the evaluation of quality, rather than the evaluation of compliance with state requirements. Institutional accreditation is now explicitly linked to the evaluation of the effectiveness of **internal quality assurance** processes and structures. Programme assessment methods are also shifting from a programme-by-programme approach to subject-level evaluation. The 52 subject fields in the National Classifier will be evaluated in the next two to three years, as the new method suggests a considerable reduction in the scope of the assessment exercise. Additional measures to enhance the effectiveness of Agency work are concerned with the new accreditation powers transferred from the Accreditation Council to eight subject-level standing committees. The latter have been responsible for the final accreditation of

programmes since June 2004. The duration of the accreditation is five to six years.

Another innovation in Agency methods consists in the introduction of post-accreditation monitoring, which will become effective after the expected approval of the Agency's new statute by the Council of Ministers. To this end, the Agency is establishing a separate unit responsible for follow-up reviews, which may have serious consequences for the institutions visited, including possible withdrawal of accreditation. This legal and structural move on the part of the Agency reflects greater awareness of the need to protect the interests of society in the quality of higher education.

Agency management is also likely to be improved following the establishment of its new Accreditation council. The Rectors Conference quota in the Council rises from four to six members, and the new body for the next six years will consist of eleven members, including the President and the Vice-President.

The Vice-President is nominated from the Rectors Council quota and will be responsible for post-accreditation monitoring.

Foreign experts are not involved in quality assurance procedures.

With the last amendments to the Higher Education Act, the representatives of the Student Council of the higher education institution could participate in the monitoring of the internal quality assurance processes and education quality maintenance.

The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency is a member of the SEE regional network (Central and East European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies) which works in close co-operation with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The National Agency plans to apply for ENQA membership.

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Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
27 December 1995	Higher Education Act	Закон за висшето образование
9 May 1972, last amendments 4 July 2000	Scientific Degrees and Scientific Titles Act (State Gazette issue No. 54/04.07.2000)	Закон за научните степени и научните звания, ДВ бр. 54 от 4.07.2000 г.
4 June 2004	Amendments to the Higher Education Act (State Gazette issue No. 48/04.06.2004).	Закон за висшето образование, ДВ, бр. 48 от 4.06.2004 г.
12 August 2004	Ordinance on the state requirements on the content of the basic documents issued by the higher education institutions, Decree No. 215 as of 12.08.2004	Наредба за държавните изисквания към съдържанието на основните документи, издавани от висшите училища, приета с ПМС №215 от 12.08.2004 г., обн., ДВ, бр.75 от 27.08.2004 г.
12 October 2004	Ordinance No. 21 for the implementation of a system for credits accumulation and transfer within the higher education institutions (State Gazette issue No. 89/12.10.2004)	Наредба №21 от 30.09.2004 г. за прилагане на система за натрупване и трансфер на кредити във висшите училища, обн. ДВ, бр. 89 от 12.10.2004 г.

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

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Due to a complex system of shared responsibility between the federal and cantonal authorities, legal competence for implementation of the Bologna reform at university level has been delegated by federal law to the Swiss University Conference (CUS), the cooperative body of the federal government and the cantons. In December 2003, the CUS approved directives for the coordinated reorganisation of teaching at Swiss universities. These directives constitute the legal basis for the reform.

For the *Fachhochschulen* (universities of applied sciences) and *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (institutions for teacher education), similar directives for the Bologna reform were adopted by the Council for Universities of Applied Sciences in 2002.

A structure based on **two main cycles** has been partly introduced in the universities and the *Pädagogische Hochschulen*. Since the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year, a considerable number of study programmes have adopted the Bachelor's/Master's structure. The *Fachhochschulen* are implementing their Bachelor's programmes in the autumn of 2005. Fifty percent of first-year students are currently entering the new system and, by

2010, all institutions and study programmes will have been completely reorganised.

The structure and content of the **doctorate programmes** are not organised in a uniform manner but established independently by individual universities. The completion of a Master's degree or its equivalent is required for access to doctoral programmes and there are no compulsory preparatory programmes. Some universities offer theoretical courses that students take while pursuing their individual research.

No joint or double doctorates are awarded by two or more Swiss universities. At European level, joint degrees can be awarded in cooperation with a French or Italian university in accordance with bilateral treaties concluded by the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS). The two federal universities (federal institutes of technology) do not yet participate in these programmes.

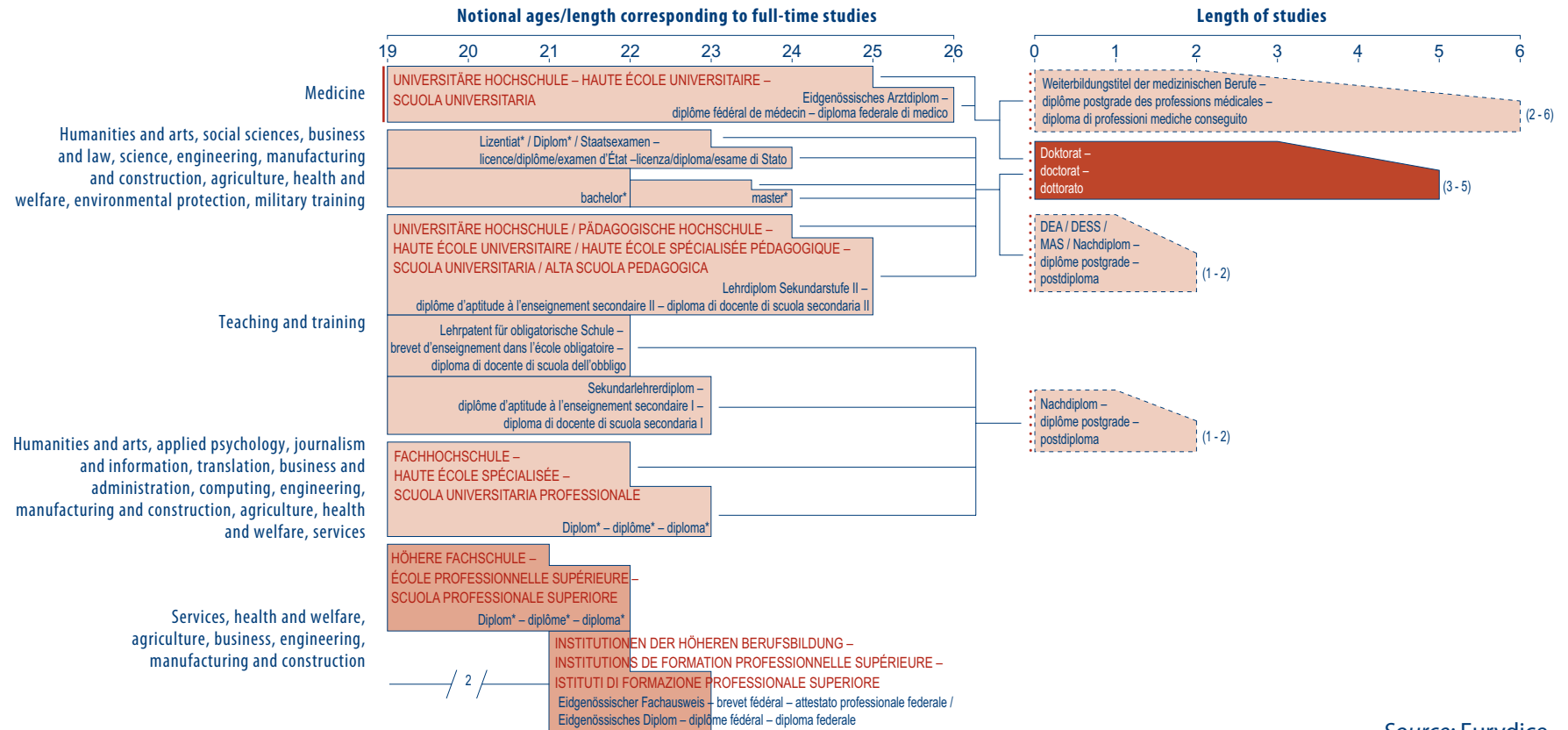
ECTS is being introduced at the same time as the Bachelor's and Master's study programmes (180 and 90-120 credits respectively). In 2005, all universities must have prepared their institutional regulations for introducing the new two-cycle study structure including ECTS which is used for both transfer and accumulation. By 2010, all study programmes

will have incorporated ECTS. The *Pädagogische Hochschulen* have already introduced the system across all their programmes.

While ECTS is mandatory for further education Master's programmes (Master of Advanced Studies), as well as normal Bachelor's and Master's courses, this is not the case for doctoral programmes.

In 2002, the CRUS issued recommendations for introducing the **Diploma Supplement** at universities and these are now due for implementation. The Supplement will be available at all institutions and for all degree programmes free of charge. It will be issued automatically to all students with their qualification, in the language of the university (e.g. German, French or Italian) and in English. The *Fachhochschulen* have issued the Diploma Supplement since 2000 on the basis of a voluntary agreement with no legislation. The *Pädagogische Hochschulen* are also currently preparing to introduce the Diploma Supplement, possibly in the 2005/06 academic year.

The body responsible for **external quality assurance** is the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss universities (OAQ) established on 1 October 2001. It receives half of its funding from the university



Source: Eurydice.

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MAS Master of Advanced Studies

The field 'humanities and arts, social sciences... military training', which offers a structure with two main cycles, accounts for around 70 % of the total student population.

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cantons, and the other half from the federal government. It currently operates solely at national level and reports back to the CUS. It performs its tasks in close collaboration with the CRUS.

On behalf of the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER), the OAQ has to check every four years whether the quality assurance systems of the universities are compatible with internationally accepted standards, and whether they result in high quality output in education and research. Federal funding of the cantonal public universities is partly linked to the results of these so-called 'quality audits'. On 1 July 2003, audits were started at the 10 cantonal universities. On-site visits were conducted by experts with reference to the self-evaluation reports. On the basis of the experts' reports, the OAQ then wrote final reports in July 2004. The audit process was itself evaluated.

In all forms of external quality assurance, an **internal assessment** (self-evaluation) precedes external assessment.

OAQ procedures and quality standards are based on international good practice. OAQ performed an in-depth review of foreign accreditation and evaluation systems before developing its own procedures.

Students do not take part directly in the governance of OAQ, but they are involved in all quality assessments (in producing the self-evaluation reports, and as interview partners during on-site visits).

OAQ is carrying out various forms of quality assessment such as **accreditation** (procedures at institutional and programme levels in both the public and private higher education sectors, and for 'conventional learning' and distance learning/e-learning), quality audits and evaluations of institutions as part of federal recognition of new institutions. In addition to these tasks, the OAQ is also offering services in the field of quality assurance.

The OAQ Scientific Council includes several academics of international standing. The Council prepares accreditation decisions on behalf of the CUS. The expert groups established for external evaluations and accreditation procedures must include a majority of peer members employed outside Switzerland.

An accreditation system has been in place since 2002. It is open to public and private academic institutions and their study programmes. Accreditation is a three-stage procedure consisting of self-evaluation by the unit undergoing accreditation, an on-site visit by an

international group of independent experts and then the accreditation decision based on the first two stages. The main focus of accreditation is teaching and learning. If the result is positive, the unit will either be granted unconditional accreditation for seven years, or conditional accreditation for a set period during which it has to rectify shortcomings observed during the process.

Accreditation is a voluntary process (particularly for universities). The objective is not to accredit all institutions or all programmes on offer, but rather to use accreditation in cases in which it will be of particular benefit to the academic units concerned.

Following a revision of the law relating to *Fachhochschulen* due to take effect from 2005 onwards, accreditation will become mandatory for these institutions and their study programmes.

Accreditation results have to be published, although under national data protection laws, negative accreditation decisions cannot be published.

Pädagogische Hochschulen are subject to a specific evaluation procedure. The Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education is responsible for evaluating and

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recognising the study programmes of these schools. Evaluation and recognition procedures comprise the following steps: submission of a report to the authorities; a preliminary decision on the basis of the report; an on-site visit by a team of experts; a proposal for a decision by the recognition commission; and a decision by the Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education. International experts from a related field, as well as students, are involved in the evaluation and recognition procedures.

OAQ actively participates in several European networks for quality assurance and accreditation. Memberships include the Joint Quality Initiative (JQI), the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA, cofounded in 2003), and the regional network D-A-CH (founded in 2003). Switzerland has also expressed an interest in joining the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2005.

In addition, it is a member of the corresponding quality assurance networks and organisations at international level (INQAAHE), UNESCO/OECD forums on accreditation/QA and on cross-border education.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in national language
4 October 1991	The Federal Institutes of Technology Act	Bundesgesetz über die Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschulen (ETH-Gesetz)
6 October 1995	The Federal Universities of Applied Sciences Act	Bundesgesetz über die Fachhochschulen (Fachhochschulgesetz)
8 October 1999	Federal Act on Aid to Universities and Cooperation in Higher Education	Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der Universitäten und über die Zusammenarbeit im Hochschulbereich (Universitätsförderungsgesetz, UFG)
30 January 2002	CRUS Recommendations linked to the implementation of the Diploma Supplement in Swiss universities	Empfehlungen der CRUS zur Einführung des Diploma Supplement an den schweizerischen Universitäten
5 December 2002	Directives for the implementation of the Bologna declaration in universities of applied sciences and universities of applied sciences for teacher education	Richtlinien für die Umsetzung der Erklärung von Bologna an den Fachhochschulen und den Pädagogischen Hochschulen
4 December 2003	Directives for the coordinated renewal of teaching at Swiss Universities within the framework of the Bologna process (Bologna Directives)	Richtlinien für die koordinierte Erneuerung der Lehre an den universitären Hochschulen der Schweiz im Rahmen des Bologna-Prozesses

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Date	Term in English	Term in national language
14 May 2004	CRUS Regulation for the denomination of diplomas in accordance with the Bologna reform	Regelung der CRUS für die einheitliche Benennung der universitären Studienabschlüsse im Rahmen der Bologna-Reform
16 June 2004	CRUS Recommendations for the coordinated renewal of teaching at Swiss Universities within the Bologna process	Empfehlungen der CRUS für die koordinierte Erneuerung der Lehre an den universitären Hochschulen der Schweiz im Rahmen des Bologna-Prozesses
23 August 2004	CRUS Recommendations linked to the application of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in Swiss Universities	Empfehlungen der CRUS für die Anwendung von ECTS an den universitären Hochschulen der Schweiz
17 September 2004	The Swiss University Landscape: Strategy 2005-2015	Universitätslandschaft Schweiz: Strategie 2005 - 2015

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

Schweizerische Universitätskonferenz (SUK)/Swiss University Conference (CUS): <http://www.cus.ch>

Richtlinien für die Umsetzung der Erklärung von Bologna an den Fachhochschulen und den Pädagogischen Hochschulen/Directives for the implementation of the Bologna declaration in universities of applied sciences and universities of applied sciences for teacher education: <http://www.kfh.ch/index.cfm?nav=3&CFID=2258314&CFTOKEN=99460194>

Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities: <http://www.crus.ch>

Information on Bologna reform at universities: <http://www.bolognareform.ch>

Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der schweizerischen Hochschulen (OAQ)/Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss universities (OAQ): <http://www.oaq.ch>

Bundesgesetz vom 8. Oktober 1999 über die Förderung der Universitäten und über die Zusammenarbeit im Hochschulbereich (Universitätsförderungsgesetz, UFG)/Federal Act of 8 October 1999 on Aid to Universities and Cooperation in Higher Education (Act on Aid to Universities, LAU): http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/c414_20.html

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO – Serbia

The 1998 University Law which abolished university autonomy in Serbia, was replaced by a new law in May 2002. Since it was difficult to reach a consensus on major university reforms in a short period of time, a decision was made by the universities and the Ministry of Education to revoke the 1998 Law and reinstate the one from 1992, with some important new elements.

The draft of the new Law on Higher Education was presented in January 2005, and its adoption and implementation are expected in spring 2005.

The current University Law implicitly enables the structure based on **three main cycles**. In general, after four or five years of undergraduate studies, there are two years of Master's studies which can be followed by postgraduate doctoral-level studies. The implementation of three-year undergraduate studies at some faculties in the 2004/05 academic year can be seen as a pilot project phase. The new law, together with complementary financial regulations concerning the two-tier structure, is expected to provide a legal framework and financial support enabling the full implementation of this structure at universities, and will be put in practice in the 2005/06 academic year.

Doctorate studies consist of individual research, culminating in a doctoral dissertation. The current University Law defines the duration of doctoral studies as lasting three to five years; however, the theoretical courses for these studies are not organised, and doctorate studies last for three years. Admission to doctoral studies is limited to students with a minimum average mark of nine out of ten. There are no theoretical courses except at the University of Arts, where they are part of the doctoral phase. Doctorate degrees are awarded on the basis of the evaluation and defence of a doctoral dissertation.

The group for Cultural Management and Cultural Policy in the Balkans provides **joint degrees**/diplomas with two higher education institutions in France.

The current University Law does not specify **ECTS** as an obligatory mechanism, but at the same time it enables the implementation of the credit system for student workload estimation at Serbian universities. The official decision to adopt ECTS has been taken at national level in the expected Law on Higher Education, which will determine the framework for ECTS implementation. ECTS will be introduced as mandatory for all course units in all degree programmes including doctorates. As defined

by this draft law, the credit system will be used for both credit transfer and credit accumulation.

One university accepted the idea and philosophy of ECTS before the Bologna Declaration was signed in 2003; based on the prepared comprehensive ECTS guide, initial stages of ECTS implementation exist at a number of the university's faculties/departments. Since Serbia is still not a member of any international mobility networks (such as Erasmus), the credit system (ECTS) is primarily used for credit accumulation. Other universities are actively preparing to start introducing ECTS in the 2005/06 academic year.

The **Diploma Supplement** based on the official model has not yet been formally introduced. Current law does not specify its use. The official decision to adopt the Diploma Supplement was taken at national level in the expected Law on Higher Education in 2005, which will determine its implementation. It will be introduced as mandatory for all institutions and degree programmes, and will be issued in Serbian and English.

Although the current law does not specify the use of the Diploma Supplement, one university has started implementing it. The first Diploma Supplement was issued free of charge and was

delivered in Serbian and English at the largest faculty of the University of Novi Sad (Faculty of Technical Sciences) as an official document in June 2004.

In June 2002, the National Council for Development of University Education (*Republički savet za razvoj univerzitetskog obrazovanja*) was established. It is responsible for **external quality assurance**, and is a national governmental body comprising the rectors and vice-rectors of all Serbian universities as well as ten members appointed by the Government. One of its aims is to establish the basic criteria and standards required for the foundation of higher education institutions (HEIs), as a response to the phenomenon of private HEIs mushrooming during the transitional phase.

The National Committee for Accreditation of Higher Education – NCAHE (*Komisija za akreditaciju visokog obrazovanja*) – was established by the Council for Development of University Education of the Republic of Serbia in January 2003. The NCAHE is a semi-independent body in the sense that the Ministry of Education provides administrative support, but the members of the NCAHE are university professors engaged on a volunteer basis. Under the current Law on Higher

Education, the participation of international experts in the quality assurance process is not required.

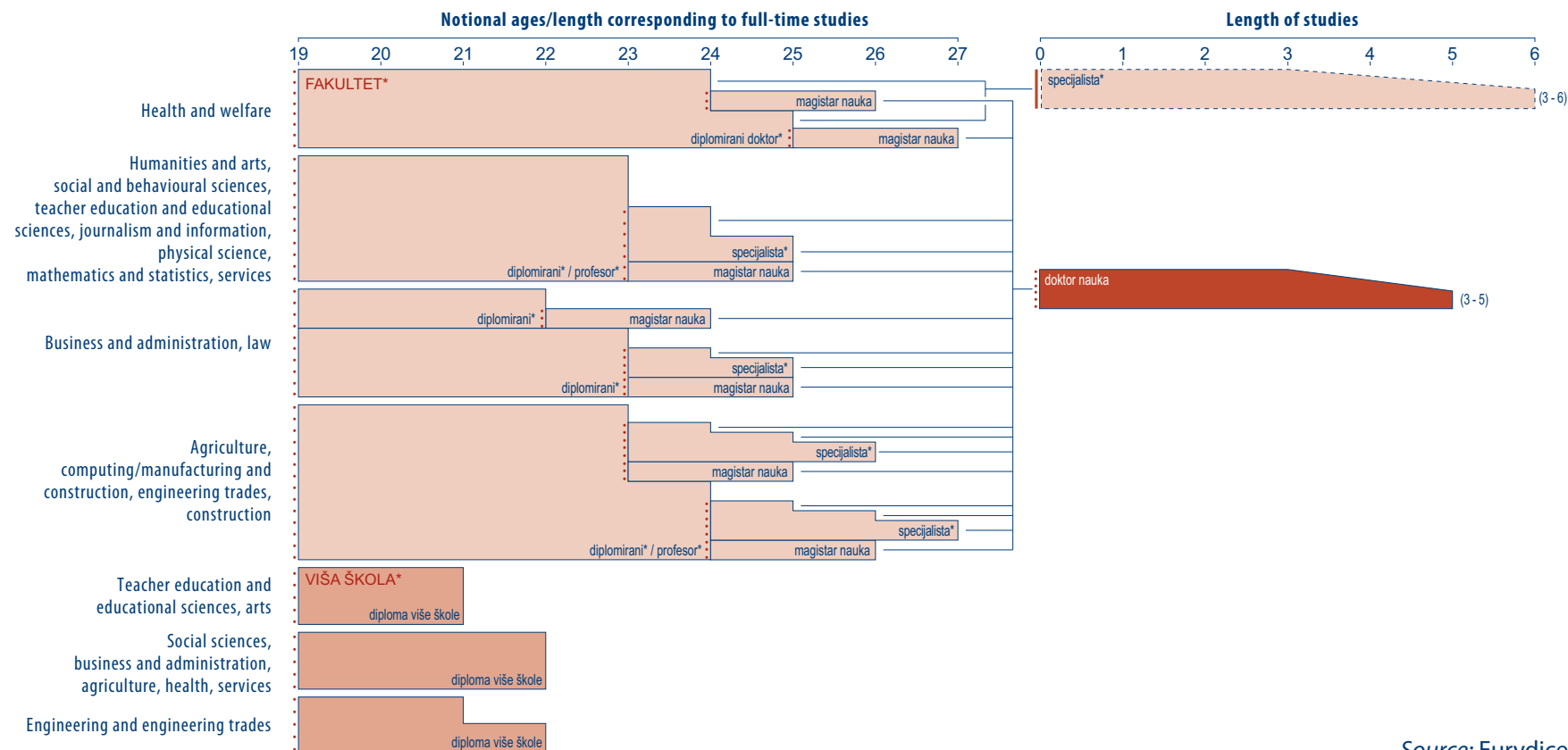
Accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes is not required in the current University Law, but it will be required by the Law on Higher Education which is in the process of being adopted. The responsibilities of the NCAHE include helping the higher education institutions to implement their **internal quality** assurance mechanisms, maintaining a database related to the accreditation procedures, carrying out the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes, encouraging international co-operation with similar institutions in other countries, etc.

The NCAHE will require internal evaluation for all institutions and programmes seeking accreditation. The process of external evaluation is preceded by internal evaluation at all universities. At present there are no measures which stimulate the introduction and development of internal quality assurance mechanisms at higher education institutions. The draft of the new Law on Higher Education introduces strict responsibilities for higher education institutions related to quality assurance, including self-evaluation and

accreditation. A higher education institution seeking accreditation for a study programme must prepare a self-evaluation document containing all relevant information about the programme, institution and faculty. The NCAHE appoints a three-member committee, which analyses the document and visits the institution. Based on the committee's report, the NCAHE makes a public decision on the accreditation of the programme. The institution has the right to appeal.

A number of regional projects related to quality assurance are underway. The University of Belgrade co-ordinates the accepted TEMPUS JEP project on quality assurance with the participation of two other universities. The project was set afoot in 2004 and aims to develop the procedures and standards of quality assurance. Many faculties are finishing the self-evaluation reports according to the proposed standards developed within the project (spring 2005).

All universities underwent the external evaluation procedure organised by the European University Association (EUA) in 2002. The conclusions and recommendations of the external evaluations have been a good foundation for the development of the strategic plan for all universities.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO – Serbia

Students are involved in the quality improvement process. Student organisations at different faculties have designed questionnaires for the evaluation of teaching

staff and curricula. They play an active role in conducting surveys on the teaching process, including the evaluation of lectures, exams, textbooks and teaching staff. The new law has also stimulated the formation of the Students' Parliament, which will play a more active role in the internal evaluation programmes. The students have no part in the governance of the NCAHE.

The NCAHE is eligible to become a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislation and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
8 August 1992 (amended in 1998 and in 2002)	University Law	Zakon o Univerzitetu
December 2004	Draft Law on Higher Education	Nacrt zakona o visokom obrazovanju

Websites

<http://www.ns.ac.yu/stara/tempusns/cards/2002/17040.html>

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO – Montenegro

In October 2003, the new Law on Higher Education was adopted by the Assembly of Montenegro. According to this law, the structure of higher education is based on **three main cycles**. Completion of first-cycle Bachelor's studies gives access to second-cycle specialist studies, second-cycle applied Master's studies or academic studies leading to the title of Master of Science. Third-cycle academic studies leading to the title of Doctor of Philosophy require the completion of second-cycle studies. Taught courses are part of the doctoral phase. Only one university offers higher education in Montenegro. It is assumed that after 2006/07, the percentage of students continuing second cycle (postgraduate) studies will increase significantly.

Since September 2004, use of the credit system based on **ECTS** has been compulsory for credit transfer and credit accumulation at the University of Montenegro (for all course units in all degree programmes, including doctoral programmes). Most faculties have already made the changes needed to introduce the system. Courses are reduced to one semester and each course is graded in accordance with ECTS points.

The **Diploma Supplement** based on the official European model is defined by the above Law of 2003. It is mandatory in all degree programmes, and is issued free of charge in the official teaching language and in English.

According to the same law, **quality assurance (QA)** must become a permanent exercise conducted through accreditation, student evaluation and self-evaluation. Procedures for quality assessment and accreditation of the institution are conducted by the Higher Education Council established by the government. When applications are submitted for accreditation, the Council forms expert bodies (*committees*), which may also include international experts, and issues a certificate when applications are accepted. An institution requiring initial **accreditation** has to apply to the Council at least a year before the beginning of the period for which accreditation is sought. Initial accreditation is granted for a maximum of three years, and the procedure for obtaining it is prescribed by a Council enactment. The institution is subject to a re-accreditation procedure after subsequent intervals of a maximum of five years. Assessment of curricular quality is performed by the Council for each programme for a maximum period of five years, by appointing expert bodies (committees) for particular curricula. Interna-

tional experts may be included on these bodies as consultants.

According to the law, the institution carries out **internal evaluation**, i.e. evaluation and assessment of the quality of its courses and working conditions. Self-evaluation is performed continuously, in accordance with institutional statutes. Its methods depend on the curriculum, teaching equipment, qualifications of its academic staff, teaching methods, percentage of students who pass examinations, percentage of graduates, and on other appropriate indicators of successful performance.

According to the new Law on Higher Education, students have to be represented on the university management board, senate and faculty bodies, 15 % of whose members are students. Students take part in the quality assurance/evaluation system, evaluating university programmes and the work of teaching staff by means of questionnaires.

In exercising external control, the government may appoint an independent auditor to examine the financial standing of any public higher education institution.

Since 2002, the University of Montenegro has taken part in the TEMPUS project called the 'Introduction of QA Standards in the University

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO – Montenegro

of Montenegro'. This project will suggest remedial activities for enhancing quality standards and devise a fully-fledged QA system to be maintained and improved, with a view to its becoming a permanent quality control system. Montenegro also intends to have a member representative within the European

Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), whose activities will soon be discussed with the consortium experts.

Creation of the National Montenegro ENIC (European Network Information Centre) is underway and is supported by a Tempus project (Socrates-Tempus Call 2004).

University units are also envisaging a new study course structure in which there will be a large number of elective courses alongside core provision, but this has not come into effect so far.

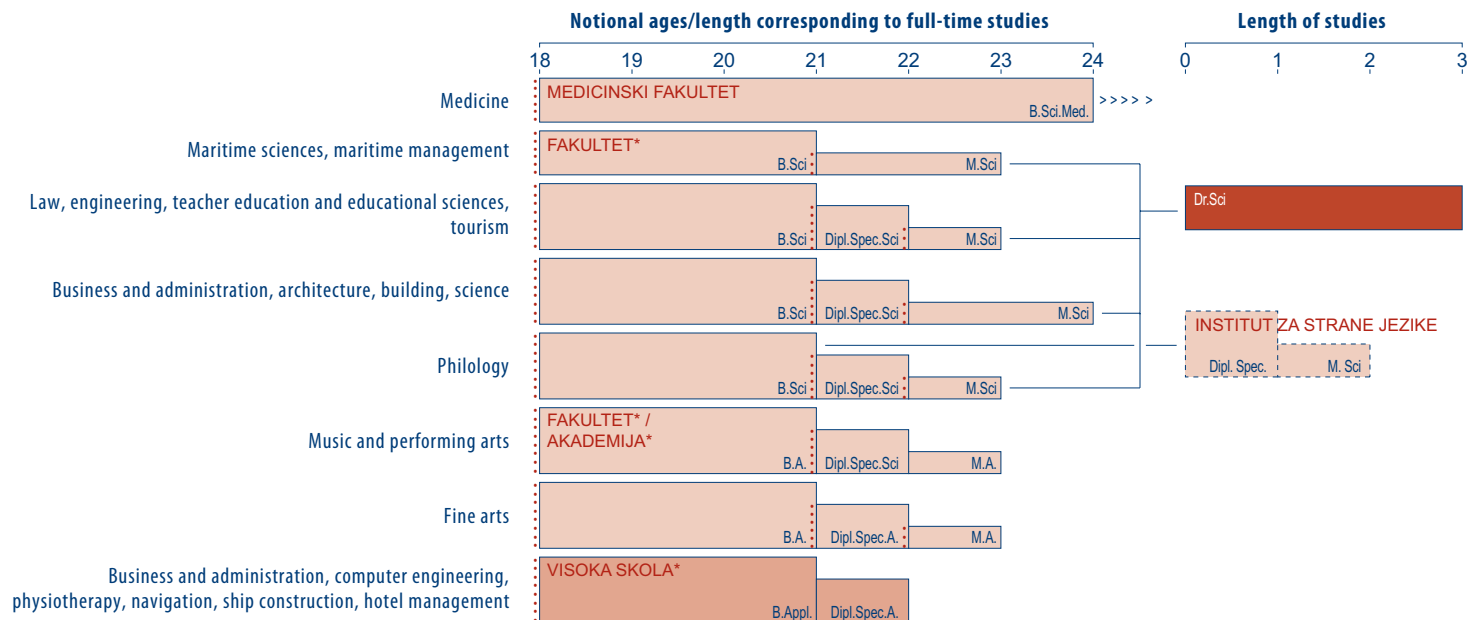
Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
22 October 2003	Law on Higher Education	Zakon o visokom obrazovanju
January 2004	Montenegro University Statute	Statut Univerziteta Crne Gore
September 2004	Rules for ECTS	Pravila ECTS

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

University of Montenegro: <http://www.cg.ac.yu>



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

>>> Study in Serbia

B. A	Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija	Dipl. Spec	Diploma specijalistickih studija	M.Sci	Magistar nauka
B.Appl	Diploma primijenjenih os+ovnih studija	Dipl. Spec. A	Diploma specijalistickih studija	M.A.	Magistar umjetnosti
B.Sci	Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija	Dipl. Spec.	Sci Diploma specijalistickih studija		
B. Sci. med.	Diplomirani ljekar - Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija	Dr Sci	Doktor Nauka		

CYPRUS

CY

Since the provision of higher education in Cyprus is limited, many young people at this level of education study abroad. The University of Cyprus (*panepistimio*) was established by law in 1989 and admitted its first students in 1992. The legal basis for the establishment and operation of institutions of higher education (including private schools) is regulated by a law adopted in 1996 (and last amended in December 2003).

The degree structure is traditionally based on **three main cycles**. At the University of Cyprus, the programmes leading to Bachelor's qualifications (*ptychio*) last 4 years and those leading to Master's (M.A. and M.Sc.) last 1 to 2 years. Some private higher education institutions (HEIs) also offer accredited programmes at the Master's level. Master's programmes follow on from degrees normally requiring four years of study.

Doctoral programmes leading to the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy (*didaktoriko diploma*) last 3 to 8 years. These are offered only at the University of Cyprus. The requirements for a doctorate include the successful completion of at least 30 University of Cyprus Credit Units (corresponding to 1 class hour per week and 60 ECTS) at Master's level according to the field of study, and an original

research thesis. In some exceptional cases, students that are awarded a Bachelor's degree may have access to doctoral programmes. Another compulsory requirement for being awarded a doctorate is the successful completion of a qualifying comprehensive written exam by the fifth semester of studies.

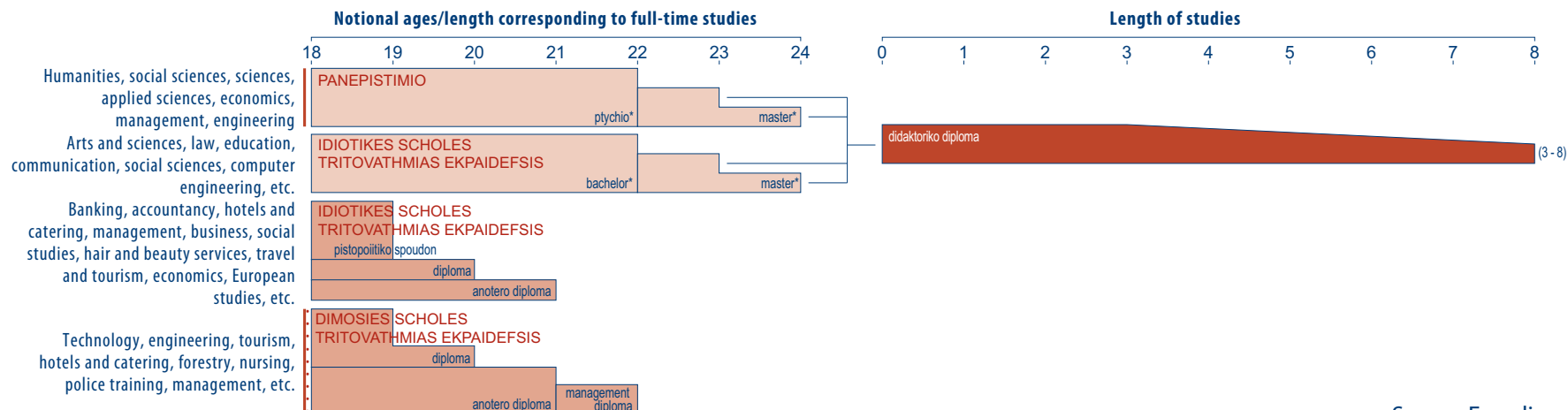
The legislation authorises the University of Cyprus to establish joint degrees, but this has not yet occurred.

ECTS has not yet been implemented by law. The system is expected to be fully operational at the University of Cyprus by 2005/06. In public and private HEIs, its implementation will be gradual, as the legislation required to introduce it is currently the subject of national debate. Once implemented, ECTS will provide for both credit transfer and accumulation, as is already the case at the University and certain public and private HEIs that use it alongside their own credit system.

The University of Cyprus has introduced the **Diploma Supplement** as of the 2004/05 academic year. It has been issued automatically and free of charge in English, to every student who graduates from the University. In some private HEIs, the Diploma Supplement is issued on request and free of charge in English

As regards **quality assurance**, the Council of Educational Evaluation-Accreditation, CEEA (*Symvoulío Ekpaideytikis Axiologisis-Pistopoiisis*, SEKAP) is the independent body responsible for the **external evaluation** of study programmes at private HEIs. SEKAP appoints Visiting Teams that consist of academics from the University of Cyprus, the other public institutions and at least one member from overseas. The Visiting Team examines the application which includes also a Self Evaluation report submitted by the applicant. As regards the evaluation of a programme, the Team visits the institution and issues an initial report on the basis of its findings. This report is submitted to the institution involved for its comments before the publication of the final report.

Accreditation of programmes offered by private HEIs along with the accreditation process itself is governed by the provisions of the 1996 Law that regulates the establishment and operation of higher education institutions. Public HEIs are not accredited. There have also been moves to establish a National Quality Assurance Agency. Although the issue is currently being discussed by the appropriate authorities, no official steps have yet been taken to set up such an Agency.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1 st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1 st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Because of compulsory enrolment in military service, men do not attend *panepistimio* until they are aged 19 or 20.

CYPRUS

As part of **internal evaluation** (self-assessment), the University of Cyprus has satisfactorily completed the European Universities Association (EUA) institutional peer evaluation and follow-up for 2004. Students participate in internal evaluation through surveys and questionnaires.

Through CEEA, Cyprus has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance

in Higher Education (ENQA) since it was set up in 1996.

Besides its measures associated with the Bologna Process, the government has taken steps to enable the establishment of private universities that guarantee appropriate levels of quality. This is currently in the process of being approved by the plenary session of the parliament. The Technological University of

Cyprus has also been established. In addition, there is ongoing debate on further legislation to introduce ECTS and the Diploma Supplement in all public and private higher education institutions.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
28 July 1989	Law No. 144/1989 that established the University of Cyprus	O Peri Panepistimiou Kyprou Nomos
3 May 1996	Law 67(I)/1996 stipulating the legal basis for the establishment and operation of schools of higher education (including private schools)	O Peri Sholon Tritovathmias Ekpaedefsis Nomos
31 December 2002	Law 234(I)/2002 regulating the establishment and operation of the Open University of Cyprus	O Peri Anoiktou Panepistimiou Kyprou Nomos
31 December 2003 (implemented on 27 February 2004)	Law 198(I)/2003 regulating the establishment and operation of the Technological University of Cyprus	O Peri Technologikou Panepistimiou Kyprou Nomos

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The main arrangements linked to the Bologna Process are the 1998 Act on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which came into force on 1 July 1998 and its amendments, especially that of 1 July 2001. The implementation of the principle of the Bologna Process has become an important part of the strategy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) as well as of respective higher education institutions, concretely expressed in their long-term strategies and the long-term strategy of MEYS and their annual updating. It is also a part of the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (White Paper) approved by the Government in 2000 and the Strategic Development of Tertiary Education issued by MEYS for the period 2000-2005 (2010).

The above mentioned legislation creates a legal framework which clearly identifies and corresponds with the Bologna scheme of three cycles of higher education, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral.

A degree structure based on **two main cycles** – a short Master's programmes (*magistr*), building on a first university degree, Bachelor's (*bakalář*) – was formally added to the traditional one-tier programmes in 1990.

The 2001 Amendment of the Act on HEIs introduced a strictly **three-cycle structure**. A Doctoral study programme follows any Master's qualification. The complete model is 3-4 years Bachelor's, 1-3 years Master's and 3 years Doctoral. In the case of non structured programmes it is 4-6 years long Master's and 3 years Doctoral. Since the academic year 2004/05, the vast majority of students have been accepted into a Bachelor's study programme. The integrated study programmes running in parallel are either those in which the accreditation has not expired yet or specific disciplines e.g. medical studies, veterinary studies, pharmacy and others selected by the Accreditation Commission. It is not possible to enter Doctoral studies after a Bachelor's degree programme. Under the Act on HEIs, all study programmes have been re-accredited since 2002. Since 2000, the Transformation and Development Programme has been established to support Bologna action lines including the development of Bachelor's degree studies and the restructuring of traditional higher education courses into two cycles (Bachelor's and Master's). A 'long' doctoral study programme of 5 years starting after a Bachelor's degree is not planned. Doctoral study programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative

activity in the field of research and development, or independent theoretical and creative activity in the Arts. The **Doctoral study** consists of individual research and a theoretical part for which students have to pass an examination. Study is completed with a state doctoral examination and the defence of a dissertation. Higher education institutions can be of university or non-university types. According to the law the non-university type higher education institutions cannot provide Doctoral study programmes. In practice non-university type higher education institutions provide mostly Bachelor's study programmes, only 7 of them have had Master's degree study programmes accredited (academic year 2004/05).

There are **joint degree** programmes as well as combined degree programmes. There is no specific national legislation but the present one allows for the development of joint degrees. There is no central monitoring but some higher education institutions are involved in such programmes.

The ECTS system is not stipulated in the Act on HEIs, however, all public higher education institutions have **ECTS** or ECTS-compatible credit systems. In private establishments, it is relatively new, and some have not yet

introduced it. The international transfer of credits has been relatively widely accepted. The national transfer of credits occurs between higher education institutions, faculties and higher education study programmes of similar type. However, problems arise if there is a transfer of credits between different types of institution, faculty and study programme. The accumulative function of ECTS has recently been used by many places of higher education. The number of institutions, namely university-type HEIs, which use the accumulative function to enable their students to follow more flexible paths within a respective study programme has been growing. Technical universities especially try to increase the attractiveness of their studies in this way.

The European **Diploma Supplement** (DS) is listed among the documents on studies and papers certifying graduation in study programmes. In accordance with the 1998 Higher Education Act, the DS was issued on request. In 2004, a group of experts from higher education institutions, MEYS, ENIC/NARIC and the national DS co-ordinator prepared documentation to help Czech institutions to meet the demand of the Berlin Communiqué – issuing the DS to every graduate in 2005. From 2005, it will be available free of charge in the language to be

determined by the HEI. The bilingualism is highly recommended.

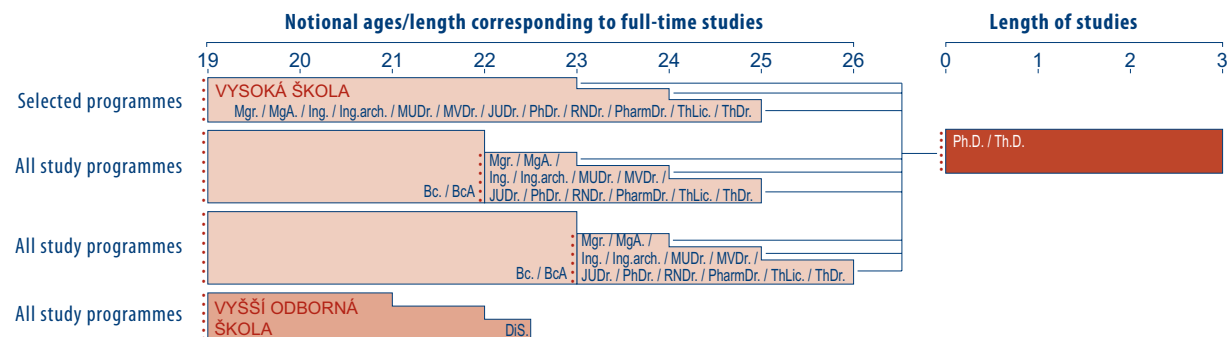
The **quality assurance** system includes self-evaluation, external evaluation, peer review and accreditation (based on previous evaluation).

The 1998 Act on HEIs states that any higher education institution (public, state or private) has to regularly carry out **internal evaluation** of its activities on a regular basis, to specify details of the process in its internal regulations and to publish the results. Internal evaluation is considered to be a precondition and the point of departure for setting the long-term strategy of HEIs in the area of education and research and development.

External evaluation and/or peer review is performed by the Accreditation Commission (AC – *Akreditační komise*) or its working committees unless the institutions apply for international evaluation. The AC was established by the Act on HEIs in July 1990. Since 1992, it has conducted peer reviews and comparative evaluations of faculties in related fields of study. The procedures of the AC are regulated by statute, the most recent valid from 28 July 2004). After 1998, the duty of accreditation of all study programmes was given by the 1998 Act on HEIs, when a number

of significant changes to the education system were made. New powers and responsibilities were also given to the AC. It is expected that the AC will concentrate once again on peer review, comparative evaluation and related activities connected with external evaluation procedures.

The Accreditation Commission is an independent expert body composed of 21 members, including foreign experts. There are no rules concerning international experts in the governance and evaluation panels of the agency. In practice, there have always been foreign experts in the AC, at present there are 3 members from foreign universities. All members are appointed by the Czech Government on the recommendation of the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports. The AC's tasks are to foster the quality of higher education and to evaluate all aspects of education and research, scientific, developmental, artistic or other creative activities of higher education institutions. All higher education study programmes whether state or private have to be accredited. Accreditation is awarded by MEYS on the AC's recommendation. The AC's approval is also needed to receive the licence enabling the establishment of private higher education institutions, the appointment of professors and



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Bc.	<i>Bakalář</i>	JUDr.	<i>Doktor práv</i>	Ph.D.	<i>Doktor</i>	ThDr.	<i>Doktor teologie</i>
BcA.	<i>Bakalář umění</i>	MgA.	<i>Magistr umění</i>	PharmDr.	<i>Doktor farmacie</i>	ThLic.	<i>Licenciát teologie</i>
DiS.	<i>Diplomovaný specialista</i>	Mgr.	<i>Magistr</i>	PhDr.	<i>Doktor filosofie</i>		
Ing.	<i>Inženýr</i>	MUDr.	<i>Doktor medicíny</i>	RNDr.	<i>Doktor přírodních věd</i>		
Ing. arch.	<i>Inženýr architekt</i>	MVDr.	<i>Doktor veterinární medicíny</i>	Th.D.	<i>Doktor teologie</i>		

The Higher Education Act does not specify subject areas for study programmes. The Accreditation Commission is responsible for deciding whether such programmes are suitable for the field in question and, if so, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports accredits them. Selected programmes comprise those for which the accreditation has not yet expired, programmes in specific disciplines such as medical studies, veterinary studies and pharmacy, or other programmes very carefully selected by the Accreditation Commission.

CZECH REPUBLIC

associate professors (*docent*). The AC is also involved in the founding and abolition of faculties in public HEIs as well as in determining types of HEI (university or non-university). The Accreditation Commission settles minimum standards concerning staff and information technologies, literature and study materials.

Study results within the framework of Doctoral study programmes are monitored and assessed by a specialist board. HEIs or parts of them can

create a joint specialist board for study programmes in the same field. The chair of the board is elected from within its members. The AC sets minimum standards concerning the content, staff and information technologies, literature and study materials of doctoral programmes.

Since May 2002, the Accreditation Commission has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher

Education (ENQA). The Czech Republic is also a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and belongs to the founders of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
1 July 1990	Act No. 172/1990 on Higher Education Institutions	Zákon č. 172/1990 o vysokých školách
1 July 1998 (2001 amendments)	Act No. 111/1998 on Higher Education Institutions (amendments No. 147/2001 of 1 July 2001)	Zákon č. 111/1998 o vysokých školách (Novela č. 147/2001 z 1. července 2001)
2000	National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (White Paper)	Národní program rozvoje vzdělávání v České republice (Bílá kniha)
2000-2005 (2010)	Strategic Development of the Tertiary Education, MEYS	Strategie rozvoje terciárního vzdělávání, MŠMT
28 July 2004	The Statute of the Accreditation Commission, approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in its Resolution No. 744	Statut Akreditační komise, schválený vládou ČR usnesením č. 744

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

GERMANY

The structure of higher education is governed by the Framework Act for Higher Education (HRG) of 1998 last amended in 2004.

A degree structure based on **two main cycles** has operated on a trial basis since 1998 in the universities and the universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) and has been mandatory since 2002. As part of the Bologna Process, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz*, or KMK) passed a resolution on 14 April 2000 on 'Access to the **doctorate** for graduates of Master and Bachelor Study Courses'. A subject-specific test procedure was fixed as a condition for direct access by Bachelor graduates (with exceptionally good results) to the doctorate. Joint preparation of a university and *Fachhochschule* doctorate is possible according to their specific regulations.

The new graduation system also supports a *Master-plus-programme*, which makes it easier for foreign students with a first degree to enter the German higher education system, and an integrated double degree study programme. The transition from the old to the new system is to be achieved by 2010.

In September 2000, the KMK adopted general criteria (last amended in 2004) for the introduction of credit systems based on **ECTS**. The introduction of ECTS is now mandatory. One credit comprises a total of 30 hours of classroom and private study. ECTS applies to all degree programmes and is used for credit transfer and credit accumulation within one specific course of study.

The **Diploma Supplement** has been recommended by the KMK and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*, or HRK) since 1999. Moves to introduce it in all programmes got under way in 2000 and are still continuing. To assist institutions in their initial administrative work, the HRK has made available fully compatible Diploma Supplement software known as the *Diploma Supplement Deutschland* (DSD). From 1 January 2005, all students automatically receive the Diploma Supplement in English at no charge.

Traditionally, **quality assurance** was ensured by the general framework for study regulations. With the introduction of the two-cycle degree structure, quality assurance is guaranteed by a combination of accreditation and evaluation.

Evaluation has been included in Germany's Framework Act for Higher Education since

1998, and has since been incorporated into higher education legislation in each of the *Länder*. Evaluation is designed to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of institutions and degree programmes, and thus to assist universities and colleges in adopting systematic quality assurance and quality enhancement strategies.

No nationally coordinating evaluation body exists. However an institutional infrastructure was developed, comprising initiatives at *Land* level (agencies) and at regional and cross-regional level (networks and associations) to oversee quality assurance in higher education.

Higher education institutions are institutions of the *Länder*. According to paragraph 9 of the HRG, the *Länder* have to guarantee the equality of study courses and exams, of final examinations and the possibility of moving from one university to another. The aim of enhancing the efficiency of higher education institutions in terms of teaching is central to reform efforts. The scope and organisation of teaching is subject to supervision by the higher education supervisory authorities only in so far as the scope of teaching commitments is laid down in a teaching load ordinance. Examination regulations (*Prüfungsordnungen*) for state examinations (*Staatsprüfungen*) are

GERMANY

issued by the relevant ministries. The regulations for higher education examinations leading to the degrees of *Diplom* or *Magister* must be approved by the competent body in accordance with *Land* legislation. If these study regulations (*Studienordnungen*) do not guarantee that the course can be carried out and completed in the standard period of study (*Regelstudienzeit*), the competent body is entitled to demand their amendment. The competent body can also demand that the examination regulations of higher education institutions be adapted to the framework provisions for the regulations governing *Magister* and *Diplom* examinations approved by the KMK and HRK.

According to the regulations of the HRK, internal evaluation of higher education institutions is compulsory and is also the basis for external evaluation.

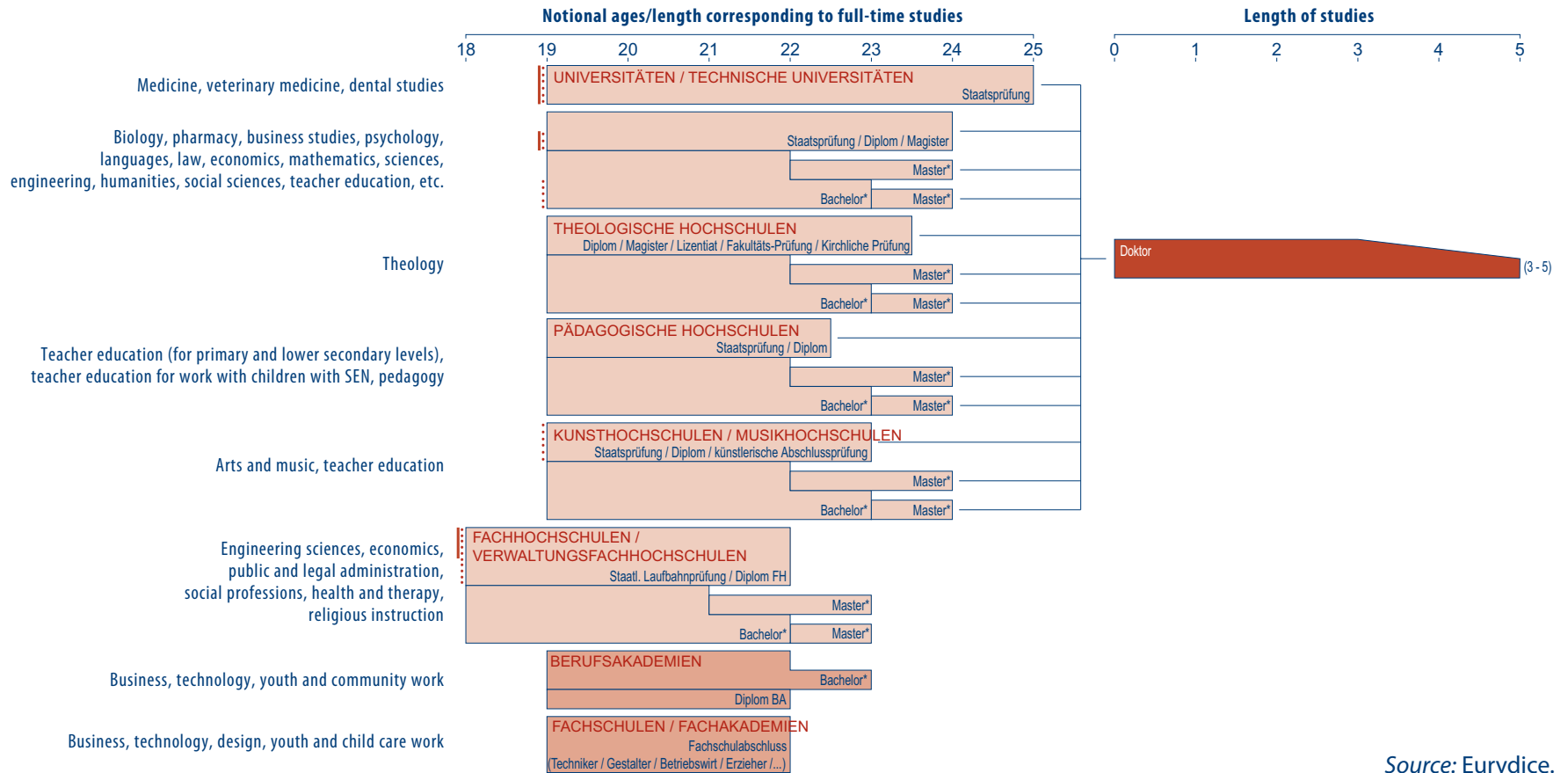
Evaluation procedures include in house review, external peer review - often with international participation, involvement of student reviewers and publication of the results in an appropriate form. According to HRK regulations, internal evaluation of higher education institutions is compulsory and also serves as a basis for external evaluation.

For the new Bachelor's and Master's study courses, as well as for future study courses leading to the degrees of *Diplom* or *Magister* in branches of study for which there are no framework regulations, the KMK has separated state approval and **accreditation** with regard to quality assurance. As with other study courses, state approval refers to guaranteeing finance for courses to be set up and their inclusion in the higher educational planning of the *Land* concerned, as well as the maintenance of structural guidelines. In contrast to this, the objectives of accreditation are to guarantee minimum standards in terms of academic content and to determine the vocational relevance of the degrees. Accreditation also seeks to increase the diversity of provision, ensure quality in international competition and create transparency for international collaboration. It is essentially performed via peer review and courses are periodically re-accredited.

For the accreditation of new Bachelor's and Master's study courses, the Standing Conference set up an independent cross-*Länder* Accreditation Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*) in 1998. The composition of the Council reflects both the 'cross-societal' scale of the reform process and the need for its acceptance among stakeholders. It comprises

four representatives from higher education, four from the *Länder*, five practitioners from various professions, two students and two international members. A key role in the accreditation of degree courses is played by the expert teams who are responsible for assessing academic content and whose membership includes representatives from higher education institutions, professional people and students. According to the Resolution of the Standing Conference of 12 June 2003, Bachelor's and Master's study courses must be accredited. The accreditation involves a formal peer review process based on objective criteria, which is used to assess whether a course meets the required standards in terms of academic content and vocational relevance. The Statute for an Accreditation Procedure across the *Länder* and across higher education institutions of 15 October 2004 defines the council's responsibilities. It has the power to accredit agencies, granting them for a fixed period the right to accredit courses of study. It monitors and periodically re-accredits agencies and defines minimum requirements for accreditation procedures.

The Accreditation Council also works to ensure fair competition among the accreditation agencies. It contributes in bringing German



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

FH Fachhochschule | BA Berufsakademie

According to a Standing Conference Resolution of 15 October 2004, accredited 5B programmes at *Berufsakademien* will give possible access to an ISCED 5A Master programme.

GERMANY

interests to bear on international quality assurance networks and accreditation institutions by promoting, amongst other things, communication and cooperation among the agencies. The German Accreditation Council – Germany’s central accrediting organisation – will be made a

foundation under public law. Its work will thus be placed on a new legal footing. The Accreditation Council and the accreditation agencies are members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

In accordance with the principles for the future development of quality assurance for all *Länder* and institutions of higher education, also adopted by the KMK in 2004, the system of accreditation is to be extended to all courses of study in the long term.

DE

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
20 August 1998 (last amendment 27 December 2004)	Framework Act for Higher Education	Hochschulrahmengesetz (HRG)
3 December 1998	Introduction of an Accreditation Procedure for Bachelor-/Bakkalaureus- and Master-/Magister Study Courses (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)	Einführung eines Akkreditierungsverfahrens für Bachelor-/Bakkalaureus- und Master-/Magisterstudiengänge (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz)
14 April 2000	Resolution on access to the doctorate for Graduates of Master- and Bachelor Study Courses (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)	Zugang zur Promotion für Master-/Magister- und Bachelor-/Bakkalaureusabsolventen (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz)
12 June 2003	10 Thesis for the Bachelor- and Master Structure in Germany (Resolution of the Standing Conference)	„10 Thesen zur Bachelor- und Masterstruktur in Deutschland“ (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz)

GERMANY

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
10 October 2003	Common Structure Guidelines of the <i>Länder</i> according to paragraph 9.2 HRG for the Accreditation of Bachelor- and Master Study Courses (Resolution of the Standing Conference)	Ländergemeinsame Strukturvorgaben gemäß § 9 Abs. 2 HRG für die Akkreditierung von Bachelor- und Masterstudiengängen (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz)
15 October 2004	Benchmarks for the Further Development of Accreditation (Resolution of the Standing Conference)	Eckpunkte für die Weiterentwicklung der Akkreditierung (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz)
22 October 2004	General Framework for the Introduction of Credit Systems and the Modularisation of Degree Programmes (Resolution of the Standing Conference)	Rahmenvorgaben für die Einführung von Leistungspunkten und die Modularisierung von Studiengängen (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz)

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

DENMARK

The most recent arrangements linked to the Bologna Process in Denmark are specified in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation's Order of May 2004 on university Bachelor's and Master's programmes, which was issued under the Universities Act of May 2003, and the June 2004 Ministry of Culture Order on education in the academies of music and the Opera Academy.

A degree structure based on **two main cycles** was introduced in Denmark at the end of the 1980s. The above legislation has established a 3+2 structure (or in certain cases 3+2½ or 3+3) in all university disciplines. Since 1992, the **third-cycle Ph.D. programme** corresponds to 3 years full-time study based on the level of a completed ordinary Master's degree. According to the 2002 legislation, the Ph.D. programme includes supervised work on an independent research project (the Ph.D. project); preparation of a written thesis based on the Ph.D. project; and satisfactory completion of research (Ph.D.) courses approved by the institution. The total course workload must correspond to approximately 30 ECTS credit points; participation in research activities, including visits to other – mainly foreign – research institutions, or similar undertakings; and gaining teaching experience or experience in the dissemination of knowledge, directly

related as far as possible to the Ph.D. project in question. In addition, the higher degree of *doctor* (dr.) can be obtained by mature researchers, normally after a minimum of 5-8 years of individual original research and public defence of a dissertation. Currently, a doctorate cannot be undertaken or awarded at two or more universities together.

The use of **ECTS** became mandatory in all higher education study programmes on 1 September 2001. It is also intended that it should be used for lifelong learning in adult higher education. The use of ECTS for credit accumulation is possible in most programmes.

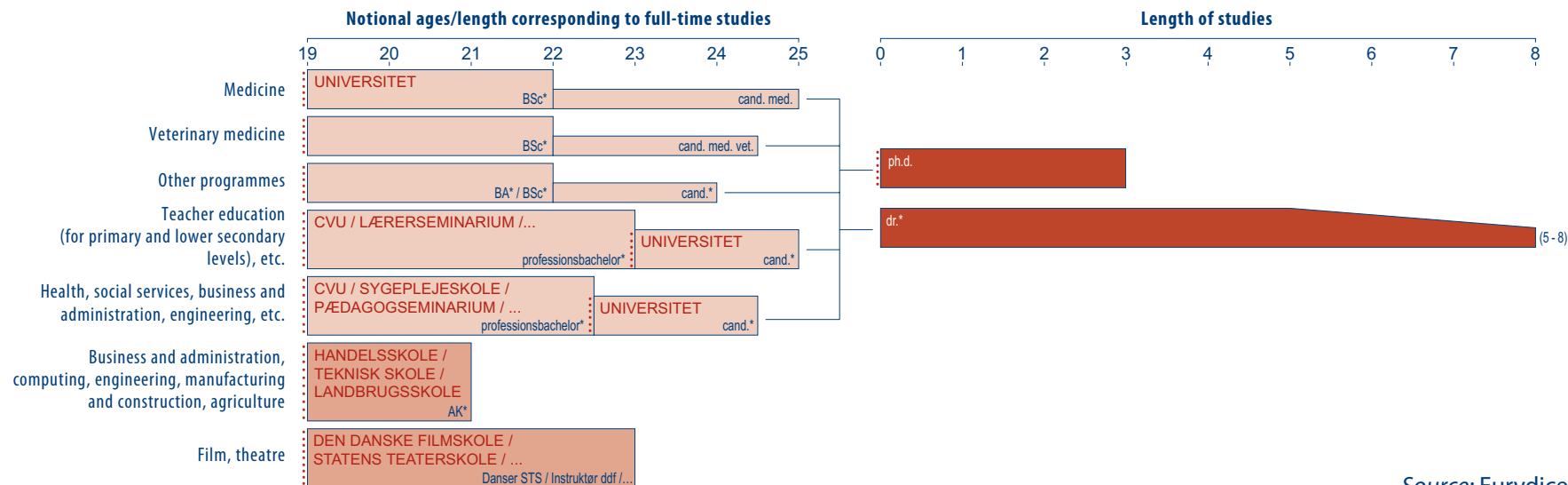
Use of the **Diploma Supplement** became mandatory on 1 September 2002. All higher education institutions have since been obliged to issue the Supplement in English to all their graduates. It is issued free of charge.

In the field of **quality assurance**, the Act on the Danish Institute of Evaluation (Consolidated Act of September 2000) established the Danish Institute of Evaluation (EVA) as an independent national agency under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. At the time of its establishment, EVA incorporated the Danish Centre of Evaluation, which carried out external evaluation of higher education from 1993 to 1999. EVA is responsible for

external quality assurance at all levels of education in Denmark, including higher education (public and private subsidised higher education institutions). It initiates and conducts systematic evaluations of higher education programmes. Their activities may include institutional, auditing and other forms of evaluation. EVA may initiate evaluations on request. These evaluations are conducted as revenue-generating activities and may be requested by government, ministries and advisory boards, local authorities and educational establishments.

A Board is responsible for the overall supervision of EVA. It appoints the Executive Director of EVA and draws up the programme for the year's activities on the recommendation of the Executive Director. A Committee of Representatives, which includes representatives from student bodies, comments on EVA's annual report and the priority of planned activities. For each evaluation EVA appoints a group composed of individuals with special expertise in the field concerned. All members must be independent of the programmes/institutions evaluated. As a general rule, EVA tries to recruit at least one Nordic member for each evaluation.

All evaluation reports are published.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

AK	Akademineveau	cand. med	Candidatus medicinae	dr.	Doctor
BA	Bachelor of arts	cand. med. vet	Candidatus medicinae veterinariae	ph.d.	Doctor philosophiae/Philosophiae Doctor
BSc	Bachelor of science	CVU	Center for Videregående Uddannelse	STS	Statens Teaterskole
cand.	Candidatus	ddf	Den Danske Filmskole		

The Professionsbachelor gives access solely to programmes leading to the *candidatus* of particular relevance to the professional field in question.

DENMARK

Institutions evaluated are responsible for follow-ups. Evaluated institutions must prepare a follow-up plan that has to take into consideration the recommendations of the evaluation report.

Public announcement of the follow-up plan must be made not later than six months after publication of the report and must be made electronically available on the institution's home page.

Institutions are required to set up their own **internal quality assurance** procedures. The Universities Act specifies the role of deans, heads of department and study boards, respectively, in assuring and developing the quality of education and teaching. Self-evaluation, in which students normally

participate, is an integral mandatory part of any evaluation.

Accreditation of all programmes leading to a professional Bachelor's degree began in 2004. EVA conducts the accreditation/evaluation, and the Ministry of Education makes the accreditation decision. EVA also conducts accreditation of private courses as part of the Ministry of Education procedure determining whether students at private teaching establishments should be eligible for Danish state study grants.

The relevant ministries decide which institutions can offer which programmes. Any decision is based on considerations concerning the institution's ability to deliver a programme meeting certain quality requirements. When an institution is given the right to offer a certain

programme, the institution must design the programme within a framework laid down by ministerial order.

All examinations at Danish higher education institutions are administered not only by the teacher, but also by an examiner who, in the case of many examinations including the final project, must be external. The external examiners are responsible for assuring the same standard for all examinations and thus for their quality.

EVA is a founder member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

DENMARK

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
12 September 2000	Act on the Danish Institute of Evaluation (Consolidated Act No. 905)	Lov om Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut (lovbekendtgørelse nr. 905)
8 March 2002	Ministerial Order No. 114 on the Ph.D. Course of Study and on the Ph.D. Degree	Bekendtgørelse om ph.d.-uddannelsen og ph.d.-graden (bkg. nr. 114)
28 May 2003	Universities Act (Act No. 403)	Lov om universiteter (lov nr. 403)
6 May 2004	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Order on university Bachelor's and Master's programmes (Ministerial Order No. 338)	Bekendtgørelse om bachelor- og kandidatuddannelser ved universiteterne (bkg. nr. 338)
8 June 2004	Ministry of Culture Order on education in the academies of music and the Opera Academy (Ministerial Order No. 511)	Bekendtgørelse om uddannelserne ved musikkonservatorierne og Operaakademiet (bkg. nr. 511)

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

ESTONIA

The general principles of legislation relevant to higher education are set out in the 1995 Universities Act (amended in 2004) and in the Professional Higher Education Institutions Act (1998 and 2004). The Vocational Education Institutions Act (1998 and 2004), the Private Schools Act (1998 and 2004) and the Adult Education Act (1993 and 2004) also regulate certain aspects of higher education.

Since the 2002/03 academic year, university (*ülikool*) programmes have been structured into **three main cycles**. The Master's degree (*magistrikraad*) requires 40 national credits (60 ECTS) if it follows a Bachelor's degree of 160 credits, and 80 credits if it follows a Bachelor's degree of 120 credits. The 3 + 2 model (3-year Bachelor's level programme and then a 2-year Master's level programme) is more common than the 4 + 1 model.

The two-cycle structure applies to most disciplines, with the exception of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, architecture, civil engineering and class teacher training.

Applied higher education programmes continue to follow the one-cycle structure. The new law states that, with effect from 1 January 2004, not only universities but also professional higher education institutions

(*rakenduskõgkool*) may offer Master's level programmes in theology and defence, or in other fields in co-operation with universities, depending on public needs.

Existing programmes leading to **doctorates** (*doktorikraad*) last 3 or 4 years and can be accessed after completion of a *magistrikraad* degree. Additional admission criteria may be set by each university. Universities only award doctoral degrees based on individual research. Bigger universities have also set minimum requirement for the theoretical courses. These optional courses are provided in parallel with the preparation of PhD theses. The reform of the doctoral programmes in the framework of the Bologna Process has not been initiated yet, but should be completed by 2007/08. The main change in new programmes will be a greater attention to research methodology, philosophy of science, etc. which are no longer part of the Masters' programmes.

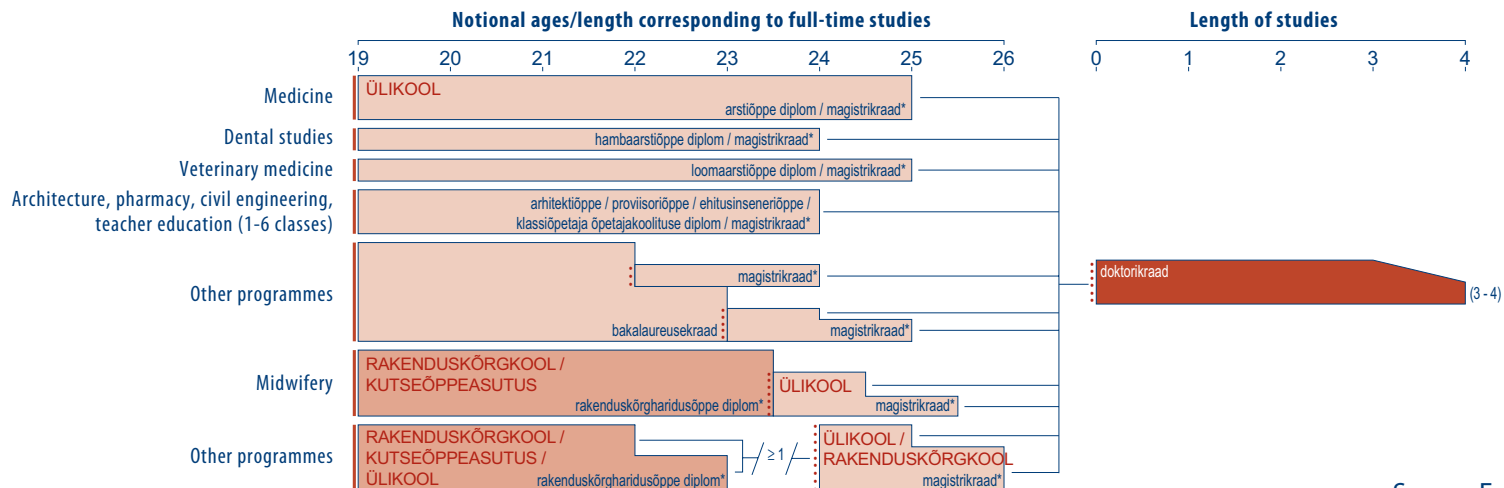
Theoretical courses in PhD programs have usually a set minimum amount workload that may be different in different universities. These seminars can be completed in parallel to the preparation for the research work, but the courses are compulsory.

There is no possibility to award joint degrees at any level (Master's or doctorate). Funding is

being provided for efforts in universities as well as at national level. The Nordic and Baltic countries are the main area of focus for international co-operation for all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), but institutional co-operation agreements have been signed with HEIs all over the world.

The national credit system (1 CP equals 1.5 ECTS credits) is based on student workload and corresponds to 40 working hours a week, and 40 weeks/credits per academic year. Since 1995, **ECTS** credits have been used voluntarily by most higher education institutions involved in the Socrates (Erasmus) programme. According to the legislation, ECTS will have to be introduced in all higher education institutions from the 2006/07 academic year onwards. A final decision in regard to all aspects of ECTS has not been taken yet, but credit points are already used both for transfer and accumulation.

The **Diploma Supplement** has been implemented and all higher education institutions have had to issue it since 1 January 2004. It is free of charge and is issued automatically in Estonian and English to all students who have completed specialised studies (e.g. professional higher education, Master's, integrated curricula of Bachelor's and Master's, or doctoral studies). The Diploma



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Since January 2004, *rakenduskõrgkool* have been able to offer the *magistriõpe* but no study programmes have yet been implemented. Institutions are authorised to offer the *magistriõpe* by government decree.

Supplement is issued upon request in the case of students who have completed Bachelor's studies only.

Public universities entered into a **Quality Assurance** Agreement on June 2003, which establishes requirements for curricula, academic posts and academic degrees. In accordance with the Agreement, the universities have started to harmonise quality requirements in the three areas indicated, and undertook to apply the requirements by the start of the 2004/05 academic year. The Agreement includes an obligation to conduct a performance assessment of the previous academic year every September. Two private institutions have also joined the Agreement.

External evaluation is carried out mostly in the form of accreditation. There is no specific body involved in external evaluation. However, the Ministry of Education and Research has the power to carry out monitoring activities when the performance of higher education institutions does not comply with legal regulations.

Few institutions have a fully-fledged **internal quality** management system in place, but many are working to develop one.

The Rectors' Conference has initiated the development of a quality handbook and

criteria for university education. The results of this ongoing initiative are due in 2005. It has identified 15 quality criteria which will undergo a first round of evaluation by September 2005.

In the field of **accreditation**, the Higher Education Quality Assessment Council (HEQAC, *Kõrghariduse Hindamise Nõukogu*) founded in 1995 co-ordinates the overall accreditation process and advises universities and other higher education institutions in the preparation of self-evaluation documents. It comprises 12 members who are representatives from higher education institutions, research and development organisations, professional associations, employers' associations and student unions. Its main activities include the accreditation of curricula, definition of standards for higher education, disclosure of accreditation decisions and issuing recommendations. The role of the Accreditation Centre (AC) established in 1997 is to perform all practical work related to accreditation. The first round of accreditation was completed from 1997 to 2002.

In general, the methods and processes have been established in accordance with those suggested by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Yet there is room for improvement, mostly

regarding the organisation of accreditation which is complicated due to the changes in the system. After a site visit, the expert panel compiles a report. On the basis of self-evaluation by the higher education institutions and the report from foreign experts, HEQAC makes the accreditation decision. Full accreditation lasts for 7 years and conditional accreditation for 3 years, and in the event of a negative decision, the curricula concerned must be withdrawn. Until 2003, HEQAC had the full right to decide the result of the accreditation. Most university programmes and a smaller proportion of those offered by professional higher education institutions are accredited. Three universities have undergone an institutional accreditation.

Since 2003, student representatives who are members of the HEQAC are entitled to participate in the accreditation process at this stage and provide input to the internal evaluation report.

AC has been a member of the ENQA since 2002.

ESTONIA

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
Adopted on 10 November 1993 and amended on 5 July 2004	Adult Education Act	Täiskasvanute koolituse seadus
Adopted on 12 January 1995 and amended on 1 September 2004	Universities Act	Ülikooliseadus
Adopted on 3 June 1998 and amended on 19 November 2004	Private Schools Act	Erakooliseadus
Adopted on 10 June 1998, last amended 13 May 2004	Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act	Rakenduskõrgkooli seadus
Adopted on 17 June 1998 and amended on 19 November 2004	Vocational Education Institutions Act	Kutseõppeasutuse seadus
Adopted on 13 June 2000 and amended on 5 September 2003	Regulation of the Government of the Republic <i>Higher Education Standard</i>	Kõrgharidusstandard Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus
23 October 2003	Regulation of the Government of the Republic Procedure for Accreditation of Universities, Institutions of Professional Higher Education and their Curricula and Requirements for Accreditation.	Ülikooli ja rakenduskõrgkooli ning nende õppekavade akrediteerimise kord ja akrediteerimisel esitatavad nõuded – Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

GREECE

Since March 2004, the education system has been in a transitory phase. A number of issues are under consideration with a view to system reform. To this end, the Ministry of Education is about to launch a national-level debate within the framework of the National Education Council (ESYP) and the Greek Parliament Standing Committee on Cultural and Educational Affairs. Some of the issues considered are related to the process of developing the European Higher Education Area.

The degree structure has been based on **three main cycles** since the beginning of the 1980s. A political decision providing for full implementation of the two-cycle structure is still awaited. The first cycle leads to the first degree (*ptychio* or *diploma*) in both sectors of higher education, i.e. the university and technological sectors. The second cycle leads to the second degree, which is called a postgraduate specialisation diploma, and to the third degree (doctorate). The postgraduate specialisation diploma is equivalent to the Master's degree. Second-cycle programmes are offered only in the university sector. However, there is legal provision for TEs (technological educational institutions) to co-operate with universities in the realisation of postgraduate programmes leading to the second degree.

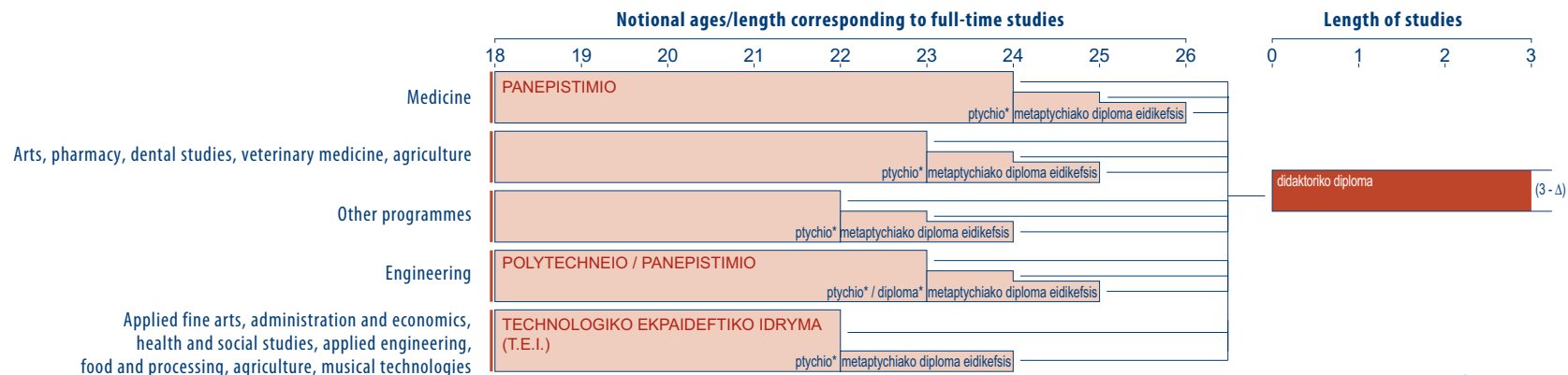
The **doctorate** is obtained after at least three years of original research, including the preparation and writing of a thesis. In some doctoral programmes, theoretical courses are compulsory and occur prior to individual research. The law enables a graduate with a first qualification (*ptychio*) to gain access to doctoral studies but this is no longer the rule. Most faculties offer Master's Programmes and it is a requirement that students who wish to proceed with doctoral studies must have obtained a second degree (Master). Only those faculties that do not offer second-cycle programmes accept students without a second qualification for doctoral studies.

Under the 2004 law, a new international scheme for joint Master's degrees has been established. This provides for co-operation between institutions to work out the details concerning the organisation and functioning of postgraduate study programmes which lead to joint qualifications.

The first step has been inter-university co-operation, undertaken between the Greek and French Ministries of Education and the Greek and French rectors' conferences. As a result of this co-operation, three joint Master's programmes involving Greek and French universities are soon to be launched. Similar co-

operation with German universities is also under consideration by the Greek and German rectors' conferences.

A national credit system has existed in both sectors of higher education since the beginning of the 1980s. This is in fact an accumulation system in which the credits are directly equivalent to the weekly hours of instruction, as far as the university sector is concerned. However, **ECTS** is used by institutions in both sectors as a transfer system for the European mobility programmes (Erasmus and Socrates). Nevertheless, it is not adopted on a regular basis, and the precise arrangements for its use are determined by the individual institutions concerned. On the other hand, a credit accumulation system based on the 'workload' approach is used in the technological sector and several university faculties (1 credit corresponds to 25 hours, with 30 units per semester, i.e. 750 hours), which means that it is considered to be compatible with ECTS. In order to clarify the situation, the Greek government intends to address this issue as part of the national dialogue, aiming to develop ECTS as an accumulation system for both sectors. A new law prepared by the Ministry of Education and scheduled for May 2005 will make the use of ECTS as a transfer and accumulation system compulsory in two-



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

TEI *Technologigo Ekpaideftiko Idryma*

GREECE

cycle programmes at all higher education institutions.

The **Diploma Supplement** will be incorporated into the educational system by law in 2005, and thus will soon be available. The Supplement will be issued automatically on a compulsory basis, free of charge, in Greek and English. It will not be available for the third cycle (Doctorate).

There are plans to establish the National Quality Assurance Agency, which will be in charge of **quality assurance**, before May 2005. The broad basis for launching the quality assurance system is prescribed by legislation which is now under discussion in the Greek Parliament. The system will operate at two levels, namely that of **internal assessment** as well as **external evaluation** and review schemes.

A single national agency will aim at quality improvement through external evaluation. The responsibilities of the agency are specified within a legislative framework and mainly involve the evaluation of study programmes and institutions, as well as organisational audit. The autonomy and independence of the body responsible for quality assurance in terms of procedures, methods and the persons in charge will be safeguarded by law, in order to secure the effectiveness and validity of the

process as well as fairness, transparency and the acceptance of results.

The governing body of the agency and the external evaluation panels will consist of distinguished academics, foreign experts and experts from the world of education. Certified experts will be selected to perform evaluations from a registration list compiled for this purpose.

The agency will work in close co-operation with the higher education community and take into account the needs of society – particularly public and private stakeholders, including students, parents and the labour market – when devising its strategies.

One of the main tasks of the agency will be to develop a set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance. In order to define objective external criteria and methodologies, the mission and aims assigned to each institution will be taken into account, as well as its specific characteristics and orientations. The standards employed should not be confined to minimum requirements, but should aspire to higher levels with a view to rewarding excellence. In this sense, the work of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in the field of

shared criteria and methodologies is capable of serving as a highly effective guide.

In terms of the evaluation process, site visits will be a standard element, as well as meetings, interview tours of facilities and the examination of documentary evidence.

A major facet of evaluation will also be that of reporting to the general public. However, reports for publication will be subject to prior consultation of all parties involved.

Finally, since the whole process seeks to enhance the quality of higher education services, recommendations are crucial. Institutions and the government will share organisational and financial responsibility for following them up within a specific time frame. Higher education institutions are encouraged to set up their own internal quality assurance mechanisms to provide a sound basis for external evaluation. The aim is to effectively combine institutional autonomy and accountability within the national quality regulations framework. Each institution has the right to independent decision-making and is therefore responsible for devising its own quality assurance system for assessing education and administrative and research functions, although general provisions are set out in the legislation. Furthermore, it is

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expected that teaching and administrative staff as well as students, will be the main participants and contributors in this process. According to the law, the teaching competence of academics is evaluated every semester by

their students. This evaluation constitutes one of the elements considered in the career development and promotion of academics.

The new law for Quality Assurance provides for student participation during the internal evaluation process.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
1992	Law (2083/92) on access to doctoral studies	
1982 (1992 amendments)	Law 1268/82, Article 15 parag. 5 amended by Law 2083/92 Article 6 parag. 13, the teaching competency of academics is evaluated, every semester by the students of the modules they teach.	
22 July 2004	Law 3255/22.7.04 on new scheme for Joint Master's Degrees	Diethneis-Diakratikes synergasies gia metaptychiakes spoudes (Διεθνείς – Διακρατικές συνεργασίες για μεταπτυχιακές σπουδές)

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

SPAIN

The main arrangements linked to the Bologna Process are specified in the Organic Act on Universities (*Ley Orgánica de Universidades*, or LOU) and the Organic Act on Qualifications and Vocational Training, adopted in December 2001 and June 2002, respectively. Third-cycle university studies are regulated by the Royal Decree 1998 on the awarding and issuing of the *doctor* title and on other postgraduate studies. On 21 January 2005, the Council of Ministers passed the Royal Decrees regulating the three-cycle structure consisting of graduate (first cycle) and postgraduate (second and third cycle) education and studies in accordance with the general lines emanating from the European Higher Education Area. This transformation will take place progressively until 2010.

The degree structure based on **two main cycles** has not yet been implemented for 2004/05. **Doctoral programmes** are offered by the various faculty departments, and are administered under their supervision and academic responsibility. Some departments do not offer doctoral studies and others offer more than one programme. University institutes may also propose and co-ordinate doctoral programmes under the academic guidance of one or more departments. In order to be accepted for doctoral studies and obtain the

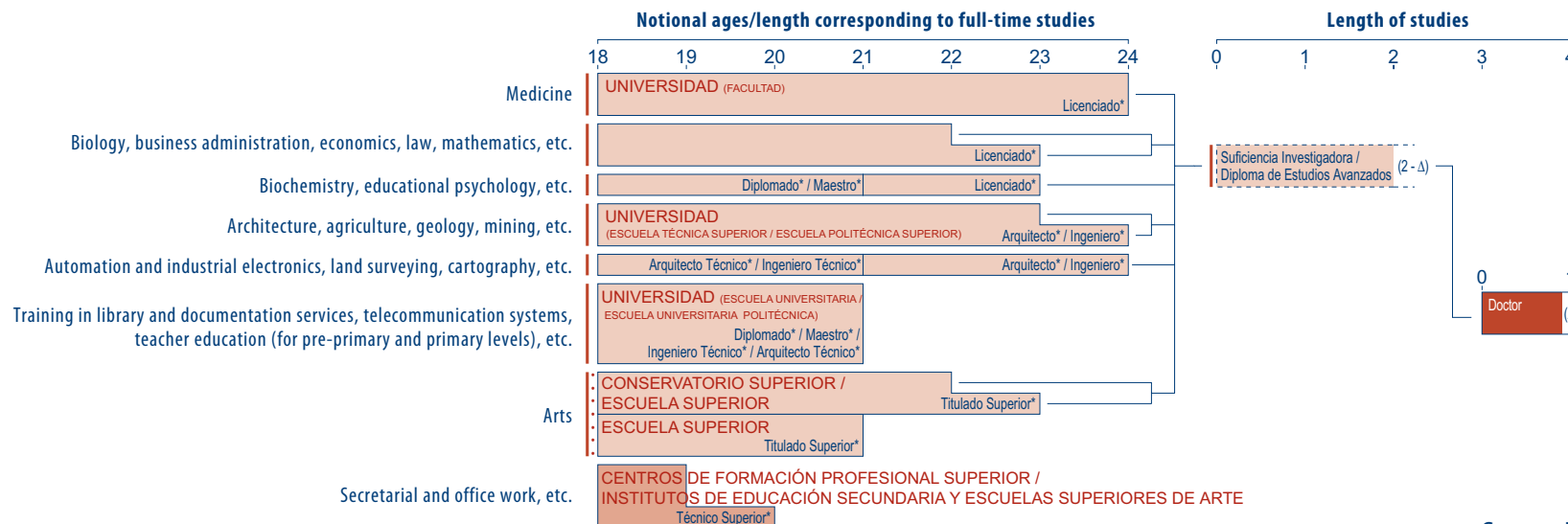
Doctor/a title, a minimum of 300 Spanish credits (one Spanish university credit corresponds to 10 teaching hours) must have been completed in university studies. Candidates must hold the *Licenciado*, *Arquitecto*, *Ingeniero* or equivalent degree, attend and satisfactorily complete the courses, seminars and guided research of the doctoral programme concerned, as well as submit and defend a doctoral thesis consisting of original research in their chosen specialised subject.

The doctorate courses or programmes last a minimum of two years and aim at specialisation in a specific scientific, technical, or artistic field, as well as training in research techniques. With regard to the thesis, those who wish to obtain the 'doctor' title have to submit and pass the corresponding doctoral thesis. There is no fixed time limit for the completion and presentation of the thesis. The doctoral programmes correspond to 32 Spanish credits, divided into two parts. The first is the teaching part, in which a minimum of 20 credits must be completed. Up to five of these credits can be obtained by attending courses or seminars which are not considered to lie within the programme (subject to prior authorisation from the tutor). Satisfactory completion of this teaching part leads to the awarding of a certificate. The second part

focuses on guided research, which is aimed at student specialisation in a particular scientific, technical or artistic field, as well as training in research techniques. A minimum of 12 credits must be completed in this part. Students must prepare one or several supervised research assignments within the department, and the research must be submitted and approved. Once the student has passed both parts, the knowledge acquired is assessed by means of a public presentation before a board, which is different for each programme. Satisfactory assessment is a formal indication of the research ability of the doctoral student. Each university regulates the organisation and approval of courses, seminars and supervised research, as well as the board's assessment of the knowledge acquired.

By agreement, universities can organise joint doctorate programmes leading to just one official *Doctor* title, which may be taken at two or more Spanish or foreign universities. The agreement specifies which of them is to be responsible for registration of the title.

Following the new decree from January 2005, the first cycle will cover basic, general and professional training (between 180 and 240 ECTS credits) leading to the corresponding title. The second cycle (between 60 and 120 credits)



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Exclusively second-cycle studies leading to *Licenciado* or *Ingeniero* qualifications also exist. These may be accessed by the following students: those who complete the first stage of a long cycle (this first stage may not necessarily be a final qualifying stage); those who already hold a *Diplomado*, *Maestro*, *Ingeniero Técnico* or *Arquitecto Técnico* qualification; and those who complete a long-cycle course and hold a *Licenciado*, *Ingeniero* or *Arquitecto* qualification.

In some fields of study (biochemistry, educational psychology, automation and industrial electronics, etc.), access to the *Licenciado* may be direct and not conditional on students first holding a *Diplomado* or *Maestro*.

Advanced vocational training (e.g. secretarial and office work) consists of *ciclos formativos* (training cycles) divided into modules of variable length related to a variety of professional fields.

SPAIN

will aimed at either an academic or professional specialisation or at promoting an introduction to research tasks. Students will obtain the *Máster* title. The third cycle of university studies (postgraduate) will aim at advanced training in research techniques and may include courses, seminars or other activities. It will include the preparation and presentation of the corresponding doctoral thesis, consisting of an original research work. This leads to the Doctor title, certifying the highest academic rank and entitling the holder to teach and conduct research.

The University Coordination Council (*Consejo de Coordinación Universitaria*), comprising all universities and those responsible for higher education in the Autonomous Communities, will propose the list of new graduate qualifications, to be revised and authorised by the Ministry of Education and Science by the middle of 2005. The drawing up of the specific guidelines for each qualification will begin, to be completed in October 2007.

The 5 September 2003 Decree on the establishment of **ECTS** and the grade system for official university titles valid nationwide, states that these credits must be applied to the guidelines for official university titles approved by the government as well as to the related

syllabuses. The courses of study leading to recognised qualifications are still described using Spanish credits. In that sense, ECTS is used for credit transfer and not for credit accumulation. Spain is currently adapting the system and ECTS is to be applied to all course units in all degree programmes before 1 October 2010.

The 1 August 2003 Royal Decree on the establishment of the procedure for issuing the **Diploma Supplement** applies to all official university titles valid nationwide. The Supplement is issued on request free of charge, in Spanish and another official EU language as determined by the university concerned. Universities in Autonomous Communities with their own joint official language can issue the Diploma Supplement in that language.

In accordance with the 2001 LOU, university **quality promotion and assurance** at national and international levels is one of the prime aims of university policy. In compliance with the Act, the Ministry of Education and Science created the National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (*Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación*, or ANECA) in July 2002.

The main purpose of ANECA is to contribute, through evaluation reports and other reports leading to certification and accreditation, to measuring the performance of higher education as a public service. The Agency also seeks to reinforce transparency and comparability as a means of promoting quality and quality assurance in universities and, by the same token, their integration into the European Higher Education Area. It also seeks to establish accountability criteria.

ANECA carries out its actions through four main programmes.

The **Accreditation** Programme constitutes its main action. The Agency checks compliance with given criteria and established standards, while ensuring that training results are adequate and that the skills acquired by students meet the demands of the labour market and society as a whole. The Programme consists of three stages, namely the *internal assessment*, *external assessment* and *final report*. To validate this process, ANECA has established a National Accreditation Committee (*Comité Nacional de Acreditación*) whose members have a national and international reputation in the fields of teaching and academic research, as well as in the business and professional sectors.

SPAIN

The Institutional Assessment Programme assesses university studies leading to officially recognised qualifications so that improvement plans can be monitored. The criteria and indicators used in this process are the same as those in the accreditation process, and it too has three stages.

The Certification Programme is an external assessment process to verify compliance with a set of previously established specifications. Its main purpose is to check quality and introduce a methodology for promoting the continuous improvement of university programmes and services.

The European Convergence Programme aims to promote actions facilitating the integration of Spanish higher education within the European Higher Education Area.

ANECA fosters institutional relations with international public and private agencies and organisations, and is notably a member of two of the most relevant associations concerned with matters relating to higher education accreditation and evaluation.

The Agency publishes all its documents, findings, details regarding committee membership and relevant aspects of its programmes on its website, in the *AneQualitas* corporate bulletin and via other media, so that public authorities and universities have the information needed to take appropriate decisions within their remit.

Internal evaluation is in line with each university's evaluation plans and with the II Plan for University Quality (II *Plan de la Calidad*

de las Universidades), whose objectives are now being developed and promoted by ANECA.

ANECA is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and, since January 2003, has been represented on its steering committee. In February 2003, the Agency also joined the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and in November 2003 joined the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

SPAIN

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
30 April 1998	Royal Decree No. 778 on the regulation of the third cycle of university studies, the award and issuing of the doctor title and other postgraduate studies	Real Decreto 778/1998 por el que se regula el tercer ciclo de estudios universitarios, la obtención y expedición del título de doctor y otros estudios de posgrado
December 2001	Organic Act No. 6 on Universities	Ley Orgánica 6/2001 de Universidades
June 2002	Organic Act No. 5 on Qualifications and Vocational Training	Ley Orgánica 5/2002 de las Cualificaciones y de la Formación Profesional
1 August 2003 (in force since September 12)	Royal Decree No. 1044 on the establishment of the procedure for issuing the Diploma Supplement by universities	Real Decreto 1044/2003 por el que se establece el procedimiento para la expedición por las universidades del Suplemento Europeo al Título
5 September 2003 (in effect since 19 September 2003)	Royal Decree No. 1125 on the establishment of the European system of credits and the grade system	Real Decreto 1125/2003 por el que se establece el sistema europeo de créditos y el sistema de cualificaciones
21 January 2005	Royal Decree 55/2005 on the establishment of the structure of university education and the regulation of Graduate official university studies and Royal Decree 56/2005 regulating Postgraduate official university studies	Real Decreto 55/2005 por el que se establece la estructura de las enseñanzas universitarias y se regulan los estudios universitarios oficiales de Grado y Real Decreto 56/2005 por el que se regulan los estudios universitarios oficiales de Posgrado

Websites

National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation: <http://www.aneca.es/>

FINLAND

The main arrangements linked to the Bologna Process are set out in the government's five-year development plan for education and research. The current development plan covering the years from 2003 to 2008 was adopted by the government in December 2003.

A new government decree on university degrees issued in 2004 together with amendments to the 1997 Universities Act comes into force on 1 August 2005. With this reform, a **two-cycle degree system** with an obligatory Bachelor's degree will be adopted in all fields of study except medicine and dentistry.

Doctoral studies have not been restructured as part of the Bologna Process, but have otherwise been actively developed since the mid-1990s. Third-cycle programmes leading to the *licentiate* and doctorates are available for students with a Master's degree or a corresponding foreign degree. The prerequisite is usually a 'good' grade in the main subject. The *licentiate* is an optional pre-doctoral degree, and is not offered in all fields of study. Universities and their faculties decide on their own degree regulations and curricula within the national degree regulations. According to the law, students awarded a doctorate must

have completed postgraduate studies in addition to their doctoral dissertation. In artistic third-cycle education they may, instead of a dissertation, have to demonstrate in public the knowledge and skills required by the university. The situation concerning taught courses varies from one university or faculty to the next and, even within faculties, there are differences between students depending on their individual study plans.

Doctoral studies are also offered by the graduate schools (*tutkijakoulu*) established in 1995, which have been set up in cooperation with several universities and research institutes. They are linked with centres of excellence in research, high-quality research projects, or nationally comprehensive and academically wide-ranging cooperation networks. In addition to universities, research institutes and enterprises participate in programmes. An important part of the instruction, which is jointly organised, consists of national and international intensive courses. Graduate schools cover all main areas of research. The Academy of Finland supports the graduate schools nominated by the Ministry of Education by funding researcher training courses as well as domestic and foreign travel by doctoral students.

The polytechnic degree is a Bachelor's degree, and second-cycle polytechnic degrees were introduced for a trial period at the beginning of 2002. The latter are for those who hold a first-cycle polytechnic degree or its equivalent, and have acquired a minimum of three years' professional experience. The government bill to introduce second-cycle polytechnic degrees on a permanent basis was submitted to parliament in March 2005, and the reform is expected to come into force in August 2005.

In 2004, in line with the development of joint degrees within the European Higher Education Area, the Ministry of Education made a recommendation concerning international joint and double degrees. The recommendation concerns all degrees and can also be applied to collaborative projects by Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs). In order to ensure the legal protection of students, a joint degree should be arranged so that the degree belongs to at least one country's official degree system.

From August 2005 onwards, the national credit system will be fully replaced by a system based directly on **ECTS** which will be used for both credit transfer and accumulation. The credit reform concerns both universities and polytechnics. In the old system, one credit was

awarded for approximately 40 hours of work (including lectures and other forms of instruction, exercises, seminars, and independent work at home or in the library). In the new system, the completion of one academic year is estimated to require an average of 1 600 hours of work, which is equivalent to 60 ECTS credits. Doctoral programmes are not measured in ECTS credits.

The universities and polytechnics have had a statutory duty since the mid-1990s to issue a **Diploma Supplement** to students on request. Most institutions already issue the English language Diploma Supplement automatically to all students on graduation, and from August 2005 have a statutory obligation to do so. The Ministry of Education reminded HEIs in 2004 that the Supplement should always be free of charge.

Quality assurance in higher education comprises the three elements of national higher education policy, national evaluation and the quality assurance of individual institutions. All Finnish universities and polytechnics are obliged by legislation to evaluate themselves and take part in external evaluations. To emphasise the quality work of HEIs, the Ministry of Education allocates part of

the funding for institutions on the basis of their educational output.

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC, or *Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvosto/Rådet för utvärdering av högskolorna*) is an independent expert body that was set up in 1995 to assist universities and polytechnics in evaluation matters. Its activities are financed by the Ministry of Education. The Council also functions as an advisory body to the Ministry of Education in matters relating to evaluation and quality assurance. All Finnish universities and polytechnics have been evaluated at institutional level, and the Council has carried out several programme and thematic evaluations.

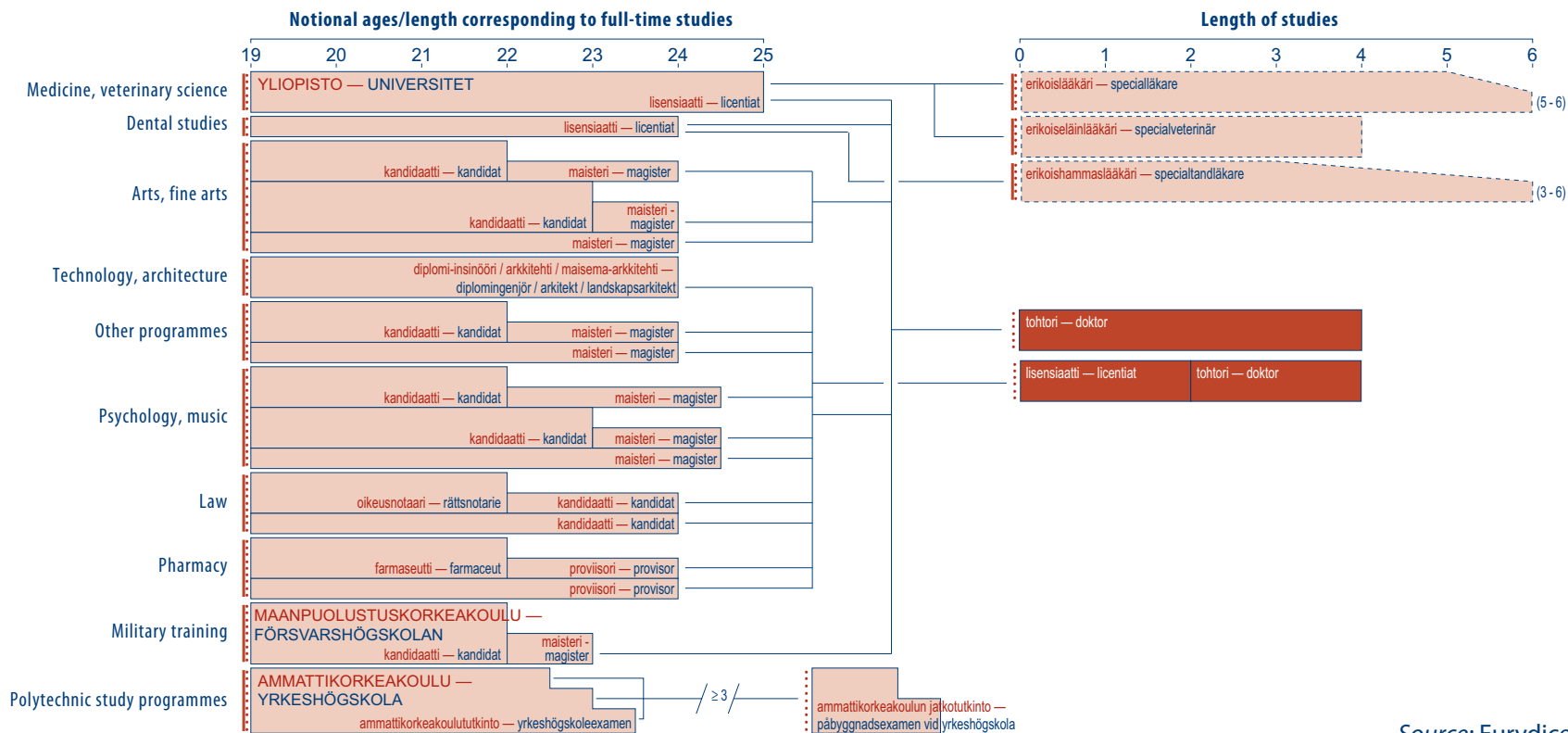
The duties and policies of FINHEEC are governed by the 1995 Decree on the Higher Education Evaluation Council and its 1998 amendment, which specify the duties of the Council. They must assist institutions of higher education and the Ministry of Education in evaluations. They have to organise evaluations of the activities of HEIs and evaluations related to higher education policy. FINHEEC is to engage in international cooperation in higher education and research in this area. Professional courses offered by higher

education institutions will be evaluated and registered.

Furthermore, FINHEEC provides advisory and consultancy services in the implementation of evaluations, develops evaluation methodology and communicates information on good Finnish and international practice to higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education.

FINHEEC uses a basic evaluation method, which is commonly used in international higher education evaluations, and which corresponds to the Council of Europe Recommendation (98/561/EC) of 24 September 1998. While the evaluation pattern used by FINHEEC is not rigidly predetermined, the following is the basic pattern for most of its evaluation projects. It initially makes a decision on an evaluation and appoints a steering committee which then makes a proposal about the composition of an external evaluation team and prepares both a review and project plan. FINHEEC next appoints the team and approves the project plan. The HEI under review compiles a self-evaluation report for the team that visits it. The team then writes a review report published for general consultation, often in English.

Students play an integral part in all evaluations, most of which consist of self-evaluation and



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Second polytechnic ISCED 5A degrees correspond to 40-60 national credits (around one to one-and-a-half years of study), but programmes usually last 2-3 years because they are organised in such a way that they can be completed by students in employment.

FINLAND

peer review with international experts, and they are often represented in evaluation steering groups. However, their opinion may also be obtained via questionnaires, interviews and seminars.

The different phases are modified and specified during the course of evaluation which may vary greatly, for example in how rigidly FINHEEC dictates the self-evaluation process. However, this has an effect both on how much freedom the higher education institution has in the self-evaluation process, and on the latitude enjoyed by the external evaluation team.

Furthermore, evaluation may be geared to development or to **accreditation**, as in the accreditation of professional courses and the selection of quality units and centres of excellence on the basis of ranking. These too

follow the basic evaluation method, except that there is no evaluation visit in the selection of quality units and centres of excellence. FINHEEC also works as an accreditation body for continuing education programmes offered by universities and polytechnics. These programmes include MBA programmes, professional development programmes and specialist studies in different fields. FINHEEC is responsible for maintaining the register of accredited programmes.

Besides and within the basic method, FINHEEC uses other evaluation techniques, such as a portfolio, peer review, and benchmarking.

FINHEEC is engaged in several international projects involving the Nordic region, or at European and global levels. It is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance

in Higher Education (ENQA) and the secretariat of ENQA is currently at FINHEEC. The Council is also a member of the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education, which provides a discussion forum on issues in the field.

Besides reforms associated with the Bologna Process, university student admission procedures are developed nationally. The government is planning to reform the system so as to facilitate a quick transition from secondary to higher education and to streamline current procedures. This requires measures such as expanding the joint application system. In addition, opportunities for adult students to participate in university studies will be promoted.

FINLAND

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
1995 (amendments 1998)	Decree on the Higher Education Evaluation Council (1320/1995) and its amendment (465/1998)	Asetus korkeakoulujen arviointineuvostosta
1997	Universities Act (645/1997)	Yliopistolaki
13 July 2001	Law on the trial polytechnic post-graduate degrees (645/2001)	Laki ammattikorkeakoulun jatkotutkinnon kokeilusta
9 May 2003	Polytechnics Act (351/2003)	Ammattikorkeakoululaki
15 May 2003	Government Decree on polytechnics (352/2003)	Valtioneuvoston asetus ammattikorkeakouluista
11 May 2004	Recommendation of the Ministry of Education on international joint and double degrees	Opetusministeriön suositus yhteistutkintojen järjestämisestä
19 August 2004 (comes into force on 1 August 2005)	Government Decree on university degrees (794/2004) issued together with amendments to the 1997 Universities Act	Valtioneuvoston asetus yliopistojen tutkinnoista

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

Ministry of Education: The Bologna Process: <http://www.minedu.fi/minedu/education/bolognaprocess.html>

Ministry of Education: The Higher Education Policy in Finland: <http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/Hep2001/index.html>

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC): <http://www.finheec.fi>

The Finnish ENIC/NARIC Centre: <http://www.opf.fi/info/recognition>

FRANCE

Initiated in 1999, adjustments to the higher education system in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Process have been accompanied by a series of regulations published in April 2002. Among the most noteworthy is a decree to adapt the higher education system to development of the EHEA for the purpose of implementing the *licence-master-doctorat* (LMD, or Bachelor's-Master's-Doctorate) reform.

The existing structure is based on the **three main cycles** of the LMD model. The Master's degree and professional Bachelor's degree, in accordance with the principles of the European plan for professional first-level studies, were introduced in 1999. The conditions for obtaining a Master's degree were defined in the decree of 25 April 2002. For the first time, with the Master's degree, the structure of higher education is applicable to both universities and *grandes écoles* (higher education institutes).

The (professional or research) Master's was introduced in the 2002/03 academic year and requires 120 ECTS credits after the Bachelor's degree, i.e. 300 credits after the *baccalauréat* (secondary school diploma), thus marking the 'Bac + 5' level of studies.

Doctoral studies were also restructured in April 2002. They are organised at doctoral schools in two phases. The first, lasting one year, leads to a research Master's degree or a *diplôme d'études approfondies* (DEA, or pre-doctorate post-graduate degree). The second, lasting three years, leads to a doctorate after the defence of a thesis. The first phase of doctoral studies aims at initiating students to research and confirming their aptitudes in this respect. The doctorate is awarded by universities, *écoles normales supérieures* (*grandes écoles* for the training of teachers) and authorised public higher education institutions (HEIs) alone or jointly, according to the decree issued by ministers in charge of higher education and university research. The possibility to prepare a doctorate within the framework of 'international thesis co-supervision' has been widened since the decree of 6 January 2005. In the same respect, following an agreement of principle between the ministry for national education and the three HEI conferences concerned, the awarding of joint or double degrees in international partnerships will soon be applied to all other degree levels.

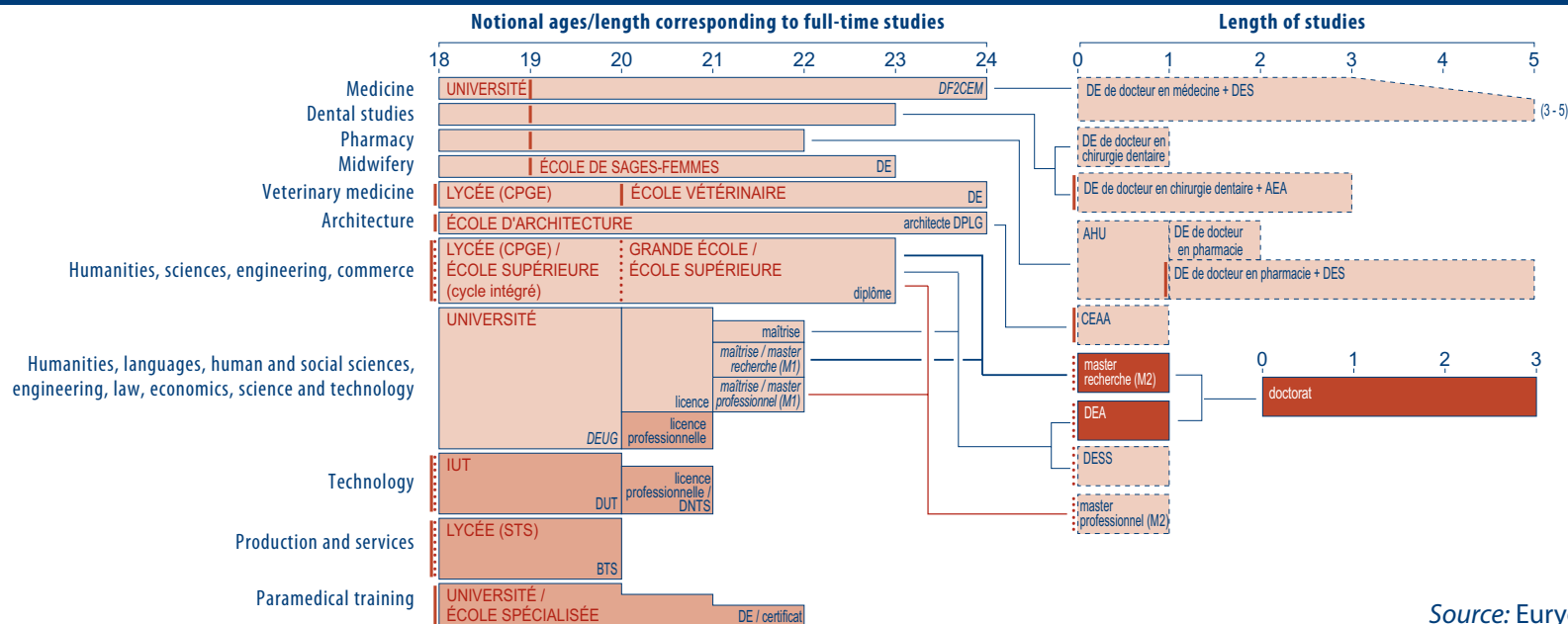
Considering the schedule for the negotiation of four-year contracts between universities and the state, the implementation of the LMD

reform has been effective since the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year for three-quarters of universities. It will become effective for all universities by 2007 at the latest and by 2010 for all HEIs, with the direct application of the Bologna Process principles in the health sector (including paramedical studies) and the field of architecture.

Institutions have begun an overhaul of programmes offered in **ECTS** credits since the 2002/03 academic year, and of the organisation of modular programmes allowing more flexibility and better gradual orientation of students. The ECTS system is used for transfer and accumulation and will be fully implemented by 2007.

Within the framework of the LMD reform, the **Diploma Supplement** is being implemented progressively by all higher education institutions. By 2007, it will be issued automatically by all institutions free of charge, in French and in another language chosen by the institution.

With regard to **quality assessment**, the general principle established by regulations in 2002 is that of regular internal and external evaluation of HEIs as well as programmes and certification measures. The regulation is based on periodic evaluation, which is mandatory so



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

AEA	<i>Attestation d'Études Approfondies</i>	DE	<i>Diplôme d'État</i>	DNTS	<i>Diplôme National de Technologie Spécialisée</i>
AHU	<i>Année Hospitalo-Universitaire</i>	DEA	<i>Diplôme d'Études Approfondies</i>	DUT	<i>Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie</i>
Architecte DPLG	<i>Architecte Diplômé Par Le Gouvernement</i>	DES	<i>Diplôme d'Études Spécialisées</i>	IUT	<i>Institut Universitaire de Technologie</i>
BTS	<i>Brevet de Technicien Supérieur</i>	DESS	<i>Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées</i>	STS	<i>Section de Techniciens Supérieurs</i>
CEAA	<i>Certificat d'Études Approfondies en Architecture</i>	DEUG	<i>Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales</i>		
CPGE	<i>Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles</i>	DF2CEM	<i>Diplôme de fin de deuxième cycle des études médicales</i>		

The *classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* (CPGE) are of a literary, commercial or scientific nature. Highly selective, they prepare students for the competitive entrance examinations for the *grandes écoles*. In the case of students who are unsuccessful, the classes are generally recognised by universities, which regard them as equivalent to the DEUG in some subjects. The most prominent of the *grandes écoles* are the *écoles normales supérieures* (ENS), the *écoles de commerce et de gestion*, the *écoles d'ingénieurs* and the *instituts d'études politiques* (which involve just one year of preparation in a fully integrated course). By 'fully integrated course' is meant any form of preparation offered within the institution itself. The *écoles* and *instituts* providing vocational education after a competitive examination generally open to holders of a higher education qualification obtained after three years of study, or to state-remunerated public-sector trainees, are not included in this diagram. The institutions most particularly concerned are the *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), the *Instituts Régionaux d'Administration* (IRA), the *École Nationale de la Magistrature* (ENM), the *École Nationale de la Santé Publique* (ENSP) and the *Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres* (IUFM).

FRANCE

that state recognition (in the form of quality assurance guarantees, etc.) and financial support can be granted as appropriate.

National periodic external evaluation of research as well as programmes and degrees, in collaboration with the contractual policy with HEIs, is conducted by specialised national evaluation teams which set the evaluation criteria and make them public. Representatives from the professional world concerned with programme objectives are involved in the evaluation procedure. The results of external evaluation of all activities – scientific, teaching and management – are considered during negotiation of the four-year contract between a university or a HEI and the State. They are also taken into account when the State, as guarantor of the quality of degrees, takes decisions regarding the authorisation to award them.

In the case of engineering, business and management programmes, institutions must be evaluated by specific national commissions

in order to receive the authorisation to award national degrees.

The *Comité national d'évaluation* (CNE, or National Evaluation Committee) has existed since 1984, and is an independent administrative authority with the mission to evaluate public HEIs. Its objective is to conduct a global evaluation of institutions with a view to encouraging the development of autonomy and quality.

The evaluation of an institution by the Committee is based on an internal evaluation (self-evaluation) report provided by the institution. To help institutions conduct internal evaluations, a reference book was prepared by a workgroup from the CNE and the *Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche* (General Inspectorate for National Education and Research), in collaboration with the *Conférence des présidents d'université* (CPU, or Conference of University Presidents), and was published in November 2003. Members of the CNE include

foreign academics. Academic and non-academic experts from France or abroad, as well as students, are asked to participate in evaluations.

Methods for the **internal evaluation** of programmes and courses offered at universities are set by the board of governors upon a proposal by the studies and student life council. Elected student representatives participate in the various councils which govern politics and life at universities.

The CNE has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2000.

FRANCE

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
8 April 2002	Decree No. 2002-481 related to university degrees and titles and national degrees Decree No. 2002-482 concerning adjustments to the French higher education system to develop the European Higher Education Area	Décret n° 2002-481 relatif aux grades et titres universitaires et aux diplômes nationaux Décret n° 2002-482 portant application au système français d'enseignement supérieur de la construction de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur
16 April 2002	Decree No. 2002-529 related to the validation of higher education studies completed in France or abroad	Décret n° 2002-529 relatif à la validation d'études supérieures accomplies en France ou à l'étranger
23 April 2002	Decree related to university studies leading to a Bachelor's degree	Arrêté relatif aux études universitaires conduisant au grade de licence
24 April 2002	Decree No. 2002-590 related to the validation of acquired experience by higher education institutions	Décret n° 2002-590 relatif à la validation des acquis de l'expérience par les établissements d'enseignement supérieur
25 April 2002	Decree related to the national Master's degree Decree related to doctoral studies	Arrêté relatif au diplôme national de master Arrêté relatif aux études doctorales
6 January 2005	Decree related to international thesis co-supervision'	Arrêté relatif à la cotutelle internationale de thèse

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

CROATIA

The most recent arrangements regarding the Bologna Process are specified in the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education of July 2003, and the amendments to it are contained in a further Act of July 2004.

The degree structure is traditionally based on **two main cycles** (consisting of a long first cycle of four to six years and a shorter second cycle lasting a minimum of two years), but the vast majority of students complete their studies at the end of the first cycle. The above-mentioned Act stipulates that a course structure based on **three main cycles** shall be introduced no later than the 2005/06 academic year. All higher education institutions are legally obliged to submit new study programme proposals to the National Council for Higher Education by March 2005. The first cycles at university will normally last three to four years and will lead to the title of *prvostupnik (baccalaureus/a)*. The second cycles will last one to two years and will lead to the *Master of Arts* and *Master of Science*.

The third cycle will last three years. The major difference consists in the fact that the doctorate will not be awarded without proper doctoral study programmes. All other changes are still being determined.

The existing **doctoral studies** last a minimum of two years, or a minimum of one year for

students working towards a doctorate in the academic field in which they have already earned a Master's degree. Normally no compulsory preparatory courses are needed to embark on doctoral studies. Entry requirements are usually a specific grade point average obtained during graduate studies, along with letters of recommendation. Some study programmes (e.g. those at medical school) require published articles and/or attendance of specific courses for enrolment. Taught courses are part of the doctoral phase.

There is little experience with joint European programmes.

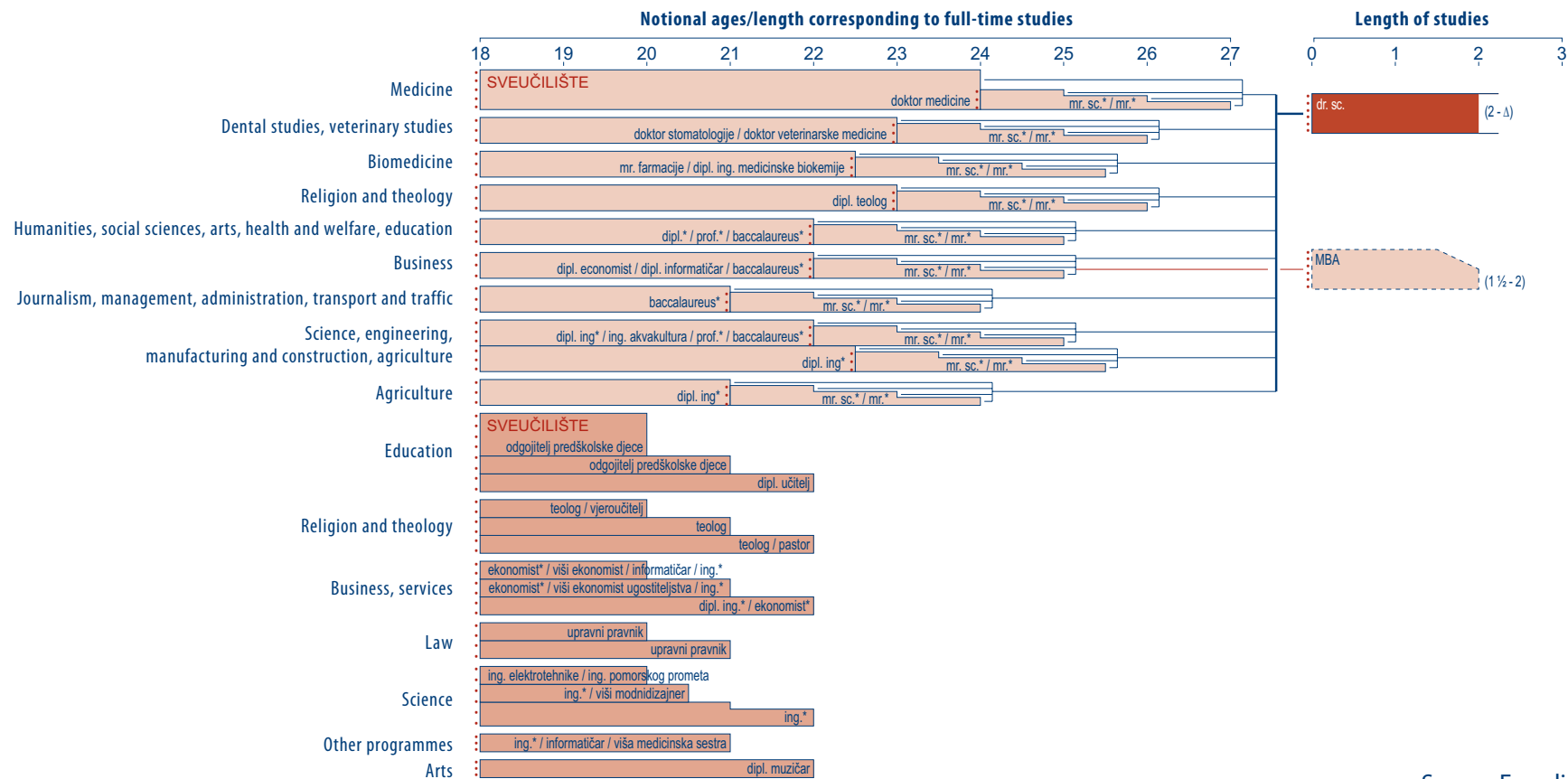
Vocational studies will also be affected by the reform. From the 2005/06 academic year, courses that currently last at least two years will last from two to three years. In exceptional cases in which professional studies conform to international standards, they may last up to four years.

Introduction of **ECTS** is a legal obligation for all higher education institutions, as stipulated by the Act of July 2003. Those institutions that have not yet restructured their programmes are obliged to submit their proposals for new study programmes, as well as the number of ECTS credits for each, by March 2005. ECTS will be introduced no later than the 2005/06

academic year and will be used both in terms of transfer and accumulation. There is no national credit system but some disciplines have developed internal credit systems (similar to ECTS insofar as they award 30 credits per semester).

The Act of 2003 states that a format for the **Diploma Supplement** (*suplement diplome or dopunska isprava*) shall be established by universities, polytechnics and professional higher education institutions. An official model for the Supplement has not yet been finalised. Some faculties have been issuing the Diploma Supplement at the request of students, and some universities have implemented it before others. A regulation adopted in December 2004 determines the format of a Diploma Supplement and stipulates what information it must contain. The Diploma Supplement will be introduced for all students entering higher education in the 2005/06 academic year. However, the regulation does not determine whether a Diploma Supplement will be free of charge, nor does it state what language it will be issued in.

The national body responsible for **external quality assurance** is the National Council for Higher Education (*Nacionalno vijeće za visoku naobrazbu*), established by the Higher



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

Dipl. *Diploma* | Dr. sc. *Doctor scientiarum* | Mr *Magister* | Prof *Professor*
 Dipl ing *Diplomirani inženjer* | Ing. *Inženjer* | Mr sc - *Magister scientiarum*

From 2005/06, doctoral programmes will last at least 3 years.

CROATIA

Education Act of 1993. The National Council is a state-funded body with four important responsibilities related to external quality assurance. It handles the evaluation of higher education on the basis of a qualitative appraisal of existing higher education institutions and their curricula in comparison with international standards. The Council is also responsible for providing the university senate with an opinion regarding the implementation and organisation of postgraduate academic studies. It participates in the process of determining qualitative standards for purposes of institutional accreditation, as well as in the periodic evaluation (every five years) of the quality and efficiency of teaching, academic and professional activities at higher education institutions.

Institutional **accreditation** is granted by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports in accordance with the assessment of evaluation findings carried out by the National Council of Higher Education.

Periodic evaluation of higher education institutions and programmes is initiated by the Ministry and is carried out by its expert commissions. Commissioners are appointed by the Minister following a National Council recommendation. The commissions base their

assessment on the self-evaluation of the higher education institutions and on the opinions of professional societies and reputable international experts. Evaluations of higher education institutions by expert commissions are kept by the National Council for Higher Education but are not published. Some of institutions publish their evaluations on their websites.

Students have been involved in external reviews at the university level.

Discussions regarding the need for **internal quality assurance** mechanisms have been going on for some time, and certain universities have set up institutional bodies for safeguarding and advancing the quality of internal processes. So far, self-evaluations have been an integral part of the evaluation procedure by expert commissions. Students have been involved in the internal evaluation (of some higher education institutions only), through ECTS committees, quality assessment committees and student evaluation projects, and as members of faculty councils and university senates.

The 2003 Act introduces considerable changes to existing quality assurance practices, including the establishment of an independent body for quality assurance as well as the

Agency for Science and Higher Education (*Agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje*), which will serve as a third party enabling and safeguarding unbiased quality control of academic and higher education institutions. In July 2004, the Regulation establishing the Agency for Science and Higher Education was passed and the latter has been operational since January 2005.

The Agency will be responsible for providing expert support in the process of evaluating academic organisations and higher education institutions, as well as in the evaluation of national scientific networks, establishing quality assurance systems at higher education institutions and accrediting study programmes. It will also collect and analyse data related to the national science and higher education system. Furthermore, it will be responsible for enabling the Croatian higher education system to network with European and international education systems, securing conditions for joining the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and enhancing the presentation and implementation of the Bologna Process. Finally, it will establish the national quality assurance network as well as the Croatian ENIC office.

CROATIA

Experts propose that the Agency should consist of three departments. One of them would be the quality assurance department, which would be intended to serve as an independent body for external quality assurance and to perform external evaluations of institutions and study programmes. At some time in the future, this department might be transformed into an independent agency, in line with quality assurance practices in most EU countries. It is desirable that the external evaluation carried out by the department should be preceded by internal assessments (self-evaluation). The team performing external evaluation will consist of university professors and external experts, with scope for the inclusion of student representatives.

In accordance with the Act, the National Council for Higher Education (*Nacionalno vijeće za visoko obrazovanje*) with redefined responsibilities was set up at the end of February 2005 and has started functioning. The Council shall be an expert advisory body responsible for the development and quality of the higher education system as a whole. As part of its tasks related to quality assurance, it will give its consent to the requirements of the Rector's Conference and the Council of Polytechnics and Schools of Professional Higher Education for obtaining scientific research and teaching grades, artistic teaching grades and other teaching grades. It will present the Minister with proposals for regulations on standards and criteria for

establishing and assessing higher education institutions and programmes, as well as proposals regarding the issuing of accreditations. The Council will also appoint evaluators and give an opinion on the establishment of new higher education institutions and programmes, as well as assess higher education institutions and programmes.

In 2001, this body became a member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education (CEENQA/AHE). Croatia is also an eligible member of the ENQA.

CROATIA

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
26 October 1993	Higher Education Act	Zakon o visokim učilištima
23 July 2003, amended on 21 July 2004	Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education	Zakon o znanstvenoj djelatnosti i visokom obrazovanju
15 July 2004	Regulation for Establishing the Agency for Science and Higher Education	Uredba o osnivanju Agencije za znanost i visoko obrazovanje
21 July 2004	Act on Revisions and Additions to the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education	Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama zakona o znanstvenoj djelatnosti i visokom obrazovanju
29 December 2004	Regulation of the Content of Diplomas and Additional Documents on Studies	Pravilnik o sadržaju diploma i dopunskih isprava o studiju

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

HUNGARY

The organisation of the higher education sector is governed by the Higher Education Act adopted in 1993 and amended several times since 1996. The latest proposed amendment to the Act (2004) is currently under national debate.

The new degree structure based on **three cycles** was adopted in December 2004 but has not yet been fully implemented. Higher education institutions are obliged by law to launch programmes of this kind with effect from the 2006/07 academic year. All main fields of study (with the exception of architectural engineering, dentistry, law, pharmacy and veterinary studies, which retain a long single-cycle structure) should be implemented in accordance with the new structure. The first cycles will consist of programmes leading to Bachelor's degrees (*főiskolai oklevél*) and lasting 3 or 4 years while the second cycles will lead to Master's degrees (*egyetemi oklevél*) and last 2 to 3 years. Since the 2004/05 academic year, a series of pre-selected Bachelor's-type programmes has already been introduced. The dual system, consisting of programmes that last 3-4 years for a *főiskolai oklevél* and 5-6 years for an *egyetemi oklevél*, is to be retained alongside them until 2006/07.

A 3-year **doctoral** study programme (*doktori képzés*) already in existence will follow any Master's qualification or equivalent title. In addition to the Master's qualification or equivalent title, each candidate has to possess a type 'C' middle-level foreign language certificate (written and oral) and has to undergo the entry procedure which includes a written dissertation plan and an interview. Further entry requirements can be set by the institutions. Taught courses are integral parts of the doctoral phase. In each semester, 30 credit points are awarded, which amounts to a total of 180 credit points for the 6 semesters.

The awarding of joint doctoral degrees has not yet been provided for in the legal statutes.

Two-year advanced vocational programmes (*felsőfokú szakképzés* at ISCED level 5B) are available on an optional basis prior to first-cycle programmes leading to advanced vocational qualifications. Such programmes can count towards any ISCED 5A programmes up to a maximum of 60 credit points.

Professional higher education training programmes (*szakirányú továbbképzés* at ISCED level 5A) can follow on from any degree (Bachelor's or Master's) and involve specialisation in a field of study (with the

awarding of a certificate on completion) but do not lead to another degree.

ECTS has been provided for in law since November 2000 and has been introduced in practice since the 2003/04 academic year. It is mandatory and is used both in terms of transfer and accumulation.

The **Diploma Supplement** has been issued by higher education institutions since July 2003 and is delivered upon students' request. In such instances, institutions provide the document free of charge in Hungarian. An English version may also be requested by students and delivered for a fee determined by the institution.

The Hungarian Accreditation Board (*Magyar Akkreditációs Bizottság* or HAB) is responsible for **quality assurance**. It is an independent body of experts, consisting of 30 members mostly involved in higher education and research institutions. Students are represented by two regular participants at the meetings of this body.

In terms of **internal evaluation**, institutions are obliged to prepare their annual institutional evaluation report to be discussed and voted by the institutional council. As part of the accreditation procedure (every 8 years) and the interim control procedure (4 years after

HUNGARY

accreditation), they are also required to prepare self-evaluation documentation, for which the HAB provides detailed guidance.

Students take part in the evaluation procedure at institutional level. The institution's annual evaluation report is accepted by the institutional council, on which students are represented. The self-evaluation documents contain spaces for students to give their opinion.

External evaluation is a lengthy multi-level process. The institution prepares its documentation and self-evaluation report based upon the pre-set HAB guidelines. The HAB nominates a Visiting Accreditation Committee (*Látogató Bizottság*), the composition of which varies according to the type of institution, the number of faculties and number of degree programmes. Based on the self-evaluation report, experiences, documented interviews and meetings during the visit, the Visiting Committee prepares its own report for the HAB. The comments and evaluation of the HAB are communicated to the institution, which is given the opportunity

to make further remarks. The report, thus further supplemented, reaches the full plenary meeting of the HAB (30 members, 5 counsellors, 4 regular participants) during which it is finalised.

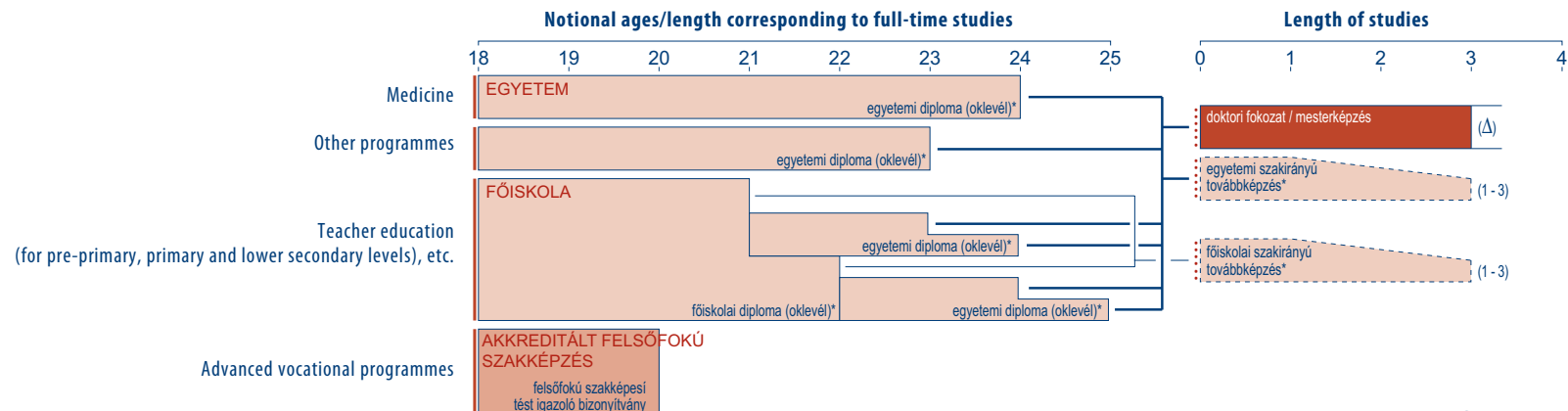
The Visiting Accreditation Committee (*Látogató Bizottság*) meets the students and their representatives during the external evaluation procedure and conducts an interview according to pre-set guidelines. At national level, one representative of the National Organization of Student Self-governing Bodies (*Hallgatói Önkormányzatok Országos Konferenciája*) and one of the National Union of PhD students (*Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége*) is delegated to participate regularly at the HAB meetings.

The **accreditation** procedure is mandatory and involves two separate procedures. On the one hand, it involves examining higher education institutions (education and training activities and conditions, research activities and facilities, staff, organisational structure and infrastructure) and, on the other hand, the degree programmes themselves (their

curriculum content, the proportion of practical and theory-based instruction, qualified staff and infrastructure). Each institution has to undergo the accreditation procedure every 8 years and an interim control procedure after 4 years. The State Audit Office (*Állami Számvevőszék*) exercises the right to investigate the financial activities of institutions.

The result of the accreditation procedure provided in a summarised format are made public in the Accreditation Bulletin (*Akkreditációs Értesítő*) as well as on the website of the Hungarian Accreditation Board.

The Hungarian Accreditation Board has been a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2000.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i> Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i> Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

ISCED 5B advanced vocational programmes lead to a *bizonyítvány*, which is a certificate and not a degree like the *oklevél*. Until full implementation of the two-cycle system in 2006/07, ISCED 5B qualifications will continue to give access to the labour market with the possibility of exemption from part of any ISCED 5A programmes up to a maximum of 60 credit points.

The qualification *főiskolai szakirányú továbbképzés* does not provide access to *doktori fokozat* and *mesterképzés*.

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Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
3 August 1993	Higher Education Act LXXX of 1993	1993. LXXX. törvény A felsőoktatásról
4 June 1999	Act No. LII. of 1999 on institutional integration (first step towards a linear degree system)	1999. LII. Törvény A felsőoktatási intézményhálózat átalakításáról továbbá a felsőoktatásról szóló 1993. évi LXXX törvény módosításáról
29 November 2000	Governmental decree 200/2000 on the implementation of the credit system and on the central registration of institutional credit systems	Kormányrendelet 200/2000. A felsőoktatási tanulmányi pontrendszer (kreditrendszer) bevezetéséről és az intézményi kreditrendszerek egységes nyilvántartásáról
24 December 2001	Act No. XCIX of 2001 regulating the implementation of ECTS	2001. évi XCIX. Törvény A felsőoktatási képesítéseknek az európai régióban történő elismeréséről szóló, 1997. április 11-én, Lisszabonban aláírt Egyezmény kihirdetéséről
3 June 2003	Act XXXVIII of 2003 regulating the implementation of the Diploma Supplement	2003. évi XXXVIII. törvény A felsőoktatásról szóló 1993. évi LXXX. törvény módosításáról
28 December 2004	Governmental decree 381/2004 (28.12.) regulating the new degree structure	381/2004. (XII. 28.) Kormány rendelet A többciklusú felsőoktatási képzési szerkezet bevezetésének egyes szabályairól
1 January 2005	Act CXXXV of 2004 on the Budget regulating certain aspects of the new degree structure	2004. évi CXXXV törvény a Magyar Köztársaság 2005. évi költségvetéséről

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Website

Website of the Hungarian Accreditation Board for further information on the results of the accreditation procedure: <http://www.mab.hu>

IRELAND

The Universities Act and the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act adopted in 1997 and 1999, respectively, regulate the most recent arrangements linked to the Bologna Process in higher education institutions.

The traditionally existing degree structure based on **two main cycles** (Bachelor's degrees are awarded after 3 or 4 years, while courses leading to Master's or other postgraduate degrees last between 1 and 3 years) fits with the model set out in the Bologna Declaration. Typically **doctoral** awards (PHD) are obtained by a process of supervised research resulting in the production of a thesis. There are a small number of programmes (profession training in the sense of research skills such library referencing skills, research skills, widening academic environment, etc.) where there is substantial taught part in addition to the thesis. It runs in parallel with the research element.

The **ECTS** has been incorporated into the national awards system of the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) since 1989 and is implemented in many programmes in the institutes of technology and the Dublin Institute of Technology. Three universities use ECTS for all students, while the remaining 4 universities use it mainly for students under Erasmus

Programmes. In order to review the existing systems in place and comply with the European approach, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland established a Technical Advisory Group on Credits in 2002. However, the use of ECTS in other higher education institutions is associated mainly with students in the Socrates (Erasmus) programme. As regards credit accumulation, awards are made in a sizeable number of HEIs when the requisite number of credits have been accumulated. However, there are as yet relatively few developments concerning credit accumulation over an extended period (i.e. beyond the conventional three-year duration of a BA degree).

The **Diploma Supplement** was introduced on a pilot basis in February 2004. It is now being 'rolled-out' to all HEIs, commencing with those 2005 graduates with the Institutes of Technology and other non-university sectors. It will be issued automatically and free-of-charge. It is also anticipated that the two of the seven universities will issue to their 2005 graduates, while the remaining will take a further year.

The bodies involved in **quality assurance** are under the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) was established in 1972 and is responsible for furthering the development and assisting in the co-ordination of State investment in higher education. The HEA has a statutory role to assist universities in achieving their objectives. Furthermore it may review and report on quality procedures in the universities.

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) was established by the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, and is responsible for establishing and maintaining the National Framework of Qualifications.

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) which was also established as part of the 1999 Act, is the qualifications awarding body for the Institutes of Technology and other non-university higher education colleges and institutions. HETAC may also delegate the authority to make awards to the Institutes of Technology. The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) is required under the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 to agree and review the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures with its providers of higher education and training programmes. All higher education institutions are primarily responsible for establishing quality assurance procedures in

IRELAND

accordance with HETAC guidelines and criteria. HETAC is responsible for both accreditation and for external evaluation. International expert peers are consulted on all quality assurance and other accreditation activities of the Council. HETAC has engaged over twenty five international peers to participate in programme accreditation, delegated authority (Institutional accreditation), research accreditation and quality assurance activities, in the past eighteen months.

In 2002 HETAC published Guidelines and Criteria for Quality Assurance Procedures in Higher Education and Training. These require all providers of higher education and training programmes associated with HETAC to establish quality assurance procedures and agree those procedures with HETAC. Twenty-two providers have agreed quality assurance procedures with the Council to date. A review of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures will commence in 2005. The governance of HETAC includes expert members with overseas international experience in higher education and quality assurance systems from Europe and North America.

In addition to these bodies, the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) was

established in 2003 and will support universities in relation to quality assurance procedures.

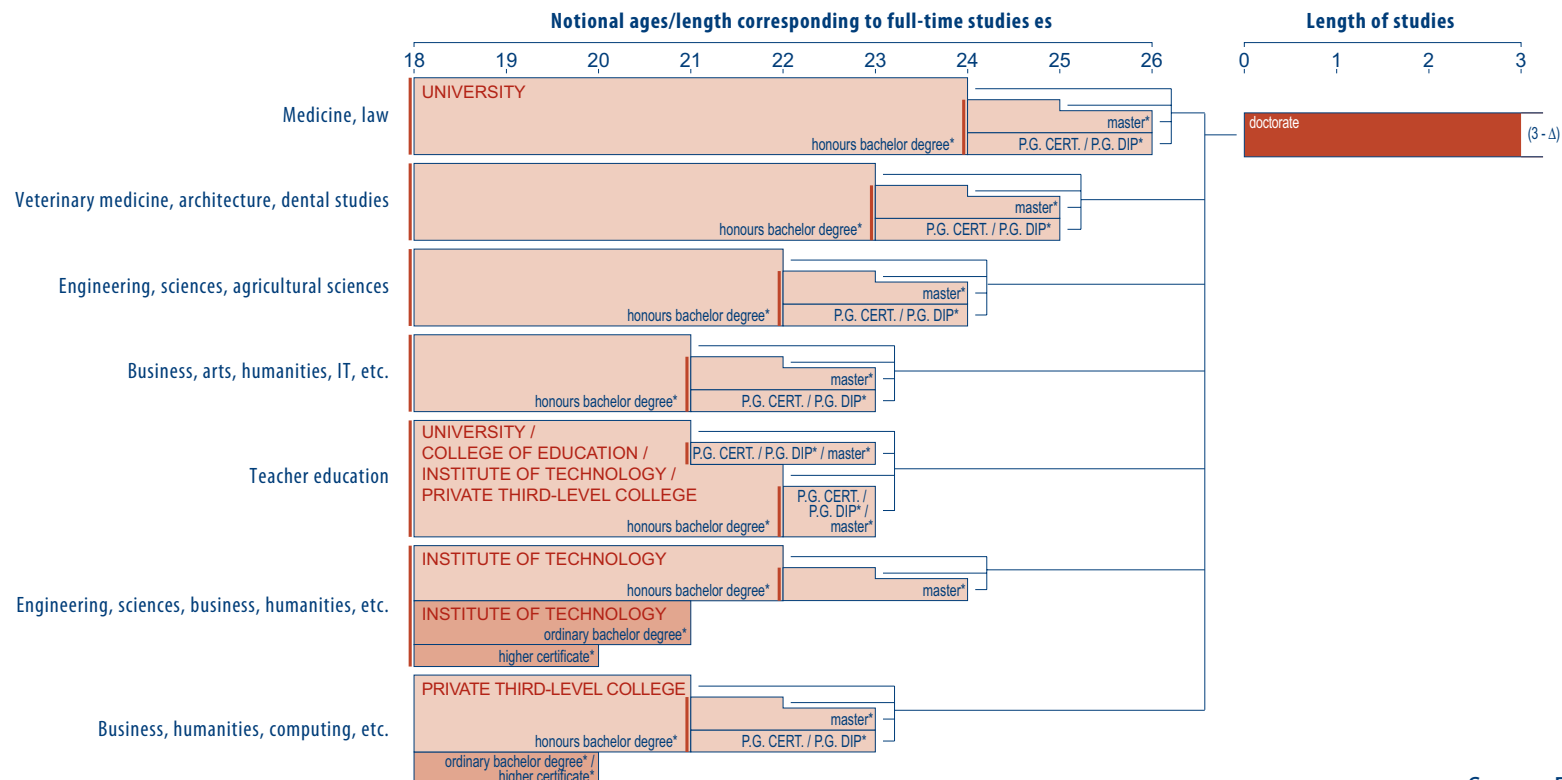
The Universities Act 1997 requires the universities to establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by universities. It includes the conduct of evaluation at regular intervals and in any case not less than once in every 10 years or longer if determined by the university in agreement with the Higher Education Authority (HEA). Such reviews are undertaken by persons, other than employees, who are competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level. In addition, a review of the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures is also carried out by the Universities (at least every 15 years) in consultation with the HEA. The external members of the IUQB board includes at least two persons from outside Ireland with experience of accreditation and quality assurance of academic programmes in universities in Europe and North America. External members also include someone with experience of professional accreditation and a person with a background in quality improvement and assurance as it relates to

management and services. One of the external members acts as Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive of the IUQB acts as Secretary.

The HEA/IUQB joint review of the effectiveness of QA procedures in the universities is being undertaken by teams of international experts from Europe and North America.

On a wider level, the Higher Education Authority has a statutory role under the Act to assist universities in the achievement of their objectives generally. Furthermore, it may review established quality assurance procedures and may publish a report on the outcome of any such reviews – a process conducted in consultation with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. The first such review of quality assurance procedures is being undertaken by the Higher Education Authority in conjunction with the IUQB and this will be concluded in early 2005.

In recent years, the seven Irish Universities have co-operated in developing their quality assurance systems and in representing their approach nationally and internationally as a unique quality model appropriate to the needs of Irish Universities. Further collaboration will be ensured by the decision of the governing authorities to establish the Irish Universities Quality Board.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

P.G. CERT. Postgraduate Certificate | P.G. DIP. Postgraduate Diploma

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While DIT (Dublin Institute of Technology) has primary responsibility for the implementation of quality assurance procedures, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) has a quality assurance review role in relation to these procedures. The DIT is at present undergoing an external quality assurance evaluation by the European Universities Association (EUA) on behalf of the NQAI.

The Dublin Institute of Technology has made its own awards at Certificate and Diploma level for more than 50 years. The quality assurance system of DIT was assessed by an International Review Team in 1996; this team recommended that DIT be granted the power to award its own degrees. The recommendation was accepted and implemented by the Minister for Education and Science. Internationally, DIT is an active member of EUA.

Students are represented on, inter alia, the Governing Bodies of Higher Education institutions established in statute, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the National

Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).

Student representation has been further advanced through the policy initiatives on quality assurance, where the proposed system recognises the importance of students in the process, particularly in reviews of academic Departments and of units that directly provide services to students. This approach is underpinned by legislation, including the Universities Act, 1997 and the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999.

HETAC has extended student representation to include activities such as the delegation of authority to make awards evaluation and committee representation for the Programme Accreditation Committee.

The Irish Higher Education Quality Network was established in October 2003 as a formal network. The network comprises the main

organisations with a role or significant interest in quality assurance in higher education and training in Ireland. Membership includes the Universities, the Institutes of Technology, the Higher Education Colleges Association, the HEA, HETAC, IUQB, DIT, NQAI and student representatives. The network is working towards the development of a common national position on key quality assurance issues in order to inform the debate on those same issues at the European level. The network provides a forum for discussion of quality assurance issues amongst the principal national stakeholders involved in quality assurance of higher education and training in Ireland and allows for the dissemination of best practice in quality assurance amongst practitioners and policy makers involved in the Irish higher education and training sector. The Higher Education Authority, Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and National qualifications Authority of Ireland are all members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

IRELAND

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English
1997	Universities Act
1999	Qualifications (Education and Training) Act

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

Department of Education and Science: <http://www.education.ie>

The Higher Education Authority (HEA): <http://www.heai.ie>

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI): <http://www.nqai.ie>

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC): <http://www.hetac.ie>

ICELAND

Higher education is regulated by the Universities Act adopted in 1997. In 2003, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture appointed a national Bologna working group to co-ordinate and conduct the process, as well as to provide input and make proposals for possible legislative reforms and regulations in order to ensure successful implementation. The group consists of representatives from the Ministry, all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and student organisations.

A degree structure based on **two main cycles** (Bachelor's/Master's) existed for a long time in parallel with the single-structure *Candidatus*

degrees (four to six years). In recent years, many *candidatus* degrees have moved towards the two-cycle system. Traces of the one-tier system remain.

Doctoral programmes are offered in two HEIs in several fields. In some fields, students have the possibility to enrol in a doctoral programme without having completed a MA/MSc degree, but in this case the duration of the doctoral programme is prolonged. The doctoral programmes include course work, which usually makes up about 15% of the programme. Each HEI that has been permitted to grant second- and third-level degrees can

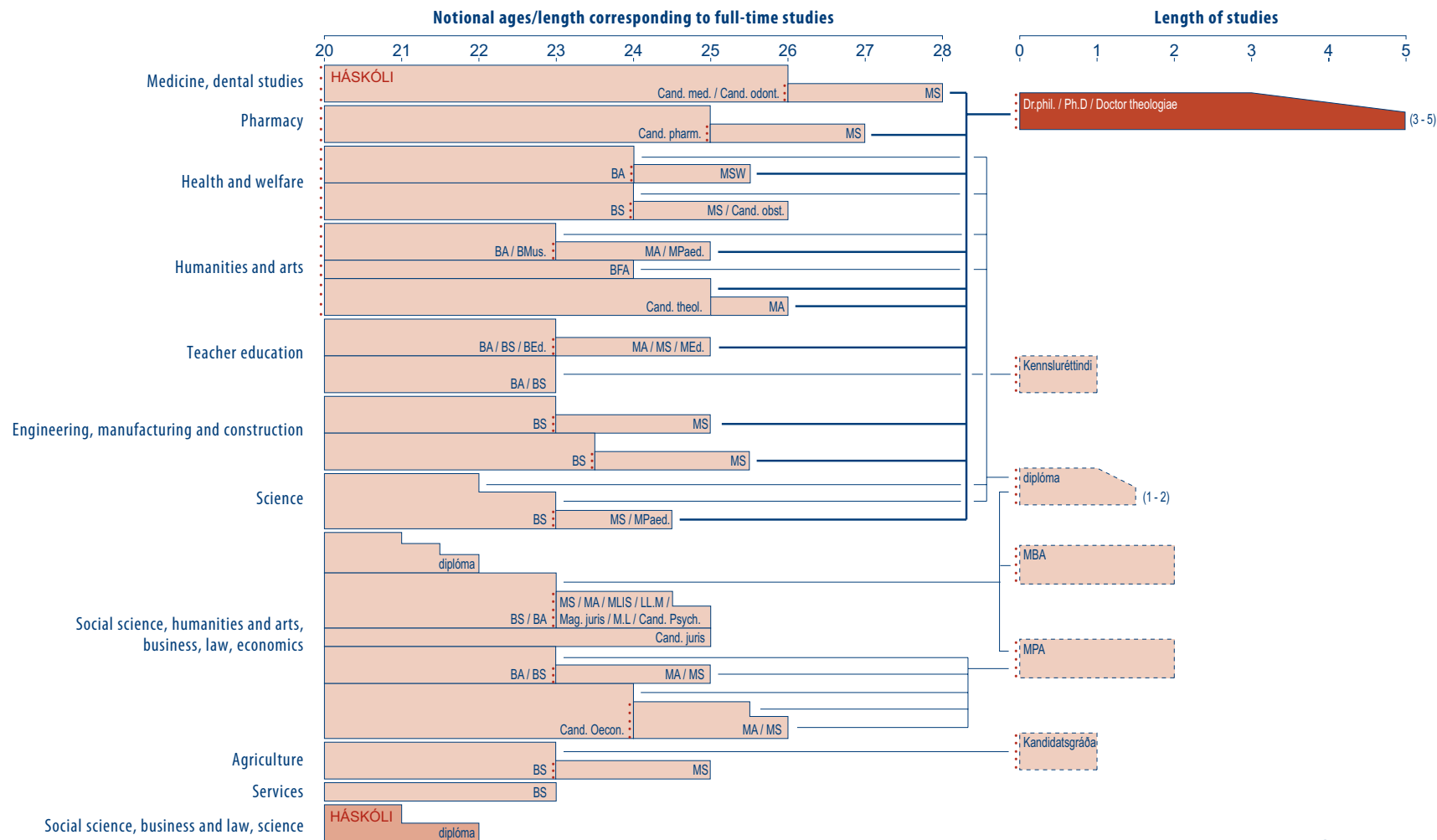
decide on the duration and form of the degrees.

Joint degrees do not have a clear legal basis in the Universities Act. However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is preparing an amendment to the Act to facilitate them. Joint study programmes are nevertheless offered in some study fields.

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BA	<i>BA-gráða/Bachelor of Arts</i>	Cand. Oecon	<i>Candidatus oeconomiae</i>	MBA	<i>Master of Business Administration</i>
BEd	<i>BED-gráða/Bachelor of Education</i>	Cand. pharm	<i>Candidatus pharmaciae</i>	MEd	<i>Master of Education</i>
BFA	<i>BFA-gráða/Bachelor of Fine Arts</i>	Cand. Psych.	<i>Candidatus psychologiae</i>	MLIS	<i>Master of Library and Information Science</i>
BMus	<i>BMus-gráða/Bachelor of Music</i>	Cand. theol.	<i>Candidatus theologiae</i>	MPA	<i>Master of Public Administration</i>
BS	<i>BS-gráða/Bachelor of Science</i>	Dr. phil	<i>Doctor philosophiae</i>	MPaed	<i>Magister Paedagogiae</i>
Cand. juris	<i>Candidatus juris</i>	LL.M	<i>Master of Laws</i>	MS	<i>Master of Science/Magister Scientiarum</i>
Cand. med	<i>Candidatus medicinae</i>	M.L	<i>Master of Law</i>	MSW	<i>Master of Social Works</i>
Cand. obst	<i>Candidatus obstetriciorum</i>	MA	<i>Master of Arts/Magister artium</i>	Ph.D.	<i>Philosophiae Doctor/Doctor philosophiae</i>
Cand. odont	<i>Candidatus odontologiae</i>	Mag. juris	<i>Magister juris</i>		

The selection procedure at the point of entry applies only to courses in the following fields: medicine, physiotherapy (an entrance examination was introduced in June 2003) and fine arts. In dental studies and nursing, there is a numerus clausus after the first term.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

ICELAND

ECTS has been used in parallel with the national credit system since 1990 in most HEIs. The national credit system, in which one credit is equivalent to two ECTS credits, is based on the same principles as ECTS and is used by all HEIs. According to the Universities Act, a full study programme normally consists of 30 national credits per academic year. There is no legislation concerned specifically with ECTS. Credits are awarded for all courses in all degree programmes and reflect student effort, class attendance, homework and examinations. ECTS credits are used by universities alongside national credits for credit transfer and accumulation.

All HEIs will introduce the **Diploma Supplement** (DS) for graduates no later than in spring 2005. Already in 2004, some HEIs issued DS to all graduates. The DS will be available automatically and free of charge to all students. The DS is issued in English, but some HEIs issue it in Icelandic as well.

General provisions for the **assurance of quality** in higher education are laid down in the Universities Act of 1997, and in regulations from 1999 set on the basis of the Act and revised in 2003. The Division of Evaluation and Supervision was established in 1996 in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The

Division exercises its responsibilities at national level. According to the regulations, it is the responsibility of each HEI to set up a formal **internal quality** control system. The regulations also state that the Ministry of Education can take the initiative in conducting **external evaluations** of clearly specified units within institutions or of institutions as a whole. For this task, an external, independent panel of specialists is appointed to implement the evaluation. A peer review group is comprised of three to six people. The group must include individuals who have qualifications in the relevant field of scholarship, or extensive work experience in higher education, quality control and employing graduates. No member of the peer review group may have any links to the institution evaluated. At least one member of the group must be employed outside Iceland.

The Minister of Education determines when an external evaluation shall take place, as stipulated in the regulations, and what the focus of the evaluation shall be.

External evaluations carried out in recent years have mainly focused on specific programmes in one institution or across institutions. Evaluations focusing on the administration and management of private institutions have also been conducted.

According to regulations, it is the responsibility of each HEI to set up a formal internal quality control system. The procedure for evaluating programmes at the level of higher education consists of self-evaluation by the institution, a site visit by external experts (including international experts) and the publication of a final report. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the follow-up of the evaluation.

The higher education quality assurance regulations state that students must be among the members of the institution's self-evaluation group. For example, it is proposed that they should take part in course evaluation. Students are also involved in site visits. The peer review group interviews 8-12 students during each visit and, when planning the visit schedule, the Ministry of Education and HEI contact person consult with student representatives to secure contacts.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education established a special committee on quality in the education sector. The mission of the committee is to map the situation concerning quality issues at all educational levels. For the HE level, the Bologna process will be at the forefront of the work.

A three-year action plan (2005-2007) on HEI evaluation has been agreed. The plan specifies

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the kind of evaluations that will be conducted within the timeframe. It includes both programme evaluations and institutional evaluations. As a general rule, the evaluations are conducted by independent experts outside the Ministry.

The Ministry of Education signs performance-related contracts with all HEIs. Appended to each contract is a list of the degrees that each institution is allowed to offer. If a HEI wants to establish a new programme or degree, this has to be recognised by the Ministry of Education and added to the list. The Ministry of Education

regularly publishes a list of all degrees that are recognised by national authorities.

The Ministry of Education is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). It participates in INQAAHE networks and in NOQA, the Nordic Network of Quality Assurance Agencies.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
1997	Universities act	Lög um háskóla
2003	Regulations (no. 666/2003) on quality assurance in higher education	Reglur (no. 666/2003) um gæðaeftirlit með háskólakennslu

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

ITALY

The university sector is governed by Ministerial Decrees of 1999 and 2004 regulating university autonomy and making provisions for new degree structures.

In accordance with the Decree adopted in 1999 and implemented in 2001, the degree structure has been based on **three main cycles**, but a two cycle structure also widely occurs. In addition, *Laurea* holders are offered an alternative degree programme consisting of at least 60 national credits, which leads to the *Master universitario di I livello*. This latter does not give access to doctoral programmes.

The *Laurea* provides undergraduates with knowledge of academic principles and specific professional skills. The *Laurea specialistica* gives graduates advanced education for highly skilled professions. The *Master universitario di I livello* offers academic or professional specialisation in specific fields.

The reform also includes provision for third-cycle programmes. The *Dottorato di ricerca* trains postgraduates for highly specialised research. No compulsory preparatory programmes or courses are specified by the legislation. **Doctoral programmes** can include research periods abroad and training periods in public or private research bodies and industrial laboratories. They are not structured in credits

as they are based on individual research and collective participation in seminars.

The *Corsi di specializzazione* are set up exclusively in compliance with EU directives or national laws. Their purpose is to provide postgraduates with advanced knowledge and skills for specific professions. The *Master universitario di II livello*, a programme of at least 60 national credits, is intended for higher academic or professional specialisation.

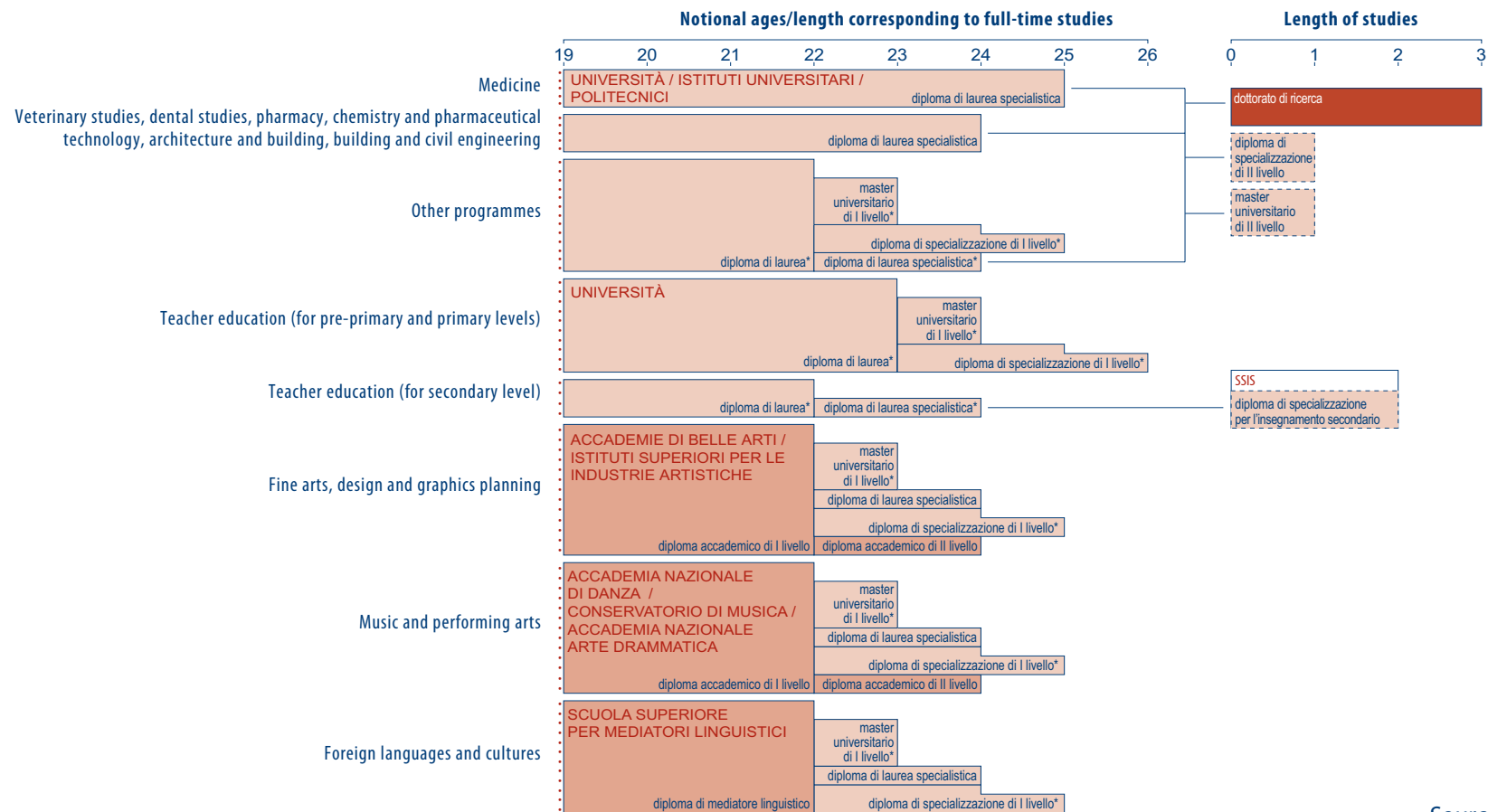
All programmes leading to the above mentioned degrees may be designed and organised in cooperation with foreign universities and therefore result in the award of a joint degree.

The 1999 reform introduced a national credit system that was modelled on **ECTS** and has been compatible with it since 2001. In the university sector, the main aim has been to make the system more student-centred and reduce the gap between the legal and real length of degree programmes. Credits represent the total student workload (class time, individual study, final exam preparation and practical work, etc.) and are used for both transfer and accumulation. One national credit differs from one ECTS being equivalent to 25 hours, and the full-time workload for one academic year is equivalent to 60 credits (1500

hours). Credits may be accumulated up to the amount necessary for the award of degree or may be transferred to another degree programme. Universities may also recognise credits based on professional experience (prior learning accreditation).

The **Diploma Supplement** was also introduced under the decree of 1999 and since January 2005 has been issued with all degrees awarded in accordance with the new framework. Universities began introducing it in 2003. Details of the Diploma Supplement scheme were approved in a further Ministry of Education decree of May 2001. On the basis of the Berlin Communiqué, a decree adopted in April 2004 confirms that Universities must issue the Supplement automatically to all graduates in a bilingual version (Italian and English). Universities may issue the Diploma Supplement free of charge or not at their own discretion.

The National Committee for the Evaluation of the University System (*Comitato nazionale per la valutazione del sistema universitario*, or CNVSU) set up in 1999 is the institutional body entrusted with **quality assurance**. It determines the general criteria for the evaluation of all universities and draws up an annual report on the university evaluation



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

SSIS Scuola di Specializzazione per l'Insegnamento Secondario

Programmes for the *diplomi accademici di II livello* are on offer with effect from the 2004/05 academic year and opportunities for embarking on further courses are being devised.

ITALY

system. It promotes experimentation with and implementation of quality assessment procedures, methodologies and practice. The CNVSU devises and executes annual external assessment plans for individual institutions or single teaching units. Technical evaluations concerning proposals for establishing new state or non-state universities with a view to authorising them to award officially recognised degrees are also carried out.

The CNVSU, whose members are appointed by Ministerial Decree, enjoys the legal status of an independent body interacting autonomously with individual universities and the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). It is supported by a technical and administrative secretariat and has its own budget.

Universities have set up a system for the **internal evaluation** of operational management, teaching and research activities and student welfare services. Evaluation is entrusted to the *Nucleo di valutazione di ateneo* (university evaluation unit) set up in 1999, whose composition, objectives and functions

are regulated by university statute. They number between five and nine members at least two of whom are chosen from students and researchers experienced in the field of quality assessment. University evaluation units are granted rights, which include operational autonomy and access to necessary data and information. They can publish their findings within the law respecting privacy.

Students are requested to complete questionnaires relating to teaching activities and infrastructure, in accordance with the law regulating internal evaluation. These findings, which respect student anonymity, are presented annually to the MIUR and CNVSU.

A system of university degree programme **accreditation** was introduced in 2001. Universities had just designed new degree programmes and were applying to the State for funding while the MIUR was requesting the cooperation of the CNVSU in order to allocate funds effectively. A system of degree programme accreditation needed to be devised which benefited only those

programmes successfully completing the whole process.

Consequently, two distinct but correlated procedures were introduced simultaneously. The first concerns the formal approval of new curricula while the second is involved in the accreditation of programmes themselves. Minimum standards of quality are complied with and evaluation results are published.

Moreover, a presidential decree of 1998 provides for compulsory external evaluation in the accreditation of new state and non-state universities, while a 2003 ministerial decree sets out plans for compulsory external evaluation in the accreditation of virtual campuses (Open universities, *Università telematiche*).

Italy has participated in the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) through the CNVSU since 1998

ITALY

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
11 October 1986	Law No. 697/86 regulating the accreditation of Higher schools of interpreters and translators	Legge n. 697/86 – Disciplina del riconoscimento dei diplomi rilasciati dalle Scuole superiori per interpreti e traduttori
15 May 1997	Law No. 127/97 – Urgent Measures concerning the rationalisation of administration as well as decision making and control proceedings	Legge n. 127/97– Misure urgenti per lo snellimento dell’attività amministrativa e dei procedimenti di decisione e di controllo
27 January 1998	Presidential Decree No. 25/98 – Regulations on proceedings for the university system development and planning, as well as for the regional co-ordination committees	DPR (Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica) n. 25/98 – Regolamento recante disciplina dei procedimenti relativi allo sviluppo ed alla programmazione del sistema universitario, nonché ai comitati regionali di coordinamento
3 July 1998	Law No. 210/98 – Regulations for the recruitment of researchers and university professors with tenure	Legge n. 210/98 – Norme per il reclutamento dei ricercatori e dei professori universitari di ruolo
30 April 1999	Ministerial Decree No. 224/99 – Regulations on Research doctorate programmes	Decreto Ministeriale (MURST), n. 224/99 – Regolamento in materia di dottorato di ricerca
19 October 1999	Law No. 370/99 – Regulations on university sector and scientific and technological research	Legge, n. 370/99 – Disposizioni in materia di università e di ricerca scientifica e tecnologica
3 November 1999 (amended 22 October 2004)	Ministerial Decree No. 509/99 – Regulations on university teaching autonomy	Decreto Ministeriale (MURST), n. 509/99 – Regolamento recante norme concernenti l’autonomia didattica degli atenei

ITALY

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
21 December 1999	Law No. 508/99 – Reform of fine art academies, national dance academy, national drama academy, higher institutes for applied arts, music conservatories and recognised music institutes	Legge, n. 508/99 – Riforma delle Accademie di belle arti, dell'Accademia nazionale di danza, dell'Accademia nazionale di arte drammatica, degli Istituti superiori per le industrie artistiche, dei Conservatori di musica e degli Istituti musicali pareggiati
30 May 2001	Ministerial Decree for the determination of basic data on students' careers and for the issue of the diploma supplement certification.	Decreto Ministeriale (MURST), di individuazione dei dati essenziali sulle carriere degli studenti e per il rilascio del certificato di supplemento al diploma
17 April 2003	Ministerial Decree Criteria and procedures for the accreditation of distance courses of state and non-state universities and university institutions qualified to issue academic titles.	Decreto Ministeriale (MURST) Criteri e procedure di accreditamento dei corsi di studio a distanza delle universita' statali e non statali e delle istituzioni universitarie abilitate a rilasciare titoli accademici
26 April 2004	Ministerial Decree No. 214 regulating the accreditation of Italian branches of foreign universities	Decreto Ministeriale (MURST), n. 214/2004 Regolamento recante criteri e procedure per gli istituti stranieri di istruzione superiore che operano in Italia ai fini del riconoscimento del titolo di studio da essi rilasciato
30 April 2004	Ministerial Decree National register for students and graduates	Decreto Ministeriale Anagrafe Nazionale degli Studenti e dei Laureati
22 October 2004	Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004 Amendment to regulations on university teaching autonomy	Decreto Ministeriale n. 270/2004, Modifiche al regolamento recante norme concernenti l'autonomia didattica degli atenei

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

A new law concerning higher education was recently published in 2005, replacing the former one adopted in 1992. Given the small size of the country, the higher education system consists of three institutions recognised by the State.

The degree structure based on **two main cycles** was implemented in 2005 in accordance with the new law for all ISCED 5A programmes. It has existed for the fields of business sciences and architecture offered by the *Hochschule Liechtenstein* since 2003/04. Since 2000, the IAP also offered a two cycle-structure. The programmes leading to Bachelor's and Master's degrees last three years (180 ECTS) and one and a half to two years (90 to 120 ECTS) respectively.

Doctoral programmes exist but are limited to a specific field of study (philosophy), and are only provided by the *Internationale Akademie für Philosophie* (International Academy of Philosophy or IAP), where first- and second-cycle programmes are not offered. They last a minimum of two years (120 ECTS) and lead to the academic title of Doctor of Philosophy. Doctoral programmes include taught courses. Admission to such programmes requires the completion of a Master's degree or another

equivalent programme prepared and awarded abroad.

ECTS was introduced by the *Hochschule Liechtenstein* on a voluntary basis in 1996 for transfer purposes only, and by the IAP and *Universität für Humanwissenschaften* (University of Human Sciences or UfH) in 2000. Following the new law of 2005, the implementation of ECTS got under way at all higher education institutions in January 2005. Wherever it is introduced, it is used in terms of transfer and accumulation.

The **Diploma Supplement** has been delivered at the *Hochschule Liechtenstein* and the IAP since 1999 and was legally implemented for all programmes at each higher education institution in January 2005. It is automatically delivered free of charge to all students, in German and in English.

Quality assurance principles are included in the laws of 1992 and 2005.

Due to the size of the country, **accreditation** exists but is included in the external evaluation process.

External evaluation is operated every six years at least and is based on peer reviews. Due to the small size of the country and the lack of a national agency involved in this field, external

evaluation is carried out thanks to European experts. These groups of inspectors consist essentially of Swiss and Austrian experts. Their main task is to contribute to quality assurance and improvement (consisting of 'branding', internal assessment of the course of studies, self-assessment, talks and visits by experts followed by recommendations, and EU branding). There are also plans for private foreign agencies involved in quality assurance to participate in the accreditation process. Higher education institutions pay for these controls.

In terms of **internal evaluation**, the institutions guarantee the quality of research and teaching, which generally undergo improvements on a permanent basis. They are obliged in particular to draft an annual report dealing with quality management. Higher education institutions are supervised by the Office of Education (*Schulamt*). If shortcomings are observed in the management of an institution, they must be corrected by the institution before a deadline set by the government.

Students, lecturers and business and industrial representatives all contribute to evaluation. In line with legal requirements and international standards, the *Hochschule Liechtenstein* has

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developed a process-oriented system of quality improvement and assurance for all products and services. The quality management system comprises six main processes. Under this system, all executives and faculty members as well as administrative and support staff have a

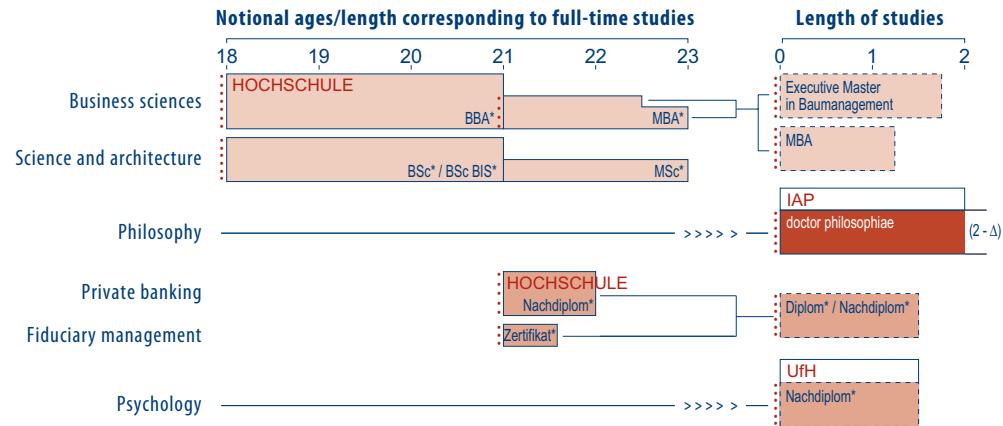
duty to implement the defined processes and to play an active role in the overall enhancement process. Students and other groups and individuals with an interest in the university are also invited to participate.

Liechtenstein is eligible to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in national language
17 September 1992 (amended on 25 November 2004)	Act on Universities of applied sciences, higher education institutions and research institutions	Gesetz über Fachhochschulen, Hochschul- und Forschungsinstitute
25 November 2004 (issued on 21 January 2005)	Act on Higher Education	Gesetz über das Hochschulwesen (Hochschulgesetz; HSG)
25 November 2004 (issued on January 2005)	Act on the University of Applied Sciences Liechtenstein	Gesetz über die Hochschule Liechtenstein

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i> Intermediate diploma	-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i> Qualifying degree	* Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

>>> Study abroad

BBA Bachelor of Business Administration

BSc Bachelor of Science

BScBIS Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems

IAP Internationale Akademie of Philosophie

MBA Master of Business Administration

MSc Master of Science

UfH Universität für Humanwissenschaften

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The main reforms related to the Bologna Process were incorporated in the new Law on Higher Education adopted in 2000. The higher education system is currently undergoing a reform which should end in 2010.

The degree structure based on **three main cycles** has existed since 1993. The first cycles last three and a half to four and a half years (140 to 180 national credits) and lead to a Bachelor's (*bakalauras*) degree or a professional qualification (*profesinė kvalifikacija*). The second cycles last one and a half to two years (60 to 80 national credits) and lead to a Master's (*magistras*) degree or to a professional qualification (*profesinė kvalifikacija*).

Three different types of third cycles exist. Doctoral studies (*doktorantūra*) last no more than three or four years (120 or 160 national credits), *rezidentūra* studies for students in Medicine, Odontology and Veterinary Medicine last two to six years (from 80 to 240 national credits), and art studies (*meno aspirantūra*) last no more than two years (80 national credits).

Vientisosios (integrated) studies (combining studies in the first and second cycles) are also provided. After the successful completion of integrated studies, a *profesinė kvalifikacija* or *magistras* degree is awarded, providing access to third-cycle studies. In order to complete the

studies, 180 to 240 national credits (200 to 240 when a *magistras* degree is awarded) are required, whereas studies in the fields of Medicine, Odontology and Veterinary Medicine require a maximum of 280 national credits.

Doctoral programmes (*doktorantūra*) can be pursued by completing the second cycle or integrated studies, or by having comparable qualifications. The *doktorantūra* consists of doctoral courses, specific research activities and the preparation of a doctoral dissertation. Upon completion of the doctoral course, a doctoral thesis must be prepared and publicly defended in order for the candidate to qualify for the doctorate. Doctoral studies must be jointly organised by higher education and research institutions.

A national credit system dating from 1993 and compatible with **ECTS**, has been consolidated and fully implemented under the new law. The workload of each study programme is measured in credits. One national credit corresponds to 40 relative hours (or to one week) of the student's work (in classes, laboratories, independent work, etc.). It corresponds to approximately one and a half ECTS. The average volume of full-time studies is 40 credits per study year. It is used both for transfer and accumulation.

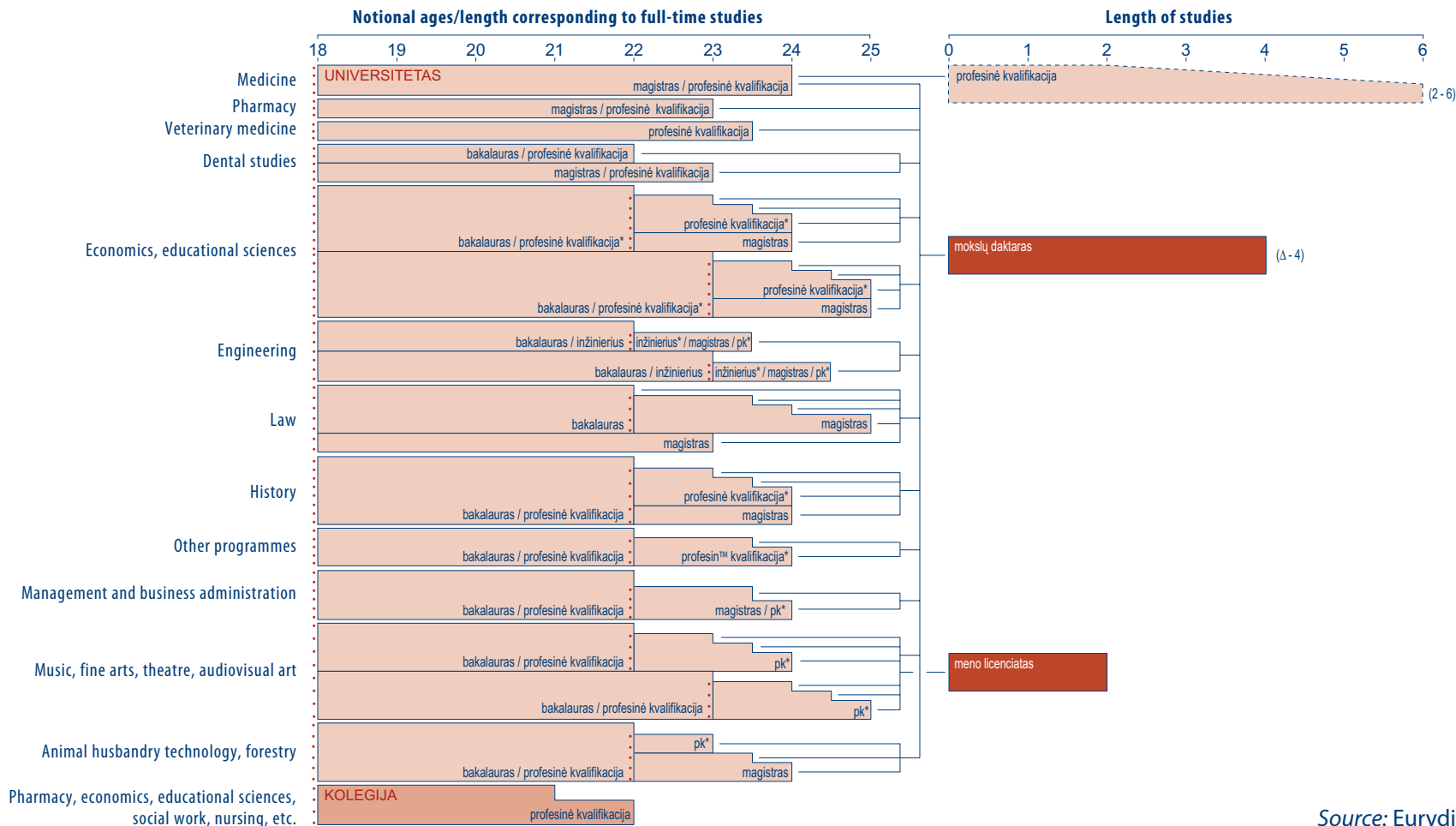
The **Diploma Supplement** was introduced legally at national level in 2004. It is issued on request and free of charge and in English and Lithuanian as one document from 2004/05. It will be delivered automatically to all students from 2005/06 onwards.

Administrative arrangements in the field of **quality assurance** have existed since 1995.

An **internal** quality assurance system is in place in each higher education institution (HEI). The self-evaluation report is the basis for external evaluation and accreditation. Accreditation in Lithuanian legal acts is used only in relation to study programmes.

Students are involved by means of internal procedures and questionnaires. One student is also included in the group responsible for the self-evaluation report.

In terms of **external evaluation**, the quality of the study programmes has been periodically assessed by the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education since 1999 (*Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras*). The Centre is a public administration institution and the majority of its employees are civil servants. Its activities mainly include the assessment of higher education and research institutions (organisation of experts' assessments of the quality of higher education and research



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n-x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Pk Profesinė kvalifikacija

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institutions) and the evaluation of higher education qualifications. Similarly, the Expert Council (which operated in 1999 and 2004) and the Council for Assessment (2004) cover both public and private higher education and research institutions.

Initially, the Expert Council consisted of ten members (Lithuanian academics). It now consists of at least one teacher from either university or non-university higher education institution, one social partner representative, one student (member of governing or other students' association) and recognised scientists, specialists, etc.

The Council for Assessment consists of scientists, distinguished teachers with peer review experience, specialists, administrators and civil servants.

Students are members of both the Expert Council (2004) and the Council for Assessment (2004).

In August 2001, a Minister's decree on order of **accreditation** was adopted, and in April 2002, the first Minister's decree regarding programme accreditation was issued. An institutional assessment has been implemented for non-university higher education institutions (*kolegija*) since the 2004/05 academic year. This process will be

implemented from the 2005/06 academic year at universities and research institutions. According to the Law on Higher Education of 2000, institutional evaluation should be performed for newly established private and public higher education institutions after four years. The evaluation is done for quality check rather than for accreditation purposes. The final decision on accreditation is taken by the Ministry of Education and Science. The Minister is free to agree, disagree or suspend the Council's decisions and the Centre's recommendations. All suggestions made by the Expert Council (1999) were approved by the Minister.

Accreditation is valid until the next external assessment of the study programme. The first cycle of external evaluation of study programmes with the purpose of accreditation started in 1999. There are plans to assess study programmes in all fields of study by the end of 2007. Conditional and restricted accreditation is valid for a shorter term which is indicated in the accreditation decree. As a rule, the period of validity for such accreditation is two to three years.

Aside from arrangements linked to the Bologna Process, the procedure for student admission to higher education was simplified in 1999 with the introduction of national examinations now

recognised by all Lithuanian higher education institutions. There are also plans to arrange for joint admission to courses (in some *kolegija* as well as universities). In 1999, the first two universities began to conduct joint admission to the first cycle of higher education. Then, in 2003, most universities joined the Association of Higher Education Institutions of Lithuania, which began to organise and co-ordinate admissions procedures for all its members.

The 2000 Law on Higher Education also amended the status of institutions by implementing a two-tier system of university and non-university higher education. The latter is currently the most rapidly growing sector in the Lithuanian education system, partly as a result of the reform of the *aukštesnioji mokykla* (vocational colleges), many of which have become the first non-university higher education institutions (*kolegija*).

Finally, the law has also facilitated the development of private higher education institutions by providing a clearer definition of the requirements for their establishment.

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education has expressed an interest in joining the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

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Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
12 January 1991 (amended on 11 June 2002)	Law on Science and Studies	Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas
21 March 2000	Law on Higher Education	Aukštojo mokslo įstatymas
7 December 2000	Law on the Long-term Financing of Science and Education 2000 12 07	Mokslo ir švietimo ilgalaikio finansavimo įstatymas
11 July 2001	Regulations on doctoral studies	Doktorantūros nuostatai
4 March 2004	Minister's Decree on quality assessment within non-university higher education institutions (<i>kolegija</i>)	Dėl kolegijų, įsteigtų reorganizuojant aukštesniausias mokyklas, veiklos kokybės vertinimo tvarkos aprašo tvirtinimo

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

For more detailed information on the general description of the higher education system: <http://www.smm.lt>

Website of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania for further information on legislation: <http://www3.lrs.lt/n/eng/DPaieska.html>

For further information on joint admission to higher education institutions: <http://www.lamabpo.lt>

LUXEMBOURG

The University of Luxembourg was established by the law of 12 August 2003. The University was conceived as a small international multilingual institution with a strong research commitment. It has taken over and restructured certain courses offered by the former higher education institutions (the *Centre universitaire*, the *Institut supérieur de technologie*, the *Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques* and the *Institut d'études éducatives et sociales pour la formation à l'éducateur gradué*). The University began its work at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year.

As the University of Luxembourg does not offer courses in all fields of study at all levels, Luxembourg students continue to pursue all or some of their higher education abroad.

The structural pattern of courses takes account of the aims of the Bologna process and is thus based on **three main cycles** (*bachelor*, *master* and *docteur*). The law states that mobility is compulsory at *bachelor* level so students enrolled at the University of Luxembourg can only obtain the *bachelor* qualification if they have spent a period of time studying at a university or any other higher education institution abroad. The provision of doctoral courses in certain fields is planned with effect from October 2005.

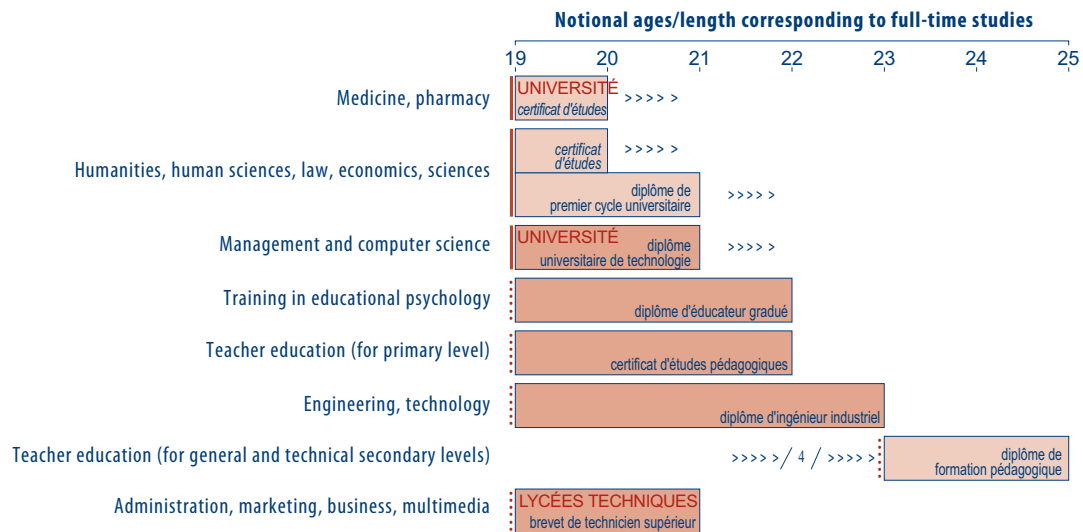
The three types of programme are converted into **ECTS** credits and the ECTS system is used for credit transfer and accumulation.

No steps have been taken to introduce the **Diploma Supplement**.

As yet there is no national agency responsible for evaluation, but the law of 12 August 2003 provides for the **internal** and **external evaluation** of teaching, research and administrative services at the University. Evaluation is carried out by recognised personalities or agencies in order to establish international comparisons regarding quality in teaching and research, and university services. Luxembourg is planning to set up a body belonging to an international consortium for external evaluation. It has no member agency within the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term	Term in the national language
12 August 2003	Law on the establishment of the University of Luxembourg	Loi portant création de l'Université du Luxembourg



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

>>> Study abroad

Initial moves to reform the Latvian higher education system got underway well before the Bologna Declaration. The first major development was the Education Law of 1991. In accordance with this law, a degree structure based on **two main cycles** (Bachelor's/Master's) was introduced in most disciplines but only in academic programmes. The 1995 Law on Higher Educational Establishments (LHEE) led to further strengthening of this structure but also underlined the division between academic and professional programmes. The amendments to the LHEE in 2000 established professional Bachelor's and Master's degrees which replaced the former five-year programmes, introducing the Bachelor's/Master's structure into the whole system and thus facilitating the transfer from one type of education to the other. The total period of study for a Master's degree should be no less than five years.

Amendments to the LHEE introduced **doctoral studies** as part of academic education (previously, doctoral degree candidates were research workers not involved in education). A degree structure based on **three main cycles** is thus fully established. The procedure and criteria for awarding the doctoral degree in accordance with the Law on Scientific Activities (LoSA) are further set out in the regulations of

the Cabinet of Ministers. Doctoral study programmes are developed by the higher education institution, and contain the list of compulsory and optional subjects along with the corresponding number of credit points, the content of research, the previous level of education necessary to embark on studies, and other provisions for implementing the programme. A doctorate is obtained only after fulfilling the requirements for the doctoral study programme and after the public defence of the doctoral thesis.

It is common practice for institutions to try and provide opportunities for their doctoral candidates to prepare part of their thesis abroad in co-operation with a foreign academic as a second supervisor. However, from a legal standpoint it is still difficult to formally award a joint doctorate with other universities.

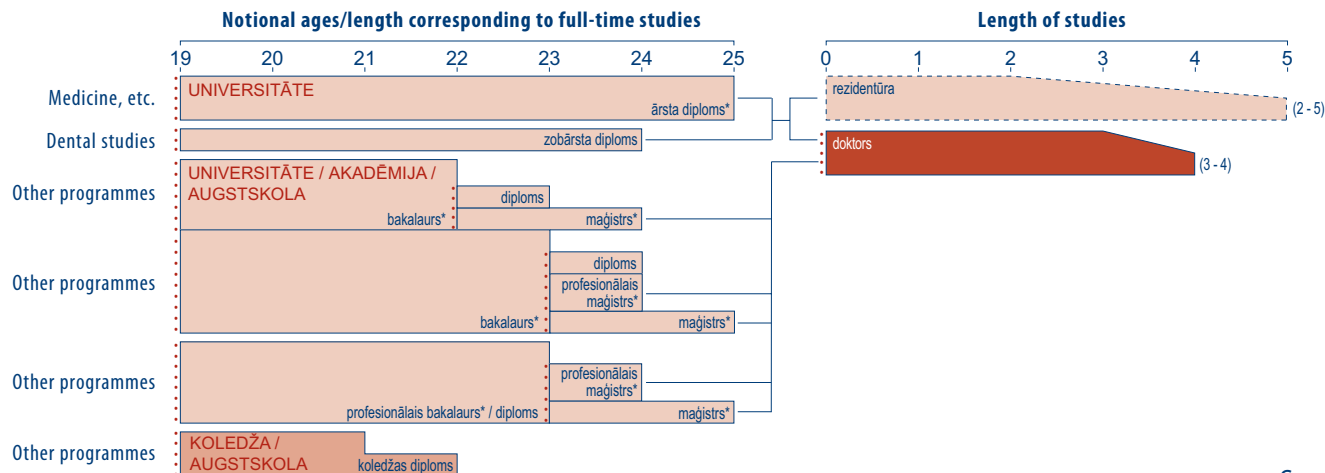
Since 1998, the majority of higher education institutions have introduced a Latvian credit point system compatible with **ECTS**, which has been used for both accumulation and transfer since it was first implemented. A Latvian credit point is defined as the full-time workload of a student in one week. As the academic year lasts 40 weeks, this corresponds to 40 Latvian credits per year and, on this basis, one Latvian credit is

worth 1.5 ECTS credits. So far, the ECTS grading scale is used only in the case of credit transfer.

As of 1 January 2004, all graduates receive the **Diploma Supplement** automatically and free of charge, in accordance with the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers on the order concerned with the issuing of state-recognised education documents testifying to the completion of higher education, and the awarding of degrees. The Supplement is issued in Latvian and English.

The national Higher Education **Quality Evaluation** Centre, or HEQEC (*Augstākās izglītības kvalitātes novērtēšanas centrs*), was established in December 1994. The Centre does not participate in the evaluation of a higher education institution or study programme itself, but assists higher education institutions in preparing their internal assessment reports, and appoints Evaluation Commissions (expert teams) which include one Latvian and at least two foreign experts.

The continuous quality assurance process consists of self-evaluation and evaluation by external experts, and ends with accreditation. Both the higher education institution as a whole and the programme in question have to be accredited before a state-recognised higher education credential can be issued. The first



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

First-cycle professional programmes (to the left of *diplooms* in row 4) which do not lead to a professional bachelor degree are being phased out. Students were admitted to these programmes for the last time in 2004/05.

After receiving the *koledžas diploms*, students may continue their studies in *profesionālais bakalaura* transferring the credits obtained.

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step in the process is the self-assessment report that representatives of the administration, academic staff and students at higher education institutions have to prepare in English. Experts evaluate it and other documents, and arrange for an evaluation visit to the higher education institution, submitting a common statement as well as written individual opinions. Institutions are accredited by the Council of Higher Education (*Augstākās izglītības padome*), and study programmes are accredited by the Accreditation Commission established by the Ministry of Education and Science. Students are represented in both these national bodies. The accreditation process began in 1996 and the first round of accreditation was completed in 2002. Accreditation proceeds in accordance with the regulations entitled 'On accreditation of Higher

Education Institutions and Study Programmes', approved in October 2001. Foreign experts are involved in each evaluation.

Study programmes are accredited once every six years. In exceptional cases, the Accreditation Commission grants only temporary accreditation, implying a repeated assessment after two years.

The self-assessment reports and reports by expert teams are made publicly available via the Internet and the educational newspaper *Izglītība un Kultūra* (Education and Culture).

The quality assurance system is also used for quality improvement and as a means to reforms in higher education.

In order to start implementing higher education programmes, a higher education

institution has to receive a licence from the Ministry of Education and Science both for the institution itself and for each particular study programme. Licensing is a kind of preliminary quality assurance, in that within three years after getting a licence, a higher education institution has to submit the study programme for accreditation.

The HEQEC has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (**ENQA**) since 2003, and of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) since 1997.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
19 June 1991 (null and void from 1 June 1999)	Education Law of the Republic of Latvia	<i>"Latvijas Republikas Izglītības likums"</i>
10 November 1992	Law on Scientific Activities	Likums <i>"Par zinātnisko darbību"</i>
2 November 1995	Law on Higher Educational Establishments (LHEE)	<i>"Augstskolu likums"</i>

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Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
29 October 1998 (valid since 1 June 1999 abolishing the previous law of 1991)	Education Law	<i>"Izglītības likums"</i>
6 April 1999	Regulation No. 134 of the Cabinet of Ministers 'On the procedure and criteria for promotion'	MK Noteikumi Nr.134 <i>"Nolikums par promocijas kārtību un kritērijiem"</i>
20 October 2001	Regulation No. 442 of the Cabinet of Ministers 'On accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes'	MK Noteikumi Nr. 442 <i>"Augstākās izglītības iestāžu un studiju programmu akreditācijas noteikumi"</i>
31 August 2003	Regulations No. 747 of the Cabinet of Ministers 'Amendments of the Regulations No. 134 of the Cabinet of Ministers as of 06 April, 1999 'On the procedure and criteria for promotion''	MK noteikumi Nr. 747 <i>"Grozījumi Ministru kabineta 1999.gada 6.aprīļa noteikumos Nr. 134 "Nolikums par promocijas kārtību un kritērijiem""</i>
23 September 2003	Regulation No. 531 of the Cabinet of Ministers 'On the order of issuing state-recognised education documents confirming higher education and scientific degree'	MK Noteikumi Nr. 531 <i>"Kārtība, kādā izsniedzami valsts atzīti augstāko izglītību un zinātnisko grādu apliecinājoši izglītības dokumenti"</i>

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

<http://www.aiknc.lv/en/>

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The Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on Higher Education (July 2003) covers the Bologna concept of higher education structure based on **three main cycles**. First-cycle undergraduate studies (academic/professional Bachelor's) are organised by universities/-faculties (for a duration of at least three years and a maximum of five) and by higher professional schools (for a maximum duration of three years). Second-cycle postgraduate studies open to candidates who have completed four years of undergraduate studies can be organised as Master of Science or Master of Arts studies for a duration of at least three semesters, one of which is for the preparation of a Master's thesis. They may also be organised as postgraduate professional studies (specialisation) for a duration of nine months, three of which are for the preparation of a thesis. The technical sciences and technologies faculties underwent the most substantial curricula and degree structure reforms. In 2004, most of them replaced the common 5+2+3 model with a 3+2+3 model (for professional undergraduate courses) and a 4+1+3 or 4+1.5+3 model (for academic Bachelor's studies). Some of them also introduced short-cycle studies as part of the first cycle. Restructuring continues in the areas of humanities, social sciences and arts. The

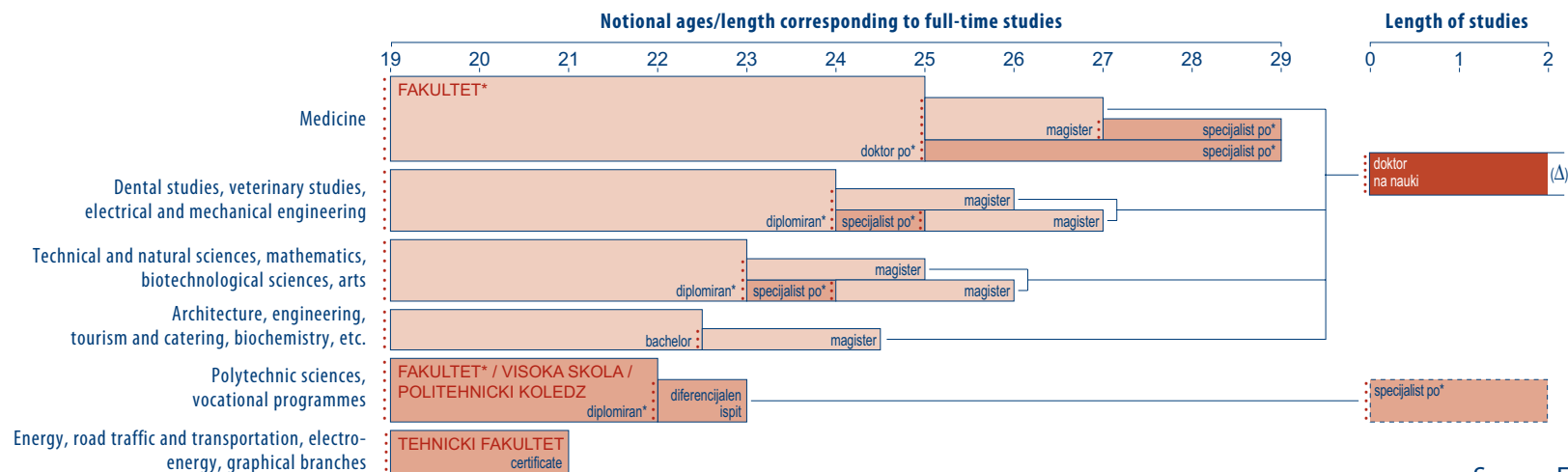
higher education institutions (HEIs) with study programmes in regulated professions are keen to join in the developments taking place in other Bologna signatory countries. Considering the long tradition of higher education provided with four-year undergraduate studies and two-year postgraduate studies, the majority of reformed study programmes have continued to follow the concept of a four-year Bachelor's degree for first-cycle academic studies along with a one- or two-year Master's model, or a three-year Bachelor's degree for first-cycle professional studies along with a two-year Master's model.

The **doctoral degree** can be obtained after doctoral studies of a minimum duration of two years and the defence of a thesis (within three years after the completion of the doctoral studies), or after mentorship-based studies, with the defence of a thesis within five years following the approval of a proposal by the scientific council of the HEI. Candidates must have a Master's degree or a specialisation in medical sciences and must have successfully defended a Master's thesis. Doctoral studies are predominantly based on mentorship.

In 2000, the Law on Higher Education introduced the obligation of HEIs to organise credit-based undergraduate (Article 96) and

postgraduate studies (Article 111). In accordance with Article 67 of the Law on Higher Education, the university senates in Skopje and Bitola adopted regulations for a harmonised credit system and the transfer between programmes and institutions in November 2001 and March 2003 respectively. With this, the universities adopted the principles of **ECTS** as an accumulation and transfer system for undergraduate, postgraduate (specialist and Master's studies) and doctoral studies. The study programmes of the recently established HEIs (the South-East European University in Tetovo, the Faculty of Social Sciences in Skopje and the State University in Tetovo) are based on ECTS. There is a need to strengthen the capacities of higher education administration, in particular student services and offices for international co-operation (staff development and information systems), in order to assure the smooth implementation of ECTS.

On 11 June 2002, the Rectors' Board of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje adopted the decision to introduce the **Diploma Supplement**, defining the form, content and means of issuing. It will be issued in Macedonian and English upon students' request, and students will bear the cost. The cost will be identical in all HEIs and will be



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i> Intermediate diploma	-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n-x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i> Qualifying degree	* Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

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determined by the Rector's board. In 2005, the Ministry of Education and Science and the HEIs will work on the implementation of the Diploma Supplement. Preparatory activities are taking place at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, St. Kliment Ohridski University in Bitola and the South-East European University in Tetovo, aiming at issuing the documents from the 2005/06 academic year. The Faculty of Social Sciences (founded in the 2003/04 academic year) and the State University in Tetovo (founded in the 2004/05 academic year) have no graduates yet.

The Law on Higher Education (2000) established the legal basis for developing the **quality assurance** system. The legal basis was improved with the Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on Higher Education (2003). According to the law, the quality assurance system covers the approval, confirmation and recognition of the performances of an HEI so that it may practise activities in accordance with the Law on Higher Education, through a process of **accreditation**. It assesses the quality of higher education, i.e. administration, financing, academic and other activities, as well as the priorities of the institution, through a process of **evaluation**. The quality assurance system also covers other activities and mechanisms through which

higher education quality is developed and maintained, as established by law and other legal acts adopted by bodies responsible for quality assurance.

The national body responsible for accreditation – the Higher Education Accreditation Board (*Odbor za akreditacija na visokoto obrazovanie*) – was established on 12 November 2001. The Board is an independent body consisting of fifteen members. Nine of the members are elected by the Inter-University Conference, two are from the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts and four are appointed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (professors or persons with scientific titles). The members of the Board have a four-year mandate and are independent in their work. The constitutive session of the Board is convened by the minister in charge of higher education. The Board elects its president from among its own members. It is independent in its work and adopts decisions within its jurisdiction on the basis of expertise and competency.

When the relevant documentation has been submitted for a project to establish an HEI, the Accreditation Board determines, within its rights and duties, whether requirements have been met regarding the higher education

activity in question. It decides whether a licence will be granted to a scientific institution wishing to offer postgraduate and/or doctoral studies, determines whether the higher education institution fulfils the conditions for organising new study programmes, and determines the capacity to offer these programmes. The Board keeps records on HEI accreditation and other licences, and performs other tasks provided for by this law.

The Board informs the minister in charge of higher education on the performed accreditation activities and other matters when necessary. The Accreditation Board may establish expert commissions whose competencies are specified in the accreditation procedure. In particular, the methodologies and procedures for the work, decision-making, accreditation, evaluation and other matters are regulated by the Rules of Procedure. The necessary funds for the operation of the Accreditation Board are provided by the national budget under a special budget item. The manner in which expert, administrative and financial tasks are performed is regulated by an agreement between the Accreditation Board and the ministry in charge of higher education. The accreditation procedure is carried out according to regulations on the norms and standards for establishing HEIs and

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for practising higher education activities, adopted in August 2002.

External evaluation and joint quality assessment of academic staff at universities and other HEIs is performed by the Higher Education Evaluation Agency (*Agencija za evaluacija na visokoto obrazovanie*) established on 13 December 2001 by the Higher Education Accreditation Board. The Evaluation Agency is composed of nine members elected by the Accreditation Board. Members of the Agency are HEI professors with a four-year mandate. The members of the Evaluation Agency are independent in their work and cannot be removed before their mandate has expired. The constitutive session of the Evaluation Agency is convened by the president of the Accreditation Board.

The tasks of the Evaluation Agency include the monitoring of accredited institutions based on evaluation reports and the assessment of the status and operation of the accredited HEIs once every five years, before proposing the extension or withdrawal of licences to the Accreditation Board. It issues necessary recommendations for the improvement of norms and standards for the establishment of HEIs and for practising higher education activities. The Agency also proposes measures

to improve the network of HEIs, and assesses the quality of the academic staff at universities and other HEIs to propose measures for improvement. Other tasks are performed in accordance with guidelines, and reports on evaluation results are published. These reports are submitted to parliament, the government and the ministry in charge of higher education, as well as to the Accreditation Board.

The Evaluation Agency performs external evaluations under the conditions determined in the guidelines for quality assurance and assessment of HEIs and academic staff, adopted by the Evaluation Agency in 2002.

External evaluation at faculty/institute level and at university level started in 2003. The external evaluation reports were submitted to the Evaluation Agency and the Accreditation Board.

Internal evaluation is performed by HEIs at institutional level (faculty, college, higher professional school or research institute) and at university level. Each institution establishes a self-evaluation commission appointed by the council of the HEI. The self-evaluation commission has five members (three academic staff members, one administrative staff member and one student). All HEIs which are constituent parts of Ss. Cyril and Methodius

University and St. Kliment Ohridski University established self-evaluation commissions in February and March 2002. The university senate nominates the members of the university evaluation commission which is made up of nine members (seven academic staff members and two students).

The evaluation commission at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University was appointed in December 2001. The St. Kliment Ohridski University senate appointed a self-evaluation commission in April 2002, and South-East European University established a self-evaluation commission in 2003.

Following the adoption of the above-mentioned evaluation instruments and the establishment of institutional and university evaluation commissions, the first self-evaluation at all faculties, institutes and universities was conducted in 2002. Students were involved in the self-evaluation procedure (all students at faculty/institute level and groups of students at university level). Questionnaires were used as evaluation instruments.

In February 2003, the European University Association (EUA) was invited by the state universities in Skopje and Bitola, and later by the private South-East European University in

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Tetovo, to undertake an institutional evaluation of each university through a European peer review process. The purpose of the evaluation was to help the universities identify the progress made in the reform of administrative and management structures and the system, highlight the steps which still needed to be taken, and contribute to the development of policies and strategies which would guarantee the quality of operations undertaken by the universities, in order to ensure that

Macedonian universities would become fully integrated into the European Higher Education Area by 2010. Three EUA institutional reports were prepared by EUA expert teams in 2003 and 2004. They are available to the public on the Internet.

The experience with the implementation of the current quality assurance procedure proved that the process is too complex. The intention is to merge the Accreditation Board and the Evaluation Agency to create a single quality

assurance body at national level. The legal basis for this change will be established with the updates of the Higher Education Law, foreseen for 2005.

Since 2001, the country has been a member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Network) and intends to have a member representative within the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

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Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in national language
25 July 2000	Law on Higher Education; Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia No. 64, August 2000	Zakon za visokoto obrazovanie; Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija br. 64, avgust 2000
24 September 2001	Regulations on the harmonised organisation of postgraduate and doctoral studies at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; University Newsletter No. 7, 25 September 2001	Pravilnik za edinstvenite osnovi za organiziranje na posleddiplomski i doktorski studii na Univerzitetot 'Sv. Kiril i Metodij' vo Skopje; Univerzitetski glasnik br. 7, 25 septemvri 2001
29 November 2001	Regulations on the harmonised credit system for the transition from one study programme to another and for the transition from one higher education institution to another constituent part of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; University Newsletter No. 20, 30 November 2001	Pravilnik za edinstvenite osnovi za kredit sistemot, preminot od edna na druga studiska programa i preminot od edna visokoobrazovna ustanova vo sostav na Univerzitetot 'Sv. Kiril i Metodij' vo Skopje; Univerzitetski glasnik br. 20, 30 noemvri 2001
29 November 2001	Guidebook on harmonised study regulations at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; University Newsletter No. 20, 30 November 2001	Pravilnik za edinstvenite pravila za studiranje na Univerzitetot 'Sv. Kiril i Metodij' vo Skopje; Univerzitetski glasnik br. 20, 30 noemvri 2001
11 June 2002	Decision regarding the introduction of the Diploma Supplement, defining the form, content and means of issuing; University Newsletter No. 27, 16 June 2002	Odluka za voveduvanje Prilog kon diplomata (Diploma Supplement), kako i za formata, soдрzinata i za nacinot na negovoto izdavanje; Univerzitetski glasnik br. 27, 18 juni 2002
13 August 2002	Regulations on the norms and standards for establishing HEIs and for practising higher education activities; Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia No. 68, August 2002	Pravilnik za normativite i standardite za osnovanje visokoobrazovni ustanovi i za vrsenje visokoobrazovna dejnost; Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija br. 68, avgust 2002

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Date	Term in English	Term in national language
1 October 2002	Guidelines for quality assurance and assessment of HEIs and academic staff in the Republic of Macedonia; Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia No. 75, October 2002	Vodic za obezbeduvawe kvalitet i ocenuvanje na instituciite za visoko obrazovanie i na akademskite kadri vo Republika Makedonija; Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija br. 75, oktombri 2002
19 March 2003	St. Kliment Ohridski University regulations on the harmonised credit system for the transition from one study programme to another and for the transition from one higher education institution to another; University Newsletter, March 2003	Pravilnik na Univerzitetot 'Sv. Kliment Ohridski' – Bitola za edinstvenite osnovi na kredit transfer sistemot (sistemot za prenos na bodovi, CTS-Credit Transfer System) za premin na druga studiska programa i premin od edna na druga visokoobrazovna ustanova; Univerzitetski glasnik, mart 2003
17 July 2003	Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on Higher Education; Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia No. 49, July 2003	Zakon za izmenuvanje i dopolnuvanje na Zakonot za visokoto obrazovanie; Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija br. 49, juli 2003
21 January 2004	Law on establishing a state university in Tetovo; Official Journal of the Republic of Macedonia No. 8, February 2004	Zakon za osnivanje drzaven univerzitet vo Tetovo; Sluzben vesnik na Republika Makedonija br.8, februar 2004

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje: <http://www.ukim.edu.mk>

St. Kliment Ohridski University – Bitola: <http://www.uklo.edu.mk>

South-East European University – Tetovo: <http://www.see-university.com>

CEE Network: http://www.ceenetwork.hu/r_macedonia.html

MALTA

Higher education is regulated by the Education Act of 1988 and subsequent amendments. The University of Malta falls under the provisions of this Act.

The degree structure, traditionally based on **three main cycles**, has been followed for many years. Full-time programmes leading to Bachelor's and Master's degrees last 3 to 4 years and 1 to 2 years respectively. They are offered by the University of Malta in most disciplines.

Full-time **doctoral programmes** vary in duration between 3 and 6 years. There are no programmes offering initial preparation. Doctoral programmes offered by the University of Malta are based solely on research. A 15-month full-time research programme is undertaken by holders of first-cycle degrees prior to formal transfer to doctoral studies. This period is included in the duration of the doctoral programme.

On 20 January 2005, the University of Malta approved provisions for the award of joint degrees with other overseas universities. In such cases, programmes are offered and degrees may be awarded as laid down in the agreements reached with them.

ECTS has been implemented since October 2003. It is mandatory for all programmes and is

applied both in terms of transfer and accumulation.

The University of Malta is working on introducing the **Diploma Supplement** in the near future but no date has been fixed as yet. Pending its introduction, students receive a transcript of their academic record. Such transcripts include students' personal details, course of studies, duration, mode of attendance, areas of study, titles of modules followed and results obtained, participation in overseas exchange programmes and final classification of the award. The issuing of a Diploma Supplement is not legally mandatory in Malta. When it is issued, it is expected that the chosen language will be English.

Quality assurance is undertaken for study programmes at the University of Malta through the annual participation of **external** examiners (both visiting and non-visiting) in setting and correcting examination papers and dissertations of final year students. They are also expected to report on the courses in general. External examiners from overseas institutions are always appointed members of the Board of Examiners for doctorates.

The **internal evaluation** procedure is pursued by a Quality Assurance Committee set up in 1996 by the University of Malta. This includes

representatives from each faculty and the administrative staff, as well as from the Students' Representative Council. As from 2004/05, measures introduced by the Committee and approved by Senate include faculty internal audits. At this initial stage, the Audit Team includes a member of the Quality Assurance Committee, the Dean (or representative) of the faculty and an external auditor who will normally be an academic working in an overseas university and who is well acquainted with the Maltese academic scene.

The Students' Representative Council is represented on the Committee and provides feedback and suggestions. The Committee relies on External Examiners to provide feedback on the standards prevailing at the University.

The University of Malta is empowered by law to award diplomas and degrees, and no **accreditation** by other bodies is required.

Malta participates in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) through the University of Malta Quality Assurance Committee and the Academic Audit Unit. The University of Malta has expressed an interest in joining ENQA.

MALTA

Apart from the University of Malta, higher education is in the process of becoming a binary system thanks to the foundation of the Malta College of Arts, Sciences and Technology

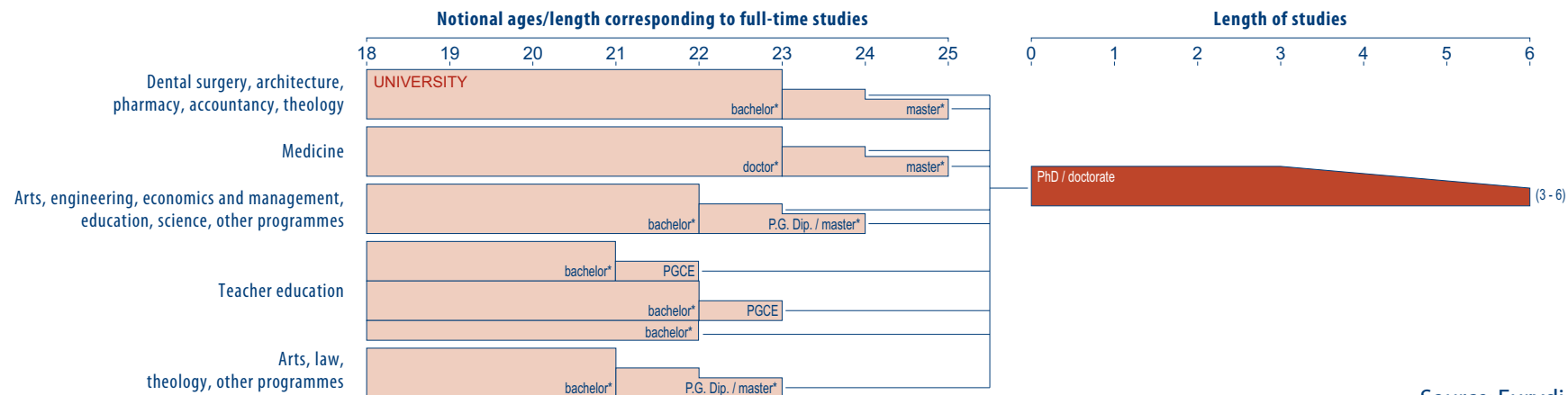
(MCAST) which has merged various colleges for vocational and professional education. Currently, MCAST offers courses at ISCED 3 and ISCED 4. However the development plan of the

College envisages the provision of ISCED 5 courses. There is no indication regarding the type of programmes and date of implementation as yet.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term
16 August 1988	Education Act

For national statistics,
see the Annexe at the end of the report.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

| P.G. DIP. *Postgraduate Diploma* | PGCE *Postgraduate Certificate of Education* | PhD *Doctor of philosophy*

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Higher education comprises higher professional education (HBO) and university education (WO), which have been governed by the Higher Education and Research Act since 1993. The Act was amended in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

The Bachelor's/Master's structure came into effect following an amendment to the Higher Education Act in 2002 which led to a degree system with **three main cycles**. The universities converted most of their traditional single-cycle courses into Bachelor's and Master's courses in the 2002/03 academic year. The remainder were converted in 2003/04. Some courses still exist in the old format but will be phased out. Incidentally, programmes in medicine, pharmacy and veterinary science are still organised in a long cycle. The courses at institutions for professional education have been converted into Bachelor's programmes in 2002. The Minister of Education can authorise these institutions to offer Master's courses as the need arises, and has done so in the area of health care.

Doctoral programmes can be accessed after the completion of a Master's degree or an equivalent title. Doctoral or PhD students do scholarly or scientific research, generally leading to a thesis or dissertation (*dissertatie*).

The programme leading to a doctorate last at least 4 years. This type of qualification may be obtained from a university as well as from the *Open Universiteit* (Open University). Research schools are national and international centres for high quality research in a particular field or in a multidisciplinary context. They offer research posts to talented research assistants and provide a guaranteed level of supervision and tuition for doctoral studies. Candidates are expected to obtain a doctorate at the end of their training.

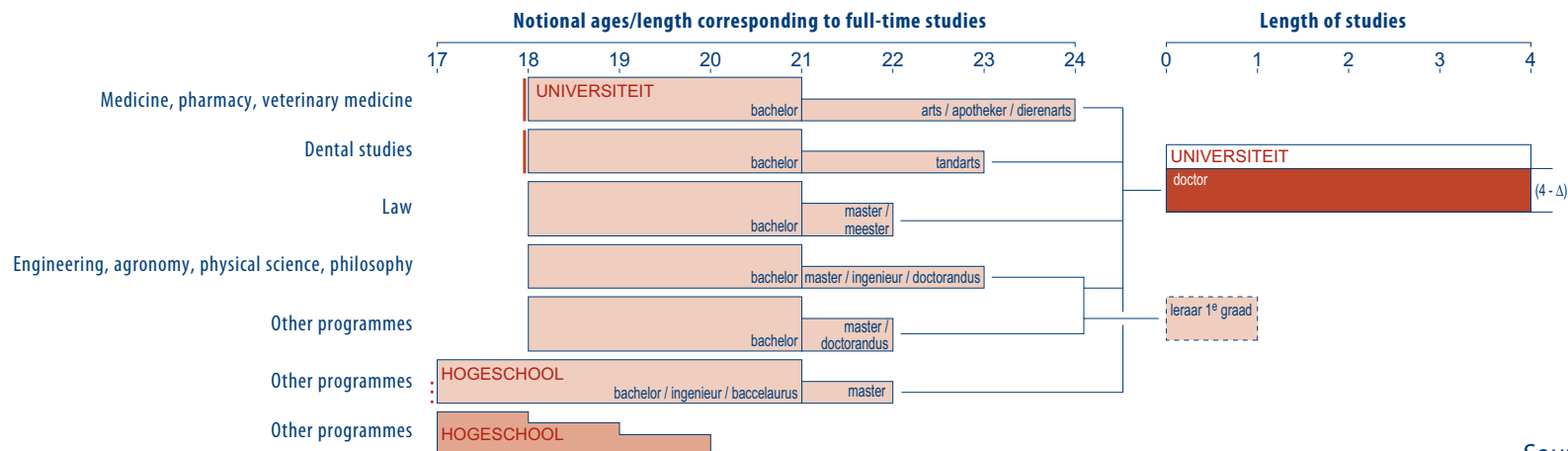
The 2002 amendment to the Higher Education Act introduced a Dutch credit system similar to **ECTS** (with 60 study points a year), which replaced the former 42-credit system with. This mandatory ECTS-credit system for accumulation and transfer of credits has been implemented since the 2002/03 academic year. The 2002 amendment defined 60 credits by law as a workload of 1 680 hours.

The use of the **Diploma Supplement** has been mandatory since 1 March 2005. Many institutions have introduced or are introducing the Diploma Supplement, whose use is being promoted extensively by student organisations, the government and the NUFFIC (as the Dutch ENIC/NARIC). Prior to 1 March 2005, the Diploma Supplement was issued on

request, free of charge and in Dutch or English. Since then, it has been issued automatically to all students.

In order to guarantee the **quality assurance** of the Bachelor's and Master's programmes, the Netherlands Accreditation Organisation (NAO), established by law in 2002, assesses courses at colleges and universities. A treaty between the Netherlands and the Flemish Community of Belgium established the NAO as a supranational organisation in the two countries in 2003. By the end of 2004, the treaty was ratified, and since then the organisation has been known as the *Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie in oprichting* (NVAO, or Dutch-Flemish Accrediting Organisation).

At the same time, the task of overseeing the **external evaluation** of study programmes was transferred from the Inspectorate (responsible for the education system at large) to the newly established NVAO in 2003. Its board members are appointed by the shared governments of the Netherlands and the Flemish Community of Belgium. It is good practice for academic communities to be consulted before the government appoints board members. The NVAO accredits programmes if the external evaluation is done according to the set



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

In addition to institutions shown in the diagram, there are a number of non-government-funded private higher education institutions (so-called *aangewezen instellingen*), whose qualifications have been placed on the same footing as those of government funded higher education institutions.

Students awarded a *bachelor* qualification at a *Hogeschool* may move on to a research university *master*, usually via a bridging programme though sometimes directly, depending on agreements between the *Hogeschool* and research university concerned.

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protocol and if the assessment is positive. This assessment is independent.

Accreditation applies both to existing and new programmes.

In order to be included in CROHO (*Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs* or Central Register of Programmes in Higher Education), Bachelor's and Master's programmes are subjected to a test for new programmes. The NVAO confirms jointly with CROHO that the programme is indeed new, and that it has neither been registered, nor had its registration withheld in the past.

The NVAO is entrusted by law to accredit all existing Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes and to validate new study programmes at government-funded higher education institutions as well as institutions approved (but not funded) by the Dutch government. Institutions excluded from government funding or approval can apply for accreditation of post-initial Master's degree programmes.

The NVAO bases its judgement on external validation, carried out by validation/evaluation organisations, such as the QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities), the NQA (Netherlands Quality Agency) and the Dutch Validation Council.

External care for quality is organised by the *Visiterende en Beoordelende Instanties* (VBIs, Visiting and Assessing Institutions) and is complementary to internal care for quality. Each external peer review is preceded by internal evaluations.

The *Visitatiecommissies* investigate all courses and research programmes in all Dutch universities. They report publicly on their conclusions and give recommendations. All courses are assessed once every six years and research programmes once every five years. A *visitatie* (review) includes all Dutch (and sometimes Flemish) programmes in the same field. The committee consists of a number of experts in the field concerned, who assess the content of the field of study and the educational aspects; the committee includes a student member as well.

Since 2003, the NVAO checks if the external assessments of the VBIs meet certain quality prerequisites. The NVAO compiles an annual list of organisations which satisfy the criteria for carrying out assessments.

According to the law, both the reports by the *Visitatiecommissies* as well as the accreditation reports must be made public. The results of the external peer reviews are published and are available on websites. Positive accreditation

judgements are published by the NVAO and available on their website.

In addition, universities and institutions for higher professional education have a great deal of freedom to organise their own system of quality assurance. All universities are involved in the individual quality assurance (consisting of external and internal evaluations) of their own education and research.

It is mandatory for students to be members of the education committees for each programme. Their involvement in internal evaluation is at the institution's discretion.

The QANU and the NQA are, along with the Inspectorate and the NVAO i.e., members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

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Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
Act adopted 8 October 1992 Implemented from 1 September 1993 (amended in 2002, 2003 and 2004)	Higher Education and Research Act	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, or WHW</i>

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

NORWAY

Most provisions of the Bologna Declaration have been incorporated in the general reform of higher education referred to as the Quality Reform (*Kvalitetsreformen*), which was fully implemented from the 2003 autumn term.

Since the 2003/04 academic year, all institutions have been obliged to incorporate the structure based on **two main cycles**. During a transition period up to 2007, both the old and new structures will exist side by side. A limited number of study programmes (medicine, theology, psychology and veterinary science) are exempt from the Bologna model.

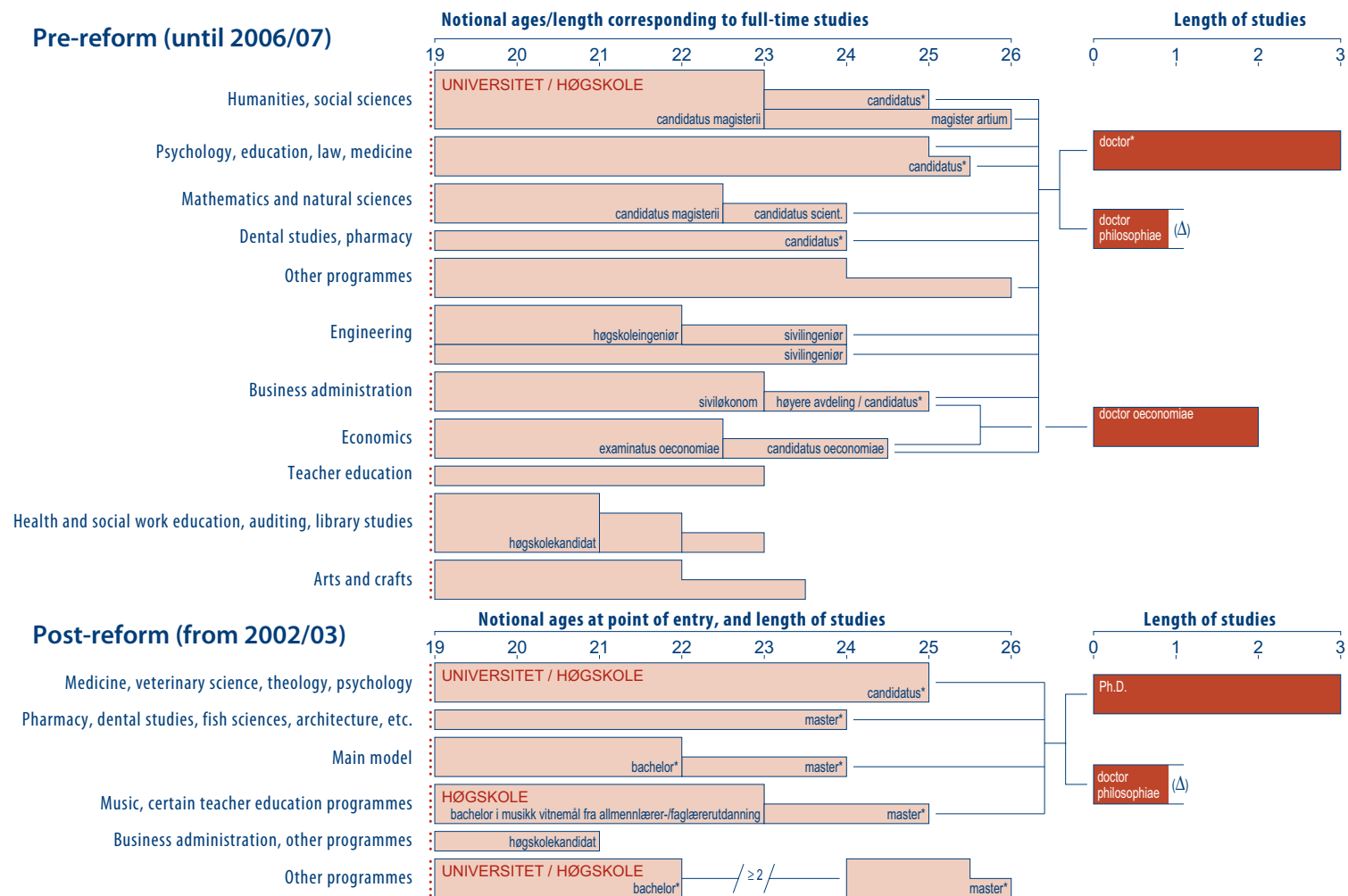
With the adoption of the Quality Reform, a common organised **doctoral programme** was introduced for all 15 different doctoral programmes leading to the Ph.D. degree. There is also an individual doctoral programme based on a relatively long record of research and publication, leading to the title of *doctor philosophiae*. Taught courses are part of the doctoral phase. The time spent on taught courses differs from institution to institution but, as a general rule, it is one semester. There are no Norwegian laws or regulations preventing two or more higher education institutions, Norwegian or European, from awarding a doctorate.

In 2001, a new system of credits in which a full academic year corresponds to 60 credits, was introduced in all study programmes. It replaced the former system consisting of 20 credits a year. The new system was accompanied by a new standardised grading scale (descending from A to E for different pass grades and F for fail). Both are equivalent to **ECTS** arrangements and were fully implemented in 2003. ECTS is used for credit transfer and accumulation.

The **Diploma Supplement** was introduced in 2002, and higher education institutions are obliged to issue it automatically to all students. It is available free of charge and only in English.

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (*Nasjonalt organ for kvalitet i utdanningen*, or NOKUT) was established in 2002. It is regarded as an independent government body and began its work in January 2003. Its role is to supervise and develop the **quality of higher education** at national level through evaluation, accreditation and recognition of institutions and course provision. NOKUT is governed by a board, which has overall responsibility for Agency activities and decisions. The board is appointed for a period of four years and consists of seven members, including one student. At present, one of NOKUT's board members is a pro-rector

from Denmark, in keeping with Norway's attempt to include an international member on the board at all times. All evaluation panels have a student representative. At least one of the experts on the evaluation panels comes from another country, which for linguistic reasons is usually one of the Nordic countries. The Agency evaluates and passes judgement on the internal quality assurance systems of institutions, by means of quality audits carried out on all accredited institutions in regular cycles. In addition to providing a control mechanism, audits should be conducive to quality development. Another task is to make all accreditation decisions concerning higher education that go beyond the self-accrediting powers of institutions. These decisions cannot be modified by any other authority. The Agency also carries out evaluations for the purpose of revising specific accreditations. Any institution can have accreditations revoked or suspended – for the entire institution as such, or for individual programmes – following a negative assessment in this type of evaluation. The evaluations and accreditations are conducted by experts appointed by NOKUT. Finally, the Agency carries out other types of evaluation for the general purpose of investigating, assessing and developing the quality of higher education in Norway. The



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Ph.D Doktor philosophiae/Philosophiae Doktor

NORWAY

Ministry may instruct NOKUT to undertake such evaluations.

All material connected with evaluations and accreditations, such as the appointment of experts, institutional applications, the experts' report and NOKUT's decisions, is made public.

In the Norwegian system, **accreditation** entails a professional assessment of whether a higher education institution and the programme it provides fulfil a given set of standards. As from January 2003, accreditation is mandatory and universal for all formally recognised higher education. Accreditation is not limited to a specified period of time, but is considered valid until explicitly revoked, following an assessment aimed at revising previous accreditation. The system is a combination of institutional and programme accreditation. Standards concerning institutional accreditation are set in regulations fixed by the Ministry of Education and Research. Further criteria for institutions, and standards and criteria for programmes have been developed by NOKUT.

Institutions are accredited in the three different categories of 'university', 'specialised university institution' and 'university college'. An institution's right to offer (new programmes of) higher education without specific programme

accreditation is dependent on its category. The universities have full autonomy and may accredit any type of programme without applying to either the Ministry or NOKUT. The specialised university institutions have basically the same rights as the universities in the fields in which they are allowed to offer doctoral degree programmes. If they want to extend their programmes to new fields, they must present the new provision for accreditation. University colleges have the right to offer any provision at Bachelor's level without any further accreditation process. In the fields in which they are allowed to offer doctoral degree programmes, they have the right to establish new Master's programmes without any further process of accreditation by NOKUT. All other new programmes have to be accredited by NOKUT.

Private institutions were not considered accredited institutions as such at the time of NOKUT's establishment, because of the former system of programme accreditation for private institutions. These institutions thus have to apply for institutional accreditation in any of the three categories in order to obtain the same rights as state institutions in the same category. A precondition for accreditation is that the institution must have a satisfactory quality assurance system. If an institution

which applies for institutional accreditation does not have an approved system, NOKUT will start the accreditation process by evaluating it. In such cases, two expert panels are involved, each with four to five experts, and the whole process takes about ten to twelve months.

Programme accreditation may be obtained for specific courses or programmes that the institution is not institutionally accredited to provide. There are standards and criteria for all three main levels – Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. – and for short-cycle higher education (two-year) degrees. Some professional education programmes are regulated by national curriculum regulations that serve as additional standards. Private institutions without institutional accreditation will have to apply for it separately for every course or programme they wish to offer.

At the time of NOKUT's establishment, all state-owned institutions were considered accredited. NOKUT will conduct cyclical evaluations of all accredited institutions every six years in order to establish whether their quality assurance systems are satisfactory.

All state-owned institutions were obliged to establish a quality assurance system by January 2004. Institutions are required to document their quality assurance work and demonstrate

NORWAY

that their systems can uncover instances where quality is weak. The systems must include routines for student evaluation of teaching, institutional self-evaluation and the follow-up of evaluations, documentation of the institution's development of the learning environment, and routines that ensure the continuous development of quality work.

External evaluations are preceded by internal assessments (self-evaluation).

NOKUT is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA), the European Consortium for

Accreditation (ECA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). In addition, the agency has signed bilateral agreements with the Spanish Quality Assurance Agency (ANECA) and the South African quality assurance agency known as the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
11 October 2002	Regulation No. 1124 relating to Degrees and Vocational Education, Protected Title and Normal Study Periods at Universities and University Colleges	FOR nr 1124: Forskrift om grader og yrkesutdanninger, beskyttet tittel og normert studietid ved universiteter og høyskoler
2 January 2003	Regulation No. 04 relating to Accreditation, Evaluation and Recognition under the Act concerned with Universities and University Colleges and the Private Higher Education Institutions Act	FOR nr 04: Forskrift om akkreditering, evaluering og godkjenning etter lov om universiteter og høyskoler og lov om private høyskoler

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

POLAND

The establishment, organisation and activity of university-type higher education institutions in Poland is regulated by the 1990 Act on Schools of Higher Education (with further amendments). The professional higher education sector (*wyższe szkoły zawodowe*) is governed by the Act on Higher Vocational Schools 1997 (with further amendments). The organisation of doctoral studies as well as the regulations concerning academic degrees and titles – including the degree of doctor in a given area of study or artistic field – is specified in the Act of 2003 on Academic Degrees and Titles and on Degrees and Titles in the field of art.

A degree system based on **three main cycles** has existed in Poland since 1990 when it became possible for university-type higher education institutions (HEIs) to offer three or four-year higher vocational study courses leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat, inżynier*), which could then be followed by a Master's degree. The title *licencjat* was introduced by legislation in 1992. As institutions are autonomous, these courses have been introduced gradually over the last 10 years, but their development has been further encouraged by the Bologna Process. At present they are already quite popular. **Doctoral** studies may be provided by all types of HEI as well as units of the Polish Academy of

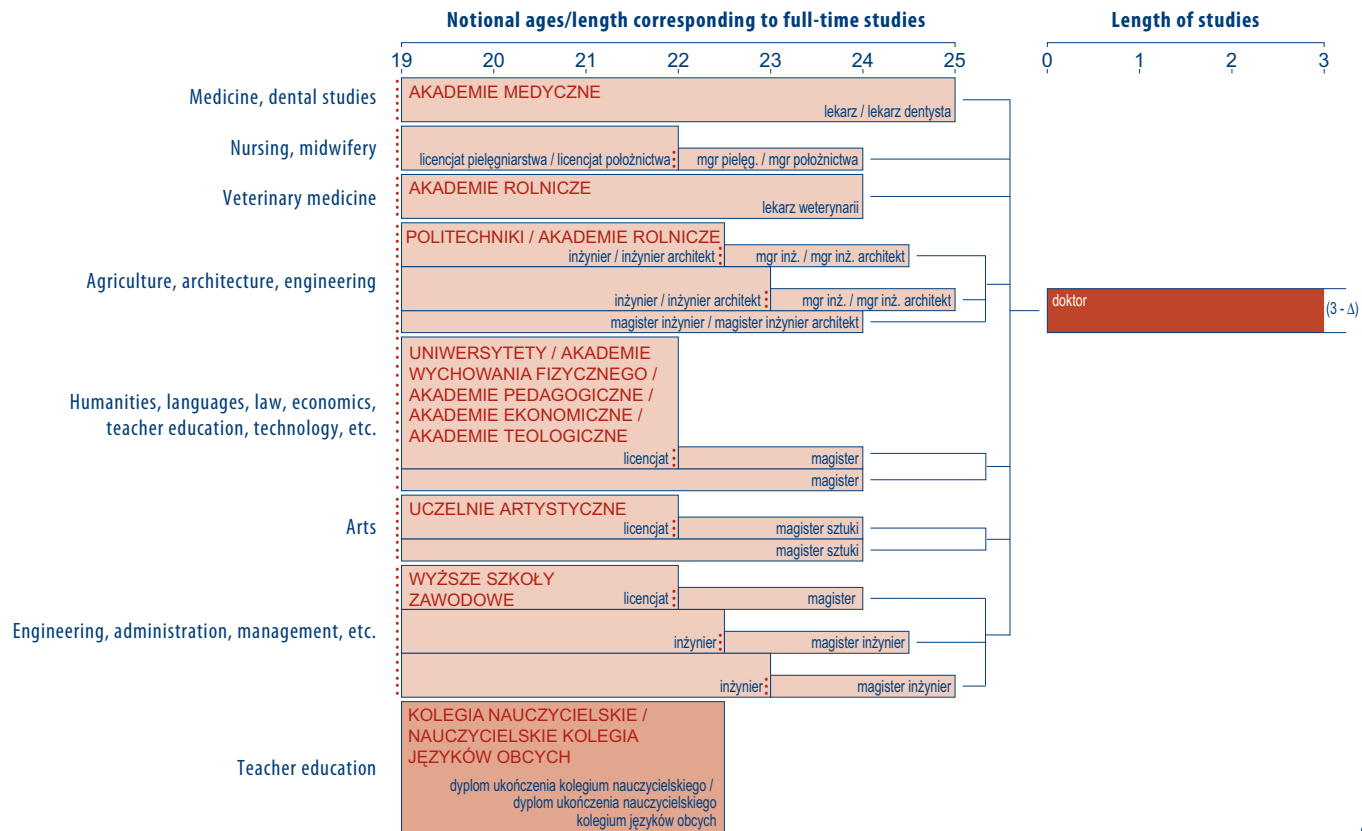
Sciences and research and development establishments which have a right to confer the academic degree of *doktor habilitowany*. These rights are granted by the Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Title, at the request of the organisational unit and on the basis of an opinion by the Main Council of Higher Education. When granting these rights, the Commission takes into consideration the following: the quality of research or artistic activity performed by the unit and the number of academic staff with the academic title of professor or *doktor habilitowany* (a minimum 12 people representing the study area or artistic field, including at least six with the title of professor). Curricula, the number and character of compulsory subjects, the number of exams and passes to be obtained are determined by the faculty (academic) councils of the doctoral studies units. Doctoral students are also obliged to undertake some teaching duties at the institution (the number of hours is determined by the faculty or academic council).

Although adoption of **ECTS** is not mandatory or as yet underpinned by legislation, it is gradually being introduced. Its implementation began under the Tempus (Phare) programme and is being continued under the Socrates (Erasmus) programme. The majority of esta-

blishments which use ECTS do so only for the transfer of credits. Some also use it for accumulation. The establishment itself decides how it is going to use the system. There is also a Presidential Project for a law which foresees the obligatory introduction of ECTS (such as the system of transfer and accumulation of credits) in all establishments.

As from 1 January 2005, it is compulsory for all higher education institutions to issue the **Diploma Supplement**. The Supplement is available free of charge and issued automatically in Polish and on request in one of the five languages, English, French, German, Spanish or Russian. This results from a July 2004 Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport on the types of diplomas and professional titles as well as the models of diplomas issued by institutions.

The most important national agency involved in the **quality assurance** system is the State Accreditation Committee (*Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna*) which was established in January 2002 on the basis of the September 1990 Act on Schools of Higher Education. Its tasks are to draw up opinions on motions regarding the founding of an HEI, to establish its extramural branches, to establish new degree programmes in existing institutions and to assign fields of specialisation to appropriate



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Mgr inż.	<i>Magister inżynier</i>	Mgr pielęg.	<i>Magister pielęgniarstwa</i>
Mgr inż. architekt	<i>Magister inżynier architekt</i>	Mgr położnictwa	<i>Magister położnictwa</i>

degree programmes in vocational schools. Until September 2002, the Committee prepared opinions on motions concerned with establishing fields of specialisation in higher education institutions, on the basis of the Act on Higher Vocational Schools of June 1997. The Committee also evaluates the quality of teaching and verifies compliance with the requirements of degree programmes in all Polish civilian higher education institutions (whether state or non-state, academic or vocational), which are supervised by the Minister for Higher Education, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Culture or the Minister of Infrastructure. The role of these ministers is to approve the implementation of new degree programmes, which are different from those defined in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of March 2002 on requirements to be met by HEIs when establishing and implementing degree programmes, as well as on the names of such programmes.

Another important national organisation involved in the quality assurance system is the General Council for Higher Education (*Rada Główna Szkolnictwa Wyższego*), which has existed under its present name since January 1991 and was established on the basis of the Act on Schools of Higher Education of 1990. The Council co-operates with the Minister of

National Education and Sport and with other governmental bodies in establishing state policy in the area of higher education. The council is responsible, among other things, for issuing opinions and proposing motions on all matters related to higher education and science, as well as on legal regulations, etc.

The Conference of Rectors of the Academic Higher Education Schools (*Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich*, or KRASP) was established on 7 June 1997 and is in charge of peer **accreditation** in Poland. This type of accreditation is voluntary and is carried out by eight accreditation commissions established by rectors of the different types of HEI involved in KRASP activities. The eight commissions are supervised by the KRASP Accreditation Commission established in June 2001. Accreditation by the KRASP commissions is considered to be the hallmark of high quality teaching in a given institution or faculty.

Only academic partners of national standing take part in the evaluation process involving the State Accreditation Committee, the General Council for Higher Education and the Conference of Rectors of the Academic Higher Education Schools.

Internal Evaluation of individual academic teachers is obligatory under the Act on Schools of Higher Education of 12 September 1990

(with further amendments). The procedure for obligatory assessment of individual academic teachers is subject to institutional autonomy and it is defined in the HEIs' statutes. The internal evaluation procedures are set by the university authorities (*senat*) and defined in the institutions' statutes. This is reflected in the variety of procedures used by Polish HEIs. Questionnaires and surveys among students are very popular. The results of internal evaluation (if available) are taken into account during the implementation of external evaluation.

Since the beginning of 2003, the State Accreditation Committee has had observer status at the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). It is not involved in any other supranational quality assurance networks.

In March 2004, a draft version of a new Act on Higher Education prepared by the President was submitted to the Polish Parliament. The draft is a comprehensive regulation on the system of higher education and deals with issues so far regulated by three different acts, namely the Act on Schools of Higher Education, the Act on Higher Vocational Schools and the Act on Higher Military Education. New proposals aim to promote the competitiveness of Polish HEIs and support implementation of the Bologna Process.

POLAND

The most important proposals of the draft bill are related to doctoral studies (ISCED 6). They include new definitions for higher education institutions, including the definition of an autonomous institution. A fully autonomous higher education institution, according to this draft bill, is a state or non-state institution with the right to confer the degree of doctor (Ph.D.) in at least four areas of study. An autonomous institution would have greater freedom to create and abolish its organisational units, and offer new courses and studies in co-operation with other higher education and research

institutions. Rules providing for the establishment of associations of HEIs (with state and non-state participants) in order to implement particular tasks will be introduced. This will make it possible for higher education institutions to offer courses in broad study areas and inter-faculty courses. There will be the introduction of three-cycle studies in vocational higher education. The title of *licencjat* or *inżynier* would correspond to first-cycle studies, complementary *Magister* studies to second-cycle studies, and doctoral studies to third-cycle studies.

Institutions entitled to award doctorates in two areas will be authorised to offer doctoral studies. So far only institutions with the right to confer the *doktor habilitowany* have had such rights. The present proposal would result in the establishment of a new status for doctoral students and entitle them to apply for financial support, participate in the senate and academic councils of university units, and establish doctoral student self-government, as well as enabling them to benefit from reduced fares on public transport.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
12 September 1990	Act on Schools of Higher Education (with further amendments)	Ustawa o szkolnictwie wyższym (z późniejszymi zmianami)
26 June 1997	Act on Higher Vocational Schools	Ustawa o wyższych szkołach zawodowych
1 January 2002	Decision No. 54 by the Minister of National Education and Sport of 28 December 2001, on the basis of Art. 38 (1) of the Act on Schools of Higher Education of 12 September 1990	Decyzja nr 54 Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 28 grudnia 2001 na podstawie artykułu 38 (1) ustawy z dnia 12 września 1999 o szkolnictwie wyższym
14 March 2003	Act on Academic Degrees and Titles and on Degrees and Titles in the field of art	Ustawa o stopniach naukowych i tytule naukowym oraz o stopniach i tytule w zakresie sztuki
23 July 2004	Regulation by the Minister of National Education and Sport on the types of diplomas and professional titles as well as the models of diplomas issued by higher education institutions	Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu w sprawie rodzajów dyplomów i tytułów zawodowych oraz wzorów dyplomów wydawanych przez uczelnie

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

PORTUGAL

The Basic Law on the Education System dated 14 October 1986 and amended in September 1997, establishes the general rules governing all levels and types of education. The law sets out its aims and scope, the conditions for admission to higher education as well as the types of institutions involved. In February 2005, the Decree-Law was approved, regulating the principles and instruments for the creation of the European Higher Education Area. This new legislation applies to all higher education institutions and degree programmes.

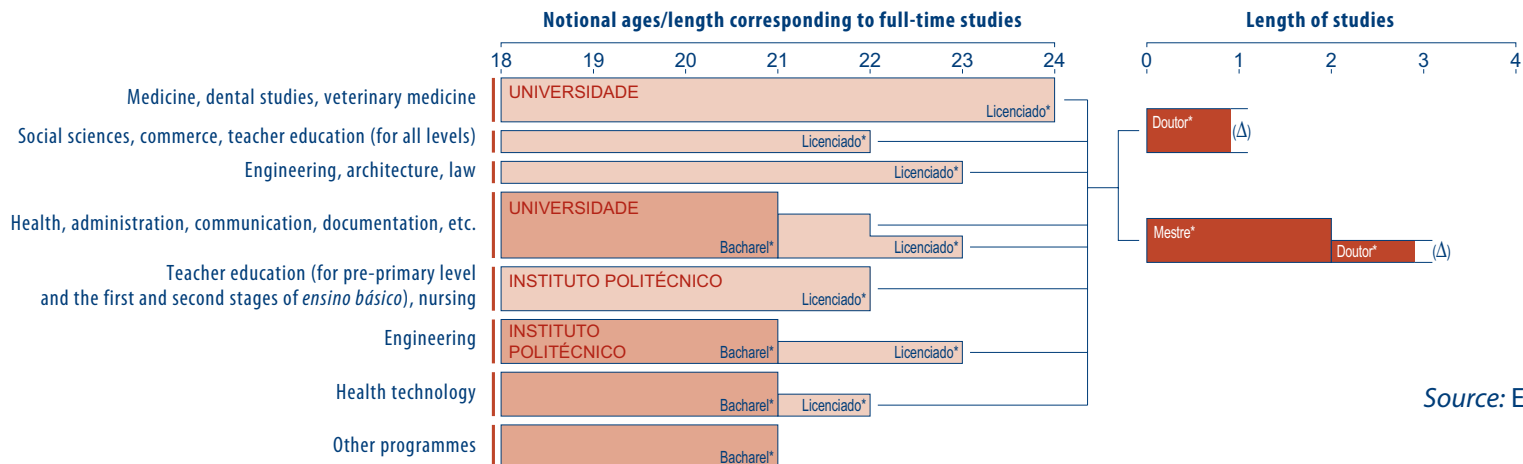
In 2004/05, a structure based on two main cycles has not yet been introduced. A new Basic Law on Education to determine the structure based on **three main cycles** is foreseen to be approved, with the view to comply with the objectives called for by the Lisbon Strategy and the principles of the Bologna Declaration.

According to the 2005 Decree-Law, the study programmes must be expressed in **ECTS** credits in principle from 2005/06. In 2004/05, only two universities developed an ETCS pilot project and were awarded the European ECTS label. ECTS has been applied in the scope of the Socrates mobility programme by institutions which signed the institutional contract in the framework of the programme. A national credit system exists but is only applied by public universities and is not compatible with the ECTS system.

According to the 2005 Decree, from the 2005/06 academic year, the **Diploma Supplement** will be issued automatically to all students, free of charge, in Portuguese and English, although some universities are already issuing it.

The process of **internal** and **external evaluation** of higher education institutions was introduced by legislation in 1994. In 1998, the National Higher Education Evaluation Council (CNAVES) was established. It is an independent body responsible for assessment of higher education institutions.

The 2003 law on the development and quality of higher education ensures fulfilment of the right to equal opportunities in education in terms of access, attendance and success, by overcoming economic, social and cultural inequalities. This law marks a step forward in the area of quality assurance and the quality and accreditation of courses and institutions. It is foreseen that CNAVES, which is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), will become the national evaluation and accreditation agency.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n-x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

PORTUGAL

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
14 October 1986 (amendments 19 September 1997)	Basic Law on the Education System (Law No. 46/86 dated 14 October, amended by Law No. 115/97)	Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo (Lei n.º 46/86 de 14 de Outubro alterada pela Lei n.º 115/97)
11 July 1998	Decree-Law No. 205/98 establishing the National Higher Education Evaluation Council	Decreto-Lei n.º 205/98 cria o Conselho Nacional de Avaliação do Ensino Superior
6 January 2003	Law No. 1/2003 on the development and quality of higher education	Lei n.º 1/2003 do Desenvolvimento e da Qualidade do Ensino Superior
22 February 2005	Decree-Law No. 42/200 regulating the principles and instruments for the creation of the European Higher Education Area	Decreto-Lei n.º 42/200 - Princípios reguladores de instrumentos para a criação do espaço europeu de ensino superior

ROMANIA

Several reforms linked to the Bologna Process have been launched since 1998. They are partly set out in three ministerial orders adopted in 1998, 2000 and 2002 respectively, in a government decision taken in 2001, and finally, in a law on the organisation of university studies approved by parliament in June 2004.

In 2004/05, the degree structure based on **two main cycles** had not yet been implemented.

Doctoral studies can be organised on a full-time or part-time basis by higher education or research institutions, subject to Ministry of Education and Research approval of a proposal from the National Council for Attestation of University Titles, Diplomas and Certificates. The structure of a doctoral programme includes theoretical and applied training activities, successful performance in a minimum of three examinations, and the defence of at least three scientific dissertations or three creative works, depending on the field (sciences or arts). In addition, full-time doctoral studies involve attending at least four taught courses, including the associated seminars and corresponding examinations. Doctoral studies can be organised jointly by two institutions, one in Romania and one abroad (in Europe or elsewhere) on the basis of a written agreement between both institutions, specifying the role

of each and the recognition of the title of 'doctor' by the corresponding authorities in both countries.

According to the 2004 law, the degree structure based on **three main cycles** will be fully implemented with effect from the 2005/06 academic year. Each cycle will have its own admissions and graduation procedures. The duration of study cycles, corresponding to various fields and areas of specialisation, will be established by the Ministry of Education and Research on the basis of proposals from the National Council of Rectors and will be approved by government decision. Special norms concerning the study conditions applicable to regulated professions adopted at European level will be established within the Romanian higher education system. The first (Bachelor's) cycle will include a minimum of 180 and a maximum of 240 transferable study credits equivalent to ECTS, and will last three to four years, depending on the field and area of specialisation. The second (Master's) cycle will include a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 120 transferable study credits (in exceptional cases and depending on the length of the first cycle, the lower limit may be 60 transferable study credits), and will last one to two years. Both cycles should enable the accumulation of at least 300 transferable study credits. For

professions regulated by European norms or good practice, the provision entailed might be offered by joining the two cycles into a long study programme lasting five to six years and leading to the equivalent of a Master's qualification.

According to the same law, the third cycle (doctorate) has also been restructured as part of the Bologna Process and will last three years. As an exception imposed by the specific nature of the theme or the need for longer experimentation, the length of doctoral studies may be extended by one to two years, subject to approval by the university senate.

For integrated programmes provided by two or more universities and leading to a common diploma, the Ministry of Education and Research will draw up the corresponding framework methodology based on the current regulations, and submit it to the government for approval.

ECTS was introduced in graduate and post-graduate programmes at the end of 1998 on the basis of a ministerial order adopted in October of that year. In accordance with the Strategy for Romanian Higher Education for the period from 2002 to 2010, the Ministry of Education and Research has encouraged state as well as private universities to implement

ROMANIA

ECTS and identify mechanisms for ensuring national compatibility. Prior to 2000, ECTS was recommended but not compulsory. According to the 2004 law on the organisation of university studies, ECTS will become compulsory for all universities and study programmes from the 2005/06 academic year. It will be used both for credit transfer and accumulation in all study programmes (including doctoral programmes), as it is the case at universities which implemented ECTS in the 2004/05 academic year.

The **Diploma Supplement** was introduced on the basis of a Ministerial order adopted in April 2000. At present, it is issued free of charge by all institutions on request, in English or French. From the 2005/06 academic year, universities will issue the Diploma Supplement free of charge to every graduate in a language commonly used at international level.

The official body responsible for **quality assurance** is the *Consiliul Național pentru Evaluare Academică și Acreditare* (National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation). The Council was formed in 1993 and acts at national level as an independent body under parliamentary control. It comprises nine specialist commissions that evaluate all existing faculties and colleges every five years,

in accordance with criteria that include educational content, research activity and teacher/student ratios. The 2002 Ministerial order has developed a methodology for more frequent periodic evaluation of higher education institutions.

Criteria used in **external evaluation** relate to the basic organisational and operational fields of higher education institutions, namely their underlying goals, teaching staff, educational content, physical facilities, research activity and financial performance. Compulsory standards have been established for each criterion.

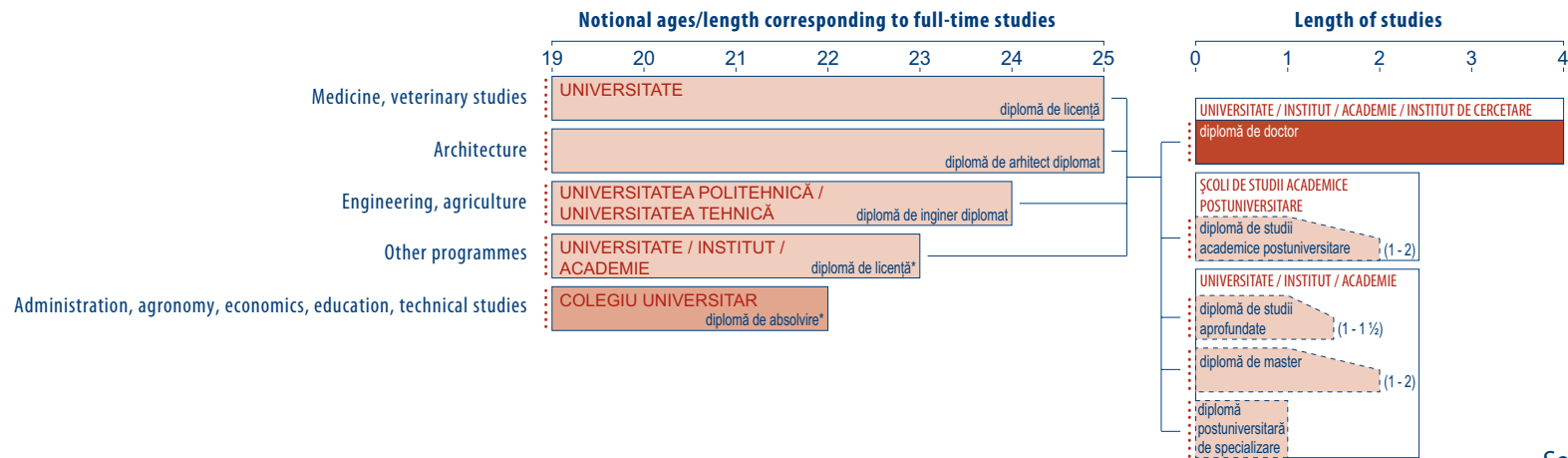
Internal evaluation of higher education institutions is carried out by department councils in compliance with the principle of university autonomy, as well as by commissions for evaluation and attestation at university level. Internal evaluation of various academic units (departments, institutes, laboratories, research groups, etc.) is based on academic standards established by the National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation. New forms of education or fields of specialisation are included in the internal evaluation carried out by the commissions for evaluation and attestation.

All higher education institutions, public or private, follow the **accreditation** procedures

undertaken by the National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation, as required by the 1993 Law on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Diploma Recognition.

Accreditation is a two-step process first involving trust licensing, which gives institutions the right to organise admission examinations. Secondly, it involves accreditation, which gives them the right to organise degree examinations and issue diplomas recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research.

At present, a new law on quality assurance in education is being debated. The working document prepared by the Ministry of Education and Research proposes a global approach to the whole education system, with specific methodologies for every type and level of education, including higher and adult education. According to the document, quality assurance will be based on standards, benchmarks, norms and performance indicators, and will take into account the quality of the national education system, the education and training services provided by institutions and the education and training process outcomes.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i> Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i> Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

ROMANIA

In line with the proposals for a new law on quality assurance in education which is currently being debated, a new body – the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – would be set up at national level, as an institution specialising in quality assurance of the education system, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research. The Agency would implement policies for quality assurance, and devise and implement the national framework for quality assurance within the national education system through specific methodologies and instruments, as well as implement periodical evaluations culminating in public reports. The administration council of the Agency would consist of the heads of various institutions involved in quality assurance (the National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation, the National Council for Evaluation and Accreditation of Pre-university Education, and the National Service for Assessment and Examination), plus a representative of the Ministry of Education and Research and eight Agency department directors.

Some main responsibilities of the Agency would be to co-ordinate and develop national methodologies, standards, benchmarks, norms and performance indicators for quality assurance in education, and to supervise compliance with performance indicators. Other responsibilities would be to evaluate the national education system and draw up recommendations for improvement, and to produce methodologies and self-evaluation tools for education and training providers. The Agency would also conduct periodical or (on request) external evaluation of education and training providers, undertaken independently or in co-operation with other institutions and experts, in Romania or abroad, prepare the report on the quality of the national education system. Finally, it would develop good practice portfolios for the improvement of national benchmarks, provide support programmes to institutions during the monitoring period, prepare comparative studies relating to the quality of education and training in Romania, the European Union and developed countries elsewhere, and provide information on results via various publications, the Internet, public debates and events.

Students are involved in the process of evaluation/quality assurance as members of the department council, which plays a major role in writing the self-evaluation report needed for the academic evaluation and accreditation of the department or area of specialisation concerned. University charters usually state that the opinions of students, expressed individually or through their representatives, should be taken into account in the process of evaluating and enhancing academic activities.

Since 1996, the National Council for Academic Assessment and Accreditation has been a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and has been a member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN) since 2002. The same Council is in the process of becoming a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), although it does not currently take part in its activities.

ROMANIA

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
December 1993	Law No. 88/1993 on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Diploma Recognition	Legea Nr. 88/1993 privind Acreditarea Instituțiilor de Învățământ Superior și Recunoașterea Diplomelor
October 1998	Ministerial Order No. 4822/1998 regarding the expansion of the transferable credits system in education	Ordinul Ministrului Nr. 4822/1998 cu privire la extinderea sistemului de credite transferabile în învățământ
April 2000	Ministerial Order No. 3659 introducing the Diploma Supplement	Ordinul Ministrului Nr. 3659 privind introducerea Suplimentului la Diplomă
October 2001	Government decision No. 1011	Hotărârea de Guvern Nr. 1011
June 2002	Ministerial Order No. 3997/2002 concerning the methodology for special monitoring of higher education institutions	Ordinul Ministrului Nr. 3997/2002 privind metodologia de monitorizare specială a instituțiilor de învățământ superior
June 2004	Law on the organisation of university studies (No. 288/2004)	Legea privind organizarea studiilor universitare (Nr. 288/2004)

RUSSIA

The organisation of higher education has been regulated by the federal law on higher and postgraduate professional education since 1996. Doctorates are organised in accordance with the same law and with the regulations on research and academic staff in higher education in the Russian Federation, which were adopted in 1998 by ministerial decree. There is no division between academic and professional higher education in Russia.

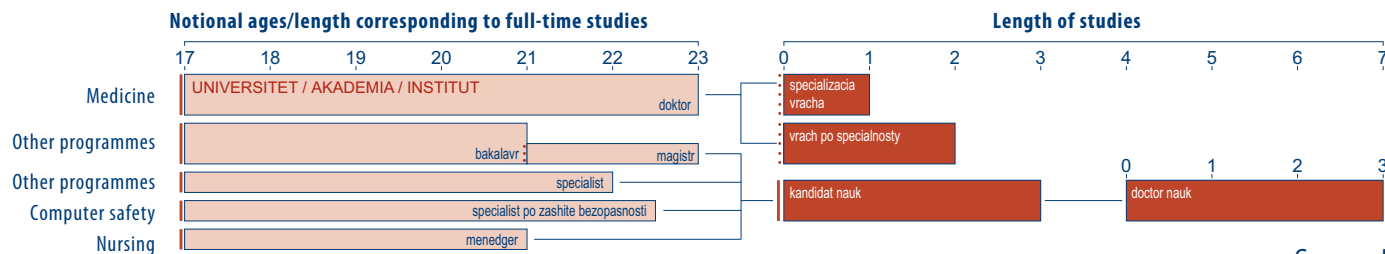
The model based essentially on **two main cycles** was established prior to the Bologna process. It was initially introduced on a limited basis in 1989 by the USSR Decree of the State Committee for Education of the USSR. The Decree provided for training programmes for Bachelor's (four years) and Master's (five and a half years) qualifications. This model was introduced on a much broader basis in 1992 by decision of the State Committee on Higher Education of the Ministry of Science regarding the implementation of a multi-level structure in higher education in the Russian Federation. As a result of the decision, Bachelor-level programmes became the basis for enrolment in specialist's and Master's degree programmes. The 1994 government decree on the adoption of state standards for higher education specified the programmes and their duration as follows: Bachelor's degree, 4 years; specialist

diploma, 5 years; and Master's degree, 6 years (including Bachelor's degree programmes). The application of the two-cycle structure is optional. Given its autonomy, a higher education institution is entitled to take an independent decision on whether or not to implement Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. Currently, the majority of students follow the long study programmes leading to the *Specialist* degree. The legal establishment of a two-level system (Bachelor – 3-4 years followed by Master – 2 years or *Specialist* – 1-2 years) is planned.

The traditional organisation of **doctoral programmes** (*Kandidat Nauk*) has not been changed in the light of the Bologna process, and such programmes are not established legally as the third cycle of higher education. *Kandidat Nauk* (Ph.D.) programmes include obligatory theoretical courses provided in accordance with individual plans (curricula). These courses comprise approximately 20% of the programme and include foreign languages (Russian for international students), philosophy and special disciplines. Each discipline culminates in a state exam. The remaining 80 % of the programmes (leading to the title of *Doktor*) are devoted solely to individual research.

A working group on the implementation of an **ECTS-based credit system** was formed in 2002 in accordance with the Ministry of Education's decision on credit system arrangements as applied to the content of state higher education. Guidelines for calculating workload in terms of credits in the main programmes have been developed and distributed by the Ministry to higher education institutions. The methodology of the credit system calculation envisages the use of 60 credits for one academic year. Initially, the guidelines were adopted by only three Russian universities. However, when the Ministry decided to launch a credit system pilot project in 2003, 30 other universities were included. In March 2004, recommendations on the use of the system were expanded and forwarded to institutions by the Ministry. It is recommended that it should be used for both credit transfer and accumulation. ECTS is implemented on a voluntary basis and is not used in doctoral programmes.

The traditional national **Diploma Supplement** awarded automatically in most higher education institutions does not meet European requirements. The pilot project for the adoption of the European-type Diploma Supplement got underway in 2003, and is currently operational in three Russian



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

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universities. Universities are in the process of organising a number of seminars and workshops on its implementation. There are plans to introduce the DS in 2007/08. Normally, it will be issued free of charge automatically to all students in Russian and English.

The legal basis for **quality assurance/evaluation** has been developed independently of the Bologna process over the past 10 years. It is fixed by the 1992 federal laws on education, the 1996 federal law on higher and postgraduate professional education, the 1999 regulations on state accreditation of higher education institutions and the educational activity licensing of 2000.

Since April 1997, decisions on issuing state **accreditation** have been taken by the Accreditation Board (established by the Ministry of Education), which consists of representatives of the National Rectors' Conference, associations of non-state higher education institutions and polytechnics, federal ministries and public organisations. Information activity and methods concerning accreditation procedures are the responsibility of the Ministry National Accreditation Centre (under the 1995 State Committee Decree on higher education).

Accreditation procedures are preceded by the publication of an evaluation report 10 days before the Accreditation Board meets. Data on each accredited higher education institution is made available to the public via the Internet. It is included in the Register List and is published as a matter of course in the guide to accredited higher education institutions.

The state recognition procedure comprises three elements as follows:

- Licensing, to assess that educational facilities, laboratory and other equipment, teaching staff and teaching materials comply with government requirements;
- Attestation, which involves evaluating the content, level, and quality of graduate training in accordance with government educational standards;
- Accreditation, which constitutes official recognition that a higher education institution is accredited by the government for a forthcoming period, with due regard for its category and the government standard qualifications it is entitled to award.

In order to reduce evaluation costs for higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education issued regulations that came into

effect on 1 January 2000, merging the foregoing three elements into a single process known as 'complex assessment'.

In March 2004, the Ministry of Education was reformed by government decree. Instead of one Ministry, three bodies have been formed, namely the Ministry of Education and Science, the Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Research, and the Federal Agency. In accordance with the decree, responsibility for quality assurance/evaluation is delegated to the Federal Service on Supervision in Education and Research. This new board is entitled to process applications and documents for licensing and accreditation from higher education institutions, to co-ordinate and carry out evaluation of higher education institutions and programmes, and to issue licences and certificates of accreditation.

International experts are not invited to take part in the work of the quality assurance agencies. It is envisaged that international experts will be represented on evaluation panels in course of the beginning of the current year. As part of the state quality assurance programme that began in 2000, each university undertakes **self-evaluation** and is subject to peer review (Ministry of Education Regulations, 2000). At present, the

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ISO 9000:2000 international quality assurance standards programme is being carried out. A training programme for quality assurance management experts in higher education institutions was launched in October 2004.

Students and student organisations are represented on the councils of higher education institutions, and provide an assessment of teaching staff. Questionnaires aimed at

gauging student opinion on the organisation of education are included in procedures for the certification of higher education institutions. Student opinion polls for external evaluation are under consideration.

The Accreditation Board is a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality

Assurance Agencies (CEEN). The Ministry National Accreditation Centre has applied for membership to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
19 April 1989	Decree of the State Committee for Education of the USSR, No. 351	Prikaz Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta po Obrazovaniyu SSSR, № 351
13 March 1992	Decision of the State Committee on Higher Education of the Ministry of Science on implementation of the multi-level structure of Higher Education, No. 13	Postanovlenie Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta po Vysshemu obrazovaniyu o vvedenii mnogourovnevnoj struktury visshego obrazovaniya, № 13
10 July 1992	Federal Law on Education, No. 3266-1	Federalal'niy Zakon Ob obrazovanii, № 3266-1
12 August 1994	Government Decree on the adoption of state standards for higher professional education, No. 940	Postanovlenie Pravitelstva Ob utverzdenii gosudarstvennogo obrazovatel'nogo standarta viisshego professional'nogo obrazovaniya, № 940
18 April 1995	Decree of the State Committee on Higher Education, No. 570	Prikaz Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta po Vyshemu Obrazovaniyu, № 570
22 August 1996	Law on Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education, No. 125-FZ	Zakon o visshem i poslevuzovskom professional'nom obrazovanii, № 125-FZ

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Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
27 March 1998	Regulations on research and academic staff in higher professional education (1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of education), No. 581	Polozhenie o podgotovke nauchno-pedagogicheskikh i nauchnyh kadrov v sisteme poslevuzovskogo obrazovaniya, № 581
2 December 1999	Regulations on State Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, No. 1323	Polozhenie o gosudarstvenoj akkreditacii visshogo uchebnogo zavedeniya, № 1323
29 June 2000	Ministry of Education Regulations, No. 1965	Rasporyazhenie Ministerstva Obrazovaniya, №1965
18 October 2000	Regulations on Educational Activity Licensing, No. 796	Polozhenie o licenzirovanii obrazovatel'noj deyatel'nosti, № 796
19 July 2002	Decision on credit system arrangements as applied to the content of state higher education, No. 2822	Postanovlenie ob organizacii rabot po sozdaniyu procedury zacheta osvoeniya studentami vuzov sodержaniya gosydarstvennyx standartov visshogo professionalnogo obrazovaniya, № 2822
2 July 2003 / 7 October 2003	Ministry decisions on launching pilot projects for use of the credit system, No. 3800	Resheniya Ministersnva o provedenii eksperimanta po ispolzovaniju zachetnyh edinic v uchebnom processe, № 3800)
6 April 2004	Government decree, No. 159	Poctanovlenie Pravitelstva, № 159

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

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The Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance came into force in 1993. An appendix to the Higher Education Ordinance contains the Degree Ordinance laid down by the government.

The current degree structure consists of long course programmes followed by doctoral programmes. A structure based on **three main cycles** also exists in the case of certain programmes. In April 2002, a project group was appointed within the Ministry of Education and Science in order to review issues, such as the degree structure, from an international perspective. The final report was submitted in February 2004 and a government bill introducing a new two-cycle structure will be presented to Parliament in May 2005.

The **doctorate** (*doktorexamen*) is the result of a programme of research training worth 160 Swedish credits (240 ECTS credits), which is the equivalent of four years of full-time study. The dissertation must consist of at least 80 credits (120 ECTS). It is possible to take a shorter programme and receive a *licentiatexamen* (licentiate degree). This degree corresponds to 80 credits (120 ECTS), of which at least 40 (60 ECTS) must be obtained from writing a paper which meets high academic standards. To be admitted to doctoral studies, a student must

have basic qualifications of at least 120 credits (180 ECTS), i.e. three years of study. Applicants must also fulfil any special requirements of the faculty board, and be considered capable of successfully completing the programme. In practice, a Master's degree or an equivalent is often required.

Different forms of preparatory programme exist but are not compulsory. In practice, they may be necessary for continued doctoral studies in the chosen field, depending on the competition between applicants. These preparatory programmes often entail up to one year of study and include some kind of 'rotation' between different research groups.

Doctoral studies in Sweden include taught courses. The scope of these courses varies from subject to subject, but they are usually worth 40-60 credits (60-90 ECTS credits) and in any event no more than 80 credits (120 ECTS).

In March 2004, two official reports were published with proposals for the structure of doctoral studies.

Joint degrees consisting of one degree awarded by two or more universities are not possible, although joint study programmes do take place.

Use of the Swedish credit point system has been mandatory throughout the higher education system since 1969. One credit in the Swedish system is equivalent to 1.5 **ECTS** credits. There is no national application regarding ECTS. However, separate universities and university colleges are using ECTS on their own initiative in their description of single courses. In such cases, ECTS serves as both a transfer and accumulation system.

To improve international 'transparency' and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications, a **Diploma Supplement** in English has been issued with all Swedish higher education qualifications since 1 January 2003. It is mandatory and free of charge.

Since January 2001, **external quality assessment** has been carried out more and more regularly by the National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket*, or HSV) and covers all subjects and programmes. It was established in 1995 as the highest administrative authority for universities and university colleges. The Agency is independent of the government and higher education institutions.

The National Agency for Higher Education supervises, promotes and assesses the quality of higher education institutions. One of its tasks is to collect and circulate information about

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them. An important function in this context is to carry out quality audits. The Agency also performs national evaluations. A national evaluation relates to subjects in undergraduate and postgraduate education, entire programmes of education or specific aspects of them such as examinations. When a programme is evaluated, performance is assessed at every institution in the country which offers it. The emphasis in quality assurance is on improvement rather than control. All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are to be evaluated within a period of six years.

The National Agency conducts programmes leading to the award of general and vocational qualifications, and evaluates postgraduate programmes. These evaluations also include appraisal of the right of higher education institutions to award degrees. Institutions that are not generally empowered to do so must apply for the necessary authorisation from the Agency, which then examines the quality of the programmes on offer. Appraisals are based on self-evaluation and a site visit by a panel of external experts, and generally conclude with the publication of a report. The panels of assessors for the evaluation of subjects and programmes always include professionals in the fields concerned and international assessors, usually from the other Nordic

countries. About 60 % of the subject experts come from outside Sweden.

Students also take part in quality assurance and evaluation both formally and practically. Students are selected for quality evaluations in accordance with certain criteria. A list of students satisfying these criteria is forwarded to the Agency by the institution and local student union. At least one undergraduate and one postgraduate student represent the students. The gender aspect is also taken into consideration, together with the stage that students have reached in their education.

The National Agency of Higher Education is also concerned with the legal rights of students and with investigating and evaluating the system of higher education, evaluating foreign education, and supporting the renewal and development of higher education. The Agency also evaluates qualifications awarded on completion of higher education programmes outside Sweden. This evaluation determines the Swedish programme to which the foreign programme corresponds.

The design of quality assurance is based on a consensus between the government and higher education institutions.

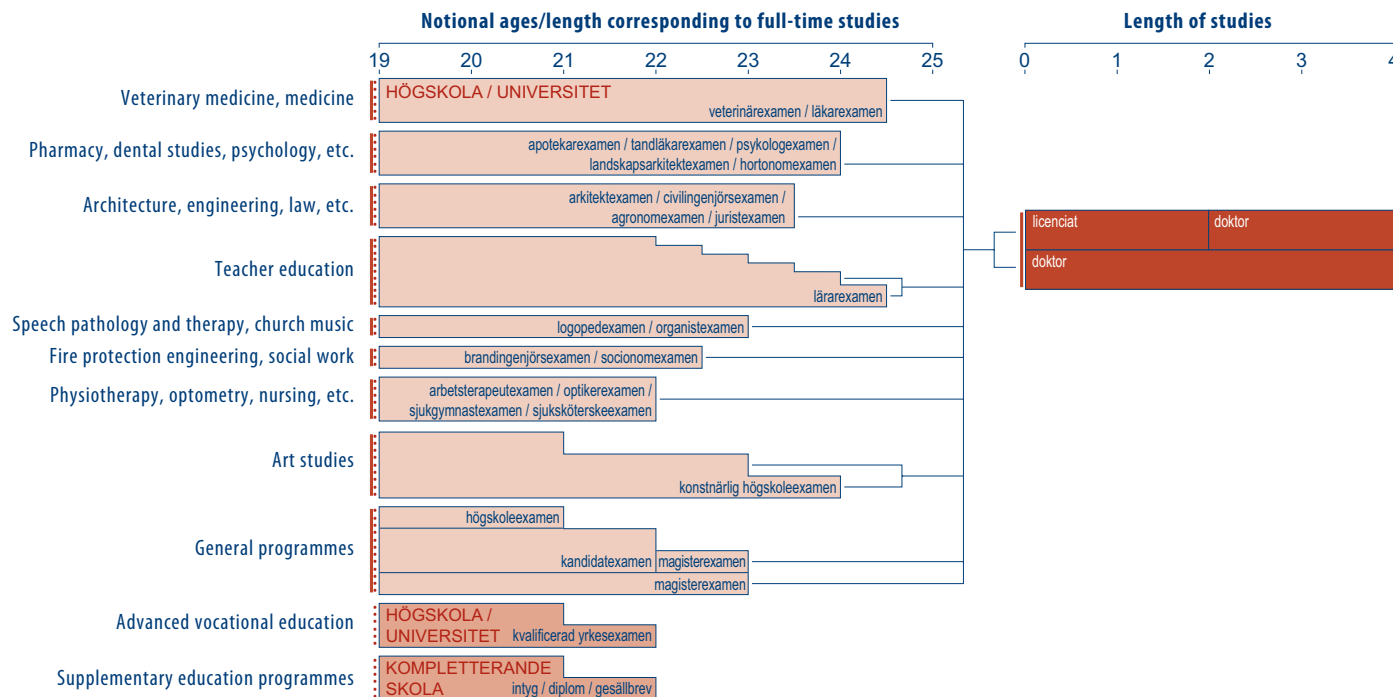
The Agency also performs national evaluations of entire education programmes and subjects. In national evaluations, performance is

assessed at all institutions of higher education which offer a particular programme or subject. Starting in 2001, the Agency will perform recurrent and comprehensive subject and programme evaluations. All programmes of higher education, including postgraduate training, will be evaluated once every six years and the results will be made available to students.

The Agency also assesses an institution's right to establish areas of research and, where applicable, its right to university status, although decisions on such matters are taken by the government.

A fourth type of assessment relates to quality management at institutions of higher education. The Agency examines quality management, i.e. the processes that result in quality at the local level.

The National Agency of Higher Education has participated as a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2000. In addition, a Nordic Network of Quality Assurance Agencies has been co-operating increasingly in quality issues with stakeholders, institutions and students.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

The professional degrees shown are no more than a selection from around 50 in all. Some advanced, supplementary undergraduate professional degree courses are based on a first professional degree.

The institution known as *kompletterande skolor* includes various private education institutions, depending on the programme concerned. *Intyg/diplom/gesällbrev* are types of certificate. Advanced vocational education may be provided by various other institutions, in addition to the *universitet/högskolor*.

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Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
17 December 1992	Higher Education Act 1434	Högskolelagen 1992:1434
4 February 1993	Higher Education Ordinance 100	Högskoleförordningen 1993:100
2 March 2004	Further development in Higher Education – The Bologna Process in a Swedish Perspective, Ds 2004:2	Högre utbildning i utveckling – Bolognaprocessen i svensk belysning, Ds 2004:2

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Website

For further details on evaluation: <http://www.hsv.se>

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The legal basis for the higher education system is set out in the Constitution, which recognises the right of universities and other higher education institutions to act autonomously within the limits set by the following laws: the 1993 Higher Education Act (and its amendments in 1999, 2001 and 2003), Amendments and Supplements to the Higher Education Act (ASHE), and the 2004 Higher Vocational Education (HVE) Act. The changes introduced by the 2004 legislation will be applicable with effect from the 2005/06 academic year.

In 2002, the National Assembly adopted the Master Plan for Higher Education. Its aim is to introduce measures that will make it easier to comply with the Bologna Declaration criteria (the widespread introduction of ECTS, quality assurance measures and preparation of proposals for legislative changes) and put them into practice.

A degree system based on **two main cycles** has existed in the Slovenian higher education system since the 1960s. Two-year Master's programmes (*Magisterij*) have been introduced by law and are offered by faculties and academies in all disciplines. They build on degrees that require normally four, but in some cases also four and a half, five or six years of study.

The Master's programmes are also regarded as a first step and prerequisite for **doctoral studies**. Indeed, since the 1993 Higher Education Act, it has been possible to study for a doctorate in two ways: by embarking on a four-year course after the first degree including theoretical courses and personal research work, and by completing a two-year Master's course and then two further years of doctoral study. Taught courses are not necessarily part of two-year doctoral studies, which are based on individual research and consultation with mentors.

According to the new higher education legislation (the 2004 ASHE Act), the new structure of higher education in accordance with the proposed Bologna patterns is to be gradually implemented with effect between 2005/06 and 2009/10. A first cycle (equivalent to Bachelor's) will include three to four years of academic or professional studies. It will be possible to continue and obtain a second degree (equivalent to Master's) which will require one additional year (4+1) or two additional years (3+2). In general, all second degrees will provide access to three-year doctoral studies (or the labour market). In a post-reform structure, the Master's qualification will be equivalent to a Master's degree (in Bologna terms). Any second-degree graduate

may be admitted to doctoral study programmes (taught courses). Pre-reform Master's graduates will be recognised as having already obtained 60 credits from doctoral-level studies within the course of their Master's qualification. In addition, the doctoral studies will be open to other candidates under certain conditions. It will be possible to obtain a doctorate as a joint degree at two or more universities. Universities from other European countries and from third countries may be included.

With effect from 2002 (criteria of the Council for Higher Education), application of the credit system based on **ECTS** became obligatory for all programmes. It is used both as a transfer and accumulation system. The 2004 ASHE Act stipulates that ECTS must be applied in all first-, second- and third-cycle programmes, and that ECTS credits must be allocated to all educational components of a study programme and reflect the amount of work done by the student. In November 2004, the Council for Higher Education enforced the Criteria for the implementation of a credit system based on the 2004 ASHE Act.

To improve international transparency and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications, a **Diploma Supplement** has been issued in Slovenia since

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the 2000/01 academic year. It is issued by all higher education institutions to all students in Slovene, and also in English on request. It is available free of charge in Slovene, and in return for payment in English. The 2004 ASHE Act stipulates that from 2005/06, the Diploma Supplement shall be attached to each first-, second- and third-cycle diploma and issued free of charge in Slovene and in one of the official languages of the European Union. The content details of the Diploma Supplement will be determined by the Minister for Higher Education at the proposal of the Council for Higher Education.

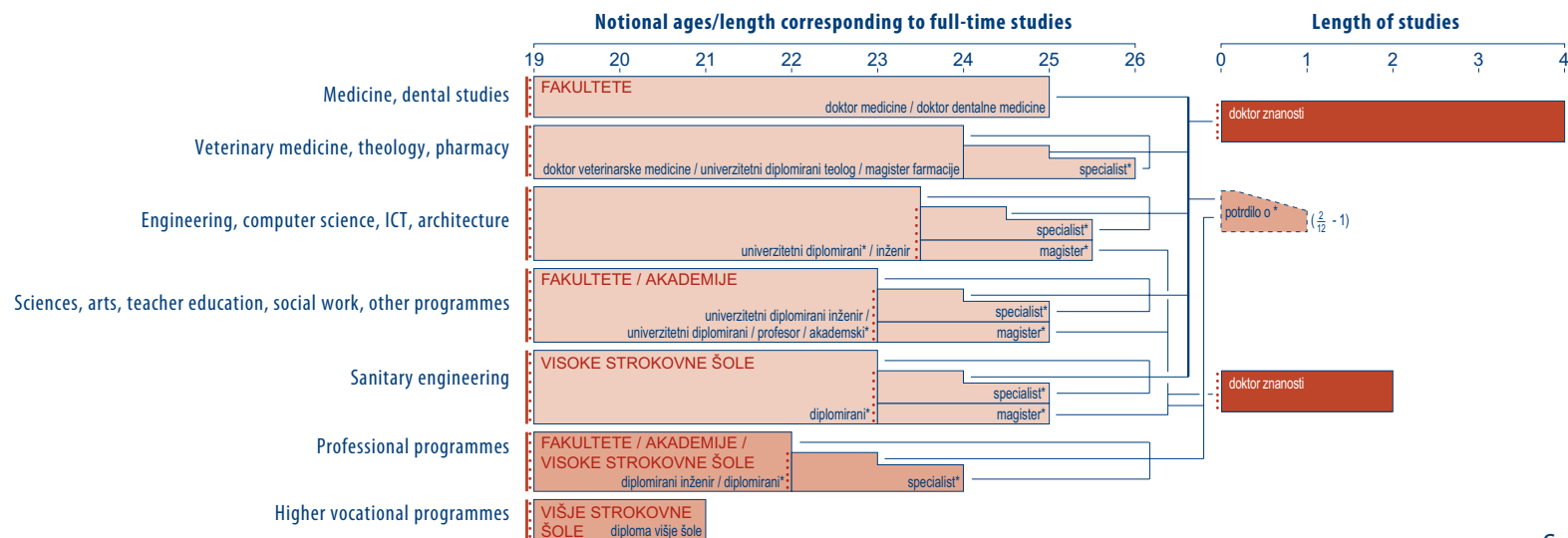
Currently, the **quality assurance** of the teaching process is monitored by higher education institutions themselves and discussed by the Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission (established in 1996), which in 2000 also accepted student representatives as new members. The Commission regularly produces and publishes annual reports. In October 2004, the Commission issued rules on external evaluation criteria.

The procedure for **accrediting** study programmes and institutions is the responsibility of the government and the Council for Higher Education (CHE) of the

Republic of Slovenia (*Svet za visoko šolstvo Republike Slovenije*). According to the new 2004 Higher Education Act, the new Council was appointed in March 2005. Its responsibilities and membership have been redefined. From March 2005, these responsibilities include running the (re-)accreditation process, discussing the findings from **self- and external evaluation** reports, co-operating with councils of experts in the area of education and science and with other agencies, and determining the criteria for credit evaluation of study programmes. The new Council also defines a minimum share of optional courses in these programmes, and determines criteria for transfers between them and for the recognition of prior learning outcomes and other achievements, which are necessary for further studies, etc. The new CHE is composed of a president and fifteen members, including seven university professors and scientists nominated by institutions of higher education, three representatives of industry and non-industrial sectors nominated by the Chambers and Associations of Employers, three representatives of students nominated by the Student Organisation of RS in co-operation with Students' Councils of Universities and other HEIs, and three representatives of the Government.

Technical assistance to the CHE is offered by the public Agency for Higher Education (no longer by the Ministry of Higher Education). The Agency is expected to be established by the end of 2005 as an independent institution. It will have an administrative board, a director and a council for the evaluation of higher education. It will also (among other responsibilities) ensure the operation of a quality assurance system in higher education and higher technical education. Furthermore, it will provide support and follow-up of quality assurance systems, as well as appoint expert panels, and encourage the self-evaluation of higher education institutions and co-operation with institutions or bodies from other countries. Finally, it will be responsible for training evaluators, analysing and publishing self-evaluation and external evaluation reports, providing professional and administrative assistance to the Council for Higher Education, establishing data bases, providing information about higher education for institutions, students, employers and employees, and carrying out other development tasks.

The 2004 ASHE Act also refers to the quality assurance responsibilities of the Council for Evaluation (an independent body of experts from the Agency). It will comprise representatives of higher education institu-



Source: Eurydice.

□ ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	■ ISCED 6 programme	⋮ Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n - x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
□ ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	□ Further qualification	▬ Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

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tions, higher vocational colleges, employers, students and the government of the Republic of Slovenia. It will define the criteria for monitoring, assessment and quality assurance, as well as issue opinions and external evaluation reports.

Higher vocational education is governed by the new Higher Vocational Education Act (HVE Act, 2004), which replaces the former Vocational Education Act (1996). Full implementation of the new Act is expected in the 2005/06 academic year. It now regulates tertiary-level vocational education separately from the upper secondary level, determines the organisation of higher vocational colleges, and places them clearly within tertiary education.

The aim of the reform is partly to ensure international comparability in terms of programme quality, and to introduce the European dimension into programmes and promote lifelong learning. It will also give greater consistency to the educational structure by providing for 120 vertical credits and further education at degree level. Joint study programmes are to be offered by higher vocational colleges from Slovenia with one or more colleges from abroad. Higher vocational colleges issue a diploma, stating the field of education, and will in future also offer a Diploma Supplement in Slovene and in one of the EU languages. The new law plans for the appointment of the accreditation committee (a

body appointed by the Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training), a procedure for the accreditation of study programmes, and the establishment of quality assessment and assurance committees in each college. It also outlines how these committees should co-operate with the Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education.

The Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission is a member of the CEE Network (Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), and also participates in sessions of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), although it is not yet a member of ENQA.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
17 October 2003	Higher Education Act (Official Gazette RS 67/1993, 39/1995 Odl.US: U-I-22/94-15, 18/1998 Odl.US: U-I-34/98, 35/1998 Odl.US: U-I-243/95-13, 99/1999, 64/2001, 100/2003)	Zakon o visokem šolstvu (Uradni list RS RS 67/1993, 39/1995 Odl.US: U-I-22/94-15, 18/1998 Odl.US: U-I-34/98, 35/1998 Odl.US: U-I-243/95-13, 99/1999, 64/2001, 100/2003)
10 June 2004	Amendments and Supplements to the Higher Education Act (ASHEA), Official Gazette RS, No. 63/2004	Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah zakona o visokem šolstvu, Uradni list RS, št. 63/2004
15 July 2004	Higher Vocational Education Act, Official Gazette RS, No. 86/2004	Zakon o višjem strokovnem izobraževanju, Uradni list RS, št. 86/2004

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

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The new Higher Education Act adopted in April 2002 and amended in November 2003 regulates arrangements associated with the Bologna process.

The degree structure based on **three main cycles** has been implemented since 1996. The new Act clearly distinguishes between Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral programmes. Bachelor's degrees are generally awarded after three or four years of study, while Master's degree courses may last between 1 and 3 years.

The former long-cycle programmes are gradually being phased out from the 2005/06 academic year onwards and incorporated into Master's courses. The only exception are programmes in Catholic theology, medicine and veterinary medicine which will remain the only fields of study offered in the form of a single long course.

The standard length of full-time **doctoral programmes** varies between 3 and 4 years (the exact standard number of credits recommended by decree is 60 per academic year). Ph.D. study is completed by the defence of a dissertation and leads to the academic degrees of *doktor* (in general fields) or *doktor umenia* (in artistic fields). In the field of Catholic Theology, a *licenciát teológie* degree (completed after two years of study) is required

for access to the one-year programme leading to the *doktor* and *doktor teológie* degrees. Theoretical courses are compulsory and occur in parallel to individual research. Doctorates may be awarded at two or more national or foreign European universities.

Double or joint degrees may also be awarded by universities in non-European countries.

ECTS was first introduced in 1998 in the framework of European mobility programmes. Since 2002, the legislation has included the obligation to implement the credit system on the basis of ECTS (for both transfer and accumulation purposes) and to publish the ECTS information package in all higher education institutions by the 2005/06 academic year at the latest. Information packages have been used since the start of the Erasmus/Socrates programme in the university sector as a tool for facilitating study orientation for incoming/outgoing students and academic staff.

The **Diploma Supplement** was first introduced in the Slovak Technical University at the end of the 2002/03 academic year. It was issued on request and for a fee, in Slovak and in English. According to the current legislation, it is to be fully introduced by all higher education institutions from the 2005/06 academic year

onwards. It will then be issued automatically and free of charge in Slovak to all students. The English version of the Supplement may be issued in return for payment, depending on the costs incurred by HEIs when producing it. When introduced, it will be provided, together with the diploma, at all three levels for a fee determined by each institution. This rule applies to graduates of higher education institutions pursuing study programmes reaccredited in accordance with the new Higher Education Act.

The **external evaluation** of higher education institutions is an integral part of **accreditation**. It has been provided for in legislation since March 2003, and carried out by the Accreditation Commission (*Akreditačná komisia*, or AC). When checking the performance of higher education activity in science, technology and art, the AC uses the findings of internal quality assessment by institutions (included in a report but not published), prepares peer reviews, and then after evaluating activity as a whole, submits proposals to the Ministry of Education. Statements by the AC are the basis for decisions taken by the Ministry (e.g. recognition of the right to award a particular degree to graduates in a given field) and the

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government (e.g. state consent to function as a private institution).

The AC, which was established by the government in 1990 as its advisory body, consists of 21 members appointed for a period of 6 years (renewable for one further term).

In the field of external quality assurance, it monitors and independently evaluates the quality of the teaching, research, development, artistic or other creative activities of higher education institutions and contributes to their improvement. It generally assesses conditions under which such activities are carried out at individual institutions and prepares recommendations for enhancing their work. The AC may inform the public about its findings.

The AC carries out accreditation of the individual activities of institutions. It gives its opinion on the capacity of institutions to implement a particular study programme and award the corresponding degree to graduates, as well as to conduct habilitation and professors' nomination procedures, and submit proposals for establishment, merger, affiliation, split, dissolution, etc. The AC also carries out regular complex accreditation of all higher education institutions at six-year intervals.

An addendum to the new Higher Education Act lists the background materials that institutions

should submit to the Accreditation Commission when accrediting their individual activities or when carrying out complex accreditation. Complex accreditation of activities of a higher education institution is a process in which the AC assesses teaching, research, development, artistic or other creative activities of the higher education institution, as well as personnel, technical information and other elements which are part of the context of such activities. It gives a statement on requests by higher education institutions for accreditation of all study programmes and habilitation procedures, as well as procedures for nomination of professors, for which the higher education institution wishes to be granted the appropriate rights. In March 2003, the Ministry also published the evaluation criteria and method for accrediting the individual activities of institutions and for complex accreditation.

In the course of **internal quality** assessment, the scientific boards of higher education institutions regularly evaluate (at least once a year) the standard of the institution in terms of educational activity in the fields of science, technology and art. The results of such an evaluation are included in a report. In accordance with the Higher Education Act, all institutions are responsible for introducing

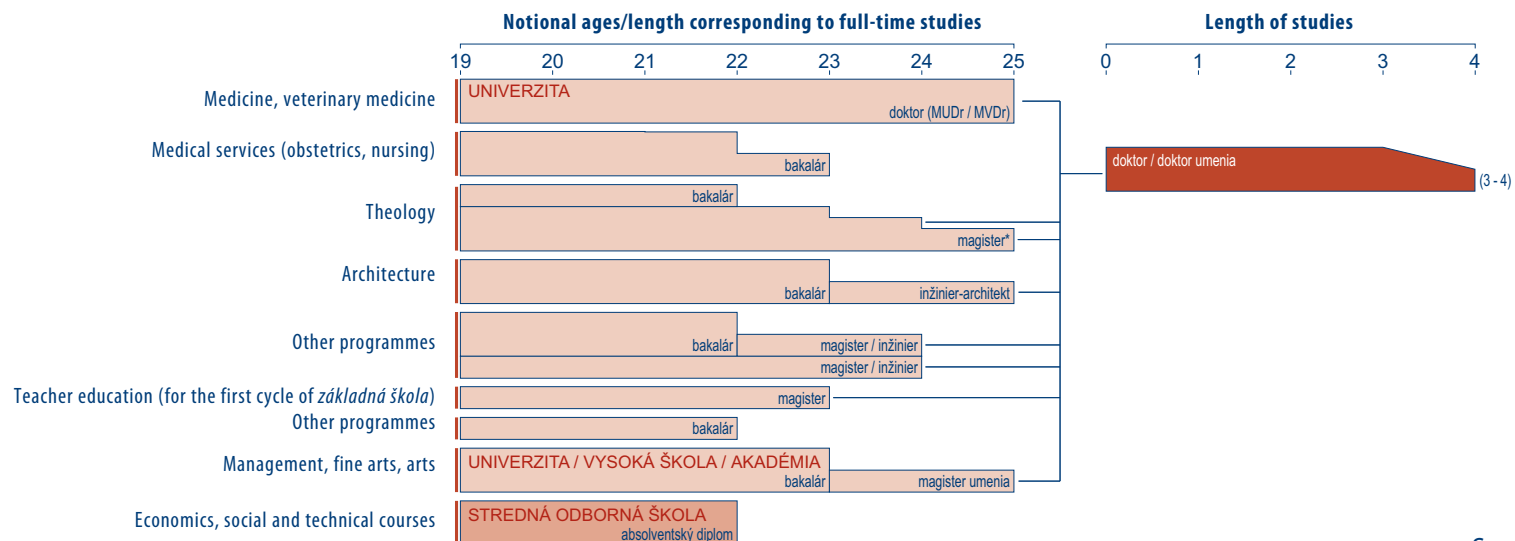
their own quality assurance system. Some universities develop practices based on national and international projects for developing their internal evaluation programmes. At some universities, quality assurance guidelines are also being prepared.

Students are involved in internal evaluation procedures. According to the Higher Education Act, each student has the right to express him/herself about the quality of teaching and teachers by means of anonymous questionnaires, at least once a year.

The Accreditation Commission has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 1995. It is also a member of the INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) and its regional sub-network CEENQAAHE (Central and Eastern Europe Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education).

In order to achieve optimal implementation of the Bologna reforms, a project called the National Team of Bologna Promoters (*Národný tím bolonských promótorov*) was prepared in June 2004.

The Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Slovak Rectors Conference, the Council of Higher Education Institutions and the Socrates



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

MUDr Doktor medicíny | MVDr Doktor veterinárskej medicíny

In the field of catholic theology, the PhD course consists of a first two-year stage, following which graduates receive the *licenciát teológie* degree (ThLic) and a second one-year stage on completion of which they receive the degree of *doktor* (PhD) and also *doktor teológie* (ThDr).

SLOVAKIA

National Agency, selected the national team of seven Bologna Promoters from all regions of Slovakia. The project covers the period from 1 July 2004 to the end of June 2005. A national report as output will be drafted.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
21 February 2002 (implemented on 1 April 2002)	Act No. 131/2002 of the Law Code on Higher Education and on Changes and Supplements to Some Laws	Zákon č.131/2002 Z.z. o vysokých školách a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov
27 September 2002 (implemented on 1 November 2002)	Decree No. 614/2002 of the Law Code of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic on the Credit System of Study	Vyhláška č.614/2002 Z.z. Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky z 27. septembra 2002 o kreditovom systéme štúdia
6 November 2003 (implemented on 1 January 2004)	Act No. 528/2003 of the Law Code whereby is amended the Act No. 131/2002	Zákon č. 528/2003 Z.z. ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č.131/2002 z.z.

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

TURKEY

The Higher Education Law of October 1981 governs the activities of the entire higher education system in Turkey, including the short cycle of higher vocational schools.

The universities are founded by law, whereas their faculties, institutes and four-year (vocational/professional) higher schools are founded by decision of the parliament. The new two-year vocational higher schools and their departments are established following approval of a university request by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), which is a constitutional, non-political state body responsible for the organisation, planning, recognition and supervision of all higher education institutions.

Since 1981, the Turkish higher education system has consisted of a structure based on **three main cycles** – Bachelor's, Master's and doctorate. In the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine, programmes are based on a one-tier system, equivalent to combined Bachelor's and Master's programmes. The theoretical part of the PhD/Doctorate (*Doktora Diploması*) programmes contains a minimum of seven courses (21 national credits). A recent change in the Regulations on Graduate Education of 1 July 1996 (August 2003), allows Bachelor's

degree holders direct access to doctoral programmes provided that their performance at the Bachelor's level is exceptional and their applications are approved. For these students, the theoretical part of the doctoral programmes consists of a minimum of 14 courses, with a minimum of 42 national credits.

There is no legal obstacle to the establishment and recognition of **joint degrees** and/or joint study programmes. Universities can set up and offer joint degree programmes through international partnerships following approval by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK).

ECTS was first introduced in higher education institutions in 2001 and has been officially implemented in most universities within the context of EU student mobility programmes. There are plans to make it compulsory by the end of the 2005/06 academic year. In Turkey, ECTS is used solely for credit transfer.

In general, all higher education institutions in Turkey also use the independent national credit system which is not fully compatible with ECTS. The existing credit system is based on contact hours (i.e. theoretical or practical hours per week).

The **Diploma Supplement** (DS) was first introduced in higher education institutions in 2001. It is not mandatory yet but will be

compulsory from the 2005/06 academic year onwards. The national DS template has been formed in line with UNESCO-CEPES, European Commission and Council of Europe standards. In the meantime, universities have been required to prepare sample copies of the DS for all degree programmes, including doctorates. Some universities have already completed all the preliminary work required to issue the DS in June 2005. The DS is to be issued to students free of charge on request, in English and in one other widely used European language (German or French).

In October 2002, the regulations on academic assessment and **quality control** in higher education were initiated by the Inter-university Board. The Commission on Academic Assessment and Quality Control in higher education, established by the Inter-university Board, has been in place since the 2003/04 academic year. The regulations involve the evaluation of all higher education degree programmes. At this stage, the emphasis will be placed on **internal evaluation**, except in the case of doctoral degrees, which will be subject to evaluation by an external committee. The Commission examines the reports and submits them to YÖK and the Inter-university Board. While the Turkish higher education system does not yet have a national

TURKEY

accreditation system, programmes are adopted if they meet YÖK criteria. Efforts have been stepped up during the 2004/05 academic year to establish national accreditation and quality assurance.

At present, the system is open to evaluation from abroad – a practice widely adopted by many universities.

Student unions in the Turkish higher education system meet on a regular basis and have a council which is independent of YÖK. For the time being, there is no national-level student representative in Turkey. In 2001, YÖK approved the regulations on university student councils proposed by the Inter-university Board to establish a student council in each higher

education institution. According to these regulations, each class, department or programme, and each faculty or four-year higher (vocational) school must have a student representative. The student council (UOK) at higher education institutions consists of representatives of the faculty and four-year higher (vocational) school. When matters concerning students are on the agenda, the president of the student council and faculty representatives are invited to the senate and board meetings by the rector or deans, though they do not have voting rights.

Students contribute to internal evaluation by completing questionnaires for each course at the end of every semester. The questions

concern the course material and the conduct of teachers. Several universities have adopted this procedure for all their programmes for over 10 years, while others have started to do so in the accreditation of their engineering programmes.

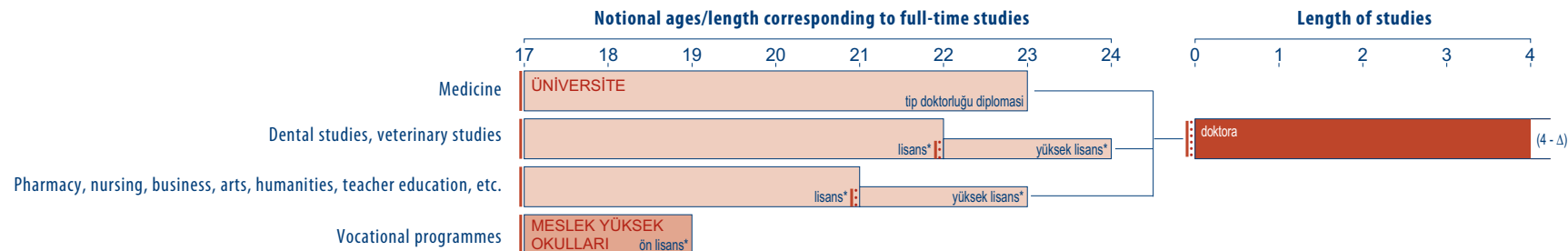
The draft proposal for the national student council is being submitted to the May 2005 meeting of the Inter-University Council (ÜAK) and then to the YÖK.

No bodies responsible for quality assurance have applied for membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
4 October 1981 (revisions in subsequent years)	The Higher Education Law No. 2547	2547 sayılı Yüksek Öğretim Kanunu

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

UNITED KINGDOM – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are autonomous bodies established by Royal Charter or legislation, and most are part-funded by government. Many of the changes and reforms in higher education which have taken place over recent years followed from the recommendations of the 1997 Dearing Report (the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education). The 2004 Higher Education Act (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) will introduce variable tuition fees from 2006 onwards. A Government decision on university title (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) has changed the basis on which the university title is accorded to an institution, removing the requirement for research degree awarding powers and spread of subject areas. Criteria for taught degree awarding powers have been strengthened to require a more extensive scholarly environment. England, Wales and Northern Ireland have responded in a positive way to the developments arising from the Bologna Process.

The degree structure in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is based on **three main cycles**. The first cycle also includes a wide range of different short-cycle qualifications at different levels. This structure meets the basic Bologna requirement since, for full-time

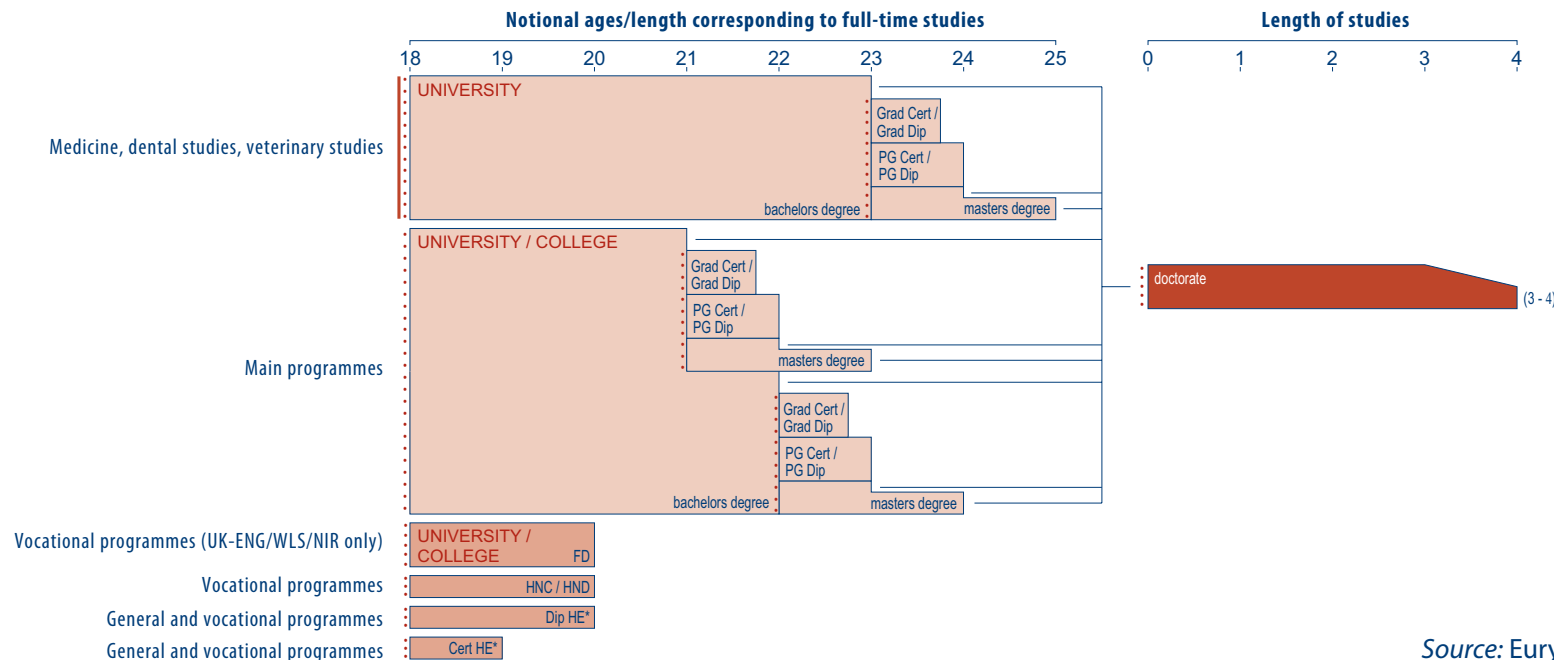
students, the first cycle is generally either three or four years. Although students typically enter **doctoral programmes** following a Master's degree, there are some subject areas where students can enter such programmes without a Master's degree if they have good results in a Bachelor's degree with Honours in a relevant discipline, along with the agreement of the supervisor(s) to take on the particular student. A PhD does not include training for teaching in higher education; this takes place separately where required. Some bodies which fund postgraduate studies require one year's training in research methods (the MRes) before the Doctorate, but this can equally form the first part of doctoral studies, which may also include short courses. There are no legal obstacles to awarding joint or double degrees provided the institution has appropriately formulated its statutes and regulations.

Titles of degrees are not regulated by law but generic descriptors for higher education qualifications, including those at doctoral level and advice on qualification nomenclature, are included in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) provided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). These descriptors provide guidance on qualification nomenclature to assist institutions in achieving

consistency in the ways in which qualification titles convey information about the level, nature and subjects of study.

Credit accumulation and transfer systems developed by consortia of HEIs have been used widely, but not universally, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over recent years. One academic year is equated with 120 UK credits or 60 **ECTS** credits, but hours/credit differ from the averages identified in the ECTS Guidelines. Credit in the UK is always based on learning outcomes recognising notional student workload. In Wales, since 2003, all accredited learning has been gradually brought into a single unifying structure referred to as the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). The majority of Welsh universities continue to work collaboratively on its implementation, while considering its integration with ECTS. The framework includes a credit accumulation and transfer system and vocational qualifications. While large numbers of universities in England and Northern Ireland also use a credit system and have done so for a number of years, credits do not form part of the English and Northern Irish qualifications framework. This issue will be discussed in 2005.

Since its introduction in 1989, ECTS has been widely used by institutions participating in the



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

Cert HE	<i>Certificate of Higher Education</i>	Grad Cert	<i>Graduate Certificate</i>	HND	<i>Higher National Diploma</i>
Dip HE	<i>Diploma of Higher Education</i>	Grad Dip	<i>Graduate Diploma</i>	PG Cert	<i>Postgraduate Certificate</i>
FD	<i>Foundation Degree (UK (ENG/WLS/NIR))</i>	HNC	<i>Higher National Certificate</i>	PG Dip	<i>Postgraduate Diploma</i>

The full flexibility of learning paths is not apparent from the above diagram, as opportunities for transferring from one programme to another and the flexibility at the end of undergraduate programmes (ISCED level 5A 1st programmes) are not illustrated.

Programmes are available on a full-time, part-time or flexible basis to students of all ages. In Scotland appropriately qualified students can start at 17. Many different types of programme are available, not all of which can be distinguished in the diagram. In Scotland, courses leading to an ordinary bachelors degree normally last three years, while courses leading to a bachelors degree with honours are typically four years. In the rest of the UK, three-year honours degree courses are more common, but there are also many four-year courses, particularly those which include UK or overseas placements. Masters degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses (lasting typically one calendar year), programmes of research (typically two years), or a mixture of both. Research masters programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil (Master of Philosophy) or MRes (Master of Research). Some masters degrees in science and engineering are integrated into undergraduate programmes lasting a year longer than honours degree programmes. Doctorates normally require a minimum of three years of original research which may include the time spent working towards an MPhil. Some doctorate programmes also include a taught element.

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Socrates-Erasmus programme. Most of them use ECTS for transfer. As institutions increasingly look to acquire the ECTS label, more institutions will be using ECTS for all first- and second-cycle programmes alongside Welsh, Northern Ireland and English credits where they operate.

Following from the Dearing Report, England, Wales and Northern Ireland were committed to the development of a Student Progress File with two elements – the first matching in large part the requirements of the **Diploma Supplement**, the second providing a personal development file. With the encouragement of the Government and the sector-wide Europe Unit based at Universities UK (UUK – a consultative and advisory body which represents university interests and speaks on behalf of all UK universities), higher education institutions are implementing the Diploma Supplement. This is issued free of charge, in English and in Wales there are plans to provide the Diploma Supplement in Welsh as well as in English. Together with the key organisations in the sector, the National Academic Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC) as a member of the European ENIC/NARIC network, also supports and promotes the implementation and promotion of the Diploma Supplement in the UK. The development of the

Diploma Supplement has been further enhanced by higher education institution conferences and other events offered in collaboration between the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council, the UK NARIC and the Europe Unit. Progress is expected towards 100% implementation over the next two years.

A comprehensive system for the maintenance of quality and standards in institutions has been established, broadly following the pattern proposed by the Dearing Inquiry in 1997. The current **external quality assurance** processes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland focus on institutional management of quality and standards. They are predicated on higher education institutions having robust internal quality assurance mechanisms capable of providing verifiable information to the public about quality and standards at programme level.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was established in 1997 to provide an integrated quality assurance service for the UK higher education sector. The Agency is an independent body funded by subscriptions from higher education institutions and through contracts with the four higher education funding councils in the UK. The Agency's role is to safeguard the public interest in sound

standards of higher education qualifications and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. It does this by reviewing quality and standards and by publishing external reference points for quality that help higher education institutions to define clear and explicit standards. These external reference points include: the frameworks of higher education qualifications, which include descriptions of different HE qualifications; subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects; and a ten-part Code of Practice for Quality Assurance.

QAA reviews and audits are evidence-based processes using materials produced by institutions, including a self-evaluation document. The integrity and consistency of the QAA's review processes, which are peer reviews, is largely dependent on the participation of well-qualified and trained reviewers. The QAA publishes a person specification for reviewers setting out the qualities and experience they should have, and in selecting reviewers tries to maintain an overall balance in respect of aspects including gender, geographical location, subject balance and ethnicity. The Agency does not currently specifically seek nominations for reviewers from outside the UK, but has involved

UNITED KINGDOM – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

international colleagues in the review of some of the elements of the academic infrastructure.

The QAA Board includes a student observer. Students play an active role in the review processes: they make a separate written submission to the audit/review team, and meeting(s) with students are an element in every audit programme. The Agency produces material on quality directly targeted at students, and has a member of staff dedicated to student matters including liaising with the National Union of Students on training in quality assurance for its members.

All QAA review activities result in published reports. These reports include judgments about quality and standards, and are available in hard copy and through the internet on the Agency's website, as are all documents relating to the Agency's standards and processes. The Agency does not have the power to close institutions or programmes or withdraw funding, but should a 'no confidence' judgment be made, the institution would have a period of one year to recover the situation either by improving or closing the provision. Should this not be achieved, then the appropriate Funding Council would take action. One year after an audit report has been

published, institutions are invited to comment on the actions they have taken in respect of recommendations made in the report.

Higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have operated **internal quality** mechanisms for many decades.

There is no system for **accrediting** higher education institutions, but the right to award degrees and use university title is protected by the Government. Institutions without degree-awarding powers may provide courses leading to degrees validated by institutions with degree-awarding powers (mainly universities and university colleges). There are many statutory and regulatory bodies associated with particular professions which accredit higher education programmes and/or individual graduates according to their specific requirements.

The Department for Education and Skills in England is committed to the continued expansion of higher education and moving towards half the population entering higher education by the age of 30. The Welsh Assembly Government has targets to increase the participation of Welsh-domiciled higher education students studying in higher education institutions in Wales. The bulk of the

expansion of higher education provision will come through new types of qualification, in particular, through foundation degrees. These two-year vocational awards are designed specifically to offer opportunities to progress to a Bachelor's degree.

The QAA is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and its Chief Executive is one of the Vice Presidents of the Network. The Agency has participated in a number of ENQA projects including the Transnational European Evaluation Projects (TEEP) and the Quality Convergence Study (QCS), and is a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). It also has bilateral links with other agencies throughout Europe and in other parts of the world. The Agency participates actively in OECD and UNESCO higher education activities. The QAA publishes a code of practice on collaborative provision covering transnational provision originating in the UK which is delivered in other countries through partner institutions.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term
1997	Dearing Report. National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. <i>Higher Education in the Learning Society</i> .
2004	Higher Education Act 2004

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

HEFCE: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

UK NARIC Diploma Supplement pages: <http://www.naric.org.uk/ds.asp>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA): <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW): <http://www.elwa.org.uk/elwaweb/elwa.aspx?pageid=458>

Department for Employment and Learning, Higher Education Branch: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index.cfm/area/information/page/HigherEducation>

Universities UK: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/>

Europe Unit: <http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/home/>

Arrangements linked to the Bologna process are mainly regulated by the Scottish Higher Education Framework adopted in 2001 and completed in 2003, and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) adopted in 2001. Developments related to the Bologna Process are monitored through the Scottish Bologna Stakeholder Group. This group includes members of the Scottish Executive (the devolved government for Scotland), representatives from Universities Scotland, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA Scotland), the National Union of Students Scotland (NUS Scotland) and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC).

The existing degree structure is traditionally based on **three main cycles**. The traditional Honours degree takes four years to complete (480 national credits or 240 ECTS), and most postgraduate Master's courses can be completed in one calendar year (180 national credits with no current ECTS equivalent). There are some exceptions to these general arrangements in the case of professional qualifications, and where flexible patterns of study are created to support lifelong learning policy objectives.

The requirements for achieving a **doctorate** vary by subject area, institution and type of

doctorate. In all cases, the candidate must provide evidence that he or she has made an original and significant contribution to knowledge. The structure of doctorate programmes is similar to that in place elsewhere in the UK. It comprises four kinds of doctorates: the traditional research-based doctoral degrees (PhD or DPhil), the doctorates with a substantial taught core (now available in some vocational areas including engineering, business and education), the professional doctorates (available for people who wish to research their professional practice), and the doctorates by publication (awarded on the basis of the submission of high-quality previously published work written by the candidate, supported by a substantial critical appraisal of this work). Part-time study is common, and therefore the duration varies from between 4 and 6 years.

There is no single model for joint or double degree programmes. Arrangements are negotiated on an individual basis between partner institutions.

All Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and programmes use the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) which defines programmes and courses in terms of credit points and credit levels. SCQF has been

compatible with **ECTS** (2 SCQF are equivalent to 1 ECTS) since 2001. ECTS is commonly used for credit transfers and SCQF is used for accumulation, given that the Framework contains levels whereas as ECTS does not. Qualifications are defined in relation to SCQF in terms of qualification descriptors, credit points and credit levels.

The **Diploma Supplement** has not been implemented yet, but HEIs expect to do so by the end of June 2005. The Diploma Supplement will be available free of charge and will be published in English. It will include a national description of the Scottish higher education system developed by QAA Scotland and the Scottish higher education sector.

External evaluation is conducted by QAA, a UK-wide body with a separate office in Scotland. This independent body was established in 1992 to ensure public confidence in the quality and standards of higher education and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of its quality. In addition to QAA, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) established in 1992 has statutory responsibility for assessing the quality of provision within publicly funded institutions. SHEFC discharges

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the responsibility through QAA Scotland and the ELIR review process.

QAA Scotland has developed its own distinctive approach to quality assurance and enhancement in partnership with SHEFC and the Scottish higher education sector. This approach is known as the Quality Enhancement Framework. It operates according to the following main elements:

- HEIs conduct internal reviews at subject level.
- QAA runs a cycle of four yearly external institutional reviews conducted by peers, based on a combination of self-assessment and visits.
- NUS Scotland (the student representative body) manages a national development service financed by SHEFC to support student engagement and participation in quality enhancement within their own institutions.
- All HEIs publish information on the quality and standards of their provision in accordance with guidance issued by SHEFC, and make this available to the public on the

Higher Education and Research Opportunities website.

QAA facilitates a series of sector-wide 'Enhancement Themes'. These are designed to enable the sector as a whole to undertake collective work to enhance the quality and standards of provision.

The focus is on reviewing an institution's ability to assure its own quality. Newly designated institutions, or institutions that appear to be failing, will undergo a more rigorous external review at programme level until there is confidence in their internal systems. HEIs take account of the QAA's national code of practice for quality assurance and national subject-level 'benchmark statements' when designing their internal processes.

HEIs conduct **internal evaluation** at subject level in accordance with guidance issued by SHEFC. HEIs are independent and self-governing bodies. Degrees and other higher education qualifications are legally owned by the awarding institution, and not by the state. HEIs determine the degrees they offer while Government holds a list of institutions with powers to award degrees, as well as other recognised institutions. HEIs have to meet strict criteria before they are given degree-awarding

powers. Qualification standards and the quality of the student learning experience are maintained by a range of processes including the extensive use of external examiners.

Quality assurance arrangements for higher education place particular emphasis on student participation in review processes. Student representatives have had full involvement in the design of processes which focus on the student learning experience.

In addition to the above arrangements, many Further Education Colleges provide short courses at higher education level whose quality is ensured by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Their standards are also monitored by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. A small number of colleges also offer degree provision which is accredited by the partner higher education institution.

QAA is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term
1966	Acts on Universities
1992	Acts on Higher Education Institutions
2001 and 2003	Scottish Higher Education Framework
2001	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
September 2004	Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (regulations underpinning doctoral level study)

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

Relevant legislative documents can be accessed at: <http://www.hms0.gov.uk/acts.htm>

Website of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC): <http://www.shefc.ac.uk>

Website of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA): <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Website for Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: <http://www.scqf.org.uk>

Website for Universities Scotland (US): <http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk>

Further detail on the national student development service in quality assurance can be obtained at: <http://www.sparqs.org.uk>

HOLY SEE

A course structure based on **three main cycles** was introduced for all programmes by the legislative document 'Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana*' (*Constitutio Apostolica Sapientia christiana*) already in 1979. This structure therefore existed prior to the Bologna Process. Since then, students fulfilling the necessary higher education admission requirements have been able to enrol. The academic degrees conferred are: *Baccalaureate* (after the first cycle), *Licentiate* (after the second cycle) and *Doctorate* (after the third cycle). Academic degrees can be given different names by the individual faculties, depending on the university practice in the local area, yet they clearly indicate the equivalence these have with the names of the academic degrees of each cycle and maintain uniformity among the ecclesiastical faculties of the same area. Special qualifications can be added to the names of these degrees according to the diversity of faculties and the order of studies in the individual faculties.

The length of time adopted for courses generally corresponds to 3+2+3 years. Apart from the norms common to all faculties, those of Sacred Theology, Canon Law and Philosophy have to follow the special norms established in the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* because of their particular nature and importance for the Holy See. The periods of study for

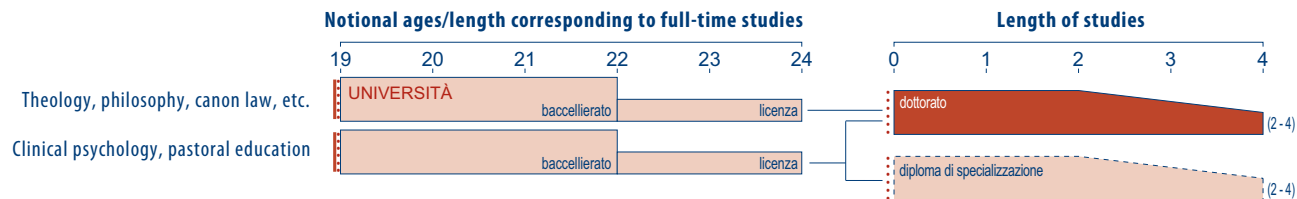
Sacred Theology are 5+2+at least 1, and for Canon Law are (at least 1)+3+at least 1. Legislative steps have been initiated for the adaptation of the first cycle from two to at least three years for Philosophy.

The fundamental law for higher education, *Sapientia christiana*, provides for **third-cycle studies** in the following terms. The third cycle leads to scientific maturity, notably through a written work which makes a true contribution to the advancement of science. This doctoral dissertation is written under the direction of a professor, and is publicly defended and approved by the university; at least the main part must be published. After the third cycle, the academic degree of doctorate is conferred. Nobody can be admitted to the doctorate unless first having obtained the licentiate. The doctorate is the academic degree which enables one to teach in a faculty and is therefore required for this purpose. The study curriculum for the Faculty of Sacred Theology in the third cycle, lasting a suitable period of time, brings scientific training to completion, notably through the writing of a doctoral dissertation. The study curriculum for the Faculty of Canon Law in the third cycle, lasting at least two semesters or one year, completes the canon law training necessary for scholarly research in view of preparing a doctoral dissertation. The study curriculum for the Faculty of

Philosophy in the third cycle, lasting a suitable period of time, promotes philosophical maturity, also by means of a doctoral dissertation. While focusing on individual research, doctoral programmes may be accompanied by optional theoretical courses taken both beforehand and in parallel to research.

A decision to adopt **ECTS** was taken along with that to become a member of the Bologna Process. The system has been legally established since 2004 and is being gradually implemented. The Holy See as a cross-border provider of higher education gave way to the introduction of the system by academic institutions by means of a letter of advice. Best experience of other national systems is taken into account. These single applications are to serve as pilot projects for future common legislative norms on ECTS. At this point in time, ECTS is established for credit transfer. The aspect of credit accumulation is under debate.

The decision to adopt the **Diploma Supplement** was taken in 2004 upon joining the Bologna Process. It was legally authorised and is applicable to all academic institutions and all programmes. It should be issued on request free of charge in both English and the national language of the area in which the academic institution operates.



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	<i>qualification</i>	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

HOLY SEE

The national agency responsible for **external quality assurance** (evaluations) in higher education is the Congregation for Catholic Education (*Congregatio de Institutione Catholica*). This governmental body exercises its responsibility on a comprehensive level according to the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* (articles 5 and 10), as well as the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* of 1988 (article 116). According to the Apostolic Constitution, the Congregation works together with subordinate higher authorities such as national boards and local representatives and stakeholders. Prior to their initial approval and establishment by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the academic institutions undergo thorough screening according to the standards set forth in the fundamental legislation of the Apostolic Constitution on universities and faculties (articles 60 and 61). After the initial

foundation, the status of an institution is evaluated every three years by means of a detailed report drafted by local Church authority. The key criteria which the report must address are: academic and scientific activity (authorities, professors, teachers and their scientific publications, academic officers, main events such as congresses and symposia, publications, celebrations), teaching activity, students, didactic means and structures, economic situation, affiliated bodies or institutions, general conditions, and major issues for the future. Affiliated (and analogously aggregated and incorporated) institutions provide annual detailed reports to the affiliating faculties according to precise public norms. The duties of the affiliating faculty under the vigilance of the affiliated institutions concern teaching and other staff, curricula, students, exams and facilities (especially the

libraries). After a period usually lasting five years, the approval of the mutual convention on affiliation (aggregation, incorporation) between the affiliating faculty and the affiliated institute, is subject to re-examination.

Internal quality assurance mechanisms are stimulated by the triennial report to the Congregation for Catholic Education based on a detailed questionnaire.

The proposal to establish a separate body responsible for **quality assurance** is being discussed along with other relevant issues, such as a quality assurance network, the participation of students and international experts, and the follow-up of evaluations.

The Congregation is eligible to become a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term in English	Term in the national language
1979	Apostolic Constitution 'Sapientia christiana'	Constitutio Apostolica 'Sapientia christiana'
1983	Code of Canon Law	Codex Iuris Canonici
1988	Apostolic Constitution 'Pastor Bonus'	Constitutio Apostolica 'Pastor Bonus'

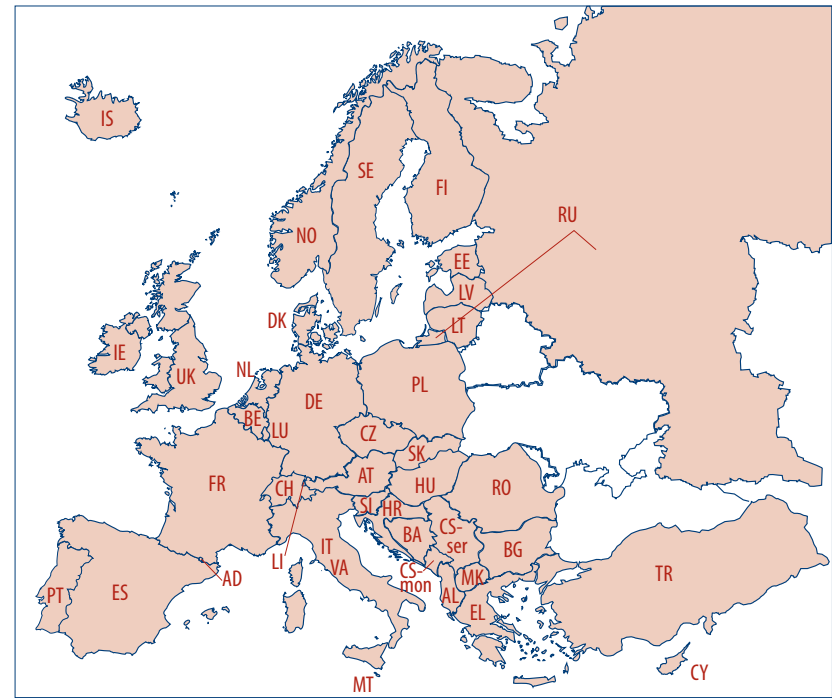
For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

GLOSSARY

Country codes

AD	Andorra	HR	Croatia
AL	Albania	HU	Hungary
AT	Austria	IE	Ireland
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	IS	Iceland
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	IT	Italy
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	LI	Liechtenstein
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	LT	Lithuania
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg
CH	Switzerland	LV	Latvia
CS-mon	Serbia and Montenegro – Montenegro	MK	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
CS-ser	Serbia and Montenegro – Serbia	MT	Malta
CY	Cyprus	NL	Netherlands
CZ	Czech Republic	NO	Norway
DE	Germany	PL	Poland
DK	Denmark	PT	Portugal
EE	Estonia	RO	Romania
EL	Greece	RU	Russia
ES	Spain	SE	Sweden
FI	Finland	SI	Slovenia
FR	France	SK	Slovakia

TR	Turkey	UK-NIR	United Kingdom – Northern Ireland
UK-ENG	United Kingdom – England	UK-SCT	United Kingdom – Scotland
UK-WLS	United Kingdom – Wales	VA	Holy See



Classification used: International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997)

The international standard classification of education (ISCED) is an instrument suitable for compiling statistics on education internationally. It covers two cross-classification variables, namely levels and fields of education with the complementary dimensions of general/vocational/pre-vocational orientation and educational/ employment market destination. The current version, ISCED 97 ⁽¹⁾ distinguishes seven levels of education: ISCED 0, pre-primary education; ISCED 1, primary education; ISCED 2, lower secondary education; ISCED 3, upper secondary education; ISCED 4, post-secondary non-tertiary education; ISCED 5, tertiary education (first stage); ISCED 6, tertiary education (second stage).

ISCED 97 levels covered by the publication

ISCED 5: Tertiary education (first stage)

Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED levels 3 or 4. ISCED level 5 includes tertiary programmes with an academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretically based, and tertiary programmes with an occupational orientation (type B) which are typically shorter than type A programmes and geared for entry to the employment market.

ISCED 6: Tertiary education (second stage)

This level relates solely to tertiary studies leading to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate).

Terminology and other definitions

Diploma Supplement

The European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES developed the Diploma Supplement in order to improve international transparency and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). The Supplement – attached to a higher education diploma – describes in widely spoken European language the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed. The Diploma Supplement provides additional information on the national higher education system, in order to fit the qualification into the relevant educational context.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

ECTS is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme – objectives increasingly specified in terms of learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired. ECTS was established initially for credit transfer. The system facilitated the recognition of periods of study abroad and thus enhanced the quality and scale of student mobility in Europe. Recently ECTS has been developing into an accumulation system to be implemented in all programmes at institutional, regional, national and

⁽¹⁾ <http://unesco.org/en/pub/pub0.htm>

European levels. It can be used across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery. The key features of ECTS are:

- The convention that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. The student workload of a full-time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to 36/40 weeks a year and, in such cases one credit corresponds to 24-30 working hours. Workload refers to the notional time in which an average learner might expect to complete the required learning outcomes.
- The link with learning outcomes, which are sets of competencies expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do on completion of a process of learning, regardless of its length. Credits in ECTS can only be obtained on completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved.
- The allocation of ECTS credits is based on the official length of a study programme cycle. The total workload necessary to obtain a first-cycle degree lasting officially three or four years is expressed as 180 or 240 credits.
- Student workload in ECTS includes the time spent in attending lectures and seminars, carrying out independent study, and preparing and taking examinations, etc.
- Credits are allocated to all educational components of a study programme (such as modules, courses, placements, dissertation work, etc.) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of study in the programme concerned.

Credit systems which are not based on student workload (but on contact hours for example) are not compatible with ECTS.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

A European network created in 1998 to circulate information, experience, good practice and new developments in the field of quality assessment and assurance in higher education among interested parties, including public authorities, higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies.

Final qualification

Qualification obtained on completion of a full course (with or without a final examination) which provides access to the employment market.

Intermediate qualification

Formal proof of satisfactory completion of the first 'cycle' of a full course, which is necessary to embark on the second cycle of that course. It is itself therefore neither a final qualification, nor meant to provide access to the employment market.

Selection procedure

Any procedure or requirement over and above the possession of an upper secondary school leaving qualification, which is intended to limit the number of enrolments in higher education (e.g. an entrance examination, competitive examination, a *numerus clausus* or other type of selection arrangement). Applicants may be selected at national, regional or institutional level.

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin		
AEA	<i>Attestation d'Études Approfondies</i>	FR
AK	<i>Akademineveau</i>	DK
AHU	<i>Année Hospitalo-Universitaire</i>	FR
Architecte DPLG	<i>Architecte Diplômé Par Le Gouvernement</i>	FR
BA	<i>BA-gráđa/Bachelor of Arts</i>	IS
B.A.	<i>Bachelor of Arts</i>	DK
BA	<i>Berufsakademie</i>	DE
B.A.	<i>Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
B.Appl.	<i>Diploma primijenjenih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
BBA	<i>Bachelor of Business Administration</i>	LI
Bc.	<i>Bakalář</i>	CZ
BcA.	<i>Bakalář umění</i>	CZ
BEd	<i>BEd-gráđa/Bachelor of Education</i>	IS
BFA	<i>BFA-gráđa/Bachelor of Fine Arts</i>	IS
BMus	<i>BMus-gráđa/Bachelor of Music</i>	IS
BS	<i>BS-gráđa/Bachelor of Science</i>	IS
BSc	<i>Bachelor of Science</i>	DK, LI
B.Sci.	<i>Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
BScBIS	<i>Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems</i>	LI
B.Sci.med.	<i>Diplomirani ljekar - Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
BTS	<i>Brevet de Technicien Supérieur</i>	FR
Cand.	<i>Candidatus</i>	DK
Cand. juris	<i>Candidatus juris</i>	IS
Cand. med.	<i>Candidatus medicinae</i>	DK, IS

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin		
Cand. med. vet.	<i>Candidatus medicinae veterinariae</i>	DK
Cand. obst	<i>Candidatus obstetriciorum</i>	IS
Cand. odont	<i>Candidatus odontologiae</i>	IS
Cand. oecon	<i>Candidatus oecon</i>	IS
Cand. pharm.	<i>Candidatus pharmaciae</i>	IS
Cand. psych.	<i>Candidatus psychologiae</i>	IS
Cand. theol.	<i>Candidatus theologiae</i>	IS
CEAA	<i>Certificat d'Études Approfondies en Architecture</i>	FR
Cert HE	<i>Certificate of Higher Education</i>	UK
CNE	<i>Commission nationale d'évaluation</i>	FR
CPGE	<i>Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles</i>	FR
CVU	<i>Center for Videregående Uddannelse</i>	DK
DDF	<i>Den Danske Filmskole</i>	DK
DE	<i>Diplôme d'État</i>	FR
DEA	<i>Diplôme d'Études Approfondies</i>	FR, CH
DES	<i>Diplôme d'Études Spécialisées</i>	FR
DESS	<i>Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées</i>	BE fr, FR, CH
DEUG	<i>Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales</i>	FR
DF2CEM	<i>Diplôme de fin de deuxième cycle des études médicales</i>	FR
Dip HE	<i>Diploma of Higher Education</i>	UK
Dipl.	<i>Diploma</i>	HR
Dipl. Ing.	<i>Diplomirani inženjer</i>	HR
Dipl. Spec.	<i>Diploma specijalistickih studija</i>	CS-mon
Dipl. Spec. A	<i>Diploma specijalistickih studija</i>	CS-mon
Dipl. Spec. Sci	<i>Diploma specijalistickih studija</i>	CS-mon

**National abbreviations with terms
in their language of origin**

DiS.	<i>Diplomovaný specialista</i>	CZ
DNTS	<i>Diplôme National de Technologie Spécialisée</i>	FR
DPA	<i>Diploma Professional Avançat</i>	AD
Dr.	<i>Doctor</i>	DK
Dr. odont	<i>Doctor odontologiae</i>	IS
Dr. phil.	<i>Doctor philosophiae</i>	IS
Dr.sc	<i>Doctor scientiarum</i>	HR
Dr. Sci.	<i>Doktor Nauka</i>	CS-mon
DU-ig	<i>Diploma Universitari en informàtica i gestió</i>	AD
DUT	<i>Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie</i>	FR
FD	<i>Foundation Degree</i>	UK-ENG/WLS/NIR
FH	<i>Fachhochschule</i>	DE, AT
GRAD. CERT.	<i>Graduate Certificate</i>	UK
GRAD. DIP.	<i>Graduate Diploma</i>	UK
HNC	<i>Higher National Certificate</i>	UK
HND	<i>Higher National Diploma</i>	UK
IAP	<i>Internationale Akademie of Philosophie</i>	LI
Ing.	<i>Inzenjer</i>	HR
Ing.	<i>Inženýr</i>	CZ
Ing. arch.	<i>Inženýr architect</i>	CZ
IUT	<i>Institut Universitaire de Technologie</i>	FR
JUDr.	<i>Doktor práv</i>	CZ
LLM	<i>Master of Laws</i>	IS
MA	<i>Master of Arts/Magister artium</i>	IS
M.A.	<i>Magistar umjetnosti</i>	CS-mon

**National abbreviations with terms
in their language of origin**

Mag. juris	<i>Magister juris</i>	IS
MAS	<i>Master of Advanced Studies</i>	CH
MBA	<i>Master of Business Administration</i>	IS, LI, HR
MEd	<i>Master of Education</i>	IS
MgA.	<i>Magistr umění</i>	CZ
Mgr.	<i>Magistr</i>	CZ
Mgr inż.	<i>Magister inżynier</i>	PL
Mgr inż. architekt	<i>Magister inżynier architekt</i>	PL
Mgr pielęgn.	<i>Magister pielęgniarstwa</i>	PL
Mgr położnictwa	<i>Magister położnictwa</i>	PL
M.L.	<i>Master of Law</i>	IS
MLIS	<i>Master of Library and Information Science</i>	IS
MPA	<i>Master of Public Administration</i>	IS
MPaed.	<i>Magister Paedagogiae</i>	IS
Mr.	<i>Magister</i>	HR
Mr.sc	<i>Magister scientiarum</i>	HR
MS	<i>Master of Science/Magister Scientiarum</i>	IS
MSA	<i>Master specialise artistique</i>	BE fr
MSc	<i>Master of Science</i>	LI
M. Sci.	<i>Magistar nauka</i>	CS-mon
MSW	<i>Master of Social Works</i>	IS
MUDr.	<i>Doktor medicíny</i>	CZ, SK
MVDr	<i>Doktor veterinárskej medicíny</i>	SK
MVDr.	<i>Doktor veterinární medicíny</i>	CZ
P.G. CERT.	<i>Postgraduate Certificate</i>	IE, UK

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin

P.G. DIP.	<i>Postgraduate Diploma</i>	IE, UK, MT
PGCE	<i>Postgraduate Certificate of Education</i>	MT
Ph.D.	<i>Philosophiae Doctor/Doktor philosophiae</i>	CZ, DK, MT, AT, IS, NO
PharmDr.	<i>Doktor farmacie</i>	CZ
PhDr.	<i>Doktor filosofie</i>	CZ
Pk	<i>Profesinė kvalifikacija</i>	LT
Prof.	<i>Professor</i>	HR
RNDr.	<i>Doktor přírodních věd</i>	CZ
SSIS	<i>Scuola di Specializzazione per l'Insegnamento Secondario</i>	IT
STS	<i>Statens Teaterskole</i>	DK
STS	<i>Section de Techniciens Supérieurs</i>	FR
TEI	<i>Technologigo Ekpaideftiko Idryma</i>	EL
Th.D./ ThDr.	<i>Doktor teologie</i>	CZ
ThLic.	<i>Licenciát teologie</i>	CZ
UfH	<i>Universität für Humanwissenschaften</i>	LI

International abbreviations

ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EUA	European University Association
ISCED	International Standard Classification for Education
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres

ANNEXE — NATIONAL STATISTICS

Number and percentage of institutions and students concerned, 2003/04 or 2004/05

AD	Institutions	Students
A	Not implemented	Not implemented
B	Not implemented	Not implemented
C	All programmes of the University of Andorra	All students
D	All programmes of the University of Andorra	All students
E	Not implemented	Not implemented

AL	Institutions	Students
A	(:)	(:)
B	7 out of 10 institutions	535 students
C	University of Tirana	12 190 students or 33 %
D	(:)	(:)
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During evaluation from 2001 to 2003, 5 programmes at 4 universities. • During the 2004 evaluation and accreditation at all of the nursery branches across 6 universities was carried out. • In October 2004, quality evaluation got under way in all teaching faculties. At present, the external evaluation stage is occurring at lower levels and in pre-school teacher training faculties. 	About 4 000 students or 11 %

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

AT	Institutions	Students
A	Universities: about 25 % of study programmes on average. 3 universities offer more than 50 % of their study programmes following the new structure; 3 very specialised universities do not offer any study programme following the new structure; 7 universities have an implementation rate above the average (25 %) <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : 6 Bachelor study programmes (or 4.3 %)	Universities: 24 407 (10.7 %) <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : 577 (2.8 %)
B	Universities: 14 % of study programmes (none of them is a PhD programme in the sense of the University Act 2002, which foresees PhD programmes with a work load of at least 240 credits).	15 858 (6.0 %)
C	Universities: all <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : all	Universities: 196 397 (100 %) <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : 20 591 (100 %)
D	Universities: 10 of 21 (47.61 %) <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : all	Universities: about 9 000 graduates (study year 2002/03) <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : 2 658 graduates (study year 2002/03)
E	Universities: no data available <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluation of programmes: 11 of 142 (7,7 %) • evaluation of institutions: 3 of 19 (15.7 %) 	Universities: no data available <i>Fachhochschulen</i> : about 4 000 students (19 %)

BA	Institutions	Students
A	2 public institutions (25 %)	University of Tuzla: 8 000 (12 %) University of Mostar: 6 000 (11 %)
B	(:)	(:)
C	2 public institutions (25 %)	(:)
D	2 public institutions (25 %)	(:)
E	(:)	(:)

Note: The two institutions concerned are University of Tuzla and University of Mostar. The dates are not available at the moment as there is a discrepancy between what has been provided for by the statute of the university and what has been achieved in reality.

BE fr	Institutions	Students
A	First year of study: all institutions (except those offering short courses) and all programmes	All first-year students
B	All universities	All new holders of the doctorate
C	All institutions	All students
D	All institutions	All students
E	All institutions	All students

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

BE nl	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions (2004/05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 Hogescholen • 6 universities + 1 transnational university (tUL) • 4 in accordance with the law on registered higher education institutions • 1 registered private higher education institution 	All students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 104 78 (in 2003/04) • 64 10 (in 2003/04) (:) (:)
B	All universities	All students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3015 (number of doctoral students in 2003/04)
C	All institutions	(:)
D	All institutions	All students In 2002/03, the Diploma Supplement was issued to all of them.
E	All institutions	All students

BG	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions (42), except colleges (9)	All students (207 340) are concerned; the long programmes still exist
B	All institutions (42), except colleges (9)	All students concerned (4 834)
C	Implemented in the 2004/05 academic year for students admitted in that year	In the process of implementation in 2004/05
D	Implemented in 2004/05 in all institutions (51)	Implemented in 2004/05
E	All institutions (51) Accredited programmes: Bachelor's programmes: 98 Master's programmes: 101 Doctoral programmes: 144 'Specialist in' (pre-university degree) programmes: 28	100 (228 468 students in 2003/04)

Source: National Statistical Institute, 'Higher schools by type and kind of ownership 1999/2000 - 2003/04'.

Note: In the middle of the academic year 2004/05 there are not yet statistical data.

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

FOCUS ON THE STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE – 2004/05

CH	Institutions	Students
A	12 universities (100 %)	109 333 (total number in 2003; in the 2004/05 semester, approximately 25 % of these students will study in accordance with the Bologna model)
	Not implemented in universities of applied sciences (<i>Fachhochschulen</i>) 15 Higher Education Institutions for teacher education (<i>Pädagogische Hochschulen</i>)	Not implemented yet About 9 500 (total number in 2003; in the 2004/05 semester, approximately 40 % of these students will study in accordance with the Bologna model)
B	In the <i>Universitäre Hochschule</i> only (some programmes).	15850 (total number in 2003)
C	In the <i>Universitäre Hochschule</i> only	25% of students in 2004/05
D	Currently being introduced in the <i>Universitäre Hochschule</i>	(:)
	Universities of applied sciences (<i>Fachhochschulen</i>): the Supplement will be implemented in 2005	
	Higher education institutions for teacher education (<i>Pädagogische Hochschulen</i>): the Supplement is about to be implemented	

CH	Institutions	Students
E	12 universities (100 %)	109 333 (total number in 2003; in the 2004/05 semester, approximately 40 % of these students are studying in accordance with the Bologna model)
	7 universities of applied sciences (<i>Fachhochschulen</i>)	37 806 (total number in 2003; since the Bologna model will be implemented in 2005, no students are affected yet)
	15 Higher education institutions for teacher education (<i>Pädagogische Hochschulen</i>)- (25% of the programmes)	About 9 500 (total number in 2003; in the 2004/05 semester, approximately 40 % of these students will study in accordance with the Bologna model)

CS-MON	Institutions	Students
A	The University	Around 15 %
B	64 % (11/14)	Around 5 %
C	The University	All students
D	The University	All students
E	The University	All students

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

CY	Institutions	Students
A	University of Cyprus	Bachelor's degrees: 3327 students Master's degrees: 581 students
B	Only the University of Cyprus	202 students
C	Not fully implemented yet	(:)
D	Implemented only by the University of Cyprus	(:)
E	Being implemented 156 programmes of study at the higher education private institutions were educationally evaluated and accredited by CEEA as of December 2004.	(:)

CZ	Institutions			Students		
	Public (24)	State (4)	Private (28)	Public	State	Private
A	All	All	3	Bachelor + Master 99 018	Bachelor + Master 3 000	Bachelor + Master 3 046
				Bachelor + Master (long) 233 442	Bachelor + Master (long) 4 182	Bachelor + Master (long) 13 286
				Bachelor – 99 165 (36.17 %) Master – 15 899 (5.80 %) Master (long) – 13 5846 (49.54 %)		
B	All	All	(-)	22 966	316	(:)
				23 282 (8.49 %)		
C	All	(:)	Exact number not available	256 408	(:)	(:)
D	All	All	All	All (2004/05)		
E	All	All	All	(:)		

Source: *Statistická ročenka školství 2003/2004: Výkonové ukazatele* [Statistical Yearbook on Education: Performance Indicators]. Praha: Ústav pro informace ve vzdělávání, 2004.

Note: In the academic year 2004/05, the situation changed in the public and state sector. There are 25 public HEIs, 24 of them university type, 1 is non university type. There are only 2 state HEIs (3 military ones have merged into one University of Defence).

LEGEND		C	Adoption of ECTS
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles	D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle	E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

DE	Study courses	Students
A	2 561 study courses (around 25 %)	67 000
B	2 561 study courses (around 25 %)	(:)
C	c. 90 % or 2250	c. 90 % or 60 300
D	c. 90 % or 2250	c. 90 % or 60 300
E	666 (296 Bachelor's/370 Master's)	(:)

Source: Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK), Secretariat.

DK	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	All institutions	All students
C	All institutions	All students
D	All institutions	All students
E	All institutions	All students

EE	Institutions	Students
A	All 12 universities can offer only 'new bachelor' programmes for the incoming students. The 'new' Master programmes will be offered in all institutions from 2005/06 onwards	On unofficial data from September 30, 2004 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 % of Master students are enrolled on 'new' Master programs. • 61 % of all Bachelor students are enrolled with 'new' programs.
B	9 universities out of 12	1757 students
C	(:)	(:)
D	All institutions	All students
E	16 institutions out of 47 do not have accredited curricula, altogether 722 curricula have undergone evaluation, with following results, 539 full accreditation, 158 conditionally accredited and 25 with the negative decision.	Overall number of students (4 782 or 7 %) who study at institutions not offering accredited programs (academic year 2004/05).

EL	Institutions	Students
A	(:)	(:)
B	(:)	(:)
C	Universities: around 25 %; TEIs: 80 %	(:)
D	TEIs: 70% are ready to issue it	(:)
E	Universities and TEIs: around 25 %	(:)

Note: Statistics can only partly be provided at the moment because the relevant data is currently being processed and is not available yet.

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

FI	Institutions	Students
A	All 20 universities (as from August 2005). The compulsory first degree is not applicable to the faculties of medicine and dentistry.	In 2003, the total number of university students was 174 000 of whom 9 000 (around 5 %) were enrolled in medicine or dentistry.
B	All 20 universities	Out of a total of 174 000 university students in 2003, 23 000 were enrolled in postgraduate studies.
C	All higher education institutions (as from August 2005): 20 universities and 29 polytechnics	In 2003, the number of students (excluding post-graduate students) was 151 000 in universities and 128 000 in polytechnics.
D	All higher education institutions: 20 universities and 29 polytechnics	All students. In 2003, the number of students was 174 000 in universities and 128 000 in polytechnics.
E	All higher education institutions: 20 universities and 29 polytechnics	All students. In 2003, the number of students was 174 000 in universities and 128 000 in polytechnics.

Source: Ministry of Education (AMKOTA and KOTA database).

Note: Higher education institutions outside the Ministry of Education sector are not included in the figures.

FR	Institutions	Students
A	75 %	(:)
B	All universities	(:)
C	75 %	(:)
D	75 %	(:)
E	All institutions	(:)

HR	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	All institutions	(:)
C	(:)	(:)
D	Not implemented yet except in some faculties	Not implemented yet except in some faculties
E	(:)	(:)

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
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FOCUS ON THE STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE – 2004/05

HU	Institutions	Students
A	Being implemented in 2006/07 in all institutions. 33 % of first cycle- programmes have been implemented since 2004/05	(:)
B	All accredited universities	1.9 % of all students in HE
C	All institutions	(:)
D	All institutions	(:)
E	All accredited institutions	(:)

Source: Official statistical reference book on HE (2003/04).

IE	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	20 institutions	3,780
C	24 institutions	(:)
D	23 institutions	Estimated 55 % of all graduates
E	All programmes with the State system are accredited by the HEIs themselves, or within the HETAC mechanism.	(:)

Source: Department of Education and Science/ Higher Education Authority.

IS	Institutions	Students
A	6 institutions offer BA and MA (66.6 %) 3 institutions offer BA (33.3 %)	Total number of HEI students is 160 29 Students in institutions that offer BA/MA 14 697 (92 %) Students in the old professional degree system (<i>Candidatus</i> degrees) 654 (4 %) Students in institutions that only offer BA/BS 1332 (8%)
B	2 institutions (22 %)	120 students (<1 %)
C	9 (100 %)	16 029 (100 %)
D	4 institutions (44 %)	(:)
E	Evaluated institutions: 3 (33 %) Evaluated programmes (law)	(:)

IT	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	In 2003/04, over 60 % of students were enrolled in the new degree framework
B	All institutions	All students
C	All institutions	All students
D	(:)	(:)
E	All institutions	All students

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

LI	Institutions	Students
A	Within the <i>Hochschule</i> only (all programmes)	474 students: (83.16 %)
B	Only in the programmes of philosophy offered by the IAP	(:)
C	All institutions since January 2005	(:)
D	All institutions since January 2005	(:)
E	All institutions	All students

Source: Office of National Economy (*Amt für Volkswirtschaft*); Statistics on Education 2004.

LT	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions (all programmes)	All students
B	All institutions (all programmes)	(:)
C	All institutions	(:)
D	Not implemented (to be issued from the 2005/06 academic year)	Not implemented
E	All institutions	All students

LV	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions (33)	99 416
B	11 institutions	1 425 students (1 % of total number of students)
C	All institutions 48 (including those providing short-cycle higher education programmes only)	125 992
D	All institutions (33)	All 2004 graduates except those from short-cycle higher education programmes
E	42 accredited HEI and institutions providing short-cycle higher education programmes (1 January 2004) Total accredited programmes: 598 (11 November 2004)	(:)

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, 2003/04 and Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre.

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
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C	Adoption of ECTS
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E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

FOCUS ON THE STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE – 2004/05

MK	Institutions	Students
A	Undergraduates studies in 5 universities (2004/05) Post graduates studies in 2 universities	Undergraduate students: 51 311 (2003/04); 61 556 in 2004/05 Master: 1376 3 (2003/04) Specialisation: 135 (2003/04) Total number of second cycle students: 1511 (2003/04)
B	2 universities	14
C	DS not yet implemented	DS not yet implemented
D	In 2004/05, Implementation of ECTS varies between universities : from 14 % to 69 and 87 %	(:)
E	34 self evaluation submitted to national agency in 2002 11 external evaluation conducted	(:)

Source: State Statistical Office and relevant services of the higher education institutions

NL	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	All institutions	All students
C	(:)	(:)
D	Many institutions	(:)
E	(:)	(:)

NO	Institutions	Students
A	29 of 68 institutions (42.64 %)	(:)
B	18 of 68 institutions (26.47 %)	(:)
C	All institutions (68)	All students
D	All institutions (68)	All students
E	(:)	(:)

MT	Institutions	Students
A	University of Malta	All students 1 st cycle: 6 473 2 nd cycle: 1 502
D	University of Malta	117 students
C	University of Malta (all fields of study)	All students
D	Not implemented yet	Not implemented yet
E	University of Malta	All students

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
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C	Adoption of ECTS
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E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

PL	Institutions			Students	
A		State academic type higher education institutions (60)	Non-state higher education institutions (272)	(:)	
	All fields of study	6 (10 %)	14 (5 %)		
	Minimum 50 % of all fields of study	32 (50 %)	15 (6 %)		
	Less than 50 % of all fields of study	23 (37 %)	23 (11 %)		
	None	0	154 (57 %)		
B	(:)			(:)	
C		State academic type higher education institutions (54)	State vocational higher education institutions (26)	Non-state higher education institutions (212)	(:)
	All fields of study	37 (60 %)	3 (11 %)	26 (10 %)	
	Minimum 50% of all fields of study	13 (21 %)	1 (4 %)	13 (5 %)	
	Less than 50% of all fields of study	4 (6 %)	1 (4 %)	12 (5 %)	
	None	0	21 (81 %)	161 (61 %)	

PL	Institutions	Students
D	From 1 January 2005, all institutions	From 1 January 2005, all students
E	51.5 % corresponding to 206 state and non-state institutions (out of 400 state and non-state higher education institutions in the academic year 2003/04)	(:)

Sources: Ministry of National Education and Sports, December 2003; Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna; PKA website.

Notes: According to the legislation, only six fields of study can be offered in the framework of uniform Master's degree courses.

The ECTS system applies to 889 fields of study in state higher education institutions.

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
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FOCUS ON THE STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE – 2004/05

RU	Institutions	Students
A	Two-cycle degree programmes are implemented in half of all higher education institutions in over 100 fields of study, with exemptions for medicine, services and information security Bachelor's degree: 681 (50.7 %) Master's degree: 305 (22.7 %)	Bachelor's degree: 481 000 (7.2 %) Master's degree: 30 100 (0.5 %) Total: 511 100 (7.6 %)
B	752 (56 %)	128 227
C	31 institutions (2.5 %) develop pilot projects and apply the credit system in only some of their educational programmes (10-15 %)	12 300
D		Pilot project
E	All institutions: 568 state (federal) higher education institutions, 1 242 of their branches, 52 non-federal accredited high schools, a further 352 accredited non-public higher education institutions and 341 of their branches.	All students: over 5.596 million students in public higher education institutions, of whom some 2.9 million are trained with support from the state budget. About 4.027 million persons (62.4%) study at higher education institutions for which the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation is responsible, of whom some 2.15 million are trained with support from the state budget.

SE	Institutions	Students
A	(:)	(:)
B	(:)	(:)
C	Not implemented yet	Not implemented yet
D	All institutions	All students
E	All institutions	All students

SI	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions (enforced by the Higher Education Act in 2004)	All students
B	All institutions (enforced by the Higher Education Act in 2004)	All students
C	All institutions	All students
D	Approximately two-thirds of higher education institutions	(:)
E	Accreditation: all institutions Self-evaluation: all institutions External evaluation: not yet implemented	Accreditation: 100 % Self-evaluation: 100 %, External evaluation: not yet implemented

Note: In 2004/05 academic year, the total number of students enrolled in 3 to 4-year professional and 4 to 6-years university first cycle study programmes amounts to 89 272; the number of students enrolled in master's and doctoral programs is 7 035.

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
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D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

SK	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	18 institutions out of 27 (66.6 %)	9 104 students (5.96 %)
C	To be fully implemented in 2005/06	(:)
D	Not mandatory yet (excepted in one Slovak technical university but no data are available for this)	(:)
E	All institutions	All students

TR	Institutions	Students
A	All 53 state and 24 private (non-profit foundation) universities	Number of undergraduate students: 1 841 546 Number of graduate students: 90 333
B	All 53 state and 24 private (non-profit foundation) universities	Number of doctorate students: 24 891
C	(:)	(:)
D	(:)	(:)
E	(:)	(:)

UK-ENG/ WLS/NIR	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	All institutions	All students
C	(:)	
D	(:)	
E	All institutions	All students

UK-SCT	Institutions	Students
A	All institutions	All students
B	All institutions	All students
C	(:)	
D	Not implemented yet	
E	All institutions	All students

VA	Institutions	Students
A	Full scale implementation	(:)
B	Universities and Faculties with the program approved (176 at the moment)	(:)
C	It has been authorized	(:)
D	It has been authorized	(:)
E	(:)	(:)

LEGEND	
A	Adoption of the model based essentially on two cycles
B	Inclusion of doctoral studies as a third cycle
C	Adoption of ECTS
D	Adoption of the Diploma Supplement
E	Quality Assurance/Evaluation

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