



Edition 2

Guide to the Bologna Process

UK HE Europe Unit

This booklet complements
the first edition of the Europe Unit's
Guide to the Bologna Process,
printed in 2005

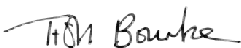
INTRODUCTION

This UK Higher Education (HE) Europe Unit Guide to the Bologna Process is an updated version of the edition published in January 2005. It focuses on issues of particular relevance to the UK in the lead-up to the next Bologna Process ministerial summit in London in 2007. While this Guide is comprehensive and can be used in isolation, readers may wish to refer to the earlier edition. For background information on the Bologna Process, including its ten action lines, it is available free of charge at: www.europeunit.ac.uk.

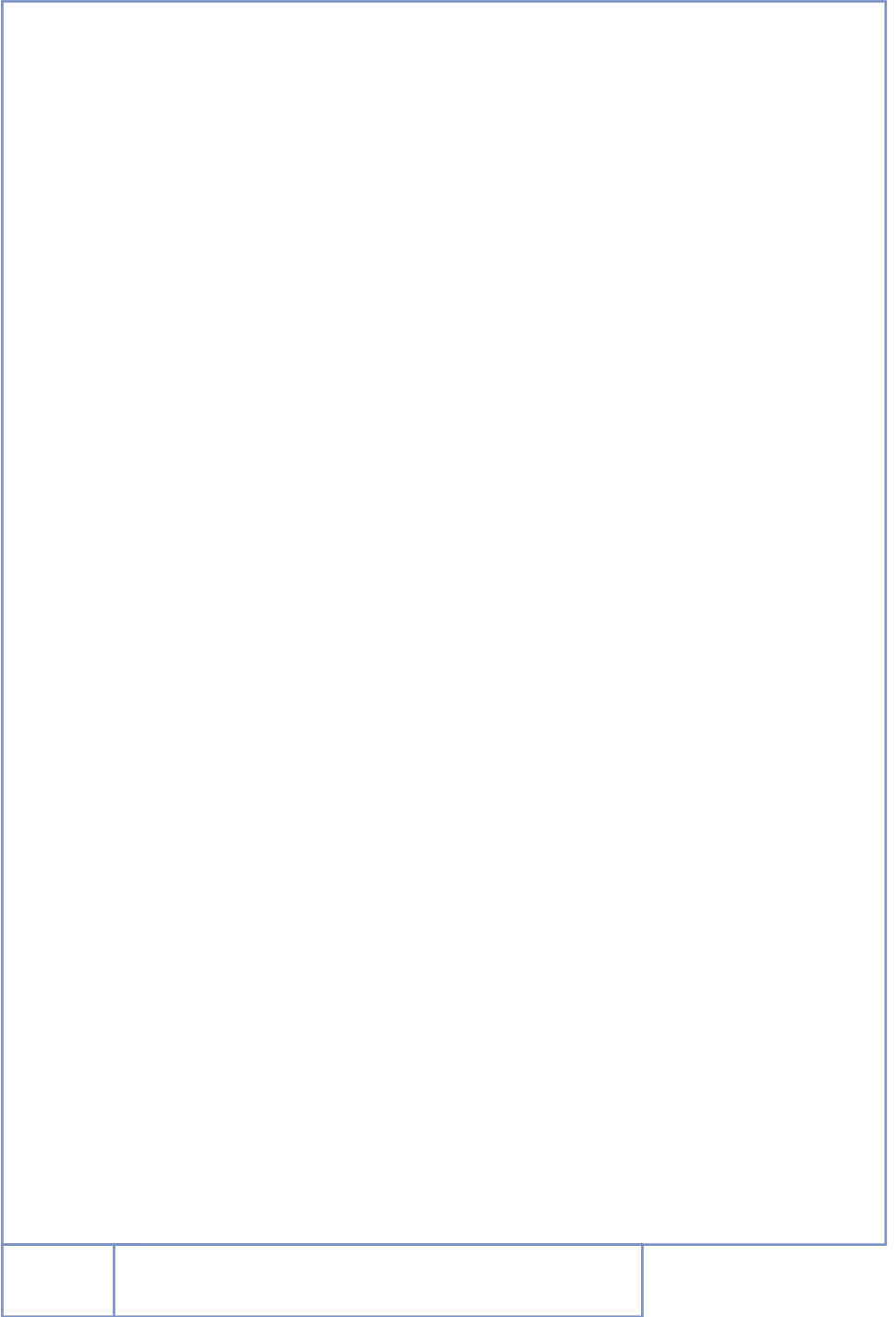
The UK HE sector supports the objectives of the Bologna Process and its ten action lines. The sector's engagement in the Bologna Process is continuing to increase with UK HE represented at all events since the Bergen summit in 2005. The Europe Unit survey of UK higher education institutions' (HEIs) European activity in 2005 indicated that one third of respondents already issue the Diploma Supplement, a key Bologna requirement, and 50% plan to do so in 2006 or 2007. There has been significant UK participation in European University Association projects and European Commission consultations and the Europe Unit's conference on the Bologna Process in July 2005 attracted over 100 delegates. This engagement by UK representatives has allowed the UK HE sector to shape debates and share experience.

As hosts of the summit in London on 16-18 May 2007, the UK has an invaluable opportunity to further influence developments over the coming months and years. The Europe Unit urges UK HEIs and stakeholder organisations to continue to engage with the Process through participation in Bologna events and consultations publicised by the Europe Unit.

This Guide begins with an overview of decision-making in the Bologna Process indicating key players at European and UK level. It then updates readers on the outcomes of the most recent ministerial summit in Bergen in May 2005 before focusing on key developments from the perspective of UK HE. In particular, the Guide sets out detailed information on the implications of key Bologna reforms as the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance and the Diploma Supplement. If you would like to know more about European HE developments, please contact us at info@europeunit.ac.uk.



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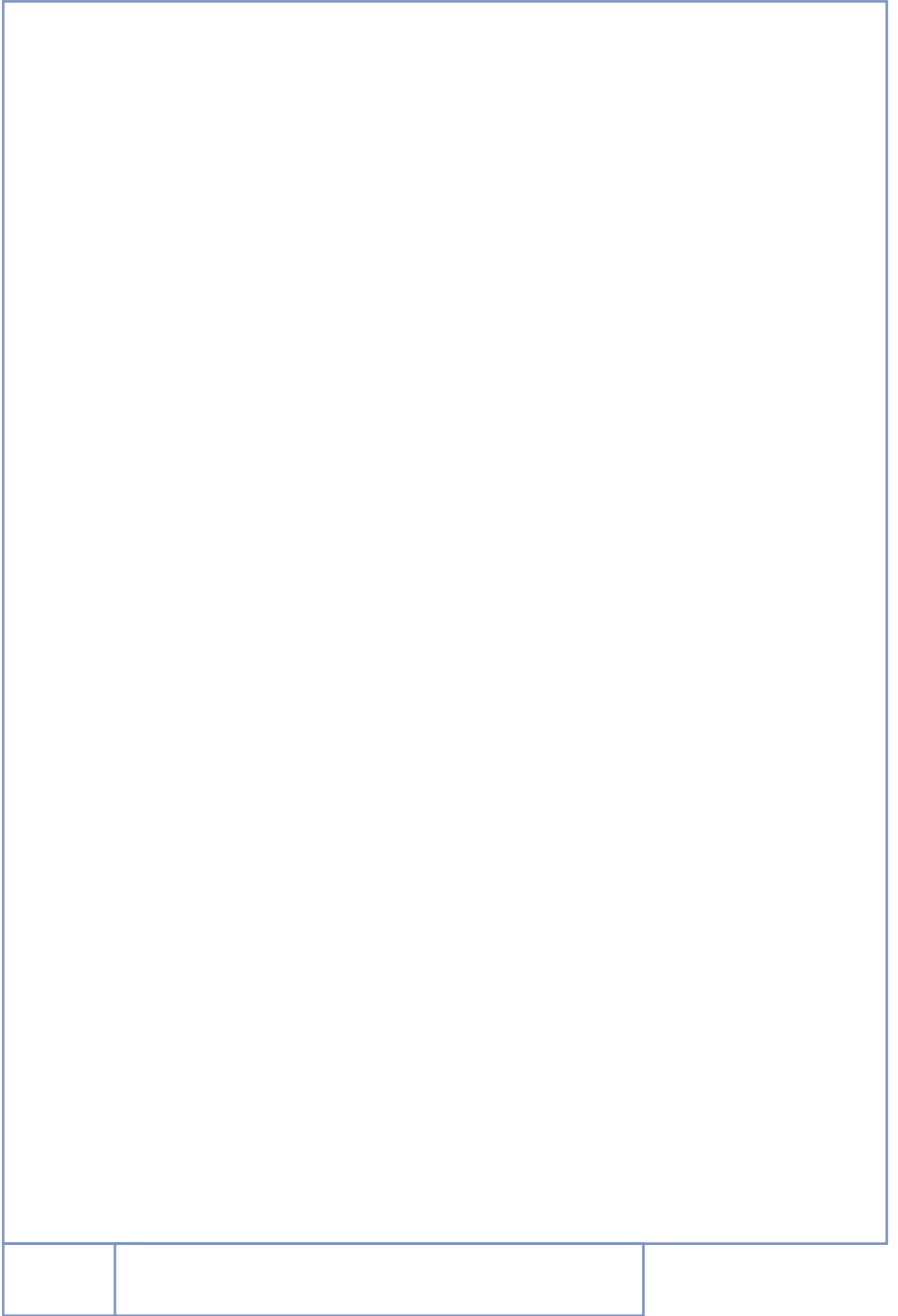


THE UK HE EUROPE UNIT THE BOLOGNA PROCESS 'ACTION LINES'

The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental process aiming to create the European Higher Education Area by 2010. It is underpinned by the following ten areas of action, known as 'action lines'. All Bologna recommendations and reforms fall under one of these action lines.

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
7. Focus on lifelong learning
8. Inclusion of higher education institutions and students
9. Promotion of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area
10. Doctoral studies and the synergy between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area

This updated edition of the Guide focuses on key issues for the UK stemming from the Process.



DECISION-MAKING IN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

An intergovernmental process

Decision-making in the Bologna Process is carried out through an 'intergovernmental' process by Ministers from participating countries at biennial summits. It is not administered by the European Commission as responsibility for education lies with European Union member states. Decisions are reached through consensus of the participating countries involved. This approach acknowledges the diversity in Europe's HE systems and national responsibility for HE.

Ministerial summits

The most important forum in the decision-making process is the two-yearly ministerial review of 'Bologna', when HE Ministers from each of the participating countries meet to assess progress and to plot the course for the near future. The next ministerial summit will take place on 16-18 May 2007 in London, following meetings in Berlin in 2003 and in Bergen in 2005. Each summit results in an agreed Communiqué setting out recommendations and future priorities. As host of the next summit, the UK currently holds the Secretariat of the Bologna Process. The Secretariat can be contacted on the following email address: bologna.secretariat@dfes.gsi.gov.uk. The ministerial summits are supported by two groups: The Bologna Follow-Up Group and the Bologna Board.

The Bologna Follow-Up Group

The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) consists of representatives from all Bologna participating countries. The Group is chaired by the current EU Presidency, with the host country of the next ministerial summit as Vice-Chair. As host of the London summit in 2007, the UK is currently Vice-Chair of the Group. The BFUG's role is to help signatory countries to follow up on the recommendations made at the ministerial summits and to produce an official work programme on priority issues.

The Bologna Board

The Bologna Board is smaller and is chaired by the current EU Presidency with the host of the forthcoming ministerial summit as Vice-Chair, currently the UK. Previous and succeeding EU Presidencies are represented and three participating countries are elected by the Bologna Follow-up Group for one year.

Role of the European Commission

The signatories to the Bologna Process extend beyond the European Union (EU) to forty-five countries. As such, the Bologna Process is conducted outside the framework of the EU. However, it is important to note that the majority of signatory countries (25 countries) are EU member states. The Commission's activity in the education sphere is based on Article 149 of the EU Treaty which entitles the Community „to contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between member states“. The Commission also sees an important role for the Bologna Process in achieving the objectives of the EU's so-called 'Lisbon Strategy' to deliver stronger, lasting growth and create more and better jobs. EU moves towards enhanced European cooperation in vocational education through the so-called 'Bruges-Copenhagen Process' are underway, in parallel to the Bologna Process.

Bologna signatory countries have granted the European Commission status as a full member of the BFUG and the Bologna Board. This status and the European Commission's role as a source of funding for Bologna projects give it considerable influence in the Bologna Process.

Other organisations

The European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB) and the Council of Europe (CoE) are consultative members of both the BFUG and the Bologna Board. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) is a consultative member of the BFUG. This arrangement has enabled these important stakeholders to play an active role in Bologna Process decision-making.

At the Bergen summit in 2005, the Education International Pan European Structure (representing teachers and education workers unions across Europe) and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) became consultative members of the BFUG. The European Association for Quality Assurance in HE (ENQA) was also accepted as a new consultative member of the Group and cooperates closely with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB on quality assurance issues. Together, these organisations are referred to as 'the E4' within the Bologna Process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Members of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and the Bologna Board:
www.bologna-bergen2005.no.

UK Bologna Process Secretariat: www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/

European Commission:
europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html



KEY PLAYERS

In the UK...

Government HE Ministers from England, Scotland and Wales attend biennial Bologna ministerial summits. Officials from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Scottish Executive are members of the Bologna Follow-Up Group. DfES officials also currently sit on the Bologna Process Board.

www.dfes.gov.uk, www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education,
www.hefcw.ac.uk/Learning_and_Teaching/bologna.htm

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) QAA plays an active role in Bologna Process debates on quality assurance and accreditation. Peter Williams, Chief Executive of the QAA, is President of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. www.qaa.ac.uk, www.enqa.net

The UK HE Europe Unit Funded by Universities UK, the funding councils for England, Scotland and Wales, GuildHE and the QAA, the Europe Unit coordinates UK HE sector involvement in the Bologna Process and other European initiatives and policy debates. Unit staff work closely with the DfES, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland. The Unit also lobbies on behalf of the UK HE sector. www.europeunit.ac.uk

UK Bologna Promoters The UK Socrates-Erasmus Council (UKSEC) administers the UK's fourteen national Bologna Promoters who are listed on the UKSEC website. Funded by the European Commission, the Promoters provide advice and support to institutions on the Bologna Process, notably on the Diploma Supplement and the European Credit Transfer System. The Europe Unit works closely with the Bologna Promoters. www.erasmus.ac.uk

National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) UK NARIC is the official source of information and advice on the comparability of international qualifications with those in the UK. UK NARIC provides information about

education systems and qualifications to HEIs, professional bodies and commercial organisations. It is part of the ENIC-NARIC Network.
www.naric.org.uk

Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) PSRBs, such as the Engineering Council UK (ECUK) and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, are monitoring the Bologna Process for its implications for their professions. Some, for example ECUK, participate in European projects or participate in European umbrella body activities.

At European Level...

European University Association (EUA) The EUA is a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board and leads on many Bologna Process projects, for example on quality assurance and doctoral level issues. It is the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences. The EUA has 775 members in 45 countries across Europe. Around 85 UK universities are members, as well as Universities UK whose Chief Executive and President sit on the EUA Council. www.eua.be

European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) EURASHE is a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board. It is the European representative organisation of HEIs. GuildHE is a member and sits on the EURASHE Executive Council. www.eurashe.be

The National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) ESIB is a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board. It is the umbrella organisation of 44 national unions of students from 34 countries. The National Union of Students (NUS) is a member. www.esib.org

European Commission (EC) The Commission contributes to the Bologna Process through participation in the Process' decision-making forums, by funding a range of Bologna projects and by producing proposals linked to Bologna Process objectives, for example on the proposed European

Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html

The Council of Europe (CoE) The CoE is a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board. It makes important contributions to the Bologna Process, notably through the CoE/UNESCO 'Lisbon' Convention on the recognition of qualifications. It provides a platform for debate between ministries and academics and supports new Bologna Process participant countries. www.coe.int

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) ENQA's members are currently public authorities, associations of HEIs and quality assurance agencies. ENQA is a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group. Its activity includes events, publications, research and projects on quality assurance issues. www.enqa.net

The ENIC-NARIC Network The ENIC-NARIC Network is made up of national recognition information centres in EU member states (the NARICs) and those in non-EU European countries (the ENICs). The network provides a forum for exchange of information on recognition issues. The network is part of the EU's Socrates-Erasmus programme which stimulates the mobility of students and staff between HEIs in these countries. www.enic-naric.net

UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) UNESCO-CEPES promotes co-operation in HE in Europe with a particular focus on Central and Eastern Europe. It is a consultative member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group. www.cepes.ro

The Bologna Secretariat The country hosting the forthcoming Bologna ministerial summit, currently the UK, provides a Secretariat for the Bologna Process. The Secretariat has administrative and operational responsibility for the next ministerial conference. It carries out secretarial functions for the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board. The UK Bologna Secretariat is headed by

Ann McVie of the Scottish Executive and can be contacted at:
bologna.secretariat@dfes.gsi.gov.uk. www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/

FROM BERGEN TO LONDON

Bergen ministerial summit, 2005

Ministers from Bologna Process signatory countries met in Bergen, Norway, on 19-20 May 2005 to review progress and set new priorities. Bergen followed earlier summits in Prague in 2001 and in Berlin in 2003. Ministers from England, Scotland and Wales attended the Bergen summit, as well as sector representatives from the UK HE sector (Universities UK) and the National Union of Students. The UK HE Europe Unit produced a UK HE sector position paper for the summit.

Outcomes

The UK welcomes the Bergen Communiqué which broadly reflects the broad UK HE policy approach set out in the sector's position paper. The summit accepted the UK's offer to host the next ministerial summit in London in 2007 and five new countries were welcomed to the Process: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. There are now forty-five signatory countries to the Process.

Ministers agreed that the period from 2005-2007 should be a time for implementation and consolidation of existing reform processes and that no new action lines should be introduced. They did however adopt reports on two important pillars of the emerging EHEA:

- European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA, including plans for a Register for quality assurance agencies
- The Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA

They also identified priority areas of activity for the Bologna Process for the following two years. This activity is taken forward through working groups, seminars, projects and discussions in the Bologna work programme for 2005-2007. The work programme includes:

- Implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and exploration of the feasibility of the European Register for quality assurance agencies
- Implementation of the Overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA and compatibility of national qualifications frameworks
- Development of national action plans to enhance the recognition of qualifications in the EHEA
- Development of basic principles for doctoral level qualifications
- A focus on the 'social dimension', including reports on staff and student mobility, social and economic situation of students and portability of grants and loans
- Development of a strategy for the 'external dimension' of the Bologna Process
- A focus on the future of the Bologna Process post-2010

A 'stocktaking' process will take place at the London summit to evaluate progress in signatory countries on implementing the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and national frameworks for qualifications. It will also look at the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, flexible learning paths and recognition of prior learning.

London ministerial summit, 16-18 May 2007

In hosting the next ministerial summit in London, the UK has a unique opportunity to influence Bologna developments. As the 2010 target for creating the EHEA approaches, the resulting London Communiqué will set priorities for the remaining years of the Process and will consider its future beyond 2010. The UK will participate in the drafting of the Communiqué, act as Vice-Chair of the Bologna Board and provide the Secretariat of the Process until the summit. UK HE sector representatives are encouraged to participate in the Bologna seminars, consultations and projects publicised by the Europe Unit to ensure the UK's views are fully voiced in the lead-up to the London summit.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Communiqué of the Bergen summit:

www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/2_1_Bergen_Communique.pdf

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA:

www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050221_ENQA_report.pdf

The Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA:

www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

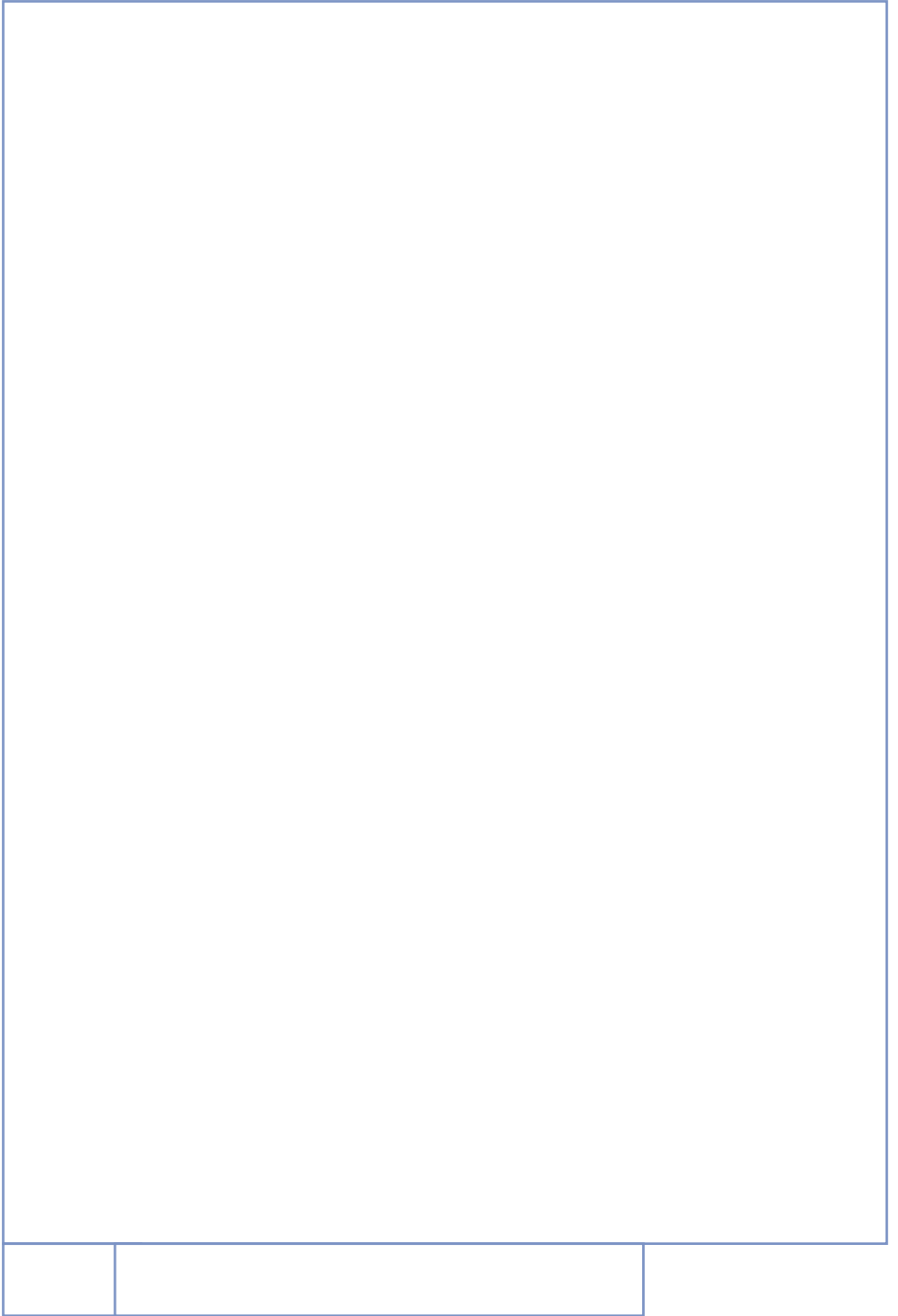
UK HE sector position paper for the Bergen summit:

[www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/Bergen%20statement%20\(headed\).doc](http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/Bergen%20statement%20(headed).doc)

UK Bologna Process Secretariat website: www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/

Bologna Process work programme for 2005-2007:

www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/Work_Programme_May2006.doc



ISSUES FOR THE UK – QUALITY ASSURANCE

One of the founding objectives of the Bologna Process was to enhance the attractiveness of European HE and make it more competitive in an international market. This is taken forward through the action line on the promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance. The Bologna Process has worked to develop a common understanding of quality assurance to stimulate quality HE provision in Europe and to develop a culture of mutual trust across the EHEA.

At the Bologna Process ministerial summit in Bergen in 2005, Ministers adopted a report setting out European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA. The Standards and Guidelines were produced by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) in cooperation with the European University Association (EUA), the European Association for Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB) - the so-called 'E4 Group'. Peter Williams, Chief Executive of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), co-authored the Standards and Guidelines through his then role as Vice-President of ENQA. The E4 Group concluded that it would be inappropriate to develop detailed procedures for quality assurance at European level as originally requested by Ministers in Berlin in 2003. The Standards and Guidelines therefore leave signatory countries to determine their own quality assurance arrangements. They include the following seven European standards for internal quality assurance of HEIs:

- 1 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 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 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.
- 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.

The Standards and Guidelines also include:

- Standards for external quality assurance of HEIs
- A peer review system for European quality assurance agencies
- A European Register for quality assurance agencies
- A European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance

In the lead-up to the 2007 summit, the E4 Group will develop the practicalities of implementing a European Register for quality assurance agencies. The Register is intended to act as an information tool, enabling credible quality assurance agencies operating in Europe to be identified. Ministers in London will approve

proposals for the Register. The Bergen Communiqué calls on Bologna signatory countries to make progress in implementing the Standards and Guidelines by 2007.

Although the Bologna Process extends beyond the twenty-five EU member states, the European Commission contributes to European debates on quality assurance. The EU Treaty entitles the Commission to „contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between member states“. In 2004, the Commission published a Recommendation on further cooperation in quality assurance in HE. UK HE sector representatives lobbied decision-makers to ensure the Recommendation is compatible with Bologna Process developments in quality assurance.

UK response

The European Standards and Guidelines are, on the whole, compatible with UK quality assurance arrangements and have the potential to support the development of a quality culture and mutual trust in European HE. The QAA is working to incorporate them into the UK's existing institutional review processes. The Standards and Guidelines will not create an additional layer of evaluation or bureaucratic burden for UK HEIs.

If the European Register for quality assurance agencies is implemented it will be vital that it does not become a regulatory tool or ranking instrument. There is also a need for the legal, ownership and regulatory issues linked to the development of a Register to be fully addressed.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA:
www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050221_ENQA_report.pdf

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education: www.enqa.net

Quality Assurance Agency: www.qaa.ac.uk

European University Association: www.eua.be

European Higher Education Institutions in Europe: www.eurashe.be

National Unions of Students in Europe: www.esib.org

European Commission Recommendation on quality assurance in higher education: www.europarl.eu.int/oeil/file.jsp?id=5207052

ISSUES FOR THE UK – QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

The Bologna Process promotes the development of qualifications frameworks to make the EHEA more transparent and attractive. Qualifications frameworks support the 'Bologna' action lines on adopting a system of more easily readable and comparable degrees and on promotion of mobility. They also play an important role in supporting student and staff mobility and lifelong learning by supporting recognition of a range of study pathways.

In Berlin in 2003, Ministers called on signatory countries to establish national qualifications frameworks. At the more recent Bergen summit in 2005, Ministers also adopted a report on the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. The Framework was developed by a working group of national ministry officials and sector experts including representatives from UK HEIs and the Quality Assurance Agency. The Framework is overarching and generic in nature. It has the following features:

- Three cycles (Bachelor, Masters, Doctoral level), including within national contexts the possibility of intermediate qualifications
- Generic qualifications descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes, known as the 'Dublin Descriptors'
- Typical credit ranges in the first (180-240 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits) and second (90-120 ECTS credits, the minimum requirement should amount to 60 ECTS credits at second cycle level). No credit range was included for the third cycle.

Ministers in Bergen called for national qualifications frameworks to be compatible with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA by 2010. Following the Bergen summit, a working group is considering how to link the Framework and national qualifications frameworks. A process for self-certification of national qualifications frameworks' compatibility with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA is under development. It includes

Universities Scotland's participation in a pilot project working to ensure complementarity between European Commission proposals in this area and the Bologna Process.

In July 2005, the European Commission launched a consultation on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. The Commission is proposing a voluntary meta-framework to encompass all education in Europe. The Framework will support lifelong learning and mobility in the EU contributing to the Lisbon Strategy. The consultation document suggests eight levels with qualifications descriptors and 'supporting instruments' (such as the Europass initiative). The Commission will publish a formal proposal for discussion in the European Parliament and Council of Ministers institutions.

UK response

The UK is supportive of the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA adopted in Bergen. By making HE systems across Europe more transparent and accessible, it has the potential to support recognition of qualifications, lifelong learning and mobility. The UK already has national qualifications frameworks in place; the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. UK experience can inform developments in this area. It is essential that UK HEIs ensure that they allocate a minimum of 60 ECTS credits at Masters level to second cycle programmes in line with the Framework for Qualifications to ensure their continued recognition in the EHEA and beyond.

The UK HE sector welcomes the objectives behind European Commission efforts to create the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. However, it is vital that the Framework complements developments in the Bologna Process and avoids an excessive focus on input indicators. The UK prefers the output approach based on the learning outcomes of study as set out in the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. It is also unclear how the Framework will relate to the twenty countries who are not EU member states but are signatory to the Bologna Process. The European Qualifications

Framework should remain generic and overarching in nature, leaving detail to be determined in national qualifications frameworks. The Europe Unit will continue to monitor developments in this area and to lobby EU decision-makers.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA:

www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

European Commission proposal for a European

Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html

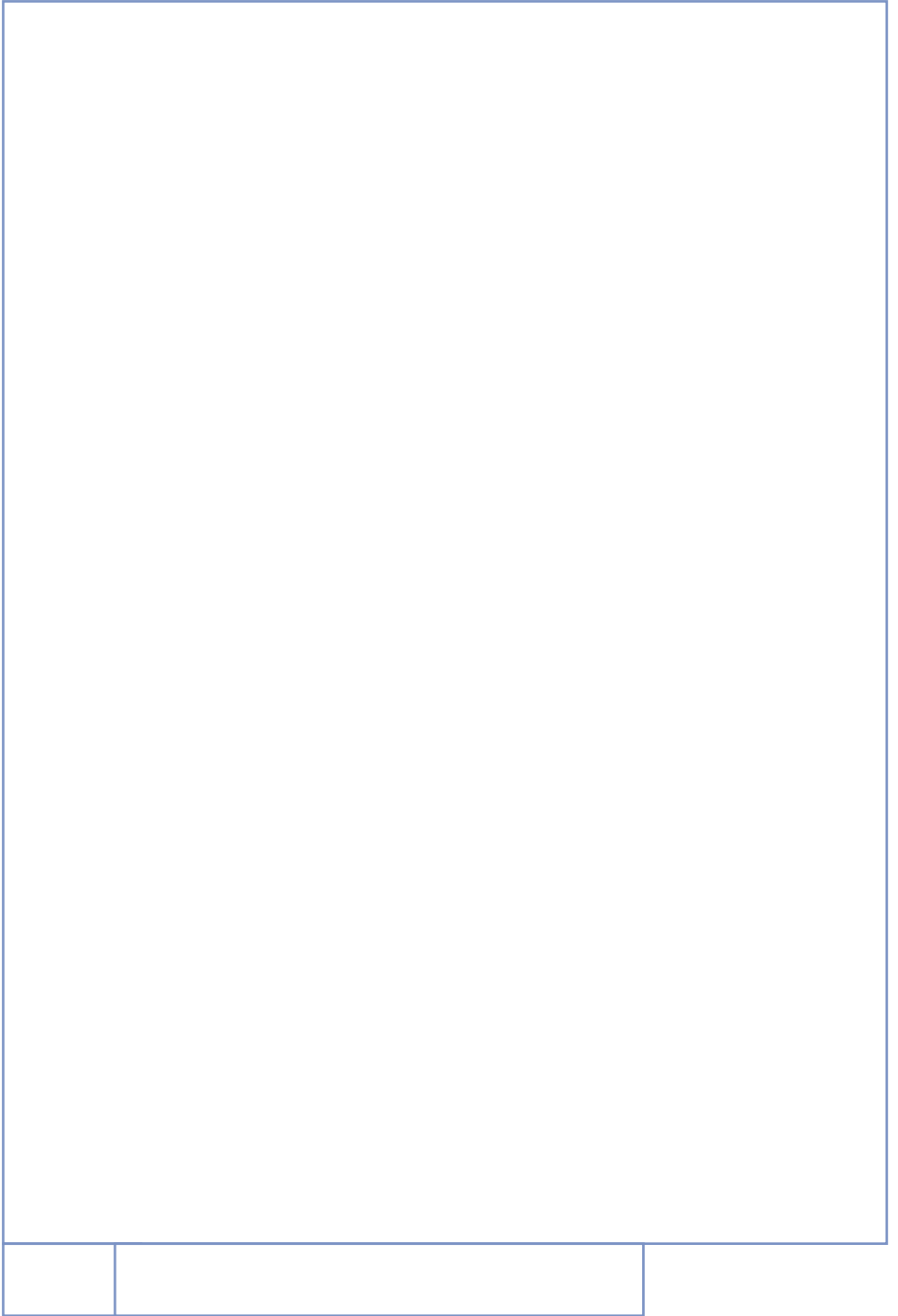
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: www.scqf.org.uk

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales:

www.elwa.org.uk/ElwaWeb/elwa.aspx?pageid=1612

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications:

www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI/default.asp



ISSUES FOR THE UK – CREDIT

One of the Bologna Process action lines is the establishment of a system of credit for the EHEA. Credit can remove obstacles to academic mobility and facilitate a range of learning in an era of lifelong learning. The Berlin summit in 2003 called for the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to be used as a transfer and accumulation system across Europe. ECTS was developed by the European Commission to support recognition of exchange programmes under the Socrates-Erasmus programme. There is a lack of consensus in Europe on whether ECTS provides adequate information for use as an accumulation system and on how to allocate credit to periods of study.

The Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA adopted at the Bergen summit in 2005 (see page 23) includes typical credit ranges for first (180-240 ECTS credits) and second (90-120 ECTS credits with a minimum of 60 credits at the second cycle level) cycles. No credit range is given for doctoral level qualifications. The Bologna Process working group on qualifications frameworks is looking at the definition of credit in national contexts in the lead-up to the London summit in 2007.

UK response

In the UK, credit is currently used universally in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Scotland and Wales have credit transfer and accumulation systems in place within integrated credit and qualifications frameworks. Many institutions in England use credit for transferring between programmes or institutions, and use ECTS for transfers within Europe. Some consortia of English institutions use credit for accumulation. The first report of the 'Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Scoping Group', chaired by Professor Burgess, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, was published in November 2004 and called for efforts to be made to develop a common HE credit system for England. A new steering group representing HEIs and HE stakeholders has recently produced its final report on credit. The Europe Unit produced guidance for this group on the relationship between UK credit systems and ECTS and will

serve on a future credit implementation group to ensure its recommendations are compatible with European credit developments.

There are issues to be resolved concerning the practical implications of ECTS developing into an accumulation system for Europe. The UK favours the use of credit in the EHEA to take account of the learning outcomes of periods of study alongside notional workload. This will be important in the debate on whether to incorporate credit into the European Commission's proposals for a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. The UK has concerns about the European Commission's Users Guide for ECTS which states that one calendar year can only be allocated 75 ECTS credits. The Europe Unit has lobbied the Commission on revised drafts of the Users Guide which retain this reference. The UK welcomes the typical credit ranges and qualifications descriptors included in the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA which accommodates the range of modes of learning and teaching in Europe and allows for 90 ECTS credits to be allocated to one calendar year. For up-to-date information on the ongoing discussions on credit in the Bologna Process please contact: info@europeunit.ac.uk.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA:

www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

European Commission proposal for a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS):

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html

European Credit System for Vocation Education and Training (ECVET):

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/ecvt2005an_en.pdf

First report of the 'Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Scoping Group', chaired by Professor Burgess:
<http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/measuringachievement.pdf>

Consultation on Proposals for National Credit Arrangements for the use of academic credit in Higher Education in England Second stage consultation:
www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/consultations/UniversitiesUK/downloads/CreditConsultation2.pdf



ISSUES FOR THE UK – UK QUALIFICATIONS AND THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

The first two action lines of the Bologna Process are the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees and the adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles. In 2003, doctoral level qualifications were incorporated into the Process resulting in the promotion of a three cycle system (Bachelor, Masters and doctoral level). The first cycle should last a minimum of three years while no length is specified for the second (Masters) or third (Doctoral level) cycles. Unlike many Bologna countries at the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, the UK already had a two-cycle system in place. In many European countries with '3 + 4' or '1 + 2' structures, a comprehensive restructuring of HE systems has been necessary.

UK response on:

One-year Masters degrees

Second cycle programmes in many other European countries last two years. It has been suggested that the UK's one-year Masters programme is 'lightweight' in terms of hours studied and is therefore incompatible with Bologna requirements. The UK approach however focuses on the outcomes of study programmes in terms of notional learning, rather than rigid measures of hours studied. The one-year Masters supports the Bologna objective of promoting flexible learning paths in an era of lifelong learning and provides a quick entry to the employment market. The one-year Masters has also been successful among European and international students and employers alike. Most taught Masters degrees in the UK achieve between 75 and 90 ECTS credits (with 90 for full year Masters). It is important that UK Masters programmes meet the Masters level qualification descriptors and include a minimum of 60 Masters level credits in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA (see page 23). The UK HE Europe Unit survey of UK HEIs in 2005 found a range of

Masters programmes on offer in respondent institutions, with a duration ranging from nine to eighteen months.

Integrated Masters degrees

The compatibility of four-year integrated Masters degrees (for example, MEng, MPharm) with the Bologna Process has also been questioned. In Scotland, integrated Masters last for five years. Integrated Masters degrees, requested by employers, are popular with students. In adherence to the UK's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Masters descriptor, they meet the second cycle (Masters level) qualification descriptor in the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. The UK HE Europe Unit is working with Universities UK, the Quality Assurance Agency and professional statutory and/or regulatory bodies to promote integrated Masters degrees and produced a Europe Note for institutions on this issue in 2005. There is a need to ensure that such programmes have appropriate credit allocation at the second cycle (Masters level) in line with the typical credit range in the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA (90-120 ECTS, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the second cycle).

Shorter higher education

The Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA includes a short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) which accommodates shorter HE, such as the Foundation degree in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, HNDs and HNCs. The Bergen Communiqué stated that there is the possibility of intermediate qualifications 'within national contexts'. The UK HE Europe Unit is working with stakeholders to promote intermediate qualifications and their continued recognition in the European HE Area as building blocks to end of first cycle qualifications.

Dentistry and medical qualifications

Recognition of the dentistry and medicine qualifications is covered by the EU directive on the recognition of professional qualifications and dental and medical qualifications are considered by many to be exempt from the Bologna Process. Recently however a number of countries have implemented the three

cycle structure in such qualifications. In the UK, these qualifications lasting for five to six years remain integrated and are formally designated Bachelor level. As dentistry and medicine qualifications in most Bologna signatory countries are at Masters level in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA, some stakeholders are concerned about the compatibility of UK qualifications with the Bologna Process and continued recognition of such qualifications. The Europe Unit organised a roundtable seminar in April 2006 attended by over 60 representatives from the dentistry and medicine professions. Representatives from the medicine sector were confident that qualifications would continue to be recognised through existing EU and international agreements, while dentistry participants agreed to consider the issue in more detail. The Europe Unit will continue to facilitate discussions on this issue among key stakeholders in the UK, including professional, regulatory and statutory bodies to enable a coordinated UK approach to be developed.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

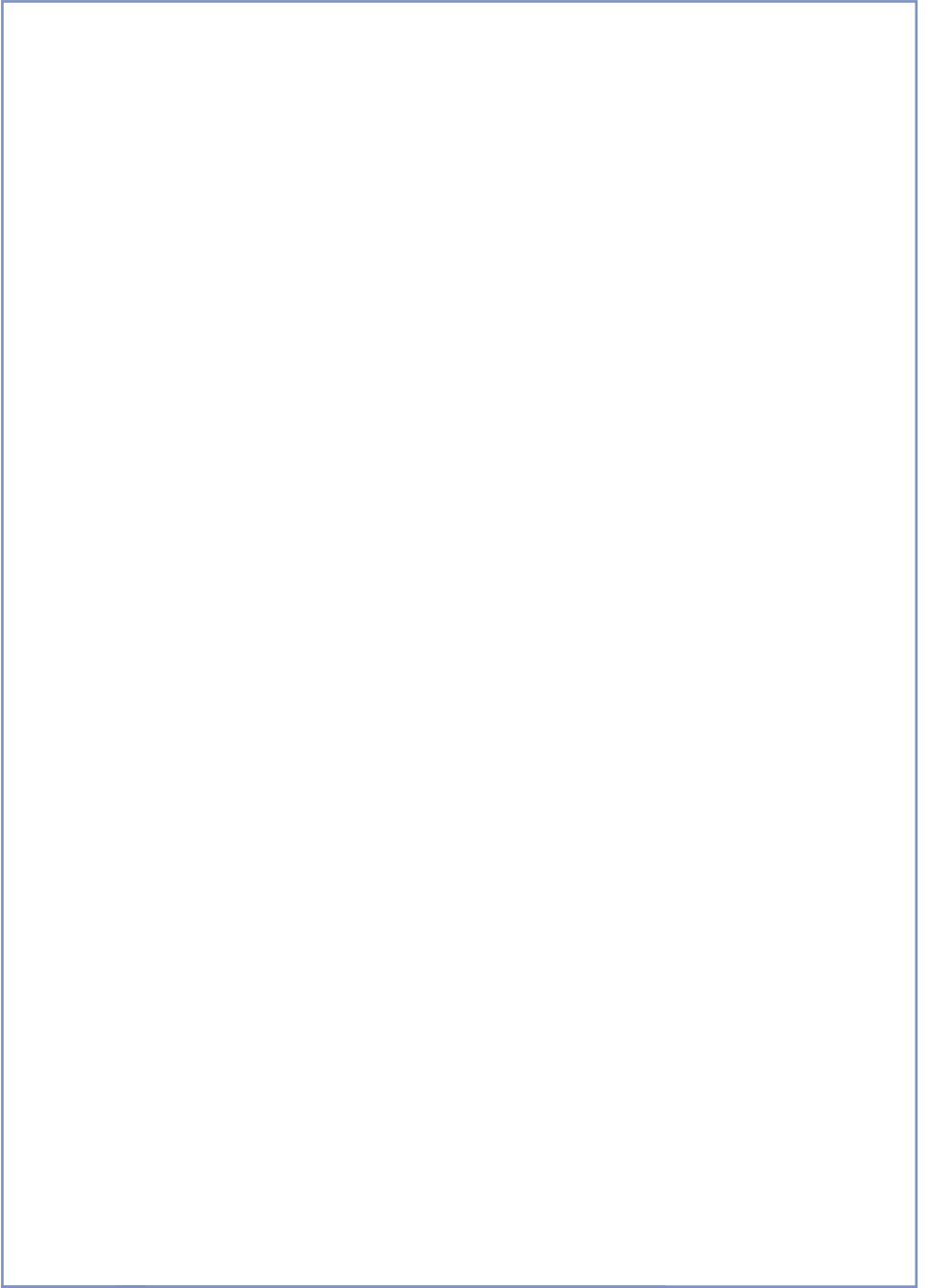
UK HE Europe Unit Europe Note on
'The Bologna Process and Masters Degrees':
www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/E-04-17.pdf

UK HE Europe Unit Europe Note on
'The Bologna Process and Integrated Masters Degrees'
www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/E-05-12.doc

The Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA:
www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

Results of the UK HE Europe Unit survey of HEIs:
www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/E-05-13.doc

Summary of UK HE Europe Unit roundtable seminar on
dentistry and medical qualifications in the Bologna Process:
www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/Full%20seminar%20report.doc



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ISSUES FOR THE UK – ISSUING THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

In working towards the Bologna Process action line to create a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the Process promotes the use of tools, such as qualifications frameworks and credits, to support this objective. The Diploma Supplement is another such tool and the Berlin summit in 2003 set a concrete target for European HEIs calling for „every student graduating as from 2005 to receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge“. The Diploma Supplement is a document to be issued to students upon graduation. It describes the qualification they have received in a standard format that is easy to understand and easy to compare. It also describes the content of the qualification and the structure of the HE system within which it was issued. It is not a curriculum vitae and simply acts as a supplementary explanation of the qualification and not a substitute for it. The Diploma Supplement is widely used in many Bologna participating countries making its introduction in the UK essential to facilitate the recognition of UK HE for future study and employment elsewhere in Europe. The Bologna Process also requires all participating countries to ratify the Council of Europe ‘Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region’ which includes the issuing of the Diploma Supplement.

UK response

The Europe Unit survey of UK HEIs and European HE developments in 2005 indicated that around one third of respondent institutions currently issue the Diploma Supplement. Almost 50% have plans to issue it in 2006 or 2007. The survey indicated that adapting information management systems and resources were key challenges for institutions when issuing the Diploma Supplement.

UK institutions are encouraged to proceed with issuing the Diploma Supplement as soon as possible. A national description of the HE systems in England, Wales

and Northern Ireland and a separate description for Scotland (a required field in the Diploma Supplement), including diagrams, are available on the Europe Unit and UK NARIC's website to help HEIs issuing the Diploma Supplement. It is important that students graduating in the UK are able to benefit from the enhanced recognition and mobility that the Diploma Supplement has the potential to bring.

The Europe Unit advises the UK HE sector on issuing the Diploma Supplement and has published a 'Guide to the Diploma Supplement' for HEIs. The European Commission funds a team of UK Bologna Process Promoters who also advise HEIs on introducing the Diploma Supplement and other Bologna issues.

The Steering Group on Measuring and Recording Student Achievement chaired by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leicester, is consulting the UK HE sector on degree classification and student transcripts. The Group will ensure that UK developments in these areas take place in parallel with, and as complementary to, the Diploma Supplement. Recent discussions among Burgess Group stakeholders indicate agreement that the UK Transcript and the Diploma Supplement can be incorporated in a single document, with a heading such as, 'The Diploma Supplement/Transcript'. Using this approach, the Diploma Supplement would therefore include the final Transcript, as issued on completion of the award of the final qualification

FURTHER INFORMATION:

UK HE Europe Notes on the Diploma Supplement:
www.europeunit.ac.uk/news/europe_note_archive.cfm

National description and diagram of the HE systems in
England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Scotland
www.europeunit.ac.uk/news/policy_paper_archive/2005.cfm

UK Bologna Promoters: www.uksec.ac.uk

UK National Europass Centre: www.uknec.org.uk

Council of Europe Convention on the 'Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region' ('The Lisbon Convention'):
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm>

Berlin Communiqué: www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/030919Berlin_Communique.PDF



ISSUES FOR THE UK – THE THIRD CYCLE – DOCTORAL LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

The Bologna Process recognises the importance of research for European HE. In 2003 at the Berlin summit, a new action line was introduced on doctoral level qualifications formally incorporating them into the Bologna Process as the third cycle. In doing so, a link was made between the Bologna Process to create the EHEA and the EU's efforts to establish the European Research Area (ERA), a genuine internal market for EU research activity with enhanced careers and development prospects for researchers.

The Bergen ministerial summit in 2005, mandated the European University Association (EUA) to develop basic principles for doctoral level qualifications in Europe and to report back to the London summit in 2007. In doing so, the EUA cooperates with EURASHE and ESIB. The Bergen mandate builds on sharing of good practice already underway in the EUA's Doctoral Programmes Project. The development of basic principles will be informed by a series of workshops organised by the EUA, culminating in a Bologna Process seminar in Nice in December 2006.

In 2005, the European Commission adopted the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment to enhance the careers of researchers in Europe. UK experts were closely involved in the development of these documents and UK experience, notably the QAA's Code of Practice for postgraduate provision and the Researchers Careers Initiative. The Charter addresses the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers and their employers or funding organisations. The Code aims to improve recruitment and to make selection procedures fairer and more transparent. Both the Charter and Code are voluntary documents.

UK response

The UK HE sector welcomes the incorporation of doctoral level qualifications into the Bologna Process. UK HE sector representatives have played an influential role in discussions in this area and look forward to participating in the development of basic principles for Europe. The UK has experience and practice to share, notably on quality assurance, supervision and transferable skills, that can inform discussions on the third cycle. It is essential that any basic principles at European level accommodate the diversity in purpose, duration and structure of doctoral programmes. Rigid recommendations at European level in this area would be unwelcome, notably concerning credit rating for the third cycle and whether researchers have employee or student status.

In response to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment, a UK sector-wide group has carried out a mapping exercise to identify those areas where UK arrangements do not align with the recommendations. The UK HE sector supports the voluntary status of these documents as instruments to support reform across Europe. Moves to link the Charter and Code with a label or seal or to funding are unwelcome. HEIs can be encouraged to engage with the principles in the Charter and Code through the intergovernmental Bologna Process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Bergen Communiqué: www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf

Doctoral Programmes Project: www.eua.be/eua/en/Doctoral_Programmes.aspx

The European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers:

http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf

ISSUES FOR THE UK – OTHER ISSUES

‘The social dimension’

Since the Prague summit in 2001, the Bologna Process has highlighted the importance of ‘the social dimension’. Originally in 2001, the social dimension was about the role of HE as a public good and public responsibility and the crucial role of students as full members of the HE community.

At the Bergen summit in 2005, Ministers referred to the social dimension as a „constituent part of the European Higher Education Area“ describing it as a pre-condition for the competitiveness of European HE. The Bergen Communiqué added the notion of accessibility of HE and conditions to enable all students to participate, regardless of social and economic background, to the social dimension. Ministers called for data to be collected on mobility of staff and students and the social and economic situation of students, as well as the development of a clear definition of the social dimension, for the London summit in 2007.

The UK is represented on the working group responsible for preparing the report for London on the social dimension. The UK has a range of experience to share in this area, for example on widening participation initiatives and supporting part-time study. The integrated national qualifications frameworks in Scotland and Wales, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, play a key role in supporting access and lifelong learning in Scotland and Wales.

Mobility

Promotion of mobility is a key Bologna Process action line. Many of the reforms, for example the development of qualifications frameworks and greater use of credit, aim to make it easier for students and staff to be mobile. There is support within the Bologna Process for the portability of student grants and loans. The UK would support portability of such benefits rather than host

country funding. The EU mobility programmes support student and staff mobility and the European Commission funds Bologna Process activity from these programmes. A new Action Programme for Lifelong Learning will begin in 2007. UK HEIs are also successfully participating in the EU's Erasmus Mundus programme which offers students and scholars from third countries scholarships to study on European Masters courses, as well as grants for EU nationals studying in third countries.

The external dimension

Enhancing the attractiveness of European HE is one of the overarching objectives of the Bologna Process. The Bergen summit in 2005 called on the Bologna Follow-Up Group to develop a strategy for the external dimension of the Process to ensure that it remains open to other parts of the world and boosts the attractiveness of European HE. The Europe Unit is monitoring developments in this area, in particular increasing competition for the UK HE sector from other parts of Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION

National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB): www.esib.org

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: www.scqf.org.uk

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales:
www.elwa.org.uk/ElwaWeb/elwa.aspx?pageid=1612

Bergen Communiqué: www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf

Erasmus Mundus programme:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html

EU Action Programme for Lifelong Learning
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index_en.html

GLOSSARY

BFUG	Bologna Follow-Up Group (www.bologna-bergen2005.no)
CoE	Council of Europe (www.coe.int/portalT.asp)
CQFW	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (www.elwa.org.uk)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (http://www.dfes.gov.uk)
DS	Diploma Supplement
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System (www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects_en.html)
ECUK	Engineering Council UK (www.engc.org.uk)
ENIC-NARIC	National Recognition Information Centres (www.enic-naric.net)
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html)
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (www.enqa.net)
ERA	European Research Area
ESIB	National Unions of Students in Europe (www.esib.org)
EUA	European University Association (www.eua.be)
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (www.eurashe.be)
HEFCE	The Higher Education Funding Council for England (www.hefce.ac.uk)

HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (www.hefcw.ac.uk)
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEURO	Association of UK Higher Education European Officers (http://www.heuro.org/)
HEW	Higher Education Wales (www.hew.ac.uk)
NUS	National Union of Students (www.nusonline.co.uk)
PSRB	Professional, statutory and regulatory body
QAA	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (www.qaa.ac.uk)
SCOP	Standing Conference of Principals (www.scop.ac.uk)
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (www.scqf.org.uk)
SFC	The Scottish Funding Council (www.sfc.ac.uk)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (www.unesco.org)
UNESCO-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
CEPES	European Centre for Higher Education (www.cepes.ro)
UK NARIC	The UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (www.naric.org.uk)
UKRO	UK Research Office (www.ukro.ac.uk)
UKSEC	UK Socrates Erasmus Council (www.erasmus.ac.uk)
UUK	Universities UK (www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)
US	Universities Scotland (www.universities-scotland.ac.uk)

THE UK HE EUROPE UNIT

The UK HE Europe Unit was launched as a sector-wide body in 2004 to strengthen the position of the UK HE sector in EU and Bologna Process policy-making forums. The Unit has three primary objectives. First, it acts as a central observatory of European HE and major research issues and informs all HEIs and stakeholders accordingly. Second, it seeks to coordinate UK involvement in European initiatives and policy debates. Third, where possible, it produces collective UK statements in key areas of EU policy, lobbying to support them as appropriate.

The UK HE Europe Unit is jointly funded by Universities UK and the three HE funding councils for England, Scotland and Wales and is supported by GuildHE and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The Unit works closely with the Department for Education and Skills, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government. The Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland is also kept informed of the Unit's activities. The Unit is supported by a large number of UK HE organisations, including the British Council, the Association of UK HE European Officers (HEURO), the UK Research Office (UKRO), the British Council, the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council, the British Academy, the University and College Lecturers' Union (NAFTHE), the Association of University Teachers (AUT), Welsh Higher Education Brussels (WHEB) and the National Union of Students (NUS).

A High Level Policy Forum (HLPF) and an officer-led European Coordinating Group (ECG) comprising representatives from key HE sector organisations inform the policy positioning of the UK HE Europe Unit.

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Visit the UK HE Europe Unit website at www.europeunit.ac.uk. The site is updated regularly and contains all Unit publications including *Europe Notes* and monthly European newsletters.

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