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Higher Education and the Bologna Process
Role of Student Bologna Experts

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Madrid April 2013
Commencement

• Bologna Declaration signed in June 1999 by Ministers for Education of 29 countries
• Included all EU countries (then 15)
• Overall aim was a coherent European Higher Education Area by 2010
• Although noting the autonomy of universities, this was a reform process led by Ministers
Objectives

• A system of easily readable and comparable degrees
• Adoption of system based on two cycles, undergraduate and graduate
• A system of credits such as ECTS
• Promotion of mobility
• European co-operation in QA
• Promotion of European Dimension in HE
Other Objectives

• Introduction of shorter cycle Bachelor degrees in countries where they were not a feature e.g. Germany, Italy
• Improved competitive position vis a vis USA in attracting non-European students
• Bachelor degree to be relevant to European labour market
• Now 32 countries in process
• Three new points added:
  - Need for Lifelong Learning Policies
  - Role of students and student representative bodies
  - Importance of enhancing attractiveness of European HE to students from Europe and other parts of world
Berlin Communique, 2003

- Membership now 40 countries including Russia
- Set objectives for next 2 years for:
  - Quality Assurance
  - Degree Structure: all countries to have 2-cycle system by 2005
  - Diploma Supplement to be issued to all
- Recognised Doctoral level as 3rd Cycle
Bergen Communique, 2005

- Five new members, total now 45
- Commitment to adoption of national frameworks of qualifications by 2010
- Adoption of standards and guidelines for QA
- Urged action on recognition of degrees and study periods
- Emphasised importance of research and structured doctoral programmes
London Communique, 2007

• Reviewed progress on mobility, degree structure, recognition, Qualification Frameworks (latter to be completed by 2010)
• Sought to align Bologna with European Research Area
• Set priorities for 2007-09 to complete 3-cycle system, QA and recognition
• Requested more work on data collection, mobility, employability and stock-taking
Louvain-la-Neuve, 2009

- 46 countries participated
- Delegates from 15 non-participating countries included China, Japan, USA.
- Emphasised need to widen participation in HE via Lifelong Learning including part-time studies and Work-Based Learning
- Development of NFQ and compatibility with over-arching Framework by 2012
- Next meetings arranged for Bucharest 2012 then 2015, 2018, 2020
Budapest Vienna Declaration 2010

• Welcomed Kazakhstan as new member

• Launched the EHEA as envisaged in Bologna Declaration

• Cited Bologna Process as an unprecedented example of regional, cross-border cooperation in higher education that made European Higher Education more visible on global map.

• Recommitted to academic freedom as well autonomy and accountability as principles of EHEA.
Budapest-Vienna 2

- Acknowledged the key role of institutional leaders and teachers, researchers and administrative staff and students in making EHEA a reality. They fully supported staff and student participated in decision-making structures.

- Re-affirmed that higher education is a public responsibility and is a major driver for social and economic development and for innovation.

- Asked the Bologna Follow-Up Group to propose measures to facilitate full implementation of Bologna principles including peer learning and study visits.

- New website www.ehea/info/
Bucharest 2012

Ministers agreed to focus on 3 main goals:

• To provide quality higher education to more students

• To better equip students with employable skills

• To increase student mobility (at least 20% of European graduates in 2020 should have been on a study or training period abroad)
National Qualification Frameworks

• All countries were supposed to publish NFQ by 2010 but some slippage
• NFQ must be compatible with Bologna Framework; Ireland was first to demonstrate this (in 2006)
• NFQ must also be compatible with EQF
• NFQ benefits learners by making explicit where qualifications stand
# Frameworks of Qualifications

## EQF and Bologna Framework

<table>
<thead>
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<th>EQF Levels</th>
<th>Bologna Framework</th>
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Ireland’s NFQ: Titles of Awards

Level
10 – Doctoral Degree
9 – Master’s Degree & Post-graduate Diploma
8 – Honours Bachelor Degree & Higher Diploma
7 – Ordinary Bachelor Degree
6 – Advanced Certificate & Higher Certificate
5 – Level 5 Certificate
4/5 – Leaving Certificate
4 – Level 4 Certificate
3 – Level 3 Certificate & Junior Certificate
2 – Level 2 Certificate
1 – Level 1 Certificate
The National Framework of Qualifications – award-types and awarding bodies
Bologna Process: Participating countries

- Albania
- Andorra
- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belgium
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Holy See
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Kazakhstan
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Serbia
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
Impact of Major Initiatives

• The Bologna Process has had major impact in the areas of:
  • Degree Structures
  • A System of Credits (ECTS)
  • Quality Assurance
  • Student Mobility
  • National Qualifications Frameworks
  • Recognition of Qualifications
Degree Structures

• Implementation of a structure of degrees at Bachelor, Master’s and Doctoral level hugely important
• It did not involve much change for UK or Ireland
• It helps to provide a transparent system for learners, especially those outside Europe
• It aids transferability and mobility
Quality Assurance

• Bologna Process has led to the agreement of Standards & Guidelines for QA in Europe
• ESG now being revised
• There is now a European QA Register for Higher Education
• Irish Higher Education Quality Network established to share best practice [HEA, IUQB, DIT, HETAC, USI, DES]
Student Mobility

• BP facilitated greater mobility by students
• Easier to transfer credits when all HEIs use the same system (ECTS)
• Mutual recognition of awards makes it easier for students to move
• New target for mobility is 20% of all graduates to have studied abroad for at least part of programme by 2020 (very challenging for many countries)
Recognition

• Within countries, NFQ is an important tool of recognition of learning
• Between countries, compatibility of frameworks with EQF and Bologna framework is an aid to recognition
• Diploma Supplements for all graduates are meant to aid recognition of awards throughout Bologna region (47 countries)
• Lisbon Recognition Convention sought to allow professionals to practise in other countries. New unit in many countries to assist those seeking recognition.
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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
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Student Role at International Level

• Critical role of the four Es:
  - ENQA (European Association of QA)
  - EUA (European Universities Association)
  - Eurashe (European Association for Institutions in Higher Education)
  - ESU (European Students Union)
• Liaise with four Es to ensure full student participation in all Bologna initiatives
Student Role at National Level

- Membership of higher education funding/policy body
- Membership of National Bologna Committee
- Membership of national QA agency
- Membership of higher education quality network (see www.iheqn.ie)
- Ensure students union fully involved
Student Role at Institutional Level

- Membership of Governing Body of university
- Membership of Academic Council/Senate
- Membership of QA Committee
- Membership of programme review panels and institutional review panels
- Student Bologna Experts to work with students’ union to ensure participation
Student Role at Programme and School Level

• Appointment of class representatives
• Training of class representatives
• Membership of programme committees for speedy resolution of problems
Role of Student Bologna Experts

• Ensure student interests are represented at international, national, institutional and programme/school level
• Ensure that student issues are considered by national teams of Bologna Experts
• Ensure student representatives are trained for their roles
• Establish good contacts with employer bodies and other stakeholders
Possible Future Developments

• New objectives flagged at Leuven/Louvain
• Issues include Access, LLL, Employability, Student-centred learning, Research, Mobility, Funding, Better Career Services
• Access Targets; a National Access Office to set targets and monitor
• LLL: to be an integral part of education systems; requires strong partnerships with employers; see EUA Charter on LLL
• Employability improved by work placements: relations with employer bodies
Useful websites

• Bologna Communiques: www.ehea.info/
• NFQ: www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/
• HEA website: www.eurireland.ie
• ESU: Bologna With Student Eyes 2007, 2009 and 2012 on www.esu-online.org/
• Irish Higher Education Quality Network www.iheqdn.ie/publications/
Questions

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