

2013

## Increasing the Visibility of the Quality of the EHEA: Benchmarking the Total Student Experience

Ellen Hazelkorn

*Technological University Dublin*, [ellen.hazelkorn@tudublin.ie](mailto:ellen.hazelkorn@tudublin.ie)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cseroth>



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hazelkorn, E.: Increasing the Visibility of the Quality of the EHEA: Benchmarking the Total Student Experience. Presentation. EU Presidency Conference, Dublin, January, 2013

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Centre for Social and Educational Research at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other resources by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact [arrow.admin@tudublin.ie](mailto:arrow.admin@tudublin.ie), [aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie](mailto:aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie), [vera.kilshaw@tudublin.ie](mailto:vera.kilshaw@tudublin.ie).

# Increasing the Visibility of the Quality of the EHEA: Benchmarking the Total Student Experience

Professor Ellen Hazelkorn

Vice President, Research and Enterprise, and Dean of the Graduate  
Research School

Head, Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU)

Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

EU Presidency Conference, Dublin

January 2013



Higher Education  
Policy Research Unit

*“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”. (Bologna Declaration, 1999)*

*“The Bologna Declaration in 1999 set out a vision for 2010 of an internationally competitive and attractive European Higher Education Area where higher education institutions, supported by strongly committed staff, can fulfil their diverse missions in the knowledge society; and where students benefiting from mobility with smooth and fair recognition of their qualifications, can find the best suited educational pathways”.*

*(Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area, 2010)*

# Themes

The European Project: from Bologna to  
*Europe 2020*

Pursuing Quality and Excellence

Strategically Positioning the EHEA

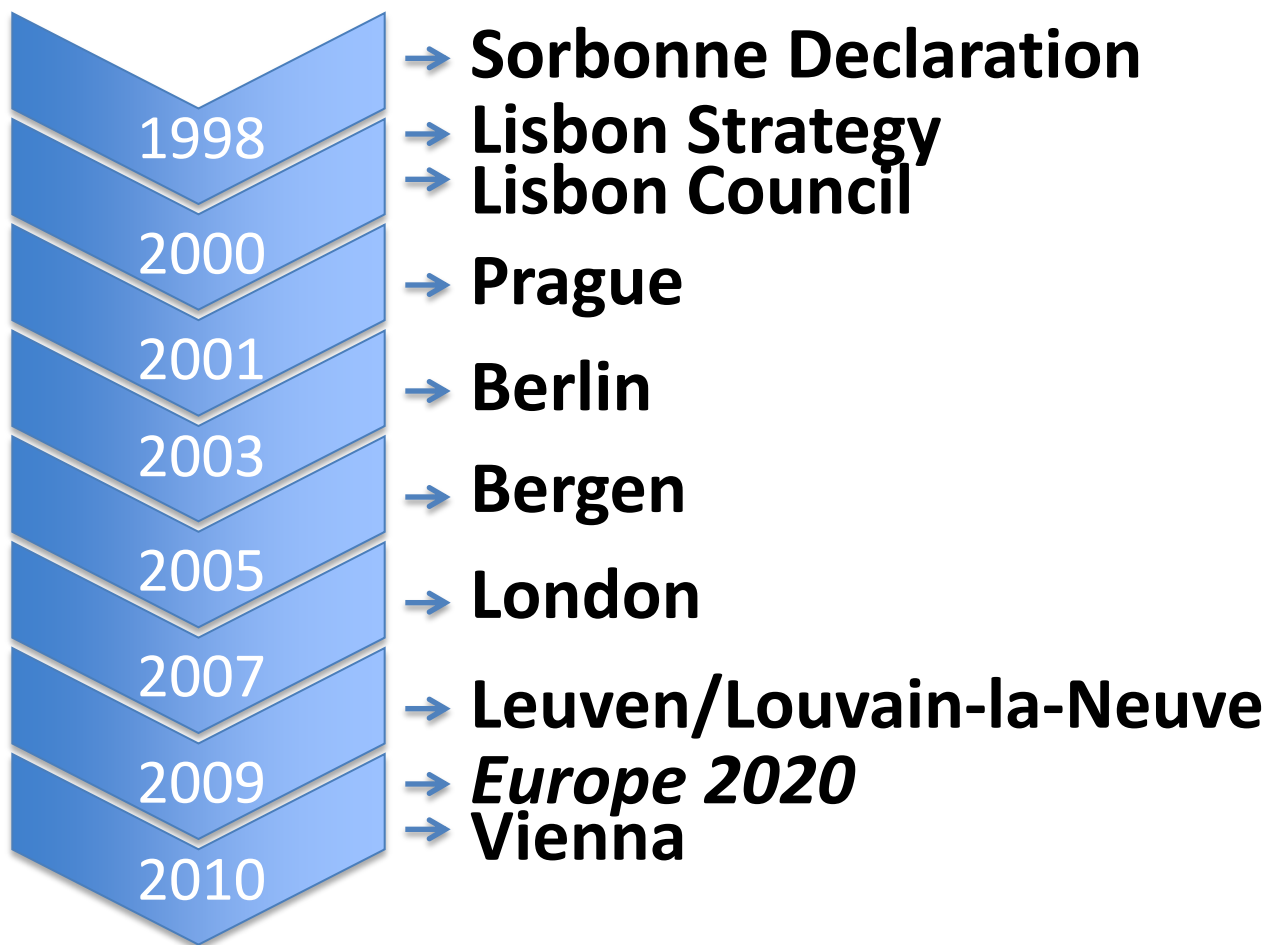
# 1. The European Project: Bologna to *Europe 2020*

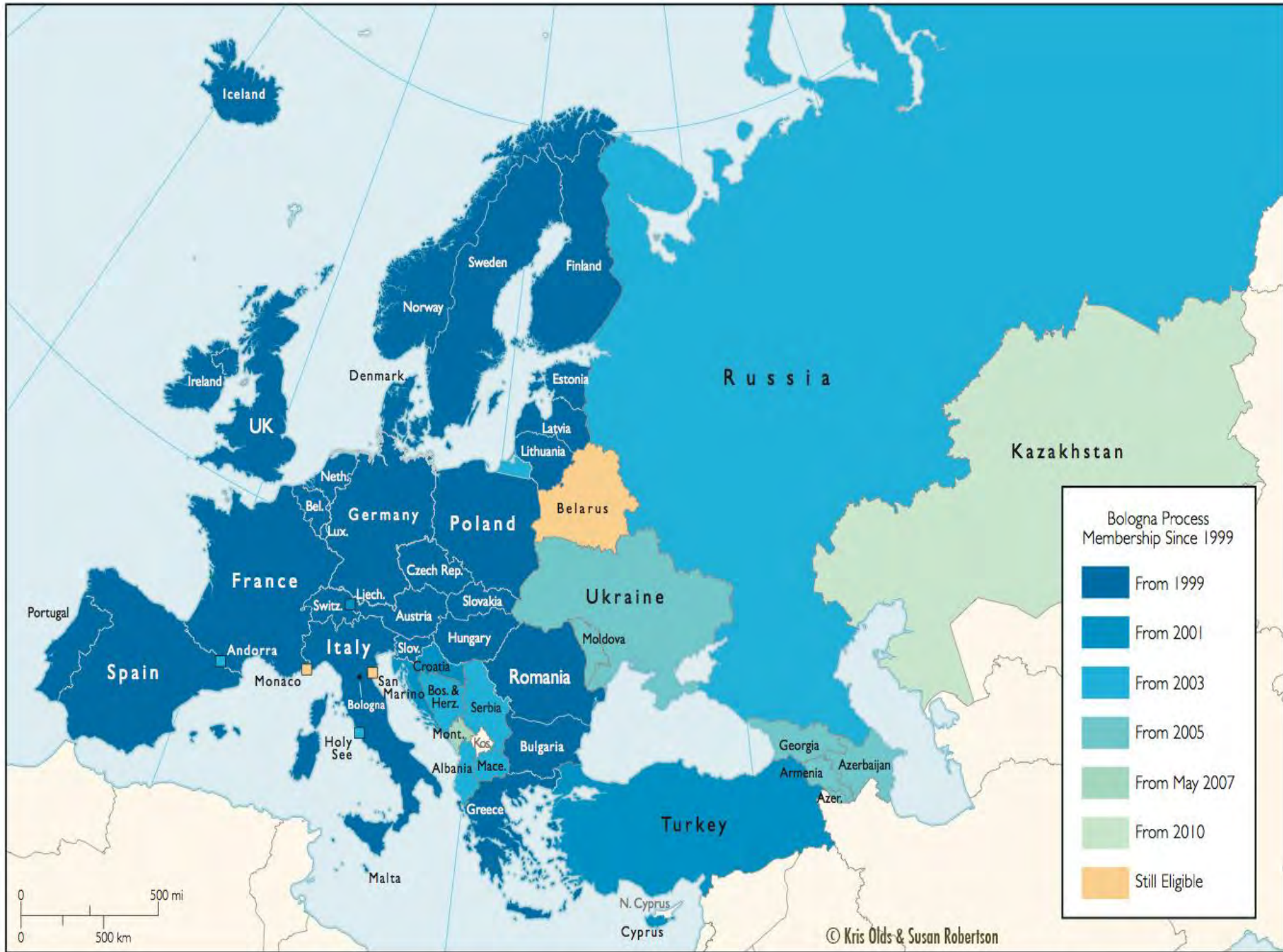


# European Vision and Higher Education

- EU founded out of a belief that a conglomerate of nations could, **by pooling resources, become something more**. This remains a noble vision.
- From the beginning, a higher education dimension has been central
  - Agreement to establish “institution of university status” – now European University (Euratom Treaty Art. 9 (2))
  - Joint Study Programmes (1973-76): *mobility based on trust*
  - Erasmus Student Mobility (1980s): *graduates with direct multi-cultural experience*
- Today,
  - HE recognised as *vital intellectual resource* – teaching/learning, research/discovery, and engagement/innovation – key to expanding the knowledge economy, and economic recovery
  - Significant momentum favouring stronger university systems as part of the Lisbon strategy to create a “*Europe of Knowledge*”

# Bologna Process to EHEA







# Bucharest Communiqué 2012

1. **Quality** higher education system
2. **Two- or three-cycle** system of study (BA, MA, PhD)
3. **Mobility** of students, academics and administrative staff
4. **Credit system** (ECTS) for the assessment of study performance
5. **Recognition of levels:** system of easily identifiable and comparable levels
6. **Active involvement** of HEIs, teachers and students in Bologna Process and student participation in the management of higher education
7. **European dimension** in higher education
8. **Attractiveness** of the European higher education area
9. **Lifelong learning**
10. Linking EHEA and ERA as **two pillars of a society based on knowledge**

# Bologna Process

- Predicated on **free movement** of students, faculty and workers across national boundaries facilitated by trustworthy information and with the assurance that their performance will be recognised in other parts of Europe;
- **Outward-looking vision**, on basis that to encourage and facilitate talent and investment from around the world, requires a system easily understood and harmonious and not constrained by parochialism.
- Anticipated need to **bring coherence to otherwise disparate national systems**, creating a system to make European HE unique, attractive and competitive internationally;
- Provides an **educational roadmap** for students and other stakeholders for what often appears to be a mystifying and fragmented landscape of higher education options.

# Copenhagen Process

Since 2002, parallel process that seeks to make European VET a world-wide reference for learners

Allow users to build on learning acquired at various times, in both formal and non-formal contexts

Recognise competences and qualifications through common credit transfer system

Promote co-operation in QA

Strengthen European dimension

# Balancing European Objectives

- Ensuring high-quality across all HEIs and regions *and* Investing in leading universities
- Strengthening Europe's attractiveness *and* Promoting social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities
- Respecting national cultures and context *and* Harmonising educational practices and student experiences
- Encouraging internationalisation *and* European co-operation, including across all HEIs
- Promoting “equal position of all institutions and systems” *and* Fostering competitiveness
- Participating in Global rankings *and* Understanding true quality
- Enhancing institutional capability *and* Building the capacity of the EHEA

# Stumbling Blocks

- Key objectives (compatibility, comparability, attractiveness) have **not been addressed to the same extent** in all members states
- **Little joint European co-operation** outside Europe as each country pursues own internationalisation strategy
  - European student mobility has not increased in line with expectations
  - International student mobility has grown but at individual national levels
- Link between EHEA and ERA could (unintentionally) **over-emphasize research intensity** at expense of institutional diversity
- **Too little discussion** of what the EHEA is and can be
  - Bologna too often presented as technocratic set of procedures or action lines rather than the “educational component necessary for the construction of a Europe of Knowledge”

## 2. Pursuing Quality and Excellence



# Globalisation and Quality

- Globalisation is characterised by the movement towards a **single world market in goods and services**. The speed of change across all knowledge-intensive industries has intensified in recent years
- Nations, their institutions, and all aspects of daily life are regularly **measured against each other** according to indicators where comparative and competitive advantages come into play with geopolitical implications
- If higher education is the engine of the economy, then the quality and status of HEIs and university-based research is a **vital indicator of competitiveness**
- **Global rankings** have successfully linked the attractiveness of nations/world regions with the talent-catching and knowledge-producing capacity of HEIs
- Bologna and the creation of the ERA and EHEA show that challenges and **policy responses transcend national borders**

# EU Policy Context

*"Universities should be funded more for what they do than for what they are, by focusing funding on relevant outputs rather than inputs,...Competitive funding should be based on institutional evaluation systems and on diversified performance indicators with clearly defined targets and indicators supported by international benchmarking". Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation (May 2006)*

*"Our education systems at all levels need to be modernised. Excellence must even more become the guiding principle. We need more world-class universities, raise skill levels and attract top talent from abroad." Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative. Innovation Union (October 2010)*

*"Europe is no longer setting the pace in the global race for knowledge and talent, while emerging economies are rapidly increasing their investment in higher education." Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education system (September 2011, 2)*

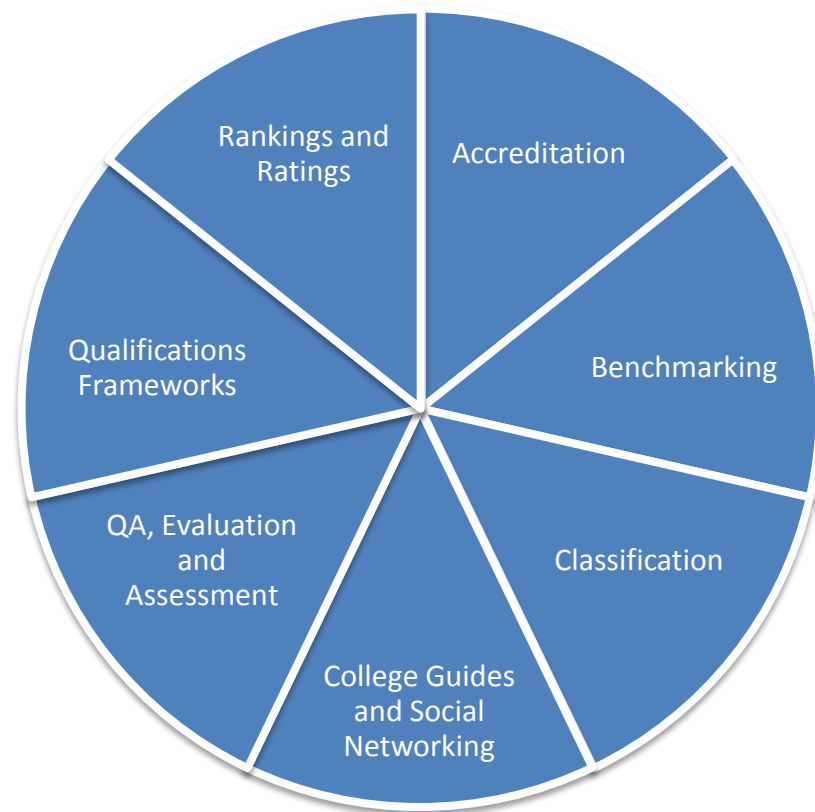


# Quality is Concern for all Stakeholders

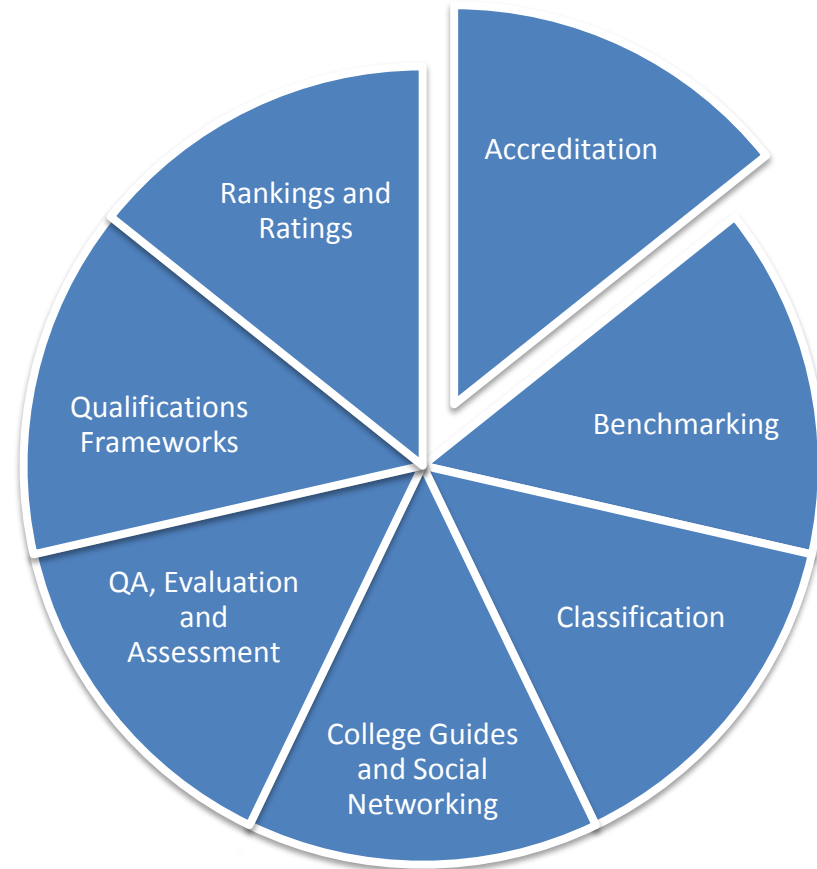
- National *geo-political positioning and pride*
- Beacon to attract mobile *investment and talent*
- Institutional *reputation and status*
- Performance *assessment* of scientific-scholarly research
- Graduate *capability and opportunities*
- Link between qualification with *career/salary and life-style*
- Value-for-money and return-on-(public) *investment*
- Growing importance of *global networks*

Political and societal support for HE can only be maintained by **assurance of quality which provides investor confidence.**

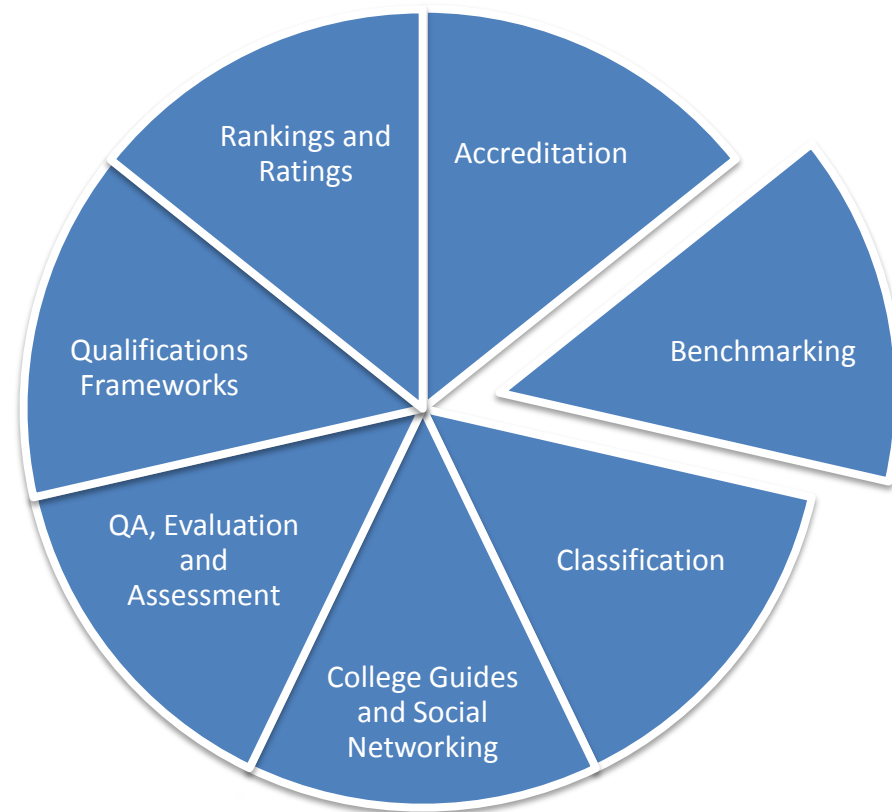
# Growth in Transparency Instruments



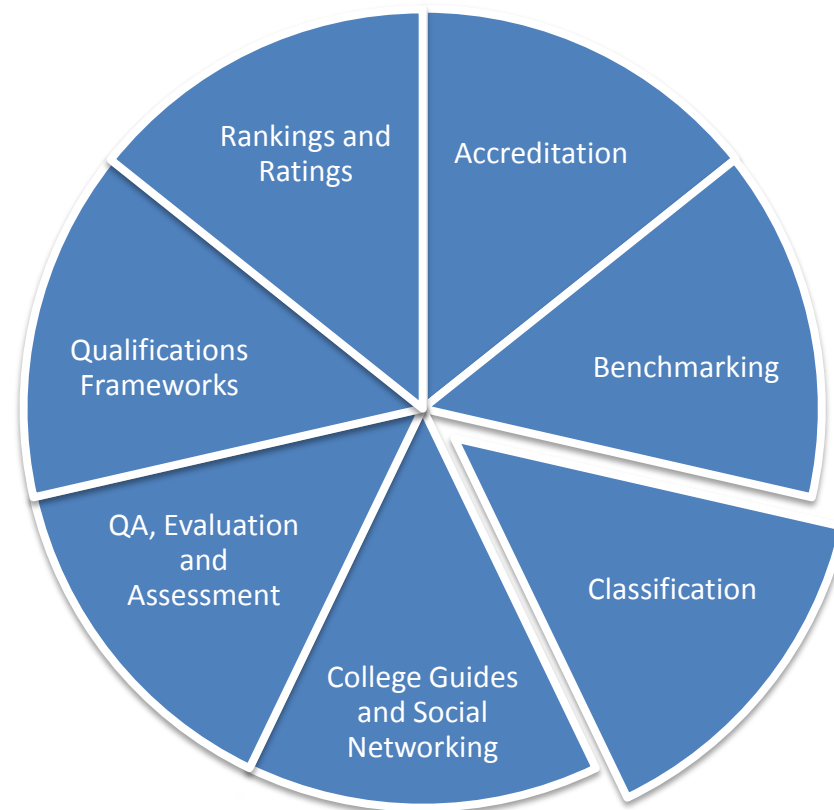
# Growth in Transparency Instruments



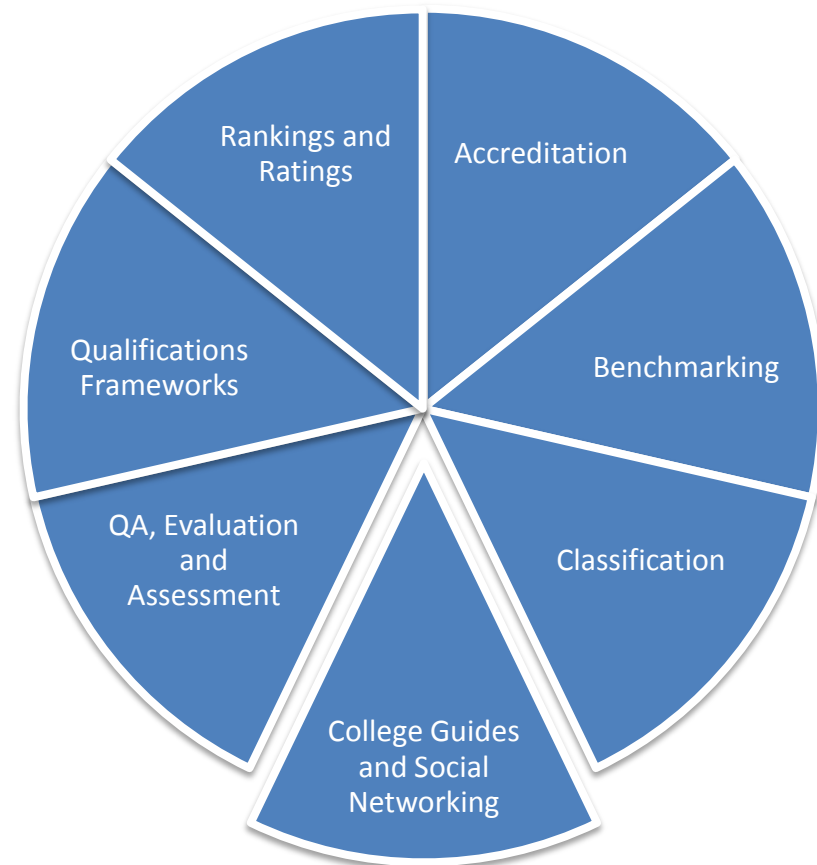
# Growth in Transparency Instruments



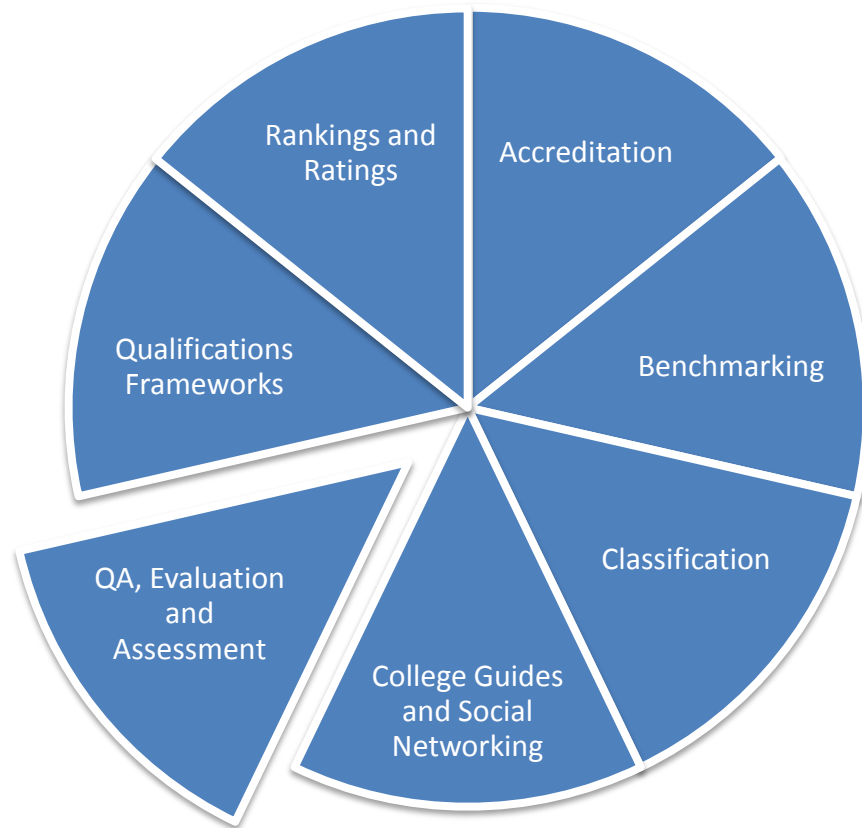
# Growth in Transparency Instruments



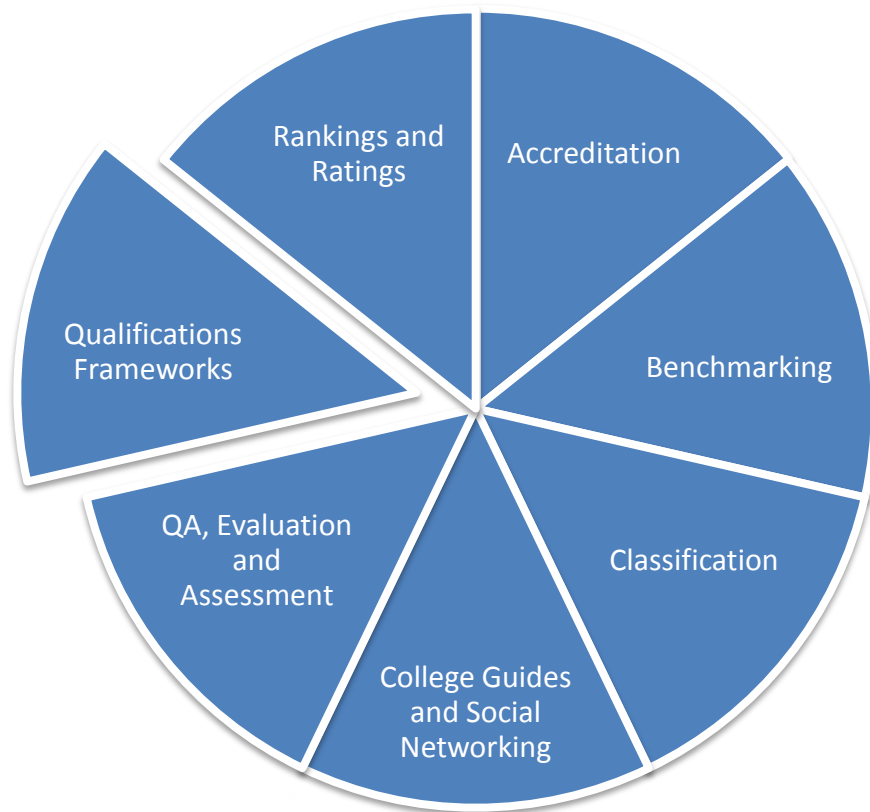
# Growth in Transparency Instruments



# Growth in Transparency Instruments

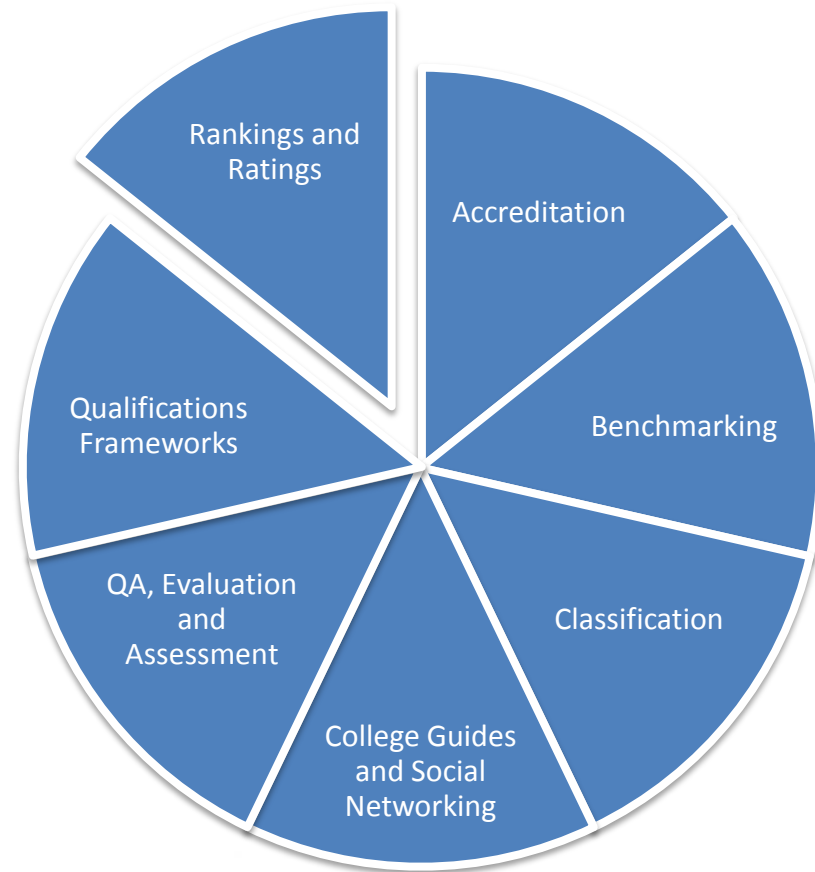


# Growth in Transparency Instruments





# Growth in Transparency Instruments



# Rankings' Legacy

- Rankings **purport** to measure higher education quality, but
  - Focus on *limited set of attributes* for which (internationally) comparable data is available
  - Assumes the indicator is a meaningful measure of quality
  - *Ignores multi-dimensional attributes* of European higher education
- **Nonetheless**, they have succeeded in:
  - Acting as a wake-up call about the *value of higher education*
  - Placing consideration of HE quality within *wider comparative and international framework*
  - Challenging self-perceptions. No more self-declaration
- With the onslaught of global rankings, the **HE world has become more competitive and multi-polar.**

# Lessons from Bologna

- Bologna challenges rankings by *placing quality within broader educational framework*
- *Big idea* is the “accountability loop”:
  - Qualification framework *facilitates flexible learning paths* and sets out clear statement of what students must demonstrate at each qualification level
  - “Tuning” *aids (re-)design, development, implementation, evaluation and enhancement* of quality degree programmes within context
  - Formalized concept of *learning outcomes rather than measuring inputs* (e.g. credit hours, classroom teaching, entry grades)
  - QA systems sets evaluation standards and guidelines for *institutional self-assessment and quality processes, and external monitoring*
  - Diploma Supplement provides *description of academic career* and the *competencies acquired*

# Going Further: Total Student Experience

- “Total student experience”: *all* aspects of student engagement with HE – *inside and beyond the classroom.*
- Because HE shapes future citizens, important to understand not only how it aids human capital capacity and capability but also how HE *enhances the ability of individuals to make choices, have control over their lives, and contribute to society.*

*“The student experience isn’t just about teaching and learning....Its about the sports clubs and societies, it is about the interactions and conversations, it is about meeting people from entirely different backgrounds and circumstances to yourself, finding out something new about them and their background and, in doing so, finding out something new about yourself.”* (University of Edinburgh, 2004)

# 3. Strategically Positioning the EHEA



# Bologna is a Powerful Global Brand

- European higher education lies at centre of EU's determination to “come out stronger from the crisis and turn the EU into a **smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.**”
- EHEA has achieved a lot but opportunity to move beyond “internal” focus:
  - To strengthen **European dimension in education during era of globalisation**
  - To provide *all* students with the **opportunities of a comprehensive and genuine international HE experience**
  - To promote a **particular European approach to higher education and research** and to global challenges
  - To open up **dialogue with other world regions**
  - To **strategically position European higher education** using EHEA as a quality-brand

# How Others See Us

Internationally, the EHEA is seen as a competitive and formidable model of comprehensive higher education:

- *Brisbane Communiqué Initiative (2006)*: Collaboration on recognition and quality of education and training in the region
- *ASEAN Education Collaborative (2005)*: Developing quality education practices, including ASEAN Single Window (ASW) data initiative by 2012
- *Canada (2007)*: Pan-Canadian qualifications framework and assessment standards
- *Latin American and African* countries have expressed interest in emulating the Bologna Process
- *Lumina Foundation (2011)*: *Degree Profile* will define the “learning that each degree should reflect, regardless of the major field of study”
- *US*: Indiana, Minnesota, and Utah have begun road-testing “Tuning”
- *AHELO* : International comparability of learning outcomes



Ministry of Education and Science  
of the Republic of Armenia



EUROPEAN  
Higher Education Area

# BOLOGNA PROCESS - EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

home

about  
bologna process

work  
programme

events

documents

previous  
bologna seminars

EHEA Archive

attended events

related  
EU Activities

press  
material

glossary

restricted area

links

Home > [Want to study in Europe? Excellent idea!](#)



Print this page



Export PDF



Increase font size



Decrease font size



Send eMail



SHARE

## Want to study in Europe? Excellent idea!

On this website you will find information about the 47 countries engaged in the process of creating a **European Higher Education Area**

- offering broad access to **high quality higher education**,
- facilitating **mobility** of students and staff,
- welcoming **students from all over the world**.

While the aim is to make Europe's higher education systems more compatible with each other (and with other systems in the world), diversity between and within the 47 countries will remain one of Europe's assets. In this diverse landscape of European higher education, this website and the links collected here will help you find your way. Some **basic recommendations** first:

- Check if the programme and/or the institution of your choice are subject to reliable **quality assurance** and if the qualification you intend to get will be **recognised** in your home country
- Find out the **language of instruction**. In most countries, programmes are offered in the language(s) of the country and in at least one widely spoken European language.
- Look into **immigration regulations** (e.g. if a visa is required and how to obtain it) as well as **social security arrangements**.
- Estimate the **costs** of your stay abroad (including possible tuition fees, housing, subsistence, social security etc.) and inquire about possible **funding opportunities** in your home country or your chosen study destination.

For more information on those topics visit our [country pages](#). By clicking on the name of the country you will find specific information for international students and scholars but also more general information on the respective higher education system, quality assurance, academic recognition, student involvement etc. [for each country](#).

back to top | print this page



# What Might This Look Like

- Actively promote EHEA as a ***genuinely* international educational experience**, across diverse institutions, focused on learning outcomes and aided by structured mobility, credit accumulation/transfer, quality assurance and qualification recognition
- **“Total student experience”** as core component, including:
  - Global citizenship (Europeanisation and internationalism)
  - Language and culture;
  - Engagement and entrepreneurship;
  - Transnational programmes.
- Establish **EHEA brand**, around the world, on a par to “the American University of...”
  - EHEA = “quality mark”, overcoming concerns of consumer protection that trouble transnational or borderless education

# Opportunities

- Quality, global attractiveness and competitiveness have been at the heart of Bologna and the EHEA
- Now is the opportunity for the European Commission, Governments, and policymakers to go beyond institutional initiatives:
  - Promote EHEA as a quality post-secondary “system” with close **interface between teaching/learning, research/discovery, and engagement/innovation**
  - Strengthen European **identity of institutions** rather than use rankings which encourage a meaningless and resource-intensive “arms race”
  - Address **policy issues in a joint and co-ordinated way**, bringing more coherence between EU policy developments and Bologna
  - Develop the EHEA for **social and economic reasons** as well as projecting European **soft power** globally

Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU)  
Dublin Institute of Technology

[ellen.hazelkorn@dit.ie](mailto:ellen.hazelkorn@dit.ie)

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/rankings>



Higher Education  
Policy Research Unit