

The Bologna Process Approach to Harmonization of Higher Education Standards



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Essentials of the Bologna process



- Intergovernmental initiative
- Objective: European Area of Higher Education (EHEA)
- A process with continuous evolution
 - Growing number of participating countries and other actors
 - New objectives added
- Institutionalised implementation
 - Ministerial meetings
 - Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)

Background of the Bologna process



- **Importance of higher education**
 - for the European Communities, Common Market and People's Europe
- **Knowledge Economy, Information Society, EC education activities**
- **EC Erasmus program** of higher education student exchange since 1987
 - European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement, developed within the Erasmus program
- **Sorbonne Declaration** in 1998 (France, Italy, UK, Germany)
- **Final preparation** of the EC Commission and member states

Bologna Declaration of June 1999



Main objective: European Higher Education Area by 2010

➤ Europe of Knowledge, promoting employability and international competitiveness

1. **A system of easily readable and comparable degrees**

2. **A system based on two main cycles**, undergraduate and graduate.

3. **Establishment of a system of credits** as a means of promoting student mobility.

4. **Promotion of mobility** with particular attention to:

- for students, access to study and training opportunities
- for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training

5. **Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance** with a developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

6. **Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education**, with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility and integrated programs

Inter-governmental process (EC excluded)

Development of Bologna / EHEA Objectives

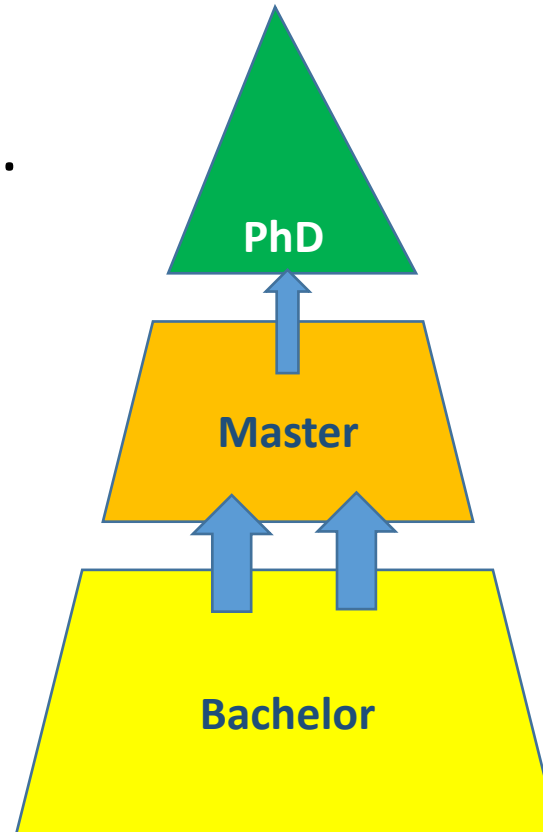


Bologna 1999	Prague 2001	Berlin 2003	Bergen 2005	Leuven 2009	Budapest-Wien 2011
Common framework of HE Degrees Two cycle system	Common framework of HE Degrees Two cycle system	Common framework of HE Degrees Three cycle system	Common framework of HE Degrees Three cycle system	Common framework of HE Degrees Three cycle system	Common framework of HE Degrees Three cycle system
Credit transfer system & Diploma Supplement	Credit transfer system & Diploma Supplement	Credit transfer system & Diploma Supplement	Credit transfer system & Diploma Supplement	Credit transfer system & Diploma Supplement	Credit transfer system & Diploma Supplement
	Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning
		Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance
			Standards and Guidelines of QA	Standards and Guidelines of QA	Standards and Guidelines of QA

Bologna HE Degree framework



- Basic framework is the three cycles of higher education qualifications.
- Qualifications are defined in terms of learning outcomes:
 - “what students know and can do on completing their degrees”



- First cycle: 180–240 ECTS credits
 - Bachelor degree - minimum 60 ECTS/ year (three to four years)
- Second cycle: 90–120 ECTS credits
 - Master degree - minimum 60 ECTS/ year (one or two years)
- Third cycle (Doctoral degree)
 - no concrete ECTS range defined (variation from two to four years and up).
- One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits, equivalent to 1,500–1,800 hours of study.

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)



Purposes of Quality Assurance

- A common framework for quality assurance systems
- Assurance and improvement of quality of higher education in EHEA
- Support mutual trust, facilitating recognition and mobility
- Provide information on quality assurance in EHEA

Principles of Quality Assurance

- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility
- Respond to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programs and students
- Support the development of a quality culture
- Take into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

ESG Standards and Guidelines



Common EHEA Standards and Guidelines for:

1. Internal Quality Assurance

Policy; Design and approval of programs; Student-centred learning; Student admission, progression, recognition and certification; Teaching staff; Learning resources; Information management; Public information; Monitoring and periodic review of programs; Cyclical external QA;

2. External Quality Assurance

Consideration of internal QA; Designing methodologies; Implementing processes; Peer-review experts; Criteria for outcomes; Reporting; Complaints and appeals;

3. Quality Assurance Agencies

Activities, policy and processes for QA; Official status; Independence; Thematic analysis; Resources; Internal QA and professional conduct; Cyclical external review of agencies;

An Example:

1.1. Internal QA Policy of Higher Education Institutions

- **Standard:** *Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.*
- **Guidelines:** *Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional QA system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. It supports the development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in QA at all levels of the institution. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available...*

Members Countries (48 + EC)



Bologna University

Signatories of the Bologna Declaration

- **1999:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom
- **2001:** Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Turkey, European Commission
- **2003:** Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Russian Federation, Serbia, Vatican City
- **2005:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
- **2007:** Montenegro
- **2010:** Kazakhstan
- **2015:** Belarus

Implementation and Governance



- **Ministerial Conferences as the highest authority**
- **Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)**
 - Executive structure supporting the Bologna Process
 - All EHEA members are members of the BFUG
 - Chaired by the country holding the Presidency of the European Union and co-chaired with non-EU member country
 - Assisted by secretariat and thematic work groups
- **BFUG tasks**
 - Prepare Ministerial Conferences and policy forums
 - Monitor and oversee the Bologna Process between Ministerial Conferences
 - Matters that have been delegated by the Ministers or do not need to be decided by them.
- **Consultative BFUG members (non-voting)**
 - Council of Europe, UNESCO, European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutes of Higher Education (EURASHE), European Students' Union (ESU), European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Education International (EI), Business Europe and European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR)
- **Partner organisations**
 - European Association for International Education (EAIE), the Council of European professional and managerial staff (Eurocadres), Eurodoc, the European Association for Promotion of Science and Technology (Euroscience)

How to become a member?

Criteria for Accession to the Bologna Process / EHEA

- **Party to the European Cultural Convention**
 - A clear definition of the geographical scope of the EHEA
- **Commitment to the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process**
 - International mobility of students and staff;
 - Autonomous higher education institutions;
 - Student participation in the governance of higher education;
 - Public responsibility for higher education;
 - The social dimension of the Bologna Process.

Alternative to EHEA Membership? Membership or Affiliate Status in ENQA

- **ENQA is the European Association for Quality Assurance for Higher Education. ENQA members are QA agencies in the signatory states of the Bologna Declaration that meet the membership criteria. Members include e.g. Kazakhstan's IAAR and IQAA.**
- **Condition of membership** is that members undergo an external review at least once every five years and compliance with the standards in the ESG Parts 2 and 3
- **Present membership fee is 4635 € / annum**
- **ENQA Affiliate status is open** to bodies worldwide that have a demonstrable interest in the quality assurance of higher education. Affiliates, as opposed to members, are not required to demonstrate compliance with the ESG. Affiliate members include e.g. Azerbaijan ANO, Georgian NCEQE and Kazakhstan's ECAQA, as well as Hong Kong and Mexico QA agencies.

