

Glossary



Accreditation

As defined in the Bologna Declaration, the study structure of the European Higher Education Area should essentially be characterised by two cycles – undergraduate and graduate. Accreditation is a central instrument to support the necessary processes of changes in European higher education systems. Like → evaluation, → accreditation serves to assure quality when implementing new (*ex ante* steering) degree programmes and also to monitor existing ones (*ex post* steering). Accreditation, i. e. certification of a degree programme, will take place after review of the minimum standards for content and specialisation, the vocational relevance of the degree to be awarded and the coherence and consistency of the general conception of the degree programme. It will be awarded for a limited period of time within the frame of a transparent, formal and external peer review. Thus, the degree programme has to be reviewed after a certain time. The process of a peer review is steered by agencies which are also reviewed through regular external evaluation. The instrument of accreditation of certificate degree programmes is relatively new in Europe but is increasingly gaining acceptance in the countries involved in the Bologna process.

Further information at:

<http://www.accreditation-council.de/>

European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA):

<http://www.enqa.net/>

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE):

<http://www.inqaahe.nl/>

Bruges Process

The term “Bruges Process” refers to the increased co-operation in European vocational education and training, similar to the Bologna process in higher education. At their conference in Bruges in October 2001, the Directors-General for vocational training initiated a co-operation process in the field of vocational education and training. The European Council affirmed this idea in Barcelona (15 and 16 March 2002). As an initial response, the European Commission invited representatives of 29 European countries (EU member states, future members of the EU and EEA countries) and social partners to a meeting in order to discuss concrete initiatives and measures to improve vocational education and training in Europe. The transparency of qualifications and skills is to be improved through a new, universal instrument, integrating existing tools such as the EUROPASS Training, the European curriculum and the certificate supplement. In addition, strong support was given to a credit transfer system in vocational education and training at the European level, complementing ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) in higher education. These measures are to be implemented within a voluntary co-operation process which will be top priority for the Danish presidency. A European framework for vocational education is to be developed by 2010 in order to enable the citizens to move freely between jobs, business sectors and countries. According to Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Education and Culture, the transfer of qualifications and skills is the precondition of lifelong learning and increased mobility.

Further information at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/bruges/index_en.html

Diploma Supplement

The European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO developed the Diploma Supplement in order to improve international transparency and to facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). The document - attached to a higher education diploma - describes in the respective national language and in English the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed. The Diploma Supplement provides additional information on the national higher education system, in order to fit the qualification into the relevant educational context. Information on the current state of the implementation of the Diploma Supplement in the countries participating in the SOCRATES programme is available [here](#).

More information at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/recognition/diploma.html#1>

Doctoral studies

The “Bologna process” focused so far on academic studies, in particular on the implementation of a system based on two main cycles. Now doctoral and post-doctoral studies are to be included into the European debates on the structural reform in the higher education systems. Already in 1992, the Ministers of Education of the EU member states Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France and the Netherlands agreed on improving the transparency and adjusting the existing systems of doctoral studies. Since 1994 doctoral students are promoted within the framework of the EU-HCM/TMR research programme. In 1991, the confederation of European Union Rectors’ Conferences proposed the implementation of a „European doctorate“ as an additive certificate and suggested that doctoral students are to spend at least a year abroad. This would not only improve the education of young scientists but also support the networking of European universities and research institutes. Structures and quality of doctoral studies in Europe were discussed during the semi-annual consultations of the Directors-General for higher education of the EU member states under the Swedish Presidency in Halmstad (May 2001) and under the Spanish Presidency in Cordoba (April 2002). Furthermore, the European Commission submitted a report concerning the mobility of doctoral students in the context of SOCRATES/ERASMUS programmes (so-called [Mitchell report](#)).

ECTS

ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is a credit system, which provides a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements, and transferring them from one institution to another. The system was initially established under the Erasmus programme (1989-1996) and has been tested over a period of 6 years in a pilot scheme involving 145 higher education institutions in all EU Member States and EEA countries. Since the introduction of the Institutional Contract in the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme in 1997/98 all European universities can take part in ECTS. As an effective instrument for creating curricular transparency and facilitating academic recognition the ECTS system supports European-wide mobility. Transparency is created by providing detailed information on the curricula and their relevance towards a degree. The main tools used to make ECTS work and facilitate academic recognition are the information package, the learning agreement and the transcript of records. The possibility of using ECTS within the field of vocational training is discussed at the moment.

Further information at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/ects.html#cl>

European Higher Education Area

The construction of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 is one of the most important objectives of the European Ministers of Education to promote the co-operation of higher education institutions within Europe. Meanwhile, 33 signatory countries are aiming at implementing joint structures in the European higher education systems and have approved a range of objectives within the framework of the „Bologna process“. The mobility of students and teachers, the recognition of degrees and quality assurance of study programmes are to be improved. Furthermore, a structure based on two main cycles (undergraduate/graduate) and a system of credits such as ECTS are to be established. The first results of the implementation and priority-settings for the time up to the Berlin conference 2003 can be found in the final communiqué signed by the European Ministers of Education on the occasion of the Bologna follow-up meeting in Prague 2001 (http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/prager_kommunique.pdf).

You will find the Bologna Declaration of the European Ministers of Education of 19 June 1999 „The European Higher Education Area“ at:
http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf

European Research Area

In January 2000 the European Commission published a communication „[Towards a European Research Area](#)“ initiated by the Commissioner for Research Philippe Busquin. It aims at the creation of better overall framework conditions for research to make Europe the leading knowledge-based economy worldwide. The document suggests a frontier-free research policy in Europe based on better cooperation among researchers and scientists in the member states which will improve the coordination of research activities within the EU and its member states without additional bureaucracy and higher costs. The European Research Area (ERA) shall promote a common use of scientific resources, create jobs on a long-term basis and stimulate competition in Europe.

Further information at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/area_de.html
<http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/era-debate/era.htm>

EUROPASS

The “EUROPASS Training” – implemented on the initiative of the Council of Europe – is a Europe-wide uniform bilingual document certifying periods of training outside the country of origin and promotes the mobility of education throughout Europe. The document records content and quality of the obtained qualifications and provides details about the international experience, skills and knowledge acquired. The “EUROPASS Training” certifies not only parts of vocational training but also practical training periods in the field of higher education.

Further information at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/europass/broch_en.pdf

EURO-STUDENT 2000

The EURO-STUDENT 2000 project compares social and economic data of student life in eight EU member states (Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Austria). The data focus on various aspects of higher education students' living conditions, e.g. study financing and its sources, students' family background,

government allocations, language proficiency, sojourns abroad, housing and students' time budgets. The results of this study are intended to provide essential information about the economic and social structures of student life in Europe and shall be used within the development of educational policy. The project will presumably be continued and expanded on further countries. The results will be published in spring 2002.

Further information on the project at:

<http://www.his.de/doku/abereich/ausland/proj/Eurostudent/frameset.htm>

Evaluation

Apart from → accreditation, evaluation is the central activity to → assure quality in higher education. To evaluate means to assess teaching and academic studies in a subject or department and the related degree programmes. Strengths and weaknesses of education and training should be demonstrated by stocktaking and analysis and proposals should be formulated to promote its quality as well. Evaluation is carried out through internal or external procedures. The process of internal evaluation is comprised of the systematic collection of administrative data, questioning of students and graduates, as well as moderated conversations with lecturers and students. As part of the process of external evaluation a review team visits the department in order to review the quality of the academic studies and teaching. External peers are lecturers or persons from vocational practice who discuss with students and young scientists and present a final report. The evaluation of academic studies and teaching has to be followed by an account of how effective the measures of quality assurance are.

Besides academic studies and teaching, the performance of research is evaluated at different levels: with reference to national research systems, individual institutions, research programmes or individual projects. In the field of research evaluation internal and external evaluations are also employed.

Further information at:

European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA):

<http://www.enqa.net>

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE):

<http://www.inqaahe.nl/>

GATS

The GATS, established in January 1994, is a multilateral agreement that is – along with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) – part of the legal structure of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The mandate of the GATS, resulting from the “Uruguay Round” negotiations, is the liberalization of trade in services and the gradual phasing out of government barriers to international competition in the services sector. Through the GATS, member-countries have made commitments to open all, or parts of, their domestic services markets to international competition. Member-nations must abide by two “principles” clearly set out in the agreement: the “national treatment principle”, which states that members should not discriminate in favour of national providers, and the “most-favoured-nation principle (MFN)”, which states that members should not discriminate between different member-nations. Education services are one of the 12 sectors (e.g. health, tourism, banking, telecommunications) included in the agreement. A new round of negotiations on trade in services began in January 2000 and is due to be completed by 2005. The discussion on the potential effects of GATS on the education sector is still under way.

Further information at:

http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/serv_e.htm

<http://gats-info.eu.int/>

www.aucc.ca/en/international/bulletins/declaration.pdf

(„Joint Declaration on Higher Education and the General Agreement on Trade in Services“, AUCC, ACE, EUA, CHEA)

ISIC

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is an international document of identification promoted by the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) and handed out by students' organisations and travel agencies. ISIC is the only international student card accepted by UNESCO since 1993. The cardholders are offered discounts in over 90 countries for travel tickets, accomodation, admission tickets etc.

Further information at:

www.isic.de

Lifelong Learning

The final communiqué of the Bologna follow-up meeting in Prague in 2001 stressed the importance of “Lifelong Learning” (LLL) as an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. Lifelong Learning comprises all phases of learning, from pre-school to post-retirement, and covers the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The implementation of this idea will be facilitated by bringing together education and vocational education in central aspects of different policies such as education, youth, employment and research. A lifelong learning framework is to be developed to enable each individual to choose among learning environments, jobs, regions and countries in order to improve his knowledge, skills and competencies and to use them optimally. An important condition for the implementation of LLL is the development of a coherent system of credits that allows the evaluation and recognition of diplomas and certificates acquired at school, at university and in the framework of work-based learning. In this way, the transfer of qualifications between schools, universities and the world of work could be ensured. Continuing education and further training are essential responses to growing competition and the use of new technologies and they therefore are among the key approaches to achieving the strategic goal for Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world ([European Council in Lisbon, March 2000](#)). In October 2000, the European Commission dedicated a [memorandum](#) to this issue and one year later published a [communication](#) of the two commission members Vivian Reding (education and culture) and Anna Diamantopoulou (employment and social affairs).

Further information at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

Please see as well the note “Towards Lifelong Learning” under “[News](#)”.

Quality Assurance

A central goal of the “Bologna Process” is to define and observe Europe-wide quality standards in higher education. A precondition is the elaboration of comparable methods and criteria to assess the quality of research and teaching. In 1998, the European Council recommended stronger co-operation in this field. As a response to this [Council initiative](#) and the objectives of the Bologna Declaration, the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ([ENQA](#)) was established. Since 1999, ENQA has supplied information about proven practical experiences as well as the newest

approaches and discussions in the field of quality assessment and quality assurance. In the course of the so-called Bologna Seminars, initial results of the debate on European quality standards for the implementation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes were presented in Amsterdam („[The European Dimension of Quality Assurance](#)"). The pilot project "[Tuning Educational Structures in Europe](#)", born of a university initiative in which 70 European universities participate, has submitted reference criteria for the comparison of final structures and teaching approaches for seven subjects (Business Studies, Education Science, Geology, History, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics). → Accreditation and → evaluation, the instruments to realize and observe quality standards, is under the supervision of evaluation and/or accreditation agencies in the individual countries.

Further information at:

<http://www.jointquality.org/>

<http://www.inqaahe.nl/>

<http://www.ia-up.org/papers.htm>