



Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe 2004/05

National Trends in the Bologna Process

EURYDICE

The information network on education in Europe

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PREFACE



The aim of the Bologna process is to create greater consistency and compatibility within European higher education and enhance its international transparency and attractiveness. Building on the intellectual, cultural, social and technological strengths of Europe, the Bologna Process is entirely consistent with and contributes to the achievement of the Lisbon strategy. This strategy was recently refocused on

creating jobs and growth, where higher education clearly has a central role to play. Universities should therefore also consider what should be their contribution to this broader strategy. In order to stimulate this reflection, the Commission adopted on 20 April a Communication addressing the strategic issues of attractiveness, governance and funding of higher education.

Central to the Bologna reforms are the three intermediate priorities emphasised by the Ministers responsible for higher education at the Berlin Conference on 18-19 September 2003, namely the introduction of study programmes based on three main cycles, more effective recognition of degrees and periods of study, and the promotion of effective quality assurance systems. Implementation of these policy objectives is crucial. From this standpoint, the present Eurydice report represents an essential contribution to the mid-term stocktaking of the Bologna process, which the Ministers also called for in Berlin.

While this report makes clear the considerable progress already made in achieving more compatible and readily comparable higher education systems, it also highlights the need for further development of the Bologna process so that universities can contribute fully to 'the Europe of knowledge'. The three-cycle structure is now being introduced in most signatory countries, while implementation of the European Credit Transfer

and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement has begun in a majority. The development of quality assurance measures is also well under way. Yet it remains vital to extend these measures to all higher education institutions and programmes on a regular systematic basis and to reinforce them with additional measures such as effective quality assurance systems recognised outside national borders.

At the request of the European Commission, the present report is not limited to Eurydice network member countries but covers all 40 signatory countries to the Bologna Declaration. This is symbolic of our determination that the whole of Europe should be involved in the Bologna process and I am therefore especially pleased that so many countries have adopted its principles.

I am grateful to the European Unit and National Units of Eurydice for having worked together so well to produce this fully authoritative 2005 edition of *Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe*. As in previous editions, the publication also contains clear diagrams and explanatory notes to represent the structure of higher education systems at the present stage of the Bologna reforms.

I hope that this Eurydice booklet will make a contribution to our efforts to achieve a fully integrated and coherent European Area of Higher Education by 2010, working for the benefit of Europe, its students and citizens.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Ján Figel'.

Ján Figel'

Commissioner responsible for
Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism

FOREWORD

The European Commission has requested from the Eurydice Network a review of current changes in the structure of higher education in Europe. The main trends in the Bologna process have determined the subjects that should lie at the heart of the analysis, namely the three-cycle structure, the European credit system (ECTS), the Diploma Supplement and quality evaluation. A fresh survey following the one prepared by Eurydice for the Berlin conference of ministers responsible for higher education on 18-19 September 2003 has thus been produced for circulation at the Bergen conference (Norway) on 19-20 May 2005.

The Eurydice assignment has been conducted in close consultation with the *Bologna Follow-up Group* which was asked by the ministers responsible for higher education for a thorough evaluation report on implementation of the Bologna process for their Bergen meeting. Information gathered by the Eurydice National Units has thus provided input for two complementary exercises, namely the *Bologna Follow-up Group* evaluation report, for which it was one of the main sources, and the present *Focus* publication prepared by the Eurydice Network itself, which describes how the relevant measures are progressing and the current structure of higher education. Each stage, from the preparation of the questionnaire for gathering information from national sources to completion of the comparative overview, has been carried out in consultation with the *Bologna Follow-up Group* and, more particularly, its own Working Group responsible for the evaluation report. The aim of this was to avoid any duplication of effort and ensure that the data contained in the two reports were all the more complementary and consistent. Yet the purpose of each is different, namely the evaluation of implementation and recommendations in the case of the *Bologna Follow-up Group* report, and descriptive analysis of the wide variety of

national circumstances and their common features in the case of the *Focus* published by Eurydice.

Although 31 countries are represented within Eurydice, the European Commission was concerned that the survey prepared by the Network should cover the 40 countries now signatory to the Bologna Declaration. An information gathering questionnaire was sent to all national representatives, including those in the nine additional countries. The information was gathered in all countries between July and December 2004. In the case of the 31 Network countries, Eurydice followed its customary procedures for checking and official approval of data. With assistance from the *Bologna Follow-up Group* secretariat, material from national sources in the nine additional countries and the way it was interpreted was also checked. However, information on education systems in countries considered here by Eurydice for the first time and with little prior knowledge of them should be treated with some caution.

The central institutional location of the Eurydice Network in its member countries, in most cases actually within their education ministries, means that the Network mainly makes use of official information of an administrative nature (legislation, regulations, recommendations, etc.). Consequently, the resultant analytical work provides data on the intentions of policy-makers and not necessarily on the practical circumstances governing their realisation or on their effect. This needs to be especially emphasised in the case of the present report dealing both with processes whose implementation is invariably well under way and with a level of education characterised by considerable autonomy of its institutions, on which factual information is in practice difficult to centralise.

We hope that this descriptive analysis will provide greater insight into the structural changes that are currently occurring within higher education in Europe. We should like to express our warm gratitude to the Eurydice National Units, as well as to the representatives of the nine additional countries with whom we have worked closely, for providing essential information and making every effort to comply with a tight timetable. We also wish to thank the members of the working group formed from the *Bologna Follow-up Group*, as well as its secretariat, for the transparency and quality of the discussions that have typified this, our first experience of cooperating together.

Patricia Wastiau-Schlüter

Head of the Eurydice European Unit

INTRODUCTION

In this publication, the **structure of higher education in Europe** is illustrated in a succession of **detailed diagrams**. For each country in turn, they represent the courses and qualifications most commonly offered by universities or other higher education institutions. The names of institutions and intermediate and final qualifications are indicated in their language of origin. The main fields of study, the national, regional or institutional selection procedures adopted at the point of entry and the length of courses are also shown. Furthermore, by using the ISCED 1997 ⁽¹⁾ system of classification (ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6), the diagrams illustrate clearly whether or not there is a structure based on two main cycles as encouraged in the Bologna Process.

Each country diagram is accompanied by a **brief account** of the **current situation** regarding the reforms or arrangements **associated with the Bologna Process** that have been introduced since 1999. Such measures are primarily concerned with the existence or otherwise of the model based on two main cycles, development of the third cycle (in terms of length, access and training in research methodology), adoption or general implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the introduction of the Diploma Supplement and the development of measures for quality evaluation.

In appropriate cases, there is also reference to other especially significant reforms introduced independently of measures linked to the Bologna Process or as a means of reinforcing it. They include changes in selection procedures or in the status of higher education institutions.

Where no reform has yet been implemented, the date of the most recent reform or the focus of any ongoing national debate is indicated.

Country diagrams along with their explanatory texts are arranged in the alphabetical order of the EU protocol country codes. This has been done to ensure uniformity of presentation in all language versions of the publication.

The first part of the publication contains a brief review of the **main trends** apparent from a study of these diagrams and their summaries. This **comparative overview** is preceded by a short account of the **background to the Bologna Process**. A **glossary** of codes and national abbreviations, as well as definitions of frequently used terms, are also included. Finally, an annex containing national statistics provides some insight into the level at which the various measures have been implemented.

⁽¹⁾ See the definition in the glossary at the end of the publication.

FROM THE SORBONNE DECLARATION TO THE BERGEN CONFERENCE – A DYNAMIC PROCESS

The Bologna Process may be regarded both as the product and continuation of a series of European conferences and a certain number of policy decisions aimed at establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010.

The five main stages mapping out the Bologna Process so far are those of **Paris-La Sorbonne** (25 May 1998), **Bologna** (19 June 1999), **Prague** (19 May 2001), **Berlin** (18-19 September 2003) and **Bergen** (19-20 May) ⁽¹⁾.

The premises of the Bologna Process are to be found in the Declaration of Paris-la Sorbonne on *Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System* signed in May 1998 by the education ministers of four States: France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

The 3 principles underlying Paris-La Sorbonne:

- Facilitating the mobility of students in the European area and their integration into the European labour market, as well as the mobility of teachers;
- Improving the international transparency of courses and the recognition of qualifications by means of gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study;
- Encouraging a return to studies or their continuation in the same or another institution, in a school or within arrangements for European mobility.

A year later (in June 1999), the Bologna Declaration on the *European Higher Education Area*, which was largely inspired by the Sorbonne Declaration, was signed. Besides aspects of its content, one of its novel features lay in a broadening of the debate, which then had 29 States signatories (the 15 EU Member States, 3 EFTA countries – Iceland, Norway and Switzerland – and 11 candidate countries) and included institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and associations of universities, rectors or European students.

The six principles of the Bologna Declaration:

- Facilitating the readability and comparability of qualifications;
- Implementing a system based essentially on two main cycles;
- Establishing a system of credits, such as ECTS;
- Developing arrangements to support the mobility of students, teachers and researchers;
- Promoting European cooperation in quality assurance;
- Promoting the European dimension in higher education (in terms of curricular development and inter-institutional cooperation).

In May 2001, a conference was held in Prague, which included the same categories of participant, with 33 States signatories (the newcomers were Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein and Turkey). The purpose of this conference was to assess the progress already accomplished (particularly on the basis of national reports) and identify the main principles that should drive the Bologna Process in the years ahead.

⁽¹⁾ See references at the end of the publication.

While the Prague conference confirmed the need to pursue the aims set out in the Bologna Declaration, it nevertheless attached importance to three points in particular.

Three specific points emphasised by the Prague Conference:

- Lifelong learning;
- The involvement of higher education institutions and students as active partners;
- The need to enhance the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

In September 2003, the Berlin Conference was an all-important stage in following up the Bologna process. With the inclusion of seven new States signatories (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Holy See, Montenegro, Russia and Serbia), 40 countries are now involved in it. Furthermore, the process gained in momentum by setting itself the intermediate priorities specified in the Communiqué signed on 19 September 2003.

The 3 intermediate priorities established by the Berlin Conference (which should be achieved by 2005):

- Having started the implementation of the two-cycle system;
- Automatic provision of the Diploma Supplement for all graduates free of charge in a widely spoken European language;
- Establishment of a national quality assurance system.

With a view to the Bergen Conference (19-20 May 2005), the ministers present in Berlin asked the Bologna Follow-up Group to prepare detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the priority aims contained in the Communiqué.

As this latest stage gets under way, 5 States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) may become the next States signatories in the process.

To make the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area more tangible, the Berlin Communiqué also included the establishment of the doctoral cycle in the Bologna reforms.

GUIDE TO READING THE DIAGRAMS

The diagrams illustrate the main possible paths through higher education. Each of these paths should be studied horizontally across the page. Each diagram consists of as many graphical units (illustrations) as the number of possible paths. The length of the boxes indicates the notional length/ages corresponding to full-time studies, even though the programme concerned may also be offered on a part-time basis.

A different colour shading is used to distinguish between study programmes at ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6 ⁽¹⁾. Within a given ISCED level, fields of study are placed together in a single illustration when they have the following characteristics in common:

- entry to their courses is in accordance with similar procedures (with or without selection),
- they are offered by the same institution(s),
- their courses are of the same duration,
- their courses lead to the same type of qualification (with the same title).

Where the same institution or institutions offer different fields of study whose course characteristics vary in relation to one or more of the above-mentioned criteria, the name of the institution concerned is not repeated for each separate graphical unit. However, when these one or more institutions offer programmes at different ISCED levels (ISCED 5A and 5B), their names are repeated in the illustration for each level.

A selection procedure at the point of entry to a programme is shown by either a vertical bold or dotted line depending on whether selection is administered by the institution or by a higher (national or regional)

authority. At this latter level, the selection procedure may be concerned with limiting the number of places. Bold and dotted lines are combined wherever both 'higher' and institutional levels are involved.

Where first-cycle (ISCED level 5A or 5B) qualifications obtained on the completion of courses whose characteristics differ (for example in terms of differences in selection procedure and/or duration), provide admission to one or more identical second-cycle (ISCED level 5A or 5B) courses, the latter are duplicated in each graphical unit concerned.

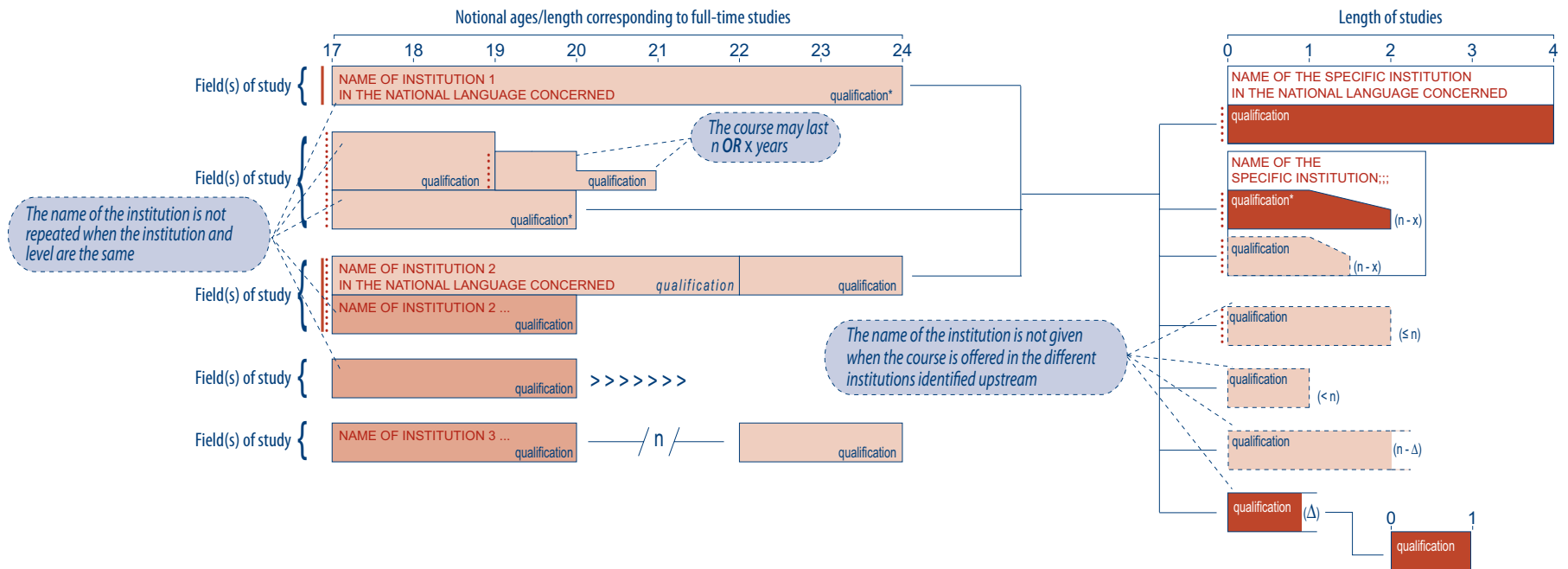
Where it is possible, on completion of the first qualifying programme, to continue with (ISCED 5A or 5B) second-cycle studies or enter the employment market, the second-cycle cell is reduced in height. However, horizontal lines extending from first-cycle or second-cycle ISCED 5A and 5B programme cells indicate that it is also possible to continue with higher studies at ISCED level 5 and/or 6.

Only links leading from one programme to another at a further level (i.e. between the first/second cycles and the third cycle) are illustrated. Consequently, the diagrams do not indicate any opportunities that may exist for students to undertake several programmes at the same level simultaneously, to embark on fresh first/second-cycle studies after obtaining a first/second qualification or to transfer between programmes each leading to a first qualification.

Where access to doctoral studies depends on the possession of a (complementary, supplementary or specialised) ISCED 5A qualification or an ISCED 6 qualification, this requirement is indicated by a line connecting the two programmes concerned.

⁽¹⁾ See the definition of ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6 on the following website:
http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=5069_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC.

LEGEND



ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification Intermediate diploma	—/n/— Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n - x) From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure /limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification Qualifying degree	* Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ) Variable duration

>>> Study abroad

Classification used: International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997)

The international standard classification of education (ISCED) is an instrument suitable for compiling statistics on education internationally. It covers two cross-classification variables, namely levels and fields of education with the complementary dimensions of general/vocational/pre-vocational orientation and educational/ employment market destination. The current version, ISCED 97 ⁽¹⁾ distinguishes seven levels of education: ISCED 0, pre-primary education; ISCED 1, primary education; ISCED 2, lower secondary education; ISCED 3, upper secondary education; ISCED 4, post-secondary non-tertiary education; ISCED 5, tertiary education (first stage); ISCED 6, tertiary education (second stage).

ISCED 97 levels covered by the publication

ISCED 5: Tertiary education (first stage)

Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED levels 3 or 4. ISCED level 5 includes tertiary programmes with an academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretically based, and tertiary programmes with an occupational orientation (type B) which are typically shorter than type A programmes and geared for entry to the employment market.

ISCED 6: Tertiary education (second stage)

This level relates solely to tertiary studies leading to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate).

Terminology and other definitions

Diploma Supplement

The European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES developed the Diploma Supplement in order to improve international transparency and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). The Supplement – attached to a higher education diploma – describes in widely spoken European language 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.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

ECTS is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme – objectives increasingly specified in terms of learning outcomes and competencies to be acquired. ECTS was established initially for credit transfer. The system facilitated the recognition of periods of study abroad and thus enhanced the quality and scale of student mobility in Europe. Recently ECTS has been developing into an accumulation system to be implemented in all programmes at institutional, regional, national and

⁽¹⁾ <http://unesco.stat.unesco.org/en/pub/pub0.htm>

European levels. It can be used across a variety of programmes and modes of delivery. The key features of ECTS are:

- The convention that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. The student workload of a full-time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to 36/40 weeks a year and, in such cases one credit corresponds to 24-30 working hours. Workload refers to the notional time in which an average learner might expect to complete the required learning outcomes.
- The link with learning outcomes, which are sets of competencies expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do on completion of a process of learning, regardless of its length. Credits in ECTS can only be obtained on completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved.
- The allocation of ECTS credits is based on the official length of a study programme cycle. The total workload necessary to obtain a first-cycle degree lasting officially three or four years is expressed as 180 or 240 credits.
- Student workload in ECTS includes the time spent in attending lectures and seminars, carrying out independent study, and preparing and taking examinations, etc.
- Credits are allocated to all educational components of a study programme (such as modules, courses, placements, dissertation work, etc.) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of study in the programme concerned.

Credit systems which are not based on student workload (but on contact hours for example) are not compatible with ECTS.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

A European network created in 1998 to circulate information, experience, good practice and new developments in the field of quality assessment and assurance in higher education among interested parties, including public authorities, higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies.

Final qualification

Qualification obtained on completion of a full course (with or without a final examination) which provides access to the employment market.

Intermediate qualification

Formal proof of satisfactory completion of the first 'cycle' of a full course, which is necessary to embark on the second cycle of that course. It is itself therefore neither a final qualification, nor meant to provide access to the employment market.

Selection procedure

Any procedure or requirement over and above the possession of an upper secondary school leaving qualification, which is intended to limit the number of enrolments in higher education (e.g. an entrance examination, competitive examination, a *numerus clausus* or other type of selection arrangement). Applicants may be selected at national, regional or institutional level.

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin		
AEA	<i>Attestation d'Études Approfondies</i>	FR
AK	<i>Akademineau</i>	DK
AHU	<i>Année Hospitalo-Universitaire</i>	FR
Architecte DPLG	<i>Architecte Diplômé Par Le Gouvernement</i>	FR
BA	<i>BA-gráđa/Bachelor of Arts</i>	IS
B.A.	<i>Bachelor of Arts</i>	DK
BA	<i>Berufsakademie</i>	DE
B.A.	<i>Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
B.Appl.	<i>Diploma primijenjenih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
BBA	<i>Bachelor of Business Administration</i>	LI
Bc.	<i>Bakalář</i>	CZ
BcA.	<i>Bakalář umění</i>	CZ
BEEd	<i>BEEd-gráđa/Bachelor of Education</i>	IS
BFA	<i>BFA-gráđa/Bachelor of Fine Arts</i>	IS
BMus	<i>BMus-gráđa/Bachelor of Music</i>	IS
BS	<i>BS-gráđa/Bachelor of Science</i>	IS
BSc	<i>Bachelor of Science</i>	DK, LI
B.Sci.	<i>Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
BScBIS	<i>Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems</i>	LI
B.Sci.med.	<i>Diplomirani ljekar - Diploma akademskih osnovnih studija</i>	CS-mon
BTS	<i>Brevet de Technicien Supérieur</i>	FR
Cand.	<i>Candidatus</i>	DK
Cand. juris	<i>Candidatus juris</i>	IS
Cand. med.	<i>Candidatus medicinae</i>	DK, IS

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin		
Cand. med. vet.	<i>Candidatus medicinae veterinariae</i>	DK
Cand. obst	<i>Candidatus obstetriciorum</i>	IS
Cand. odont	<i>Candidatus odontologiae</i>	IS
Cand. oecon	<i>Candidatus oecon</i>	IS
Cand. pharm.	<i>Candidatus pharmaciae</i>	IS
Cand. psych.	<i>Candidatus psychologiae</i>	IS
Cand. theol.	<i>Candidatus theologiae</i>	IS
CEAA	<i>Certificat d'Études Approfondies en Architecture</i>	FR
Cert HE	<i>Certificate of Higher Education</i>	UK
CNE	<i>Commission nationale d'évaluation</i>	FR
CPGE	<i>Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles</i>	FR
CVU	<i>Center for Videregående Uddannelse</i>	DK
DDF	<i>Den Danske Filmskole</i>	DK
DE	<i>Diplôme d'État</i>	FR
DEA	<i>Diplôme d'Études Approfondies</i>	FR, CH
DES	<i>Diplôme d'Études Spécialisées</i>	FR
DESS	<i>Diplôme d'Études Supérieures Spécialisées</i>	BE fr, FR, CH
DEUG	<i>Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales</i>	FR
DF2CEM	<i>Diplôme de fin de deuxième cycle des études médicales</i>	FR
Dip HE	<i>Diploma of Higher Education</i>	UK
Dipl.	<i>Diploma</i>	HR
Dipl. Ing.	<i>Diplomirani inženjer</i>	HR
Dipl. Spec.	<i>Diploma specijalistickih studija</i>	CS-mon
Dipl. Spec. A	<i>Diploma specijalistickih studija</i>	CS-mon
Dipl. Spec. Sci	<i>Diploma specijalistickih studija</i>	CS-mon

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin

DiS.	<i>Diplomovaný specialista</i>	CZ
DNTS	<i>Diplôme National de Technologie Spécialisée</i>	FR
DPA	<i>Diploma Professional Avançat</i>	AD
Dr.	<i>Doctor</i>	DK
Dr. odont	<i>Doctor odontologiae</i>	IS
Dr. phil.	<i>Doctor philosophiae</i>	IS
Dr.sc	<i>Doctor scientiarum</i>	HR
Dr. Sci.	<i>Doktor Nauka</i>	CS-mon
DU-ig	<i>Diploma Universitari en informàtica i gestió</i>	AD
DUT	<i>Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie</i>	FR
FD	<i>Foundation Degree</i>	UK-ENG/WLS/NIR
FH	<i>Fachhochschule</i>	DE, AT
GRAD. CERT.	<i>Graduate Certificate</i>	UK
GRAD. DIP.	<i>Graduate Diploma</i>	UK
HNC	<i>Higher National Certificate</i>	UK
HND	<i>Higher National Diploma</i>	UK
IAP	<i>Internationale Akademie of Philosophie</i>	LI
Ing.	<i>Inzenjer</i>	HR
Ing.	<i>Inženýr</i>	CZ
Ing. arch.	<i>Inženýr architect</i>	CZ
IUT	<i>Institut Universitaire de Technologie</i>	FR
JUDr.	<i>Doktor práv</i>	CZ
LLM	<i>Master of Laws</i>	IS
MA	<i>Master of Arts/Magister artium</i>	IS
M.A.	<i>Magistar umjetnosti</i>	CS-mon

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin

Mag. juris	<i>Magister juris</i>	IS
MAS	<i>Master of Advanced Studies</i>	CH
MBA	<i>Master of Business Administration</i>	IS, LI, HR
MEd	<i>Master of Education</i>	IS
MgA.	<i>Magistr umění</i>	CZ
Mgr.	<i>Magistr</i>	CZ
Mgr inž.	<i>Magister inżynier</i>	PL
Mgr inž. architekt	<i>Magister inżynier architekt</i>	PL
Mgr pielęgn.	<i>Magister pielęgniarstwa</i>	PL
Mgr położnictwa	<i>Magister położnictwa</i>	PL
M.L.	<i>Master of Law</i>	IS
MLIS	<i>Master of Library and Information Science</i>	IS
MPA	<i>Master of Public Administration</i>	IS
MPaed.	<i>Magister Paedagogiae</i>	IS
Mr.	<i>Magister</i>	HR
Mr.sc	<i>Magister scientiarum</i>	HR
MS	<i>Master of Science/Magister Scientiarum</i>	IS
MSA	<i>Master specialise artistique</i>	BE fr
MSc	<i>Master of Science</i>	LI
M. Sci.	<i>Magistar nauka</i>	CS-mon
MSW	<i>Master of Social Works</i>	IS
MUDr.	<i>Doktor medicíny</i>	CZ, SK
MVDr	<i>Doktor veterinárskej medicíny</i>	SK
MVDr.	<i>Doktor veterinární medicíny</i>	CZ
P.G. CERT.	<i>Postgraduate Certificate</i>	IE, UK

National abbreviations with terms in their language of origin

P.G. DIP.	<i>Postgraduate Diploma</i>	IE, UK, MT
PGCE	<i>Postgraduate Certificate of Education</i>	MT
Ph.D.	<i>Philosophiae Doctor/Doktor philosophiae</i>	CZ, DK, MT, AT, IS, NO
PharmDr.	<i>Doktor farmacie</i>	CZ
PhDr.	<i>Doktor filosofie</i>	CZ
Pk	<i>Profesinė kvalifikacija</i>	LT
Prof.	<i>Professor</i>	HR
RNDr.	<i>Doktor přírodních věd</i>	CZ
SSIS	<i>Scuola di Specializzazione per l'Insegnamento Secondario</i>	IT
STS	<i>Statens Teaterskole</i>	DK
STS	<i>Section de Techniciens Supérieurs</i>	FR
TEI	<i>Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idryma</i>	EL
Th.D./ ThDr.	<i>Doktor teologie</i>	CZ
ThLic.	<i>Licenciát teologie</i>	CZ
UfH	<i>Universität für Humanwissenschaften</i>	LI

International abbreviations

ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EUA	European University Association
ISCED	International Standard Classification for Education
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres

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Higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are autonomous bodies established by Royal Charter or legislation, and most are part-funded by government. Many of the changes and reforms in higher education which have taken place over recent years followed from the recommendations of the 1997 Dearing Report (the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education). The 2004 Higher Education Act (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) will introduce variable tuition fees from 2006 onwards. A Government decision on university title (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) has changed the basis on which the university title is accorded to an institution, removing the requirement for research degree awarding powers and spread of subject areas. Criteria for taught degree awarding powers have been strengthened to require a more extensive scholarly environment. England, Wales and Northern Ireland have responded in a positive way to the developments arising from the Bologna Process.

The degree structure in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is based on **three main cycles**. The first cycle also includes a wide range of different short-cycle qualifications at different levels. This structure meets the basic Bologna requirement since, for full-time

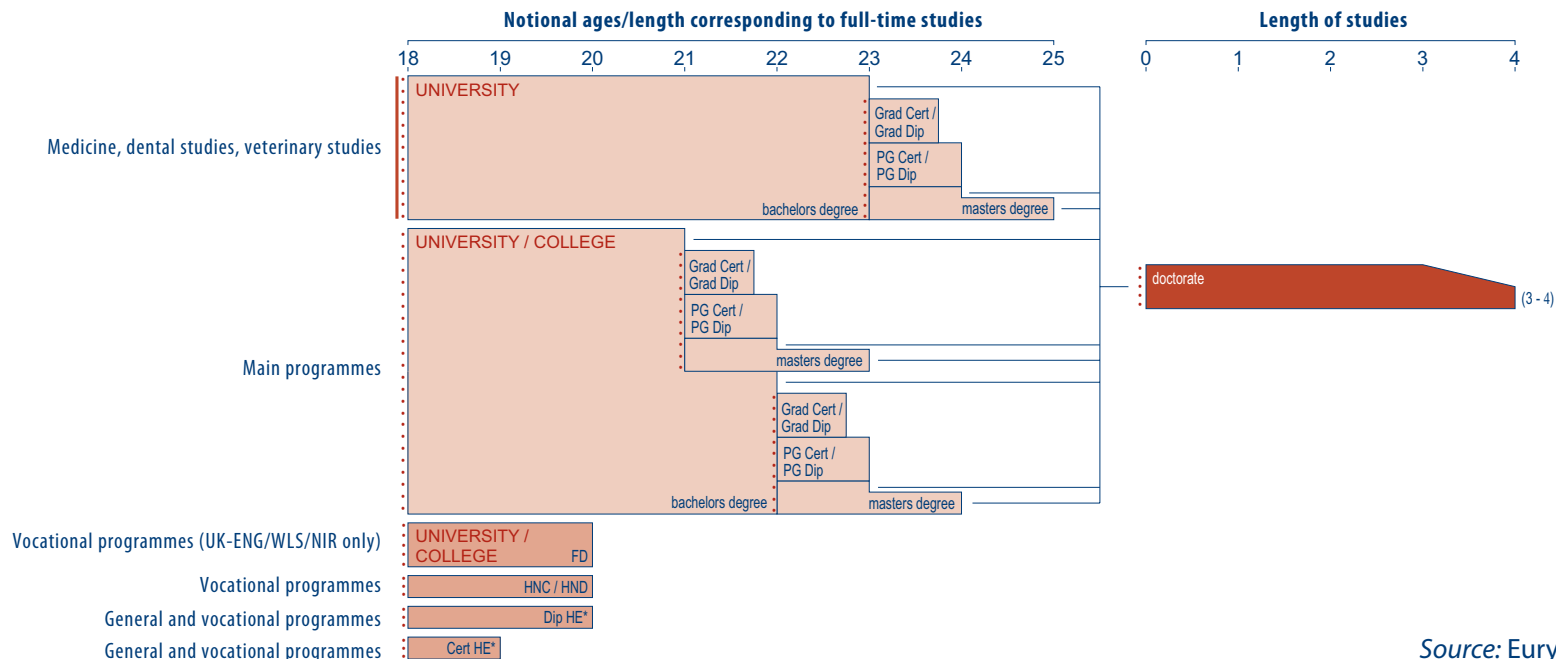
students, the first cycle is generally either three or four years. Although students typically enter **doctoral programmes** following a Master's degree, there are some subject areas where students can enter such programmes without a Master's degree if they have good results in a Bachelor's degree with Honours in a relevant discipline, along with the agreement of the supervisor(s) to take on the particular student. A PhD does not include training for teaching in higher education; this takes place separately where required. Some bodies which fund postgraduate studies require one year's training in research methods (the MRes) before the Doctorate, but this can equally form the first part of doctoral studies, which may also include short courses. There are no legal obstacles to awarding joint or double degrees provided the institution has appropriately formulated its statutes and regulations.

Titles of degrees are not regulated by law but generic descriptors for higher education qualifications, including those at doctoral level and advice on qualification nomenclature, are included in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) provided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). These descriptors provide guidance on qualification nomenclature to assist institutions in achieving

consistency in the ways in which qualification titles convey information about the level, nature and subjects of study.

Credit accumulation and transfer systems developed by consortia of HEIs have been used widely, but not universally, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over recent years. One academic year is equated with 120 UK credits or 60 **ECTS** credits, but hours/credit differ from the averages identified in the ECTS Guidelines. Credit in the UK is always based on learning outcomes recognising notional student workload. In Wales, since 2003, all accredited learning has been gradually brought into a single unifying structure referred to as the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). The majority of Welsh universities continue to work collaboratively on its implementation, while considering its integration with ECTS. The framework includes a credit accumulation and transfer system and vocational qualifications. While large numbers of universities in England and Northern Ireland also use a credit system and have done so for a number of years, credits do not form part of the English and Northern Irish qualifications framework. This issue will be discussed in 2005.

Since its introduction in 1989, ECTS has been widely used by institutions participating in the



Source: Eurydice.

ISCED 5A (1st or 2nd programme)	ISCED 6 programme	Selection procedure at point of entry (institutional level)	qualification	Intermediate diploma	-/n/-	Compulsory work experience + its duration	(n- x)	From n year(s) minimum to x year(s) maximum
ISCED 5B (1st or 2nd programme)	Further qualification	Selection procedure/limitation of places (national/regional level)	qualification	Qualifying degree	*	Qualification + field of specialisation	(Δ)	Variable duration

Cert HE	Certificate of Higher Education	Grad Cert	Graduate Certificate	HND	Higher National Diploma
Dip HE	Diploma of Higher Education	Grad Dip	Graduate Diploma	PG Cert	Postgraduate Certificate
FD	Foundation Degree (UK (ENG/WLS/NIR))	HNC	Higher National Certificate	PG Dip	Postgraduate Diploma

The full flexibility of learning paths is not apparent from the above diagram, as opportunities for transferring from one programme to another and the flexibility at the end of undergraduate programmes (ISCED level 5A 1st programmes) are not illustrated.

Programmes are available on a full-time, part-time or flexible basis to students of all ages. In Scotland appropriately qualified students can start at 17. Many different types of programme are available, not all of which can be distinguished in the diagram. In Scotland, courses leading to an ordinary bachelors degree normally last three years, while courses leading to a bachelors degree with honours are typically four years. In the rest of the UK, three-year honours degree courses are more common, but there are also many four-year courses, particularly those which include UK or overseas placements. Masters degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses (lasting typically one calendar year), programmes of research (typically two years), or a mixture of both. Research masters programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil (Master of Philosophy) or MRes (Master of Research). Some masters degrees in science and engineering are integrated into undergraduate programmes lasting a year longer than honours degree programmes. Doctorates normally require a minimum of three years of original research which may include the time spent working towards an MPhil. Some doctorate programmes also include a taught element.

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Socrates-Erasmus programme. Most of them use ECTS for transfer. As institutions increasingly look to acquire the ECTS label, more institutions will be using ECTS for all first- and second-cycle programmes alongside Welsh, Northern Ireland and English credits where they operate.

Following from the Dearing Report, England, Wales and Northern Ireland were committed to the development of a Student Progress File with two elements – the first matching in large part the requirements of the **Diploma Supplement**, the second providing a personal development file. With the encouragement of the Government and the sector-wide Europe Unit based at Universities UK (UUK – a consultative and advisory body which represents university interests and speaks on behalf of all UK universities), higher education institutions are implementing the Diploma Supplement. This is issued free of charge, in English and in Wales there are plans to provide the Diploma Supplement in Welsh as well as in English. Together with the key organisations in the sector, the National Academic Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC) as a member of the European ENIC/NARIC network, also supports and promotes the implementation and promotion of the Diploma Supplement in the UK. The development of the

Diploma Supplement has been further enhanced by higher education institution conferences and other events offered in collaboration between the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council, the UK NARIC and the Europe Unit. Progress is expected towards 100 % implementation over the next two years.

A comprehensive system for the maintenance of quality and standards in institutions has been established, broadly following the pattern proposed by the Dearing Inquiry in 1997. The current **external quality assurance** processes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland focus on institutional management of quality and standards. They are predicated on higher education institutions having robust internal quality assurance mechanisms capable of providing verifiable information to the public about quality and standards at programme level.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was established in 1997 to provide an integrated quality assurance service for the UK higher education sector. The Agency is an independent body funded by subscriptions from higher education institutions and through contracts with the four higher education funding councils in the UK. The Agency's role is to safeguard the public interest in sound

standards of higher education qualifications and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. It does this by reviewing quality and standards and by publishing external reference points for quality that help higher education institutions to define clear and explicit standards. These external reference points include: the frameworks of higher education qualifications, which include descriptions of different HE qualifications; subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects; and a ten-part Code of Practice for Quality Assurance.

QAA reviews and audits are evidence-based processes using materials produced by institutions, including a self-evaluation document. The integrity and consistency of the QAA's review processes, which are peer reviews, is largely dependent on the participation of well-qualified and trained reviewers. The QAA publishes a person specification for reviewers setting out the qualities and experience they should have, and in selecting reviewers tries to maintain an overall balance in respect of aspects including gender, geographical location, subject balance and ethnicity. The Agency does not currently specifically seek nominations for reviewers from outside the UK, but has involved

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international colleagues in the review of some of the elements of the academic infrastructure.

The QAA Board includes a student observer. Students play an active role in the review processes: they make a separate written submission to the audit/review team, and meeting(s) with students are an element in every audit programme. The Agency produces material on quality directly targeted at students, and has a member of staff dedicated to student matters including liaising with the National Union of Students on training in quality assurance for its members.

All QAA review activities result in published reports. These reports include judgments about quality and standards, and are available in hard copy and through the internet on the Agency's website, as are all documents relating to the Agency's standards and processes. The Agency does not have the power to close institutions or programmes or withdraw funding, but should a 'no confidence' judgment be made, the institution would have a period of one year to recover the situation either by improving or closing the provision. Should this not be achieved, then the appropriate Funding Council would take action. One year after an audit report has been

published, institutions are invited to comment on the actions they have taken in respect of recommendations made in the report.

Higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have operated **internal quality** mechanisms for many decades.

There is no system for **accrediting** higher education institutions, but the right to award degrees and use university title is protected by the Government. Institutions without degree-awarding powers may provide courses leading to degrees validated by institutions with degree-awarding powers (mainly universities and university colleges). There are many statutory and regulatory bodies associated with particular professions which accredit higher education programmes and/or individual graduates according to their specific requirements.

The Department for Education and Skills in England is committed to the continued expansion of higher education and moving towards half the population entering higher education by the age of 30. The Welsh Assembly Government has targets to increase the participation of Welsh-domiciled higher education students studying in higher education institutions in Wales. The bulk of the

expansion of higher education provision will come through new types of qualification, in particular, through foundation degrees. These two-year vocational awards are designed specifically to offer opportunities to progress to a Bachelor's degree.

The QAA is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and its Chief Executive is one of the Vice Presidents of the Network. The Agency has participated in a number of ENQA projects including the Transnational European Evaluation Projects (TEEP) and the Quality Convergence Study (QCS), and is a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). It also has bilateral links with other agencies throughout Europe and in other parts of the world. The Agency participates actively in OECD and UNESCO higher education activities. The QAA publishes a code of practice on collaborative provision covering transnational provision originating in the UK which is delivered in other countries through partner institutions.

Legislative and/or official references

Date	Term
1997	Dearing Report. National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. <i>Higher Education in the Learning Society</i> .
2004	Higher Education Act 2004

For national statistics, see the Annexe at the end of the report.

Websites

HEFCE: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

UK NARIC Diploma Supplement pages: <http://www.naric.org.uk/ds.asp>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA): <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW): <http://www.elwa.org.uk/elwaweb/elwa.aspx?pageid=458>

Department for Employment and Learning, Higher Education Branch: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index.cfm/area/information/page/HigherEducation>

Universities UK: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/>

Europe Unit: <http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/home/>

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