

# Bologna Explained

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# Why is Bologna important?

- International and European competition
- March 2009 UUK report - to maintain UK position, UK universities advised to implement all the Bologna process reforms and become "Bologna Compatible"
- Potential direct competitors: Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland
- Partnership and internationalisation

# Context

- 1986 Single European Act
- Free movement of goods, services, persons and capital
- 1992 Single European Market
- Worker/student mobility
- Mutual recognition of qualifications and training

# Bologna Process

- 1999 - 27 countries sign the Bologna Declaration
- Intergovernmental - not legally binding
- International peer pressure
- To date, 46 participating countries

# Key players

- Governments
- European Commission
- European Council
- UNESCO - CEPES
- HE institutions
- Students
- Staff
- Employers

# **Objectives:**

## **To Create a European Higher Education Area by 2010**

- Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees (see Diploma Supplement)
- Adoption of a system based on 3 main cycles:
  - 1. undergraduate (3 years) and
  - 2. postgraduate, leading to masters and
  - 3. doctoral

# Objectives continued

- Establishment of a system of credits - ECTS
- Promotion of mobility
- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
- Promotion of European dimension- curriculum development, inter institutional cooperation, mobility, integrated programmes, training and research

# ECTS Explained

- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme
- 60 ECTS credits = 120 UK credits
- First cycle - 180-240 ECTS credits (English 3 year undergraduate degree = 180)
- Second cycle (Masters) - 90-120 ECTS credits (a minimum of 60 must be at 2nd cycle level)
- Third cycle - no credit allocation

# ECTS - Issues

- Masters programmes
- Europe 2 year model, UK 1 year
- UK "lightweight degrees"?
- Reaching intensity - UK 15% less per week than in Europe
- Length of study- but Bologna not prescriptive on the length of the second cycle
- Educational market will decide
- Potential emergence of 5 year programmes

# ECTS - issues

- Debate: input/volume versus outcomes
- Dublin Descriptors 2004
- Tuning Project - European Commission - discipline specific approach of
  - 1. generic competences
  - 2. subject-specific competences
  - 3. the role of ECTS as an accumulation system
  - 4. the role of LTA and performance in relation to quality assurance and evaluation

# ECTS -issues

- Learning outcomes
- Quality assurance systems
- Does this provide equivalence?
- Why does it matter? - Trust, partnership, collaboration, EU funding, reputation - concept of "clusters" (Morgan and Lydon)

# Bologna compliance at Masters level

- National position difficult to achieve
- Imperial College London
- All Masters courses assigned ECTS value - 12 month courses accumulate 90 ECTS and the accepted range of hours/ECTS is 25-30

# Diploma Supplement

- Mobility tool - recognition instrument
- Berlin Communiqué 2003 - objective that every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement and free of charge
- No national record in UK
- Style, content and structures vary - few examples of good practice being shared

# Benefits for the students

- Enhanced mobility (2009 Leuven Communiqué calls for at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA to have had a period of study or training abroad by 2020)
- Employment profile
- Consolidates academic profile
- Free movement/upward mobility

# Benefits for the university

- Promotes employability of graduates
- Supports the students
- Enhances profile and attractiveness to students
- Reflects engagement with EU/International strategy
- Facilitates upward mobility and thus attractiveness to students
- Aids collaboration- e.g. joint degrees and partnership

# Challenges

- Raising awareness amongst staff and students
- Support from senior management
- Costs
- Software complications
- Compliance with template and methodology
- Production and authorisation of documentation
- Examples of good practice - Swansea University
- Kite mark label - so far not issued to any UK university

# Recent developments

## London 2007

- Register of HE quality assurance agencies
- Doctoral programmes
- Focus on European HE in a global context

## Leuven 2009

- Social dimension of HE and widening participation
- Life long learning and employability
- Internationalisation- joint degrees and mobility

- *"Internationalisation can by no means "run on autopilot". It needs to be actively and professionally promoted. Nor is internationalisation the "cherry on the cake" which can be left out when funds are scarce. It must become a core element of all university business and needs to be reflected in our daily actions and routines."*

Dieter Lenzon, President, Free University of Berlin, EUA Conference October 2009