Bologna Process

Responding to the post-2010 challenge

Simon Sweeney

This booklet is designed to identify challenges to and opportunities for UK higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It aims to:

— engage UK HEIs more actively in the spirit and application of the Bologna Process;
— identify ways in which UK HEIs might benefit from more active commitment to the Bologna Process;
— provide a basic understanding of the principles underlying the Bologna Process and the EHEA.

The Bologna Process presents challenges to UK higher education, several of which reflect issues of current debate. These include:

— the relationship between the Bologna Process and European politics;
— the global dimension of Bologna and implications for the international attractiveness and competitiveness of UK qualifications;
— Bologna and Doctoral studies, including prerequisites for entry to Doctoral-level programmes;
— the impact of Erasmus Mundus Doctoral programmes;
— curriculum reform and the European dimension;
— student mobility in all cycles;
— staff mobility;
— quality assurance, accreditation and ranking;
— transcripts, the proposed Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) and the Diploma Supplement;
— credits, workload, learning outcomes and 'fast-track', two-year, first-cycle degrees;
— integrated Master programmes – one- and/or two-year Master programmes;
— increased transparency on the comparative costs of UK higher education;
— the impact of more teaching through English in other EU countries;
— social inclusion.

Foreword

The Bologna Process is an important part of the landscape of European Higher Education. 2010 marks the formal establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and yet participation by UK HEIs remains limited. This seems curious for a higher education system that shares many of the values and principles upon which the EHEA is founded. This booklet offers an invaluable perspective from Simon Sweeney – a Bologna Expert and National Teaching Fellow who identifies challenges to and opportunities for UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Bologna Process and the EHEA. In sharing insights about the conceptual underpinning of Bologna, he outlines a range of different dimensions, and considers their potential impact on learning and teaching policy.

This Bologna briefing paper is written primarily for institutional senior managers such as vice-principals, pro-vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, registrars, deans, and national policy makers. The document is not intended to be exhaustive, nor could it be, but it aims to provide a better understanding of the benefits of the Bologna Process to all students in UK HE, and the value it offers UK universities.

The Higher Education Academy is very grateful to Simon Sweeney for producing this briefing paper, and we would like to express thanks also to John Reilly (Bologna Expert), and to the British Council.

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About the Author

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Simon is currently researching for a PhD on European Security and Defence Policy at Leeds University. He is the author of *Europe, the State and Globalisation* (Longman 2005) as well as a range of business and management English Language Teaching (ELT) books, mainly for Cambridge University Press. Before becoming a full time lecturer in 1995, he worked as a freelance language teacher, communications consultant, writer and translator.

Simon was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship by the Higher Education Academy in 2006.

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I would also like to thank colleagues past and present who serve or have served as Bologna Experts. I have learned much from all of you, and no doubt still have plenty to learn. I am especially grateful to John Reilly of the University of Kent for his deep knowledge of things Bologna, and for his acerbic criticism, wit and good humour. John kept a close eye on this document during its development, commenting on drafts, and prompting various improvements. He also contributed most of Chapter 5.

While I hope the opinions expressed are broadly shared by John and other Bologna Expert colleagues, there may be exceptions. As is customary, I declare that any mistakes or inaccuracies are solely my own.

Finally thanks to all those colleagues at universities around the UK who have invited me to talk about Bologna. I am always delighted to do this and await further calls, especially if you need clarification or further argument on what follows.

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University of York, November 2010
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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims of the document

This briefing paper is designed to identify challenges to and opportunities for UK higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The material consists of a basic text, plus further factual material supplied in numbered boxes, and additional annexes, mainly covering the mechanistic aspects of Bologna that may be already understood. These are included for reference if needed. The main text contains more complex and controversial opinion in the spirit of debate. The document urges full commitment to Bologna and its principles, highlighting the substantial advantages that this can bring to our universities.

A comprehensive list of agencies and sources for further information and practical assistance is included at the end.

This document aims to:

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— transcripts, the proposed Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) and the Diploma Supplement;
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— integrated Master programmes – one- and/or two-year Master programmes;
— increased transparency on the comparative costs of UK higher education;
— the impact of more teaching through English in other EU countries;
— social inclusion.

1.2 Key challenges facing UK universities

Higher education policy must be outward-facing, recognising that the sector has obligations that go far beyond the local and the national. **Education is a public good.** It must be of a quality and reputation that brings benefits to all. Policy making must take account of needs and trends not only in the EHEA, but also in other regions of the world. Climate change, economic and environmental sustainability, energy policy, security, war and peace, food security, health and hygiene, and the quality of governance are global issues that challenge the fundamental purpose of our universities. Bologna, far from being Eurocentric, embraces this perspective. For the UK to play an effective part, it is essential that there is full engagement with the Bologna Process, making it central and integral to every HEI internationalisation strategy.

In a difficult financial environment there is a tendency to turn inwards and construct institutional strategy and higher education policy in isolation without reference to what is happening elsewhere. Our vision must extend beyond the institutional and national to the wider European and global environment. We must embrace a **Bologna-integrated approach**.

It may be argued that the UK complies with key Bologna mechanisms and frameworks since we have already established:

— the three-cycle framework;
— quality assurance;
— awards based on credit accumulation and credits based on learning outcomes;
— articulation between UK qualification frameworks and the Bologna Qualification Framework of the European Higher Education Area;
— a commitment to lifelong learning.

However, is 'compliance' sufficient or is there a need to engage actively not only with the mechanisms but also with the spirit of Bologna? In important respects there

is a tendency in the UK to diverge from the norms and expectations of Bologna. The introduction of fast-track degrees, major increases in fees, differences in Master-level provision, reduced contact time, and access to Doctoral study directly from a first-cycle qualification raise important questions that may threaten the perceived international competitiveness of UK higher education.

Through 'membership' of the Bologna Process the UK is committed to promoting the European dimension and student and staff mobility. However, the UK lags significantly in the number of students engaging in some form of **mobility** as an accredited part of degree studies[1], and **monolingualism** is common.

The **Diploma Supplement** is still not available for graduates in a large number of UK HEIs[2]. UK credits are used in preference to ECTS, which is consequently frequently ignored or relegated to a brief note in course catalogues or websites. However, the strengths of the UK credit systems are in danger of being undermined through a **creeping credit dilution** with exceptions, 'condonement' and tolerated failure/compensation evident in institutional credit and degree regulations. The lack of transparency in these regulations makes it increasingly difficult to assert the primacy of achieving learning outcomes for the award of credit, and the accumulation of a required number of credits for the award of a qualification. Honours graduates may even find that their degree classification takes little account of performance in year one, and the application of a principle based on 'exit velocity' can mean that even second-year performance is of little account in determining degree classification.

If the **'fast-track', two-year Bachelor degree** becomes widely available it may be difficult to defend this, or to argue that it is Bologna compliant[3].

While **learning outcomes**, long established in the UK, are an integral part of

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1 See Becker *et al.* (2009), Carbonell (2010) and Findlay, King and Ahern (2010, forthcoming).

2 HEFCE report (2009) quoted in *Students studying abroad and the EHEA: Briefing for students' unions* (NUS 2009, p.35): http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/studentsabroad.pdf. In contrast, the Europe Unit report *Results of the 2009 UK HE Europe Unit survey on HEIs engagement in European HE developments – England and Northern Ireland* (2010) reported that 75% of 73 respondents (55% of the total of 132) in England and Northern Ireland declared that they were issuing the Diploma Supplement: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/resources/E-2010_02EuropeUnitSurveyResultsEnglandNorthernIreland.pdf.

3 See Curtis (2009).

the Bologna Process, **length of study** can be controversial. The one-calendar-year, full-time Masters and the four-year, integrated Masters are common in the UK but raise eyebrows elsewhere.

Further fees increases may provoke more strident protests over the number of **contact hours** in many disciplines[4]. Higher fees for as few as six or eight hours per week contact over a mere 22 weeks per year may be perceived as an increasingly poor deal[5]. The argument that fees cover access to online services, libraries and other facilities, occasional brief meetings with tutors, and above all a validated degree from a UK university begins to look less convincing. It is well known that formal contact time varies across disciplines, with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and training in the higher professions involving many more hours, while arts, social sciences and humanities courses offer considerably fewer. In these disciplines the deal seems to offer diminishing value for all students, both home, European and international. This may have an impact on the competitiveness of many of our universities.

1.3 What is the EHEA and what does it represent?

The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental process that seeks to establish a **European Higher Education Area** originally involving 29 European countries and now encompassing 47. The intention was that the EHEA would be established by 2010 and that the signatory countries would implement Action Lines to ensure mutual confidence and recognition, and to enhance the quality, attractiveness and compatibility of qualifications, as well as promote student and staff mobility throughout the EHEA.

The EHEA is intended to benefit a wide range of stakeholders and to contribute to the economic, social and political objectives of all partners in the process. It acknowledges the historical purpose of the European university to promote learning, research and shared understanding in a spirit of co-operation, while at the same time emphasising the central importance of the skills and competences that prepare graduates for the world of employment.

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4 See Attwood (2008).

5 However, this is a much more complex picture. See Gibbs (2010) for an evidence-based discussion of contact hours in HE, their impact, and what we know about their relationship to quality in HE.

Bologna is closely linked to the **economic objectives of the Lisbon Agenda** to boost the competitiveness, dynamism and knowledge base of the European economy[6]. Bologna also has a strong **social dimension**: it addresses lifelong learning, widening participation, as well as intercultural awareness and understanding.

Bologna celebrates the linguistic and **cultural diversity** of its 47 member countries through its commitment to student **mobility**, exchange and institutional partnerships. At Leuven in 2009 the Bologna signatories declared that: "mobility shall be the hallmark of the European Higher Education Area" and made a commitment that "by 2020, at least 20 per cent of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad". Success will depend upon building a 'culture of mobility' based on mutual recognition throughout the continent.

The Bologna Process has been an important driver of change and reform in European higher education, establishing the three-cycle framework, recognition of qualifications, transparency in quality assurance and credit-based systems based on learning outcomes. At the same time it has embraced a global perspective. The Bologna Process is influencing education worldwide, including Australia, Latin America, Japan, the United States and China[7]. The EHEA provides a quality benchmark for European universities in their appeal to worldwide markets and in their quest to find overseas partners.

This introduction has outlined some of the principles and controversies discussed in this document. There is no room for complacency. The clock is ticking.

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6 See European Council (2000).

7 See Zgaga (2006) and Crosier *et al.* (2007), whose report also refers to international interest in the Bologna/EHEA process.

2 Bologna Process: politics, ethos and principles

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the UK relationship with Bologna, signalling areas where the UK is close to compliance and highlighting areas where performance is less impressive. It identifies threats to the UK in appearing to be semi-detached from trends encouraged by the Bologna Process.

The chapter refers to political aspects of Bologna, emphasising that Bologna has government support in most of Europe and arguing that such support is fundamental to its success in the UK. It also refers to the ethos that underpins Bologna, which might be described as an ideology based on principles rooted in the liberal and secular traditions of the European university and the commitment to public funding.

Bologna goes beyond mere compliance with mechanistic processes, but instead requires a commitment to the social and political objectives of Bologna derived from the historical ethos of the European university.

2.2 The UK and the Bologna 'Action Lines'

The United Kingdom was involved at the beginning. The UK, France, Germany and Italy effectively launched the Bologna Process with the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998[8]. Since then, however, there has been a sense that the UK has been a reluctant partner adopting stances that range from the defensive to the dismissive, even at times aggressive. The UK has been anxious to demonstrate compliance, but it is difficult to identify enthusiasm or commitment. The key objective seems to have been to ensure that UK interests and ways of doing things are safeguarded. While this may be understandable and indeed could be argued to be an appropriate response, it has had an unfortunate impact on the attitude of HEIs, who might otherwise have been more enthusiastic. Four key but often neglected observations are:

1. Many aspects of the Bologna Process reflect accepted practice in the UK and in most UK HEIs.
2. UK HEIs have largely failed to use Bologna as a mark of good practice. This is an

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8 See Allegre *et al.* (1998).

opportunity lost as Bologna becomes better known internationally and offers a marketing benefit for UK universities.

3. UK universities do not appear to be promoting the benefits of Bologna to employers and students.
4. A defensive or dismissive approach to Bologna means that UK HEIs have been slow to respond in areas where they perform less well.

None of the above implies that there are not Bologna challenges in other countries and that UK HEIs do not encounter examples of gross non-compliance with the spirit and letter of Bologna. However, the UK position in response to such behaviour will be strengthened if there is a generally more positive engagement from the UK higher education sector.

Regarding the **Bologna Action Lines** and compliance by UK universities, a rough evaluation is as follows:

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
   — *In the main UK universities have been strong on this, but there may be confusion around entry or progression to the final year of first cycle, on accession to second cycle, and on second-cycle awards, in particular integrated Masters.*

2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles
   — *There is an established history of Bachelors/Masters, but the existence of integrated Masters blurs the distinction.*

3. Establishment of a system of credits
   — *A credit system and now a credit framework exist but the UK avoids using ECTS, and has a creeping tendency to tolerate module failure through 'condonement'.*

4. Promotion of mobility
   — *Most UK universities score badly on mobility.*

5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
   — *At national level this is strong.*

6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education
   — *This is difficult to assess but is likely to be weak.*

7. Lifelong learning (LLL)
   — *Most UK universities score strongly on LLL, with some institutions having a high percentage of 'mature' students.*

8. Higher education institutions and students
   — *Involvement of UK universities with the Bologna Process is patchy, and students know little or nothing about it.*

9. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area
   — *At university and national level, this is almost non-existent.*

10. Doctoral studies and synergy between the EHEA and ERA
    — *UK universities mostly score well on this, but there are important issues concerning the status of Doctoral candidates and collaborative degrees.*

An assessment of the UK's performance against the Action Lines suggests the following core areas in which the UK needs to strengthen its commitment to Bologna:

— commitment to the **European dimension** in Bologna (see Chapter 3);
— much stronger commitment to **mobility** of students and staff, more international partnerships and a stronger commitment to foreign language learning. This requires sustained effort to build a **culture of mobility** where periods of study abroad are the norm and foreign language study a natural component of higher education studies (see Chapter 3);
— **transition**: clarity in distinction between first and second cycle and the need to sustain the competitiveness of UK Master degrees; clarity in access requirements to Doctoral studies (see Chapter 4);
— adoption of **ECTS** as the benchmark credit, credit transfer and accumulation system, and inclusion of ECTS in the Diploma Supplement (see Chapter 5);
— promotion of the benefits of compliance with all aspects of the EHEA, securing of commitment by all universities and colleges to the Bologna Process, closer involvement of students in reinforcing the EHEA and the principles underpinning Bologna.

This is a substantial 'to-do' list which could allow the UK to take advantage of significant opportunities presented by the Bologna Process and the EHEA. The commitment required needs dedicated personnel and adequate funding. In straitened

economic circumstances this will not be easy, but commitment to Bologna could bring long-term benefits to the sector and ultimately strengthen UK universities in an increasingly global, competitive and demanding marketplace.

2.3 Bologna and European politics

The Bologna Process began as an intergovernmental initiative by the four largest European Union member states agreeing the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998. Building on a Council of Europe initiative the Sorbonne signatories prepared the ground for the wider European engagement that came a year later at the ministerial meeting in Bologna. The Bologna Declaration, including the commitment to build a European Higher Education Area, was taken up by the **European Commission**. Education for several decades had been considered a state-level rather than a European concern, and to a large extent it still is. The Bologna Process has no legal jurisdiction in the European Union as it is not bound by any EU treaty. As such, the groundwork on Bologna was established by ministers acting in their own national interests. Nevertheless those ministers agreed that their **national interests** would be served by international co-operation. The Bologna Process is a political initiative that depends upon co-operation to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Bologna has always had a political content, requiring policy initiatives that would develop co-operation and ultimately assist in building the EHEA. Once the Commission took on a guiding function and contributed (some) funding, the die was cast for the Bologna Process to become not only an intergovernmental initiative but a European one. Despite the important role of the Commission, the Bologna Declaration in 1999 was signed by 29 countries when the EU had only 15 member states. The Bologna Process has never been a closed shop; it has consistently welcomed new members up to the present 47.

The political content of Bologna includes:

- a commitment to policy making towards establishing, consolidating and developing the European Higher Education Area;
- government funding of public institutions that will facilitate engagement with the EHEA;
- co-operation with the European Commission in so far as this supports the EHEA;
- recognition that Bologna is a European initiative for the benefit of higher education throughout the European space;
- commitment to policies and practice that bring transparency and mutual recognition across and between HE sectors;
- association between the EHEA and the Lisbon Agenda, including the commitment to boost to research and thereby secure benefits to the competitiveness of the European economy.

Bologna, like the Single Market initiative of the 1980s, recognises that transparency and recognition bring comparison and competition, especially in the increasingly **global marketplace** that affects higher education.

The **research** dimension to Bologna, introduced as an Action Line in Berlin in 2003, links Bologna to the aims of the **Lisbon Agenda** to make Europe a competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. Partnerships between European universities, especially in research, are an integral part of this ambition, and ultimately the success of such research will feed into the **Single European Market** benefiting the European economy, competitiveness and employment.

The Bologna Process has **government support** across the continent. Much like any other sector, compliance with the precepts of Bologna, as well as sharing in the ethos of the initiative, brings goodwill and co-operation in other spheres. For the UK this is not a 'done deal' and may require particular effort because continental partners have become used to seeing the UK as – in Stephen George's (1998) immortal phrase – "an awkward partner".

In many respects this is unfair. The UK is a reliable partner in the Single Market having a good record on implementation and compliance. Furthermore, many of the mechanisms that are core to the Bologna Process are long established in the UK, including the three-cycle system, credit allocation, learning outcomes and quality assurance. However, there are risks in appearing to be a fringe player in some key tenets of Bologna. Warning signs exist, and policy makers and UK universities would be well advised to recognise these as the sector moves into a difficult economic environment with increasing competition in Europe and beyond.

The European Commission is not alone in promoting the EHEA. The **Council of Europe** also contributes to Bologna through its participation in the Bologna Follow-up Group. The Council of Europe was founded in 1949, predating the European Economic Community by almost a decade. It showed an interest in qualification frameworks as early as the mid-1990s. The Council of Europe has close ties to UNESCO and other international organisations including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, which it set up in Strasbourg in 1949 following agreement on the European Convention on Human Rights.

The links to the Council of Europe are part of the political dimension to Bologna. They indicate a shared ethos across several European bodies and beyond. These institutional partnerships contribute to the **soft power**[9] that underpins European

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9 See Nye (1960).

integration in its widest sense. A process like Bologna benefits from this association. Soft power is based on shared **values**, common ideals and a powerful spirit of co-operation in defence of human rights. By association as well as practice, the Bologna Process has a powerful reputation internationally and is widely seen as a force for good. It is to Europe's advantage that the values underpinning Bologna are shared by several institutions.

It is important to understand Bologna in this wider political context as it demonstrates the importance of full participation and commitment to its principles, ethos and practice. However, Bologna remains essentially intergovernmental and is based on co-operation: it is not part of any European Union treaty and so lacks legal force. Bologna is not an externally imposed set of rules. It is a system based on convergence towards a set of principles that can enable transparency and recognition and bring benefits to higher education across Europe as well as to the wider society.

The following section explores the ethos and principles underpinning the Bologna Process.

2.4 Bologna ethos and principles

It is fitting that the process carries the name Bologna, given that the Università degli Studi at Bologna is arguably the continent's oldest university, founded in 1088. The European university has always been a focus of research and a repository of knowledge. It has contributed to the cultural richness and diversity of Europe and it continues to inform and enrich the experience of European citizens from all countries. It is the aim of Europe's universities, and of the Bologna Process, to develop knowledge and learning across all subject areas in ways that are compatible with the core values of European societies. In the 21st century these include support for tolerance, diversity and human rights (HR) as reflected in the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and subsequent HR declarations such as the 1953 European Convention on Human Rights and the European Union's Fundamental Charter on HR agreed at Nice in 2000.

The Bologna Action Lines are not intended to create a straitjacket, nor do they seek to impose standardised practice across Europe. Bologna is not about homogenisation, it does not seek to make all HE systems the same. It supports **autonomy** and **flexibility**, but it promotes comparison and recognition through ease of articulation between different national frameworks, and the compatibility of those frameworks with the EHEA. Bologna supports the idea of autonomous institutions.

Bologna and European universities celebrate the **cultural and linguistic diversity** of the European continent, as well as a key principle of the European Union, that of **freedom of movement** of European citizens and workers throughout

the European Economic Area (EEA). Freedom of movement is facilitated by mutual **recognition of qualifications** awarded in different Bologna signatory states. Bologna reflects this central tenet of European integration through its promotion of mobility, qualifications frameworks and mutual recognition. In recent years Bologna has supplemented these efforts with a focus on graduate skills development, employability, accredited work placements and other links to industry.

While citizenship is not directly referred to in Bologna, the principle of global citizenship is widely shared in European universities and may be considered part of the European university ethos. A related element of the Bologna ethos is the importance of economic competitiveness coexisting with **environmental sustainability** and respect for the natural environment.

Bologna seeks to establish a co-operative environment in which the **European dimension** can flourish. The European dimension concerns the content of the curriculum and mobility in particular. The Bologna Process is less about building European citizens than it is about developing **citizenship** – a sense of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding among European peoples. Bologna holds that student **mobility** and hence interaction with students from other cultures, countries and language communities can build a sense of inclusiveness, and a shared perspective that this represents a public good. Such a notion is perhaps reflected in the idea articulated in 2009 by the Czech playwright and former President, Vaclav Havel, that "Europe is the homeland of our homelands"[10].

In the Bologna context mobility consists of any type of student or staff exchange, placement or study visit, whether for a short time or for a period of residence over a semester or a whole year. The Erasmus exchange programme normally requires a period of residence of at least one semester abroad. The Bologna Process supports periods of mobility as the best way to achieve genuine cultural and linguistic benefits, especially if they last at least six months.

A weakness of the Erasmus initiative observed in continental Europe is that as English becomes the established lingua franca and a common medium of instruction in many university departments, a smaller proportion of European undergraduates have two foreign languages than was the case ten or 20 years ago. This threatens to reduce participation in Erasmus exchanges between France, Italy, Spain and Germany.

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10 Havel, V. (2009) See www.europarl.europa.eu/eng-internet-publisher/eplive/archive/multimediaav_page/default.do?reference=20091217MAV66659&language=en and www.euronews.net/2009/11/11/havel-s-democracy-speech-wins-warm-ep-ovation/.

The majority of UK students on Erasmus exchanges are language undergraduates visiting the home country of their chosen language. Many other exchange students are not primarily language students, but have the opportunity to improve their foreign language skills as part of their degree experience. It is fundamental to Bologna that learning foreign languages is a desirable and culturally enriching benefit, so where possible studies undertaken as part of an Erasmus exchange should be conducted through the medium of a foreign language.

In the UK the Bologna Process attracts the attention of **Eurosceptic interests** who see the attempt to build linguistic and cultural bridges between the UK and other European countries as the politicisation of education, or even as a form of indoctrination by the European Commission, especially since the Commission allocates funds to support the Erasmus exchange programme. This reaction is in part spurred by the fact that education lay outside the remit of the European Economic Community and therefore had a minor role in the economic foundations of the Single Market. Education, it is claimed, should be left to the nation states and the Union should not meddle in such matters. However, education, like much else that might (for some) appear to be beyond the remit of a single market, has increasingly attracted the attention of various institutions at the European level, and not just those traditionally dominated by state interests.

Nowadays no EU institution is dominated by purely state interests: over time there has been much blurring of the distinction between state and European interests. Bologna is arguably a response to this increasing crossover between the two. Nevertheless it is worth reiterating that the early moves towards building a qualifications framework and a European space in higher education had nothing to do with the European Union.

A significant aspect of the Bologna ethos finds expression through what can be described as its **European dimension**. This receives too little attention in UK universities. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation.

2.5 Conclusion

The Bologna Process is neither a set of rules nor a straitjacket. It is a framework designed to enable effective co-operation on the basis of transparency and mutual recognition. It is important that both government and senior officers in universities and colleges appreciate the political support for Bologna throughout Europe, and engage fully with the ethos and principles that underpin the endeavour.

3 European dimension in higher education

3.1 Introduction

The European dimension is an aspect of Bologna that is poorly articulated and not well understood, but is nevertheless important. Indeed the Bologna Process is predicated on the idea of promoting, highlighting and consolidating the **European dimension** in students' higher education experience. It is one of the original 'Action Lines' and relates to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

The concept of the **European dimension** in **curricular development** will be explored in this section in conjunction with student (and staff) mobility, which is central to the Bologna Process.

3.2 The European dimension: implications for the curriculum

In promoting excellence in teaching, learning and research in European universities, Bologna is also addressing the **Lisbon Agenda** to strengthen the European economy. The realisation of the Bologna and Lisbon agendas depends on the capacity of European universities to develop graduates with high level knowledge, understanding, communication skills and competences in analytical skill, i.e. graduates who are thus able to contribute to a knowledge-based economy, and ensure that Europe is globally competitive.

Bologna links these economic imperatives with sustainable **societal benefits**. It is underpinned by the notion that learning is a public good, and that society will benefit from the knowledge, understanding and skills gained by growing numbers of suitably trained graduates. Bologna promotes the European dimension through mobility, student and staff exchanges, institutional co-operation, and explicit awareness and celebration of Europe's diversity and cultural heritage.

How can the European dimension be expressed through the curriculum? **Learning about Europe** is a key element of the **European dimension** and in many areas necessitates curriculum modifications. A number of strategies may be pursued, depending upon the discipline involved:

— **Modules with a European content**, referring to the **culture**, history and development of Europe incorporated into humanities and social sciences degrees with a comparative and/or historical approach.

— A focus on the relevance of Europe to the discipline in fields such as science and engineering, e.g. in relation to professional requirements and recognition, the practice of the subject, history, economy, nature of employment, sustainability and business opportunities, as well as the economic and social implications of the **Single European Market**.
— Active engagement with professional organisations in other European countries, raising awareness of **research** opportunities, opportunities for partnerships and co-operation, including such with industries and businesses.
— **Foreign language study*** as an integral part of any first-, second- or third-cycle degree programme, reinforced by a *Languages for All* strategy.
— **Erasmus Student Exchange opportunities***, fully accredited, integrated into degree programmes on the basis of partnerships between universities holding the Erasmus Charter.
— Full **support for students** including preparation, orientation, monitoring, and language tuition and study abroad skills for all students on exchange programmes, with dedicated support to all students while abroad.
— **Work placement*** opportunities that offer cultural, language and employment experience, enhancing skills and employability.
— Encouragement of **study visits abroad***, participation in student-led symposia, conferences and other similar links using established partnerships.
— Hosting **student seminars** for visitors from partner universities and colleges abroad.
— **Student participation** in international conferences and events, including virtual seminars, webinars, e-learning and e-networking with European partners.
— **Joint degrees/joint awards*** or participation in consortia with modules studied under the auspices of different institutions, including physical and/or virtual mobility.
— **Virtual mobility*** – the provision of e-learning opportunities involving curriculum content relating to the European dimension, links to institutions and students in other universities, shared learning experiences and other computer-assisted learning.

*See *next section (3.3) The European dimension and mobility.*

All the above contribute to the European dimension, but its implementation requires explicit support from the highest level to ensure that it becomes integrated and embedded in the culture of the institution, clearly articulated in a European strategy. **Curriculum reform** to incorporate the European dimension must include

full recognition of study abroad activities, accredited work placements and modules with a specific European content. Institutional support also means the provision of dedicated resources to support the European dimension.

3.3 The European dimension and mobility

Mobility is central to the Bologna Process and presents a challenge to UK HEIs. **The Leuven Communiqué** 2009 declared that "mobility shall be the hallmark of the European Higher Education Area" and agreed that "in 2020 at least twenty per cent of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad". This is known as the Leuven 20/2020 target[11].

In order to achieve this target it is vital to establish a **culture of mobility**, in which a study abroad experience and/or a work placement abroad becomes the norm. Successful creation of a mobility culture is necessary in order to counter the tendency towards an inward looking and insular mentality among a substantial proportion of the home student population, in contrast to the increasingly diverse and international context in which their careers may unfold, given the wider trends in the global economy and its impact on the local environment. An essential first step is to promote the benefits of mobility.

The **benefits of mobility for students** are numerous:

- language learning opportunities;
- cultural enrichment through the opportunity to observe and experience another culture and study environment at first hand over an extended period;
- extending friendships and networks;
- learning about another country's history and experience;
- for a work placement, another working environment.

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11 See *Leuven Communiqué* (Conference of European Ministers responsible for higher education 2009), available from the UK Europe Unit at: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/bologna_process/decision_making/leuven_louvain_la_neuve_2009.cfm.

There is evidence that study abroad and/or work placement brings other benefits to students, including a better degree classification, improved key skill competences, enhanced confidence and potentially also better employment prospects, as employers look favourably on graduates with what is perceived to be added value in relation to potential recruitment[12].

Mobility also provides **institutional benefits** such as:

— enhanced attractiveness of the university, adding value to the university brand and reputation;
— strengthening international institutional partnerships;
— building collaborative research opportunities;
— internationalising staff experience – a key element in staff professional development;
— integration with European educational and professional communities and networking;
— combating institutional and particularly departmental insularity.

Mobility is not confined to European Commission-sponsored Erasmus student and staff exchanges or work placements conducted with Erasmus support. Nevertheless, UK engagement with the Erasmus programme is disappointing, with only 10,843 participating in the Erasmus scheme in 2008/09, less than half the number in France, Germany or Spain[13]. This represents a slight increase on the figure of 10,251 for the previous year. UK Erasmus students are disproportionately but unsurprisingly language students (4,920, about half the 2007/08 total) with the next strongest representation being from Business Studies (1,414) and in particular International Business, often with an integral language component in the degree. This means that only about 30% of Erasmus students from the UK are studying other disciplines[14].

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12 See *Students studying abroad and the EHEA: Briefing for students' unions* (NUS 2009, p.7): http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/studentsabroad.pdf.

13 UK figures for 2008/09 from UK Erasmus at British Council: www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus-facts-and-figures.htm.

14 Discipline numbers from *Students studying abroad and the EHEA: Briefing for students' unions* (NUS 2009, p.7).

The UK faces specific difficulties in promoting **student mobility**. Among the reported barriers are:

— decline in language studies;
— cultural inertia, lack of interest in languages (lazy assumption that 'everyone speaks English');
— absence of institutional strategic commitment, aversion to incurring costs in setting up and managing exchange links, or managing incoming students;
— lack of interest at departmental level and inflexible curricula; difficulty matching study abroad to home modules, especially where 'long thin' modules are interrupted half way to allow a semester abroad;
— student perceptions of added costs;
— part-time students with external or family commitments; part-time employed students reluctant to give up jobs;
— placements: difficulty in getting students with little or no foreign language skills to pass interviews and gain sufficient foreign language competence;
— placement employers' reluctance to undertake perceived costs, risks and responsibilities.

Combating these perceptions and dealing with impediments to a culture of mobility requires institutional commitment and powerful promotion, so that mobility becomes the norm. The benefits of mobility need to be articulated in mission statements and in a European strategy. Mobility opportunities need to be well advertised at open days, in 'welcome weeks', and in early contact with new students. Mobility needs a continual profile and should involve the local Students' Union and returning students, who are the best advocates of mobility.

Erasmus needs to be underpinned by **free language learning opportunities**, ideally under a *Languages for All* initiative[15]. This requires a dedicated unit serving all students and staff offering a range of languages. Language modules should be allocated credits whether or not they contribute to the student's final award. Achievement in foreign language study can be recognised in Europass documentation.

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15 See that provided by Department of Modern Languages, University of York: www.york.ac.uk/admin/uao/ugrad/studying/lfa.htm; see also University of Bath as a further example of good practice: www.bath.ac.uk/flc.

Universities should ensure that students are actively involved in initiatives to promote mobility, particularly returning students who have already benefited from study abroad and work placement opportunities. It would be helpful to establish an **Erasmus Society** to promote study abroad and placements, and work in conjunction with the **International Office** in servicing the needs of foreign students. The Society could be a focal point for networking, and include among its members incoming and outgoing students (past, present and future), as well as staff who have been involved in staff exchanges.

Full commitment to building a mobility culture should encompass efforts to set up **joint degrees** with partner universities abroad. This would facilitate extended study abroad on a 50/50 basis with joint awards at the end of the programme. Mobility should also become an established part of all three cycles – at present in most disciplines mobility only features formally in Bachelor degrees.

Mobility may take many forms, and is not limited to Erasmus-sponsored semesters in Europe. Different disciplines may lend themselves to different types of mobility, including short-term sojourns to partner universities through joint initiatives, sharing of modules or units within modules. These might be termed '**mobility windows**' – the incorporation of which requires a flexible and innovative approach to **curriculum reform** in all disciplines.

Mobility may also entail **virtual mobility**. The increasing provision of computer-assisted learning should be used to harness e-learning potential in relation to the European dimension, which may in some ways compensate for some barriers to mobility for some students. See reference to virtual mobility in previous section.

The following is a list of **20 actions for Leuven 20/2020** beginning with 14 institutional policy initiatives and concluding with six practical steps concerning the student experience around mobility:

1. Establish a European strategy as part of an internationalisation strategy.
2. Establish full and explicit institutional backing and support for mobility, with dedicated staff/offices.
3. Promote and ensure Bologna compliance across the institution, including use of Europass and the Diploma Supplement.
4. Consolidate the European dimension and establish short and long mobility windows in the context of curriculum reform.
5. Make study abroad or placements compulsory in some programmes.
6. Provide a free and comprehensive *Languages for All* programme with full accreditation of language modules where possible.

7. Develop work placement and/or student exchange programmes.
8. Establish the European dimension in all three cycles.
9. Establish joint programmes and joint awards with partner universities abroad.
10. Promote and facilitate staff mobility within staff development programmes.
11. Expand co-operation in research and scholarship with European universities.
12. Develop partner networks with industry and link mobility to the promotion of employability.
13. Provide sufficient funding to support all aspects of the European dimension and mobility.
14. Commit to publicity for mobility opportunities through open days, prospectus, university website, faculty and departmental promotion of language study.
15. Involve students and Students' Union in all aspects of mobility including student support, and the promotion of mobility.
16. Ensure pre-placement cultural preparation, language learning, orientation and mentoring.
17. Ensure virtual learning environment, e-support, online discussion boards, to support outgoing students throughout stay abroad, and to support virtual mobility for students who remain 'at home'.
18. Engage former Erasmus students as mentors to outgoing students and ensure effective debriefing for returning students.
19. Ensure quality record keeping and reporting.
20. Organise events for international students/returning Erasmus students through an Erasmus Society linked to the International Office and Students' Union.

Some of the best advocates of mobility are the students returning from Erasmus exchanges. Their enthusiasm encapsulates many of the benefits of the Bologna Process. Students are often nervous and unconvinced before undertaking an exchange, but fulsome in their positive evaluation of the experience on return. Erasmus Study Abroad has a 90% approval rating[16].

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16 See *International student mobility* report by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex and the Centre for Applied Population Research, University of Dundee (2004): www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04%5F30.

3.4 Conclusion

A commitment to mobility and the European dimension requires curriculum reform and the construction of a permanent **mobility culture** in all universities and colleges.

It should be a condition of validation that programmes reflect both the European dimension and opportunities for mobility. Such an ambitious objective requires the total backing of university and college executives.

There should be a clear commitment to the principles and practice of the Bologna Process, including the promotion of mobility and of the European dimension. Such a commitment will raise the profile of Bologna and bring marketing benefits and other advantages to UK universities and colleges, as well as substantially enhance the student experience.

4 Qualification frameworks, the three-cycle system and the UK position

4.1 Introduction

The key Bologna instruments highlighted in this chapter concern qualification frameworks. Bologna seeks articulation and compatibility between the following:

— A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA;
— the three-cycle system (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral studies);
— the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning;
— national qualifications.

In the United Kingdom qualification frameworks – constructed on the basis of three cycles, quality assurance, credit-bearing modules and learning outcomes – are well understood. Nevertheless there are significant ways in which the UK could more rigorously adopt Bologna instruments and avoid ambiguities and incompatibility with the implications of Bologna.

It is important to appreciate that there are two European Qualification Frameworks. The Bologna framework for the whole of the EHEA, known as **A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA**, is solely concerned with higher education[17]. It was endorsed by ministers in Bergen in 2005. The second framework is the **European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)**, adopted as a Recommendation by the European Parliament in 2008[18]. This applies only to European Union member states. Both are overarching frameworks designed to provide a set of common reference points for national qualification frameworks. Strictly speaking, the EHEA framework for higher education is 'Bologna', but EU countries cannot ignore the EQF.

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17 www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf

18 www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/eqf/broch_en.pdf

4.2 Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA

This section provides a brief summary of the background to the Bologna Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA and may be omitted by those who prefer to read about the challenges facing UK HEIs in relation to the three-cycle framework (section 4.3).

UK universities need to be aware of the articulation between the Bologna Framework, which is based on the three-cycle structure, and the EQF. At the Bergen meeting in 2005, ministers adopted the following resolution:

> *We adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. We commit ourselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007*[19].

The purpose of the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA is to consolidate **recognition and ease of comparison** between qualifications. In setting a target for all national frameworks to be compatible with the overarching framework, Bergen stressed the need for a **focus on learning outcomes and competences** achieved by the end of a period of study. This would show not only what a graduate should know, but also the skills and competences gained during the period of study.

The London meeting in 2007 recognised progress since Bergen and stressed the benefits of the overarching framework but emphasised that more still had to be achieved:

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19 *Bergen Communiqué* (Conference of the European Ministers responsible for higher education 2005), available from the UK Europe Unit: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/bologna_process/decision_making/bergen_2005.cfm.

Qualifications frameworks are important instruments in achieving comparability and transparency within the EHEA and facilitating the movement of learners within, as well as between, higher education systems. They should also help HEIs to develop modules and study programmes based on learning outcomes and credits, and improve the recognition of qualifications as well as all forms of prior learning[20].

This demonstrates convergence between Bologna and practice in the UK. It underlines the intention of the overarching framework to assist comparison between different systems, to show the point on the framework where a particular course of study or award is located and to provide orientation and guidance on the nature of the award. It also offers guidance on appropriate directions for further studies. Bologna tolerates flexibility, but the UK must not undermine its position by adopting a loose interpretation of both the Bologna framework and the credits required for progression between levels and between cycles.

The Bologna Process website stresses that the overarching framework is designed to provide transparency within a system that is marked by diversity – in other words while national qualification frameworks are highly diverse they should accommodate the overarching framework to facilitate understanding, transparency and comparison. A common feature should be the use of credits linked to learning outcomes.

A characteristic of Bologna is the interplay between different instruments and Action Lines. It is significant that the London Communiqué states:

We emphasize that qualification frameworks should be designed so as to encourage greater mobility of students and teachers and improve employability[21].

This highlights the view that the framework can assist mobility and employability, both of which are central to the social dynamic of Bologna.

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20 *London Communiqué* (Conference of the European Ministers responsible for higher education 2007), available from the UK Europe Unit: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/bologna_process/decision_making/london_2007.cfm and http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100202100434/dcsf.gov.uk/londonbologna/uploads/documents/londoncommuniquefinalwithlondonlogo.pdf .

21 Ibid.

4.3 Three-cycle framework and the UK

The 'Bologna' three-cycle framework – Bachelor, Master and Doctoral studies – corresponds well with the UK degree structure although questions have been raised about the UK Master level.

The Bologna assumption is that the first cycle consists of three or four years of full-time study (Bachelor), the second cycle one to two years (Master), and the third cycle (Doctoral studies) three years. This results in a typical 3 + 2 + 3 framework, although there is significant variation given the flexibility of Bologna, and scope for national and institutional autonomy. The UK has its own variations in the three-cycle structure. The three-year Bachelor degree is the norm in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (notwithstanding many institutions offering four-year first-cycle courses), but in Scotland the Honours first-cycle degree involves four years. Most but by no means all UK second-cycle degrees take place over one calendar year.

As more students undertake part-time employment to fund their degree the meaning of 'full-time study' is open to interpretation. At the same time credit regulations have become more permissive in respect of **transition** from one level to another inside the first cycle; this raises questions about the possibility in practice to obtain a UK award without the requisite 360 UK (180 ECTS) credits.

Another area of concern is **progression from one cycle to another**. Bologna seems to suggest that a first-cycle qualification is a prerequisite for admission to a second-cycle Master programme, and that completion of the second cycle is a requirement for commencing Doctoral studies. This is not a legal requirement and the EHEA framework and the Lisbon Convention on academic recognition make it clear that holding a qualification at the required level simply makes a student eligible for admission, and HEIs may in fact apply their own selection criteria. However, many Bologna countries have legislated to prescribe the Bologna structure meaning that for them the qualifications are de facto requirements for entry to the next level. As the Diploma Supplement gives increasing transparency to qualifications, graduates from HEIs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who have not progressed through each of the levels may find it difficult to gain acceptance of their qualifications or to be admitted to study in other EHEA countries if they do not meet the requirements of their qualification frameworks.

While the UK has sought to demonstrate that UK integrated Masters degrees are Bologna compliant, it remains ambiguous whether such a degree is first or second cycle. The **four-year, integrated Masters** typically involves a four-year programme with a M-level award at the end on the basis of a minimum of 120 UK credits at M-level

(normally in the final year). Candidates are not usually awarded a first-cycle qualification[22]. The 120 M-level UK credits (equivalent to 60 ECTS), while meeting the EHEA framework minimum requirement of between 90 and 120 ECTS credits *with a minimum of 60 at second-cycle level* is at the low end of general practice in the EU where the norm is two academic years of study with 120 ECTS (240 UK) credits for a second-cycle award[23].

The UK position on integrated Masters programmes is neither unacceptable nor unique, and **one-year Master** courses may sometimes extend beyond a calendar year. A Master programme is usually a demanding and intensive year of full-time study with learning outcomes matched to the appropriate M level, but the perception remains that the workload and credit allocation are lower than is the case elsewhere. The risk is that employers, universities and public authorities in other European countries will focus on the duration of study and the number of credits, and consider the UK second cycle as not equivalent. As long as students continue to opt for one calendar year Masters it may be argued that there is no need to act differently, but the market may be affected if international comparisons of workload and credit arrangements suggest that UK qualifications are 'worth less' than a two academic year/120 ECTS (240 UK) credits alternative. The availability of the Higher Education Achievement Record, incorporating the Diploma Supplement, will make these differences more obvious[24].

A further matter of potential controversy involves taking on **Doctoral candidates** immediately after successful completion of the first cycle. This may be

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22 *Results of the 2009 UK HE Europe Unit Survey on HEIs' engagement in European HE developments – England and Northern Ireland* (Europe Unit 2010) reported that 83% of those England and Northern Ireland HEIs delivering integrated Masters programmes did not award a Bachelors certificate at the end of three years, but only the Masters-level award on completion of the programme: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/resources/E-2010_02EuropeUnitSurveyResutlsEnglandNorthernIreland.pdf. This is in spite of Europe Unit advice in 2005 that to do so would enhance recognition of the M-level award: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/resources/E-05-12.doc.

23 According to the 2009 Europe Unit Survey (2010), three responding HEIs in England and Northern Ireland did not even award the minimum 60 ECTS at M level: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/resources/E-2010_02EuropeUnitSurveyResutlsEnglandNorthernIreland.pdf.

24 Europe Unit (2004) *Masters Degrees and the Bologna Process* gives an excellent overview of the issues relating to one-year Master degrees and Bologna: www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/E-04-17.pdf.

interpreted in the UK as an example of institutional autonomy in admissions, but from a Bologna perspective it looks questionable, as the norm is for Doctoral candidates to have completed a second-cycle programme[25].

Universities may apply the principle of accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) to candidates for Doctoral studies, which may be easier to defend than progression directly from Bachelors to Doctoral programme if the experience involved in the APEL judgement clearly demonstrates a candidate's suitability for Doctoral studies.

4.4 Joint awards, Erasmus Mundus and Doctoral studies

The Council of Europe has long taken a close interest in **joint degrees**, and called for positive legislation to support joint awards in all three cycles, as well as flexibility from awarding bodies that insist on at least half the programme of study being conducted in their institution, a situation immediately problematic if more than two institutions are involved or the division of content is not 50/50[26].

A seminar on joint degrees within the framework of the Bologna Process held in Stockholm in May 2002 produced a detailed list of the key characteristics for joint awards. These are included in Box 9 in the Quick reference section.

The Berlin Ministerial Summit in 2003 noted that:

> *(I)nitiatives have been taken by Higher Education Institutions in various European countries to pool their academic resources and cultural traditions in order to promote the development of integrated study programmes and joint degrees at first, second and third level*[27].

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25 Bologna applies a 'light touch' in respect of Doctoral-level qualifications, but flexibility in this area may mean that UK practice can appear to run counter to usual practice elsewhere. See, however: www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna_process/uk_policy_positions/uk_position_on_doctoral_qualifications.cfm.

26 See *Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees* adopted by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region on 9 June 2004: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=836481&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75.

27 *Berlin Communiqué* (Conference of European Ministers responsible for higher education 2003), available from the UK Europe Unit: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/bologna_process/decision_making/prague_2001_and_berlin_2003.cfm.

The summit furthermore underlined the significance of this in relation to the **European dimension**:

> *Moreover, [ministers] stress the necessity of ensuring a substantial period of study abroad in joint degree programmes as well as proper provision for linguistic diversity and language learning, so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability*[28].

As joint awards become more common and Erasmus Mundus builds on its impressive start in developing a positive internationalisation of HE, universities that do not commit to these developments are likely to find themselves significantly disadvantaged[29].

The UK has been active in developing **doctoral programmes**, and Research Councils have become increasingly prescriptive in their requirements for high level training in generic and subject-specific skills. There is a growing appreciation of the need for more collaboration between centres of excellence in the training of doctoral students. The London and Leuven Communiqués emphasised the need for more European/international collaboration in doctoral programmes, including mobility opportunities. Indeed it has been argued that it should be a requirement for a doctoral candidate to have been mobile for part of their doctorate. While some UK HEIs have been enthusiastic about the 'co-tutelle'/ joint supervision model for doctoral students, others have rejected the idea or have found that their regulations do not permit it. In general, **doctoral student mobility** has not been a strategic objective for UK universities, either in research or international strategies.

Erasmus Mundus doctoral programmes present fresh challenges. Mobility is a specific requirement of **Erasmus Mundus**, a hallmark of which is **joint or multiple awards** involving international partnerships between European universities and others in third countries[30]. Joint or multiple awards require appropriate enabling regulations and satisfaction

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28 Ibid.

29 See *Bergen Communiqué* (Conference of European Ministers responsible for higher education 2005), available from the UK Europe Unit: www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/bologna_process/decision_making/bergen_2005.cfm.

30 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/programme/about_erasmus_mundus_en.php

of the QAA Code of practice relating to collaborative programmes[31]. It seems likely that the Erasmus Mundus model will become the effective European benchmark for collaborative doctoral programmes and institutional recognition as European 'centres of excellence' by the European Commission. In time UK HEIs will need to show that they too can satisfy the criteria. It seems certain that the impetus of the Erasmus Mundus programme will accelerate the development of many more European and international joint doctoral programmes.

A further challenge posed by Erasmus Mundus and the European Charter for Researchers is the **status of Doctoral candidates**. Employment of doctoral candidates is becoming the norm in many countries in the EU and is strongly supported by the European Commission. Erasmus Mundus effectively requires that doctoral candidates should be employed and hence given staff status, whereas they normally have student status in the UK. Making employment status the norm would have serious legal and financial implications for the UK, particularly in the context of the aim to increase the number of UK and international doctoral candidates. It is not clear what attitude the Research Councils and individual HEIs will adopt over this. The view of the European Commission is that a number of UK HEIs in the first round of Erasmus Mundus doctoral programmes have been able to grant employment status to their doctoral candidates, and hence there is no legal impediment and no reason why all UK institutions should not do so. If the sector does not engage actively with the issue, it will find that by default the European Commission has dictated a radical change of policy and practice for the UK.

4.5 Conclusion

Formally the UK complies with both European qualification frameworks. However, the fact that other countries are tending to implement more prescriptive national frameworks begins to highlight important variances that may present worries for UK HEIs.

A highly flexible interpretation of three-cycle system, both within and between the cycles, may leave the UK vulnerable to criticism and lead to a loss of competitive advantage, especially if fees continue to rise. In the short term, UK universities may continue to benefit from their established reputation. They may also benefit from the popularity of the UK as a student destination, the status and widespread use of English as an international language, and even the decline in the value of sterling. However, these advantages may be limited to a few highly ranked universities and even these may be adversely affected if prospective students, and those from overseas in particular, choose to look elsewhere for value.

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31 See *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review* (QAA 2006): www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section7/programmedesign.pdf.

5 Quality assurance, ECTS and the Diploma Supplement: more issues for the UK

5.1 Introduction

This chapter first considers how the development of quality assurance through the Bologna Process raises questions for the UK. The increasing international emphasis on quality assurance and enhancement particularly in the EHEA will require the UK to continue to be actively engaged in all the arenas in which the topic is debated and policy and standards are developed.

Secondly the chapter looks at ECTS and the concerns already referred to in the section on the three-cycle system (4.3).

The final part makes the case for universal implementation of the Diploma Supplement.

5.2 Quality assurance

Starting with the Sorbonne Declaration quality has always been a prominent aspect of the Bologna Process. It is evident that if the European Higher Education Area is to be attractive for students and staff – not only in the EHEA but from outside – there must be confidence in the quality of its qualifications. The early rhetoric has been followed by tangible results and an increasing emphasis on the need to implement a quality regime.

The key European document is the **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in the European Higher Education Area**[32], which provides the framework for quality assurance and enhancement at institutional level and at national level, including the quality assurance of national agencies.

Hand-in-hand with the approval of the Standards and Guidelines is a commitment to establish national quality assurance agencies and a European register of national quality assurance agencies that meet specified standards.

The European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA) continues to be active in collaboration with the European Commission, European Universities Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students' Union (ESU) in developing the quality agenda. Together these bodies founded the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). Currently 17 agencies have been admitted to the EQAR. The UK QAA has decided not to apply for inclusion on the Register.

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32 www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso

The European Commission considers that in future HEIs should be able to apply for a quality review, not only to their national agency, but to any agency on the EQAR. Indeed the European Commission has become increasingly active in the quality field, issuing a Quality Code of Practice for Researchers integral to the Erasmus Mundus Doctoral programme and a Code of Practice for Quality in Mobility[33]. The Commission has recently reviewed developments in the field of quality throughout EU higher education.

From a UK perspective it may be argued that the established nature of the UK QAA, its benchmarking and codes of practice, mean that the UK can take a benevolent, if not detached, view of developments in the EU. On the other hand the acceleration in quality activity offers potential benefits in relation to integrated joint or collaborative programmes since the basic quality criteria are now explicit and shared. At the same time, the focus on quality ensures that real standards and achievements in each cycle become increasingly transparent. One illustration of this is the concern being expressed about the workload expected in many institutions and in many subject areas in the UK.

Perhaps a more significant point regarding the spotlight on quality is the fact that UK universities are not required to undergo any national accreditation of their degrees, although in some subject areas professional bodies exercise considerable influence over the curriculum.

The jealously guarded right of UK universities to validate and award their own degrees, in contrast to most of the rest of Europe, where there are demanding regional and/or national accreditation processes, means that UK institutions need to be even more open and transparent about the rigour with which they develop, accredit and review their degree programmes[34].

5.3 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation (ECTS)

ECTS is now the effective credit system incorporated in national legislation in many countries. It is a requirement in Erasmus Mundus and other European programmes.

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33 See *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* (QAA 2004): www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section2/collab2004.pdf.

34 Bologna supports greater institutional autonomy. *The Trends V* report refers to institutions with higher levels of autonomy having the best and most systematic instruments of quality assurance. Institutional autonomy is not threatened by the Bologna reforms. See Crosier *et al.* (2007).

The UK can argue that the UK system in Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland is compatible with ECTS although it uses 120 rather than 60 credits. However, the increased use of ECTS does raise a number of issues for the UK apart from the difference in the number of credits allocated.

The most recent European Commission ECTS Users' Guide[35] reflects the European commitment to the award of credits for the achievement of **learning outcomes**. However, it continues to reflect on the **workload** associated with the achievement of these credits, which is formally considerably higher than the stated workload in the UK. All the relevant UK publications on credits suggest that for an academic year the normal student workload is calculated to be 1,200 hours whereas in the rest of Europe it is stated to be significantly higher.

However much it may be argued that neither of these statements reflects the reality, they are very much in the public domain and will be increasingly presented in the international context. This will portray the UK as lagging behind its partners and competitors in the rest of the EU and, indeed, in other countries in the EHEA. Furthermore, a credit system and the associated transcript and Diploma Supplement make it transparent that UK HEIs are willing, through the process of **compensation** and '**condonement**', to award degrees to students *who have not achieved the requisite number of credits*. Both of these (compensation and 'condonement') could be argued to be at odds with the UK emphasis on and commitment to the achievement of learning outcomes for the award of credits, and the requirement that for the award of a degree the relevant number of credits must be achieved. Credits cannot justifiably be awarded if the learning outcomes have not been achieved.

In spite of their stated commitment to internationalisation, particularly in the recruitment of students from the rest of Europe and the global market, UK institutions typically fail to show ECTS credits alongside UK credits in course catalogues and transcripts. This is not helpful for students who come to the UK from other parts of Europe for part or all of their degree. Moreover, for UK graduates wishing to secure recognition of their qualifications, the lack of ECTS credits on transcripts and Diploma Supplements is at least inconvenient and can be damaging.

While the new ECTS Users' Guide is silent on the issue of the number of credits for a full calendar year, this problem has not gone away at the second-cycle level. The UK has consistently maintained that a full calendar year Masters carrying 180 UK credits is *ipso facto* worth 90 ECTS credits. Unfortunately many partners continue to

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35 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

dispute this and national recognition centres cannot fail to draw attention to the fact that fewer credits are being required and awarded for UK Masters degrees.

While a recent EUA study indicates considerable diversity in the number of credits awarded for a second cycle, and in the duration of such programmes, it recognises that most Master degrees lasted two years and awarded 120 ECTS credits[36]. Only in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is the preferred model a three-year undergraduate degree followed by a one-year Masters (3+1); three countries used 4+1, five used 4+2, and 13 used 3+2. A further detailed study cited in the EUA Report highlights the variety found within Bulgaria (one and a half years the most common), France (3+2), the Netherlands (variable between one- and two-year Masters), and Germany, where 71% of second-cycle programmes are two years. The majority of the flagship **Erasmus Mundus** Master programmes, including those with UK partners, are two-year 120 credit programmes.

As long as the international market continues to accept the UK one-calendar-year 180 UK (90 ECTS) credits there may be little to fear. However, the increased transparency provided by a credit system, transcripts and the HEAR/Diploma Supplement, will inevitably raise questions as to whether the UK 90 (ECTS) credit Masters is indeed equivalent to and worth as much as a 120 ECTS two-year Master programme.

UK institutions on the whole, have not engaged actively in demonstrating the value, quality and weight of a one-calendar-year Master programme. There are good pragmatic reasons for this. In general they have been less engaged in offering joint or integrated programmes with European partners, and the wider international market, including the EU market, still seems to value the one-calendar-year Masters.

However, rising tuition fees, increased teaching of quality assured and accredited Master programmes in English in other countries, and a greater emphasis on promoting the attractiveness of the EHEA on a worldwide basis by other EU countries and the European Commission, may mean that the UK will need to be more proactive at institutional level in defending its position. Moreover, as joint collaborative, integrated programmes in all cycles develop, the UK will need to engage with partners over the issue of the number of credits to be awarded.

Individual institutions may already have encountered problems in having their degrees recognised in a number of other countries on the basis of the number of credits awarded, and if this becomes wider public knowledge, it will undoubtedly have an impact on the market.

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36 See Davies (2009) *Survey of Master Degrees in Europe*, p.33. www.eua.be/publications.

5.4 Diploma Supplement

It is encouraging that three UK universities have been awarded the European Commission **Diploma Supplement Label**, but surely every UK higher education institution should have this Label?

The UK has been slow to engage with the Diploma Supplement and institutions have failed to recognise that the whole purpose of that document is that it should be in a standard (not bespoke) format. In the early days of the Diploma Supplement it was argued that the transcript element of the UK 'progress file' adequately replicated the Diploma Supplement. This issue was considered by the Burgess Group in its deliberations over the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), piloting of which followed the Burgess Report in 2007[37]. In 2010 Burgess concluded that the HEAR should include the European Diploma Supplement in its entirety, fully conforming with the specifications laid down by the European Commission, and including the title 'Diploma Supplement'.

UK HEIs must move quickly to meet these recommendations for the HEAR in accordance with the precise format, order and wording endorsed by ministers in the Bologna Process, and being used in other countries. This offers a real opportunity for UK institutions to support students and illustrate not only the components but also the quality of UK degrees.

The HEAR incorporating the Diploma Supplement also offers an opportunity to reflect the range of activities in which a student has engaged, particularly if this has involved a work placement or mobility. As the Diploma Supplement becomes a recognised and required document throughout the EHEA, UK graduates who are unable to provide the standard document may be seriously disadvantaged.

As the three successful Label holders have demonstrated, UK institutions can provide the document without compromising any UK requirements. There is a need for more urgent adoption of the Diploma Supplement throughout the sector.

It is vital that the stipulations of the HEAR are met in full. To do otherwise will compound the impression of the UK as semi-detached from the European mainstream, but more importantly, it will create confusion and problems in recognition, the very things that the Bologna is intended to avoid.

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37 See *Beyond the Honours Degree Classification: Burgess Group Final Report* (Universities UK and GuildHE 2007) www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/Burgess_final.pdf and Burgess and Wood (2010) 'B 3.5-1 The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)' in EUA *Bologna Handbook: Making Bologna Work*: www.bologna-handbook.com/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=277&Itemid=59.

5.5 Conclusion

The development of quality assurance in the rest of Europe, the ubiquitous use of ECTS, and the Diploma Supplement, all offer opportunities for the UK but also present potentially serious challenges. The open question is: 'How will institutions address these challenges?'

In conclusion, some of the main points from the European Universities Association *Trends V* report may be identified as especially significant[38]. The report highlights:

- the need for clarity in degree structures within the three-cycle framework;
- centrality of employability as an objective within all cycles;
- promotion of student-centred processes and learning outcomes;
- full implementation of ECTS for both credit accumulation and transfer;
- universal release of the HEAR incorporating the Diploma Supplement;
- emphasis on quality assurance as an outward-facing process involving a full range of stakeholders while promoting and respecting institutional autonomy;
- promotion of mobility through enhanced trust, confidence, mutual recognition of achievements and qualifications, as well as fine tuning of learning agreements;
- continued and improved support for lifelong learning, particularly with incentives from government and a commitment to increasing the diversity of the student base;
- growth in extra-European interest in the Bologna Process and its outcomes.

Trends V further highlights three major challenges:

1. Strengthening the relationship between governments, HEIs, and other societal stakeholders, broadening the debate and building confidence.
2. Developing a strategic response to lifelong learning, increasing mobility and building an improved dialogue with employers, and gaining a better understanding of future needs.
3. Building a greater vision that embraces the full implications of the European Higher Education Area, including its growing global significance.

The subsequent Trends 2010 report stresses:

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38 Crosier *et al.* (2007). Available from: www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/EUA_Trends_V_for_web.pdf.

The Bologna Process should be regarded as a means to an end. Its main goal is to provide the educational component necessary for the construction of a Europe of knowledge within a broad humanistic vision and in the context of massified higher education systems; with lifelong access to learning that supports the professional and personal objectives of a diversity of learners[39].

Trends 2010 also identifies four priorities going forward:

1. Full exploitation of the link between the elements of the Bologna Process and curricular and pedagogical renewal with continued emphasis on student-centredness, lifelong learning and diversity.
2. Broad application of the European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance with a clear articulation between institutional autonomy, internal quality processes and external stakeholders.
3. Improved co-operation beyond Europe among European HEIs – there is a threat that internationalisation actually dilutes European co-operation.
4. Stronger links between the EHEA and the European Research Area.

The EHEA has been developed in little over a decade, and while it is still evolving, it is vital that UK universities fully embrace its implications, in particular through full engagement with its ethos and practice. As stated in the introduction to this document, the clock is ticking.

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39 Sursock and Smidt (2010, p.9). Available from: www.eua.be/typo3conf/ext/bzb_securelink/pushFile.php?cuid=399&file=fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/Trends_2010.pdf.

Box 1 Origins of Bologna

The Bologna Process was not a European Union initiative. The Council of Europe and UNESCO established the **Lisbon Recognition Convention** signed by 44 states in 1997. This agreed measures to recognise degrees and protect the interests of students and graduates in respect of qualifications. The Convention set up the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in the European Region and the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC).

In 1998 France, Britain, Germany and Italy agreed the **Sorbonne Declaration**, which expressed the intention to create a **European Higher Education Area** (EHEA). A meeting of European education ministers in the Italian city of Bologna in June 1999 consolidated this initiative with the **Bologna Declaration** signed by 29 countries.

The signatories set a target to complete the EHEA by 2010. The EHEA would facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications and bring transparency in quality assurance among universities across Europe. It is notable that the original signatories extended well beyond the then 15 members of the European Union, and now Bologna has 47 signatory states while the Union has 27.

Box 2 Bologna Declaration (1999)

In 1999 a meeting of 29 education ministers in Bologna signed the Bologna Declaration, which affirmed the principles and instruments of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The Bologna Declaration agreed to establish the EHEA by 2010. What became known as the Bologna Process initially contained six main action areas to achieve the EHEA:

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees.
2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two cycles (Bachelors and Masters).
3. Establishment of a system of credits.
4. Promotion of student and staff mobility.
5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance.
6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

The basic qualification framework of Bachelors and Masters was a radical change for many countries, as was the shift towards the universal application of credits for modules leading to a credits accumulation for a specific award. The inclusion of quality assurance signalled the need for transparency and mutual recognition as a confidence building measure between universities, especially those involved in student exchange.

Box 3 Prague, Berlin and Bergen

Every two years EU education ministers have met to discuss progress of the Bologna Process, consolidating and adding new priorities. After the **Prague ministerial summit of 2001** three more actions were added:

7. Focus on lifelong learning.
8. Inclusion of higher education institutions and students.
9. Promotion of the attractiveness of the EHEA.

Lifelong learning recognises that for social and economic reasons higher education should embrace all age groups. This related to the social dimension to improve social inclusion through easier access to university from a range of backgrounds.

Prague recognised the need to engage HEIs and students, as key stakeholders.

Promoting the 'attractiveness' of the EHEA was a recognition of the global and competitive nature of higher education and the importance of attracting international geographically mobile students.

The **Berlin Summit of 2003** extended the Bologna Process by adding a further action:

10. Doctoral studies and the synergy between the EHEA and the newly constituted European Research Area.

This attempt at a 'joined-up' approach linked Bologna to the Lisbon Agenda (2000), which aimed to promote the global competitiveness of the European economy.

The **Bergen Communiqué:**

— affirmed the three-cycle system and stressed the positive achievements since 1999;
— emphasised the social aspects of Bologna and the need to support competitiveness and mobility;
— set a target for national qualification frameworks compatible with A Framework for Qualifications in the EHEA to be in place by 2010;
— encouraged the establishment of a register of quality assurance agencies;
— identified the need to promote institutional partnerships leading to joint awards to increase student mobility and immersion in different languages and cultures.

Box 4 Ten Bologna action lines and key instruments

When 29 states signed the Bologna Declaration they agreed six major Action Lines (1–6 below). Later four more were added.

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees.
2. Adoption of a system based on two cycles (Bachelors and Masters).
3. Establishment of a system of credits.
4. Promotion of student and staff mobility.
5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance.
6. Promotion of the European dimension in higher education.
7. Focus on lifelong learning.
8. Inclusion of higher education institutions and students.
9. Promotion of the attractiveness of the EHEA.
10. Doctoral studies and building synergy between the EHEA and the newly constituted European Research Area.

In 2010 Bologna has 47 signatory states committed to these Action Lines.

The main **EHEA instruments** are:

— three-cycle degree structure;
— Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA;
— European Credit Transfer and Accumulation (ECTS);
— Diploma Supplement;
— Europass;
— Quality Assurance and the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA).

Box 5 London and Leuven

The **London Communiqué** (2007):

— asserted the priority to promote mobility for students, staff and graduates;
— highlighted recognition, accreditation for prior experiential learning (APEL) and flexibility in handling accreditation and credit transfer;
— emphasised the European Commission's Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA;
— stressed the need for HEIs to "embed Doctoral programmes in institutional strategies and to develop appropriate career paths and opportunities for doctoral candidates and early stage researchers".

The London Communiqué identified priorities for post-2010 as:

— mobility;
— the social dimension;
— data collection;
— promoting employability;
— the profile of the EHEA in the global context.

The **Leuven Communiqué** (2009):

— emphasised consolidation of the achievements thus far, and the need to build improved quality in teaching, research, social and cultural development;
— stressed the social dimension including skills, personal development and the commitment to lifelong learning;
— reiterated the importance of work placements and skills for employability and the need to include employers and other stakeholders into the process;
— stressed the importance of student-centred teaching and the core teaching mission of higher education, and underlined the importance of research and innovation;
— set a target of 20% of all students in all three cycles to have a study abroad experience by 2020;
— highlighted the need for better data collection to monitor the effectiveness of social engagement, employability, and the success of mobility initiatives;
— referred to the need to address funding issues and for diverse sources of funding.

Box 6 Single European market, research and Lisbon Agenda

The success of the European single market – and the European economy – is dependent on the effectiveness of the university sector and other **stakeholders** in building a knowledge-based society. These stakeholders include central, regional and local government, private enterprises, institutions, schools and colleges.

All citizens have a stake in the efficiency and value of the higher education systems across Europe. The competitiveness of European industries and the efficiency of public administration depend on the work of the HE sector.

The European Commission, as a lead player in the construction of the Single European Market inevitably takes an interest in the contribution that education makes to the European economy and to society in general.

Partnerships and shared **research** can bring synergies and economies of scale. Bologna emphasises the need for international partnerships and since the Berlin Summit in 2003, partly in response to the **Lisbon Agenda**, has pressed for greater research collaboration and closer ties with industry.

The Commission provides substantial funding for research through the Framework programmes and other initiatives from each of the Directorate Generals. It also funds the European Research Institute in Brussels, designed to support a European Research Area within which universities play a leading role, supported by both private and public funding. Research is fundamental to strengthening the Single European Market.

Box 7 Organisations involved in Bologna

Bologna has always benefited from an important contribution from the **Council of Europe**, in partnership with **UNESCO**, which had been researching common qualification frameworks across Europe before the Bologna Declaration. The Council of Europe works closely with the **European Network of Information Centres (ENIC)** and the **National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC)** in enhancing mutual recognition of educational qualifications across Europe.

Both the Council of Europe and UNESCO continue to participate in the Bologna Process. Neither of course are European Union bodies, and both have memberships that extend well beyond the 27 members of the European Union. The Council of Europe from its foundation in 1949 took an early interest in education and the work of universities in particular.

The Berlin ministerial summit set up the **Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)** as the overall steering committee to monitor the progress of Bologna. BFUG meets at least twice yearly and consists of representatives from all signatory states and from the **European Commission**, as well as expert consultation and advice from a range of interested bodies including the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the **European Universities Association (EUA)**, the **European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE)**, and the **European Students Union (ESU)**. BFUG is chaired by the **Presidency of the European Union**. A **Bologna Secretariat** oversees the steering process on behalf of the EU member state due to host the next two-yearly meeting of education ministers.

Another key contributor is the **European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)**. After the Berlin Summit, ENQA developed a European register of quality assurance agencies as part of its commitment to driving forward the quality assurance component of Bologna.

Box 8 Commission support for Bologna

The Bologna Process receives financial support from the European Commission, which allocates resources from its culture and education budget to promote and sustain Bologna objectives, including mobility through the Socrates Erasmus Programme, now incorporated under Lifelong Learning.

In addition the Commission approves and funds nationally nominated teams of Bologna Experts in all signatory countries. These Experts (formerly known as Bologna Promoters) are tasked with promoting the principles and instruments that together comprise the Bologna Process and that aim to establish and consolidate the EHEA.

The Commission also funds training initiatives and conferences to support Bologna Experts.

Box 9 Key features of joint degrees

The following criteria could be useful common denominators for European joint degrees:

— Two or more institutions in two or more countries are participating.
— The duration of study outside the home institution should be substantial and continuous, e.g. one-year at Bachelor level.
— Joint degrees should require a joint study programme settled on by co-operation, confirmed in a written agreement, between institutions.
— Joint degrees should be based on bilateral or multilateral agreements on jointly arranged and approved programmes, with no restrictions concerning study fields or subjects.
— Full use should be made of the Diploma Supplement and the ECTS in order to ensure comparability of qualifications.
— A joint degree should preferably be documented in a single document issued by the participating institutions in accordance with national regulations.
— Joint degrees and study programmes should require student and staff/teacher mobility.
— Linguistic diversity in a European perspective should be ensured.
— Joint study programmes should have a European dimension, whether physical mobility or intercultural competence in the curriculum.

The full text is available at: www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Stockholm_results.pdf.

Websites and useful information

British Council Erasmus website: www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus
Higher Education Academy: www.heacademy.ac.uk
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE): www.hefce.ac.uk
UK HE Europe Unit: www.europeunit.ac.uk/home
Official Bologna Process website 2007–2010: www.bologna2009benelux.org
UK National Europass Centre: www.uknec.org.uk
European Commission Education & Training: http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm
European Commission Bologna: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html
National Union of Students: www.nus.org.uk
European Students' Union (ESU): www.esib.org
UK HE Europe Unit Guide to the Bologna Process: www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna_process/index.cfm (click on 'Guide to the Bologna Process')
UK HE Europe Unit Guide to the Bologna Process – Edition 2: www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna_process/index.cfm (click on 'Guide to the Bologna Process – Edition 2')
Bologna with Student Eyes: www.esib.org/documents/publications/official_publications/BWSE2009-final.pdf
Lifelong Learning Programme: www.lifelonglearningprogramme.org.uk/higher-education.asp
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: www.qaa.ac.uk
HEA Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies – Supporting international students in UK Higher Education: a course for staff: www.llas.ac.uk/international
JISC infoNet Bologna Process: www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/bologna-process
European University Association: www.eua.be

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