

**BOLOGNA PROCESS  
TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007**

Final: 9 May 2006

**A. Background information on your Higher Education system**

**Details**

Country	Luxembourg
Date	January 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2007
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**Main achievements since Bergen**

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.

The regulations concerning the awarding of bachelor and master degrees as well as PhDs were finalised by the passing of the required decrees. They determine the modularisation of study programmes, the criteria for the awarding of ECTS and they contain provision for joint degrees.

The Luxembourg Government has had the research sector surveyed by the OECD.

Both developments will be taken up in later answers.

**National organisation**

2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.

The University of Luxembourg is overseen by the Minister for Higher Education and Research. Funding coming from the ministry is allocated on an annual lump sum basis, the amount of which is defined in a four-year contract linking the University and the Government. The University can also apply for funding from the Luxembourg Research Fund on the basis of a call for tender that the FNR (Fonds National de la Recherche) launches within specific research programmes.

The University is an autonomous, self governing body; its autonomy comprises inter alia the hiring of staff, the definition of salaries, the definition and implementation of curricula, the awarding of degrees, budgeting as well as any form of participation in private firms or organisations.

The University of Luxembourg is a university with a board of 7 external members, four of whom have an academic background and three of whom have a business background. The chair person of the board is chosen among these board members. The University rector acts as CEO.

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**3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure.**

- There is one public university; two US universities have branch campuses in Luxembourg and one French university as well as and one Belgian university offer a number of programmes in conjunction with the lifelong learning departments of the professional Chambers. (Chambre des Employés privés et Chambre de Commerce).
- As far as the public higher education sector is concerned there is also a short cycle within the first cycle modelled on the French BTS (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur). The latter accounts for 6% of the overall Luxembourg student body. The BTS cycle is governed by its own legislation although the programmes are now being modularised and put on the ECTS system.

## Partnership

**4. Describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.**

With one university in the country, the main criteria of the Bologna Process are integrated into the implementation of the University Act dating back to 2003. The governance structure of the university is responsible for implementing the Bologna Process.

As far as employability of bachelor and master degrees is concerned, the implementation of the European directives and /ot recognition purposes for integration into the labour market is done in conjunction with the relevant social partners.

A separate structure does not make sense in a small country.

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**5. Describe the arrangements for involving students and staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.**

The University Act stipulates that there is one member of staff and a student representative sitting as observers on the board of governors of the University, there being 7 external governors having the right to vote.

The university council only comprises elected members of staff or student representatives (two members of the academic staff per faculty and two students per faculty plus one doctoral student or post-doc per faculty, one representative from the administrative staff and one representative for the

librarians).

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6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.

As indicated in the previous answers co-operation ensues within the existing structures of the Luxembourg social dialogue.

## **B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements**

### **Degree system**

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.

- The University Act stipulates that the university can only award bachelor and master degrees. This means that since October 2004 students have been able to enrol in bachelor/master programmes only. However, the university also acts as successor for two former polytechnics. This entails that 62,4% of the students are currently enrolled in bachelor/master programmes, while the phasing out of the old polytechnic programmes means that 34,6% are still enrolled in these.
- More than 60% of the Luxembourg student population study abroad. Of those enrolled at a French university 71,48% follow bachelor/master courses; the figure is 61.63% of those enrolled at a Belgian university, 24.58% of those enrolled at an Austrian university and 15,36% of those enrolled at a German university.

( Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

The normal length of full-time doctoral studies is three years with a possibility of prolonging the programme for another fourth year. The definition is in terms of duration and no ECTS credit points are allocated to any part of the programme. Supervision of the doctoral candidate is carried out by a supervisor and a supervisory committee. The assessment is made by the PhD examining board which must not be chaired by the supervisor. A number of PhDs are run along the lines of "industrial PhD programmes"

including joint research contracts between the University and industry as well as internships.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Access<sup>1</sup> to the next cycle

9. Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and second and third cycles.

Admission to postgraduate programs (master and PhD) is granted to holders of a grade or diploma attesting to the previous level and recorded in the register of qualifications filed with the Department for Higher Education. Notwithstanding this provision, access to non-holders of one of the foregoing grades or diplomas is open to students who have successfully passed a special entry examination organised by the University or who are able to demonstrate possession of professional skills and experience. In such cases access is subject to submission of a file and to an interview before an ad hoc committee convened to that end.

On principle, all bachelor degrees give access to a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle. However, the legislation differentiates between academic and professional streams both at bachelor and at master level. Bridging courses are required for access to an academic stream from a professional one. This also holds true for access into doctoral programmes.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA<sup>2</sup>.

A working group has been established at ministerial level with a timetable for implementation originally set for October 2007. However, the work done on the Recommendation at EU level has put the work done in this group to a halt. There is a need for further clarification, since it is felt that in spite of their compatibility there are two European frameworks in existence.

The consultation process with the stakeholders will only start after this clarification.

11. What measures are being taken to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications?

<sup>1</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

<sup>2</sup> A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

At the University of Luxembourg 51,7% of students enrolled in bachelor programmes follow study courses that will lead to employment in areas where there is scarcity of supply on the labour market. The areas referred to are education, social work and engineering. These bachelor programmes have been developed at the request of the employers concerned.

At governmental level, a policy document defining entry requirements at bachelor and at master level is currently being discussed.

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA<sup>3</sup>

12. To what extent is your national system of QA already in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA?

The following is a translation of the University Act and the provision for quality assessment therein.

### [Article 43. Internal and external assessment

(1) Assessments of all the activities of the University shall be focused upon administration, teaching, research and the work of staff engaged in teaching and research.

(2) The assessment process shall include an element of internal quality assurance and an external assessment carried out by persons or agencies having recognised skills in the application of international benchmarks in terms of quality of teaching and research and the provision of services across the University as a whole.

(3) The Office of the Rector shall determine the procedures that govern the internal quality assurance of the activities of the University.

(4) The terms of reference relating to the external assessment of the University shall be drawn up by the Minister with responsibility for Higher Education. The University shall cooperate and make available any information required for the assessment.

(5) The Office of the Rector shall take note of the recommendations made in the assessment reports and implement them in the next Long Term Development Plan.

(6) The reports shall be submitted to the Office of the Rector, the Deans, the Board of Governors, the staff engaged in teaching and research and, if applicable, to the members of the specially convened committee referred to in Article 34(1). The reports shall also be submitted to the Minister with responsibility for Higher Education. The reports shall be made public at the end of this procedure.

(7) In the case of research units, teaching programmes and administrative departments, the interval between assessments shall be four years, with a re-examination mid-term. The interval between assessments of the work of staff engaged in teaching and research shall be two years.]

Generally speaking the ENQA guidelines are not wholly appropriate for small

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

countries. This does not apply for general criteria like independence of judgement, transparency of aims and objectives of quality assessment or for publication of criteria and reporting. However, the very concept of an agency in a small national context does not guarantee independence of judgement because of proximity and therefore the risk of cosiness with the only institution.

Therefore, the Luxembourg ministry is currently setting up an international panel to carry out the external assessment. This panel comprises 5 experts from 5 different European QA agencies plus two business leaders and a student from an international organisation.

Together with the ministry and the University the terms of reference for this group have been defined; in parallel the university is designing its own quality assurance procedures.

The panel will operate as an independent body and will be adequately resourced to be able to work outside the administration and the university.

The panel will then publish its assessment processes as well as the criteria and subsequently organise the peer review system.

Publication of the terms of reference and criteria for assessment will be in June 2007, training of review teams in October 2007, reviewing process will start in November 2007 and the publication of the report will be in December 2008.

Eventually it is hoped that this will lead to the creation of an international consortium or an international joint venture.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

13. Describe the quality assurance system operating in your country.

- cf answer to 12

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

14. Describe the level of student participation in your national quality assurance system.

The student is a full member of the panel of experts and according to the terms of reference students will be included as full members of the external review teams.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

15. Describe the level of international participation in your national quality assurance system.

The quality assurance process does not include a national member in any part of its structure or process. It is wholly international.

## **Recognition of degrees and study periods**

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

### **Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement**

16. Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country.

Issuing the Diploma Supplement is mandatory with the awarding of the bachelor and master degrees, which will commence in June 2008 for the bachelor programmes and in June 2007 for the master programmes. It will be issued automatically and free of charge. The University is currently elaboration the supplement on the basis of the EU/CoE/UNESCO format. The language will be French and possibly English.

(Scorecard)

### **National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention**

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>4</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Luxembourg ratified the Lisbon Convention by Act of Parliament in 2000. (Publication August, 14<sup>th</sup>, 2000).

The University Act also stipulates that recognising a level or period of studies as equivalent is done so particularly on the basis of the provisions of Sections V and VI of the Lisbon recognition Convention.

In general the principle of “recognition if no substantial differences can be proven” is applied; so is its corollary.

ENIC is part of the department for higher education.

One context descriptor: 38% percent of the students at the University of Luxembourg have not lived in Luxembourg prior to enrolling in a study programme and this trend is meant to increase in the following years with the University set on a further internationalisation of its student population. On the labour market, two thirds of those employed in the private sector are of non-Luxembourg origin. If recognition is done for access to the labour market, it also includes a perspective of consumer protection. However, recognition of foreign qualifications is essential to make this system work. On average, 5% of the dossiers submitted are not recognised.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### **Stage of implementation of ECTS**

18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country. ECTS is both used as an accumulation and a transfer system. Bachelor programmes are within the 180 – 240 credit range, master programmes comprise between 60 and 120 ECTS points. The use of the ECTS system is mandatory for all programmes, including those that are being phased out at the university.

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<sup>4</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>5</sup>? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

The recognition process for access to the labour market was defined by Act of Parliament in 1969 and subsequently modified. This act defines the structure for the process of recognition and defines those commissions whose advice has to be sought. The deadlines for answering the applications are those that are valid for the administration in general.

As far as recognition for academic purposes is concerned, the ministry and the university liaise on the basis of the provision of article 12 of the University Act.

Since the process is clearly structured there is no felt need for an action plan.

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

The recognition of prior learning for access into study programmes primarily lies with the University.

Any person who has undertaken any professional employment related to the subject of his request, whether paid, unpaid or voluntary, for at least three years, may request validation of his professional skills in order to provide evidence of all or part of his knowledge and skills required to obtain the awarding of a diploma or qualification. Any person may also request validation of a completed course of higher education, particularly if undertaken in a foreign country.

Validation as provided for by Article 12 is determined by an examining board whose members are appointed by the Rector according to the nature of the validation requested. To validate such experience, the examining board shall, in addition to staff engaged in teaching and research who shall form the majority, consist of persons who are qualified to assess the nature of the experience, especially that of a professional nature, for which validation is being sought.

The examining board shall reach its decision in the light of a dossier put together by the candidate upon completion of an interview with the candidate and, if applicable, a real or reconstructed professional assessment when this procedure is provided for by the body awarding the certification. It shall also reach a decision about the extent of the validation and, in the event of partial validation, about the nature of the

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<sup>5</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

knowledge and skills which may be subject to further assessment.

Validation has equal standing with success in an assessed examination or examinations of the knowledge and skills it replaces.

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21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.

All teaching programmes are now modularised. This has made it possible to create new flexibility for a number of programmes in terms of entry requirements and recognition of prior learning. This is true for engineering (access from vocational training and with work experience), teacher training (access from social work with previous qualification), psychology (mediation and gerontology: access from work experience in nursing) as well as banking and finance (access with work experience). The delivery methods are flexible: different timing, different pedagogy.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

The university has the power to award joint degrees and it is actively encouraged to make use of this instrument. In fact all bachelor and master programmes are bilingual with a choice of two languages from the following three: English, French and German. Every bachelor programme includes a compulsory mobility period at a partner university.

Doctoral programmes are to a large extent implemented together with partner universities and joint PhDs can be awarded.

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## C. Current issues in Higher Education

### Higher education and research

23. Describe the relationship between higher education and research in your country - what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.

Besides the university there are four public research centres. The ministry has had

the system reviewed by the OECD in order to streamline the activities. The report notes the following: "Luxembourg has undergone tremendous change during the last two decades. While it has started from a relatively low level both of budgetary resources as well as specialised institutions, Luxembourg has succeeded in building up a wide range of specialised institutions: laws and regulations on the one hand and organisations on the other".

The creation of the university in 2003 was the last link in this chain and so the innovation system can be considered as complete. It also demonstrates the strong commitment of Luxembourg's government to catch up in the field of research and innovation.

The ministry now encourages the definition and implementation of competence centres on the basis of research programmes instead of weakly connected individual projects. Programmes launched by the Fonds National de la Recherche are instrumental to this aim; these programmes very often require collaborative projects between the University and the research centres. At the same time the definition and implementation of research schools in close collaboration with the research centres and with partner universities is encouraged

Besides, researchers from these centres can be associate professors at the University.

As far as infrastructure is concerned the construction of a new campus will regroup all these institutions in such a way that facilities will be shared and scientists working in the same domain will have their workplaces in the same premises.

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24. What percentage of doctoral candidates take up research careers; are any measures being taken to increase the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers?

Luxembourg has too few students entering and completing doctoral study programmes. It is estimated that 3,2% of the overall student body is enrolled in doctoral programs. New incentives have been created. Doctoral students at the University of Luxembourg are considered as early stage researchers in employment, which entails that they have a salary and full social security. The stipend system is under revision, the main objective of which is to give doctoral students a labour contract with a defined income.

The recent creation of the University of Luxembourg provides new job opportunities for researchers in the public sector. It is worth remembering that until recently the research and innovation landscape in Luxembourg was characterised by strong private investments and activities.

## The social dimension

25. Describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education.

The financial aid system for students is conceived in such a way that students should be able to pursue higher education irrespectively of their socio economic background.

This financial aid can be given as a loan and a grant or as a loan; the weighting depends on the financial and fiscal situation of the household and on the payment of tuition fees topped at 3700€. The loan has a fixed interest rate of 2%; reimbursement starts two years after completion of studies and cannot exceed 10 years.

Besides this financial aid system there is an incentive scheme to encourage students to complete their studies within the official duration of the programme. The bonus for successful completion of a 1<sup>st</sup> cycle within the official duration of the programme is 1000€; it is 2000€ for a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle and between 2000€ and 8000€ for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle.

Child benefits and tax relief are part of the overall social system and they are meant to remove financial obstacles that could impede access into higher education.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Tutoring is mandatory at the University; it is being gradually implemented and it is now available for all first-year students. The University accommodation with partly subsidised rents is planned to be available for 20% of the student population by 2011, the ratio now being 10%.

## Mobility

27. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

- At the University of Luxembourg mobility is mandatory in all bachelor programmes, the minimum being 30ECTS credits obtained outside the University.
- For non-EU students procedures for obtaining a visa and a work permit have been simplified and shortened.

28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.

Loans and grants are portable to 100%, no matter what the place of studying is. They are fully portable for the whole length of bachelor/,master/doctoral programmes.

29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

The academic staff at the University is multinational. Besides, the legal status of the University is that of an “établissement public”, which means that staff are recruited on private law contracts.

## The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.

The promotion of the EHEA is integrated into the Luxembourg cooperation policy that Luxembourg engages in with specific countries around the world. (example: Asia: Vietnam and Laos)

At the same time it is also part of the cultural conventions that Luxembourg has with a number of countries on a bi-lateral basis.

## Future challenges

31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country.

- a. considering the political commitment to increase spending on higher education, making sure that the University engages in sustainable growth
- b. making sure that more young people go on to higher education and that more young people start a career as a researcher
- c. considering the Bologna process: wishing for an accelerated implementation of the three cycles; otherwise recognition issues will start looming large.

Completed National Reports should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email no later than **Friday 15 December 2006**.

Please remember to attach a copy of your national action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Bologna Secretariat  
May 2006