



Ministerie van de
Vlaamse Gemeenschap



**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
BOLOGNA
AND THE CHALLENGES OF E-LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF NON-CLASSICAL LEARNING AND TEACHING FORMS TO THE EMERGING
EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

Ghent , “Het Pand”, June 4-5 2004

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lifelong learning. Ministers underline the important contribution of higher education in making lifelong learning a reality. They are taking steps to align their national policies to realise this goal and urge Higher Education Institutions and all concerned to enhance the possibilities for lifelong learning at higher education level including the recognition of prior learning. They emphasise that such action must be an integral part of higher education activity.

Ministers furthermore call those working on qualifications frameworks for the European Higher Education Area to encompass the wide range of flexible learning paths, opportunities and techniques and to make appropriate use of the ECTS credits.

They stress the need to improve opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher education.

(Berlin Communiqué)

Organisation

This international seminar will be organised by the Ministry of the Flemish Community (Belgium) in cooperation with the University of Ghent. The programme has been designed in cooperation with international specialists both in the field of the Bologna process as well as in the higher distance education sector.

It was approved as an official seminar in the framework of the Bologna work programme between Berlin and Bergen by the Bologna Follow-up Group and is open to policy makers and the academic community from the Bologna signatories and consultative organisations with interest and/or professional experience in the theme of the seminar.

Maximum capacity : 150 participants.

General approach of the seminar

Main focus of the seminar will be on the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education, as was recommended by the ministerial Bologna follow-up meetings in Prague (2001) and more recently in Berlin (2003). In particular the seminar will explore the issue of widening access to higher education, e.g. for a more mature student public that combines studies with other, for instance professional, responsibilities.

This public not only needs more flexible programmes but also more appropriate teaching methods and modes of delivery of the courses. Moreover, large attention will be given to the issue of interaction, synergies and complementarities between virtual and physical mobility.

This seminar will make an attempt to see how non-classical teaching and learning forms and virtual mobility can be of use in an emerging European Higher Education Area of which quality assurance and recognition, as well as mobility and social issues are the corner stones. What are the challenges higher distance education poses in this perspective ?

It is clear that in the ongoing preparatory work for the Bergen ministerial conference (2005), in particular on the meta-evaluative principles for quality assurance and on the overarching qualification framework for the EHEA, the perspective of e-learning and other non-classical teaching forms cannot remain absent.

Thematic exploration in working groups

Apart from the plenary session, 4 working groups will be set up concentrating on different challenges of e-learning and distance education to the Bologna process.

The discussion in the working group will be facilitated by the presentation of case-studies illustrating some “good practice” in the area concerned.

Working group 1 - Lifelong learning and the mainstream

Higher distance education is often perceived as a necessity in order to involve all potential lifelong learners in higher education. Not all lifelong learners will be reached through classic mainstream higher education. More flexibility and a demand oriented approach are needed. Does higher distance education have the potential to match with these learning demands and to widen access ?

Key questions : is the mainstream offer sufficient to serve all lifelong learners ? How should distance education be developed to widen access to higher education for all lifelong learners ?

Working group 2 - Quality assurance and the emerging qualification framework for the EHEA

Higher distance education implies more than developing digital course material and supplying it through a digital carrier. It asks for an adapted pedagogy and didactics, it poses other demands on counselling of students and implies non-classical forms of student assessment. In order to realise its added value higher distance education will have to tackle these issues.

Key questions : are the models of quality assurance and accreditation that have been developed for higher education over the past few years adequate to face these new challenges ? Shouldn't they be adapted and if so, in what way ? What are the challenges for international recognition ? How can these challenges be tackled?

Working group 3 – Virtual and physical mobility

Virtual mobility is often seen as a means of facilitating physical mobility or is very often defined in terms of physical mobility. Virtual mobility, however, can be much more than a copy of or annex to physical mobility, but has an added-value of its own, especially in the perspective of international curriculum development.

Key questions : How do we get the most out of virtual mobility in the context of joint courses and degrees ? What challenges does virtual mobility pose in terms of recognition and the application of the ECTS system ?

Working group 4 - Opening up higher education to the larger society

Higher distance education will only reach its full societal relevance if underpinned by efficient partnerships between higher education and other sectors in society. Public and private networks play an important role in this context .

Key questions : how can e-learning and distance education contribute to regional development ? What does this mean in a context of the expanding EHEA with its heterogeneity of 40, soon 46 countries ? What about the social dimension : can we identify good practice in combining the objective of widening access to e-learning programmes with efficient cooperation with the business sector ?

Registration and accommodation

Registration forms should reach us as soon as possible (by fax +32 2 553 98 45 or e-mail :

linda.cys@ond.vlaanderen.be).

Hotel rooms have been reserved close to the conference venue for conference participants by the University of Ghent.

Please return your hotel reservation form before April 30 (by fax +32 9 264 83 99 or e-mail : An.Moors@UGent.be).

Special arrangements are foreseen for participants from TEMPUS countries. The organisers will take charge of the accommodation and travel costs of max. 2 delegates pro country. These participants do not need to submit a separate hotel reservation form.

Contact

For further inquiries on the programme, please contact Mr. Patrick Willems at the Flemish Administration of Higher Education and Scientific Research, tel. +32 2 553 98 52, e-mail : patrick.willems@ond.vlaanderen.be