

RESULTS OF UK BOLOGNA SEMINAR EVALUATION EXERCISE

The UK Bologna seminar on *Using Learning Outcomes* took place in Edinburgh on 1-2 July 2004. Some 150 delegates attended the event representing 26 Bologna countries. A total of 29 speakers contributed during plenary and workshop sessions covering a range of topics including the use of credit, quality assurance, educational structures and recognition issues. Delegates were given the opportunity to participate actively in the event at all stages.

We asked delegates to comment on the effectiveness of various aspects of the seminar:

- *The extent to which the specific aims were met*
- *The range of topics and effectiveness of presentations*
- *The general format of the seminar*
- *Views on sessions which were particularly useful*
- *General enjoyment and lessons for future events*

Twenty nine responses were received. They are summarised below.

1. Aims

To explore the meaning of the term ‘Learning Outcomes’ and how this approach is being applied within HE systems across Europe.

All respondents (100%) noted that this aim was completely or almost completely achieved. Many delegates noted that the balanced mix of high level overview and participative workshop sessions was very effective. The range of topics covered which recognised differences in approach across Europe was welcomed. Some commented on a need for further discussion to reach common definitions in this area across Europe.

To discuss how the ‘learning outcomes’ approach links with Bologna action lines.

Most (86%) respondents noted this aim was completely or almost completely met. The remaining share noted that the aim was partially met. Some commented that this theme should be explored in more detail.

To provide an opportunity for participants to consider how this approach could be applied within their own HE systems

Most (73%) of respondents noted that this aim was completely or almost completely met. The remaining share noted that this aim was partially met. It was noted that some workshop sessions did not provide space for this type of exploration. Some noted that they would need to reflect further on conference themes.

2. Topics and Presentations

Almost all (94%) respondents noted that the range of topics and speakers was helpful. Some commented that there was too much policy input which left little room for practitioner level participation. Some noted that the employer and student perspectives could have been given

more weight in plenary sessions. However, a majority noted that the right balance was achieved within the limits of time available.

3. Seminar format

A majority of respondents (90%) felt that the format was useful and appropriate with sufficient opportunities for discussion and debate. Opportunities for active participation were welcomed. The spacing of breaks provided opportunities for informal networking which was also useful. Some delegates indicated that they would have preferred more time for discussion in small groups.

4. Most useful sessions

Stephen Adam's context setting contribution was commended by many respondents as was the contribution on the US experience of learning outcomes from Peter Ewell. Of the plenary sessions, the panel session covering a range of interests including student, business and EC representatives, was considered to be the most useful by delegates. The range of workshop sessions and seminar groups was also commended. All those who attended enjoyed the evening social event – a Scottish Ceilidh dance and buffet at Edinburgh Castle - and found it a good opportunity to network and to relax.

5. Lessons for future events

Delegates indicated they would prefer more opportunities for participation and discussion on practical rather than theoretical issues. They also expressed interest in further seminars on qualifications frameworks and learning outcomes after Bergen to focus on practical issues, for example subject specific seminars.

6. Future actions

We also asked delegates to indicate what actions they intended to take as a consequence of the seminar. Some of the points raised are listed below for reference.

- Report to colleagues within institution and increase knowledge of staff
- Make good use of the Irish definition of the term 'learning outcomes'
- Consider how this approach could be used to improve curriculum design
- Use ideas to inform general training of outcome assessors
- Initiate national discussion and also within BFUG on merits of this approach
- Work to define how the LO approach could fit with ECTS

UK Seminar Organising Committee
August 2004

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED

How far were conference aims achieved?

- (i) Explore meaning of the term 'learning outcomes'.
- (ii) Discuss how learning outcomes approach links with Bologna action lines.
- (iii) Provide opportunity to consider how LO approach could be applied within own systems.

	1 poor	2 acceptable	3 good	4 excellent
i	-	-	55%	45%
ii	-	14%	59%	27%
iii	-	27%	53%	20%

Conference Format

- (i) Was the length of the sessions appropriate?
- (ii) Was the range of speakers appropriate?
- (iii) Were there sufficient opportunities for discussion?

	1 poor	2 acceptable	3 good	4 excellent
i	-	-	48%	52%
ii	3%	3%	45%	48%
iii	3%	7%	41% %	48%