

# **BOLOGNA PROCESS Scotland**

## **TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007**

**Final:** 9 May 2006

### **Notes:**

The deadline for submitting National Reports is **Friday 15 December 2006**.

BFUG members are encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template and return it to the Secretariat by email. Your report should not exceed **20 pages in length**, using Times New Roman font size 12. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. For any topic where there has been no change since 2005, please refer to your National Report for the Bergen conference.

Please attach your country's action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in London in May 2007.

This template has three sections:

- A. Background information on your Higher Education system
- B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements
- C. Current issues in Higher Education.

Elements that will inform the scorecard element of stocktaking are clearly indicated in the template.

Information for the stocktaking, including the scorecard element, will also be drawn from the Eurydice survey "Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe". These elements are also indicated in the template. Please use your National Report to supplement, but not repeat, your country's input to the Eurydice survey.

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

#### **Details**

Country	Scotland
Date	15 December 2006
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Gill Troup Head of Higher Education and Learner Support Division
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Contributors to the report	US, SFC, QAAS, UCU, NUS, ASC, Sparqs

## Main achievements since Bergen

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

Scottish degrees already conform to the Bologna model of three main cycles of Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees. The Framework for Qualifications of Scottish Higher Education Institutions (NQF) is a key reference point which describes the main qualifications of Scottish HEIs in terms of qualification descriptors, credit definitions and learning outcomes. This framework is also a central part of the comprehensive national credit and qualifications framework for lifelong learning - the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Scottish higher education has a robust quality assurance process in our Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). The QEF focuses on both teaching and learning; recognises the role of students in quality assurance/enhancement; places an emphasis on clear public information on quality and standards; requires both a subject level review by institutions and an external/independent institutional review; and seeks to enhance the student learning experience. Important developments since Bergen are:

- Successful self-certification of NQF against QF-EHEA [http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Scotland\\_en.pdf](http://www.enic-naric.net/documents/QF-Scotland_en.pdf)
- Continued engagement of Scottish experts in BFUG WG on QFs
- Review of QEF, including compatibility with ESG for quality assurance
- Publication of guidelines on RPL by QAA and parallel guidelines by SCQF
- Sector-wide Quality Enhancement initiatives in the areas of: assessment; employability of graduates; research-teaching links (including enhancing graduate attributes and transferable skills); enhancing the student experience in the First Year (including student retention); and flexible delivery of HE
- Implementation of EDS
- Implementation of ECTS, alongside compatible national system
- Introduction of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, which sets out the respective roles of the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Further and Higher Funding Council (SFC) and the individual institutions
- Merger of the previously separate funding councils for HE and FE on 3 October 2005 to form the SFC. In their guidance to the new Council, Scottish Ministers asked SFC to consider what its role should be in support of all aspects of international education, including the Bologna Process
- Publication of 'Learning to Improve: Quality Approaches for Lifelong Learning' by the Scottish Executive <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/12/0994621/46213>
- Academic freedom extended to cover all staff.

## 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.

Please include:

- whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries
- how funds are allocated to HEIs
- areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council has merged with the Scottish Further Education Funding Council to form the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, known as the Scottish Funding Council or SFC. <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/20050006.htm> - Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005.

Its main responsibility is to secure coherent provision by the college and university sectors of high quality further and higher education; the undertaking of research; to ensure that arrangements are in place to assess and enhance the quality of further and higher education offered by colleges and universities; to promote both a national credit and qualifications framework and collaboration among colleges and universities. SFC is required by statute to have regard to:

- skills needs in Scotland
- issues affecting the economy of Scotland
- social and cultural issues in Scotland
- achieving sustainable development
- the UK and international contexts
- the educational and related needs of students and potential students.

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

Please include:

- the number of public/private HEIs
- are there different types of institutions delivering higher education (i.e. academic/professional, university/non-university etc.)
- the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution
- the extent to which different types institutions are covered by the same regulations.

No significant changes, although 2 applications for university title, from existing HEIs, are pending.

## Partnership

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

Please include:

- the membership and role of any national Bologna group (for example policy committee, promoters' group)
- the membership and role of students, staff trade unions, business and social partners in any national Bologna Group.

Developments relating to the Bologna Process in Scotland are progressed in a variety of ways. HEI's have the primary responsibility for implementation and this is overseen at policy level by the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee. The Scottish Bologna Stakeholder Group brings together representatives of the Scottish Executive, Universities Scotland, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, Association of Scotland's Colleges, Scottish Qualifications Authority, National Union of Students Scotland, Universities and Colleges Union, Employers (Scottish Sector Skills Development Agency) and Bologna Promoters and provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information. This group also provides a direct link between stakeholders and Scottish Ministers and between stakeholders and the BFUG. Some key members of the Stakeholder Group are also directly represented in UK-wide committees and forums, such as the UK Europe Unit. QAA Scotland also regularly convenes informal meetings of senior representatives from HEIs, including Universities Scotland and NUS Scotland, to discuss and inform developments. Universities Scotland's Teaching Quality Forum includes a routine update on Bologna Developments, with an opportunity for representatives from HEIs and sector agencies to discuss issues.

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

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies
- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1992/Ukpga\\_19920013\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1992/Ukpga_19920013_en_1.htm) - Further and Higher Education Act 1992

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/20050006.htm> - Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005

The higher education sector in Scotland has diverse governance regimes, depending on each institution's legal basis: ancient universities - the Universities (Scotland) Acts 1858 to 1966; chartered universities created in the 1960s – Royal Charters; universities and designated higher education institutions created in the 1990s– Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, as amended, and its Statutory Instruments or Orders of Council. Each therefore has a distinct legal basis. All are governed by a Court or Board of Governors which are required, by statute, to have elected staff members,

normally both academic and non-academic. Student representation is normally the President of the Student Association and another office bearer.

The Court or Board of Governors has key responsibilities in relation to the strategic direction of the university and the way that resources are managed. Student and staff members of Court or Board of Governors are full members.

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

SFC's Skills Committee, which has external representation, advises on strategy, works closely with relevant stakeholders, including employers, and aims to enhance the relevance of skills and the employability of people in or wishing to enter the workforce.

The Scottish higher education sector is addressing employability within the context of its overall approach to quality enhancement. In 2004-05, employability was one of the two quality enhancement 'themes' pursued by the Scottish HE sector. The employability theme set out to raise the profile of employability, support institutions to develop employability strategies and assist staff to embed employability in the curriculum.

The theme helped to disseminate the wide range of innovative practice in the sector in a number of areas including the development of institutional employability strategies and research into employer engagement. SFC plans to fund a programme of collaborative development projects, starting in 2007-08, to help the Scottish sector build on the progress it has made and develop new approaches to be embedded in future institutional strategies.

The Scottish Sector Skills Development Agency is a member of the Scottish Bologna Stakeholder Group.

## 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.

Please include:

- the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.

First and Second cycle is the existing pattern of provision in Scottish higher education, so the percentage is effectively 100%.

( Eurydice )

## Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

Please include:

- the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle students following structured doctoral programmes
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- the elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research only
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomes
- are interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studies
- are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?

The third cycle is implemented in Scottish higher education. The requirements for achieving a doctorate vary by subject area, institution and type of doctorate. In all cases, the candidate must provide evidence that he or she has made an original and significant contribution to knowledge. The structure of doctorate programmes is the same as in other parts of the UK. It comprises four kinds of doctorates: the traditional research-based doctoral degrees (PhD or DPhil), the doctorates with a substantial taught core (now available in some vocational areas including engineering, business and education), the professional doctorates (available for people who wish to research their professional practice) and the doctorates by publication (awarded on the basis of the submission of high-quality previously published work written by the candidate, supported by a substantial critical appraisal of this work). Doctorate programmes may include theoretical training as well as individual research. The common full-time duration varies from 3 to 4 years. Part-time study is common and therefore the duration varies from between 4 and 6 years. Doctoral studies are included in our NQF and are therefore linked to learning outcomes, where appropriate.

Expectations regarding the quality assurance of post graduate research programmes are set out in the guidance on skills training for doctoral research students issued by the UK research councils [see QAA Code of Practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes, Annex 3 (September 2004). This includes guidance on assessment and supervision.

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section1/postgrad2004.pdf>

Regarding the use of credit points in measuring workload of doctoral studies, only doctoral studies which have a substantial element of structured learning carry SCQF credits. SCQF credits are directly linked to learning outcomes. It is not feasible to seek to award credit to research-based doctorates. This approach is consistent with the provisions of the Qualifications Framework for the EHEA.

(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.

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle
- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area

any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

According to the self-certification report of the Framework for Qualifications of Scottish HEIs, the successful completion of a first cycle qualification gives access to the second cycle, in accordance with the Lisbon Convention. This includes ordinary Bachelors Degrees which can, allied to relevant experience, give access to the 2nd cycle.

Successful completion of second cycle qualifications gives access to the third cycle. In some cases, successful completion of a first cycle award gives access directly to a third cycle award, especially if complemented by other relevant experience. 100% of first cycle programmes give access to the second cycle, and 100% of second cycle qualifications give access to the third cycle, subject to specific programme entry requirements set by individual institutions.

(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>.

Please include:

- the stage of development of your national qualifications framework (for example: has your national QF been included in legislation or agreed between all relevant stakeholders; has a working group been

<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/>

established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of qualifications been prepared; has a timetable for implementation been agreed?)

- the extent to which your national qualifications framework is in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA
- the role of stakeholders in the development of your national qualifications framework.

Our NQF for higher education (the Framework for Qualifications of HEIs in Scotland) has been in place and fully implemented across the sector since 2003/4. It has been certified as being in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA. As indicated in the self-certification report, a wide range of stakeholders was fully involved in the development of our NQF.

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

Please include where possible:

- the percentage of first cycle graduates who found employment after graduating in 2005/06
- the percentage of first cycle graduates who continued into the second or third cycles in 2005/06
- the extent to which this is expected to change in 2006/2007.

The most recent data relate to 2004/05: 68% of leavers with first degree qualifications went into full or part time employment in the UK or abroad within 6 months of graduation from Scottish HEIs. 18% of leavers with first degree qualifications went into further study or training. Statistics indicate that graduate employment rates are not decreasing, so similar levels of employability are likely for 2006-07. Despite the very high employability of graduates (89%), the sector continues to seek to improve its performance and employability was one of the recent sector-wide Quality Enhancement initiatives. The SFC plans to support higher education institutions to implement their employability strategies by strategic funding for institutional capacity building and collaborative development projects. One dimension of the Quality Enhancement initiative on Research-Teaching links is the skills and attributes of graduates.

The SFC has commissioned a longitudinal survey of graduates, including tracking their employment history from graduation. A second longitudinal study is about to be commissioned.

## 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?

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of the national quality assurance system in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action that has been taken to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any deadlines set for taking action to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action planned to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

Scotland has operated a national quality assurance system since 1993. There have been significant developments since 1993 and the current system, introduced in 2003/4, is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

It is not considered necessary to make changes, as arrangements are in line with ESG. However, the sector is currently considering what further steps it might take to ensure that our system of Quality Assurance explicitly reflects best practice within the context of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education<sup>4</sup>

which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- internal assessment
- external review
- publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

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

The Scottish HE sector has a national system of quality assurance/enhancement which is fully operational across all of Scotland's HEIs. Parallel arrangements are in place for higher education delivered in Scottish colleges of further education. Quality assurance/enhancement includes internal assessment, external review and publication of results. Procedures for peer review of our QA agency for HEIs are under discussion: we expect agreement by December 2006 and for the process to be completed by 2010.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

#### Level of student participation

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

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
  - the governance of national agencies for QA
  - as full members or observers in external review teams
  - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
  - in the consultation process during external reviews (e.g. arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
  - in internal evaluations.

Student participation is one of the five pillars of our Quality Enhancement Framework. Students participate at all levels of the QEF as partners in the quality enhancement process. The SFC, in consultation with the sector, has devised a set of guidelines for student involvement within institutions. The SFC also, in collaboration with the sector, provides funds to support a development agency, sparqs (Student Participation in Quality Scotland), which trains and supports students for their involvement in quality processes at all levels and provides consultancy support for students' associations and institutions seeking to enhance student engagement within quality processes. sparqs has undertaken a mapping exercise of how students are engaged with quality assurance and enhancement processes within all 21 HEI's across Scotland. The Higher Education Quality Working Group, which developed and oversees the implementation of the QEF, is chaired by the President of the National Union of Students Scotland. The President of the National Union of Students Scotland also observes meetings of the SFC.

A student sits as a full member of the QAA Scotland Board and student members sit on all QAA Scotland committees, including the Enhancement Theme steering committees. Students participate as full members of external review (ELIR) teams, including in the decision-making process and— like their

<sup>4</sup> higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

academic counterparts – on occasion will chair meetings during the course of review visits. All institutions have mechanisms whereby internal evaluation panels meet with students. In addition, 16 out of 21 institutions have students as members of internal evaluation panels and 2 allow students from subject areas being evaluated to submit a student submission to the internal evaluation panel.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

#### Level of international participation

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

Please include:

- whether there is international participation in the following aspects of quality assurance
  - the governance of national agencies for quality assurance
  - the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies
  - teams for external review, either as members or observers
  - membership of ENQA
  - membership of any other international network.

International participation in the governance of the national QA agency has been agreed. We intend to ensure international participation in the external evaluation of our national quality assurance agency. International involvement in external review teams is also under consideration. QAA is a member of ENQA and of INQAAHE and an observer of the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). QAA has bilateral links and agreements with partner agencies in Denmark, Ireland, Malaysia and South Africa, reflecting various levels of interest in sharing information about the transnational activities of UK HEIs and cooperating in international quality assurance and evaluation projects. The Agency manages a programme of visits and seminars for international colleagues and policy makers with an annual average of 55 delegations.

Representatives from the Scottish sector, including Bologna Promoters, have been active in European QA discussions, seeking to learn from, and contribute to, best practice, including active participation at the Bologna Promoter's Training Seminar on Quality Assurance in Europe (22-23 November 2006, Munich) and the EUA, ENQA, EURASHE & ESIB 1<sup>st</sup> European Forum for Quality Assurance (23-25 November 2006, Munich).

Each of the Scottish sector's Quality Enhancement Themes explicitly looks for international good practice in aspects of higher education relevant to the theme. This usually involves visits by international experts to Scotland, participation in conferences and visits to Scottish HEIs to speak and advise on good practice. The Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee recently undertook a study visit to Canada, looking particularly at student involvement in quality and at student-centred approaches to learning.

## 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.

Please include:

- the percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a Diploma Supplement
- which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
  - issued in a widely spoken European language
  - free of charge
  - automatically
  - correspond to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

Over 75% of students graduating in 2007 will receive a diploma supplement automatically and free of charge. For others, it will be available on request. Approximately 73% of HEIs issue the diploma supplement automatically and all issue it free of charge and include all information fields as required for the European official model. There is no common design since each HEI produces its own Diploma Supplement.

(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>5</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
  - applicants' right to fair assessment
  - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

<sup>5</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)

- demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
- provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

The UK ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention on 23 May 2003 and it came into force on 1 July 2003. The Code of Practice of the UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) includes recognition measures which are in accordance with the supporting documents detailed in the footnote to this section. All of the following principles of the Convention are applied in practice: applicants' right to fair assessment; recognition if no substantial differences can be proven; demonstration of substantial differences where recognition is not granted; provision of information about the country's HE programmes and institutions. The UK NARIC is a fully operational representative agency in the wider European Network of Information Centres.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

#### Stage of implementation of ECTS

18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country. Please include:

- the stage of implementation of ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- the percentage of first and second cycle programmes using ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- how any other credit or accumulation system in use relates to ECTS: is it compatible with ECTS; what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits.

Scottish HE operates SCQF, which is a combined credit and qualifications framework for lifelong learning. ECTS is now implemented across the sector, alongside SCQF, enabling credit transfer and accumulation. 2 SCQF credits = 1 ECTS credit.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>6</sup>? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

Yes, copy attached.

As a party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention the UK has in place a robust system for the recognition of international qualifications. The attached UK national action plan reports on the current status in detail and describes proposed measures for further qualitative improvements to the process. The

<sup>6</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

number of international students in the UK at all levels is an indication of de facto academic recognition of qualifications from a wide range of systems and countries.

Scottish institutions make use of information provided by the UK NARIC to facilitate the recognition of national qualifications. The recent self-certification of the NQF will allow easy referencing of Bologna three-cycle qualifications to the NQF.

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)
<p>Recognition of prior learning</p> <p>20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.</p> <p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning</li><li>• a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for access to HE</li><li>• a description of any procedures or national guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.</li></ul>
<p>The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is a key SCQF priority and was included in the National Plan for Implementation of the Framework (December 2002). This led to the development of the Guidelines for RPL and sector specific work on the recognition of RPL (such as in the Community) <a href="http://www.scqf.org.uk/rpl.asp">http://www.scqf.org.uk/rpl.asp</a>. The Quality Assurance Agency has published a Code of Practice, within which there is a section on RPL <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/apl/guidance.asp">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/apl/guidance.asp</a>. These publications include guidelines for allocating credits as a basis for access to higher education and exemption from some programme requirements.</p>
<p>21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.</p> <p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• any flexibility in entry requirements</li><li>• any flexible delivery methods</li><li>• any modular structures of programmes.</li></ul>
<p>Scotland has developed and implemented its national credit and qualifications framework for lifelong learning, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This is an initiative of major national importance and covers learning from a variety of different education and training sectors. SCQF is increasingly the basis for flexibility in terms of entry requirements, allowing learners to move more easily from one type of learning to another, while having previous learning recognised.</p>

This includes entry into degrees with advanced standing with sub-degree qualifications and the possibilities for such articulation are detailed in the national mapping website at <http://www.scqf.org.uk/college2uni/mapping/index.asp>. SCQF was developed largely from the Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer system, which has been widely used across the Scottish HE sector for more than 15 years. Apart from one or two small specialist institutions, the Scottish HE sector has been modularised for many years. Scottish HEIs offer a variety of flexible delivery methods, including, part-time, distance learning, e-learning, open learning, evening/weekend learning, community/outreach learning and 'franchised' learning which takes place in colleges or the workplace. All Scottish HEIs offer a number of these different, 'non-traditional' delivery methods.

Additionally, the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access (SACCA), which oversaw the completion of the Scottish self-certification report and is responsible for the maintenance and assurance of the framework for qualifications of HEIs in Scotland, will shortly launch its own website detailing its relevant national responsibilities for quality and standards.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint<sup>7</sup> degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

Joint degrees are generally allowed/enabled and encouraged in Scotland, and approximately 70% of Scottish HEIs have established joint degree programmes across the three cycles jointly with HEIs of other countries. HEIs are encouraged to take part in Erasmus Mundus programme and in government supported programmes for dual and joint degrees through cooperation programmes with Russia (BRIDGE) and India (UKIERI). HEIs who have their degree awarding powers by virtue of an order granted under section 48 of the 1992 Act (i.e. post

<sup>7</sup> a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

1992 HEIs) have joint degree powers. Consultation is currently under way to check whether any action is required for HEIs whose degree awarding powers pre-date 1992. If necessary, the Scottish Executive will support HEIs to change their statutes to enable them to offer joint degrees.

## 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

In Scotland, no HEI may be granted university title without the institution having the power to award research degrees. As funding for research comes from a wide range of sources it is difficult to determine what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs. However, when research income in Scotland for every Scottish Funding Council-funded institution is taken across all subjects and income sources (research grant and contract; Research Council; industrial; charity and EU), Scotland receives 13% of the research funding to UK universities with only 9% of the UK population.

In terms of improving the synergy between HE and other sectors, since 2001 the major spenders on science and research in Scotland have aimed to achieve a better targeting of funds, as proposed by the *Science Strategy for Scotland*. Since then, the SFC, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department and the Scottish Executive Health Department have developed their own research strategies and sharpened the focus of their spending priorities. Scottish Enterprise has also developed its cluster activity and developed a long term funding stream for three Intermediary Technology Institutes in areas of particular research strength – Energy, Life Sciences and Tech Media, where there are also very good commercial opportunities.

Among SFC's seven high level aims is for "Scotland's universities to provide a high quality and internationally competitive research base" and it allocates significant core and strategic funding to support this. A further high level aim is for "Scotland's colleges and universities to generate effective knowledge exchange that stimulates innovation and development in public and private sector organisations and enterprises." In 2006-07 SFC research funding will total £260M.

One of the current Quality Enhancement initiatives relates to the links between research and teaching in Scottish HEIs. Specifically this will identify and disseminate best practice in approaches to developing research-related skills and attitudes in students on taught programmes ref:

<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/ResearchTeaching/default.asp>

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?

We do not routinely track the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers in Scotland. We do however assist the retention of good doctoral students into postdoctoral careers by supporting the creation of postdoc positions through our various Strategic Development Research Grant schemes, as do the UK-wide Research Councils. We are also working to improve the attraction of a research career by improving conditions for early-stage researchers through our response to the Roberts Review and through the revision of the concordat on contract research staff which is currently being led by the Research Councils.

Since 2001 the Scottish Executive has provided funding through the Royal Society of Edinburgh for Personal (3 year) and Support (1 year) Research Fellowships. At UK level, measures to improve conditions for early stage researchers include: increasing Research Council-supported postdoctoral researchers' salaries by around £4,000 by 2005/06 and PhD stipends to £12,000 by 2005/06 and to £13,000 in areas of recruitment difficulties; providing two-weeks of career development training for Research Council researchers and PhD students; and the development of a new Academic Fellowship scheme to provide 1,000 fellowships over five years. The funding for skills training for postdoctoral researchers has enabled universities to expand their training and support for postdoctoral researchers considerably and to provide them with opportunities to develop broader professional skills. In addition to this training, the Research Councils operate schemes and targeted training aimed at providing researchers with broader training, which include public engagement training and the provision of grants for public engagement activities.

## The social dimension

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

Please include:

- any financial or other measures to widen access in higher education amongst socially disadvantaged groups
  - any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to widen access to higher education, including results if possible
  - any further measures planned, following evaluation of the widening access measures already in place.
- The SFC funds four Wider Access Regional Fora in Scotland. The Fora are a partnership of colleges and universities and other organisations formed to provide wider access to further and higher education.
  - The SFC also provides additional resources to institutions to help meet the additional costs of widening access measures. These include a widening access premium to target resources at those that have the greatest number of students from under represented postcodes (currently under review). Also, each HEI receives an articulation grant to support and develop FE/HE articulation links.
  - Tuition fees have been abolished for eligible Scottish students in higher education making access to HE free at the point of entry. The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) provide a number of bursaries to students from the most vulnerable groups. These include the Young Students Bursary for those from low-income backgrounds and other grants

such Disabled Students Allowance, Lone Parents Grant and the Dependent's Grant.

- Individual Learning Account is a Scottish Executive scheme that offers financial assistance to individuals with low income to access higher education.
- In 2005 the SFC published the *Learning for All* report which reviewed widening access initiatives and contained recommendations for the future. Its new corporate plan commits to "fair access to a diverse range of learning programmes suited to individual learners' circumstances", to be achieved by, for example, working with others (including universities) to reduce barriers to enrolment and progression, improving the pattern of supply of lifelong learning programmes. In Scotland's colleges over 30% of teaching is for students from Scotland's most deprived 20% of postcode areas.

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

Please include:

- any guidance or counselling services and any other measures to improve retention
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

All HEIs in Scotland are strongly committed to widening participation amongst underrepresented groups. Almost all have developed transitional and induction programmes designed to assist students from non-traditional and socially disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their academic skills and thus improve retention rates. All HEIs offer comprehensive counselling services to all students.

HESA annually collects and disseminates performance indicators (PIs) for both widening participation and student retention for all HEIs nationally. HEIs use the PIs for internal management processes and comparing performance with other similar and regional institutions.

There is a wide range of additional initiatives within HEIs, the most common being: hardship funds/bursaries/grants; community-based/outreach programmes; and mentoring or 'buddy' schemes.

Students who face particular financial difficulties in accessing or continuing their course may be eligible for additional assistance through the hardship funds administered by individual colleges and universities.

From 2007-08 SAAS and the Student Loans Company will make monthly payments of student loans and bursaries. One of the aims of this move is to improve retention by helping students manage their finance more effectively.

There is currently work ongoing through a quality enhancement initiative on the

particular challenges of the first year of study with a view to identifying and promoting best practice.

SFC is committed to monitor institutions' retention and achievement statistics and to provide funding and support and/or require action, as appropriate.

## Mobility

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

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward student mobility
- any measures to increase outward student mobility.

The Scottish Executive and individual HEIs fund a number of Scholarship schemes to promote inward student mobility. Through Education UK Scotland (part of the British Council), the Scottish Executive has funded research to gather feedback from overseas students on the quality of their student experience in Scotland, with a view to identifying areas for further development. The sector has produced draft good practice guidelines for attracting and supporting overseas students. Scotland also takes part in the second phase of the UK-wide Prime Minister's Initiative, started in April 2006, to secure the UK's position as a leader in international education and sustain the managed growth of UK international education delivered both in the UK and overseas.

At the same time, the Scottish Executive, the HE sector and the UK Socrates Erasmus Council are working to promote greater outward mobility. Student support is portable for Erasmus exchanges; additional travel expenses are paid; and the rate of the student loan available varies to recognise higher cost countries. A conference was held in October 2006 to underline the link between outward mobility and the wider employability agenda, to increase outward mobility.

The Scotland-France Co-operation Agreement, signed by Ministers from both countries in November 2004, committed us to sharing approaches to implementation of Bologna and promoting joint PhD study across the two countries. Work is ongoing in this respect.

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.

Outwith Erasmus exchanges, loans and grants are not currently portable. However, the Scottish Executive is taking part in the Bologna Working Group led by the Netherlands, with a view to developing a toolkit to assist those countries practicing portability overcome some of the administrative barriers. The group will complete its work and contribute to the London communiqué in May with a recommendation that an informal pan EHEA group of student support experts is established.

Scottish Executive Ministers have recently announced that a pilot restricted to some international and European countries, will be developed to investigate the feasibility of portable Grants and Loans for Scottish students by 2010.

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

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward staff mobility
- any measures to increase outward staff mobility.

Many institutions report significant inward and outward staff mobility and few indicate any real difficulties. Marie Curie Fellowships are popular in Scottish HEIs, and there are many UK-wide schemes, but the following are Scotland-wide:

- Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellowships for post-doctoral or established researchers
- Scottish Enterprise Fellowships, which provide a year's salary, business training and advice to develop commercially relevant research, hosted at a Scottish HEI or Research Institute
- Carnegie Trust.

The range of problems relating to inward and outward staff mobility has been insufficiently explored so far, and the Bologna Follow Up Group has acknowledged the lack of good information on this across the Bologna area. The UCU is working with the global union federation Education International to organise a seminar in the Bologna programme in February 2007 in order to address these issues. Language is an obvious factor promoting inward mobility and restricting outward mobility as far as UK academics are concerned. Another factor is the insecurity of employment for young researchers which makes impossible for them to take sabbaticals posts. This problem is, however, being reduced with the implementation of the Fixed Terms Directive.

### **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.

Work is under way to develop an International Further and Higher Education Strategy. This will identify strategic aims to enhance the internationalisation of Scottish further and higher education. We will continue to support and take part in international exchanges, such as the recent study visit to Canada. We will also continue to respond positively to requests to share our experience of developing SCQF.

## Future challenges

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

Challenges for Scottish higher education in the Bologna context include:

- Maintaining the competitiveness of Scottish higher education
- Increasing staff engagement with quality enhancement
- Internationalising curricula
- Improving retention, progression and achievement within under represented socio-economic groups
- Developing more joint degrees
- Increasing outward student mobility
- Supporting peer learning.

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