

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

A. Background information on your Higher Education system

Details

Country	Iceland
Date	14.12.2006
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Main achievements since Bergen

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

On 1 July 2006 a new law on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) no. 63/2006 was adopted by the Icelandic parliament replacing the framework law on universities no. 136/1997. The new framework law stipulate the accreditation, quality assurance (QA) and general running of HEIs that fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The law was prepared in cooperation and consultation with all main stakeholders, i.e. the Higher Education Institutions, students and the social partners.

Although there were no legal obstacles in Iceland in implementing the Bologna process before the new law of 2006 was adopted, it strengthens the legal basis for the implementation. According to the new law the issue of the Diploma Supplement (DS) in English is automatic and compulsory, the 3 cycle structure is confirmed, as well as compulsory adoption of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and a National Qualification Framework (NQF) has already been issued based on the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Six HEIs in Iceland come under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and fall under the new law; three public and three private (government dependent). Two HEIs fall under the Ministry of Agriculture.

A complete regulation framework according the new law is being implemented, i.e. regulations concerning QA, accreditation of HEIs limited to specific fields of study in accordance with definitions by OECD's Frascati manual and the NQF.

Specific law on public HEIs is under preparation and will be put before parliament in 2007-2008 to replace law no. 41/1999 on the University of Iceland as well as law no. 137/1997 on the Iceland University of Education and law no. 40/1999 on the University of Akureyri.

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.

General:

There have been no major changes in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education in Iceland since Bergen, besides the change in the law detailed in the answer to question 1.

As stated above, the Higher Education Institutions law no. 63/2006 establish the general framework for the activities of six HEIs in Iceland coming under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; the private ones as well as the public ones. Two HEIs come under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, in accordance with the Agricultural Act, enacted in 1999. All these HEIs report to the ministries each year.

Contracts:

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture signs performance contracts with each of the six HEIs under its auspices. These contracts include performance indicators that are reviewed periodically during the contract time.

Quality Assurance (QA):

In February 2006, an Office of Evaluation and Analysis was set up within the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. This office will take on several roles including management of QA in higher education. The law on HEIs no. 63/2006 stipulates that the Minister of Education, Science and Culture can contract the external part of the QA process to accredited institutions or agencies, either national or international.

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.

As already stated, there are 8 HEIs in Iceland, 5 public and 3 private, government dependent. 3 public and 3 private are covered by law on HEIs no. 63/2006 and two public agricultural institutions are covered by law no. 57/1999. They are all of academic character and at university level. Two HEIs do only offer ISCED 5A, one offers ISCED 5A and 5B and two offer ISCED 5A and 6. The number of students admitted in the academic session 2006-2007 in ISCED 5A at public HEIs is 13.148, students admitted in ISCED 5B are 198 and in ISCED 6 are 199. Students attending government dependent private HEIs are 3.680, all admitted in ISCED 5A.

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.

After the Berlin conference the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture decided to establish a National Bologna Group to formalize and strengthen the implementation of the Bologna process in Iceland. The group consists of representatives of the Ministry, all HEIs and students.

Co-operation between the Bologna Group and the social partners has been in the hands of the chair of the National Bologna Group.

As the law on HEIs no. 63/2006 form strengthened legal basis for the implementation of the Bologna process the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is now more directly involved.

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.

The HEIs Act no. 63/2006 stipulates the involvement of students and other stakeholders in the governance of HEIs. Specific law govern each of the public HEIs (see answer to question 1), which stipulate further structure of governance.

The main bodies involved in decision making within each HEI are the senate at central level, the faculty board and the department council. The senate is the highest governing body. Its task is to promote the interests and objectives of the HEI and its institutes. This body is constituted of 10 members; the Rector and 9 other representatives. Four are elected for 2 years from the institutions fulltime teachers and one representative of the organisation of university teachers. Two students are elected to the senate for two years and two representatives from outside the HIE, generally from the business community are appointed by the Minister of Education Science and Culture for 2 years.

The faculty board has decision power in all educational affairs of each faculty. Its members consist of all fulltime teachers at each faculty and two student representatives, elected by the student unions.

In the department council of each department, full time teachers and two student representatives have their seats. The council's main task is to handle the affairs of the department, determine the curriculum and organisation of instruction and examinations etc.

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

As already mentioned in the answer to question 5. the Minister of Education, Science and Culture appoints two representatives to the HEIs senate, who are from business and other social partners forging a direct link between HEIs governance and the world of work.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.
The 3 cycle system already existed in Iceland before the Bologna process although there were few programmes outside this system i.e. five years professional degree system. Now there is only one programme left of the professional degree system, that of medicine.
(Eurydice)
Stage of implementation of the third cycle 8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle. Please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the percentage of 3rd cycle students following structured doctoral programmesthe normal length of full-time doctoral studiesthe elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research onlythe supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studiesare doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomesare interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studiesare credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?
Almost 100% of the third cycle students follow structured doctoral programmes. Doctoral programmes are offered by two HEIs. As the implementation of the Bologna process is fully integrated in the HEIs law no. 63/2006, the doctoral programmes will generally last for three to four years. The doctoral programmes include coursework up to around 15% of the full programme. The supervision and assessment procedures for doctoral studies follow an international framework of quality and evaluation processes. Each faculty appoints a committee of experts to appraise applications for doctoral studies. If the candidate is accepted one or more supervisors are appointed and at the end of the programme there is an official examination with two or three external examiners. The doctoral programmes are included in the NQF and linked to learning outcomes. The workload of the doctoral programmes will be measured by ECTS credit points.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Access¹ 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 law on HEIs no. 63/2006 all baccalaureate degrees, 180 – 240 ECTS give access to second cycle studies. There are a few diploma degrees in the first cycle that do not give direct access to the second cycle, but they are designed as a part of a full degree, so there is a structured path for students to take if they choose to study for a full degree and then move to the second cycle.

There is a possibility for exceptionally gifted students to progress straight from the first cycle to third cycle within natural sciences, this is rare and only 10 students have done so in the last 3 years.

There is normally a direct access between the second cycle and the third cycle depending on an evaluation of the candidate's research plan by a special committee within each department. There are three degrees at the second cycle: MBA, Master of Public Administration and an Accounting degree, that require those who want to advance to the third cycle to complete additional research training, which is provided on an individual bases by the HEIs.

(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 EHEA².

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 established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of

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

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

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.

There are stipulations on a National Qualification Framework in the law on HEIs no. 63/2006. A NQF in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area was already under preparation before the law was adopted and has now been issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. All the HEIs in Iceland are to have the NQF fully implemented before 1 July 2008 when the accreditation process for all fields of study at all HEIs has taken place. The NQF has been developed with full participation of stakeholders and all the HEIs did have a representative in the committee preparing the NQF as well as the students and when the draft was ready it was sent to all the HEIs and other stakeholders for comments.

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.

There is now only 2, 6% unemployment in Iceland. Unemployment has been very low during the last years. 70% of those now registered unemployed have been on the register for less than 3 months according to Statistics Iceland. According to preliminary data from Statistics Iceland, less than 1% of people with university degree are unemployed.

First cycle students that continued into second cycle studies in 2005-2006 are around 15% in the year of first cycle graduation. However there is a visible trend for students to return later into second cycle studies.

Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA³

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.

The QA system stipulated in the law on HEIs is based on the Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA as well as the practice established during the Bologna process in Iceland which had already been adapted to the Standards and Guidelines. The law no. 63/2006 states that although an independent Quality Assurance Agency will not be established for the time being the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture will ensure that the external quality assurance will be upheld by independent experts, as prescribed in the Standards and Guidelines and independent foreign experts will be called upon to conduct the evaluation of fields of study during the accreditation process.

(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 education⁴
- 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.

An external QA system has been in place for the last 10 years. It operates at a national level and covers all HEIs.

The system includes an internal assessment by the HEIs that they have to make public according to regulations. This is followed up by an external review. The external review panel has to include at least one academic expert, one expert in quality assurance and one student.

³ <http://www.enqa.net/files/Bergenoport210205.pdf>

⁴ 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.

One of the panellists has to come from abroad and one has to be Icelandic.
 Basic guidelines have been established for the external peer review panel in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines.
 The system is based on transparency and the results are to be published in accordance to law no. 63/2006.
 Procedures have not been established for the peer review of the QA system (there is no Agency yet) but there are some preparations already for such a review. It will, however, not be conducted until after the accreditation process, already mentioned, has been concluded in mid 2008. The review when undertaken will be in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

(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 (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
 - in internal evaluations.

The law on HEIs no. 63/2006 stipulates that students have to participate as full members at all levels of QA. Students are consulted and take part in both the internal and external review process as full members of committees and panels and as such involved in decision making.

(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.

Apart from the external peer reviews, described in the answer to question 13, the whole Higher Education system in Iceland will go through an accreditation process to be conducted by committees consisting of foreign experts before 1 July 2008 as mentioned in the answer to question 1.

Iceland is an associated member of ENQA and a full member of NOQA, the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education.

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.

The Diploma supplement was fully implemented in Iceland in 2005. The percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a DS will thus be 100%. The DS is free of charge, automatically issued in English and available in other languages on request. It corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents⁵ 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
 - 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 Lisbon Recognition Convention was ratified by the Icelandic authorities 21 March 2001. All appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents. Professional recognition is regulated by the Recognition of Educational Qualifications Act, no. 83/1993 which implements the European Union's General System Directives on recognition and the procedure is handled by different Ministries (as competent authorities) under the direction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

⁵ 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)

There is no specific framework legislation on academic recognition in but the HEIs are by law authorised to evaluate studies from other HEIs for course credits and to recognize studies from other HEIs or research institutions. When a HEI recognizes studies from another institution it warrants that these studies measure up to the quality standards prescribed by the law.

Iceland has a fully operational ENIC. Information on the Icelandic HEIs is readily available on the home page of the University of Iceland where the ENIC office is situated. See also the answer to question 18.

Rules on recognition of studies are to be found in the regulations of each HEI. As mentioned earlier the law on HEIs no. 63/2006 stipulates that HEIs are to apply for accreditation. The accreditation process will take place during 2007. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture will secure that the HEIs who get accreditation have in their regulations provisions regarding academic recognition that must be in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and international agreements to which Iceland is a party.

(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.

The ECTS credit system has been fully implemented by all HEIs from the autumn 2006.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications⁶? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

For answer to this question please see: Iceland: National Action Plan for Recognition already submitted to the Bologna Secretariat.

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

Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)
Recognition of prior learning
<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">• the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning• a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for access to HE• a description of any procedures or national guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.
<p>There are no specific procedures or national guidelines for the recognition of prior learning for academic recognition which is entrusted to the HEIs relying on their regulations, which must be publicly available.</p> <p>Access to HEIs in Iceland is either based on the matriculation examination at the end of Upper Secondary School or other equivalent education. Access for those who do not have formal examination are based on prior learning both formal and informal.</p> <p>Recognition of credits based on prior learning and experience is in the hands of the HEIs.</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">• any flexibility in entry requirements• any flexible delivery methods• any modular structures of programmes.
<p>In the HEIs act no. 63/2006 lays the foundation for the flexibility of learning paths in HEI by setting the structure of the programmes and the NQF. Flexibility has increased considerably during the last years and is an aim in itself in Iceland. There should be no dead ends either in Upper Secondary or HE.</p> <p>HEIs have full autonomy in deciding on delivery methods and modularisation of their programmes.</p> <p>Transfer from one course of study to another or from one institution to another are always subject to the approval of the academic authorities of the receiving faculty or institution. The receiving faculty decides how many credits can be transferred towards a new programme, usually on the recommendations made by study committees that are composed of students and teachers in each department. Transfers between subjects within the same faculty are usually easily arranged, but may involve some loss of credits earned.</p>

Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)
Establishment and recognition of joint degrees
<p>22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.</p> <p>Please include:</p>

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint⁷ degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEI's that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEI's of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

Under Article 9 of the law no. 63/2006 on HEIs the institutions are authorized to offer degrees in co-operation with other institutions, both on national and international basis for all three cycles of higher education (bachelor, masters and doctoral) in accordance with the Annex to the Lisbon Convention. This gives Icelandic HEIs the possibility to offer and recognise joint degrees or double degrees. Before the revision of the University Act the legal basis for offering and recognising joint degrees was not secure.

⁷ 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.

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 HEI's; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.

Information for 2003 based on total expenditure on research and development by source of funding and performing organizations show that 21, 3% of research in Iceland is done by HEIs, 51, 8% by the business sector, 2, 1% by private non-profit organizations and 24, 8% by public institutions. Preliminary figures for 2005 are almost identical. HEIs 21, 9%, business sector 50, 7%, private non-profit institutions 2, 0% and public institutions 24, 4%.

The official policy of the Science and Technology Policy Council (STPC) for the science community in Iceland states the need for HEIs to make an effort to spread knowledge about the results from scholarly work, scientific research, and technological development and opportunities arising from these, to the society as a whole.

The Science and Technology Policy Council are of the opinion that:

- Scientists must be made more aware of the value of patenting and Intellectual property rights, and the importance of exploiting their Intellectual assets for the benefit of society, without discouraging The efforts to publish in peer reviewed journals;
- More effort should be put into to acquiring patents based on Research and to encourage companies to use them, as well as to Increase awareness of the importance and ways to secure patents.
- It is important to draw the attention of companies to the technological And innovative potential of scientific results;
- There is a need to promote the development of a market for intellectual Assets and to encourage the exploitation of research results Particularly in sectors that often are considered to be outside the Scope of innovation, such as trade and services.
- The emphasis placed on international publishing in the evaluation Criteria used by the universities should not discourage the will to Publish in the Icelandic language;
- There is a need to create a forum for cooperation between universities, spin-offs and research-intensive SME's, innovative and high-tech companies, and public research institutions.

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?

Currently there is no information available on the percentage of doctoral candidates that take up research careers, but some of the measures described in question 23. are designed to encourage doctoral candidates to take up research careers.

The Icelandic Centre for Research is currently performing an extensive study on all Icelandic doctoral graduates, their status and preferred career. The findings from this exercise will be available in the near future.

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 student population in Iceland has increased dramatically in recent years and almost doubled from 1995 when the total was 9.171 until 2005 when the total reached 18.863. These figures include Icelandic students both studying in Iceland and abroad. (The ratio is explained in the answer to question 27.). In spite of this steep increase the structure for financial support is coping fully, ensuring that all capable individuals have access to higher education.

HEIs are responsible for selecting students for admission. According to the law on HEIs, students entering HEIs are required to have passed the matriculation examination, have finished other equivalent education or have, in the view of the HEI in question, acquired equivalent maturity or knowledge.

All students have access to student loans that cover living costs and tuition fees according to stipulations of law no. 21/1992 on the Student Loan Fund.

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.

The Student Loan Fund offers study loans to everybody studying at HEIs. The loans have low interest rates and the repayment is related to gross income after graduation. Each HEI has within its structure, counselling services as an integral part of the student support system. Measures of retention are being developed in relation with the STPC especially in relation to women participation in science and technology.

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.

Icelandic language courses are offered to all foreign exchange students. Courses for Erasmus students are offered in the summer before the actual study period begins and courses are also offered as a part of the study programme. Additionally, Icelandic language courses are offered on-line as self-study programmes.

All Icelandic HEIs offer assistance in finding housing for exchange students. In most HEIs a student assistance system has also been developed.

In order to improve the mobility of Icelandic students to other countries regular information meetings are held in each HEI. The Office of International Education (OIE) at the University of Iceland also holds regular meetings for foreign students of all HEIs.

Increased flexibility in the programmes of the HEIs has encouraged internal mobility.

International mobility has always been prevalent in the education of Icelanders. Post graduate studies especially have been largely conducted abroad. Only in recent years the percentage studying abroad of the Icelandic student body has fallen mainly due to increased availability of masters and doctoral programmes in and the increase in the total number of students in higher education in Iceland. Although the percentage has decreased the actual number of Icelandic students studying abroad has increased over the last 10 years. In 1995 the total number of Icelandic students in higher education both in Iceland and abroad was 9.171 of those students 1.696 were studying abroad or 22,7 % but in 2005 the total was 18.863 and 2.237 or 13,5 % were studying abroad.

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.

The loans from the Icelandic Student Loan Fund are fully portable thus making it possible for all those who are interested to study abroad.

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.

The HEIs are preparing measures to increase staff mobility. The information and assistance will be improved both for those arriving and going abroad. Special language courses will also be offered for mobile staff.

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

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

Most HEIs offer courses taught in English. In recent years an increasing number of students from countries, both within and outside the EHEA, have studied at an Icelandic HEI. In the school year 2005-2006 there were for example 695 foreign students at the University of Iceland from 71 countries. Iceland, as other countries, has used its participation in international fora such as the European Union, OECD, CoE and the Nordic Council of Ministers, to promote the Icelandic Higher Education System abroad. Many Icelandic HEIs have entered into bilateral contracts with foreign universities, both in the United States and Europe. The Icelandic HEIs take part in conferences held by the National Association of Foreign Students Affairs (NAFSA) an international fora, where there is an opportunity to promote the EHEA as well as Icelandic higher education. The University of Iceland also takes part in the European Utrecht net of about 30 universities one of whose main aims is to promote the EHEA on other continents.

Future challenges

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

As in most western countries the financing of HE both of teaching and research is the main challenge. Iceland has not introduced tuition fees in public HEIs but the private institutions charge tuition fees. As mentioned above the Student Loan Fund offers loans to pay the tuition fees so the possibility to study at these institutions is open to everybody. The other main challenge in Iceland is the work on the implementation of the new law on HEIs no. 63/2006, especially the accreditation process which will provide very accurate information on the status of the higher education system. The accreditation process will be in the hands of foreign experts that will evaluate the study programmes offered by the HEIs limited to specific fields of study in accordance with definitions by the OECD's Frascati manual. The process will include all the HEIs in the country, including the two HEIs that fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture. Accordingly by mid 2008 all HEIs will have been through the accreditation process.

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