

Bologna Process Follow-Up Seminar:

NEW CHALLENGES IN RECOGNITION

**Bologna and the World, or
Bologna vs. the World?**

Transatlantic Progress and Challenges
in a Global Context

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How we began -1998

European Transatlantic Views and Policies

- U.S. secondary education was not recognized or partially recognized, while Canadian secondary education was usually recognized;
- U.S. and Canadian community college (diploma, Associate) qualifications were largely treated as outside higher education;
- U.S. Bachelor's degrees were partially recognized at best; Canadian first degrees were recognized;
- U.S. and Canadian Master's degrees were usually recognized (but MBAs and some other types were sometimes questioned);
- U.S. and Canadian Doctorates were generally recognized, but some countries treated U.S. Doctorates as "taught" due to misunderstanding of the U.S. credit system;
- Decentralized North American education systems were not well understood, leading to mistaken assumptions about quality assurance and structure; and
- U.S. involvement in transnational education, as well as the U.S. and Canadian embrace of distance learning were viewed with suspicion in many quarters.

How we began -1997

North American Transatlantic Views and Policies

- North Americans recognized European secondary qualifications, but not always as superior to theirs;
- North Americans did not, as a rule, recognize 3-year Bachelor degrees as comparable to theirs;
- North Americans did recognize European master's and higher degrees – usually without conditions;
- North American – especially U.S. – institutions used a credit transfer formula that only partially accepted ECTS credits;
- Most North American educators regarded the nascent Bologna Process as purely a European development with no implications for them, and most ignored it;
- A great number of North American educators did not understand European systems very well; and
- U.S. educators did not understand why others viewed their system as a threat, or tended to recognize aspects of the even more decentralized Canadian system in preference to theirs.

Shared Issues circa 1997

- We saw ourselves as having the best and most developed education systems in the world, and others as copies of varying quality;
- Our attitudes toward non-Regional institutions and qualifications was often inconsistent with intra-Regional practices;
- The major importing and exporting education systems were not prepared for the rapid expansion of other competitive education systems from 1997 to 2007;
- Many exporting and importing systems too often treated other countries primarily as locations for investment and recruitment rather than as partners with rights;
- Host countries frequently had no means to share information, regulate providers or build systemic capacity;
- We paid lip service to, but practically tended to ignore, brain drain issues and other protestations from the “developing” world; and
- Concerned educators and policymakers in many countries began to push for the policing of national systems and transnational activities via international organizations and agreements.

Developments Across a Decade +

- 1994 – CEPES publishes the report on Recognition of Qualifications Between Europe and the USA, where both sides agree to disagree.
- 1996-97 – European Region countries negotiate and sign the Lisboa Convention, which enters into force in 1999.
- 1999 – The Bologna Process is launched, with non-EHEA countries initially neither allowed to observe nor consult.
- 2001 – The Prague Communiqué adopts Bologna Action Line 9, promoting the attractiveness of the EHEA.
- 2001 – ENIC-NARIC Networks accept the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education and Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures for Assessing Foreign Qualifications.
- 2001 – UNESCO launches the Global Forum on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Recognition of Qualifications
- 2002 – CEPES proposes that the ENIC-NARIC Networks develop a centrally managed Transnational Education Database.

2003 – The United States rejoins UNESCO.

2003 – UNESCO and the OECD propose joint resolutions on a binding regime of international quality assurance plus a centrally managed database of recognized institutions.

2004 – BFUG Seminar in Hamburg marks the first time that EHEA Bologna participants address non-EHEA views of Bologna.

2005 – The ENIC-NARIC Networks drop the idea of a centrally managed Transnational Education Database.

2005 – After intense negotiations, UNESCO and the OECD issue the Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education as non-binding documents, and recast the database proposal as a simple portal linking national websites.

2006 – Russia proposes development of international qualifications and quality assurance guidelines for the G8, but this proposal is not accepted by the USA and others and is dropped.

2006 – CEPES initiates project on university ranking systems, which is roundly criticized by the ENIC-NARIC Networks.

2006 – U.S. government renews its efforts against diploma mills and bogus or substandard accreditors; educators and policymakers call for a national strategy to promote U.S. higher education.

2006 – UNESCO proposes a pilot “information tool” project to develop a managed information portal on cross-border education. U.S. participation is conditional on this remaining a decentralized portal controlled by national authorities – stay tuned.

2006 – Bologna issues are featured at the annual meetings of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools.

2006 – Bologna is the subject of an academic conference on Transatlantic developments hosted by the University of Pittsburgh’s European Union Center of Excellence.

2006 – U.S., Australian, German and British education authorities co-host a symposium on 3-year degrees in Washington, DC, the first formal U.S.-European discussion of recognition issues since 1994.

Where we are - 2007

European Transatlantic Views and Policies

- The EHEA countries now seek outreach to North America and elsewhere;
- EHEA systems have begun to recognize U.S. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate qualifications for access to higher education;
- Community colleges are better understood, and their credits are more frequently accepted as part of Bachelor degree programs;
- U.S. and occasional Canadian bachelor degrees are still only partly recognized (Australia refuses to recognize U.S. honors degrees as comparable, and some EHEA systems still only recognize 2 years of a U.S. bachelor's program);
- North American master's and higher degrees are now generally recognized;
- U.S. and frequently Canadian QA authorities are selectively recognized if at all, despite the provisions of Lisboa; and
- EHEA countries and others have strengthened their visa policies.

- The decentralized aspects of U.S. and Canadian higher education are still misunderstood and in some cases used to justify barriers;
- Private education providers, frequently encountered in the U.S. system and increasing across Europe, are still not fully understood or accepted as legitimate;
- Distance learning is increasingly accepted, so long as it has acceptable QA;
- The size and diversity, competitive organization, and practice of transnational provision of the U.S. system are still viewed as challenges.

Where we are - 2007

North American Transatlantic Views and Policies

- The situation with respect to EHEA secondary qualifications has not changed, but concern about the issue is more widespread;
- As of fall 2007, surveys show that over 50% of U.S. and even more Canadian institutions are aware of Bologna and its importance;
- 56% of the U.S. and Canadian graduate schools that accept the most international students now accept 3-year degrees (other than UK degrees), and nearly half (44%) of the rest;
- U.S. institutions that have close partnerships with EHEA institutions, and which sponsor study abroad programs or receive numbers of EHEA students, are aware of the Diploma Supplement and sometimes use it;

- Credit transfer issues are beginning to receive attention in the United States, especially institutions with EHEA partners, and at the Provincial level for Canada ;
- U.S., Canadian and other European Region educators now hold frequent conferences and participate in one another's meetings;
- Canadian and U.S. student and exchange visitor visa procedures have been and are continuing to be improved; and
- U.S. educators and policymakers are engaged in following Canada's lead to develop coordinated and active promotion of their higher education system.

Where we are - 2007

- We still do not fully understand or accept the organization and structure of each other's education systems;
- We still make recognition policies and decisions based on outmoded knowledge and assumptions;
- Our shared goal of improving recognition remains subordinate to internal issues as well as systemic misunderstandings;
- Our view of the world is still too often as a student feeder area and an opportunity zone for our providers; but
- We are now more fully aware of the rapid development of higher education outside our systems; and
- We now better understand brain drain and related mobility issues.

We have been relieved to discover that our mutual recognition issues are not as bad as we feared, but we cannot afford for this temporary "fix" to breed complacency and allow us to sink back into old habits.

Transatlantic Stocktaking

A personal view

Quality Assurance	CANADA	USA	EHEA
1. Stage of Development of QA	Green	Green	Green
2. Key Elements of Evaluation	Green	Green	Green
3. Level of Student Participation	Green	Orange	Yellow
4. Level of International Cooperation	Yellow	Green	Yellow
Two-Cycle Degree System	Blue	Blue	Blue
5. Stage of Implementation	Green	Green	Green
6. Level of Student Enrollment	Green	Green	Green
7. Access from 1 st to 2 nd Cycle	Green	Green	Yellow
Recognition Progress	Blue	Blue	Blue
8. Status of DS v. Transcript	Yellow	Yellow	Green
9. Ratification of Lisboa	Yellow	Yellow	Green
10. ECTS Status	Yellow	Yellow	Green
11. Transatlantic Recognition	Green	Yellow	Yellow
TOTAL (3.9, 3.8, 3.7)	Green	Diagonal Green/Blue	Diagonal Green/Blue

The Road Ahead

- European and North American systems need to continue improving their understanding and respect for each other particularly EHEA and the United States;
- Progress on changing outmoded policies and practices that inhibit recognition needs to continue;
- The systems in Europe and North America need to view each other as legitimate partners, not merely as competitive rivals;
- We need to develop better understanding of systems outside the UNESCO European Region and their aspirations;
- It is important that we recognize one another's national competent authorities, particularly but not limited to QA;
- Our European and Australasian partners need to realize that their concept of qualification frameworks is not part of the North American educational culture, and that non-centralized structures can nevertheless give good results;

- We must take care to avoid raising « substantial difference » arguments so often that some systems are effectively treated as largely unworthy of fair recognition; and
- We need to understand the limits of global regulation by IGOs, and the promise of mutual cooperation and capacity-building.

Together we can!

**Thank you for your past and future
cooperation.**

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Canadian and U.S. views!***