

# Theme 5

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## *Pushing forward Bologna and Prague*



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# **Groups 5A+D**

## **New structures and their impact**

### **1 . Survey**

- overriding principles of the two-cycle structure**
- overriding structural principles of the first cycle**
- focusing on the master phase**
- the doctoral phase**



## 2. Basics: terminology and links

Employability should not be mixed up with meaning nothing but a profession-orientation in a narrow sense (as readiness for particular profession)

- It should be seen in systemic context with LLL and training on-the-job schemes
- Aim is *sustainable employability* not just responding to short-term labour market concerns
- This results in employability as indicating: the ability to do something on an academic background, which society is willing to pay for.

- **The link between employability and academic outcomes should be realised**

a) by fostering analytic thinking, competent reasoning, the ability to structure information and arguments, and the ability to interact in a social context.

b) by preparation for pursuit of a particular profession, closely involving professional associations and employers in curricular development

- **Learning to learn should be addressed in particular**

### 3. Employability in an academic context and the “stepping-stone philosophy”

- there are options in the balance between academic content and the skills orientation according to the mission of the institution/ programme;
- all first cycle programmes must offer an option to enter the labour market;
- the HEIs should offer second cycle programmes (either research or professionally oriented)

*Thus, stepping-stone concept is wrong if meant as serving as a **stepping stone only***



## 4. Course design, level descriptors and outcomes

- Curricula must be re-designed in order to give bachelor and master degrees meaning in their own right
- The description of qualifications should shift from listing input characteristics to description through levels and learning outcomes and competencies
- to explore desired learning outcomes, there needs to be a structured debate with relevant stakeholders and graduates

- Dublin descriptors of levels as general orientation are useful,
- but they have to be complemented more specifically with regard to academic fields

- Descriptive studies of academic cores and competencies (e.g. Tuning initiative) are appreciated, when serving as reference points for curriculum development and quality assurance
- However, these reference points should not be seen as binding normative standardizations (core curricula), but variations are possible if justified.
- States or EU should not impose core curricula by means of legal instruments or in any other way.
- There is a need for quality assurance systems in institutions and a governed system to maintain it.



# 5. Qualifications' frameworks

- Transparency should be provided for national qualifications by described these qualifications in terms of level, profile and learning outcomes, thus forming national qualifications' frameworks
- An overarching EHEA framework should be flexible enough to accommodate the national frameworks and it will serve as a translation tool between the national ones
- The EHEA framework should also address the need to develop an European standard against competitive systems.



# 6. Implementation strategies

- no blueprint for implementation,
- due to different national legal setups, cultures etc., implementation strategies should be introduced in a decentralized manner,
- HEIs must take responsibility for the implementation process



- in doing so, internal communication and learning processes must be established to enhance staff awareness and ownership,
- it is noted that there may be need for transitory steps to allow adaptation to the new system
- governments should set up incentives for implementation, namely provide specific funding.



## 7. Design of master's level

- masters are open to a variety of approaches and outcomes, as long as they are transparent
- variety can pertain to research or skills orientation, it can be specialization or a crossover structure,
- however, masters should not only be a second degree in time, but also in level. Even in a crossover master degree programme, there must be at least some learning experiences at master level.

## 8. Access and admission

*Access means the right to be considered for admission, not automatic admission*

- Access should be open in principle for holders of bachelor degrees or equivalent;
- no quotas should be set by governments;
- there can be qualitative thresholds, defined by institutions (there also can be capacity constraints).



## 9. Do integrated masters belong to Bologna?

- Group D – every degree has to be a stand-alone, to ensure students' right to make choices.
- Group A – there was an opinion that masters' level degrees as first degrees are possible in some disciplines, but all programmes should at least provide an exit at bachelor's level

# 10. Doctoral phase

## Group 5D

- YES to inclusion of doctoral programmes in Bologna process;
- preparing for Ph.D can be varied: both taught programmes and individual supervision should be possible

# 11. Topics for further debate

- joint degree programmes,
- overlap (possibilities for transferring credits from bachelor to master phase)



# **Working Group 2: Transparency and recognition: ECTS and curricular reform**

## **1. Endorsement and commitment:**

- **a call to institutions to make the implementation of ECTS a central point of institutional policy leading to institution-wide implementation.**



## 2. Widening significance

- Building on the conclusions and recommendations of the Zurich Conference, ECTS has to be further promoted as both a **transfer and accumulation system**.
- The link has to be made between **ECTS and learning outcomes** in the context of **lifelong learning**:
  - to enhance flexibility in the learning process
  - to facilitate recognition of informal learning

- The link between ECTS and learning outcomes may help to elaborate the qualifications' frameworks.
- Further discussion is needed on the use of ECTS at doctoral level

### 3. Conceptualizing

- There is general **need for information, including counselling**, on:
  - ECTS key features (principles and tools)
  - the use of ECTS as an accumulation system (methodology)
  - the potential of ECTS to bring about reform at institutional level in the context of the paradigm shift from teaching to learning
- In procedure, involvement and ownership must be provided. This means that academics and students have to be involved in the policy-making, implementation processes and designing workload.

## **4. Monitoring and quality assurance in ECTS application.**

- Workload-based study concepts must be monitored in practice with regard to practicality of quantitative concept in reality
- Students must be involved in the evaluation of workload

# Group 5 C

## Social dimension

- If tuition fees exist, balancing mechanisms need to be developed to guarantee equal access
- HEIs need to provide special services to increase access from underrepresented groups
- Services to facilitate access need to be better supported financially by funding agencies
- Student loans and grants should be made portable to increase mobility



- Social security systems, especially pension systems, need to be more flexible to allow increased teacher mobility
- EUA should encourage the exchange of good practices with regards to HEIs' support services for students and staff



- The value added to a student needs to be taken into account in quality and funding procedures
- There is need for a European survey on questions of access and social conditions of students