

## **Implementation of the Bologna Goals in Denmark**

### **The Bologna Process**

A reform of higher education programmes, known as the Bologna Process, is taking place in several European countries for the purpose of creating a common European area for higher education before 2010 with free mobility for students and graduates.

The targets of the Bologna Process are set out in the Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, and further clarified in the communiqué from the meeting of ministers in Prague on 19 May 2001.

### **The organisation of the follow-up process in Denmark**

In Denmark, the Bologna Process covers education programmes and institutions under several ministries, each of which are responsible for the implementation of the process within their ministerial jurisdictions. It has also been a goal to fully include the ministries' professional agencies, education institutions and organisations in the implementation process.

Therefore, the implementation process is led by a steering group – the Bologna Follow-up Group –, which has the following members:

Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (chairmanship)  
Danish Ministry of Education  
Danish Ministry of Culture  
Danish Evaluation Institute (quality assurance agency for international education programmes)  
Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (NARIC)  
CIRIUS Denmark (programme administration and information)  
Danish Rectors' Conference  
Danish Association of Institutions in Higher Education (DAN-EURASHE)  
Danish Confederation of Professional Associations  
National Union of Students in Denmark

The Bologna Follow-up Group has had the following three functions:

Contact forum for the parties involved in the process  
Steering group for the projects initiated  
Reference group for international activities  
Information about the Bologna Process in Denmark can be found on the web site [www.bologna.dk](http://www.bologna.dk)

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## **Follow-up on the individual goals of the process**

### **Mutual recognition of foreign qualifications**

*Mutual recognition of foreign qualifications is the core of the Bologna collaboration, because recognition, in part, makes mobility in the European labour market for people with a higher education possible and, in part, makes further education in other European countries (academic recognition) possible.*

The Lisbon Convention has been ratified and the instrument of ratification has been transferred to the Council of Europe.

As of 1 September 2002, it is obligatory to issue a Diploma Supplement to graduates from higher education programmes in Denmark, in accordance with the provision set in the Executive Order on exams for higher education programmes. A common Diploma Supplement template has been designed to be issued by all institutions of higher education as an English-language supplement to the Danish diploma.

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An agency has been established which is responsible for recognising foreign qualifications: The Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and it is the Danish participant in the ENIC-NARIC networks. The rules for the activities have been most recently set out in Consolidated Act no. 74 of 24 January 2003. A board of appeals has been established, Kvalifikationsnævnet (Board of Qualifications), for the purpose of assessing disagreements between students and institutions of higher education regarding credits for foreign qualifications.

### **Degree structure**

*To facilitate transparency and mobility, the participating countries have committed themselves to implementing a tiered system within their higher education programmes.*

For the university sector, a decision in principle was made back in 1993 in connection with the political agreement between the Danish Government and the parties represented in the Danish Parliament on the implementation of a Bachelor Degree in university programmes and the gradual implementation of such a degree in connection with the revision of the Executive Orders on Education from 1993 (the so-called 3+2+3 system). This has now been made statutory in Act no. 403/2003 on universities, which lays down the degree structure for university education programmes. The reform is by and large complete, but is in the process of being developed further at the universities to give more flexible study and exam forms.

For medium-cycle higher education programmes, the Professional Bachelor Degree was introduced in Act no. 481/2000. The programmes, which are mostly aimed at the education and health sectors, have been reformed in order to fulfil the new requirements.

Act no. 1115/1997 on short-cycle higher education programmes introduces a new sector in Danish higher education – namely a two-year professionally oriented higher education programme.

A common systematic description of the degrees used in the higher education system has been developed, *Towards a Danish “Qualifications Framework” for higher education*, which include adult education programmes. It is to be applied in the development and evaluation of education programmes and in recognition of qualifications.

### **Establishment of a system of credits**

*A common perception of the size of education programmes and the number of credits an education unit is worth is a prerequisite for establishing a form of mobility that does not prolong length of study. Therefore, the member countries have committed themselves to implementing a credit system – the ECTS – as a means to promote greatest possible student mobility.*

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The previous indication of the size of education units, i.e. “student man-years”, has been replaced by an indication of credits according to the ECTS system. As of 1 September 2001, it is obligatory to indicate the size of education units in ECTS credits in accordance with the provision set out in the Executive Order on exams for higher education programmes. The scheme was made statutory in the new University Act, and is also applied in the Executive Orders on Education in the other areas of higher education.

Projects have been carried out on the use of ECTS information packages, but their use is not obligatory. However, the information packages containing descriptions of academic targets, content, teaching and evaluation structures are used by the universities in connection with student exchange.

Projects will be carried out on further use of the ECTS marking scale by the Rector’s Conference and similar organisations.

### **Promotion of mobility**

*The member countries have committed themselves to removing other barriers to mobility, especially student access to education programmes and their associated services.*

Denmark participates in a number of exchange programmes, which are relevant for higher education, notably:

Nordplus

Socrates/Erasmus

Leonardo

Cultural agreements with various countries

Education institutions’ own networks and agreements

Higher education institutions receive special funding in proportion to the number of incoming and outgoing international exchange students (the “internationalisation taximeter”).

An agency for international education programmes, CIRIUS, has been established, which is responsible for programme administration and the dissemination of information. At the education institutions, international units have been established which provide services to exchange students and other foreign students. A “crisis manual” has been prepared with recommendations for dealing with unusual situations. Both CIRIUS and the education institutions have English-language homepages as well. A large amount of Danish education legislation has been translated into English.

A growing number of education programmes and courses are offered in English.

Mobility also includes trainee programmes abroad, especially for students following medium-cycle higher education programmes.

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Danish students can, for the most part, take their Danish State study grants with them when they study abroad.

The government has presented a programme for building new student housing in which a portion of the rooms are to be reserved for exchange students.

### **Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance**

*Confidence in the quality of other countries’ education programmes is a prerequisite for recognition and mobility, so member countries have, therefore, committed themselves to collaboration on quality assurance.*

Since 1992, external and systematic evaluations of Danish higher education programmes have been carried out by an independent evaluation agency. The Danish Evaluation Institute can initiate evaluations by its own decision. It is a founding member of the European Network of Quality Assurance (ENQA). It is at the moment responsible for the conduct of TEEP.

The University Act increases the universities’ duty to conduct continuous and systematic quality development of their education programmes. Evaluation and planning for the follow-up process must be included in the universities’ Performance Contracts, which they enter into with the Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation. The universities will have the option of choosing the Danish Evaluation Institute or a foreign evaluation agency to conduct the evaluations. The universities have taken part in several European initiatives, namely under the auspices of the European University Association (EUA) and, most recently, in the Quality Culture Project, in which a Danish medium-cycle education institution is also participating.

For short-cycle higher education programmes, requirements have also been set down centrally regarding the internal quality assurance system of the education institutions.

For exams, the Danish education institutions are required to use a corps of external examiners who are also required to provide an evaluation of the total exam results.

### **Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education**

*The member countries have committed themselves to promoting the European dimension in higher education, especially in the areas of academic discipline development, institutional cooperation, mobility programmes and joint education programmes.*

Danish education institutions are active participants in European and international networks. Danish universities participated in six of the subprojects in the “Tuning Educational Structures in Europe” project (i.e. business economics, education theory, geology, history, mathematics and physics, but not chemistry). The universities in the Copenhagen metropolitan area and in Southern Sweden (Scania) cooperate in education and research in a transnational university consortium “The Øresund University”.

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Danish higher education institutions take part in the development and establishment of European joint programmes and degrees. Some examples: A joint Swedish-Danish education programme in horticulture has been established. German-Danish cooperation in joint programmes in business economics and business has been working for ten years. Joint English-Danish programmes in Marketing and in Finance have been established too. Danish universities are participating in three of the projects relating to the joint European Master programmes.

### **Life-long learning**

Denmark has established an independent education system aimed specifically at adults and with its own set of degrees:

Adult higher education (VUU)

Diploma programmes

Master programmes

Admittance to these programmes requires at least two years’ professional experience. Approximately 80 different Master programmes and a number of Diploma programmes are offered within the adult education system.

It will also be possible to offer normal higher education programmes, including Bachelor and Candidatus programmes, as part-time programmes (under the auspices of the Open University programme).

For a fee, the institutions also offer specially structured courses for companies.

### **Higher education institutions and students**

The autonomy of Danish universities is laid down in the University Act, according to which all universities are to be converted into non-profit institutions. The

act also ensures that students have influence on their education through joint curriculum boards and through participation in consultative bodies.

Centres for Higher Education, which offer medium-cycle higher education programmes for Professional Bachelors, are organised as independent non-profit institutions. The students are represented on the study boards of the individual programmes.

Vocational academies, which offer short-cycle higher education programmes, are sections at vocational schools, which are independent non-profit institutions. The students are represented on the education committees of the academies.

### **Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**

A number of programmes are offered in English, but there is great variation in the size of the programmes from one higher education institution to another.

For non-European students, there are a number of scholarships available through the Denmark International Study Programme and Fulbright Programme (USA), cultural agreements (China), ASEM-DUO (Asian ASEM countries), DANIDA (developing countries) and through the universities' own networks. An overall plan has not yet been developed.

Students from abroad can also be admitted to Danish universities against full payment.

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