

# Educating for a Global World

Reforming German Universities toward the  
European Higher Education Area



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# Editorial



**MARGRET WINTERMANTEL**  
President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

Dear Readers,

Early next year the Ministers of Education of the Bologna Process member states will meet in Louvain. We are looking forward to this conference with anticipation – it is also an occasion for the German Rectors' Conference to issue this collection of articles. The result lies before you. On the following pages, we attempt to trace the steps of the Bologna reforms and their effects in Germany and Europe. We also provide a platform for various stakeholders to present their viewpoints. On this note, I would especially like to thank the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for making this possible through their financial support.

As of now we are approaching the tenth year of the Bologna Process, which in many ways represents an unprecedented endeavour. Bologna stands for a comprehensive modernisation of study programmes and for internationally comparable degrees. It also entails a change in perspective toward the learners and their development of competences. At the end of this path we hope to find improvements in the quality of teaching for the sake of strengthening students' scientific knowledge and skills. That is one of the essential goals of our efforts.

In the course of this process, German higher education institutions have modernised and introduced more than 7,500 study programmes with the Bachelor or Master degrees issued across Europe. That amounts to more than two-thirds of the entire courses of study offered in Germany. Consequently, this shows that German universities are taking over an ever larger responsibility and achieving a great deal.

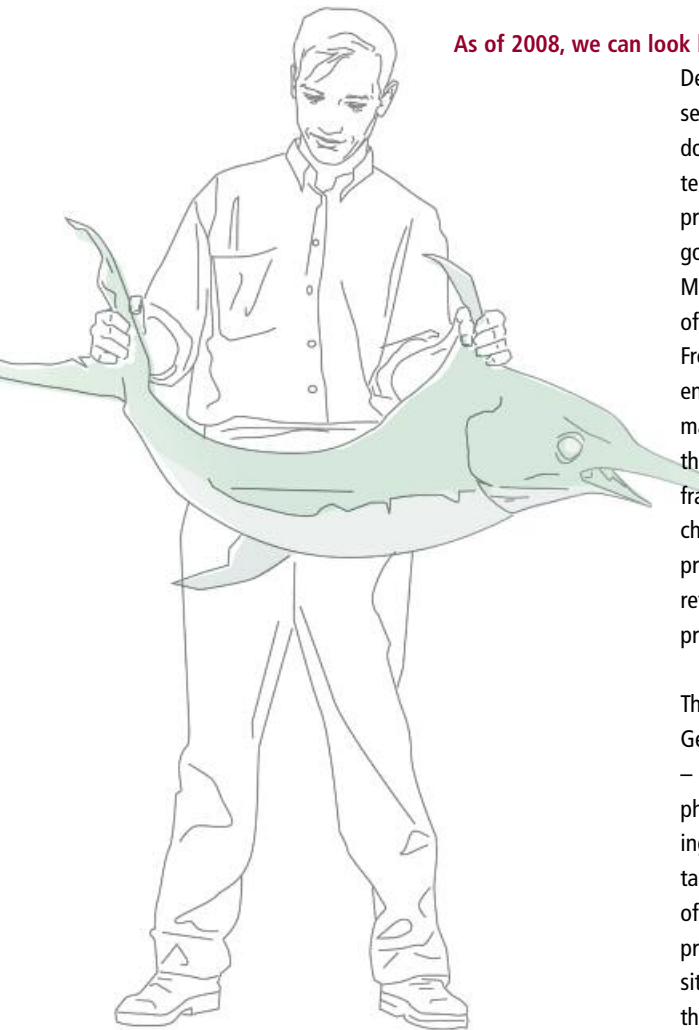
At the same time, we must confront the imminent challenges. And despite major accomplishments, Bologna still appears to be suffering from an "image problem" where criticism and scepticism – though clearly necessary – overshadow the positive effects of the reform. Critique should drive the need for improvement, but we should recognize the encouraging results to energise us for our further efforts. This volume of articles illustrates the impressive achievements, but also a realistic balance of the tasks yet to be addressed. They hopefully offer some insightful lessons learnt as well that may prove helpful within Germany and beyond. I am confident that we can assert the quality and the competitiveness of the German higher education system on an international scale. And in doing so, we can contribute together to the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area as a whole.

Margret Wintermantel

# Implementing Bologna in Germany

## A “Success Story” in the Making, but only if More is Achieved

From increasing mobility to improving studyability and employability, Bologna has a wide set of goals. In order to fulfil its promises, a variety of actors from academia, government, companies and social partners must work together



As of 2008, we can look back on nine years of an unprecedented reform process. The Bologna Declaration of 1999 stated that the first qualifying degree shall be followed by a second one and then doctoral studies. No other rules or specifications were laid down with regard to the duration or structure of study programmes, education systems or the names of degrees. All other structural guidelines in Germany are a product of national politics, meaning they have been determined by the federal government in close cooperation with Germany's 16 State (Länder) governments. Moreover, the Bologna “label” has developed into a comprehensive modernisation of study programmes and stands for internationally comparable university degrees. From the outset, the German institutions of higher education have viewed the ensuing study reforms as the strategic focus of their adaptational efforts. They have made the goals of the Bologna process their own. What's more, they understand these goals as an opportunity to internationalise their study programmes in the framework of a common European Higher Education Area, and to make necessary changes that have long been discussed in the national context. In Germany, the process has expanded from increasing international mobility to a comprehensive reform of curricula and teaching that will improve the quality of study programmes profoundly.

The Bologna process by and large has been implemented to a significant extent in Germany. The universities have taken on major responsibility in executing reforms – and that is no small task given the dual burden of introducing the “new” while phasing out the “old” programmes, and despite the perpetual issue of underfunding. Especially the latter could make it overly difficult for universities to take advantage of the otherwise great opportunity offered by Bologna. In 1999, the Ministers of Education from the Federal and State governments called for renewed study programmes, better support and advisory services, quality assurance, fewer university drop-outs, and shorter duration of studies. But without matching investment in the institutions, one may doubt the feasibility of attaining these goals.

At the end of the story, highly qualified and motivated graduates

Quality assurance in studies and teaching is also of central importance for the success of the study reforms. Rigorous quality criteria at universities will have sustainable influence on future competitiveness of the German graduates, their employers and the universities that educate them. Universities are the ones who organize and carry out study programmes and they use external and internal tools for quality assurance. Such systems must be designed suitably to be used on a university-wide



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basis and serve as a reference point for teaching. At the same time, the goals, strategies and measures must accommodate for the diversity of subjects and their specific cultures. Students will only profit from higher teaching quality in the long-term once the necessary structures for quality assurance and further development are established. The goal here, as opposed to competition in research, is to strengthen teaching in the German university system on the whole. In turn, promoting high-quality, high-value and professional teaching at universities will require certain structural and financial conditions to be met.

Teaching and learning is cooperative effort. Teachers and students working together make an unbeatable team

It would also seem that Bologna has not yet reached those study areas in Germany that are completed by state-examinations, in particular law, medicine and education. 35 percent are graduating in these degree programmes over which the universities have only marginal control. Only a few States have begun implementing bachelor and master into "teacher education" programmes, but with mixed results. For universities, this situation is difficult and may throttle development. An additional impediment in Germany is the remaining mistrust in many subjects towards the bachelor degree, with doubts concerning qualifications and career possibilities after such a "short" education. Not every career, though, requires a five-year university study programme. For a long time now, the labour market has been calling for younger graduates who can gain further qualifications in practice. In order to make this project successful and to remove prejudices, universities, ministries of education, companies and social partners should exchange and conduct more dialogue on these study programmes.

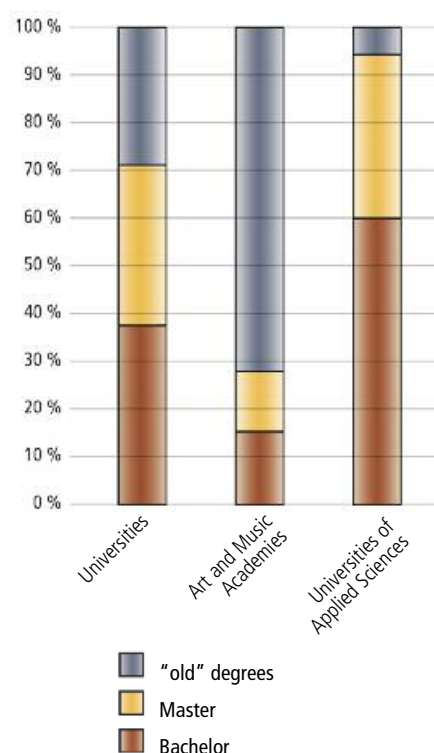
Germany has certainly come a long way in implementing Bologna reforms, but there is much yet to be done. The reform of the German higher education landscape may even become a success story – that is, of course, only if the sequel is at least as good as the first part.

**JOACHIM D. WEBER**

Acting Secretary General of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

## Implementing Bologna is no small task

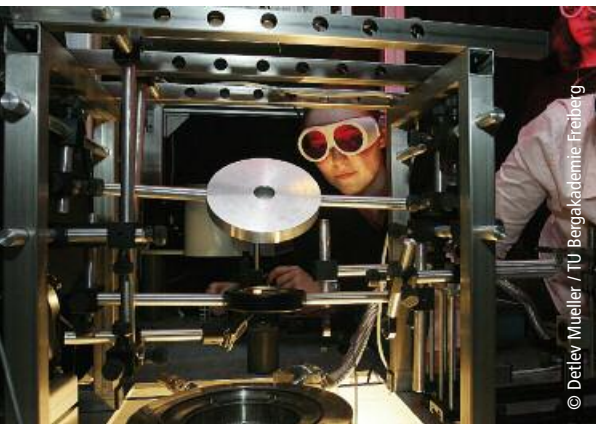
Diagram: Rate of implementation by type of higher education institution (Winter 2008)



# Bologna – An Impetus for Reform

## A “Federal” Perspective

No other higher education area in the world is characterized by so many different cultures as Europe’s...and the higher education reforms are making this treasure universally accessible



Bologna, an unprecedented experiment!



An ever richer assortment

**The Bologna Process has become the** most important forum for higher education policy in Europe. The ongoing dialogue and coordination efforts culminate in the biannual meetings of the European Ministers of Higher Education from the current 46 Bologna members. The Communiqué signed by all member states at the end of the summit then provides a working plan for the following two years. The decisions laid down in the Communiqué are implemented in the individual countries in accordance with their relevant legal contexts. Unsurprisingly, a national government’s influence on higher education institutions varies from country to country, but a common trend seems to be a decrease in state regulation – and Germany is no exception in this case.

Despite the declining role of the state in university life, the government – regardless of whether it is federal or unitary, centralistic or decentralizing – needs to facilitate the Bologna process and the greater modernization of higher education by setting the necessary parameters. There are areas where the German federal government has contributed to the implementation of Bologna decisions, as it should continue to do. The recent amendments to the German Federal Financial Aid Act (BaföG) for example are making student mobility easier. The conditions and regulations of the new study programmes and external quality assurance are being set by the States (Länder) in Germany.

As for the practical side of carrying out the reforms, the institutions of higher education themselves are greatly responsible. And this is precisely the innovative aspect of the Bologna Process – the participation of the stakeholders, especially the universities, students and social partners such as employer and employee representatives. A great deal of the pressure to convert to the Bachelor-Master structure has come from stakeholders and the universities directly. They want to cooperate with other European universities, to make it easier for their students to do graduate studies abroad, and to attract the best Bachelors from Europe for their own Master and doctoral degree programmes. Federal Government, state governments and stakeholders regularly discuss all Bologna-related matters in a National Bologna Follow-Up Group and seek to find pragmatic solutions. Our common goal is to continue improving higher education in Germany and implementing the Bologna reforms, thus bringing our universities to the heart of the European Higher Education Area.

**PETER GREISLER**

Head of Directorate Higher Education, Federal Ministry of Education and Research

# Free Movement of Knowledge

## A "State" Perspective

What has long been standard for companies should apply to students, scholars and researchers too. Free movement between universities will become a key competitive advantage for Europe

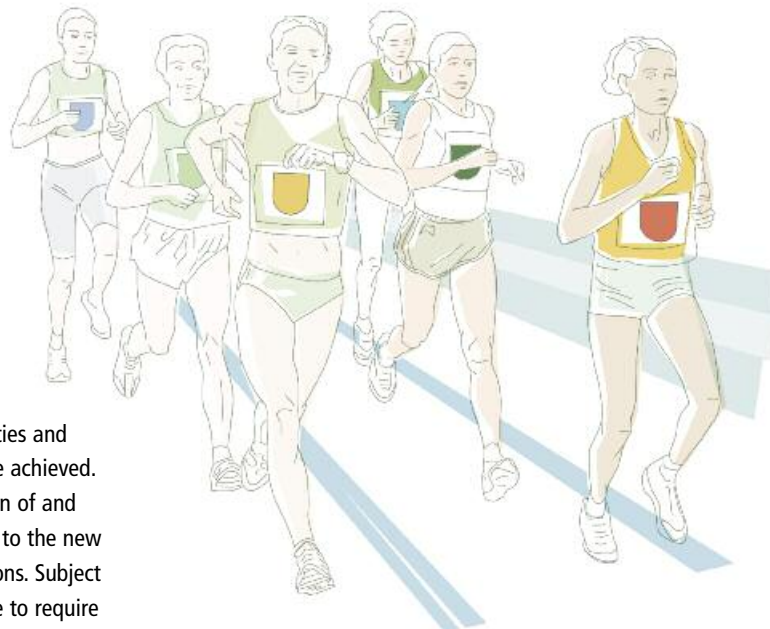
**What the European Union is for** economics, the Bologna Process is for academics. And "Bologna" comes at the right time since we need more international orientation, mobility and cooperation in higher education. Finally, there is the need to improve the competitiveness of our graduates. In order to achieve these goals, the 46 Bologna member states are striving to create a common Higher Education Area by 2010 – the scope of this pan-European dimension being unprecedented in the area of education. For companies and businesses, moving freely throughout Europe is already an everyday routine. This should be the case for students, scholars and researchers too. To that end, there are common standards and principles to be fulfilled by each member country. European diversity in academic training and higher education structures can and will nonetheless remain intact.

In Germany as elsewhere, the state (or various levels thereof), universities and businesses all set parameters within which the Bologna goals are to be achieved. The States (Länder) provide for standards as well as the implementation of and compliance to them, while the actual conversion of study programmes to the new degree forms is carried out by the individual higher education institutions. Subject areas like Medicine, Pharmacy and Law are still regulated and continue to require "state examinations". However, it is only a matter before conversion to new degree programmes occurs here too, as State efforts in the area of "teacher education" programmes are already illustrating.

With regard to quality assurance, a network of structures has established itself in Germany involving a variety of actors, a common theme in the Bologna Process. There are a series of specialised quality assurance agencies and States have set up accreditation councils for assessing their reliability. Both the federal and state governments are also working together on a German Qualification Framework to be used for making degrees from the areas of school, vocational training and universities more internationally comparable – a complex endeavour that will take some time. The implementation of Bologna will lead to a more attractive higher education landscape and thus Germany must progress at a good pace, especially since one thing is for sure: The competition is not waiting.

### **BIRGER HENDRIKS**

Head of Department for Science, Ministry of Science, Economy and Transportation of the State of Schleswig-Holstein



An exciting race that brings everyone forward!

# Advancing the Bologna Process Beyond 2010

## Optimising and Completing the Reform Achievements

After a period of incredible reform tempo, the acceptance of Bologna reforms and their implementation are on fragile ground. For sustainable reform success, national higher education systems need to enter a phase of readjustment

**For a number of reasons, the Bologna Process** may need to enter a phase of adjustment and optimization. Bologna reforms have triggered a period of incredible tempo in restructuring the higher education degree programmes in many Bologna member states. The next step should entail a more substantive phase of readjustment, more intense consultation and routine in "fine-tuning" individual approaches to the reform challenges. In order to focus on particular questions for each of the national education systems and to make the Bologna reforms sustainable, priorities likewise need to be set for optimizing the reforms. With particular regard to Germany, the following topics will be of key importance for the next stage leading to Bologna 2020.

In the context of substantive reform, quality and access issues will play a central role. For a better national implementation of Bologna, information must be available and disseminated. It also must be "custom-made" for individual academic-subject cultures and include examples of "good practice". For international mobility in higher education and the workforce, mutual trust is needed in the national diplomas. Bologna is fostering this with overarching criteria and references for quality assurance. At the same time, the development of reliable and feasible admission procedures is a necessary task in the next phase of Bologna. Interestingly, improvements in the area of quality assurance and usage of qualifications frameworks will contribute in turn to the "fairness" and consistency of admissions policies. Likewise, cross-border recognition of qualifications and study achievements will become more feasible thanks to the international infrastructure in quality assurance. Improving recognition, transparent criteria and procedures will drive the Bologna process in future.

Moreover, there remain a number of national obstacles to mobility. Promoting adequate opportunities for financial aid – reforming the system of governmental assistance and facilitating the creation of scholarships – as well as the portability of pensions of academic and research staff are relevant areas to address. Overall conditions for studying should continue to be improved. This would involve creating more "studyable" programmes by offering part-time degree programmes, and promoting academic continuous education. The standard duration of studies should also be geared more toward the necessities of the individual academic subject cultures. In accordance with more flexibility and variety, not to mention the very "spirit of Bologna", internships and study-abroad terms should be inte-



European Higher Education  
Area around the corner



A place in the sun. New experiences, opportunities and horizons

grated into the curricula. At the same time, the status and function of doctoral studies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) must also be clarified.

Essentially, the adjustment and advancement phase entails a further development and implementation of already existing instruments and elements of the Bologna Process. These need to be put into practice or, if already in use, optimized in various areas in order to reach reform targets. Looking at 2020 and beyond, imminent demographic, cultural and labour market changes will continue to pose new challenges. Consequently, in the upcoming knowledge society, the issues of equal opportunity education and the promotion of access for broader strata of the population are becoming ever more salient and critical. Interlinked with those topics is of course the question of financing education. Thus, the ministers of education throughout Europe along with the higher education institutions and social partners in the Bologna area will have to take on these issues. Meeting the increasing levels of academic qualification that the knowledge economy, an internationalising Europe and a global world require translates into the future ambitions of the institutions and societies of the EHEA. Supporting new and diverse paths of education in order to open up more potential, enhancing financial aid and support in order to ensure accessibility, sustaining the Bologna Process as a role model for a truly European education policy by integrating all stakeholders, and continuing to enhance transparency, comparability and information exchange constitute some of the main tasks remaining on the European higher education agenda. All told, Bologna's horizons need to be expanded.

**MARGRET WINTERMANTEL**

President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

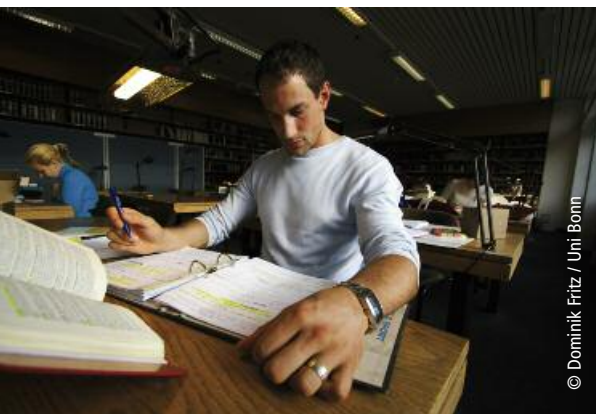
**Supporting new and diverse paths of education in order to open up more potential**

# A Change in Perspective

## Teaching Learning Outcomes and Skills

Bologna is more than a structural reform. It also involves steps toward achieving greater clarity and quality in teaching. Therefore, defining learning outcomes is important – the next step is using them

One of the central issues in the context of improving universities' performance lies in the field of teaching. To teach effectively is to enable students to learn independently. High-quality teaching is, in a word, student-centred. "Bologna" is also a commitment to a curricular reform oriented toward learning outcomes that improve the quality of teaching. A change in perspective from the teacher to the "taught", i.e. the student, is an intensive process that has only just begun. Accordingly, this will place new demands on teaching in higher education institutions.



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Delving into the learning process...

As a defining attribute, academic courses of study are knowledge based and research oriented from the outset. Ideally, a higher education degree programme is designed for students to attain an optimal mixture of subject-related knowledge and necessary methodical and key competences. Put simply, pure knowledge delivery is not enough – that approach to teaching ultimately wastes a great deal of its potential effect. How a teacher structures the learning environment can make the difference between "good" and "not so good" teaching. But adapting to student-centred teaching brings with it a host of challenges for the individual instructors, the students and the university.

Bologna, especially in the German interpretation, sees employability as particularly significant, which is why learning outcomes and skills are deemed so important. To educate for the needs of a knowledge society, changing labour markets and a global world, teaching strategies have to focus on addressing and challenging students as independent, autonomous learners, not least because most graduates will find themselves working in various environments. Hence, they must learn how to learn in order to adapt. To foster students' confidence and independence, teaching must engage students in dialogue, involving intensive communication and sincere cooperation between teachers and students with ample and systematic feedback. Similarly, programme curricula should provide students with orientation aids as well as room to develop, for example by allowing for electives and optional courses, but having clear programme goals and a core set of courses.

For the institutions, implementing a new approach to teaching is intertwined with other goals of higher education reform. In their own interest, universities should establish institutional forms of quality assurance, which can be tuned to student-centred teaching. How the faculties and departments design their degree programmes and modules will surely reflect their level of commitment to this teach-



... Igniting the learning process

ing paradigm. True commitment means a paradigm and perhaps priority shift within the academic culture. This includes a fundamental interest in students' learning success, their inquisitiveness and the promotion of co-responsibility for their learning. In addition, more value must be placed on teaching ability as a key qualification to be gained on the path to becoming a researcher, instructor, professor and so forth. Institutional support is thus absolutely essential. New instructors and professors, but the "older" ones too should be encouraged – e.g. by colleagues, the institution, through training and coaching programmes – to further develop their teaching competence.

In sum, teaching learning outcomes and skills in a student-centred approach and the corresponding examinations are grounded in more active forms of participation and flexibility in selecting teaching approaches. And, akin to other issues in the Bologna Process, this naturally requires resources, in particular, improved student-teacher ratios, enhanced advisory capacity and support services. Hence, the clarion call applies here to the German Länder and federal government to provide sufficient funding for teaching and support between teachers and students, without which these programmes cannot be implemented on a wide, sustainable scale. But besides the funding issues, flexible legal parameters are needed as well. For that purpose, the rules and regulations on capacity at universities and the state-set ceilings must be changed. That represents but some of the factors to resolve on the way to increasing the quality of academic programmes. Dedication to good teaching represents the key to opening the door to achieving that goal. It brings with it a great deal of effort for a lot of actors. But it is worth the effort.

**WILFRIED MÜLLER**

Rector of the University of Bremen, Chair of the Rectors' Conference of the City-State of Bremen and Vice-President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

**Bologna is also a commitment to improving the quality of teaching... a change in perspective from the teacher to the "taught".**

# Improving Mobility in Bachelor's and Master's Programmes

## In Search of a Suitable Framework

The Bologna Process has turned a utopia into reality – and that within only a short amount of time. Numerous barriers have been removed – but some promises are yet to be fulfilled

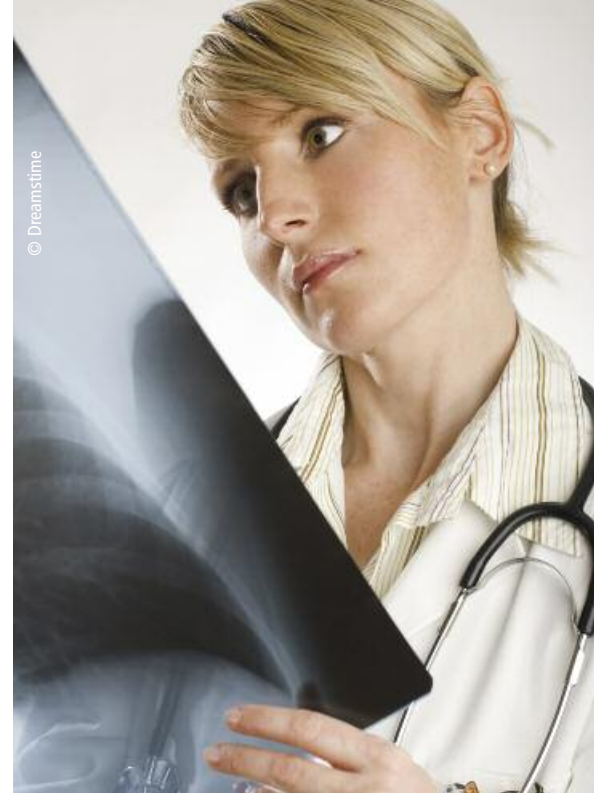
**Promoting borderless mobility has been one of the core goals** of Bologna and is essential for the creation of a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA). But, increasing cross-border mobility has not been as successful as expected from the Bologna Process. There may indeed be hurdles left. While reduced mobility may prove to be a mere transitional "side-effect", its significance should not be underestimated – the rate of mobility ultimately serves as one of the key yardsticks for measuring the success of the higher education reforms. Consequently, efforts in this area will need to be intensified by a number of actors at various levels.

According to a number of studies, the new Bachelor and Master degree programmes are, on the whole, making it easier for students to transfer to universities within Germany and abroad. However, there is a major discrepancy when differentiating between horizontal and vertical mobility. Students in Germany are much more prone to study near "home" for their Bachelor degree, while Master students tend to go to institutions further away and demonstrate a higher frequency of study-related stays abroad. One explanation may be the rather compact, rigid structure of numerous Bachelor programmes that leave little or no buffers for abroad phases, while Master programmes often require internships and abroad experience. This may be affecting the mobility behaviour of students. They postpone that to the interim period between the two study cycles or wait to go abroad during their Master's studies.

Furthermore, despite the advancements triggered by Bologna and the fewer bureaucratic obstacles, the recognition of study activities (university courses, study-relevant internships, etc.) completed abroad remains fairly difficult. Higher education institutions, for one, should show more flexibility and trust toward the performance and quality of other university systems in order to increase the international mobility of students. Procedures for recognizing study activities could be based less on a restrictively schematic comparison and more as a general, total assessment. German universities also have a great deal of catching up to do in applying ECTS correctly as well as issuing Diploma Supplements. In addition,



No limits to where you can learn



Getting abroad should be as easy as possible

“windows of mobility” should be part of the curricula in both study cycles. Another avenue would be to expand common study programmes with partner institutions in other countries (“Joint Programmes”). For the long run, the German Rectors’ Conference’s initiative to align German semester breaks closer with the internationally common academic year will also facilitate study abroad and reduce students’ time lost.

As for the political arena, the German Länder need to play their part as well. Overly rigid rules on the duration of study cycles can be harmful to international mobility, as is the lack of windows of mobility. The Länder also deserve criticism for the slow pace in reforming state-regulated degree programmes like teacher education, almost completely hindering student mobility in these fields. The federal government on the other hand should create more incentives. It could, for example, establish support programmes that reward universities for organizing cross-border study offerings. These are especially cost intensive and demand more staff than customary degree programmes. The federal government could also take more necessary steps by allowing the portability of government assisted stipends and student loans throughout the entire EHEA. Having the possibility to apply for grants and stipends earlier would make higher education even more accessible and financially feasible. As for non-permanent teachers and academic staff, being able to take pension entitlements and claims with them would clearly advance international mobility.

The Bologna Process and its aspired reforms will only succeed in practice if the resources are matched to the increased needs of educating for a global world. In Germany, both the state and federal governments can help make this possible by providing necessary support and cooperation, while the institutions themselves must take initiative to adapt to the changing higher education landscape. We are definitely on the right path! But if we are to take our goals of enhancing mobility in higher education seriously, then we still have work to do. There is certainly no lack of willingness on part of the students to be mobile. Our job is to provide the right framework.

**DIETER LENZEN**

President of the Free University Berlin and Vice-President of the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK)

**The rate of mobility serves as a yardstick for measuring the success of Bologna reforms**

# Improving Recognition for More Mobility

## Transparency Instruments of the Bologna Process

Each country has its own higher education degrees. A common unit of measurement is needed in order to be able to compare them. Precisely this task is being fulfilled by the qualifications framework – and is providing for transparency in Europe

**Mobility in Europe has been problematic, particularly** due to differences in the national higher education systems and degrees. Then the Bologna Process comes along with its package of qualifications frameworks, module descriptions, credit points and Diploma Supplements. Now recognising study activities abroad is a smooth, automatic procedure? Sure, it is not that simple, but for good reason because the diversity of study programmes makes competent scrutiny necessary. The goal instead is to set up clear criteria for recognition that those responsible in higher education institutions can use to make proper and reliable decisions.



Stamped and certified! The accreditation agencies issue the new degree programmes a "seal of approval"

Qualifications frameworks indicate at which level a study programme can be placed and which types of skills (e.g. discipline specific, inter-disciplinary, or communicative) it covers. In Bergen, 2005, the European Ministers of Education agreed upon a qualifications framework. It describes three levels according to necessary skills and scope of studies. The participating countries assign degrees to the coinciding level and make it available for comparison with other partner countries. In Germany, for instance, all degree programmes must correspond with the levels described in the so-called qualifications framework for German higher education degrees that is based on the Bergen framework. Moreover, the accreditation examines whether the "promised" skills level will be reached in that programme. This procedure is likewise based on European standards, laying a good foundation for confidence in the degrees of other partner countries. A German Bachelor, for example, and the French Licence are both assigned to the "First-Cycle" level.

Yet this does not tell us whether the learning outcomes are equal in subject content. But the criterion is not full equivalence in the curricula of the home and host university. That of course would place a tight limit on mobility. Diversity on the other hand is perhaps the primary motivating factor to be mobile. Therefore, the question is to be posed inversely, i.e. is the difference between the learning outcomes achieved abroad and at home so drastic that recognising the "foreign" ones would be unacceptable? If not, the study activities must be counted. We can determine the learning outcomes by the module descriptions that are part of each ECTS package. A situation where a domestic degree programme qualifies the graduate to enter doctoral studies but the programme abroad does not could also constitute a substantial difference. For these issues, the Diploma Supplement provides assistance as it describes the academic and professional status achieved through a particular programme.



Striving together for qualifications

But what if the foreign study activity awards four ECTS points, but the programme at home rewards five, does this imply that the student's work was in vain? Not at all! The learning outcomes attained represent the most important feature and if they are equivalent, nobody will be forced to repeat the work due to one missing credit point. ECTS points provide a useful quantitative measurement of the amount of work a student completed for a course or other study activity. Substantial quantitative differences may indicate that two courses are not equivalent, but smaller differences in otherwise equivalent learning outcomes are obviously no basis to refuse recognition of the student's activity abroad.

Nevertheless, there remains the question of how to proceed in cases of substantial differences in learning outcomes, qualification, course structure or quality in study programmes. One answer is the Lisbon Convention of 1997 which defines these four criteria for a "substantial difference". In these cases, the institution shall check whether the activity can be recognised at least in part and whether the missing learning outcomes can be substituted by an individual exam the student can prepare for. Precisely this sort of arrangement supports mobility and eases the workload of the student and teacher on the whole.

In order to recognise study activities and degrees, they must be checked and verified with regard to their academic substance. This can occur on the basis of pre-arranged agreements between higher education institutions, or by individual request of students. Promoting mobility through recognition requires that the procedures take place transparently and with clearly-defined criteria. The transparency instruments of the Bologna Process help those responsible such as examination committees or registrar offices to make reliable, informed decisions. As a result, recognition procedures will become more systematic, but not automatic. And that is good to know, since this leaves room for flexibility and creativity for the deciders to the advantage of student mobility.

**JAN RATHJEN**

Head of Section Study and Teaching, and  
Personal Assistant to the President, German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

**Transparency Instruments. An advantage for student mobility and institutions of higher education as well!**

# Making Bologna Work: Free Movement in Higher Education!

A Shift from Penalising to Facilitating Mobility in Research and Academia.  
Improving Information, Advisory Services and Possibilities

The discussion on higher education reform in Europe is entering a new phase. Until now, it has been, and will continue to be characterized by demands to increase competitiveness, cooperation, internationality, and permeability between and within the diverse European higher education systems. Summarized into one key term, the next phase needs to involve the promotion and facilitation of mobility in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), both for students and staff. The new phase, to a great extent, has been triggered by the previous one since there is still a way to go in reaching the reform goals. For instance, the restructuring of degree programmes is a major step in the direction of better recognition and comparability. But it has not and, certainly by itself, could not have delivered the desired impetus to mobility. Indeed, there are still a number of external restrictions such as immigration barriers, nationally defined social security systems, and tax regimes. They must be addressed as well, should Europe truly aspire to improve the appeal, performance and reputation of its higher education institutions on the global stage.



Crossing borders requires building bridges

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK), together with international participants, addressed precisely these issues during its official Bologna Seminar on National Pension Schemes as an Obstacle to Mobility for Researchers in June 2008. As discussed in the conference, the heart of the issue is that mobile scientists have a special need for rapidly available, reliable and transparent information on social security issues; they need to be able to be informed of the repercussions of their mobility on their financial situation in the future and particularly in old age. Due to the diversity of national pension schemes and national taxation regimes, often with mutually incompatible rules, mobile scientists are in an unfavourable situation and are in fact frequently "penalised" for their mobility. Higher education institutions of the EHEA and pension providers should take responsibility for offering consistent, accessible and transparent information and advice on all pension-related issues, allowing university staff to take decisions on future geographical or inter-sectoral moves. Existing advisory models have to be analysed and improved in a European exchange of experience and best practice.

Promoting a better and more efficient "Bologna" implementation of academic staff mobility entails a number of factors and steps. Among these are, firstly, raising awareness on multiple levels (within governmental administrations, higher education and research associations, and individual institutes). Furthermore, adequate pension schemes, particularly in the area of supplementary pensions, whether public, private or both, must meet the particular necessities of research



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Getting to the heart of the problem

and academia. Universities can play their part by creating package deals, allowing individual approaches, raising awareness in their staff departments and welcome centres and encouraging individual researchers to think of ways to secure retirement. In this context, a National Pension Register could help in making accrued pension rights transparent for all people. The register could consist of a data bank and a user friendly, internet based application with easy access and reliable information. Researchers could serve as a pilot group for establishing such a register.

These proposals constitute but a few fundamental possibilities for opening the internal European market for this highly specialized professional sector. Europe as a whole would gain from these improved working conditions of its researchers who are the creators of change and innovation. In overcoming long-established national restrictions, while preserving the constructive elements of national social security traditions, Europe could benefit from the added value of globalization and, through a stronger competitive dynamic of its higher education institutions, would gain a competitive advantage. Improved efforts by governments, pension providers and the universities themselves on the other hand also present an optimal opportunity for forging a true partnership. To be sure, enhancing staff mobility ultimately means reducing all kinds of barriers. It also provides a way for securing a highly qualified labour force. Moreover, improved parameters for mobility would enable a more intense knowledge and experience transfer while cultivating the ethos of cultural exchange and mutual understanding, or in other words, making "Bologna" work.

**GERHARD DUDA**

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**Enhancing mobility translates into Europe's competitive advantage**

# Bringing transparency to the faculties?

## The Qualifications Frameworks in Action

The qualifications frameworks represent a tool for enhancing transparency and permeability. They also make it easier for university staff to design their study programmes and curricula, while achieving comparability and compatibility at the same time

It is probably a suitable moment for looking back to the starting point of the Bologna Process: the Sorbonne Declaration. It was here that an idea of cultural and political progress and development towards a “Europe of Knowledge” was formulated. Accordingly, Europe beyond a union of the Euro, banks or the economy, also needed to strengthen and build upon intellectual, cultural and social dimensions of our continent. The institutions of higher education have been awarded a special and important role in this challenge and in reaching these goals.

Obviously this is no trivial thing. And it is up to actors in the field of higher education to make their contribution to building a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to deliver high-quality personal education and compatible qualification to its academic learners. The role for the universities is constitutionally bound to their specific character, with independence and autonomy. Bologna strives to ensure that higher education and research systems continuously adapt to changing needs, society’s demands and advances in scientific knowledge. It also encourages and strengthens this unique characteristic of the EHEA. So the Bologna Process in the whole and its individual instruments have to be measured against the real upgrading of degrees of academic freedom for the academic actors and institutions. And, this has to be the case for the important “Bologna-tools” such as the qualifications frameworks (QFs).

We can observe an emerging system of qualifications frameworks in Europe. By transferring the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF LLL) to the national education systems, the development of different national and sectoral QFs has accelerated remarkably. Here the Bologna Process meets the Copenhagen Process and a new bond between school education, vocational training and academic education is growing. A better comparability and recognition of different elements in the individual qualifications profiles will be realized in the near future. We are facing new flexibility and freedom of movement for education and employment.

Whether QFs can be useful for the specific conditions of academic work and education depends on a few important factors. They should, if they act as a mediator between an autonomous design of a study course, on the one hand, and the employers’ demands for qualifications. They can, if they are written in a common language of both sides. Therefore we have to formulate the descriptors of qualifi-



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Qualifications frameworks offer teachers more room for designing their courses



What the graduates learn during their studies can be “read” in the qualifications frameworks

cations in the terms of “learning outcomes” – one could call the “Bologna-Code”. They must, if the way to reach a particular learning outcome is not fixed. That gives study programme designers the necessary scope for combining changing research and development tasks with the teaching conditions for a stable qualifications profile.

In that case, the QFs help to pose especially pertinent questions: In which module/unit will a concrete element of the qualifications profile be realized? Which contents of the existing curriculum will be delivered or educated there? Which didactic approach facilitates the acquisition of those qualifications? Which kind of examination will be used to test the proficiency in the qualifications? Is it possible to acquire the concrete qualifications in different environments and are “substitutes” equivalent to those “learning outcomes”? These questions can be addressed through the accreditation process. The evaluation hence does not ask: will this be done here as in other institutions, but rather will the course uphold the promise for the described qualification? Even the recognition of externally attained qualifications will become transparent in that way.

As a tool within the Bologna Process, QFs ought to be mediating translation tools, which enable the EHEA to build up a permeable system of different qualification offers. They can also make visible the difference between school education, vocational training and academic study. Moreover, they present the tools for bridging the gaps between different individual terms of qualification and open the way to higher education from different starting points. Thus, QFs could support the specific role of higher education: helping people to prepare themselves for future research, employment and development. That is the task the EHEA has been awarded by the Sorbonne Declaration in the beginning of the Bologna Process. Fulfilling the task is a major contribution to assuring qualification for a global world and the knowledge society.

#### **ULRICH BARTOSCH**

Vice-Dean of the Faculty for Social Work, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, and Chair of the German Association for Faculties of Social Work as well as Bologna Expert of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

## **Our major task – Qualification in the Knowledge Society**

# Reforming the German State-Exams

## Is it Possible to both Europeanise and Uphold Professional Tradition?

The Bologna Process does not seek to undermine regulated professions. Certification remains indispensable – but also room for innovation. Bologna should be seen as an opportunity to bridge tradition with modernising higher education

**The European Ministers of Education have long set** the course for carrying out the transition to Bachelor and Master in the remaining subject areas. In Germany, this pertains mainly to Law, Medicine and Teacher Education – degree programmes that are linked to a specific career area and are still completed via state examinations (Staatsexamen). This in no way means that long-established study programmes should abandon their wealth of experience. Instead, they need to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the reform – especially since it may help in providing solutions to problems specific to these study programmes as well as in setting common standards. The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) addressed paradigmatically these chances during its international seminar on the Structure of Medical Education in Europe in October 2009.

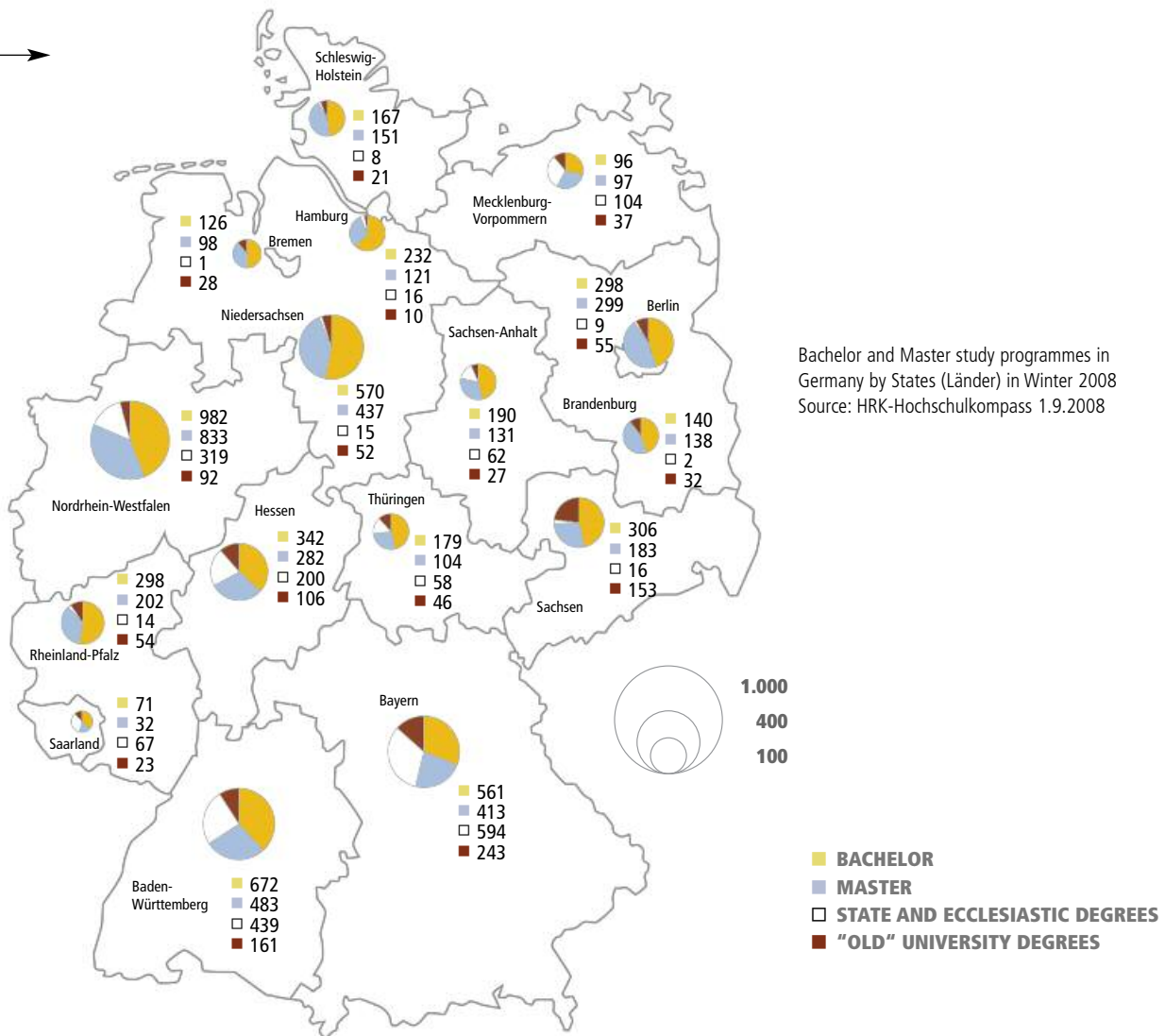


A good mix of creativity and learning experience makes innovation possible

In light of this, it would seem that, in Germany at least, much too much time and energy has been wasted in unnecessary resistance. Physicians and lawyers in particular have been opposed to the Bologna reform. They fear that the traditional congruence between course of study and state-regulated professional training will not fit into the tiered study structure. Furthermore, representatives and professional associations in these fields tend to doubt that a Bachelor degree will enable entry into a medically or legally oriented career. Reform adversaries on the other hand may be overlooking the benefits of the Bologna Process. Proposing instead of opposing may be a better route to take: it makes little sense to leave a handful of degree programmes completely excluded from the reform. But it is equally obvious that objectives and time-frames still need to be set by the state with regard to access to these regulated professions.

How these two demands can be unified has been demonstrated in other European countries. Switzerland, for example, has brought forth "good practice" reform examples that can be emulated by German higher education institutions. Swiss professors have shown how innovative solutions can result on account of a good mixture of creativity and teaching experience. In order for the German Staatsexamen programmes to be aligned with the Bologna goals, the degree programmes likewise have to be disentangled. Here, university final exam and professional licensing are fused into one examination. Ultimately, there is no objective reason for doing it this way.

But, there is good reason for giving universities full responsibility over the study programme, including the final academic exam in order to qualify for graduation. The subsequent licensing process can and must remain in state hands – aspiring lawyers, physicians and teachers would still need to complete their respective



internships. Such a system would have several advantages. First of all, higher education institutions could design their study programmes more individually, set their own focus and compete with one another for the best students. Secondly, graduates would be able to decide for themselves whether they want to try to enter the regulated professional at all, and if so, they would have to take the necessary steps after completing the degree programme. Other graduates conversely could prepare themselves for career alternatives accordingly, whether in the pharmaceutical sector or in the legal or marketing departments of large companies for instance. This flexibility, and not the often feared creation of a European "homogeneity", represents the main goal of the Bologna Process. Bachelor and Master degrees, modularisation and ECTS credit point systems are not tools for eliminating differences. On the contrary, they provide instruments for facilitating mobility and precisely this responsible approach to diversity is one of the strengths and a fascinating aspect of the emerging European Higher Education Area.

There is no one, clear-cut "right way" to reform the current programmes. What is certain is that they will not reform themselves and that a "just get it over with" attitude toward the reform necessity will not lead to optimal study programmes. In adapting the remaining degree programmes, the universities must make their own efforts, but the State (Länder) and federal governments will need to provide their support as well. They bear the responsibility to not only de-regulate the Staats-examen study programmes and amend relevant laws accordingly. They also need to secure reliable financial parameters. Germany should not miss the opportunity to provide future generations of graduates with the best possible higher education – and the opportunity to bring the European "spirit of Bologna" to life.

**PETER A. ZERVAKIS**  
Head of the Bologna Centre of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

**Practice in other countries shows that freedom and regulation can be made into complements, not just opposites**

# Implementing the Diploma Supplement

## The German Universities' Experience

The Diploma Supplement with a Europe-wide standardised structure makes students' degrees more readily comprehensible on an international scale. The majority of German universities distribute them, but with mixed results and under different conditions

**In Germany, the Conference of Education Ministers (KMK)** and the German Rectors' Conference have strongly recommended that universities introduce the Diploma Supplement, one of the most significant instruments of the Bologna Process. Meanwhile, most States (Länder) have made this legally binding for universities. But, how far have German higher education institutions come along in introducing the Diploma Supplement (DS) in practice?

In October 2004, the HRK conducted the first survey on the topic of Diploma Supplements in order to gauge the status of its implementation. It was discovered that there is an enormous amount of personnel and financial efforts involved in regularly issuing DS, especially in the introductory phase. The introduction more often was undertaken by the individual faculties and departments than institution-wide implementation. Especially after the Berlin Communiqué re-emphasised the importance of the DS as a means to promoting mobility, there was a significant increase in institution-wide approaches at universities.

A second survey followed in November 2007 to assess how the issuance of DS had developed, inquiring on the current level of implementation and plans until 2010. While only 13 percent of the institutions could claim to have a university-wide DS for all degree programmes at the end of 2004, the number more than doubled to 29 percent by the end of 2007, with 81 percent planning to have university-wide implementation for issuing DS by 2010. Almost all institutions issue the DS at no charge. A number of universities without a comprehensive procedure will still provide their graduates with a DS upon request in order to support them when applying for positions abroad. What took place between 2004 and 2007 is clearly a positive development. Even more encouraging is the planned increase between 2007 and 2010. The processes initiated for putting Bologna instruments into practice have definitely set in.

Though the numbers may speak for themselves, they fail to tell the whole story. Qualitative responses by the institutions on the other hand provide an explanation for the delay until 2010. By then, most universities will have reached the end of the transition phase from the "old" to the "new" study structure. For reasons of insufficient resources, according to the institutions themselves, students of Diplom and Magister programmes tend not to be automatically issued a DS; the graduates of the new Bachelor and Master programmes will be the first to receive them

**Diploma Supplements –  
an important instrument to promote student mobility**



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It is a long way from the classroom to graduation day. All the better when the efforts are recognised internationally

on a widespread basis. An exception here is the State Exam programmes in Germany. Since the conversion to the two-cycle study structure is only incipient for these traditional studies, the issuance of Diploma Supplements here will remain infrequent for the time being.

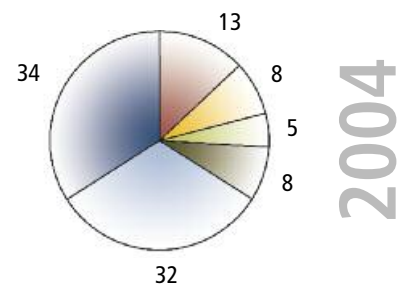
From a wider perspective, the long introductory phase can be viewed as a consequence of the higher education reform's structurally and substantively broad scope in Germany. "Bologna" has become an occasion for German universities to tackle long-overdue reforms. Considering that they are carrying out this modernisation project mostly without additional funds or resources, it becomes apparent why new Bologna instruments are commonly introduced on a piecemeal basis. Hence, many universities have opted to first issue DS as a rule for the new tiered degree programmes and only upon request for the old ones.

Overall, our studies reveal that a professional university management in the administrative area is beneficial to the introduction of DS – and to implementation of "Bologna" in general. At the same time, sufficient personnel and financial resources proved conducive to setting up an extensive, automatic procedure to issue DS. This includes suitable electronic data systems and well-functioning interfaces in university administration. Planning is also necessary, especially since universities as complex organisations often are unable to execute administrative change "overnight". Moreover, the experience has shown that, besides the technical-structural demands, generating and coordinating the content posed difficulties as well. Administrative units often had improper or contradictory information at their disposal and, without learning outcomes or a programme module description, could not issue the DS fully. In the end, establishing satisfactory, quality organisational structures and procedures appears all the more important. As with other aspects of Bologna, making the Diploma Supplement work means having all participants, from the subject areas to the administration, cooperate and coordinate.

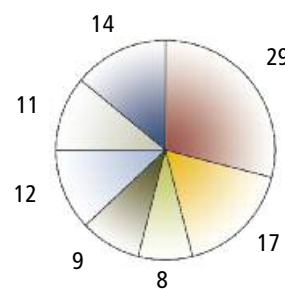
**MONIKA SCHRÖDER**

Project Manager, Bologna Centre of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

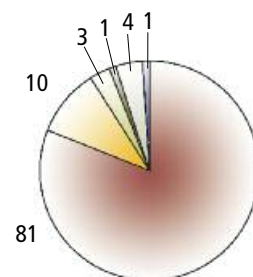
Percentage of university's degree programmes, for which Diploma Supplements were issued:



2004



2007



Planned for  
2010  
per cent

- university-wide for all degree programmes
- for ca. 75 % of all degree programmes
- for ca. 50 % of all degree programmes
- for ca. 25 % of all degree programmes
- less than 25 % of all degree programmes
- by individual request of the graduate
- no Diploma Supplements being issued

# German Experience with Quality Management

## Further Development of a Complex, but Necessary Task

All course offerings must be tested thoroughly before the first day of class. The procedure is known as accreditation and in Germany, it is decentrally organised. The system is good, but it may not be good enough yet

**The Bologna Process of creating a European Higher Education Area** has had enormous consequences for quality assurance (QA) in Germany. While evaluation was introduced in some parts of Germany in the 1990s, there was no national quality assurance system until the end of the millennium. With the reform of the degree structure towards a two-tiered system, an accreditation system was introduced and it is legally prescribed that all new programmes undergo an accreditation process.

The European dimension has played a significant role in further developing this system. The ministers responsible for higher education stated in their 2003 Berlin Communiqué that the quality of higher education is first and foremost the responsibility of the institutions themselves and this has had an impact on the national discussions in Germany. The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), outlined by ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU and accepted by the ministers in Bergen 2005, have become an important framework of reference in this dialogue. Their principles have been included in all procedures related to accreditation in Germany.

The reform or further development of the accreditation system was discussed and resulted in the introduction of a new accreditation procedure called "system accreditation" in addition to the already existing programme-oriented procedures. This new procedure focuses on the quality assurance system of the higher education institutions rather than each programme. Nevertheless it cross-examines random samples of programmes and features of study programmes as to whether the QA system for teaching and learning is in use in all of institution's programmes and units. Currently a number of institutions are in the preparatory phase for this new procedure, which is likely to strengthen institutional autonomy and responsibility for the quality of their offers and services.

Furthermore, the ESG, the general Bologna discussion and the concurrent debates on internationalisation and visibility of German higher education in the international market have contributed to a larger discourse on quality issues in higher education. More and more institutions are elaborating and implementing QA policies and comprehensive systems of quality management for the institution, combining the teaching, research and service components. Some of these new systems are modelled along the lines of general quality management systems stemming from the business or industrial sectors such as ISO, EFQM or TQM. Many institutions, however, realise that a system developed for economic enterprises can not



An eye for detail. Accreditation is demanding



High quality demands on all degree programmes

be easily translated one-to-one to a higher education setting. Therefore, many systems currently in use borrow elements from different theoretical models and combine them with measures specific to the institution. Since a one-size-fits-all-solution to quality management is highly unlikely, each institution will need to develop its own specific system taking its own mission and culture into account. This remains a challenge in the years to come.

There are, however, some issues of concern to be further addressed, at national as well as European and global levels. The first entails the international dimension of quality assurance. This ranges from questions on the relevance of QA procedures for recognition purposes, on developing proper QA mechanisms for joint or double degrees and on enhancing the quality of cross-border education by supporting a sustainable implementation of the OECD/UNESCO guidelines.

The second one is related to the link between QA procedures and qualifications frameworks. If the frameworks at European and national levels are to have an impact on the system, their relevance for and inclusion into processes of QA must be further strengthened. Lastly, and still of particularly high relevance for institutions is the question of connecting courses with learning outcomes and respective assessment methods, as well as determining the workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes. This alignment should be examined more in QA processes to ensure that the reforms related to the Bologna Process are not only addressing structural but also content-oriented and didactic issues in the institutions.

If these challenges are addressed, there is good reason to believe that quality assurance processes will fulfil their task: to enhance quality and to implement continuous improvement processes in higher education. Thus they can also help to establish a quality culture within universities in a sustainable, lasting way and contribute to strengthening the institutional autonomy and public accountability at the same time.

#### **STEFAN BIENEFELD**

Head of the Quality Management Project of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

**Quality assurance processes can help to implement continuous improvement in higher education**

# Bachelors Welcome

## Employers Support Study Reform as an Improvement to Recruitment Potential

Bachelor graduates combine both academic and practical training...they can learn more quickly the "everyday business" of a business



From the outset, the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) has counted itself a supporter of the Bologna Process. The BDA has accompanied the transformation of the German higher education system to the tiered study-structures with a series of activities. From the dissemination of information to companies, to participation in relevant committees such as the Accreditation Council, the business sector is demonstrating its dedication to the reforms and promoting career entry for Bachelor graduates.

In the published statements within the initiative "Bachelor Welcome" since 2004 every two years a large number of renowned companies from nearly all sectors pledged themselves to far-reaching commitments. They promise to offer internship positions, to provide assistance in career orientation, and to be directly involved in university working groups. Thus, employers are sending students and higher education institutions a clear message of their support.

The success is already visible: employment recruiters are currently on the look for graduates of Bachelor degree programmes for numerous positions. From the standpoint of businesses, the Bachelor degree programmes are not only adequate – their graduates are highly valued because they have both academic and practical training, and on top of that, are considerably younger than their fellow students graduating with the "old" degrees. As a result, they can be integrated quickly into the everyday business of a business. Also important from an employer perspective are the key skills acquired in the course of studies. In addition, the new degree programmes are characterized by interdisciplinary and international approaches. All of this strengthens the employability of the students.

Such trends are encouraging. But in order to ensure continued acceptance in the labour market, universities need to design their programmes to be convincing in substance and quality – mere "relabelling" will not do the job. For this purpose, companies should be included into the development phase. Through exchange and cooperation, confidence in the new degree programmes will be strengthened among the employers as well as the universities.

#### DIETER HUNDT

President of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)

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# Improving Social Conditions for Mobility

## The Social Dimension of Bologna

Improving mobility is more than improving degree comparability. To get abroad, curiosity is a good start – but getting further requires financial and social support

Since the first Bologna Conference, 2001 in Prague, the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been a key objective of the Bologna Process. Consequently, it must finally become a top issue for the 46 signatory states of the Bologna Declaration. Clearly, mobility in the EHEA is not only a question of making study structures and degrees more comparable. The substantive requirements for mobility likewise need to be fulfilled.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights sets forth in its Article 13 as an international obligation that “higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education”. This must finally be placed on the agenda of the Bologna Process along with the task of creating an effective system of education grants for all students. Nobody should be punished because they want to study, research or teach abroad – this applies to academics and researchers as well, whose mobility is often punished, not promoted by the social security systems. Whoever goes abroad today often loses pension claims, despite having paid into the old-age benefits system. Moreover, universities and research institutions often refuse to recognize academics’ and researchers’ periods of employment abroad. As a result, salary loss is the price they have to pay for their mobility.

The transition from Bachelor to Master studies should not become a social hurdle either. The German Education Union for example calls for full permeability: quotas or grades cannot be allowed as a restriction on admission to master programmes. This permeability also reflects the social dimension: Whether a Bachelor programme is followed by a Master’s should not depend on a student’s wallet. Students need to have a right to education grants and, in the age of Life Long Learning, age restrictions for such grants are clearly obsolete.

In the transition from studies to work in academia or research, the social dimension must also come to effect. Doctoral studies are less a third phase of higher education after Bachelor and Master, but rather more a first phase of professional life. Thus, the work performed by doctoral candidates must be recognised as academic work and rewarded as such, for example, by employing them on a labour contract with regular social security benefits and adequate working conditions regulated by collective bargaining between employers and trade unions. Ultimately, improving mobility means taking the social dimension and needs of those affected seriously.

### ANDREAS KELLER

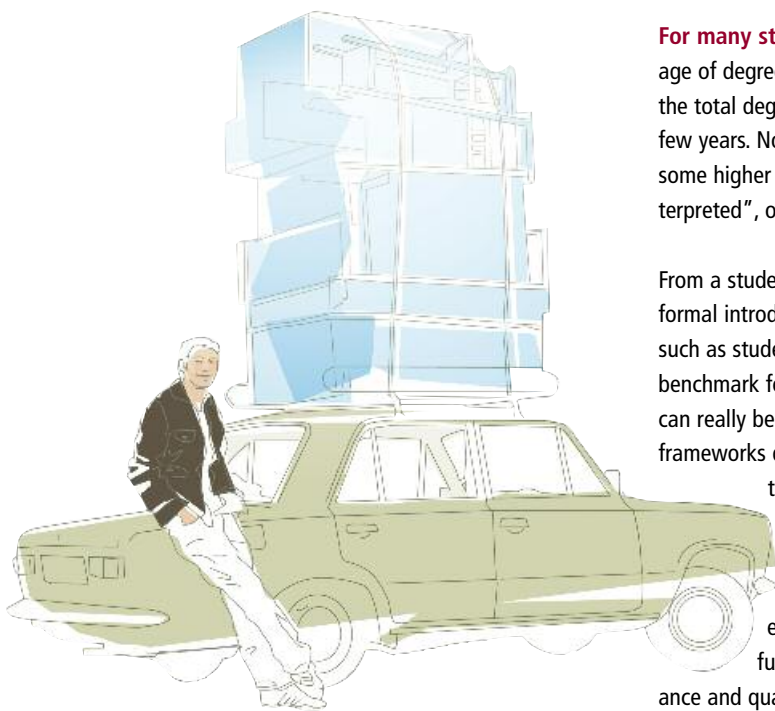
Member of the Executive Board of the German Education Union (GEW), Member in the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee (HERSC) of Education International (EI)



Being able to move and study throughout Europe care-free

# Bologna in Sight! And Yet so far Away

A slow progress: a number of barriers are yet to be overcome. Bologna may be a “wind of change”, but it will take time before the students feel the “fresh air”



All packed and ready, but  
nowhere to go?

**Bologna's positive goals  
– merely formal imple-  
mentation is not enough**

For many students, the Bologna Process is a book of seven seals. The percentage of degree programmes converted to Bachelor and Master has reached 67% of the total degree offerings by 2008 and much has been accomplished in the last few years. Nonetheless, the reforms are taking a long time to have any effect. In some higher education institutions, the intended goals are misunderstood or “reinterpreted”, often leading to a completely incorrect implementation.

From a student perspective, there is more to the Bologna Process than the mere formal introduction of Bachelors and Masters. The important aspects of the reform such as student-centred and competence orientation urgently need to become the benchmark for teaching at universities; it is only along these lines that teaching can really be improved. Likewise, the implementation of ECTS and qualifications frameworks depend significantly on academic instruction geared toward acquisition of competences and skills. Furthermore, the poor stage of implementation, at least in parts, derives from an insufficient information policy, which in turn is connected to deficient (personnel) resources. Surely a comprehensive higher education reform addressing the entire study and teaching system is not feasible without additional funding. And, if the reforms are concerned with having higher acceptance and quality of the new degree programmes, then student participation must be enhanced considerably more than it has up to now.

The reforms scratch the surface in many places. A primary example is the situation in improving mobility, i.e. the recognition of study activities acquired abroad. A study by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) reveals for instance that only 40% are recognized fully. This makes the need for action obvious.

However, the direction of the Bologna Process – a rethinking of old structures and teaching forms with a focus on promoting various teaching strategies and improving mobility – is a welcome change from the students' point of view. But, especially the social dimension is an important factor for the Bologna member states to work on in the future. Opening higher education institutions and improving access must be treated as priorities in the next years.

Therefore, there is quite a lot to do in order to make the positive goals of Bologna reforms a reality. Some steps on the way include continuous readjustment and evaluation – since a reform that is only implemented formally can hardly be a success.

#### IMKE BUSS

Former Member of the Board of the German National Union of Students and Bologna Expert of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

#### ANJA GADOW

Member of the Board of the National Union of Students in Germany

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# Revisiting the Social Dimension

## Efforts to Improve Student Welfare Abound

The social situation is different in each country. This area should not be overlooked. And if we take a closer look, it seems that much is being done here

**The discussion on the social dimension** of the Bologna Process encompasses a wide scope. This includes special groups of students (e.g. impaired students, students with children, students with immigration or underprivileged socio-economic background) as well as necessary conditions for studying successfully (e.g. admission to higher education, financial aid, workload). One can combine both threads of the discussion into a matrix of "issue areas" such as financial aid for students with children or workload for students with handicaps.

Institutions of higher education are confronting the questions posed by these issue areas and supporting students in finding solutions to their individual concerns. Particularly noteworthy in this context is the broad range of advisory and counselling services offered by all participating institutions. As part of the general and subject-specific advisory services, higher education institutions are providing the opportunity to develop tailor-made solutions to study-related questions (e.g. mode of study, leaves of absence, etc.). At the same time, examination offices are prepared with suggestions when students are in certain predicaments (e.g. how to obtain an extension of examination deadlines or finding substitute types of examination). The public institutions for student affairs, or Studentenwerke, provide assistance in financial planning for students, for instance, with regard to public financial aid and student loans. And, both the universities and their respective Studentenwerk provide special advisory service for impaired students.

Furthermore, as the umbrella organisation of German universities, the German Rectors' conference (HRK) persistently works to improve these conditions, calling upon the federal and state (Länder) institutions to, for example, provide adequate financing for improving teaching and studies. Additionally, it strives to develop appropriate instruments for enhancing participation of previously under-represented student groups. In this way, the cause of numerous endeavours are being supported like the project to improve recognition of study-activities acquired outside the "home" institution, the working groups on higher education admissions for individuals without the specific university-entrance diploma (Abitur), or efforts to improve the situation of students with disabilities.

The programmes and instruments described above are being expanded and optimised in the course of the Bologna Process. The particular needs of students in different circumstances and an ever growing diversity in the student body are going to play an increasingly important role – they will need to be addressed accordingly. While there is still a way to go, the higher education institutions are already on the right path.

**RALF ALBERDING**

Head of Section for Legal and Student Affairs of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

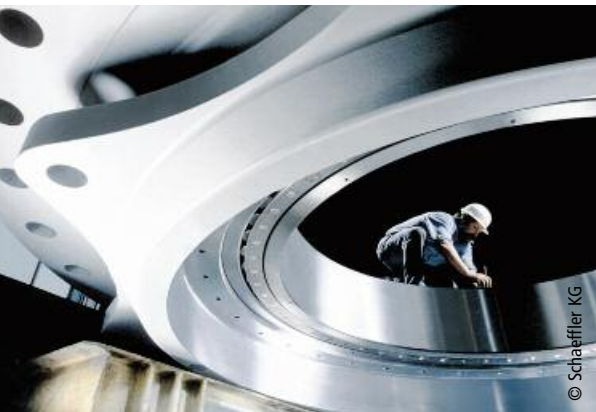


**Meeting the needs and interests of an ever more diverse student body**

# The Universities and the Business Sector In Search of New Partnerships

Universities have to strengthen the qualifications profiles and employability of their Bachelor and Master graduates. As companies in turn are interested in high quality graduates as well, working together would be a natural partnership

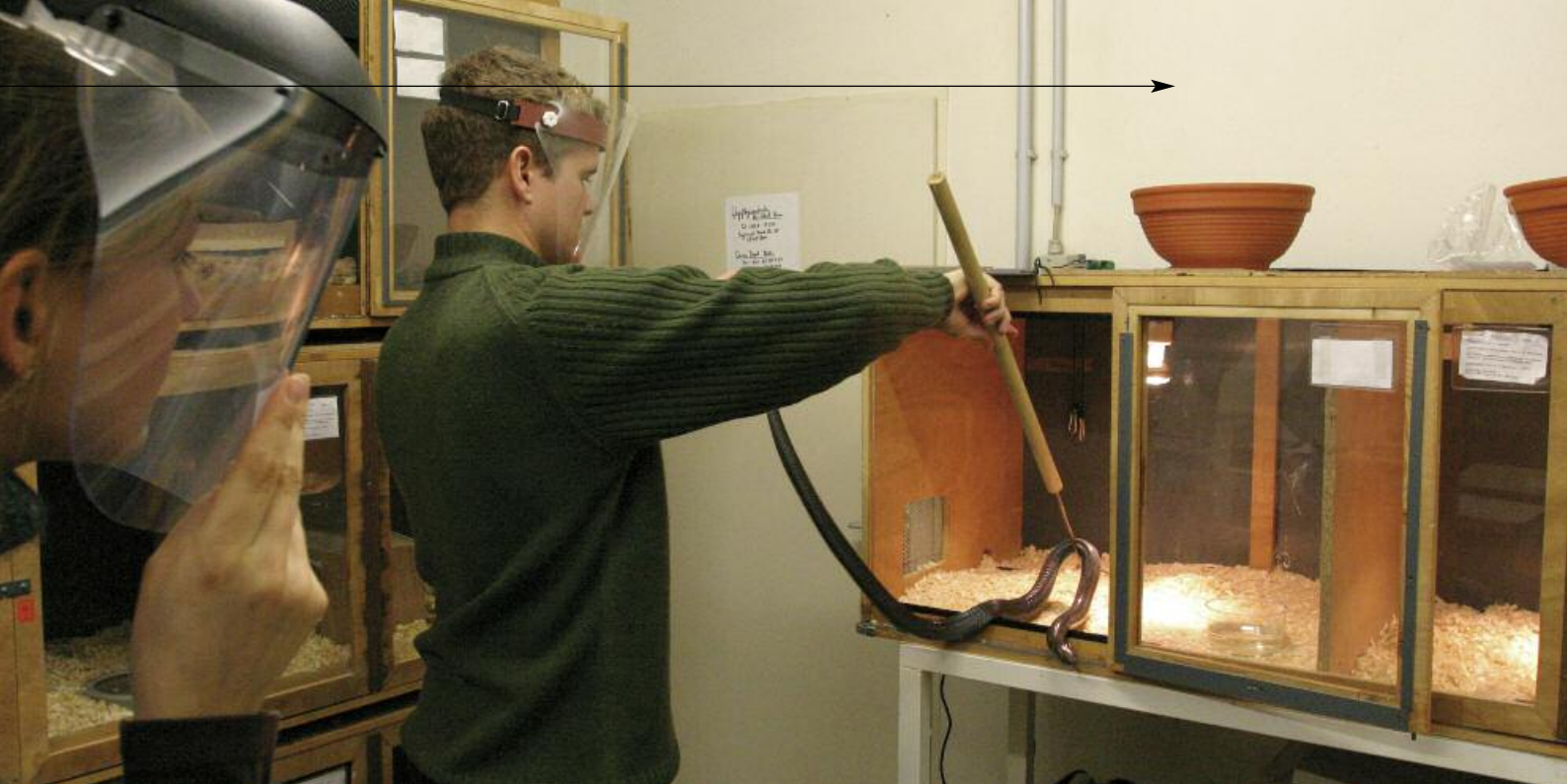
**The universities are working hard to implement reforms, but** they also need partners beyond the state. Especially since changes in the labour market and economic sector have provided some of the main reasons for the Bologna process and higher education reform, it would seem that business actors and organisations represent a “natural choice” for partnership with universities. Enhanced cooperation with consultants from industry and business for example in the accreditation process has already proved beneficial for both sides: business representatives receive easier access to detailed information about study programmes, expand their informal network, and can actively contribute to the design of quality assurance processes at universities. The universities profit as well from the practical evaluative skills of the consultants from the business sector and get the chance to gear their new study programmes more consistently with the needs of the labour market and student interests. In the long-term, universities will be able to use their autonomy and leverage in study programmes competitively for recruiting the best students, much more so than in the past.



Getting to know the “nuts-and-bolts”

The career success of the graduates in turn provides the best proof of Germany’s high competitiveness. That is why it is essential to have a quality culture of study and teaching that is concerned with the basic “employability” of university graduates. This is also an important issue for a number of groups: for companies, who rely on solid higher education training of their specialists and future leaders; for students, who depend on gaining key competences and skills to become employable and have career opportunities; for the universities themselves, whose reputation in the future will be determined by the quality of teaching at their institution. If the reform is to succeed, then close cooperation between institutions of higher education and especially local and regional employers must be expanded. Employers likewise have a duty to promote the acceptance of bachelor and master graduates in exchange for continuous information on the skills development of the university graduates.

A university degree programme, one that educates students for working in a global world, does not only need to impart knowledge, but assist in gaining skills as well. Indeed, the universities carry the main responsibility for providing their graduates with the knowledge and skills they need for their career paths. But they need and increasingly receive impulses from the business sector. Thus, it is encouraging that employer representatives in Germany have been in close dialogue with



Hands-on training and developing soft skills: an essential part of higher education

universities on the creation of new study programmes and improving employability. Especially smaller and medium sized companies in the surrounding region can provide valuable support and advice to universities, for example, regarding the skills the company is looking for and expects of a beginner.

By now, a large number of company representatives are serving as consultants to university councils and accreditation agencies, supporting the development of "Career Services" centres, teaching courses at the universities, and offering students and instructors insights into business practice. For the universities, being able to exchange with employers about the study programmes is a fruitful experience. If such dialogue reveals that, for example, small and medium-sized companies are looking for more flexible generalists with a broad knowledge base, while large companies look more for specialists with inter-disciplinary experience, then universities have the possibility to strengthen the quality profiles of their graduates and thus increase the attractiveness of their tiered study programmes. However, the business sector can also take on more responsibility through more commitment via scholarships and stipends for students, among other things. To be sure, close cooperation between universities and companies is worthwhile for both sides: for the development of dual study programmes, the recognition of achievements in vocational training as university qualification, and the promotion of continuing education of qualified employees, for instance in executive study programmes.

The graduates of accredited bachelor study programmes should bring with them the knowledge, methodical and personal skills needed to adjust swiftly to the tasks and needs of various companies. Structured, high-quality and high-valued study programmes are a convincing model for more professional diversity. But it is just as much up to the employers to guarantee necessary opportunities for further education and career perspectives.

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**Bologna has galvanized universities' cooperation with employers**

# A European Invention with Global Impact

## The External Dimension of Bologna

The impact of the Bologna Process extends beyond Europe's borders. Consequently, enhanced international cooperation on higher education matters is becoming more and more crucial, but also increasingly attractive

For the Bologna signatory states, the external dimension has always been an integral part of the whole process. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) explicitly aims at enhancing the international attractiveness and competitiveness of its higher education institutions. To this end, the Bologna countries have acknowledged that implementation of all reform objectives and instruments within the boundaries of the EHEA will still not be enough. Collaboration and dialogue with the outside world is also essential. Only if Europe manages to set up convincing standards and communicate them to others will a global dimension successfully develop out of the Bologna Process. For some time, information on the Bologna Process and its implications was insufficient in other regions of the world. Consequently, the process has often been viewed as a threat to existing cooperation. But the picture is changing.

Until lately, discussions on Bologna at North American institutions of higher education were limited, if existent at all. The major and possibly only question being asked was: "Are the Bologna three-year degrees equivalent to U.S. and Canadian bachelor's degrees?" Today, senior officials and experts in North America acknowledge that the Bologna Process will ultimately trigger a paradigm shift that may alter how U.S. and Canadian educational institutions evaluate, admit, and educate students. The reality of Bologna is not "coming to America" – it is already there. A broader discussion of Bologna, beyond credit compatibility, relates to issues such as the "philosophies" underlying undergraduate education with an approach based on discipline-specific expertise vs. general education. Above all, there is growing reflection on the competitiveness of North American higher education and how the EHEA will impact the ability of North American institutions to recruit top students from around the world.

In Latin America, there is certainly a strong impact of the Bologna idea and spirit. While becoming more familiar with the process, Latin American universities see Bologna, not as a model, but rather as a process of reflection and mobilisation. The ongoing intra-regional cooperation process in higher education is most evident in projects such as TUNING Latin America that aims at facilitating a reciprocal understanding of higher education systems. An impressive 186 universities in 19 Latin American countries have already joined. Growing regional cooperation in quality assurance matters, e.g. in the RIACES network, may be seen as another significant part of the Latin American reaction to European developments creating a new basis for inter-regional cooperation.



A strong impact of the Bologna spirit in Latin America





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Also in Asia, especially the ASEAN nations such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam are closely observing European developments. They see Bologna as a potential model for closer cooperation between the universities in the ASEAN region. China, Japan, Korea and India as well have a pronounced interest in closer collaboration with higher education institutions in Europe. With a view to further enhancing its competitiveness in the higher education market, Australia has been the driving force behind the Brisbane Communiqué Initiative. Taking over the Bologna blueprint, Education Ministers of the Asia-Pacific region agreed in 2006 to collaborate on key goals related to the recognition and quality of education and training in the region.

While Bologna was originally viewed with suspicion in many African countries concerning cooperation with European partners, it is being increasingly perceived as a chance to reform national systems of higher education, aligning them with the Bologna model. This is especially true for the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, who are exceptionally interested in close partnership with the EHEA.

Meanwhile, European Ministers of Education have underlined that Europe should use this momentum and respond to the global interest in the Bologna reforms. In 2007, they adopted the strategy document "European Higher Education in a Global Setting", defining five core policy goals with regard to other world regions: improving information on the EHEA, promoting European higher education to enhance its worldwide attractiveness and competitiveness, strengthening cooperation based on partnership, intensifying policy dialogue and furthering recognition of qualifications. With these policy goals, the Bologna Process is creating an opportunity to enhance international cooperation and thus meet the higher education needs and demands of students and nations worldwide.

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A European innovation goes global



# Strengthening the Global Perspective in Higher Education

## The German Universities' Internationalisation Efforts

Educating for a global world means bringing the global perspective into the higher education institution. Internationalisation needs to become a university-wide effort



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**International factors  
play a role in all areas  
of a university**

The internationalisation of the higher education landscape has been, and is still being widely discussed. While some view higher education institutions as international by definition and thus a "new" internationalisation there as redundant, others see an enhanced strategic internationalisation of German higher education institutions as necessary and desirable, especially in light of current global challenges.

Both sides are correct: research and teaching have always been international. But it is undeniable that German universities need to enter a new phase of internationalisation in order to educate for a global world. This will depend more and more on the ability of the entire university to design and implement a broad strategy for internationalising, which is based on the university's profile and mission. The latter encompasses, in turn, all areas of a higher education institution – from studies to teaching, research, services, and administration. In addition to the mobility of students, researchers and academics, and involvement in international research networks, a comprehensive understanding of internationalisation and internationality involves considering "international" factors in how an institution distributes its resources and organises its administrative procedures.

German higher education institutions traditionally take a true partnership approach, striving for international cooperation based on an equal footing. It is a positive development to see that meanwhile international students and academics have become part of everyday life at universities, as has the integration of international elements in the curricula of most subject areas, e.g. study and practical phases abroad. Moreover, while internationalisation has advanced to various degrees within the different academic disciplinary cultures, student interest is continuously growing in common study and doctoral programmes that lead to a dual degree on the Master's or Doctoral level.

Indeed, internationalisation should be part of the mission of a higher education institution, though it is never the goal in and of itself. If too many international projects are undertaken in an uncoordinated jumble, the institution risks losing the "forest for the trees", that is, sight of its over-arching strategic goals. Nor is there a one-size-fits-all approach for internationalising a higher education institution: for one university it may be appropriate to expand its international network through building its own offices in other countries, but for another it may prove more promising to pursue similar goals through closer cooperation with partner universities abroad. Overall, it is especially important to establish a common vision of internationalisation and internationality that suitably takes into account the specificities of higher education institutions as well as the regional and national context in which they are embedded.

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