

BFUG3 6
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BFUG FOLLOW-UP OF SEMINARS IN THE WORK PROGRAMME

1. BACKGROUND

In the Board meeting on 13 September, the Secretariat was asked to advise the BFUG on how recommendations from the seminars should be considered for inclusion in the Bergen Communiqué and prepare a discussion of the recommendations from the seminars up to July, ie. in Stockholm, Ghent, Edinburgh and Santander.

In the Criteria for Bologna Follow-up seminars, decided in the BFUG meeting on 9 March, (Document BFUG2 4criteria), it was stated that when a sponsor or host considers it appropriate for the recommendations of the seminars to be included in the Bergen Communiqué, these should be channelled through the BFUG Secretariat. There should as a rule be no more than 1 or 2 such recommendations from each seminar.

In a document prepared by the Chair and the Secretariat, and circulated to the BFUG on 14 April 2004 (BFUGS repsem), further guidelines for recommendations were elaborated. It was pointed out that recommendations should be approved by participants at the seminar.

All seminars will be mentioned in the General Report to be prepared by the Secretariat.

2. GENERAL ISSUES

The BFUG may encourage the hosts of remaining seminars to limit the number of recommendations. The BFUG may itself select one or two recommendations from each seminar for further follow-up or for the Ministers' attention.

Two main options may be considered for handling seminar recommendations:

- The BFUG may consider the various recommendations and instruct the Secretariat on possible follow-up actions.
- The BFUG can delegate this to the Board.

For further elaboration, the BFUG or the Board may

- feed recommendations into the working group for the overarching qualifications framework,
- feed recommendations into the group preparing the ENQA report,
- feed recommendations into the group preparing the draft Bergen Communiqué (Communiqué Drafting Group) or
- ask the Secretariat, in informal consultation with stakeholders and experts, to further develop the topic and report to the next BFUG meeting.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INDIVIDUAL SEMINARS

3.1 Recommendations from the Seminar "Joint degrees - further development", Stockholm, 6-7 May 2004

The recommendation that each country should report on progress in removing legal obstacles to joint degrees to the Bergen ministerial conference has been included in the template for the 2005 National Reports.

A considerable amount of information on the experience of higher education institutions and students concerning joint study programmes and joint degrees, including good practice with regard to arrangements and agreements between the partner institutions and agreements between institutions and students, is now available through the EUA Joint Masters Project. The EUA may be invited to present examples of good practice and make recommendations in the areas mentioned on the basis of the project. These can then be reported to the Communiqué Drafting Group.

If the BFUG considers that a more analytical approach to the problem of joint degrees is called for in the period leading up to the Bergen conference, as a supplement to drawing on the experience of higher education institutions and students, the Secretariat may be asked, in informal consultation with stakeholders and experts, to prepare a short document on possible follow-up. It may be noted that quality assurance and joint degrees will also be the theme for one of the workshops of the Noordwijk seminar.

The Secretariat suggests that the Communiqué Drafting Group should consider the three recommendations addressed to the Ministerial Meeting.

3.2. Recommendations from the Seminar "Bologna and the challenges of eLearning and distance education", Ghent, 4-5 June 2004

The Secretariat suggests that the ENQA drafting group should consider the recommendation: *"To extend quality assurance, accreditation and qualification frameworks to e-learning and other non classical modes of delivery in an integrated approach encompassing the full range of higher education"*.

In the same way, the Qualifications Framework WG may be asked to consider the recommendation:

"To explore how the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention could be used to establish common understanding and shared standards on the validation of prior learning experiences in both formal and non-formal settings as a concrete step to the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education".

The Secretariat suggests no further action at this time.

3.3. Recommendations from the Seminar "Using Learning Outcomes", Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2004

At the Board meeting on 13 September, members pointed out the relevance which the recommendations from the Edinburgh seminar had to the work on the overarching qualifications framework. The Secretariat suggests that the recommendations are fed into that work as a whole.

3.4. The Seminar "Methodological Common Instruments for Assessment and Accreditation in the European Framework", Santander, 28-30 July 2004

In the Santander seminar, no recommendations were discussed or approved by the participants. The Secretariat has received a general report with conclusions, written by the hosts. Later the Secretariat received an e-mail indicating that the report was a draft.

With reference to this, the Secretariat has no basis for suggesting any further action.

APPENDIX 1

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SEMINAR "JOINT DEGREES - FURTHER DEVELOPMENT", STOCKHOLM, 6-7 MAY 2004

Recommendations to the Bologna Follow-Up Group

5. The Bologna Follow-Up Group should map the experience of higher education institutions and students regarding:

- a, the concepts and formats of joint study programmes and joint degrees valid for the emerging European Higher Education Area,
- b, arrangements and agreements for cooperation between the partner institutions, and
- c, agreements between the partner institutions and the student safeguarding the rights of the student.

If possible conclusions and recommendations should be reported to the Bergen ministerial meeting.

6. Each country should report on the progress made in removing legal obstacles as agreed in the Berlin communiqué to the Bergen ministerial meeting in 2005.

Recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting

7. The possibility of awarding joint degrees with national and foreign higher education institutions should be clearly referred to in national legislation. Every country should report on the progress of their work in time for the ministerial meeting in 2007.

8. The format of the Diploma Supplement should be adapted to facilitate the description of joint degrees. The Diploma Supplement should include a cross-reference when double degrees are issued.

9. Ministers should encourage the development of incentives for higher education institutions to participate in joint study programmes leading to joint degrees. Higher education institutions should give proper recognition to students and staff who participate in joint degree programmes.

APPENDIX 2

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SEMINAR "BOLOGNA AND THE CHALLENGES OF E-LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION", GHENT, 4-5 JUNE 2004

On the basis of these observations, we make the following recommendations for the further development of the Bologna process:

- To open up the EHEA to an Open Higher Education Area by fully integrating the dimension of flexible learning paths supported by e-learning and other non-classical learning and teaching forms.
- To extend quality assurance, accreditation and qualification frameworks to e-learning and other non classical modes of delivery in an integrated approach encompassing the full range of higher education.
- In the context of widening access, to develop leadership in higher education institutions in order to integrate a lifelong learning-for-all strategy in joint responsibility with staff, students and the local and international community.
- To explore how the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention could be used to establish common understanding and shared standards on the validation of prior learning experiences in both formal and non-formal settings as a concrete step to the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in higher education.
- To acknowledge the contribution of so-called "virtual mobility" to international academic exchange and joint curriculum development to take on board in the design of international mobility schemes.
- To promote a broad approach to all "Bologna tools" (as for instance ECTS and Diploma Supplement) to include e-learning and non classical teaching and learning forms.

APPENDIX 3

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SEMINAR "USING LEARNING OUTCOMES", EDINBURGH, 1-2 JULY 2004

Points for consideration by BFUG

18. The main conclusions of the seminar suggest that BFUG could:

- Take a lead role in ensuring coherence across the different strands affected by learning outcomes: in particular the relationship between ECTS and qualifications frameworks, Tuning, Diploma Supplements, and quality assurance, and more broadly between the Bologna and Copenhagen processes.
- Consider reflecting the following themes in the draft Bergen Ministerial communiqué
 - The importance of learning outcomes for the future development of Diploma Supplements, ECTS and qualifications frameworks, as a tool to promote transparency and mobility, while supporting flexibility and diversity across the European Higher Education Area.
 - The need to accept that the pace and nature of change will not be uniform across all countries or all disciplines. Such flexibility will protect the diversity inherent in the European Higher Education Area and lead to greater ownership of the final outcome.
 - The need for continuing dialogue to achieve a common language and a shared understanding of that language.

19. BFUG members organising future Bologna seminars may also wish to take note of comments made about the structure and organisation of the UK event in the summary evaluation feedback attached at Annex B.