

## I. OUTLINE STRUCTURE FOR THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT.

*This Diploma Supplement model was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.*

### **1 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION**

- 1.1 Family name(s):
- 1.2 Given name(s):
- 1.3 Date of birth (*day/month/year*):
- 1.4 Student identification number or code (*if available*):

### **2 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION**

- 2.1 Name of qualification and (*if applicable*) title conferred (*in original language*):
- 2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification:
- 2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (*in original language*):
- 2.4 Name and status of institution (*if different from 2.3*) administering studies (*in original language*):
- 2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination:

### **3 INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION**

- 3.1 Level of qualification:
- 3.2 Official length of programme:
- 3.3 Access requirements(s)

### **4 INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED**

- 4.1 Mode of study:
- 4.2 Programme requirements:
- 4.3 Programme details: (e.g. modules or units studied), and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained: (*if this information is available on an official transcript this should be used here*)
- 4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance:
- 4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (*in original language*):

### **5 INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION**

- 5.1 Access to further study:
- 5.2 Professional status (*if applicable*):

### **6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Additional information:
- 6.2 Further information sources:

### **7 CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT**

- 7.1 Date:
- 7.2 Signature:
- 7.3 Capacity:
- 7.4 Official stamp or seal:

### **8 INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

*(N.B. Institutions who intend to issue Diploma Supplements should refer to the explanatory notes that explain how to complete them.)*

## II. DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT EXPLANATORY NOTES

(updated version adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee, June 2007, Bucharest)

Since the Diploma Supplement was adopted in 1999, it has been adopted as part of national legislation in many countries. Since 1999, there have been significant developments within higher education, notably as concerns the development of joint degrees<sup>1</sup> and of transnational or crossborder higher education provision<sup>2</sup>. Other significant developments include the development of external quality assurance and/or accreditation and the introduction, within the European Higher Education Area, of national and overarching qualifications frameworks. Within the Bologna Process, Ministers have committed to issuing the Diploma Supplement automatically, free of charge and in a widely spoken European language by 2005. The Diploma Supplement has also been incorporated in the Europass established by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers in 2004<sup>3</sup>.

Where qualifications are issued as joint degrees, double or multiple degrees or under transnational/borderless education arrangements, this should be noted in the Diploma Supplement, in particular in points 2.1, 2.3, 2.4 4.1, 4.3 6.1 and 8. Consortia offering joint degrees would be well advised to provide information packages on their degrees. Where relevant, these may be included with the Diploma Supplement.

(The numbers below refer to the numbered sections in the Diploma Supplement.)

### 1 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION

- 1.1 Provide the full family or surname(s).
- 1.2 Include all given/first names.
- 1.3 Indicate day, month and year of birth.
- 1.4 This should identify the individual as a student enrolled on the particular programme which is covered by the Diploma Supplement, e.g. through the student's personal code in the institution's database. A national or State personal identification number could be included for those countries that have such systems of identification, in accordance with national legislation.

### 2 INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION

- 2.1 Give the full name of the qualification in the original language(s) as it is styled in the original qualification e.g. *Kandidat nauk*, *Maîtrise*, *Diplom*, etc. The original name of the qualifications may be transliterated into the alphabet or writing system used for the language in which the Diploma Supplement is issued (e.g. Latin characters for Supplements issued in English or Cyrillic for Supplements issued in Russian). Indicate if the award confers any nationally accepted title on the holder and what this title is e.g. *Doctor*, *Ingénieur* etc, and, if appropriate, a specific professional competence, such as "teacher of French". Indicate if the title is protected in law. If the qualification is a joint degree, this should be indicated.
- 2.2 Show only the major field(s) of study (disciplines) that define the main subject area(s) for the qualification e.g. *Politics and History*, *Human Resource Management*, *Business Administration*, *Molecular Biology* etc.
- 2.3 Indicate the name of the institution awarding the qualification in the original language. Where a degree is issued jointly by two or more institutions, the names of the institutions issuing the joint degree should be indicated, with indication of the institution at which the major part of the qualification has been obtained, if applicable.

The status of the institution refers above all to whether it has successfully undergone a quality assurance and/or accreditation exercise or procedure, and this should be clearly indicated. It may also be relevant to give the profile of the institution. If the provider is transnational or borderless, this should be clearly noted.

As a (fictitious) example, this information could be given in the following form:

"[Name of the institution] is a private non-university institution which has undergone external quality assurance by agency X in [name of the country] in 2003 with satisfactory results".
- 2.4 This refers to the institution which is responsible for the delivery of the programme. This is often, but not always, the same as the institution awarding the qualification (see 2.3 above). Cases are known in which a higher education institution entitles another institution to deliver its programmes and issue its qualifications through a "franchise" or some type of "validation", "affiliation", etc. In some cases that other institution may be located in a different country. If this is the case it should be indicated here. If there is a difference between

<sup>1</sup> See the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint degrees, adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in 2004, available at <http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=836481&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>

<sup>2</sup> See the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Joint Degrees, adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in 2001 and revised by the Committee in 2007, available at [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/Code%20of%20good%20practice\\_EN.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/Code%20of%20good%20practice_EN.asp#TopOfPage), and the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education adopted in autumn 2005 in the framework of both Organizations, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/51/35779480.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Downloads/MiscDocs/EuropassDecision/navigate.action>  
DECISION No 2241/2004/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass).

the awarding institution and the institution delivering the programme leading to the qualification indicate the status of both. , see 2.3 above.

- 2.5 Indicate the language(s) by which the qualification was delivered and examined.

### **3 INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION**

- 3.1 Give the precise level of qualification and its place in the specific national educational structure of awards (explained and cross-referenced to the information in section eight). For countries that have established a national qualifications framework, give the place of the qualification within the national qualifications framework. The framework itself should be described in point 8. Include any relevant information on “level indicators” that are nationally devised and recognised and which relate to the qualification.
- 3.2 Explain the official duration or workload of the programme in weeks or years and the actual workload including information on any major sub-components i.e. practical training. Preferably, the workload should be expressed in terms of total student effort required. This consists of the normal designated time on the programme including taught classes and private study, examinations etc. Where possible, the effort should be described in terms of credit, and the credit system should be described. European countries should translate the workload required for the qualification into the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.3 List or explain the nature and length or workload of access qualification(s) or periods of study required for access to the programme described by this Diploma Supplement e.g. *Matura* (for access to a first degree programme) or *Bachelor Degree* (for access to a second degree programme). This is particularly important when intermediate studies are a prerequisite to the named qualification.

### **4 INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED**

- 4.1 The mode of study refers to how the programme was undertaken e.g. full-time, part-time, intermittent/sandwich, e-learning, distance, including placements etc.
- 4.2 Where available, provide details of the learning outcomes, knowledge, skills, competencies and stated aims and objectives associated with the qualification. This information, which relates to outcomes rather than procedures of learning, will increasingly be the key basis on which qualifications are assessed. If applicable, provide details of the regulations covering the minimum requirements to secure the qualification, e.g. any compulsory components or compulsory practical elements, whether all elements have to be passed simultaneously, any thesis/dissertation regulations etc. Include details of any particular features that help define the qualification, especially information on the requirements for successfully passing it.
- 4.3 Give details of each of the individual elements or parts of the qualification and their weighting. For institutions that issue transcripts of studies, it will be sufficient to include the transcripts.  
List the actual marks and/or grades obtained in each major component of the qualification. Entries should be as complete as possible and in accordance with what is normally recorded at the institution concerned. Cover all examinations and assessed components and/or fields of study offered in examination, including any dissertation or thesis. Indicate if the latter were defended or not. All this information is often available in the form of a transcript (a useful format for transcripts has been developed for the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System [ECTS], see point 3.2 above). Many credit-based systems employ detailed transcripts that can be integrated into the wider framework of the Diploma Supplement. If information on the credit allocation between course components and units is available it should be included.  
If the qualification is a joint degree, indicate what parts of the qualification have been earned at which institution.
- 4.4 Provide information on the grading scheme and pass marks relating to the qualification e.g. marks are out of a possible 100% and the minimum pass mark is 40%. Tremendous variations in grading practices exist within and between different national higher education institutions and countries. A mark of 70% in some academic cultures is highly regarded whilst in other countries it is regarded as average or poor. Information on the use and distribution of grades relating to the qualification in question should be included. If more than one grading scheme is used, e.g. in the case of joint degrees, information should be provided on all schemes used for the qualification in question.
- 4.5 If appropriate, indicate the overall classification for the final qualification i.e. *First Class Honours Degree*, *Summa Cum Laude*, *Merit*, *Avec Distinction* etc.

### **5 INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION**

- 5.1 Indicate if within the country of origin, the qualification normally provides access to further academic and/or professional study, especially leading to any specific qualifications, or levels of study e.g. access to Doctoral studies in Hungary. If this is the case, specify the grades or standards that have to be obtained to allow progression. Indicate if the qualification is a terminal (end) award or part of a hierarchy of awards.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html)

- 5.2 Give details of any rights to practise, or professional status accorded to the holders of the qualification, in accordance with national legislation. What specific access, if any, does the qualification give in terms of employment or professional practice and indicate which competent authority allows this. Indicate if the qualification gives access to a 'regulated profession'.

## **6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Add any additional information not included above but relevant to the purposes of assessing the nature, level and usage of the qualification e.g. whether the qualification involved a period of study/training in another institution/company/country or, include further relevant details about the higher education institution where the qualification was taken. If the qualification is a joint or double/multiple degree, or if it was earned under a transnational or borderless education arrangement, this should be noted here.
- 6.2 Indicate any further useful information sources and references where more details on the qualification could be sought e.g. the department in the issuing institution; a national information centre; the European Union National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC); the Council of Europe/UNESCO European National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC) and relevant national sources.

## **7 CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT**

- 7.1 The date the Diploma Supplement was issued. This would not necessarily be the same date the qualification was awarded.
- 7.2 The name and signature of the official certifying the Diploma Supplement.
- 7.3 The official post of the certifying individual.
- 7.4 The official stamp or seal of the institution that provides authentication of the Diploma Supplement.

## **8 INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Give information on the higher educational system: its general access requirements; the national qualifications framework (where applicable), types of institution and the quality assurance or accreditation system<sup>5</sup>. For countries party to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the national qualifications framework should be compatible with and refer to the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA adopted by Ministers in 2005<sup>6</sup>. For countries which are members of the European Union or party to relevant EU programmes, the national framework should also be compatible with the European Qualifications Framework. This description should provide a context for the qualification and refer to it. A standard framework for these descriptions together with actual descriptions should be available for many countries. These have been created as a result of this project and with the co-operation of the relevant National (European Union and European Economic Area) Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), European (Council of Europe/UNESCO) National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC), Ministries and Rectors' conferences.

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<sup>5</sup> Under the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on The Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention), signatories are committed to making arrangements for providing such information. The text of the Convention may be found at [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/LRC\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Recognition/LRC_en.asp).

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520\\_Framework\\_qualifications.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/BASIC/050520_Framework_qualifications.pdf)

### **III. EXAMPLES OF DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENTS.**

#### IV. FOUNDING PRINCIPLES AND GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THOSE PRODUCING SUPPLEMENTS .

The following founding principles and general guidelines are designed to help the production of concise and effective supplements. They result from the work of a joint European Commission Council of Europe UNESCO/CEPES working group that in 1997-1998 piloted and evaluated the Diploma Supplement. The guidelines make strong recommendations concerning the principles and good practice behind effective supplements and the explanatory notes give further detailed advice to higher education institutions who create supplements. All documents are available in all EU/EEA languages and Russian. A range of good practice examples of completed Diploma Supplements can be found on the servers of the European Commission, DG22 (<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22>), the Council of Europe (<http://culture.coe.fr>) or UNESCO/CEPES (<http://www.cepes.ro>). The Diploma Supplement is intended to facilitate the implementation of the *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region*, Lisbon 1997. It was further tested as part of the Phare Multi-Country Project, *Recognition of Higher Education Diploma and Study Credit Points Across Borders*.

##### **Founding Principles:**

The Diploma Supplement is based on the following important founding principles that respect national and international academic autonomy. These principles also give some further explanation of the purpose and nature of the new version. The Diploma Supplement is:

1. a flexible, non-prescriptive tool, capable of adaptation to local needs. It can be used to replace or augment current approaches. Existing transcripts and explanatory systems can be integrated into the framework or be superseded by it. The supplement uses a sequence for the information that it is strongly recommended should be followed.
2. a device that has national and international applications. It has been designed to aid the resolution of international recognition problems as well as domestic ones. These have both been intensified by increasingly fast-changing and complex qualification and award structures.
3. a system to aid recognition for academic and professional purposes. It is potentially useful for all higher education institutions, professional bodies, students, employers, public bodies, governments and citizens.
4. an approach that specifically excludes claims and value-judgements concerning equivalence by providing sufficient objective information to allow the recipient to make his or her own judgements about the qualification in question. It is a system that does not guarantee automatic admission or recognition. It facilitates the process whereby judgements are made by autonomous national or local bodies (academic, professional, governmental, etc.) and therefore does not infringe local rights of judgement. It eases the process of access and recognition.
5. a tool that should be used with sensitivity. The recognition of foreign qualifications should be viewed as a process for the assessment of the competence, experience and knowledge acquired, recognising that 'fair recognition' and not exact equivalence should be sought. Users of the supplement are encouraged, where possible, to focus on the outcomes of the learning that has taken place and to make their judgements using the qualitative and quantitative information provided.
6. a set of guidelines that avoids the inclusion of so much detail that it confuses the user. This minimalist approach acknowledges the cost of producing the supplement and wherever possible advocates referral to other information sources that could be consulted. However, the Diploma Supplement should provide all the necessary information for a judgement to be made without repeated demands for more data.
7. an addition to the original credential. The credential should remain unchanged from its normal state (in its approved language and textual form). The Diploma Supplement should accompany the authentic credential that certifies the award. It is not a substitute for it. Furthermore, the Diploma Supplement can be used in conjunction with other appropriate documentation, including curriculum vitae, etc. a person may well have several Diploma Supplements, each accompanying an individual qualification.

## General Guidelines

It is strongly recommended that supplements should conform with the following:

1. The brief explanatory note (In the box at the head of the sample supplement) should be reproduced as part of each completed Diploma Supplement, in order to guide higher education institutions, citizens, employers and other potential users of the information.
2. Institutions should follow the structure and sequence of information carefully developed and tested by the pilot project. Various customised versions were tested and found not to be as clear and user-friendly. In the cases where sections were omitted altogether, these supplements were invariably found to be ineffective. Great care needs to be taken in compiling supplements in order to avoid imprecise, missing or confused information. Overlong and over-complicated supplements should be avoided. They irritate those who receive them. Avoid information overload and present information as concisely as possible. The examples of good practice supplements show how this can be done. The use of a transcript clearly helps provide detailed information in a concise way.
3. In combination with the credential itself, the supplement should provide sufficient information to enable the reader to make a judgement about the qualification and whether it is appropriate for the purpose for which the holder seeks to use it (e.g. for access to an academic programme, exemption from part of a programme, employment/right to practise a profession, etc.). It is not designed to replace a curriculum vitae but to provide additional information.
4. The supplement should always be accompanied by the original qualification as supplements normally have no legal validity. The existence of a Diploma Supplement does not guarantee the status of an institution, its awards, or whether it is recognised as part of a national higher education system. However, it should contain information on these aspects.
5. The supplement should always have the name and title of the qualification, the name and status of the institution awarding/administering it, and the classification of the award all presented in the original language. Incorrect translations mislead those making judgements about qualifications. Transliterations are permissible in the case of scripts other than the Latin alphabet. It should be possible to relate the names of degrees and awards to the description of the higher education system under section eight,
6. Supplements should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.
7. The production of supplements is best done centrally and not devolved to different parts of academic institutions. This keeps costs down and minimises variation in content and approach.
8. Institutions should take appropriate action to minimise the possibility of forgery and misrepresentation of their supplements.
9. Information on the higher education system (section eight) should be kept to a two-page maximum. Where possible, information could include diagrams and charts to aid clarity. As a follow-up to the pilot Diploma Supplement project, finalised versions of this information are to be produced for each country with the help of national ENICs/NARICs (national information centres), Ministries and Rectors' Conferences.
10. It is best to issue supplements automatically at the time the qualification is completed. This is preferable to retrospective issue which becomes more difficult as programmes and educational awards are subject to continuous evolution and change. **It is particularly important that section eight of the supplement describe the national higher education structure in force at the time the qualification was awarded.**
11. Great care should be taken with translations and terminology as many problems exist in this area. In order to overcome these, it is essential that the original language is used where indicated in the supplement. In addition, the glossary of terms associated with the supplement has been specifically produced to overcome linguistic confusions. Supplements may be produced in whatever language(s) institutions think appropriate.
12. Where they exist, institutional, regional and national quality assurance systems should include Diploma Supplements in their activities. This will help ensure the quality of supplements.
13. Supplements are designed to be used with sensitivity. The evaluation of qualifications from another country should concentrate on the competence, experience and knowledge acquired, recognising that 'fair recognition' and not exact equivalence should be sought.

## V. GLOSSARY.

*Definitions and usage of terms vary from country to country. To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding this glossary aims only to cover all the main terms used in the papers associated with the Diploma Supplement initiative. It is partly based and fully consistent with the definition used in the 1997 Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region..*

**ACADEMIC RECOGNITION** refers to the recognition of courses, qualifications or diplomas from one (domestic or foreign) higher education institution by another. Usually this is sought as a basis for access to further new study at the second institution (cumulative recognition) or, as recognition allowing some sort of exemption from having to re-study elements of a programme (recognition with advanced standing). A further type of academic recognition is recognition of studies taken elsewhere in another institution (recognition by substitution) that replace a comparable period of study at the home institution (see PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION).

**ACCESS** (to higher education) refers to the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education. Access is distinct from admission, which concerns the individuals' actual participation in the higher education programme concerned.

**ACCREDITATION** is the process by which one higher education institution gains authority to award, and/or gains recognition of, its qualifications from another senior competent authority. This might be the State, a government agency or, another domestic or foreign higher education institution (see FRANCHISE). The term has its origins in the American system and is used in some European countries in the same way as 'recognition'.

**ADMISSION** the act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme.

**ASSESSMENT** i) (of institutions or programmes) the process for establishing the educational quality of a higher education institution or programme; ii) (of individual qualifications) the written appraisal or evaluation of an individual's foreign qualifications by a competent authority; iii) (of individual students) the actual testing of a student's ability and skills within a programme (e.g. by examination).

**AWARD** this is used synonymously with qualification.

**COMPETENT RECOGNITION AUTHORITY** a body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

**COURSE** a part of a programme of studies that is normally self-contained and assessed separately. Complete study programmes are normally composed of several courses.

**CREDENTIAL** a term sometimes used to refer to a qualification (see QUALIFICATION).

**CREDENTIAL EVALUATOR** the individual who makes a judgement on the recognition of foreign qualifications (see COMPETENT RECOGNITION AUTHORITY).

**CREDIT** the 'currency' providing a measure of learning outcomes achieved in a notional time at a given level. Usually associated with credit-based modular courses (see ECTS).

**DE FACTO RECOGNITION** refers to situations of unregulated recognition for professional purposes, such as where no national legal authorisation to practice a particular profession exists or is required. This is the most problematic area of professional recognition (see PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION and RECOGNITION).

**DE JURE RECOGNITION** refers to the recognition of the right to work in a specific country in a regulated profession (e.g. medical doctor) in the European Union or European Economic Area.

These situations are subject to various European Union Directives whereby if a citizen is a fully qualified professional in one Member State, he or she has a right to exercise that profession and be recognised as a professional in another Member State (see REGULATED PROFESSION, PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION and RECOGNITION).

**DIPLOMA** here refers to any formally awarded qualification/credential. In some educational systems the term refers to a specific category or type of qualification. It is not being used in this restricted sense here.

**ECTS** the European Credit Transfer System (developed by the European Commission). This is a system based on ECTS credits (student workload), designed to facilitate mobility, credit accumulation and transfer, and the international recognition of periods of study completed abroad.

**ENIC** European National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility (Council of Europe/UNESCO).

**FRANCHISE** the situation where an institution agrees to authorise another institution (nationally or internationally) to deliver an approved programme whilst normally retaining overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements. However, significant variations in franchise relationships exist.

**FIELD OF STUDY** the main disciplines or subject areas of a qualification.



**HIGHER EDUCATION** all types of courses of study, or sets of courses (programmes), training, or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to its higher education system. Higher education builds on the level of competence, knowledge and skills generally acquired through secondary education (see HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION and PROGRAMME OF STUDY). Higher education normally comes after secondary education in time and is normally offered through higher education programmes at higher education institutions. However, it should be noted that higher education institutions may give courses of study that are not higher education level. Conversely, institutions which are not considered as belonging to the higher education system may offer some higher education programmes. The exact definition of higher education and higher education institutions vary from country to country. For example, in some countries, nursing is considered to be a field of higher education, whereas in other countries, nursing is considered to be part of post-secondary education without being higher education.

**HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION** an establishment providing higher education and recognised by the competent authorities as belonging to its system of higher education (see HIGHER EDUCATION and PROGRAMME OF STUDY).

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** the specific intellectual and practical skills gained and tested by the successful completion of a unit, course or whole programme of study.

**LEVEL** the place of a qualification in the higher education system. Normally, a national hierarchy of qualifications exists. The number of levels of higher education qualifications vary between countries and/or kinds of higher education (see LEVEL INDICATORS).

**LEVEL INDICATORS** these can range from any general information on the role of the qualification to highly detailed specific statements about the nature, skills and competencies associated with the successful completion of parts or all of a qualification (see LEVEL).

**LISBON RECOGNITION CONVENTION** refers to the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region adopted in Lisbon April 1997.

**MODULE** a separate and coherent block of learning. Part of a modular programme of studies where the curriculum is divided into a range of similar sized segments.

**NARIC** National Academic Recognition Information Centre (European Union and European Economic Area). Some NARICs also have responsibilities for professional recognition.

**PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION** refers to the right to practise and the professional status accorded to a holder of a qualification. In the European Union recognition for professional purposes is defined as the legal act by which a competent authority in a host Member State recognises that the qualifications obtained by an applicant in another Member State are suitable for the pursuit on its territory of a professional activity whose practice is legally regulated (see REGULATED PROFESSION, DE JURE RECOGNITION, DE FACTO RECOGNITION and RECOGNITION).

**PROGRAMME OF STUDY** a set of courses, the various components of which complement and build on each other in order to provide the student with a higher education qualification (see HIGHER EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION and COURSE). 'Programme' also denotes the academic fields of study and requirements that collectively define the qualification (see FIELD OF STUDY).

**QUALIFICATION** i) higher education qualification: any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme; ii) qualification giving access to higher education: any diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education programme and giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to higher education (see HIGHER EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION and PROGRAMME OF STUDY). Also termed as any higher education award given for the successful completion of a programme of learning; a generic term that refers to the wide variety of higher education qualifications at different levels and across different countries.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE** refers to the internal and external processes by which the quality of academic provision is maintained.

**RECOGNITION** a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities. An assessment of individual qualifications. Such assessment may be any kind of statement on the value of (in this case) a foreign qualification. Recognition refers to a formal statement by a competent recognition authority acknowledging the value of the qualification in question and indicating the consequences of this recognition for the holder of the qualification. For example a qualification may be recognised for the purposes of further study at a given level (academic recognition), or for the use of a title, or for the exercise of employment purposes (professional recognition) (see COMPETENT RECOGNITION AUTHORITY, QUALIFICATION, ACADEMIC RECOGNITION and PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION). Recognition can also refer to the accreditation of a higher education institution by another authority (see ACCREDITATION).

**REGULATED PROFESSION** refers to professions whose practice is regulated in some way by law or administrative rules. A given profession may be regulated in one country and not in another (see DE JURE RECOGNITION).

**TRANSCRIPT** an official record or breakdown of a student's progress and achievements. Many credit-based education systems employ detailed transcripts that show the credits and grades for units undertaken (e.g. ECTS Transcript of Records).

**VALIDATION** the process by which a recognised awarding institution judges that a programme of study leading to a qualification is of appropriate quality and standard. This can be a programme of its own or that of a subordinate institution