

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION -

Presentation of definitions and Code of Good practice

*based upon the results of
Council of Europe/UNESCO Working group on Transnational Education*

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at Malmö seminar on Transnational education

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Introduction-

Some concepts that should be taken into account when analysing the phenomenon of transnational education

Transnational education is:

all types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based.

Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

The institution or programme in question may belong to the national education system of another country, or it may be independent of any national system.

While this distinction

should not have a bearing on the demands for transparency and quality,
it does have consequences on the legal aspects of the recognition of qualifications granted under such programmes, as well as for the arrangements for quality assurance.

Transnational education is closely linked to

- development of and new possibilities offered by information and communication technologies,
- growth of corporate educational provision by multi-national companies,
- developing 'global market' of borderless higher education

Transnational education results from the process of merging the interests of both sending and receiving institutions. It is often a response to a demand for higher education to which the national system is not able (or willing) to respond, e.g.:

- national system does not offer a kind of programmes)
- national system is *elite* higher education and lots of qualified applicants remain outside
- national system does not provide opportunities for learning in parallel to work
- national system does not provide HE in minority languages
- national system restricts women's access in some way
- national system is too expensive
- transnational programmes are more attractive

By all accounts, transnational education is here to stay, and cannot be disregarded in the name of past national glories, or considered as a mere temporary phenomenon.

A refusal to find ways of dealing with this new phenomenon, for example by means of attempts at national level to simply outlaw transnational programmes qualifications as such, would in the short or medium term, lead to problems which will not disappear, and would be even more difficult to solve at a later date.

Recognition problems of transnational qualifications can not be solved through direct application of Lisbon recognition convention. Convention is an agreement between *States*, it covers qualifications issued by *national* higher education systems.

Convention uses wording *foreign qualifications* , it is about recognition of education completed *in another country*, see below:

Article V.1. Each Party shall recognize periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education programme **in another Party**.

Article VI.1 ... each Party shall recognize the higher education qualifications conferred **in another Party**...

If a foreign institution operates in territory of a Party:

Article IV.9 (admission), **Article VI.5** (HE credentials):... **each Party may make the recognition of qualifications issued by foreign educational institutions operating in its territory contingent upon**

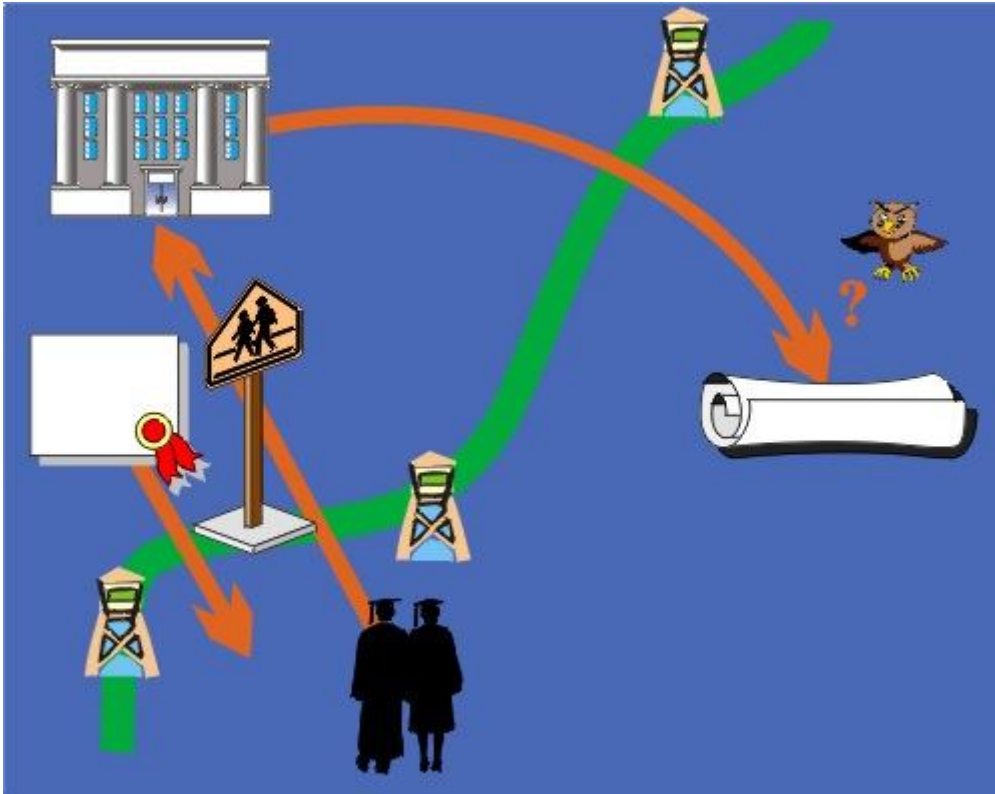
- specific requirements of national legislation or
- specific agreements concluded with the Party of origin of such institutions.

Mission of the Council of Europe/UNESCO working group was

- reflection and analysis of the new developments in transnational education;
- sharing information;
- making recommendations for recognition of qualifications awarded through transnational education
- promoting cooperation with quality assurance and accreditation bodies

Definitions in transnational education

1. Student mobility and transnational education

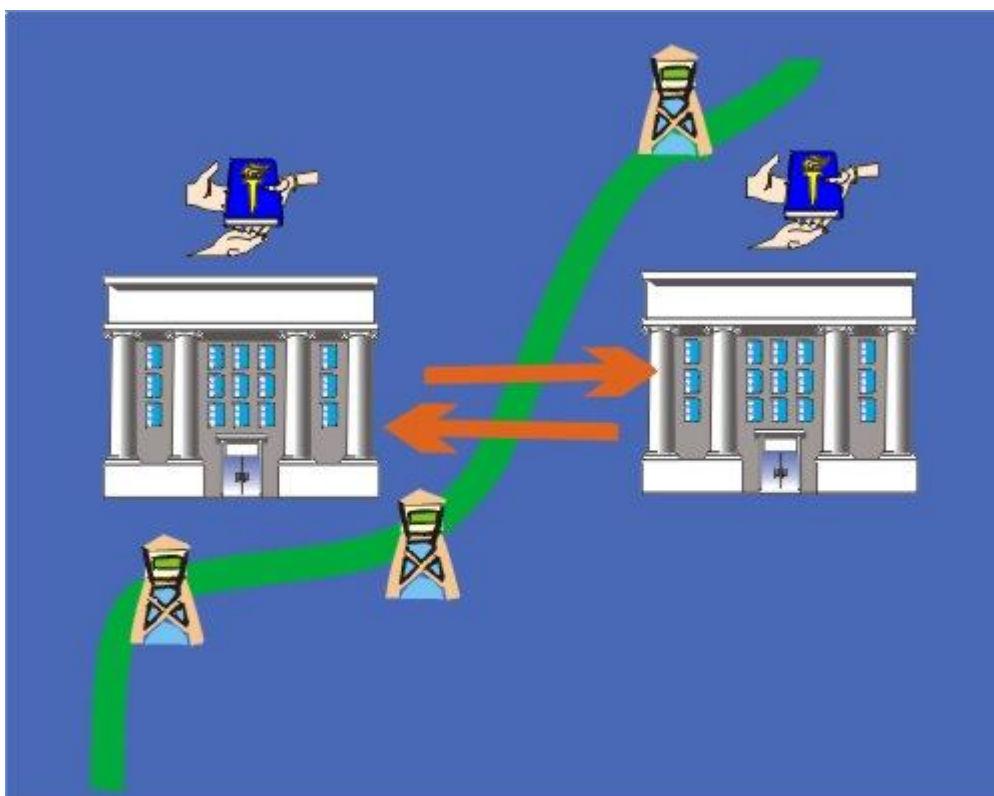


Transnational education is something different from student mobility.

Mobility. When students move to study in another country (crossing the green borderline with watchtowers), they return with their credentials that are obtained *in another country*. This case is clearly under the Lisbon convention and the principles for evaluation and recognition of truly foreign credentials are clear to credential evaluators.

Transnational education. In the case of transnational education the students don't move – they study in their home country or even at home, but the credentials are awarded in the name of a foreign institution. So the diplomas “fly” to the student from abroad. In other words, it is not the student but the diploma that crosses the borderline.

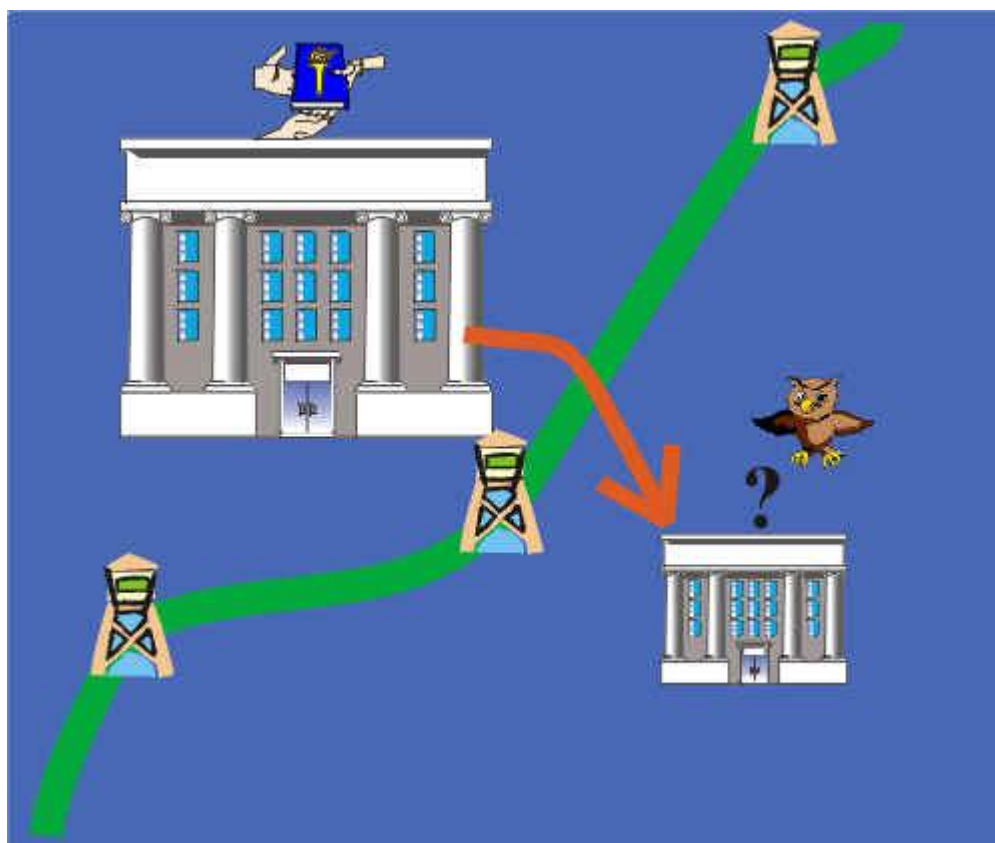
2. Programme articulations



Programme articulations are result of co-operation among higher education institutions in different countries. They can lead to e.g. programme twinning, joint or double degrees.

Provided that both higher education institutions are recognised in their own countries (we found that the symbol above the university icon in clipart pictures was regarded to as “accreditation”), this kind of transnational education should not lead to too many problems.

3.Branch campus



Quite often higher education institutions establish branch campuses in other countries. In many cases the mother institution is a recognised institution in its own country. However, the credential evaluator will want to know answers to a number of questions, like:

- can the recognition/accreditation of the mother institution be transferred also to the branch? In other words, are the same quality assurance bodies who check the quality of mother institution, really responsible also for the branch? And if not, in what way is it ensured that quality is the same as in mother institution?
- are the programmes in the branch campus really identical to the ones in mother institution? If they are – do they fit the needs of receiving country?
- if the programmes are adapted to the needs of host country, are they still the same degrees/qualifications as in the sending country?
- finally, there is the question about the teaching staff quality (see next picture).