



Bologna Seminar co-organized by the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia together with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, the National Training Foundation and the Council of Europe

«ECTS BASED ON LEARNING OUTCOMES AND STUDENT WORKLOAD»

MOSCOW 17-18 APRIL 2008

Conclusions

I. CONTEXT

The importance of establishing a credit system to ‘promote the most widespread student mobility’ was underlined already in the Bologna Declaration. Both the Salamanca Convention of Higher Education Institutions (March 2001) and the Prague and Berlin Conferences of Higher Education Ministers (September 2001, September 2003), agreed on the importance of credit systems for both transfer and accumulation, and on the need for progress on these issues.

In Zürich (October 2002), the participants of the EUA/ Swiss Confederation Conference ‘Credit Transfer and Accumulation – the Challenge for Institutions and Students’ agreed on a number of key features of credit transfer and accumulation and on the importance of introducing widely the ECTS as the only tried and tested credit system in Europe. At the same time, a number of open issues for further reflection were identified and brought forward to the Graz Convention of European Higher Education Institutions (May 2003), and the Berlin Ministers’

meeting (September 2003).

In Edinburgh (February 2008), the Bologna seminar on learning outcomes endorsed the proposition that “learning outcomes are the basic building blocks of the Bologna package of educational reforms” and that this methodological approach is at the heart of the paradigm shift from teacher to student - centered learning. The seminar agreed that it was unhelpful to counterpoise learning outcomes and workload, since both elements were important in the use of ECTS.

In Moscow, at the Bologna seminar on ECTS and student workload, (April 2008) participants from European universities, student bodies, national ministries and international organizations agreed that ECTS credits are based on learning outcomes and the workload students need in order to achieve expected learning outcomes.

II. SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS

- There is a great need for a common terminology based on a shared understanding amongst staff, students and other stakeholders about what the key concepts mean;
- Learning should be described using an outcomes-based approach at various stages, i.e., in the Frameworks at European and national levels, program, and module levels, to facilitate recognition and mobility (Matryoshka doll system);
- Descriptors used in national frameworks (including at programme level) should be consistent with those at the European level while allowing for diversity;
- In order to empower students, to facilitate life-long learning, and to allow flexibility, public authorities, university staff and students need to recognize that the shift from an input to an output-oriented approach requires a culture shift at all levels;

- Proper implementation of ECTS requires concerted action by public authorities and all the other stakeholders if we are to bridge the gap between commitments made and actual practice;
- National and institutional quality assurance procedures based on the European standards and guidelines must address the use of ECTS based on student workload and learning outcomes;
- Proper implementation of ECTS is a fundamental tool for planning curricula and enhancing their quality and transparency;
- In order to arrive at realistic workloads and credit allocation, the involvement of students in the calculation and verification of workload is indispensable; it is recommended to monitor this process on a regular basis, e.g. during internal quality review processes and/or in a self-evaluation report in the framework of an external quality review;
- Progress in the implementation of ECTS, description of learning outcomes and setting up of NQF should be properly assessed.

The conclusions will be presented formally to the Bologna Follow-Up Group for inclusion in the preparation of the Ministers' meeting hosted by the Benelux countries in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve on 28-29 April 2009.

Moscow, 18/04/2008

