

Recognition and Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process

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Presentation Layout

- Bologna Reforms at UOC
 - Application of ECTS both as a transfer and as an accumulation system
 - Developing an internal culture for quality
- External Quality Assurance
- Recognition of Degrees

Large Variability in HE and degree structures

June 1999
Bologna Declaration
Signed by 29 European countries

2001 Prague

2003 Berlin (40 countries)

2004 Joint Masters
Erasmus Mundus

(catalyst for the unification and
Recognition issues)

2005 Bergen
(45 countries)

European Qualifications Framework
Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA

European Higher Education Area
comparable, compatible, competitive
HE structures and quality standards
Mutual recognition of degree structures

National QA Systems
National Qualifications Frameworks

Bologna Process Stocktaking

Presented at the Bergen Ministerial Conference

- Quality assurance
- Two-cycle system
- Recognition of degrees and periods of studies

Quality Assurance

Scoring Criteria

- Stage of development of QA system
- Key elements of evaluation systems
- Level of participation of students
- Level of international participation, co-operation and networking

Two-Cycle Degree System

Scoring Criteria

- Stage of implementation of two-cycle system
- Level of student enrolment in two-cycle system
- Access from first to second cycle

Recognition of Degrees and Periods of Study

Scoring Criteria

- Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement
- Ratification of Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Stage of implementation of ECTS

Bologna Scorecard

Green	Excellent Performance
Light Green	Very Good Performance
Yellow	Good Performance
Orange	Some Progress has been made
Red	Little Progress has been made yet



**Bologna Reforms at the
University of Cyprus**

University of Cyprus

- State institute, established by law in 1989
- Only tertiary education institute in Cyprus that has the status of a university
- Admitted its first students in 1992
- Started postgraduate studies in 1997
- Presently, it has
 - A student population of about 4,500 (approx 1000 graduate students)
 - Six Faculties (Sciences, Engineering, Humanities, Social and Education Sciences, Economics and Management, Letters)
 - 22 first cycle, 30 second cycle, and 24 third cycle programmes

University of Cyprus

- Issues its Diploma Supplement from 2004
 - Mechanistic translation of old credits based on contact hours to ECTS credits
- From September 2005 all programmes will apply the ECTS requirements
 - Ultimate objective: Student-centered learning-oriented educational methodology
- UOC will apply for a DS Label and an ECTS Label when it feels that all relevant requirements are satisfied

Application of ECTS both as a transfer and as an accumulation system at UOC

- Decision taken by UOC Senate in the summer of 2003
- It has taken two years to make the conversion from the old to the new system
 - It has been very easy for new programmes, e.g. Architecture

Characteristics of Existing Educational System of UOC

- Modular educational structure based on credits – measuring contact hours, not student workload
- Semester-based academic year
 - Fall Semester (Sept – Jan)
 - Spring Semester (Feb – June)
- Three discrete cycles
 - Ptychio – 4 years (for Engineering too)
 - Masters [Magister] – 3 or 4 semesters
 - Didaktoriko – 4 years (a PhD thesis can be submitted in 3 years, e.g. if exempted from the taught component)
- Philosophy loosely based on learning goals, and advocating continuous assessment – “course contract”

Basic Step of the Conversion

convert the old system of credits based on contact hours to the new system of European credits based on student workload

Interested parties, primarily professors and students, need to be “convinced” of the benefits of the reform

Academic Recognition

Professional Recognition



Notion of Credits

- Very basic in a modular system
- Touches all aspects
 - Layout of programmes
 - Student load
 - Notion of full-time study
 - Tuition fees
 - Student exchanges, etc. etc.

Translation of Study Rules

- **First Phase – Hard Constraints**

- An academic year consists of 60 ECTS credits – 1 credit equals 25-30 hours of student workload
- Equal distribution between the two semesters, i.e. 30 credits; slightly lower load (1-3 credits) permitted for fall semester
- Full-time study in a semester means 30 credits
- etc.

- **Second Phase – Softer Constraints**

- A 1st cycle programme thesis ranges from 10 to 30 credits
- etc.

Questions Raised

Definition of an ECTS credit

- The range for 1 credit (25-30) does cause problems, since the difference amounts to 300 work hours in an academic year and thus 900 work hours in total for 3-year programmes. **Should the definition be more fixed, e.g. 27 or 28 work hours per credit?**

Questions Raised

Duration of Cycles

- 1 extra academic year means 1500 – 1800 additional hours of student work
- Common learning outcomes, albeit different starting states (defined by the preceding primary and secondary levels of the education system) and education philosophies – **convergence at a high level of semantic abstraction defined by learning outcomes**
- Engineering programmes are especially difficult (3, 4, or 5 years for 1st cycle?) – academic recognition more directly linked with professional recognition

Distribution of Credits

amongst the components of a programme

- A modular distribution was not possible, as it was not so in the old system
 - First cycle programmes by definition involve courses from a number of Departments
 - E.g. choosing 6 ECTS credits as the fixed unit would have caused a 4-year programme with 4-credit courses (in the old system) to be reduced to 3 academic years
 - A semi-modular distribution was the only viable option (language courses and free electives fixed to 5 ECTS credits)
 - Heuristic used for other courses: 2 additional hours of student work per contact hour

Above all it should be
emphasized that

the number of credits allocated to
a course do not represent its
significance or importance

Problems Faced

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Year Total
1	30	32	62
2	31	29	60
3	29	31	60
4	31	30	61

Total number of credits for the programme

243

High level estimation and distribution of credits

- Further fine-tuning was necessary in order to meet basic ECTS constraints
- Credits per course had to be further analyzed and justified at a lower level in terms of student workload at the granularity of hours
- The ECTS reforms gave the opportunity to Departments to introduce further revisions to their programmes

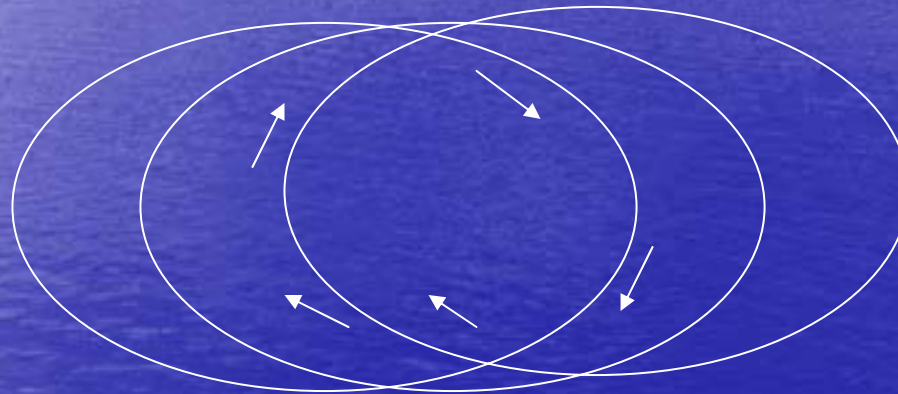
Two Outstanding Tasks of Critical Importance

- Explicate fully learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods – **course template under design**
- Do the estimates of the student workload agree with reality (Tuning project approach)? Do the programmes meet the generic level descriptors adopted in the EQF (Dublin descriptors)?

Student Workload Tuning approach

I. Learning Module (LM)
(no of credits./student workload)

II. Planning
Educational activities/
Estimating student
workload



III. Monitoring Workload
by validating the real time
required

IV. Revising LM
Either in relation to
the number of
credits or with
respect to the
educational
activities

The conversion of the programmes to ECTS has resulted in substantial self-awareness

As the application of the reforms unfolds and refines itself, more concrete evidence regarding the justification of additional resources can be assembled

Insights from this experience

- Pressing too hard with a very rigid time schedule is counter-productive
- Holding several meetings is necessary for direct interactions – general meetings, with specific Departments, with students
- Written material is necessary but not sufficient
- Skepticism should be freely expressed and convincingly addressed, in particular the question “Is quality really enhanced by these reforms, or is it in reality adversely affected?”

Developing an Internal Culture for Quality

at the University of Cyprus

Quality Culture Preliminary Steps

- EUA institutional evaluation and follow-up
- Programmatic evaluations by committees of external experts
- Other self-evaluation initiatives
 - A study on research productivity and visibility/ impact of the departments of the university
- Research Committee is preparing a proposal for managing the quality of research at the university, based on internationally accepted quality indicators

Quality Culture Staff Development

- Institution of “individual research activity” of academic staff
 - Supports mobility of researchers
 - To attend conferences and other scientific meetings
 - To keep in touch with external collaborators
- Professional development of administrative staff on a systematic basis should also be addressed

Quality Culture Education Provision

- **Centre for Teaching and Learning** a significant development
 - Already networking with international experts
- **Student evaluation questionnaire** for courses and teaching in use, but optionally
 - EUA follow-up team is critical of this
 - Matter under discussion
 - On-line completion is being considered

Quality Culture Education Provision

- **E-learning policy** decided but still to be implemented awaiting the provision of necessary resources
 - Primarily to be used for supplementing traditional methods with added benefits to the learner
- Graduate Studies Committee has submitted a proposal about **quality assurance criteria for doctoral theses**
- Quality management of graduate studies under discussion
 - General **criteria for deciding student intake**
 - **Graduate School** (longer term objective)
- Quality management of undergraduate programmes also in need
 - Some studies about the **quality of incoming students** have been carried out

Quality Culture

Administrative Infrastructure

- **Total quality management** of administrative services – ongoing project
- Reform plan under discussion
 - Aims to promote quality by offering incentives at the workplace
- **Professional development** of administrative staff
 - there is now a separate Division for Human Resources Management

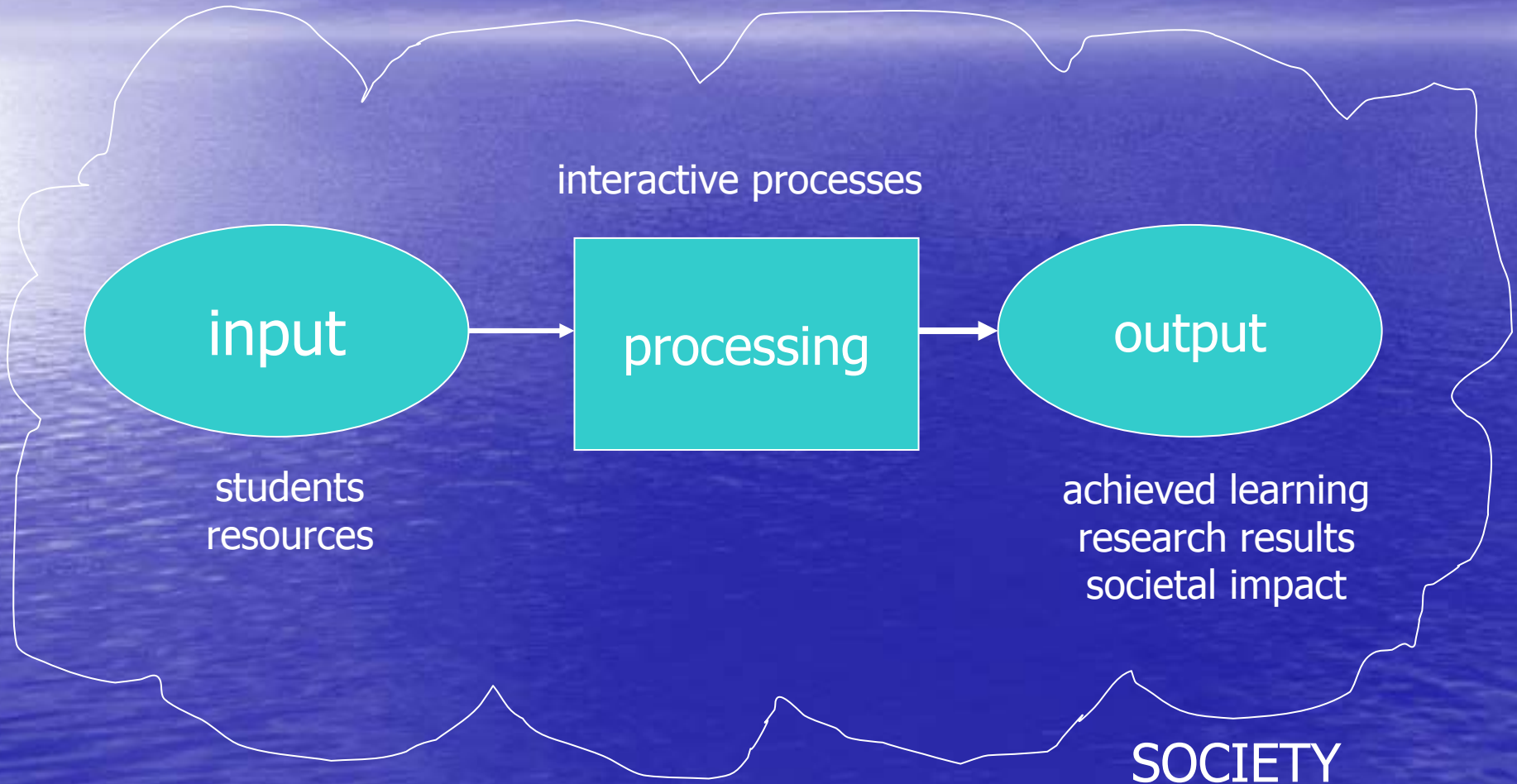
Managing or assessing quality necessitates the maintenance

Of an up to date, comprehensive **data bank** collecting all relevant data

Internal Quality Management
and External Quality
Assurance should be tightly
linked processes, i.e.

Adequate (IQM) →
Positive Outcome (EQA)

High level view of education provision and research conducting



Internal Quality Management

Final Note

- The processes do not operate in vacuum but in the context of a (supporting) society
- IQM amounts to managing the quality of such interactive processes, primarily from the perspective of their output, given their input

External Quality Assurance

Berlin Communiqué

By 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved
- Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results
- A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures
- International participation, co-operation and networking.

Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA

In Berlin, Ministers called upon ENQA through its members, in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB to develop by 2005

an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on QA & to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for QA and/or accreditation agencies or bodies

QA - Bergen Ministerial Conference

- The Ministers observed that much had been done in QA but there is still progress to be made
- Institutes are urged to enhance the quality of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal mechanisms and their direct correlation to external QA

European Standards and Guidelines for Internal QA

- Policy and procedures for QA
- Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- Assessment of students
- QA of teaching staff
- Learning resources and student support
- Information systems
- Public information

European Standards of External Quality Assurance

- Use of internal QA procedures
- Development of external QA processes
- Criteria for decisions
- Processes fit for purpose
- Reporting
- Follow-up procedures
- Periodic reviews
- System-wide analyses

European Standards for External QA Agencies

- Use of external QA procedures for HE
- Official status – formally recognized by competent public authorities in the EHEA
- Activities
- Resources
- Mission statement
- Independence
- External QA criteria and processes used by the agencies
- Accountability procedures – agencies themselves are accredited

At Bergen the Ministers
welcomed the principle of a

European Register of QA
agencies based on
national review

Cyprus Situation Regarding External QA of Tertiary Education Institutes

- **SEKAP** – The Council for Educational Evaluation-Accreditation
 - Only for Private Colleges of Tertiary Education
 - Only Programmatic Evaluation
- Legislation for a **National QA Agency** under discussion
 - Will encompass all universities, public & private
 - Both Institutional & Programmatic Evaluation

Recognition of Degrees

Convention of the Council of Europe and UNESCO on the Recognition of HE Qualifications in Europe

A country should recognize the
corresponding qualifications of
another country as equivalent to
its own, unless there are
significant differences

European Qualifications Framework

- Overarching framework on qualifications for the EHEA based on national frameworks
- Assigned (at the Berlin conference) to a working group chaired by Danish Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation
- Adopted at the Bergen conference

European Qualifications Framework

- Comprises three cycles
- Allows for the possibility of intermediate qualifications, within national contexts
- Adopts the Dublin descriptors as the generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competencies
- Credit ranges in the first and second cycles

National Qualifications Framework

At the Bergen meeting Ministers committed themselves to elaborate, by 2010, the corresponding national frameworks of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, and to show progress by 2007.

What about qualifications that
existed in the old systems

but are no longer a part
of the reformed
systems?

Extinct Qualifications (e.g. combined qualifications)

Should still be included in the
NQFs and ascribed clear
quantitative and qualitative
semantics, so that they can be
interpreted and recognized

KYSATS

(The Cyprus Council for the Recognition of HE Qualifications)

- **Equivalence** – just level
 - Admission criteria, duration, methods of teaching and student evaluation, substantive part of the studies carried out at the degree awarding institution
- **Equivalence and Correspondence** (first cycle degrees) – both level and specialization
 - Prototype programmes, those of the national universities of Cyprus (or Greece or other European universities)
 - The need to attend supplementary courses arises
- **Bilateral agreements**, between Cyprus and other countries, for the mutual recognition of degrees

Recognition and Quality Assurance

are tightly linked:
Quality assures Recognition

The **Bologna process promotes quality** through transparency, compatibility and comparability at a high (semantic) level of learning outcomes, and common quality standards and guidelines