



*A
Framework for Qualifications
of the European Higher
Education Area*

EURASHE XV Conference, Vilnius - April 2005

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Berlin September 2003

- *Ministers encourage the member states to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile.*
- *They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.*

Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA - status

- Developed by working group, with expert consultants, in 2004-05 in response to request of the ministers at Berlin
- Endorsed by Seminar in Copenhagen in January 2005
- Recommended by the Bologna Follow-up Group to the ministers at Bergen in May 2005



qualifications



**A Framework for Qualifications of
The European Higher Education Area**

Why move towards a Bologna Qualifications Framework?

- Until 2003, little Europe-wide agreement or common understanding to resolve what distinguishes the first 2 cycles
- Bologna process implies the development of rigorous qualification frameworks that make qualifications really transparent

Principles

- Qualifications are a matter of national policy and law
- Framework for the EHEA is an overarching “framework of frameworks”
- EHEA framework will not cover all the features required in national frameworks

Purpose of EHEA framework

- International transparency
- International recognition
- International mobility
- Assist in identifying points of articulation between national frameworks

EHEA Framework

- Three main cycles (& short cycle)
 - Short cycle (within or linked to first cycle)
 - First cycle (*e.g. bachelors*)
 - Second cycle (*e.g. masters*)
 - Third cycle (*e.g. PhD*)

Learning outcomes

- Key conceptual development
- Descriptors of learning outcomes, including competences
- Generic end-of-cycle outcomes

Dublin Descriptors

- knowledge and understanding
- applying knowledge and understanding
- making judgements
- communications skills
- learning skills

Credits

- European credit transfer system guidelines
- 60 credits = one year FTE
- All awards should be linked to ECTS
- Detailed credit arrangements a national matter

ECTS

- Short cycle (within or linked to first cycle)
 - 120 approx
- First cycle
 - 180-240
- Second cycle
 - Min 60, normally 90-120
- Third cycle
 - Usually not credit bearing

European Qualifications Framework

- “European Qualifications Framework” ≠ Framework for EHEA
- EU initiative, linked to Lisbon Strategy and Maastricht Communiqué on VET
- Expert Group working proposal due by late 2005
- A meta-framework for HE and VET
- Based on common reference levels

Linking frameworks

National => European

- Criteria
- Procedures for self-certification

Criteria for national frameworks

- Ministerial designation
- Based on learning outcomes
- Bologna-compatible QA arrangements
- Diploma supplement referenced
- Qualifications linked to descriptors
- Published responsibilities

Procedures

- Self-certification by competent authority
- Process evidence published
- Relevant national QA agreement
- International dimension to certification process
- ENIC/NARIC maintain listing of the self-certified
- Diploma supplement note

National Framework - the Irish experience

- Published in 2003
- Implementation in Institute of Technology sector through HETAC
- New awards structures and standards
- Procedure for transition to new awards
- Determination of standards for fields of learning

Issues for EURASHE sector in national framework development

- Recognition of sector qualifications
- Parity of esteem for binary qualifications and the question of profile
- Voice in determination of standards
- Arrangements for quality assurance
- The inclusion of short-cycle (within or linked to the first cycle)