

Recommendations of BFUG working group on teaching and learning to Tirana Ministerial Conference 2024

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This deliverable was developed within the framework of the Bologna Follow-up Group by the Working Group on Learning and Teaching, Co-chaired by EURASHE together with representatives from France and Ireland and with participation of the members of the Working Group: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Croatia, Cyprus, Education International, European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Students' Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), EURASHE, European Commission, France, Georgia, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Scotland).

Background

The BFUG Working Group on Learning and Teaching (WG L&T) bases its work on the Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA - Annex III to the Rome Communiqué (2020), specifically looking at how to translate these Recommendations into concrete policy actions across the EHEA and, where possible, into measurable, qualitative indicators.

Thematic Framework

Three main specific topics in the broad area of learning and teaching, that the BFUG WG on L&T has been mandated to work on, are the following:

- Making student-centred learning a reality across the entire EHEA;
- Supporting staff development;
- Fostering innovative learning and teaching.

The WG on L&T has carried out its activities around these topics and always looking at the system-level initiatives and practices and not focusing on practices at the level of individual higher education institutions.

The final recommendations presented to the BFUG were consolidated into two primary categories, namely student-centred learning and staff development. This integration was prompted by the transversal nature of the transformative learning and teaching topic.

Proposals for the Ministerial Communiqué

STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

We will incorporate a commitment to SCL into legislation and/or national strategies, ensuring adequate funding and proper support structures for implementation.

We encourage higher education institutions to take a proactive approach for adapting to the changing environment through flexible learning, while ensuring that students are empowered to use their autonomy and responsibility in their learning experience (including in assessment), respecting a diversity of learners, ensuring the acquisition of skills for the future and emphasising critical thinking. We commit to creating and implementing policies that bridge the disparity in educational starting points, in an effort to achieve equity by guaranteeing that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

We call upon the BFUG to establish a thematic peer learning group on student-centred learning to bring together institutions from across the EHEA to exchange and learn from each other, to work towards a commonly shared and operational definition, and to propose concrete actions of how to enhance the implementation.

Acknowledging the transformative power of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education, we emphasise ethical considerations in these areas. We affirm our commitment to

encourage HEIs to develop policies that promote the ethical use of AI in teaching and learning and in scientific practice. We encourage institutions to integrate ethical principles into digitalisation efforts, ensuring transparency, fairness, and student and staff well-being. This includes engaging with students as partners and with staff on responsible AI use and maintaining data ethics in learning and teaching, including in learning analytics. We will support the development of ethical guidelines and the provision of AI literacy for students and staff. By considering ethics in digitalisation and AI adoption in teaching and learning, we commit to enhance educational quality, inclusivity, and uphold human rights, while harnessing the potential of digitalisation and of AI for positive impact on our societies.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Our recommendations aim to enrich the European higher education landscape by strengthening teacher support, acknowledging teaching's significance, while respecting their professional autonomy and ensuring ample time for effective educational practices and collaboration. They focus on three key areas:

1. **Enhancing Support for Educators:** Efforts should be made to incorporate teacher pedagogical training into the curriculum for doctoral students and early career researchers. Continuous professional development should be accessible to all professionals engaged in education. Their training should be rooted in research and adapted to different contexts, while integrating equality and inclusion. Establishing teaching and learning centres is important to offer training and expertise, and mentorship programs can also aid early career educators.
2. **Recognizing the Value of Teaching:** Teaching should be acknowledged as an essential part of academia. Frameworks should be established to outline educators' development and career paths. Recognition can manifest through promotions based on teaching quality, incentives for innovative teaching, and support for research on teaching practices.
3. **Allotting Time for Teaching and Collaboration:** Integrating professional development into the academic workload is crucial. Stable employment and reasonable teaching loads are essential for maintaining educational quality. Time should be dedicated to preparation, innovation, and collaborative activities among educators. Additionally, it's important to recognize that reforms about teaching enhancement are a long-term process.



About EURASHE

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EURASHE is an established partner for European institutions and stakeholders in the development of policy and practice in higher education, reflected in its participation in high-profile forums and working groups, as well as in several European networks and alliances.

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