

Working Group 4 on Learning & Teaching (Final Report)

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Summary

This Final Report of the Working Group on Learning and Teaching gathers information about the activities and outcomes of the work of the Bologna Follow-Up Group on Learning & Teaching Working Group (BFUG L&T WG), focusing on translating the Recommendations endorsed by Ministers in the 2020 Rome Conference of Ministers, in particular Annex III of the Communiqué, into concrete policy actions.

1. Introduction & Mandate of the Group

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.

1.1. Reference to the Rome communiqué

“We adopt the “Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA” (Annex III) and commit to following them, supporting higher education institutions in further implementing student-centred learning and teaching. The recommendations comprise increased support for all learners, and for teaching and non-teaching staff. Academic staff, including junior academics, require stable employment and career opportunities, parity of esteem for teaching and research, attractive working conditions, access to up-to-date staff development, and recognition of their achievements. In all these respects we will foster dialogue and collaboration on learning and teaching in our national systems and at EHEA level.

Flexible and open learning paths, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of student-centred learning and are in increasing demand in our societies. In addition to full degree programmes, many higher education institutions offer or plan to offer smaller units of learning, which enable learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal skills and competencies at various stages in their lives. We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed, implemented, and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tools.

We commit to supporting our higher education institutions in using digital technologies for learning, teaching, and assessment, as well as for academic communication and research, and to investing in the development of digital skills and competencies for all.”

1.2. Specific tasks

In addition, specific objectives were entrusted by the BFUG to the LT working group:

- Further develop the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué by translating them into concrete actions at the European/EHEA level and developing

measurable qualitative indicators, which can serve as a basis for monitoring the progress on learning and teaching in EHEA;

- Support member countries in the development of concrete national actions and strategies to implement the above recommendations. This could entail, but does not need to be limited to, organising forums and/or seminars for policymakers and HEI;
- Organise a survey based on the recommendations to map challenges and actions within the EHEA and inform further work in this period. Repeat this survey at the end of the working period;
- In preparation of the 2024 ministerial conference, recommend concrete policy actions to the BFUG and ministers on the implementation of micro-credentials in the EHEA, in line with the developments in the European Education Area
- Make concrete recommendations on strengthening innovative learning, teaching, and assessment, including student-centred, trans-disciplinary, challenge-based and STEAM approaches;
- Identify lessons learnt during the COVID-19 crisis for learning, teaching, and assessment in higher education in the EHEA. Translate these into recommendations and actions for policymaking at the level of public authorities. Emphasis might be put on the digital transformation of higher education institutions and systems and on future skills development for teachers and learners.

2. Activities of the Working Group

2.1. Thematic Framework

Following its mandate, the WG L&T progressed three main topics in the broad area of learning and teaching:

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

Additional topics from the Terms of Reference include the following:

- Discussing assessment in higher education;
- Supporting the continuous improvement of learning, teaching, and assessment;
- Developing international learning environments for the students.

These additional topics are addressed under discussions on the three specific topics (students, staff, innovation).

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

2.2. Implemented activities

Among the specific responsibilities of the WG L&T was a task to further develop the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué by translating them into concrete

actions at the European/EHEA level and to support member countries in the development of concrete national actions and strategies to implement the above recommendations. The WG chose to operationalise this task by translating all lessons learnt and information gathered from all the tasks completed, into concrete recommendations. More specifically, the collection of good practice at the system level has been done, among others, through organising PLAs for policymakers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The WG L&T held eleven meetings. In addition, the WG L&T held one Peer-Learning Activity (PLA) on staff development hosted by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, a second one on the topic of student-centred learning in Bucharest during the EURASHE Annual Conference, and a third one that took place in Athlone, Ireland, hosted by the Irish Higher Education Authority and the Technological University of the Shannon covering topics around transformative approaches to learning and teaching.

2.3. Peer Learning Activities

The first PLA addressed the topic of staff development. This was hosted by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research in Paris on 26-27 October 2022. More information about the PLA is presented in Annex I.

A second PLA was on the topics of student-centred learning. This took place in Bucharest on 7 June 2023 (<https://www.eurashe.eu/events/pla-student-learning/>) back-to-back with the EURASHE annual conference. This PLA brought together different stakeholders in higher education to share information about the system-level developments, exchange best practices and discuss possible commitments concerning further enhancing the student-centred learning approach at the system level.

The third PLA took place in Athlone, Ireland, on 23-24 October 2023. Hosted by the Irish Higher Education Authority, Technological University of the Shannon, and the N-TUTORR initiative (funded by the European Union - NextGenerationEU), the PLA covered topics around transformative approaches to learning and teaching. This initiative is designed to transform learning, teaching, and assessment by focusing on changing the student experience and developing the capabilities of all staff to address sustainable pedagogical and learning environment with a particular focus on digital transformation, sustainable development goals and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The participants got to see a demonstration of some of the N-TUTORR projects and presentations from teaching staff and student fellows.

2.4. Indicators

Among the specific tasks of the WG L&T, one of the tasks is to develop measurable qualitative indicators which can serve as a basis for monitoring the progress of learning and teaching in the EHEA, based on the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué. The WG L&T came up with an extensive list of topics and possible indicators and submitted it to the WG on Implementation and Monitoring which extracted from the original list those that are feasible to be measured and compared at the level of the EHEA. The original list of potential topics from which to formulate indicators are included in Annex I of this Report. And the outcome of the discussion held at the fifth meeting of the WG on L&T, with the participation of the co-chairs of the WG1 are included in Annex III of this report.

2.5. Links established with other structures and projects

Being mindful of links between the area of learning and teaching with other areas covered by different working groups, some of them supported through Erasmus+ funding for EHEA reforms and developments, the co-chairs of the WG L&T reached out to other groups and consortia and established regular communication and cooperation with the following BFUG working groups and supporting projects:

2.5.1 Coordination with other groups within the BFUG internal structure

- WG on Implementation and Monitoring:
Development of indicators around learning and teaching.
- WG on Social Dimension:
As part of the reflection on the concept of student-centred learning, discussions took place with the working group on Social Dimension. In addition to online meetings, one of the co-chairs participated in a meeting of this group in Brussels on September 29, 2022, to discuss in more depth.
- Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) – contributing to developing recommendations on concrete policy actions to the BFUG and Ministers on the implementation of micro-credentials in the EHEA, in line with the developments in the European Education Area (e.g. [MicroNet Inaugural Peer Learning Forum](#)).

2.5.2 Participation of one of the co-chairs in the closing meeting of the Erasmus+ project OCTRA “Online course catalogues and databases for transparency and recognition” (30 August 2022, Riga, Latvia).

The objective of the "OCTRA" project was to intensify the dialogue with higher education institutions by agreeing on a model for course catalogues and improvement of the National Qualifications Database (NQD) which guides towards structured and transparent learning outcomes for higher education qualifications, facilitating automatic recognition.

The guidelines and recommendations developed through the project are intended to serve as a tool to help higher education institutions improve / create useful and coherent course catalogues appropriately corresponding to NQDs; and possibly for the bodies responsible for NQDs to make adaptations to the content useful for the assessment of qualifications.

For students, improved course catalogues and NQDs should provide structured and comprehensive information on study programs. The final report of this project is available online: https://aic.lv/content/files/OCTRA_guidelines_web.pdf

2.5.3 Participation in the final conference of the LOTUS project (Leadership and Organization for Learning and Teaching at European Universities) (28-29 September 2022, Brussels, Belgium)

LOTUS is co-funded by Erasmus+ as an initiative to support the implementation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms and was led by EUA in partnership with a consortium

of higher education institutions (HEIs), national rectors' conferences, educational government departments and organisations. The project aims to discuss and demonstrate the potential of various actors (ministries, university associations, student, and staff unions, etc.) to support transformation and innovation in learning and teaching.

The concluding documents of this project are available online:

<https://eua.eu/resources/publications/1041:leadership-and-organisation-for-teaching-and-learning-at-european-universities.html>

During the LOTUS final conference, one of the co-chairs of the WG on Learning and Teaching co-facilitated a Policy Lab focusing on staff development. This participation helped broaden visions, enrich reflections, and realise how questions of professional development of teachers were widely shared and totally central to the development of quality and innovative teaching in HEIs.

2.6. Survey

One of the specific tasks assigned to our working group was the organisation of a survey based on the recommendations of the Rome Communiqué to map challenges and actions within the EHEA and inform further work during this period. We decided in 2022 to conduct a landscape scan of the Bologna Follow-Up Group/European Higher Education Area (EHEA) membership.

Parameters were identified to ensure consistency, which are the following:

- Alignment to Learning & Teaching objectives identified in the “Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA” (Annex III to the Rome communiqué);
- Alignment to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Learning and Teaching Working Group;
- Examples must be of a System Level nature;
- Examples must have transferrable characteristics.

Only 14 countries responded to the request, despite several reminders and additional deadline extensions. In addition, only one example was provided (with the notable exception of Bulgaria which transmitted 21 examples of initiatives) which does not make our investigation as rich and illustrative as we hoped.

The landscape scan performed has shown that the initiatives demonstrated are meeting the vision and objectives of the BFUG and fulfilling an innovative, interconnected, and inclusive EHEA. On the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué, the emerging themes identified above and the attributes supporting these themes are corresponding to the recommendations. These recommendations were made during the pandemic, to which many members had to provide alternative teaching and learning ways during this time. The first recommendation of student-centred learning has been demonstrated in the submissions but also during the Paris PLA presentations. The second recommendation of fostering continuous enhancement of teaching is being fulfilled by different ways and means. Some member states used governance and funding resources to achieve this, while other member states have frameworks and continuous professional development programmes. From the discussions post the Paris PLA, there is a view of enhancing this further with some incremental changes. On the third recommendation concerning strengthening the capacity of the system, the

pandemic has hampered this significantly. However, many of the innovations reported have counteracted this circumstance and have increased the capacity of the system. As an attribute, innovation features strong and significant across the emerging themes which will be a major factor to the follow through of recommendation.

3. List of meetings

3.1. First meeting (21 September 2021)

At its first meeting, the WG L&T discussed the Terms of Reference and agreed on how to make operational the tasks mandated to it. An agreement was reached to first focus on discussing possible indicators in the area of learning and teaching based on the Ministerial Recommendations.

The group agreed not to organise a specific survey based on the Recommendations but to direct its efforts towards making a proposal to the BFUG Working Group on Monitoring and Implementation, on topics and possible indicators to map challenges and actions within the EHEA in the implementation of the Ministerial Recommendations.

These indicators would then be used for the Bologna Process Implementation Report which would assure continuous monitoring and assessment of the implementation of Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA (2020).

3.2. Second meeting (25 January 2022)

The Annual Work Plan for 2022 was adopted and agreement was reached to divide the work into three sub-groups, each to be led by one of the co-chairs, focusing on three main topics that are:

1. Student-centred learning;
2. Staff development;
3. Innovative learning and teaching.

Each of the three sub-groups met online once (21 February 2022, 28 February 2022, 2 March 2022) to discuss the topics and thematic framework and to draw indicators on learning and teaching.

3.3. Third meeting (5 April 2022)

At the third meeting the Co-Chairs reported on the work of the sub-groups and key topics under which the indicators would be developed for monitoring the implementation of the Ministerial Recommendations.

3.4. Fourth meeting (12 May 2022)

The WG discussed the development of indicators that could best assess progress on implementing the *Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA* and prepared an extensive list of topics that could be covered by indicators and submitted its proposal to the WG on Monitoring and Implementation.

The WG also discussed the possibilities of having PLAs on specific topics and sub-topics and prepared a structure for each member of the WG to come up with proposals and volunteer with specific contributions to PLAs. A working document was prepared for that purpose, shared online, and used throughout the duration of the mandate of the Working Group.

3.5. Fifth meeting (30 September 2022)

At the fifth meeting of the WG L&T (30 September 2022) the WG discussed and agreed on a set of measurable indicators, prepared by the WG Monitoring based on a first list of possible topics identified by the WG L&T. The indicators cover the following topics:

1. Strategy and policy
 - I. Strategy/policy implementation plan
 - II. System-level strategy or policy on learning and teaching
 - III. Stakeholder consultation
 - IV. Monitoring mechanisms/QA
2. Supporting learning and teaching
 - I. Structures to support teaching and learning
 - II. Consultation
 - III. Student-centred learning
3. Professional development
 - I. Initial and continuous teacher training
 - II. Use of digital tools
 - III. International collaboration
 - IV. Professional experience

The development of the PLA on staff development was discussed and discussion on the work plan for 2023 took place. Finally, the co-chairs presented a proposed structure for the Final Report of the WG L&T. This was in the form of a discussion paper proposing a structure for the future report and calling for contributions from the WG members on drafting chapters on landscape scan, policy context, outcomes of the PLAs and direct inputs from members of the Working Group.

The Working Group agreed to process based on a discussion paper to:

- a) co-chairs to develop a template for collecting examples of good practices at the system-level;
- b) WG members to contribute to a landscape scan;
- c) BFUG members to contribute with examples of practices from respective EHEA systems (using a common template).

3.6. Sixth meeting (1 December 2022)

At the sixth meeting of the WG L&T the topic of staff development was discussed based on the outputs of the PLA on staff development in higher education, organised in Paris (27-28 October 2022), with the objective to propose recommendations for the Tirana 2024 Communiqué. Participants were split into parallel breakout sessions and the three sub-groups offered potential proposals. The synthesis of the proposals is presented in Annex IV of this Progress Report - Proposals for the Ministerial Communiqué on the topic of staff development.

3.7. Seventh meeting (5 April 2023)

At the seventh meeting of the WG L&T, three main items were on the agenda: results of the landscape scan, discussion on the proposal for the Communiqué and the preparations for the next PLA. First, the results of the screening of good practices at the system level in learning and teaching were presented and discussed. Since only 16 EHEA members responded to the survey, the agreement was reached that the deadline would be prolonged and another reminder will be sent to the BFUG members.

Second, the proposals for the Communiqué on the topic of staff development were discussed. The outcome is presented as the revised Annex IV of this Progress Report - Proposals for the Ministerial Communiqué on the topic of staff development. An agreement was reached that the input for the Drafting Committee very well reflects the discussion held so far on the topic of staff development, but that the next version of the input needs to be more visionary, shorter / condensed, focused on the main ideas, and formulated as a Ministerial commitment. Secondly, the group agreed that it would not propose another annex to the Communiqué but would limit its contribution to a paragraph(s) on teaching and learning in the Communiqué. The WG agreed that the existing Ministerial Recommendations (*Annex III to the Rome Communiqué*) are quite ambitious and that, in the next work programme of the BFUG, the focus should be on implementation, rather than on creating new commitments. In addition it was agreed that the WG would submit the updated Progress Report as the Final WG Report.

Third, the concept and the draft agenda of the PLA on student-centred learning (SCL) were discussed. The PLA would take place in Bucharest, back-to-back with the EURASHE Annual Conference with a focus on developing a proposal on the topic of SCL for the Communiqué.

Finally, the discussions of this working session led to the creation of a small group responsible for collecting and using the existing bibliography on the subject to analyse ethical impact ethical issues related to the use of digital tools in training and pedagogy (artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, learning analytics) and produce recommendations that the drafting committee could use.

3.8. Eighth meeting (15 June 2023)

The eighth meeting of the WG L&T a proposal for ministerial commitments on student-centred learning was presented as a synthesis of group discussions during the PLA, incorporating previous outcomes from discussions. The objective was to discuss, make changes, and revise the document before sending it to the Drafting Committee.

3.9. Ninth meeting (5 September 2023)

The ninth meeting of the WG L&T, concentrated on proposals for Ministerial commitments to be submitted to the Drafting Committee. Three topics were covered: professional staff development, student-centred learning and ethics and digital technologies in teaching and learning.

While the first two topics have been in the scope of the work of the L&T WG since the beginning, the topic on *ethics and digital technologies* emerged as new topics that the WG decided to address. For that reason, an *ad hoc group* was established to prepare a draft statement on ethics and digital technologies in teaching and learning that could be integrated in the proposal for the ministerial communiqué.

The WG discussed proposals for the Communiqué. Longer versions of the work on each of the three topics are attached as annexes to this Progress Report as it follows:

- ANNEX IV – revised paper on professional staff development;
- ANNEX V – paper on student-centred learning;
- ANNEX VI – report from the *ad-hoc* group on Ethics & Digital Technologies in T&L.

Shorter versions of proposals for the Ministerial commitments, combining the three topics, are attached as the ANNEX VII of this Progress Report.

3.10. Tenth meeting (9 November 2023)

The tenth meeting of the WG L&T presented a proposal for Ministerial commitments on transformative approaches to learning and teaching. Following recommendations from various working group members, the objective was to discuss, make changes, and revise the document. Following discussions, the Working Group recommended developing a shortened document to send to the Drafting Committee.

3.11. Eleventh meeting (15 February 2024)

The eleventh meeting focused on the development of the final report, proposing a roadmap for the final phase of the Working Group. The participants agreed on the structure of the final report and a plan to organise and present all the findings in the final report.

4. Conclusions and recommendations for the Tirana Communiqué

The WG L&T agreed the following recommendations, structured around the three main topics defined above classified according to the 3 areas which were at the heart of its concerns.

STUDENT- CENTRED LEARNING (SCL)

We recommend incorporating in the Communiqué a commitment to SCL in legislation and/or national strategies, ensuring adequate funding and proper support structures for implementation.

We encourage higher education institutions to take a proactive approach in adapting to a 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 ask the Ministers for a commitment to create and implement policies that bridge disparities in backgrounds, to achieve equity, by guaranteeing that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

We suggest the BFUG 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 (for SCL), and to propose concrete actions to enhance implementation.

Focusing on the student suggests being able to adapt to the abilities and progress of everyone, which becomes complex in a context of massification of higher education. Digital developments, and particularly those of artificial intelligence, can enable such adaptations. In doing so, we suggest emphasising ethical considerations in these areas. We think it is essential to encourage HEIs to develop policies that promote the ethical use of AI in teaching and learning and in scientific practice. We think it is necessary to encourage institutions to integrate ethical principles into digitization 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. It is important to support the development of ethical guidelines and the provision of AI literacy for students and staff. By considering ethics in digitalization and AI adoption in teaching and learning, countries will enhance educational quality, inclusivity, and the upholding of human rights, while harnessing the potential of digitalization and of AI for positive impact on our societies.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Our recommendations aim to enhance learning and teaching in the EHEA, enrich the European higher education landscape by strengthening teacher support, acknowledging the importance of teaching significance, while respecting professional autonomy and ensuring appropriate time and workload for effective educational practices and collaboration between colleagues. Our recommendations focus on three key areas:

1. Enhancing Support for Teachers / 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 teaching education. Their training must be anchored in research and adapted to different contexts, while integrating the concepts of equity and inclusion in teaching and assessment. Establishing teaching and learning centres is important to offer training and expertise, and mentorship programmes can also aid early career teachers.

2. Recognising the Value of Teaching

Teaching should be acknowledged as an essential part of the academic profession. Competence-based frameworks should be generalised to outline educators' development and career paths. Recognition for teaching can be manifested 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 is important to recognize that reforms about teaching enhancement are a long-term process, requiring regular monitoring and review as to their fitness for purpose and the effectiveness of their implementation.

TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO LEARNING & TEACHING

There has been a shared experience through the pandemic, where higher education institutions have addressed academic, resourcing, and logistical challenges and uncertainties, while racing to identify workable solutions to ensure the continuity of learning, teaching, and assessment. Many transformative approaches to learning and teaching were deployed. While many of these solutions were technology-driven, the adaptation, continuous use, and impact of new learning and teaching approaches needs to be examined for both positive and negative attributes. By better understanding these new approaches, we can harness the benefits and disseminate best practices across the EHEA.

Transformative approaches to learning and teaching do not have a standardised definition; the following elements could be included in any future definition:

- Transforming the **student experience**, developing the autonomy of learners and their critical senses through a student-centred approach. This requires the expansion of the capability of staff to address a more sustainable pedagogical and learning environment.
- **Empowering teachers** to integrate appropriate research, technologies, and practice into pedagogies, teaching and learning, and assessment, effectively and meaningfully.
- Encouraging and resourcing curriculum and **pedagogical development** to incorporate these new approaches.

- Embracing new forms and **concepts of mobility** post pandemic. Opportunity for mobility has evolved to include mobility not always requiring a physical presence in higher education.

We recommend that the BFUG develop a strategic approach to explore transformative learning and teaching. This recommendation supports higher education institutions in further exploring, developing, and documenting transformative approaches and initiatives. We have seen that these can come from various approaches and standpoints, including technological change in practice and approaches. We encourage higher education institutions and EHEA members to recognise and promote transformative learning and teaching opportunities proactively. In addition, recognising and encouraging transformative approaches to learning and teaching, respecting the diversity of learners, and considering both the individual realities of students and broader societal challenges are essential in this work.

Annexes

Annex I. Topics and possible indicators to monitor learning and teaching at the system level

The WG on L&T elaborated a list of topics and indicators as an outcome of the 5th meeting. This list was communicated to the WG on Implementation report.

1 Strategy and policy

1.1 System-level strategy or policy on learning and teaching

This indicator considers whether higher education systems have a top-level strategy/policy on learning and teaching. It differentiates between:

- systems where at least one main learning and teaching strategy is currently being implemented within an overall higher education strategy;
- systems where a learning and teaching strategy is implemented independently;
- systems with no system-level strategy related to learning and teaching.

1.2 Strategy/policy implementation plan

This indicator is relevant only for systems where a strategy/policy is in place. It considers whether the learning and teaching strategy/policy is supported by a funded implementation plan with measurable objectives and targets.

1.3 Consultation

This indicator considers whether learning and teaching policy is the subject of regular consultation with stakeholders, including higher education institutions, academic staff, students, employers, trade unions and NGOs.

1.4 Monitoring mechanisms/QA

This indicator focuses on whether quality assurance agencies are specifically required to assess the implementation of the national strategy/policy (in countries where it is explicit). For countries without a strategy/policy related to learning and teaching, information on the role of QA agencies in relation to learning and teaching will be gathered.

2 Supporting learning and teaching

2.1 Structures to support teaching and learning

This indicator considers whether publicly funded system-level bodies (e.g. an agency) exist to support learning and teaching in higher education institutions.

2.2 Consultation

This indicator considers whether system-level bodies are guided in their decision-making based on consultation with stakeholders, including higher education institutions, academic staff, and students.

2.3 student-centred learning

The indicator considers the ways in which public authorities support student-centred learning.

Possible question looking for incentives:

- Is SCL explicitly mentioned/defined in the national level strategies/policies/legislation?
- If the SCL approach is defined, which elements does it encompass?

Elements of SCL identified by the WG L&T:

- Changed roles of teachers and students
- Students' active role and responsibility
- Students' choices
- Learning outcomes approach
- Learning, teaching, and assessment methods based on partnership and cocreation
- Recognition of prior learning
- Flexible learning pathways
- Diversity of the student body
- Formal students' participation in governance

Possible question looking for obstacles:

- Are there any legal obstacles to the implementation of the SCL approach? (e.g., legally defined assessment methods such as compulsory written final exam; legal restriction on the use of online learning, teaching and assessment tools legally defined in %; legal restriction for the use of RPL in terms of %).

3 Professional development

3.1 Initial and continuous teacher training

The indicator considers whether there are requirements for higher education academic staff to receive training in teaching a) prior to being recruited, and b) during their careers.

3.2 Use of digital tools

The indicator considers whether there are requirements for higher education academic staff to receive training in using digital tools in relation to teaching.

3.3 International Collaboration

The indicator considers whether higher education institutional recruitment and promotion structures are required to consider and give value to international collaboration and experience.

3.4 Professional experience

The indicator considers whether regulations for recruitment and promotion are required to consider specific criteria – including indicators of research performance, indicators of teaching performance, and professional experience acquired outside of the academic world.

Annex II. Complete proposals from the WG on the theme “Staff development”

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The Annex III of the Rome Communiqué already provided recommendations for member countries of the Bologna Process to support the enhancement of learning and teaching, notably by making student-centred learning a reality, strengthening institutions’ and higher education systems’ capacity, and fostering the continuous enhancement of teaching. This document further elaborates on how staff development for teaching may contribute to the actual implementation of these recommendations.

In envisioning the future of education, we highlight the importance of supporting teachers through career and assessment frameworks that value continuous professional development, diversity, and embrace the potential of digital innovation. Furthermore, we will foster dialogues and collaboration on learning and teaching in our national and at EHEA level to reach our common objectives.

We believe that professional development of teachers is paramount for quality teaching and student success. Along with growing expectations ranging from research excellence to societal engagement, it is vital that teaching and learning are afforded equal esteem alongside research and societal engagement.

We commit to recognize and celebrate diverse perspectives and experiences that teachers can bring, thereby cultivating an inclusive and enriching learning environment that can unlock innovative teaching practices in higher education.

Furthermore, as we live in the era of rapidly evolving technologies, we commit to supporting investment in the professional development of our teachers that must place training in navigating the digital landscape at the forefront of professional development initiatives.

Many educators also lack support, expertise, and training opportunities to incorporate environmental sustainability in their teaching practices. They often feel insufficiently equipped to deal with eco-anxiety and eco-pessimism and help learners engage with climate and environmental issues in a positive way.

It is crucial to support educators, including by providing the necessary time and space, to adopt pedagogies that enhance environmental sustainability learning and to approach sustainability education in interdisciplinary ways and develop the socio-emotional aspects of learning for environmental sustainability, so that all learners can become agents of change and learn to act, both individually and collectively, for a more sustainable world.

THREE PILLARS ON WHICH TO INVEST

(1) DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR TEACHERS IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR PROFESSION AND FOR THEIR CPD

Initial teacher training is essential to the development of quality teaching conducive to the success of students in their diversity. Teacher training could be integrated into the compulsory or curricular requirements of doctoral students and early career researchers, and accessible to all professional experts involved in the courses. In addition, professional development must be accessible to everyone, and not just at the start of a career.

Teacher training should be based on evidence-based approach to teaching and on research carried out in higher education. This training, whether initial or continuous, must be flexible, respectful of the specificities of the different fields/contexts and of academic freedom, learner-

oriented, and include the development of skills to support learner autonomy in education. In addition, such training should consider how teachers approach student equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Development of pedagogical support centres (located at higher education institutions or shared by several institutions) are a good way to cater for training needs and provide expertise and support on teaching enhancement. Development of such centres should be encouraged, and they should be properly staffed: these personnel must be trained, and there must be a sufficient number of them as it is an emerging profession that must also be valued. The networking of these centres should be promoted.

Mentorship programs in which experienced teachers support early career teachers in their teaching and learning practices could also be encouraged.

For the daily exercise of teaching, sufficient, effective, and efficient infrastructure is needed: learning laboratories and classrooms equipped with various educational resources (for distance learning, for animation in small groups, with movable furniture, etc.).

The provision of educational resources (conferences, MOOCs, educational workshops, with dedicated support staff) is essential, and must be accessible to all teachers regardless of their status in the establishment (permanent, temporary, expert in profession, etc.). To this end, the use of open educational resources could be shared between institutions, via national and digital platforms.

(2) RECOGNISING THE VALUE OF TEACHING

For professional development to make sense and yield results, teaching should be properly recognised as an integral part of the academic profession. This valuation equally goes through appropriate teacher-student ratio.

Staff development frameworks, which could include approaches to academic assessment and career progression, would be one way to acknowledge and give visibility to the teaching mission, and relating it to teachers' career paths. Such frameworks need to accommodate and respect the diversity of teachers' profiles. Academic profiles may be diverse, but teaching and learning should enjoy parity in esteem with research and other relevant missions and working areas (such as commitment to the institution) in relation to academic recruitment and progression.

Recognition of the value of teaching could take the form of:

- career promotions and tenure tracks based on teaching quality. It is important to underline that the assessment of teaching should be robust and evidence-based;
- a range of incentives for promoting teaching, including team teaching (such as awards, prizes, bonus, and funding for teaching projects, etc.);
- funding for teaching innovation;
- developing research of teaching practices.

(3) GIVING TIME TO TEACH AND WORK AS TEAMS

- All required professional development must be included as an integral part of the academic workload (not an additional requirement);
- The teaching load must be reasonable. It is unrealistic to think that quality education can be provided without stable employment, without devoting enough time to preparation, innovation, student support, and assessment. As with research activities, teaching also requires time and space to discuss and share with colleagues, create together new formats/content, evaluate effects, etc.
- Reforming takes time: it's not « done » once the reform is adopted.

Annex III. Complete proposals from the WG on the theme “Student-centred learning”

STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING PARADIGM

Student-centred learning (SCL) is considered one of the key elements of higher education in the European Higher Education Area. Students should always be seen as active participants in their own learning, able to plan their learning pathways and acquire the knowledge, skills and competences that meet their personal goals and societal needs.

Recent developments in learning and teaching such as digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and the use of technology in learning and teaching, green transition, and the related skills needs in professional and private life, demographic change which underline the need for more flexible learning that meets the diverse needs of students and enable it, show that the SCL paradigm needs to be further elaborated.

The WG4 on L&T noted in its work how difficult it was to define student-centred learning and teaching and concluded that further work is needed to arrive at a consensual, operational definition of SCL and solutions on how to adapt it to new developments such as digitisation, Artificial Intelligence and microcredentials, within the context of the Bologna Process.

Although there is still no universally accepted definition of SCL, it is consensually understood in terms of a paradigm and countries should be encouraged to implement what SCL entails and means. The SCL paradigm is understood as an ecosystem and culture applying to all types of higher education delivery.

SCL is characterized by different elements that could be included in the future definition, among which the following could be identified:

- learning opportunities, tailored to the needs and capabilities of diverse learners,
- a shared commitment from higher education institutions and public authorities to enable and foster student agency,
- deployment of innovative and always new methods of teaching and learning centred on students,
- empowering students to take active engagement for all aspects of their learning experience as co-creators,
- increased responsibility and autonomy of students in making the key decisions about their learning pathway,
- reflexive approach to teaching, learning and assessment processes on the part of both teacher and learner, focused on the learning outcomes achieved by the student,
- a shift from power relationship to a mutual respect and reciprocal learning between students and teachers,
- fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking,
- ensuring flexibility of learning pathways both within study programmes and in a lifelong learning perspective,
- offering access to adequate and qualitative learning resources and inclusive learning spaces tailored to each individual student's needs, as well as student support services, such as counselling, mentoring, and tutoring.

Further work on SCL could be supported with an Erasmus+ project in the next implementation period and the next BFUG work plan that could include:

- (1) developing a comprehensive definition that would allow for clearer and stronger future ministerial commitments,

- (2) developing a Guide to Student Centred Learning to support the implementation of the SCL paradigm at higher education institutions across the EHEA,
- (3) developing a monitoring framework for the implementation of the SCL approach to learning and teaching in the future
- (4) showcase and map practices of SCL in different systems.

This should be included in the terms of reference of the relevant working group/thematic peer learning group.

Annex IV. Report of the Sub-group working on the development of draft statement on Ethics & Digital Technologies in T&L

During its work, the working group saw the need to further develop a narrative on this subject and an ad hoc group therefore worked on this point, drawing on the existing literature in this area.

General themes and sub-themes/sub-topics emerging from the collected resources.

1. Responsible and ethical use of AI in teaching and learning

- HEIs should formally adopt policies on the responsible, ethical, and transparent use of AI tools and other emerging technologies with students and staff.
- There is a need to review and reform teaching and assessment practices to consider the potential use of AI and areas where AI cannot be used.
- Academic staff and students should receive adequate training on how to use AI, its positive features, and risks, as well as assistance on its use to ensure inclusivity.
- Appropriate professional development for teachers, administrators, and policymakers is required to make informed decisions about the use of AI tools.
- The use of AI should be reflected in institutional guidelines on good scientific practice and research ethics.
- HEIs should seek networking and co-operation for solutions to the ethical use of AI.

2. Ethics of AI and data usage in learning analytics

- Institutional codes of conduct should cover informed consent, transparency of data usage, ownership, and boundaries of data usage in learning analytics.
- Learning analytics should be seen as a moral practice, providing relevant pointers for what is appropriate and morally necessary.
- Students should be engaged as partners/co-creators in learning analytics.
- Data collected through learning analytics should have agreed-on life spans and expiry dates.
- There is a need to clarify who has access to data, how data are used, where data are stored, and for how long.

3. Human rights and ethical considerations in AI adoption

- Support for Europe's roadmap towards a human rights-embedded legal instrument on AI.
- Ethical standards must be followed when using data, including the help of AI, in educational processes.
- Adequate AI literacy education should be provided to the public to empower people and reduce digital access inequalities.
- Debates on digital technologies and ethical considerations should include broader ethical and socio-cultural perspectives.

- Things to consider – how transparently AI uses data, are the data used for commercialization purpose? these are things higher education needs to consider when adopting AI in T&L.

4. Quality assessment and impact of AI in education

- Public funding should support open research projects on AI to assess its real impact.
- Policymaking should consider the impact of AI on education and prioritise human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.
- Initiatives should assess the quality of education and the impact on students and teachers resulting from the use of AI technologies in teaching, teacher training, and e-learning.

Summary

Recognising the transformative power of digitalisation and AI in higher education, we believe it is essential to emphasise ethical considerations and societal values. We believe that the development of policies by HEIs promoting the ethical use of AI in teaching and learning as well as in scientific practice should be encouraged. Institutions should be encouraged to integrate ethical principles into their digitalisation efforts, thereby ensuring transparency, fairness and the well-being of students and staff. This involves engaging with students as partners and with staff on the responsible use of AI and maintaining data ethics in learning analytics and in teaching and learning. States should support the development of ethical guidelines and the provision of AI knowledge to students and staff. Considering the ethics of digitalisation and the adoption of AI in teaching and learning means committing to improving the quality of education, inclusion and defending the rights of humans, while exploiting the potential of digitalization and AI to have a positive impact on our societies.

Annex V. Results from the survey (landscape scan)

The Working Group decided in 2022 to conduct a landscape scan of the Bologna Follow-Up Group/European Higher Education Area (EHEA) membership. The purpose of this is to establish from the membership initiatives that are in place to support learning and teaching and demonstrate the correlation to the Rome Communiqué and outcomes of the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) event in October 2023. A call for submissions was issued to the WG L&T membership and to the EHEA membership. Outside the WG L&T membership, the co-chairs would like to acknowledge the contribution of Bulgaria and Liechtenstein who answered the call for submissions to this landscape scan.

Following the PLA event in Paris (October 2022) where the WG L&T heard presentations from all over the EHEA membership on Staff Development, the co-chairs of the WG L&T decided to engage a landscape scanning exercise on learning and teaching. The landscape scanning encompasses the following:

- Deliberations from the PLA in Paris
- Completion of a Landscape Scanning Template document, issued to the WG L&T and the EHEA membership.

Methodology and respondents

Parameters were identified to ensure consistency, which are the following:

- Alignment to Learning & Teaching objectives identified in the “Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA” (Annex II to the Rome communiqué);
- Alignment to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Learning and Teaching Working Group;
- Examples must be of a System Level nature;
- Examples must have transferrable characteristics.

The contributors were as follows:

- From WG L&T: Albania (2 examples), Austria (1), Cyprus (2), EI-ETUDE (1), France (2), Georgia (1), Hungary (1), Ireland (3), Norway (1), Romania (1), Slovenia (1), Switzerland (1), United Kingdom (1).
- Outside WG on L&T: Bulgaria (21), Liechtenstein (1).

The examples provided, although not numerous, nevertheless greatly contributed to the reflection on the indicators which enabled joint work with the working group on Implementation Report.

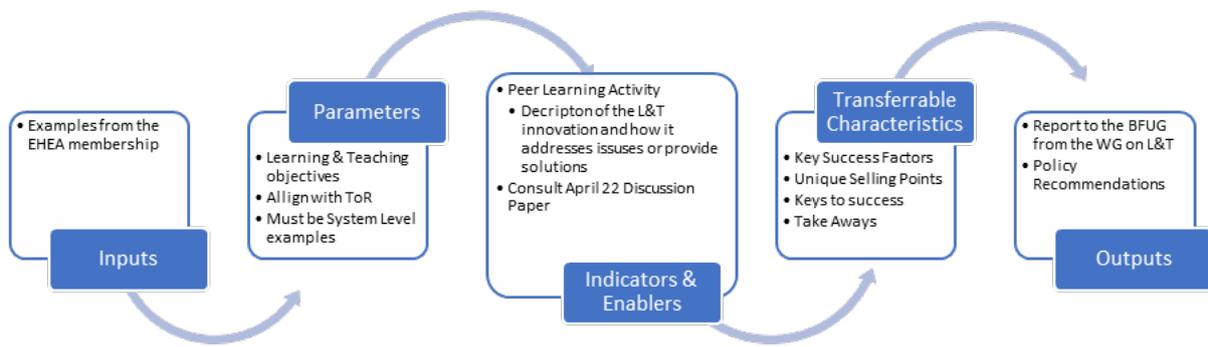


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework for activities.

Findings

The findings from both the Paris PLA and the Landscape Scanning exercise indicate seven evolving themes with various attributes supporting these themes.

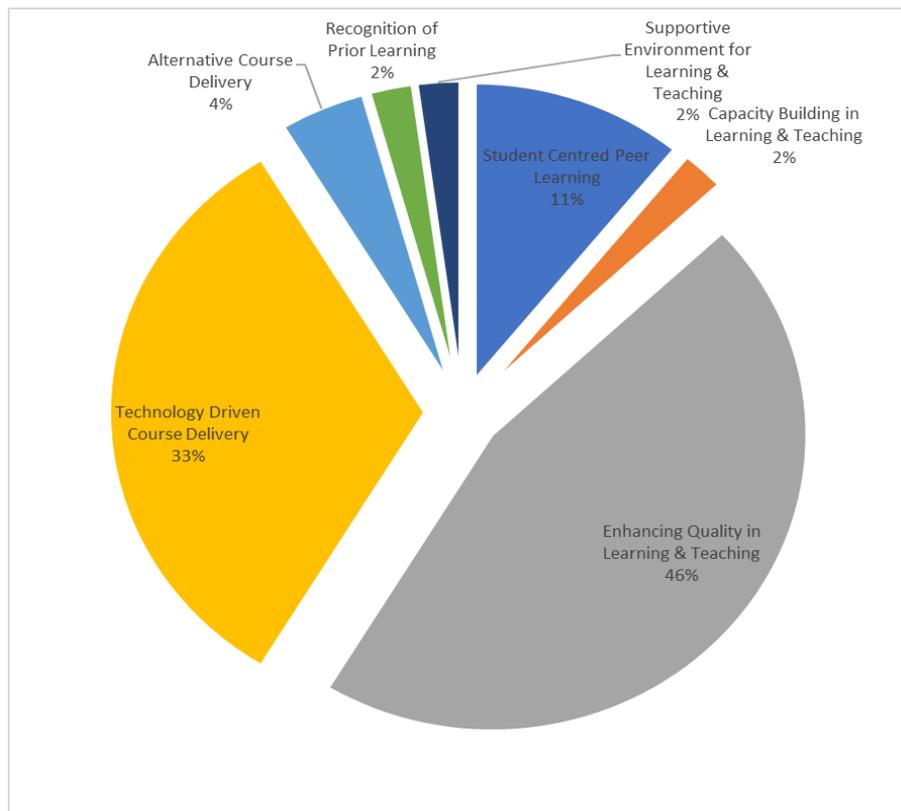


Figure 2 - Emerging themes from landscape scan.

These are further outlined and described in the following headings.

Thematic Findings

Student Centred Peer Learning

In defining this theme, the WG L&T received examples where learning and teaching were designed around the student in mind. In this theme, attributes contributing to this theme mainly featured technology and soft skills development, with others including inclusiveness, internationalisation, student experience and engagement.

Capacity Building in Learning & Teaching

This theme which concerns the aspect developing learning and teaching capacity in HEIs in a system level context, attributes appearing were evenly distributed across knowledge transfer, mobilities, technology, environment social governance. This is one of the smaller themes emanating from this work.

Recognition of Prior Learning

While Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is well established across the EHEA, there was one submission on this from Ireland. This contained many relevant attributes that were evenly distributed, however, this is a small sample size of an emerging theme.

Alternative Course Delivery

Receiving submissions from two countries, the attributes forming Alternative Course Delivery theme range from a wide spectrum of technology to knowledge transfer and student experience and engagement. These were generally evenly distributed; however, this is a small sample size.

Supportive Environment for Learning & Teaching

While this is one of the smallest emerging themes, the attributes highlighted demonstrate similar ones found across the other emerging themes concerning student experience and innovation.

Technology Driven Course Delivery

While technology features as a dominant attribute, many of the submissions received and presentations featured in the Paris PLA demonstrate that technology has become an evolving theme to overcome the previous barriers to learning and training. Submissions that were predominately technology based were grouped into this theme. This theme contains a wide variety of attributes ranging from student experience and engagement to soft skills development. It is worth noting that many of the technology driven initiatives come from the pandemic, while others were not pandemic related but may have excelled during this time.

Enhancing Quality in Learning & Teaching

Between the PLA and landscape scan, this is the largest emerging theme with a vast quantity of attributes spanning across various standpoints. While this may have technology as one of its largest attributes, student experience, innovation, engagement, knowledge transfer form a large part of this theme, amongst others that are illustrated below. Other attributes that form

this can be well distributed in this pie chart. These attributes are topical for the WG L&T and the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

Attributes

It is clear from the landscape scan submission that many of the attributes appear across many of the themes. In further analysis by way of merging some of the attributes (i.e. quality) and stripping the themes away from the attributes, there are 7 major attributes supporting learning and teaching themes across the EHEA membership. These are: student engagement, student experience, technology, knowledge transfer, inclusiveness, key competencies/soft skills development, and innovation.

Correlation with the Rome Communiqué

It is clear from the PLA and landscape scan that the initiatives demonstrated are meeting the vision and objectives of the BFUG and fulfilling an innovative, interconnected, and inclusive EHEA. Concerning the recommendations in Annex III, the emerging themes identified above and the attributes supporting these themes are corresponding to the recommendations. These recommendations were made during the pandemic, to which many members had to innovate and provide alternative ways during this time. The first recommendation of student catered learning has been demonstrated in the submissions and PLA presentations. The second recommendation of fostering continuous enhancement of teaching is being fulfilled by different ways and means. Some member states used governance and funding resources to achieve this, while other member states have frameworks and continuous professional development programmes in place. From the discussions post the PLA, there is a view of enhancing this further with some incremental changes. On the third recommendation concerning strengthening the capacity of the system, the pandemic has hampered this significantly. However, many of the innovations reported have counteracted this circumstance and have increased capacity of the system. As an attribute, innovation features strong and significant across the emerging themes which will be a major factor to the follow through of recommendation. It must be noted as mentioned in the findings that although the L&T WG contacted EHEA members, the responses were limited.