

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Working Group on the Creation of The European Higher Education Areas Criteria for Enhanced Social Dimension

Chairing

The group should be co-chaired by three members of the Bologna Follow Up Group with different statuses within BFUG. Ideally this would be composed by one Full Member, one Consultative Member and one Technical Expert.

Composition

An open call for between five to ten members, excluding the co-chairs will be issued.

Reference to the Paris Communiqué

While higher education is perceived as “a major driver for social and economic development and for innovation in an increasingly knowledge-driven world (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2012), the need has grown to work harder on the implementation of the social dimension itself in the context of higher education. As from the start in 1999 social dimension has always been mentioned in every statement or declaration which demonstrates the given importance to this field.

While social dimension was only mentioned once in the Bologna Declaration, “strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions”, this has been extended during the following ministerial conferences.

In the Paris Communiqué, Ministers committed, on an extensive manner, to develop policies that encourage and support higher education institutions to fulfil their social responsibility and contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive society through enhancing intercultural understanding, civic engagement and ethical awareness, as well as ensuring equitable access to higher education .

Ministers also recognized that further effort is required to strengthen the social dimension of higher education. In this regard, and in order to ensure that the student body entering and graduating from European higher education institutions reflects the diversity of Europe’s populations, they committed to improving access and completion by under-represented and vulnerable groups.

However, creating of policies alone is not enough to ensure results concerning social dimension aspects within the context of Higher Education. Therefore, effort should be the result of concrete criteria which should be adopted by all members of the Bologna process.

Overarching Aim

The overarching aim is to concretise what until now is the rather abstract field of Social Dimension. Having common reference points will allow for benchmarking, hands on peer learning, and will ultimately help to achieve an accessible, inclusive and diverse higher education. In this regard structured actions need to be agreed on and adopted by the members of the Bologna process.

Objectives

- To gather and examine existing data on good practices in the field of social dimension by examining the previously agreed commitments and collected data capturing the field of work that can be enhanced by European cooperation.
- To define what is mutually agreed upon between the members of BFUG and create a list of criteria which act as a point of reference to assess the progress within the field of social dimension
- To come up and be ready to adopt Criteria for Enhanced Social Dimension at the next Ministerial Conference in 2020
- To understand existing policies and map a strategy to implement such policies in a manner which can be evaluated and benchmarked
- To identify the system and level of governance applicable on the social dimension sphere
- To begin working on Peer Learning Activities within the Social Dimension sphere, with the aim that these would increase substantially after the adoption of the Criterion for Enhanced Social Dimension in 2020
- To fulfill the communique's objective of strengthening the social dimension of higher education as well as improving access and completion by under-represented and vulnerable groups

Reporting

Minutes of working group meetings will be made available to the BFUG on the website (by the Bologna Secretariat). Bologna Secretariat, at the request of the WG Chairs, may circulate relevant updates to the WG members by email.

The BFUG should also receive regular reports and updates from the working group. To ensure good communication with the BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, progress reports should be submitted at least two weeks before each BFUG meeting.

DRAFT SCHEDULE FOR THE WG Social Dimension

The content and timeline of the meetings will be discussed amongst the co-chairs and the members of this Working Group, however, the following can be seen as a draft schedule:

1. Governance & Abstraction - November 2018
 - Outline the details that should be achieved through each objective
 - Decide upon the governance of the the European Higher Education Areas Criteria for enhanced Social Dimension, once adopted
2. Collect existing materials & map the way forward- February 2019
 - Gather and examine existing materials
 - Outline how this can be converted into implementable goals and concrete reference points
3. Draft- July 2019
 - Compose a first draft based on analysed data gathered during the previous meeting.
4. Amendments- October 2019
 - Proposal of amendments of the draft which are in line with the objectives of the working group
5. Final document- February 2020
 - Agree on the finalisation of the document which will be presented at the next Ministerial Conference
 - Agree on the future proceedings and implementation of the European Higher Education Areas Criteria for enhanced Social Dimension