

bologna process

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1. Main achievements since Berlin

1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms

The University of Luxembourg was created by Act of Parliament on August 12 2003. The university is an "établissement public", i.e an institution that is financed by the State, but which enjoys financial, pedagogical, administrative autonomy. The relationship of the university with the State is governed by a four-year-plan. The structure of the university is such that a board of 7 governors representing various economic sectors as well as the world of the academia defines the strategy of the university and exerts the ultimate control. The rector of the university is best described as a CEO, who also initiates the strategic debates in the board of governors. The university council sees to the delivery of the mission to academic standards.

The university is allocated a yearly lump sum and it acts as an employer; the personnel is appointed either by the rector or in the case of professors by the board of governors.

The Act also establishes the obligation of both an internal and external quality assurance mechanism.

2. National organisation

2.1. Give a short description of the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their competencies (For example, do higher education institutions report to different ministries?)

The Ministry for Culture, Higher Education and Research oversees both the university and the various public research institutes as well as the national research fund.

2.2. Give a short description of the institutional structure

(For example, number of public/private universities/other HE institutions or numbers/percentage of students in public/private sector. To what extent are private and State higher education institutions covered by the same regulations?)

Two US universities, Sacred Heart University and Miami University, have branch campuses in Luxembourg. The French university of Nancy II runs executive programmes together with

a professional chamber (Chambre des employés privés). There is specific legislation for these ventures. The 1977 law defines the criteria that have to be met before the school/institution is given a licence to operate. This permission is granted under the form of a grand ducal decree. Before preparing the decree the ministry acts on the advice of an independent panel of experts. Three new requests are being examined at the moment.

2.3. Give a brief description of the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country

(National Bologna group, thematic working groups, composition and activities, stakeholder involvement)

The University Act explicitly refers to the Bologna Process; the university is thus based on the principles of the Bologna Process. The degree structure is bachelor, master, PhD. Study programmes are defined in terms of ECTS, bachelor and master programmes taken together cannot exceed a five-year-duration (standard student), mobility is compulsory for all students in bachelor programmes. The implementation of the principles is done at university level; the composition of the various governing bodies of the university is such that the various stakeholders are involved in this implementation.

Since there was provision at Fachhochschule level and undergraduate level, albeit only two-year courses, before the university was set up, these programmes are currently redefined so that they meet the Bologna criteria.

3. Quality assurance

The following questions have been included in the template at the request of the Working Group on Stocktaking.

3.1. National quality assurance systems should include a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.

The national quality assurance system is about to be put in place. Considering the size of the country and the fact that there is only one institution, the national quality assurance system will be based on networking and it will be overseen by a panel of international peers/experts.

So far institutional quality assurance has focused on administration and management.

3.2. National quality assurance systems should include a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.

Describe the system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, if any.

A first pilot project has been launched to accredit master programmes in informatics. This is being done by/with a German agency from German's accreditation council.

3.3. National quality assurance systems should include international participation, co-operation and networking.

Are international peers included in the governing board(s) of the quality assurance agency(ies)?

See above

Please add any general comments, reflections and/or explanations to the material on quality assurance in the stocktaking report.

4. The two-cycle degree system

The two-cycle degree system is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

Since the University of Luxembourg relies on cooperation agreements with universities from France, Belgium and Germany the varying degrees at which the process is implemented in the various Member States greatly affects these agreements. The coexistence of two systems and the ongoing definition of study programmes in terms of duration complicate the issue further.

Besides, student mobility risks becoming more difficult in the new system, not only because at this stage different systems coexist, but also because in certain countries the Bologna systems means a reduction in programme duration, which in turn implies that institutions, out of a sense of ownership of these programmes, leave little room for free credits.

5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study

Recognition of degrees and periods of study is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

Traditionally Luxembourg has had to recognise degrees taken abroad since most students were not trained in the country. A department within the ministry works to ensure the appropriate application of the directives and the recognition of diplomas awarded by foreign universities.

6. Doctoral studies and research

6.1. Give a short description of the organisation of third cycle studies

(For example, direct access from the bachelor level, balance between organised courses, independent study and thesis)

Doctoral programmes are currently conducted as joint ventures with other universities; this holds true for both the university and the public research institutes. A specific doctoral programme in the area of informatics (security, reliability and trust of communication systems) explores the link between a doctorate and placements in industry ("industrial PhD"); this programme includes seminars, but it is not structured in terms of coursework; nor are the other doctorates.

6.2. What are the links between HE and research in your country?

(For example, what percentage of publicly-funded research is conducted within HE institutions?)

The University of Luxembourg was created to boost public research, which currently stands at 0.36% of GDP. The Luxembourg government is committed to reaching the 1% GDP goal set by the Lisbon agenda. Thus in terms of its fundamental mission the University is to be developed into a research university. Therefore the greatest emphasis is laid on the master

and doctoral level.

7. Mobility of students and staff

7.1. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of students from as well as to your country (For instance funds devoted to mobility schemes, portability of student loans and grants, visa problems)

Traditionally Luxembourg has relied on student mobility. Having the student trained abroad has always been considered as being beneficial to the country; this is also the reason why the University Act renders mobility compulsory at bachelor level. Accordingly, there is a financial aid system based on three pillars: grants and loans on the one hand and incentives to encourage students to finish their studies within the delays imparted to the various study programmes. At bachelor and master level, the social situation of the parents is taken into account to define the respective part of the grant and the loan, at doctoral level only the student's income is considered. There is a hundred percent portability of student grants and loans. The ERASMUS programme complements these measures.

7.2. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of students from as well as to your country

see above

7.3. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of teachers and staff from as well as to your country (For instance tenure of appointment, grant schemes, social security, visa problems)

There are no nationality clauses attached to the appointment of staff at either the university or the public research centers. As a result, an important percentage of the personnel of these institutions is of non Luxembourg origin. This is rendered possible by the fact that the researchers are no civil servants and that these institutions are legal entities governed by private law. The higher education and research sectors thus reflect the general labour market, which heavily relies on foreign labour.

7.4. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of academic teachers and staff from as well as to your country

see above

8. Higher education institutions and students

8.1. Describe aspects of autonomy of higher education institutions

Is autonomy determined/defined by law? To what extent can higher education institutions decide on internal organisation, staffing, new study programmes and financing?

The university's autonomy is defined by the University Act. The institution itself decides on its organising principles (except for the matrix structure of the institution), its staffing, its study programmes and the way it allocates the lump sum provided by the government to the different cost centres. The financial auditing is carried out according to the principles laid down for private undertakings. However, for constitutional reasons, certain conditions pertaining to the awarding of degrees need to be laid down in grand ducal decrees.

8.2. Describe actions taken to ensure active participation from all partners in the process

The governance of the university is based on a system of checks and balances making sure that the members of the various boards and committees are not the judges in their own cases. So the governing board (7 governors) only has external members ("external" meaning not being employed by the university) with the rector, a student representative and a professor as consultative members. The rector, though, has the right of initiative and generally speaking proposes the strategic documents (four-year-plan/ performance related contract with the ministry, yearly budget, recruitment plan) for approval to the board. The university council, chaired by the rector, has student as well delegates from the various administrative and research levels of the university sitting on it. For the new study programmes, mixed committees (university personnel and representatives from the relevant or appropriate economic and/or societal sectors) advise the rector and the board of governors.

8.3. How do students participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions and at the national level?

(For example, participation in University Governing Bodies, Academic Councils etc)

see above

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

9.1. Describe measures which promote equality of access to higher education

The University Act aims at gender equality and thus provides for a specific position in the governing body (the rectorate) of the institution to promote this issue.

At the same time the grant and loan system of the State is such that in case of disability the grant part of the system is increased accordingly.

10. Developments in lifelong learning

10.1. What measures have been taken by your country to encourage higher education institutions in developing lifelong learning paths?

Various Acts of Parliament define the criteria according to which in service training measures and continued education are subsidised. The University also has the mission to contribute to lifelong learning. Presently this is primarily done through executive programmes.

10.2. Describe any procedures at the national level for recognition of prior learning/flexible learning paths

The University Act contains provision for a "validation des acquis professionnels"; this still needs implementing though. However, in the domain of engineering, there is a validation of skills acquired in vocational training as well as on the job in order to ensure access to a bachelor programme.

11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education

11.1 Describe any legal obstacles identified by your country and any progress made in removing legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and/or joint

study programmes

11.1.1. Describe the extent of integrated study programmes leading to joint degrees or double degrees

At bachelor level, a bilingual (French/German) programme in physics is run by three universities; this programme is based on joint admissions, it includes student mobility (each university offering 60 credits) and it leads to three degrees. There are also three master programmes (law, economics, philosophy) that are run as joint degree programmes with joint admissions, mobility of student and the awarding of double degrees. Doctoral programmes are offered on a co-tutelle basis, leading to double degrees. All the doctorates are joint programmes; the bachelor in physics is merely a niche product.

11.1.2. How have these programmes been organised? (joint admissions, mobility of students, joint exams, etc.)

see above

11.2. Describe any transnational co-operation that contributes to the European dimension in higher education

The ongoing implementation of the University Act with its provision for compulsory mobility at bachelor level will lead to most of the programmes becoming joint programmes with the awarding of double degrees. The system which is being put in place is that of a network in which the institution has the responsibility to make mobility happen.

11.3. Describe how curriculum development reflects the European dimension (For instance foreign language courses, European themes, orientation towards the European labour market)

One of the organising principles of the University of Luxembourg is multilingualism. Programmes are to become bilingual (with the choice being French, German and English). At this stage programmes are offered in either of these languages and most of them are also taught in two languages (with exams also being taken in two languages); however, with the ongoing organisation of the new university, multilingualism is becoming a defining element of its strategy.

12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

12.1. Describe actions taken by your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA

The attractiveness of the EHEA depends on its openness to the world and on its proud assertion of multiculturalism. As far as the former is concerned various government departments have liaised to ease visa formalities and also to set the construction of the university within the context of cooperation with target countries in the developing world.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

The implementation of the Bologna Process and the development of the university go hand in hand. Putting the three - cycle structure in place will be followed by the inception of a quality assurance system. The establishment of a qualifications framework will be run as a parallel

venture, since there is also short cycle higher education in Luxembourg. The next Parliamentary Act to anchor the Bologna Process in the Luxembourg legislation will thus be on a qualifications framework.

Generally speaking though, the implementation of the Bologna Process will mostly be done at institution level. It is felt that the University Act provides the framework and the criteria; it is now the task of the University to put those into practice.

13.2. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country

The main challenge for Luxembourg will be to implement the Bologna Process in such a manner that manifold cooperations with the institutions of the neighbouring countries remain possible. On account of the varying speeds and the differing interpretations of the Bologna Process, this is a difficult task which requires both flexibility and clear steering.

On a more general level, Parliament decided to have a fully fledged university in Luxembourg that is to contribute to the advent of a knowledge based society. Setting up a research university that in a few priority areas is to achieve excellence remains the greatest challenge. The Bologna Process has certainly acted as a catalyst.

Finally, on a more practical level the full implementation of the Bologna Process across Europe will greatly affect recruitment requirements in the public sector and the Luxembourg civil service will need to restructure certain career paths.