

Terms of Reference of Working Group on Learning and Teaching

Name of the Working Group

Working Group on Learning and Teaching

Contact persons/Co-chairs

- Ireland – Terry Maguire (terry.maguire@teachingandlearning.ie)
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Composition

Albania; Armenia; Austria; Belarus; Belgium Flemish Community; Cyprus; European Commission; France; Georgia; Germany; Holy See; Ireland; Italy; Kazakhstan; The Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Romania; Russia; San Marino; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom; United Kingdom (Scotland); EI – ETUCE; ENQA; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association; EURASHE.

Purpose and/or outcome

- To support the members of the EHEA in developing successful ways to improve strategies for the enhancement of learning and teaching. The working group will base its work on the recommendations that were endorsed by Ministers in the 2020 Conference of Ministers [as result of the 2018-2020 BFUG Work Programme], in particular Annex III of the Communiqué, thus, translating these into an operational action framework and – where possible – into measurable, qualitative indicators. The group will include the following topics:
 - Making student-centred learning a reality across the entire EHEA;
 - Supporting staff development;
 - Fostering innovative learning and teaching. These should ensure inter-disciplinary, inter-sectoral and experiential learning as outcomes. Innovations in learning and teaching should also contribute to opening up higher education to lifelong and non-traditional learners, for example through micro-credentials;
 - Discussing assessment in higher education to encompass a wider set of learning outcomes, in addition to disciplinary knowledge, such as inter-disciplinarity and transversal, green



and digital competencies;

- Strengthening the capacity of higher education institutions and systems, to support the continuous improvement of learning, teaching and assessment;
- Developing international learning environments for the students, such as the inclusion of a mobility experience or access to internationalisation at home).

In view of its establishment during the COVID-19 pandemic, this group aims also to strengthen the resilience of the higher education system, with a focus on future skills, high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment methods and strong links with research and innovation.

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.”*

Specific Tasks

- 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;¹

- 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.

Reporting

Minutes of the working group meetings and the results of the surveys shall be made available to the BFUG.

BFUG shall receive regular reports and updates and be consulted if needed. Progress reports will be submitted by the working group at each BFUG meeting.

More specifically, the set of indicators measuring progress shall be agreed with the BFUG. In between the BFUG meetings, updates shall be circulated by the BFUG Secretariat via email.

The draft of the 2024 working group report will be presented and discussed at the BFUG meeting at the end of 2023.

Meeting schedule

TBC

¹ This objective in particular raises the question of funding; to do this properly funding would be necessary to define and implement a systematic project approach. An EC funded umbrella project is suggested here, such as in the peer support groups of the current working period