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Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA

Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology OPET

# BOLOGNA PROCESS

# NATIONAL REPORT: 2007-2008

# SWITZERLAND

## Details

Country	Switzerland
Date	30 October 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Silvia Studinger Head University Institutes, SER
Email address	Silvia.Studinger@sbf.admin.ch
Contributors to the report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– State Secretariat for Education and Research;</li><li>– Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology;</li><li>– Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities;</li><li>– Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences;</li><li>– Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education;</li><li>– Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities</li></ul>

### 1. Main developments since London 2007

Please describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms and changes in institutional structures, since the London meeting in 2007.

Soon after the Bologna Declaration in 1999, Swiss higher education institutions (HEI) recognised the importance of this reform process and set up project organisations. The Swiss University Conference (CUS) passed legally binding "Bologna Directives" for the Universities in 2003,<sup>1</sup> the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) for Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education in 2002.<sup>2</sup> In 2005, the Federal Universities of Applied Sciences Act has been revised according to the new study structure.<sup>3</sup> The legal bases for the two sectors are mutually compatible, so that the reforms are well interconnected and consistent across the entire tertiary education sector. For all HEIs, the new system is based on a first cycle (bachelor) comprising 180 ECTS credits and a second cycle comprising 90 or 120 ECTS credits. For physicians, one additional year of clinical education is required.

The implementation of the Bologna process has made considerable progress in the last years. In autumn 2006, all first year students (except for medicine) entered bachelor programmes. Since autumn 2007, this is also the case for medical students. And in autumn 2008, the Universities of Applied Sciences started their first master programmes, after having delivered their first bachelor degrees in the same year. The Universities of Teacher Education have delivered their first bachelor degrees in 2004 and their first master degrees in 2007.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cus.ch/wEnglisch/publikationen/richtlinien/BOL-RL-2008-Engl-V2.pdf> (English)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.kfh.ch/uploads/dobo/doku/Richtl\\_Bol\\_d.pdf](http://www.kfh.ch/uploads/dobo/doku/Richtl_Bol_d.pdf) (German)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/414\\_71/index.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/414_71/index.html) (German)

The three Rectors' Conferences (Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities, Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences, Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education) reached an agreement about the permeability between the three different kinds of HEIs in November 2007. This agreement came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008. Regarding the coordination of the Bologna process in Switzerland during the period 2008-2011, the Swiss University Conference decided, among others, to carry through a vast monitoring project taking into account all important aspects of the Bologna process. The institutional structures have not been changed since the last ministerial conference in London.

## 2. Partnership

Please describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

Legal responsibility for the Bologna process lies with the Swiss University Conference (CUS) for the cantonal Universities and the Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH), with the Council for Universities of Applied Sciences for Universities of Applied Sciences, and with the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) for Universities of Teacher Education. The three bodies have passed legally binding "Bologna Directives". At the institutional level, the implementation of the legal framework is overseen by the three executive bodies (Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities, Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences, Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education), which collaborate closely and report to their respective political authorities. All three have set up Bologna commissions which bring together representatives of all member institutions and other stakeholders in order to ensure a coordinated implementation of the reforms. Their activities include the establishment of guidelines, recommendations and codes of best practice regarding general aspects of the reforms as well as coordination and support of curricular reforms, ECTS, admission regulations, mobility, monitoring, improvements, quality assurance and the social aspects including gender equality. They provide a platform for inter-institutional discussion of all Bologna-related issues.

- a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up<sup>4</sup> Yes  No
- b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of
- |                                   |                                         |                                        |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Ministry                          | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Rectors' conference               | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Academic staff                    | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Students                          | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Staff trade unions                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Employers                         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
- c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group<sup>5</sup> Yes  No

<sup>4</sup> A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

- d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of
- |                                   |                                         |                                        |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Ministry                          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference               | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Academic staff                    | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Students                          | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Staff trade unions                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers                         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) _____      |                                         |                                        |

*Please add any additional comments if necessary:*

There is a general agreement that the implementation of the Bologna process needs to be critically analysed so that improvements can be made. For this reason, the State Secretariat for Education and Research and the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology financially support a vast coordination and monitoring project for the Bologna implementation at Swiss Universities over the period 2008-2011. This project is carried through by the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities.

## **DEGREE SYSTEM**

### **3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle**

a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

As of 2007/08, all first-year students at all HEIs (Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education) and in all subject areas (including medical studies) enrolled in bachelor programmes. During the academic year 2008/09, 85% of all first and second cycle students are enrolled in bachelor or master courses (official prevision of the Federal statistical office; exact statistical information will be available only in spring 2009).

The traditional single-tier study courses are gradually being discontinued: In 2008/09, only 15% of all students are still enrolled in the single-tier study courses. According to estimations, this percentage will drop to less than 5% in 2011.

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<sup>5</sup> A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all<sup>6</sup> students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 <sup>7</sup>	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
2008/09: 150'000	2008/09: 130'000	2008/09: approx. 85%

c) Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation regarding implementation of the two cycle system in your country:

The implementation of the two cycle system is well advanced: in 2008/09, approximately 85% of all students below doctoral level are enrolled in the two cycle system and as of 2011 only a small minority will linger in the former single-tier system. However, HEIs are also highly aware of a number of remaining challenges, especially with regard to curriculum design and student-centered learning, systematic formulation of learning outcomes, application of ECTS and calculation of student workload, as well as mobility. All HEIs are currently working on evaluating and improving the new study courses. At the national level, a vast evaluation of the main reform aspects is under way (general study conditions, admission to the second cycle, length of studies, ECTS, mobility, social dimension / gender equality).

A recent national student survey at Swiss Universities offers evidence that students are generally satisfied with their study conditions in the new system.<sup>8</sup> However, they also point out that there are still too many differences between institutions or subject areas regarding the use of ECTS and workload per credit, that learning outcomes are often not communicated, or that some curricula are not flexible enough. With respect to horizontal mobility, almost 25% of second cycle students have been mobile, but many students say that they forgo an exchange due to administrative or financial obstacles.

#### 4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies

<sup>6</sup> "All" = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. *NB Students of ALL study fields are taken into account*

<sup>7</sup> If countries have more recent data available after November 1, they can provide an update but no later than January 15, 2009

<sup>8</sup> The survey "Système de Bologne dans les universités suisses: conditions d'études" has been conducted in March 2008 by the two national student organisations in close collaboration with the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities and the "Observatoire de la vie estudiantine" of the University of Geneva. The main (preliminary) results have been presented to the public on 4 September 2008. The conclusions of the survey will be published in spring 2009.

- other elements<sup>9</sup> apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

The doctorate, situated at the interface of education and research, is a key concern for Swiss Universities which are currently modernizing the third cycle.

The core element of the doctorate remains the doctoral thesis as a proof of a personal and original contribution to research. At the same time, different paths are leading to the doctoral degree that all fulfil the common objectives of the doctorate (scientific competence, but also, for instance, skills transcending disciplines).<sup>10</sup> Swiss Universities being in charge of both the doctorate and its organisation, there is great diversity for example in terms of structural, educational or supervision matters at an institutional level, but also at the level of departments or study fields. In the Swiss view, diversity is a highly valued asset. Swiss Universities commit themselves to enhancing the quality of doctoral education by creating optimal framework conditions – excellence being the guiding principle – rather than to harmonizing the third cycle according to given standards.

In 2007/08, 18'152 doctoral students were enrolled at Swiss Universities. Due to both institutional and inter-institutional initiatives as well as to projects under the responsibility of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities, the number of more or less tightly structured doctoral programmes increases: Many doctoral students are either participating in established programmes or modularly organised study elements forming an integral part of their doctorate. Some Universities have set up schools which are not only in charge of the organisation of such programmes, but also of issues like admission which is increasingly done on a competitive basis under the responsibility of a committee. However, no figures are available regarding the percentage of students following structured doctoral programmes. At present, such programmes exist particularly in the sciences and at the two Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH) as well as in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, where inter-institutional programmes have a long-standing tradition. Programmes are often based on cooperation between two or more Universities. At the same time, programmes on the level of single institutions and covering other disciplines can increasingly be found as well.

Taught elements beyond the master level are an important element of structured doctoral programmes. At the same time, attendance of third cycle courses

<sup>9</sup> E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of doctoral studies), etc.

<sup>10</sup> See the Position of Swiss Universities on the Doctorate (<http://www.crus.ch/la-crus/coordonne-harmonise/projet-prodoc/guide-de-bonnes-pratiques-et-recommandations.html?L=1%2F%2F>)

(colloquia, seminars, summer schools etc.) is common practice for all doctoral students, including those outside a structured programme, and there is a large offer of such courses open to all doctoral students.

Workload of curricular elements that are an integral part of the doctorate – as well as other activities such as presentations at conferences etc. – is sometimes measured using ECTS credits. The number of credits to be obtained often amounts to 12 credits, but might also be more important. No credits are used to assess the workload of the doctorate as a whole.

Courses might cover disciplinary, interdisciplinary or methodological issues. Particular attention is given to the development of transferable or generic skills. Considering that the doctorate qualifies its holder for a broad range of high-level responsibilities and functions both in and outside academia, the development of corresponding offers – as well as of further measures such as career centres – is an important concern for Swiss Universities. In the same vein, many institutions seek to remove barriers between departments and disciplines by offering the possibility to do an interdisciplinary doctorate open to candidates with a Master degree from other disciplines. Structured programmes are often based on an interdisciplinary approach.

Swiss doctoral students have a hybrid status, being students as well as junior researchers. While the status of doctoral students might in practice slightly differ according to their funding situation, the tendency goes to regarding doctoral students as early stage researchers with corresponding rights and duties to be set down in employment regulations. Swiss Universities are currently seeking to improve relevant structures and processes, for instance by identifying good practices, on the basis of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

In most cases, supervision of doctoral students is organised according to the traditional model with a single supervisor being in charge of the doctoral student. Alternative modes of supervision such as co-direction or supervision of the candidate by a committee exist, in the first place, in the sciences as well as in the case of structured programmes. To intensify the support of doctoral students is considered to be an important issue. For example, some institutions have set down supervision arrangements in corresponding decrees. Special attention is given to the integration of doctoral students in a research setting and to the idea of scientific exchange transcending institutional and disciplinary boundaries. With regard to the final stage of the doctorate, assessment of the thesis, different models exist. Due recognition is given to the original research contribution; however, other elements such as the doctoral examination may equally be taken into account. Regulations particularly differ, for instance, with regard to the composition of the jury including the presence of external jury members or the respective roles of supervisor, reviewers and jury within the assessment process.

The normal length of doctoral studies is between 3 and 4 years full-time, but there are differences according to discipline and organisation of studies. For example, time to degree is longer in the humanities and social sciences, but also depends on the organisation of doctoral studies and the working and living conditions of doctoral students.

## 5. Relationship between higher education and research

a) Please describe the main trends in the role of higher education institutions in research in your country.

For the period 2008-2011, there has been a substantial increase in public funding both of fundamental research and application or market oriented research. Especially in the means for fundamental research, the funding has to be allocated on a competitive basis (to be combined with an overhead to cover indirect costs of research). In this context, autonomy of Swiss HEIs plays a crucial role as it allows them to develop clearly defined institutional profiles enabling them to face international competition. For example, an important instrument with regard to high quality research and education is the identification and the development of institutional or network-based, inter-institutional and interdisciplinary competence centres – a process that is led by HEIs on the basis of the criteria of excellence, effectivity and national relevance.

Research quality is a key issue for Swiss HEIs. On the one hand, HEIs seek to attract the best talents by optimizing framework conditions for researchers according to the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct. This is especially true for junior scientists. On the other hand, systematic evaluation of research according to international standards is a necessary precondition for excellence in research. For example, Swiss Universities are currently working on collaborative projects that are about adapting evaluation methods and criteria to different disciplines and linguistic contexts.

Finally, (fundamental) research and the transfer of research results to the industry are the *primum mobile* for development and innovation. The promotion of research results and the intensification of the collaboration between Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences as well as between HEIs and the private sector are important means in order to further enhance Switzerland's innovation capacity.

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:

- percentage of GDP spent on research
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

In 2004, Switzerland spent 2.94% (CHF 13.1 billion) of its GDP to research. More than two thirds of research is financed by the private sector (69.8%), whereas 22.7% are financed by the public sector and 7.5% by other sources. The

percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions was 23% in this year.

Publicly funded research is mainly conducted within higher education institutions. Research, together with education is part of the mission of all three types of Swiss higher education institutions (Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education) as defined in either cantonal or federal laws. Moreover, a tight link between higher education and research is expected: The Federal Act on Aid to Universities and Cooperation in Higher Education<sup>11</sup> as well as the Federal Act on Universities of Applied Sciences<sup>12</sup> consider the unity of teaching and research to be a condition for obtaining subsidies. The Federal Act on Research<sup>13</sup> which regulates federal financing of research also insists on the tight link between research and education. Accordingly, the cantonal Universities and Federal Institutes of Technology spent 51% of their overall budget on research in 2006. In the same year, the Universities of Applied Sciences spent 15% on research (aim 2011: 20%). The research at the Universities of Teacher Education is still being developed and amounted to 6,2% of the overall budget in 2006.

An important part of doctoral students are employed either as teaching assistants at their University or on a research project, alternative funding schemes such as bursaries awarded within the framework of structured programmes do exist but are less frequent. There is also an important nation-wide programme for the promotion of equal opportunities of women and men at Universities. In the context of its module "Monitoring", female doctoral students can benefit from a substantial financial support. There is also a similar programme for the Universities of Applied Sciences.

For a long time, the creation of synergies between HEIs and other research sectors has been a priority for Switzerland. It will be one of the challenges ahead to maintain the high level of current activities aimed at turning investments in R&D into entrepreneurial successes. Measures include the following:

- All HEIs have put in place mechanisms to ensure research cooperation with the industry, including small and medium-sized enterprises. In 2007, for instance, research mandates from the private sector made up 5.6% of the cantonal Universities' overall budget.
- CTI, the Swiss Confederation's innovation promotion agency has a long-standing tradition of supporting the transfer of knowledge and technology between businesses and HEIs through promoting and supporting innovative research projects with serious market potential conducted by businesses and HEIs. The CTI budget is rising considerably. For the period 2008-2011, it amounts to approximately CHF 532 million (compared with 400 million for the period 2004-2007). The funding is allocated on a competitive basis. Projects of the Federal Institutes of Technology have a share of about 40% of the CTI budget, the Universities of Applied Sciences with their strong link to small and medium sized enterprises a share of 35% (2007).

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<sup>11</sup> [www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/4/414.20.de.pdf](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/4/414.20.de.pdf) (German)

<sup>12</sup> [www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/c414\\_71.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/c414_71.html) (German)

<sup>13</sup> [www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/4/420.1.de.pdf](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/4/420.1.de.pdf) (German)

- swITT, the Swiss technology transfer association, supports and seeks to strengthen the transfer of technology between the private sector and public research and education institutions by promoting the professional development of its members, an understanding of the technology transfer process and its benefit to society, an optimal environment for technology transfer activities, and good inter-personal relationships.

Moreover, the law on foundations has been revised a few years ago and liberalised in such a way that it stimulates and simplifies private donations to public institutions.

c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?

Yes  No

The transition of University graduates from higher education into the labour market is examined within the framework of a survey carried out biennially by the Federal Statistical Office. The survey focuses on the first five years after graduation, asking when and under what conditions with regard to their qualification graduates take up an occupation. Until recently, doctorate holders were included in the survey; today their data is gathered and analysed separately within the framework of a corresponding, more elaborate project. Basic data concerning doctorate holders, especially with regard to the overall (working) population, can also be gathered from the Swiss labour force surveys of the Federal Statistical Office.

## 6. Access<sup>14</sup> and admission to the next cycle

Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles.

### 6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

As a general rule, all first cycle qualifications give access to the second cycle in the same subject area. However, at the Universities of Applied Sciences, only a certain percentage of holders of a first cycle degree is admitted to second cycle studies in the same subject area (due mainly to the fact that the first cycle degree is the standard qualification to get access to the labour market). Percentages vary according to subjects (e.g. over 90% in music; approx. 20% in engineering). This means that access to master programmes can be highly competitive (while fully corresponding to the Lisbon Recognition Convention).

In many cases, holders of a first cycle degree have access to second cycle programmes in a different subject area. Most notably, this is the case at the Universities of Teacher Education (e.g. bachelor degree holders in (pre-)primary education have access to master programmes in special needs education).

<sup>14</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: "Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education."

b) any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (please specify)

All first cycle qualifications give access to second cycle programmes in the same subject area.

c) any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: *please tick whether graduates must:*

sit entrance exam	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
complete additional courses	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
have work experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If the answer to the last point is yes, please specify what type of work experience is required:

At the Universities of Applied Sciences, relevant work experience is required for access to a (first or) second cycle programme.

d) any further special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies

The institution admitting a bachelor degree holder from another institution may ask that the student complete additional courses. However, this is restricted to courses that are highly relevant to the master programme the student wishes to follow and s/he has not already completed as part of her/his bachelor course. The Universities of Applied Sciences are free to define additional entrance conditions for bachelor degree holders in order to admit the best qualified students for a specific master programme.

e) to which students the above special requirements apply:

all students	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
students of the same field coming from other HEIs	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

f) which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies:

entrance exam	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
additional courses	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
work experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>

## **6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles**

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle

100% of second cycle qualifications obtained from a University give access to doctoral programmes (which are only offered by the Universities). Students are admitted on merit by the academic staff in charge of the programme. As the first master programmes at the Universities of Applied Sciences started this autumn,

the question of the transition from these masters to doctoral programmes will need to be addressed in the near future.

- b) any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle (please specify)

-

- c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

-

## 7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

- a) What measures are being taken to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications? Please include the most recent statistical data on the employment status of graduates of all cycles.

If your higher education institutions also provide professional bachelor programmes, please provide employability data for both types of bachelors separately

The Swiss Universities aim at providing an education on master level to as many students as possible. They are, however, aware that this may not always be possible for or desired by individual students and that reorientation has to be an option after completion of the bachelor level. Therefore, all Universities closely monitor the study pathways of students and continuously adapt profiles and contents of the bachelor and master programmes according to the variety of needs and purposes including but not limited to preparation for research careers.

The number of bachelor diplomas awarded by the Universities has considerably increased since 2002 (2002: 11, 2003: 141, 2004: 1056, 2005: 2926, 2006: 4987, and 2007: 7168). In 2006, 78.9% of first cycle graduates continued straight into the second cycle (2005: 80.5%, 2004: 84.7%). The recent decrease in the number of bachelor graduates continuing immediately with a master programme seems to indicate that the bachelor degree is more and more recognized by the labour market. Yet more explicit data about the career paths of bachelor graduates are not available at the national level. National surveys on the employability of graduates are carried out every two years by the Federal Statistical Office. Initial findings on the employability of bachelor graduates will be available in spring 2009.

The survey conducted regularly by the University of St. Gallen (HSG) among its new graduates shows that students with a bachelor degree have little difficulty finding a good job. 89% of them think that the value of their bachelor degree on the labour market is either high or very high. These figures should be interpreted with due care, however, since the HSG mainly offers study programmes in business, economics and law. It is an interesting new development that many students enter the job market for a certain time after having obtained their bachelor degree, and then to begin their master studies later on. So 6.8% of the bachelor graduates of the year 2004 and 4.7% of the year 2005 entered a master programme one year after graduation.

The study programmes of the Universities of Applied Sciences and part of the study programmes of the Universities of Teacher Education have traditionally

been first cycle degrees oriented towards the professional sector; therefore, no extra measures to increase the employability of bachelor qualifications are felt to be necessary beyond constant efforts to assure a high quality of these programmes.

One year after graduation in 2004, about 96% of the students of both Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences got a job.

b) To what extent is there a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:

- curriculum design, work placements and international experience  
Significant  Some  A little  None
- accreditation/quality assurance  
Significant  Some  A little  None
- University governance  
Significant  Some  A little  None

c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes  No  In some cases

d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes  No  In some cases

## 8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared<sup>15</sup>?

Yes  No

A draft version of the Swiss national qualifications framework was submitted to all stakeholders in 2008 for consultation. A revised version will be available in spring 2009 for adoption by the Rectors' Conferences. The Swiss national qualifications framework encompasses all three types of HEIs (Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, and Universities of Teacher Education).

b) Does the framework or proposed framework include generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences?

Yes  No

The Swiss qualifications framework proposes generic descriptors that are based on the Dublin descriptors and adapted according to national specificities. These descriptors are defined for all three cycles.

<sup>15</sup> A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

c) Does it include ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle?

Yes  No

The ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle are fixed in the legal basis for the two-tiered study structure and accordingly included in the Swiss qualifications framework.

d) Has the NQF been nationally discussed with all stakeholders?

Yes  No

It has been one of the main aims of the project group to get all stakeholders involved from the very beginning, in order to make sure that the NQF will be generally accepted. There were focussed discussions with stakeholders (HEIs, students, employers, etc.) during the drafting process of the Swiss qualifications framework. Moreover, all stakeholders were included in a broad consultation of the draft version in 2008.

*If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):*

e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes  No

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*If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:*

f) Are all formal arrangements decisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes  No

At the time of drafting the current report, the national consultation process on the qualifications framework is still ongoing. All formal arrangements and decisions for implementing the framework will be made in spring 2009, once the consultation is completed.

g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed?

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation)
- There is significant progress on implementing the framework
- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and competencies has been completed
- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is no timetable for implementation

Although the Swiss qualifications framework has not been formally adopted yet, work on its implementation has already started in most institutions: several institutions have defined subject specific frameworks, started to describe their modules and programmes in terms of competences and learning outcomes or

initiated projects on how to use learning outcomes. Moreover, the national quality assurance body considers the use of learning outcomes in its evaluations.

h) What is the stage of progress on the self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework ?

Completed  Started, but not yet completed  Not yet started

The self-certification process will be launched towards the end of 2009, after the adoption of the Swiss qualifications framework.

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes  No

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

The self-certification report will be published.

## NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)<sup>16</sup>

### 9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG<sup>17</sup> and national support for implementation

a) Has your national QA system been reviewed against the ESG?

Yes  No   Not yet, but such a review is planned  
(2006)

b) If a review has been undertaken or is planned, please give further details of the review process.

The national QAA was assessed against ESG part 2 and 3 in the year 2006 (as were all other agencies recognised by the Federal Department of Economic Affairs which are responsible for the Universities of Applied Sciences). A successful outcome has been achieved. Furthermore the Swiss University Conference (CUS) has issued official guidelines for internal QA systems at Swiss Universities in December 2006; they are compatible with ESG part 1 and form the benchmarks for mandatory quality audits at all Swiss Universities (successfully applied by the national QAA in 2008).

c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes  No

The introduction of specific financial or other incentives aimed at improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions?

Yes  No

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

Results achieved in institutional audits are linked to the official recognition and the right of the Swiss Universities to get financial support from the federal government. Universities of Applied Sciences and their study programmes must be accredited.

- Other measures

Yes  No

d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

Yes  No

Following the first cycle of quality audits in Switzerland (2004) structural changes have been implemented in most of the audited HEIs (e.g. introduction of the position of vice rector for quality, establishment of internal QA/evaluation units, systematic evaluation of faculties, etc.). The impact of these measures has been evaluated in the course of the second cycle of quality audits.

For the Universities of Applied Sciences, a Peer-Review programme (2001-2003) prior to accreditation as well as the subsequent accreditation exercises have shown strong impact on the improvement of the study programmes.

## 9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

The internal QA systems at Swiss Universities have to be compliant with specific guidelines<sup>18</sup>, which are compatible with ESG and issued by the Swiss University Conference. The national QAA assesses whether the Universities do comply with these guidelines. The QAA is not prescribing a specific model of internal QA, but HEIs have to show that they have a model that is coherent, effective, systematically applied and fit for its own purpose. All HEIs do have a strategy for their quality management and most have published their base documents.

The Universities of Applied Sciences follow the regulations laid down in the Federal Universities of Applied Sciences Act.<sup>19</sup> As to internal quality assurance procedures, they generally apply the EFQM model.

The Universities of Teacher Education have different quality assurance systems in place. The EFQM Excellence Model is the most common. The Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education (COHEP) has published "Recommendations on the planning, development and introduction of a Quality Assurance system" in order to foster the development of Quality Assurance in the Universities of Teacher Education. Furthermore, all Universities of Teacher Education are taking part in the "Quality Development" COHEP Commission.

The study programmes of the Universities of Applied Sciences are submitted to mandatory accreditation. The study programmes of the Universities may be subjected to accreditation procedures.

<sup>18</sup> [www.cus.ch/wDeutsch/publikationen/richtlinien/D-443-06A-Quali-RL-VO.pdf](http://www.cus.ch/wDeutsch/publikationen/richtlinien/D-443-06A-Quali-RL-VO.pdf) (German)

<sup>19</sup> [www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/414\\_71/index.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/414_71/index.html) (German)

Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to relevant websites:

a) How many HEIs have published a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality?

All HEIs  Most HEIs  Some HEIs  No HEIs

b) How many HEIs have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

All HEIs  Most HEIs  Some HEIs  No HEIs

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

The HEIs use internal and external evaluation procedures. For internal approval of programmes, formal procedures are in place:

With respect to teaching, there are formal procedures to install study programmes. All programmes are revised periodically. Curricula are evaluated periodically through course evaluations (e.g. questionnaires, interviews involving students, teachers, alumni), internal evaluations undertaken by the faculties themselves, regular external peer reviews, student surveys, and alumni surveys. There are also market surveys done either by the Universities themselves or by the Federal Statistical Office. Some Universities of Applied Sciences have applied for the EFQM label "Committed to Excellence".

c) How many HEIs have described their programmes in terms of learning outcomes?

All HEIs  Most HEIs  Some HEIs  No HEIs

d) Are student assessments at HEIs designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (based on published criteria) applied in a consistent way?

All HEIs  Most HEIs  Some HEIs  No HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved.

Currently, the HEIs assess their students according to published curricular programmes and plans. Only in some cases, learning outcomes have already been explicitly formulated and published. Over the next years, formulating learning outcomes and explicitly linking them to student assessment is one of the main priorities for HEIs and the competent national bodies.

e) How many HEIs publish up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

All HEIs  Most HEIs  Some HEIs  No HEIs

Information on programmes and awards are published in print, and more commonly on the websites of the individual HEIs as well as on the website of the Rectors' Conferences. They are regularly updated at least once a year.

## 10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

The Swiss University Conference has issued Guidelines for internal Quality Assurance at Swiss Universities. These Guidelines define in seven standards the minimal requirements for an internal quality assurance system. Swiss public Universities have to undergo a Quality audit every four years to evaluate if these standards are fulfilled.

Public and private Universities can also ask for an accreditation of the institution or their programmes.

Universities of Applied Sciences are obliged to have their programmes as well as the institution accredited. The accreditation standards are set by the Federal Department of Economic Affairs which is also the accreditation body. The evaluations is carried through by Swiss and foreign accreditation agencies.

Universities of Teacher Education must have their programmes accredited by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK).

Please include:

a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

The external quality assurance system as described above is fully implemented.

b) does your external quality assurance system operate at a national level;

Yes  No

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education<sup>20</sup>

Yes  No

There is one important exception: programmes of the Universities of Teacher Education must have been recognized by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK). But currently, there is no institutional accreditation for Universities of Teacher Education.

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- |                          |                                         |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - self-assessment report | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - external review        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - publication of results | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - follow-up procedures   | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

e) has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place

Yes  No

<sup>20</sup> Higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

## 11. Level of student participation

From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

- a) in governance of national agencies for QA .  
Yes  No  In some cases
- b) as full members in external review teams  
Yes  No  In some cases
- c) as observers in external review teams  
Yes  No  In some cases
- d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews  
Yes  No  In some cases
- e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)  
Yes  No  In some cases
- f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes)  
Yes  No  In some cases
- g) in preparation of self-assessment reports.  
Yes  No  In some cases
- h) in follow-up procedures:  
Yes  No  In some cases

## 12. Level of international participation

In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance

- a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance  
Yes  No  In some cases
- b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies  
Yes  No  In some cases
- c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers  
Yes  No  In some cases
- d) membership of ENQA  
Yes  No  In some cases
- e) membership of any other international network  
Yes  No  If Yes, please specify:

ECA, INQAAHE, JQI, EAIR, (UNESCO global forum on accreditation)

## RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

### 13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country. Please include the percentage of all students graduating in 2009 who will receive a Diploma Supplement (if less than 100%, please explain)

All students graduating in 2009 with a bachelor's or master's degree will receive a Diploma Supplement.

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:

- |                                     |                              |                                         |                                         |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| • 1st cycle programmes              |                              | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| • 2nd cycle programmes              |                              | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| • 3rd cycle programmes              |                              | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| • remaining "old type" programmes   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • short higher education programmes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> |

b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes  No 
  - *please specify the language*

The Diploma Supplement is generally bilingual and issued in two of the following languages: German, French, English, and Italian. The choice of language depends on the institution and the local language.

- issued free of charge  for a fee
- issued automatically  on request
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

#### 13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles.

Yes  No

The DS is used together with the original diploma and is considered as a very helpful tool in the admission process. However, at the time of application, the DS is often not yet available, since admission offers are made before completion of the applicants' bachelor degree. Thus, the application decisions and verifications of the study achievements often have to be made on the basis of other documents such as transcripts.

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualifications.

Yes  No

If the language is English, French, Italian or German and if the DS suffices to verify all the information needed, the majority of the Swiss HEIs do not require a translation.

c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity of the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market).

Yes  No

If the information provided is clear (e.g. table form of the education system) and really pertinent to the qualification submitted, no other documents – apart from the diploma itself – are required.

d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes  No

When the Diploma Supplement was introduced at HEIs, the Swiss model was conceived in view of providing useful information to the labour market. This objective was discussed with all HEIs. Information on the DS, on its objective and function as well as on the Swiss model is provided on the website of the Swiss ENIC. Switzerland has a national model which is used by all HEIs. There is a close collaboration between the Swiss ENIC, in charge of implementing the DS, and the responsible recognition authorities. The recognition bodies meet regularly to discuss their recognition practices.

#### **14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention**

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>21</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes  No

Switzerland was one of the first countries to have implemented the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1998. The existing decentralized laws and regulations proved to be flexible enough to deal with the Lisbon Recognition requirements. The higher education institutions have adapted their admission regulations in order to guarantee fair assessment. All diplomas are recognized if no substantial differences can be proven. Furthermore, an ENIC which provides essential information on institutions and programmes has been established as a department of the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS).

<sup>21</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

- b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:  
i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes  No

Switzerland has ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts. It also has a national action plan for recognition in which all HEIs and the responsible recognition authorities are involved. National and cantonal laws as well as internal regulations of the Swiss HEIs are in conformity with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention as well as the Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition.

- ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes  No

Joint degrees are allowed and in some cases financially supported (especially at doctoral level) by the Swiss Confederation. There are no legal obstacles to the recognition of joint degrees.

Three Swiss universities offer joint master programmes in collaboration with leading partner universities from France, Spain, Holland, Italy, UK and Singapore. One university has signed the Double Degree Agreement for Management Education in Europe (DAFME). Besides these international joint master programmes, most universities offer joint masters together with other Swiss universities. Thanks to bilateral agreements, there is also the possibility to obtain a joint or double doctorate (cotutelle de thèse) from a Swiss and an Italian or French university. Joint or double doctorates offered only by Swiss universities are not awarded.

Joint and double programmes at bachelor and master level exist also at several Universities of Applied Sciences.

- iii) Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Yes  No

Transnational arrangements are in the responsibility of the HEIs. They make sure that they meet the requirements of the Code of Good Practice.

- c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

- i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes  No

The HEI have adapted their admission regulations so as to meet the requirements of the Lisbon Convention.

- ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes  No

Cf. the answer to the last question.

- iii) demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted

Yes  No

Cf. the same answer.

iv) provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions

Yes  No

Information about accredited HE programmes and institutions is provided by the Swiss ENIC at the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) and can be found on its homepage,<sup>22</sup> as well as by the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology for Universities of Applied Sciences.<sup>23</sup> The information is updated regularly.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes  No

Switzerland has a fully operational ENIC. In addition to monitoring the implementation of the Convention and discussing arising problems, Swiss ENIC informs about the multilateral conventions on higher education of the UNESCO and the European Council, the bilateral agreements with Germany, Italy, Austria and France, the directives of recognition of the European Union, the ENIC, and the recognition of foreign and domestic institutes of higher education.

d) As additional information, please describe any actions to implement fully the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

Together with the Swiss ENIC, the CRUS Commission for Admission and Equivalence supports and monitors the implementation of the Convention and discusses arising problems. Amongst other things a workshop is organised every year to discuss necessary adaptations of admission requirements. The Rectors' Conference of the Universities of Applied Sciences has set up a special commission for education matters which deals also with questions of admission of general interest.

## 15. Stage of implementation of ECTS<sup>24</sup>

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes<sup>25</sup> in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

100%  75-99%  50-75%  <50%

All first and second cycle programmes use ECTS credits for all of their components. ECTS credits are normally not used for the former one-tier study programmes that are being discontinued. This affects a rapidly diminishing number of students (18% in 2008/09).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.crus.ch/information-programme/recognition-swiss-enic/recognised-or-accredited-swiss-higher-education-institutions.html?L=2>

<sup>23</sup> [www.bbt.admin.ch](http://www.bbt.admin.ch)

<sup>24</sup> Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html)

<sup>25</sup> Except doctoral studies

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes<sup>26</sup> in your country? Please tick one:

No  In some programmes  In the majority of programmes   
In all programmes

c) If you use credit system other than ECTS, please give details of your national credit system:

-

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes  No

ii) what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits?

-

d) Are you taking any action to improve understanding of learning outcomes?

Yes  No

Improving the understanding of learning outcomes is a strategic priority of the Swiss Universities during the next years. There are, accordingly, actions to improve understanding of learning outcomes at both the national and the institutional level.

The Rectors' Conferences as well as other national bodies (association of faculty developers, quality assurance agency) regularly organise activities aimed at HE staff in order to discuss the use of learning outcomes and exchange experiences. These activities include conferences and workshops, the preparation of information material, the publication of good practice examples, etc. In addition, the development of the Swiss qualifications framework is considered an opportunity to focus efforts related to the promotion of learning outcomes and student-centered learning.

Individual institutions are also highly aware of the importance of learning outcomes and are fostering the introduction of a learning-outcomes approach. This includes a range of projects aimed at the improvement of study programmes and teaching, information activities (events, publications) and counselling of staff.

e) Are you taking any actions to improve measurement and checking of student workload?

Yes  No

The issue of student workload has been a core concern of the Swiss HEIs from the beginning of introducing ECTS. The Rectors' Conferences and institutional staff in charge of the reform are highly aware of the fact that student workload is not always correctly calculated. Therefore, how best to check student workload is regularly discussed at the national level in the relevant working groups or as part of workshops and conferences. Moreover, all institutions aim at improving workload measurements via regular surveys or focussed studies.

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<sup>26</sup> Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

f) Are you taking any actions to assist HE staff or other stakeholders in applying ECTS.

Yes  No

As from the start of the Bologna reform process, a national Bologna and ECTS coordination unit has been in place at the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities in order to support and assist HE staff and other stakeholders concerning all issues related to ECTS. The main support activities include: provision of information material in both printed form and on the Internet, regular workshops on ECTS-related topics for HE staff, surveys and studies on the use of ECTS, financial support of HE staff for attending relevant international conferences (e.g. Tuning dissemination seminars), etc. In addition, staff at the Bologna/ECTS coordination unit provides specific information on ECTS when requested.

In a similar way, the Rectors' Conference of the Universities of Applied Sciences (KFH) has set up a Bologna Commission to support the Universities of Applied Sciences to implement the Bologna process. The project is lead by the General Secretariat of the KFH.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

### 16. Recognition of prior learning

Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning (RPL), including non-formal and informal learning (for example learning gained in the workplace or in the community).

a) Do you have nationally established procedures in place to assess RPL as a basis for access to HE programmes?

Yes  No

It lies in the responsibility of HEIs to take decisions about admissions. For this reason, there are no nationally established procedures in place to assess RPL.

b) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits towards a qualification?

Yes  No

The allocation of credits towards a qualification is incumbent on the HEIs. So there are no such procedures at the national level.

c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements?

Yes  No

For the reason mentioned, there are no nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements.

d) To what extent are any such procedures applied in practice?

Comprehensively  Some  A little  None

HEIs are autonomous in terms of admission and of allocation of credits. Therefore, there are no nationally established procedures to recognise prior learning. Several Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences have adopted procedures of their own to do so: the Swiss Universities of Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Lugano and Lucerne as well as most of the Universities of Applied Sciences offer the possibility to enter some of their programmes on the basis of a personal assessment. Furthermore, work experience and informal learning are taken into account for the admission to many continuing education programmes, including some Masters of Advanced Study (MAS). Relevant work experience is also a requirement for access to Universities of Applied Sciences.

### 17. Flexible learning paths

Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

It is generally agreed that educational structures should be organised in such a way that able students do not end up in a dead-end. Generally speaking, there are two ways to access higher education in Switzerland: maturity certificate (“gymnasiale Maturität”) for Universities and Federal Institutes of Technology, professional maturity certificate (“Berufsmaturität”) for Universities of Applied Sciences. Recently, various steps have been taken in order to facilitate the transition from one sector to the other. After passing the professional maturity certificate, for example, there is the possibility to take an exam (called “Passerelle”) which gives access to Universities.

In order to implement the Bologna reform in a coordinated way, the Swiss University Conference as well as the Council for Universities of Applied Sciences enacted comparable directives (Bologna Directives) for each of these sectors. This is an important prerequisite for an increased permeability between the different types of higher education in Switzerland. In November 2007, the three Rectors’ Conferences (Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities, Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences, Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education) signed an agreement which simplifies the transition. They agreed that after obtaining a first degree (bachelor) from an institution of one type, a student can in principle change to an institution of another type (in the same field of study) if at most 60 ECTS Credits are sufficient to bridge any major differences of profile or content. This agreement came into effect in August 2008 along with an extensive list containing the details for every study course concerned.

At present, doctoral studies are only offered at Universities and Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH). Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education do not offer doctorates. The question of the possibility to take up doctoral studies at a University or an ETH after having completed a master degree at a University of Applied Sciences or a University of Teacher Education needs to be discussed in the near future.

a) Are there specific measures in place to promote flexible learning paths within the national qualifications framework?

Yes  No

Though the national qualifications framework (which is not yet in force) does not mention specific measures to promote flexible learning paths, Universities are free to set their own admission standards, as long as they comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

- b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?  
Yes  No

As the responsibility for admission decisions is incumbent on the HEI, there are, at least at the national level, no measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths.

- c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?  
Yes  No

Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences are free to accept students who do not meet the usual requirements for admission. As mentioned before, the Universities of Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Lucerne and Lugano as well as most of the Universities of Applied Sciences offer the possibility to enter some of their bachelor programmes on the basis of a personal assessment. There is also the possibility to enter the Federal Institutes of Technology by taking an entry exam.

- d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners  
Yes  No

Several Universities and all Universities of Applied Sciences explicitly offer the possibility of studying part time. In all HEIs, the regular period of study can be extended without any difficulty by at least half its regular time.

- e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?  
Yes  No

A large majority of the Universities of Applied Sciences, Universities of Teacher Education and an increasing number of Universities offer programmes with modular structures. In the field of continuing education, modular structures are especially popular, as they make it easier to combine studies and professional activity.

- f) If possible, please provide any statistics on the results of measures taken to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups,

There are no statistical data on this subject at the national level. The data provided by the University of Geneva which has analyzed the study paths of students who did not meet the usual requirements for admission show that these students have a similar success rate than the "regular" students.

## JOINT DEGREES

### 18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees<sup>27</sup>

a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes  No

Does the legislation fully allow:

i) establishing joint programmes?

Yes  No

ii) awarding joint degrees?

Yes  No

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in

i) joint degrees

75-100%  50-75%  25-50%  1-25%  0%

ii) joint programmes

75-100%  50-75%  25-50%  1-25%  0%

c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country

In the first cycle? None  Little  Widespread

In the second cycle? None  Little  Widespread

In the third cycle? None  Little  Widespread

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread?

The Universities offer joint degrees/programmes across all subject areas. The Universities of Applied Sciences offer joint degrees/programmes mainly in engineering, business administration and social work and arts, the Universities of Teacher Education in languages.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

The Swiss HEIs offer approximately 65 joint programmes.

f) Describe any actions being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

In some cases, joint programmes and degrees (especially at doctoral level) are allowed and financially supported by the Swiss Confederation. Furthermore, the Swiss Confederation supports strategic cooperation projects between different HEIs, which sometimes lead to joint programmes.

It must be stressed that the decision to offer joint degree programmes must come bottom-up. HEIs must themselves have an interest to establish such programmes, for instance in order to be able to offer better study programmes and so to attract better students.

<sup>27</sup> A *joint degree* is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

g) Are there any specific support systems for students to encourage joint degree cooperation?

The State Secretariat for Education and Research financially supports about 20 joint or double doctorates (cotutelle de thèse) from a Swiss and an Italian or French university.

## MOBILITY

### 19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

Compared with other OECD countries, Switzerland has one of the highest proportions of international students in the two cycle system (18%), PhD students (45%) and professors (28%) in higher education in 2007.

In summer 1999, the European Union and Switzerland signed seven bilateral agreements including the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2002. As a result of the EU eastern enlargement on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, the agreement was supplemented by an additional protocol containing provisions for the gradual introduction of the free movement of persons in the ten new EU member states as well. The protocol came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006. The bilateral agreements with the EU both enhance participation in EU education programmes and facilitate taking up residence in Switzerland (e.g. obtaining residence permits, health insurance, etc.).

An adequate supply of grants and loans is especially important for students from a lower social or economic background, if they are to be able to complete their studies and to be mobile. In order to harmonize the grants and loans system and to define common standards, the Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) has decided to elaborate an inter-cantonal agreement. This year, a first draft of the agreement has been sent out to the Cantons for consultation.

Switzerland is a federal country, which limits the direct governmental influence on the institutions. The "Bologna recommendations" of the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities proposes a bunch of measures to be taken by HEIs to facilitate student mobility. In addition, the Rectors' Conference's strategy paper "University landscape Switzerland 2005-2015" states that Universities should aim at having one quarter of their graduate students coming from another University, be it from within Switzerland or from other countries. The Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences has published a white paper for internationalisation at Universities of Applied Sciences in 2008 and has set up a special commission for internationalisation of the Universities of Applied Sciences. This commission is dealing with staff and student mobility matters. Furthermore, all Swiss HEIs have harmonised their academic calendar in order to facilitate mobility within Switzerland and across Europe.

The federal programme for gender equality at the Universities<sup>28</sup> includes a project "Conciliation of career and family" in order to support dual career couples

<sup>28</sup> [www.crus.ch](http://www.crus.ch) > Chancengleichheit

seeking for positions at Swiss Universities. It is planned to establish local services or platforms (e.g. Euraxess) that provide information for academic couples on various aspects like job offers, housing, and child care. Some financial support is offered to scientifically highly qualified partners as a starting help. It has also be kept in mind that the main goal of the programme for gender equality is to reach a proportion of 25% female professors in 2012. The above-mentioned support measures are, therefore, of paramount importance since female academics are more likely than their male colleagues to have partners also working in academia and more often follow their partners abroad for career-related reasons.

b) Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?

Yes  No

For nationals of EU member states (without Bulgaria and Romania), the Agreement on Free Movement of Persons greatly facilitates student and staff mobility between EU-countries and Switzerland. According to the agreement, no visa may be demanded from nationals of the contracting parties to enter the Swiss territory. As regards residence, the following rules are applied to researchers from the EU: for a stay of less than 90 days, there is a registration procedure, but no residence permit is required, whereas for a stay of more than 90 days, a residence permit is granted provided that a written confirmation of engagement is produced. For nationals stemming from the 8 eastern European member states, a work permit is still required as some transitional restrictions are applicable until 2011 at the latest.

As a non-EU member, Switzerland is not automatically taking over the EU directive and the two recommendations regarding the "scientific visa". Hence, there are so far no specific rules to facilitate the entering of third country researchers to the Swiss territory. Concerning the access to the Swiss labour market, facilitations for researchers from third countries are possible as far as they are "executives or qualified specialists being indispensable for important research projects in enterprises and research institutes or essential for the fulfillment of extraordinary assignments".

c) Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff?

Yes  No

Students participating in an Erasmus exchange programme benefit from a federal scholarship which covers part of the additional costs. Moreover, most cantonal grants and loans are portable.

Through the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS), the Swiss Government offers University scholarships for foreign students. These scholarships are offered on the basis of reciprocity (fixed number of scholarships for each country) or within the framework of a scholarship pool (scholarships without fixed distribution by country). They are intended for postgraduates who, by staying in Switzerland, will be able to further their education and to undertake research work in the fields in which the Swiss Universities are particularly active.

To a limited extent, scholarships are also available for postgraduate studies at the Universities of Applied Sciences. This applies to Western and Central and

Eastern European countries included in the scholarship pool. Students must have graduated from a University or University of Applied Sciences with at least a bachelor degree and enrol in Switzerland for studies at post-graduate level. This offer applies for the seven public Universities of Applied Sciences.

Furthermore, there are Universities which grant scholarships to foreign students (often in order to attract especially talented students).

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes  No

Study periods abroad at another HEI are recognised by the home institution. A recent survey among students shows that recognition generally works well<sup>29</sup>. The great majority of credits obtained at another institution are recognised by the home institution without any difficulties. It is advisable, however, that students first get a written confirmation ("learning agreement") from their home University that the credits earned abroad will be recognized.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes  No

All Swiss HEIs assist students in finding accommodation, e.g. by providing housing or a collection of addresses and links. However, in the bigger cities, students still have difficulties finding appropriate accommodation. Some Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences actively tackle the problem and are increasingly constructing their own student houses (e.g. ETH Zurich). Nevertheless, the percentage of students living in student accommodation is low compared with other European countries.<sup>30</sup> At several HEIs, special accommodation for staff is also available.

f) Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility?

Yes  No

Cf. question 19. a) above for measures taken.

## 20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes  No

In Switzerland, the 26 Cantons are responsible for the majority of grants and loans. So it depends on the respective cantonal legislation whether grants and loans are portable. It seems that they normally are.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes  No

Cf. answer to the last question.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the survey "Système de Bologne dans les universités suisses: conditions d'études" already mentioned above.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. for instance the data provided by Eurostudent III.

## THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

### 21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy "European Higher Education in a Global Setting"

Because the EHEA is very important for Swiss HEIs, particular attention is being paid to ensure that national Bologna Directives are compatible with international regulations. An important actor for the promotion of the EHEA is the Information and Coordination office ERASMUS Switzerland (IKES) and its "spin-offs" (so-called mobility offices) at the HEI.

In order to make up for the fact that the Swiss Confederation is not a member state of the EU, various measures have been taken to ensure at least an indirect participation of Swiss institutions in EU higher education programmes.

**b) What has your country done to:**

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

Among others, the three Rectors' Conferences regularly publish useful booklets called "Studying in Switzerland" for would-be students (also available online<sup>31</sup>). There are different editions for Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education. These booklets provide information about the Swiss educational system, HEIs and their study programmes, entry requirements, recognition matters, international mobility etc. for foreigners wishing to study in Switzerland. For students interested in studying in Switzerland, there is also a comprehensive website which offers information on programmes offered at the Universities, general information on Switzerland as well as practical information: [www.swissuniversity.ch](http://www.swissuniversity.ch). Furthermore, the ministries and several other bodies provide background information about the Bologna process and the possibilities for being mobile as well as many useful links to HEI, funding opportunities and so on.

ii) promote European higher education, enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness?

It is generally agreed that the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA can only be enhanced by continuously improving the quality of its education and research programmes. All Swiss HEIs are strongly committed to this aim.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

Swiss Universities have a long-standing tradition of cooperation with Universities from around the world. In order to coordinate these activities and to deepen the cooperation with selected countries, the State Secretariat for Education and Research has developed a strategy for bilateral research cooperation which is being further strengthened during the period 2008-2011 (cf. answer to the next question). Furthermore, Switzerland is active in many international organisations

<sup>31</sup> Cf. for instance <http://www.crus.ch/information-programme/studieren-in-der-schweiz.html?L=0>

and research projects. Finally, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation which is part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has much experience in the field of scientific cooperation with developing and emerging countries.

iv) intensify policy dialogue with partners from other world regions?

Backed by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the State Secretariat for Education and Research runs 4 Swiss Houses for Scientific Exchange (Boston, San Francisco, Singapore and Shanghai), the so called swissnex. This number is due to rise in the near future. The swissnex act as a physical and virtual environment fostering closer ties between Switzerland and the different areas in which they are established in the fields of academia, industry and society. Their main objective is to help Swiss Universities and research institutions develop their international activities. They also place particular emphasis on the next generation of creative thinkers and leaders, through a network that promotes the exchange of knowledge and generates cooperation in an innovative, inspiring, and rewarding atmosphere.

Switzerland also has bilateral cooperation agreements with many countries all around the world. Furthermore, a list of priority countries has been set up, with which policies in terms of science shall be deepened.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

All Swiss Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences have bilateral agreements with HEIs outside the Lisbon Convention region in order to enhance mutual recognition of qualifications.

Information on recognition procedures can be found in English on the website of the Swiss ENIC and on the websites of the competent recognition authorities.

Together with the Swiss ENIC, the Rectors' Conference's Commission for Admission and Equivalence has elaborated principles concerning recognition matters for all countries. This commission supports and monitors the recognition process in the Universities and discusses arising problems. A workshop is organized every year to discuss necessary adaptations.

c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*? Please describe.

The Guidelines were brought to the attention of and discussed by the HEIs and are generally adhered to in practice, especially regarding recognition of diplomas awarded as part of cross-border education programmes.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes  No

Cf. the answer to the question above.

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes  No

## FUTURE CHALLENGES

### 22. Main challenges for higher education

Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

A distinctive feature and highly-valued asset of the Swiss higher education system is its variety of types of institutions and a corresponding division of responsibility between federal and cantonal bodies. On the basis of a new constitutional article which has recently been adopted, national legal reforms are being undertaken in order to reduce this structural complexity and to enhance the overall coherence and efficiency of the entire tertiary education sector. At the same time, however, such reforms must not lead to excessive centralisation or stalling fruitful and crucial developments towards reinforced autonomy of HEIs. Moreover, the diversity of types of institutions and offers in higher education has to be maintained.

Overall financing of higher education and guaranteeing an appropriate level of public funding will be another major challenge in the coming years. The Swiss Confederation and the Cantons have to agree on a new mechanism and new rules for funding the HEIs.

All HEIs are highly concerned with enhancing research conditions. For the Universities, the main issues are maintaining its highly competitive research position, assuring optimal conditions for young researchers, and assuring common financing of highly cost-intensive domains and equipment. At the Universities of Applied Sciences and the Universities of Teacher Education – fairly young institutions – the focus will mainly be on developing high quality research and support staff in developing their research qualifications as well as enhance staff standards.

The challenges ahead for HEIs specifically related to the Bologna reforms include:

- consolidating the profound renewal of HE teaching already achieved within the framework of the Bologna process,
- removing administrative and other obstacles to mobility,
- implementing the national qualifications framework and more generally the student-centred learning approach with a consistent measure of student workload,
- completing the introduction of high quality master programmes in all disciplinary fields (Universities) or where appropriate (Universities of Applied Sciences),

- establishing joint master programmes as well as joint professorships of Universities and Universities of Teacher Education in several pedagogical domains,
- enhancing teacher-to-student ratios especially in the humanities and social sciences,
- creating reasonable and fair pathways between different types of HE institutions,
- modernising and enhancing doctoral education by increasing the number of structured doctoral programmes,
- providing easily accessible and user-friendly information on study opportunities at Swiss HEIs, and
- evaluating the achievement in consideration of the objectives of the Bologna reforms.

## PART II

### NATIONAL STRATEGY on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

#### I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

“We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.”

#### II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

Figures of the year 2005<sup>32</sup> show that the educational background has a major influence on the probability of getting access to higher education. Students' fathers hold 1.4 and students' mothers 1.2 times as often a degree from a University or an equivalent higher education institution than the population in the same age category. The corresponding ratio for students' fathers and mothers holding the lowest educational qualification is 0.9 for each group. It is interesting to note that the situation varies considerably from one type of higher education institution to the other. Whereas 40% of University students have at least one parent who has completed a degree in higher education, this is the case for only 22% of the students of Universities of Applied Sciences. It seems that this can be explained by the different access conditions for Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences: a maturity certificate (“gymnasiale Maturität”) is required to enter a University, whereas students of Universities of Applied Sciences normally get access to higher education through vocational training and then passing a professional maturity certificate (“Berufsmaturität”) (the other main possibility being to get access through a maturity certificate as well as one year of relevant work experience). Children of parents who do not hold a degree from a higher education institution tend to opt for vocational training and then, if able, to obtain the professional maturity certificate. For the reasons mentioned, this route normally leads to a University of Applied Sciences.

There are no figures about the income level of students' parents in Switzerland, but if one is entitled to suppose that holders of a degree from a higher education institution normally earn more than the average population, there might also be

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<sup>32</sup> The figures used in this and the following paragraph are taken from “La dimension sociale dans les hautes écoles. La Suisse en comparaison internationale,” Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Neuchâtel 2008, “Social and economic situation of students in higher education. How Switzerland compares to other European countries”, Neuchâtel 2007, and the report of the study on the social situation of students in 2005, Neuchâtel 2007. The data was collected for the national survey on the social and economic situation of students by the Federal Statistical Office and has been used in Eurostudent III.

financial reasons for the fact that students' parents more often hold a degree from a higher education institution than the population of the same age. On average, the financial contribution from the parents is by far the most important source of students' budget. For 21 year old students, 64% of their budget comes from their parents. Given the importance of the contribution from the parents, one might be entitled to suppose that parents' income level does have an influence on whether students have the opportunity to attend a higher education institution. This means that the availability of adequate funding through grants and loans is key for students from a lower economic background.

About 77% of Swiss students have a part-time job while studying. On average, this is the second most important financial resource (accounting for about 39% of the average student budget).

Based on a recent representative survey,<sup>33</sup> student organisations recently complained about difficulties encountered in coordinating job and studies. Especially the introduction of the new study structure according to the Bologna principles seems often to have led to tighter curricula with many compulsory courses. This obviously affects most of all students from a lower economic background.

Foreigners having done their obligatory school outside of Switzerland tend to have either a very high or a rather low standard of education. In 2007,<sup>34</sup> 27.7% of them had a degree from a higher education institution (average among Swiss citizens: 20.1%), whereas 31.9% have only completed the obligatory school education (compared with 8.8% of Swiss citizens). The situation is different for foreigners having attended at least part of their obligatory school in Switzerland. For 27.8% of them, the obligatory school is the highest educational attainment. A majority of them engaged in vocational training (52.9% against 51.5% for Swiss citizens). However, at the level of higher education (ISCED 5A), they are clearly underrepresented (8.9% against 20.1% for Swiss citizens). The problems often seem to show up at an early level of education. Especially for linguistic reasons, many children and young people with migration background have difficulties following the lessons. For this reason, they often perform under their intellectual potential at the obligatory school, which reduces their chances of making their way to higher education institutions. Furthermore, the difficulties linked with the educational and economic background of parents mentioned above might also be more common among the population with migration background.

A further obstacle to access higher education might be the fact that there are not so many non-traditional routes leading to higher education. In Switzerland, 9% of students had access to higher education institutions through non-traditional routes. Whereas there are many non-traditional routes leading to Universities of

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. "Système de Bologne dans les universités suisses: conditions d'études". The main (provisional) results have been presented to the public in September 2008; they are to be published in spring 2009. This survey showed that a large majority (81.4%) of students is satisfied or very satisfied with the study structures, which is very encouraging. On the other hand, it also showed that those students who are dissatisfied often have many different problems (financial, academic etc.) at the same time.

<sup>34</sup> The figures used in this paragraph taken from the Swiss labour force survey (Schweizerische Arbeitskräfteerhebung, SAKE) 2007, Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

Applied Sciences as well as to Universities of Teacher Education, only about 5% of University students gained access in such a way.

As far as equal opportunity of male and female students is concerned, the situation seems to be equilibrated. In the academic year 2007/8, there are slightly more female than male students in the first two cycles (or in the traditional single-tier study courses being steadily discontinued) attending Universities (51.3%). At Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education taken together, the proportion is just 50%. If one considers also doctoral studies and continuing education programmes, there is a slight majority of male students (50.3% at Universities, 52.1% at Universities of Applied Sciences). At first sight, this situation is very satisfactory. However, one should not forget that there are important and often persistent differences from one subject to the other. At first sight, this situation is very satisfactory. However, one should not forget that there are important and often persistent differences from one subject to the other. At Universities, for instance, a large majority of women in the first two cycles (or in the old courses) study humanities or social sciences (65.9%) or medicine/pharmacy (63.9%), but only few women study technology-related fields (26.1%), economics (32.1%) or science (36.5%). At Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education, women very often study health-related fields (85.4%), applied linguistics (83.1%), teaching (76.8%) and social work (74.2%), whereas they are a tiny minority in technology and IT (5.7%), architecture (22.4%) or agronomy and forestry (33.5%).

Still an important issue is the problem of the "leaky pipeline". Whereas slightly more than half of the bachelor/master students are women, these figures diminish steadily as the academic career goes on. Only 42.4% (2007/8) of doctoral students and 14.6% of professors at Universities and 31.1% at Universities of Applied Sciences (2007) are women. Even though the situation is obviously far from being satisfactory, it is not as dramatic as it might seem at first sight, since the small percentage of female doctoral students and professors is the result of the situation as it was many years ago. Policy measures in the field of equal opportunity take a long time to be effective, and there is strong evidence that the situation is steadily improving.

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

Probably the most important measure to increase the percentage of students from a lower educational and economic background is to provide enough scholarships. About one out of seven students (14%) gets a grant or loan from the state. Furthermore, some students get a financial support from a higher education institution or a private not-for-profit organisation. In all, about 17% of students receive a grant or loan, be it from the state or from other sources. For those students who get a grant or loan, the financial support amounts on average to more than 30% of their budget. In most cases (87%), students who are financially supported receive a (non-repayable) grant. The attribution of financial support normally depends on the income level of the student and his parents. So

it comes as no surprise that the percentage of students getting a grant or loan is much higher (25%) among those students whose parents have the lowest education level (CITE 0 1 2).

It seems fair to say that in most cases, the portability is given for students wishing to study abroad. The free choice of the higher education institution is also stated as a goal of the inter-cantonal agreement (see below) being elaborated.

Due to the federal system in Switzerland, it is in the responsibility of the Cantons to award grants and loans and to determine their amount. As it became increasingly clear, this situation has led to important disparities from one Canton to the other with respect to the conditions of attribution and the amounts granted. For this reason, the Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) has decided to elaborate an inter-cantonal agreement on the harmonisation of the grants and loans. Among other things, the agreement will determine common standards for the attribution of grants and loans as well as minimal amounts. This year, a first draft of the agreement has been sent out to the Cantons for consultation. The final version of the agreement will have to be accepted by the cantonal parliaments, and the cantonal laws will have to be adapted according to the principles of the agreement. This means that the agreement will be legally binding for the Cantons. It is expected that the Swiss Confederation will continue to contribute a substantial amount of the grants and loans awarded by the Cantons to students engaged in tertiary education, on the basis of a new federal law.<sup>35</sup> (“Ausbildungsbeitragsgesetz”).

Beside the grants and loans awarded by the Cantons, there are federal scholarships for students spending a certain time abroad within the Erasmus programme. The young researchers benefit especially from grants awarded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), in most cases for a stay abroad. Finally, there are many scholarships from private non-for-profit organisations which constitute a welcome complement to the state scholarships.

The difficulties mentioned recently by the student organisations in coordinating job and studies, need now to be analysed. It will be incumbent on the Universities to find adequate solutions to these problems. This problem might well be tackled when redesigning the curricula in the course of implementing the national qualifications framework at the higher education institutions. It is one of the explicit aims of the Bologna directives<sup>36</sup> adopted by the Swiss University Conference (CUS) that part-time studies should be possible.

As far as the underrepresentation of foreigners who have done at least part of the obligatory school in Switzerland is concerned, the reason seems to be mainly located at an early level of their education. In order to remove obstacles related to linguistic deficiencies or other problems at an early age, many Cantons have introduced special arrangements, often several hours a week of linguistic training in small classes. There are also projects targeted at a better integration of their parents. Furthermore, a new inter-cantonal harmonization project called HarmoS has been launched. This project has already been accepted by the cantonal ministers of education and needs now to be ratified by the cantonal parliaments,

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<sup>35</sup> “Ausbildungsbeitragsgesetz”: [www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/4/416.0.de.pdf](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/4/416.0.de.pdf) (German).

<sup>36</sup> Directives for the Coordinated Renewal of Teaching at Swiss Universities within the Framework of the Bologna Process (Bologna Directives), 3rd edition, 2008: [www.cus.ch/wEnglisch/publikationen/richtlinien/BOL-RL-2008-Engl-V2.pdf](http://www.cus.ch/wEnglisch/publikationen/richtlinien/BOL-RL-2008-Engl-V2.pdf) (English).

and in some Cantons in a popular vote. The purpose of this inter-cantonal agreement is to harmonize the goals and institutional structures of the cantonal education systems, to improve the quality of the public schools and their quality assurance systems, to increase the permeability of the system and to facilitate the mobility within the country. Among others, it is planned that the children will go to school at the age of four years. Beside other benefits, this reform is expected to help children with migration background to learn the national language of their region and to become acquainted with the local culture at an early age, and so to have better chances of success at school.

As far as non-traditional routes to higher education are concerned, it is up to the higher education institutions to decide under which conditions students not satisfying the usual requirements can nevertheless be accepted. For instance, it is possible to get access to several Universities, mainly from the French and the Italian speaking part of Switzerland, in different non-traditional ways. There are also some possibilities to do so at the Universities of Applied Sciences and the Universities of Teacher Education. In all these cases, the criteria as well as the decision procedures are clearly defined.

Many higher education institutions do have special promotion programmes aiming at increasing the number of female students in the fields traditionally chosen by a large majority of men. In close collaboration with the State Secretariat for Education and Research, the Swiss University Conference (CUS) has launched in 2000 an important nation-wide programme for promoting equal opportunities of women and men at University level. The programme which comprises three modules (incentives for hiring female professors and associate professors, mentoring, childcare) has been a success, even though there is still much to be done. The target of 14% of female professors in the year 2006 has been reached (1998: 7%). At the same time, a similar programme financially supported by the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology has been set up for the Universities of Applied Sciences (*gender mainstreaming*). Among other things, it aims to increase the number of female students, professors and researchers. Finally, in its mandate to the domain of the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, the Federal council explicitly asks for a higher percentage of women at all levels of the academic ladder and at all management levels. It also asks for more family-friendly working conditions which make it possible to combine a scientific career with a family.

3. Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document). Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

An adequate supply of grants and loans is an important means to widen access to HEI for students from a lower social or economic background and to make it possible for them to complete their studies. The system of financial support and

the reforms under way have been described in the answer to the previous question.

Students are admitted to higher education institutions on academic merit only. The admission rules are clearly defined for Universities (including the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology) as well as Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education. This means that the admission policy does not admit of discrimination and can be considered to be fully transparent and fair. Furthermore, adequate complaint procedures are in place at all higher education institutions.

In order to help students in case of personal problems, the higher education institutions normally have a social service which can give advice. In order to facilitate the transition from the University to the job market, many do have a career centre. Many higher education institutions also have some kind of support measures for students with children.

Several reforms are being implemented to facilitate the transition from one type of higher education to another. This is an important measure to make sure that talented students do not end up in a dead-end.

Last but not least, all higher education institutions have a good infrastructure (well functioning libraries, access to scientific databases, dedicated and highly professional administrative staff, IT facilities, lecture halls, seminar rooms etc.).

4. Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1)? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

The Swiss Federal Statistical Office is conducting student surveys on a regular basis. Among other things, the social situation of the students at Swiss Universities is monitored.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, there are statistics about the Swiss working force which also provide useful information.<sup>38</sup> The results of both surveys are published regularly. In addition, Switzerland now participates for the first time as a full partner in the Eurostudent project, so that it has also been included in the Eurostudent III report in 2008. The Statistical Office also published another report which uses the same data, but which provides more background information and explains in detail the situation in Switzerland as compared with other European countries. Comparisons have also been made in 2007, when the Federal Statistical Office published a leaflet about the situation of the Swiss students in the international context, using the data of the Eurostudent II report as well as the report on the social situation of the students at Swiss higher education institutions.<sup>39</sup> The Federal Statistical Office will carry out the next national survey on the social dimension of higher education students in 2009.

The education report ("Bildungsbericht") which has been published for the first time in 2006 overviews the whole education sector.<sup>40</sup> This report, which helps

<sup>37</sup> Soziale Lage der Studierenden, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Neuchâtel 2005.

<sup>38</sup> Schweizerische Arbeitskräfteerhebung, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Neuchâtel 2007.

<sup>39</sup> How Switzerland compares to other European countries. Social and economic situation of students in higher education, Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Neuchâtel 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Bildungsbericht Schweiz, Schweizerische Koordinationsstelle für Bildungsforschung, Aarau, 2006.

identify problems, will be a useful tool for the strategic governance of the whole education system in the future.

In close collaboration with the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities and the "Observatoire de la vie estudiantine" of the University of Geneva, the two national student organisations (VSS/UNES and AES/VSH) have conducted in March 2008 a representative survey about the study conditions in Switzerland.<sup>41</sup>

This survey which has been presented to the public in September 2008 analyses the current study conditions. This survey is very useful, as it shows how students evaluate their study conditions after the introduction of the new study structures according to the Bologna principles.

Furthermore, a number of scientific studies about the main obstacles to participative equity and related issues have been published by researchers from different Universities.

### **III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)**

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

The reforms currently under way, most notably the creation of coherent school structures and a much more harmonized and transparent grants system, aim at achieving several goals. As far as the issues dealt with in this report are concerned, these reforms should lead to an improved grants system, facilitate mobility within the country and improve the integration of children with a migration background through an early schooling.

As far as the federal programme for promoting equal opportunities of women and men at University level is concerned, the actual level of 14% of female professors is still considered to be too low. The target of 25% by 2012 has been defined as the next important milestone. Furthermore, it is key that the percentage of women at all levels of the academic ladder as well as in the decision bodies be increased. At the Universities of Applied Sciences, the percentage of female professors, researchers and students has also considerably increased. The further development and integration of the programme *gender mainstreaming* is the main goal for the current budgetary period 2008-2011. Ensuring equal opportunity has to be part of the policy of all Universities of Applied Sciences.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

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<sup>41</sup> "Système de Bologne dans les universités suisses: conditions d'études". See above for the reference details.

Several policy actions which have been mentioned in the answer to question 2) above are under way and need now to be fully implemented.

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details

The actions mentioned above are meant to resolve several problems. This means that the necessary budgets have not been earmarked under the special heading "measures for underrepresented groups". For the period 2008-2011, the Parliament accorded a substantial amount as a federal contribution to the cantonal grants and loan system for students of higher education institutions and for the promotion of women doing an academic career. There are also budgets for the other action lines described above at the federal as well as at the cantonal level.

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

There are individual timelines for the different policy actions. These are approximations, as it is always difficult to estimate the time the political process will take. The Cantons joining the agreement about the harmonization of the scholarships will have to adapt their legislation accordingly within five years. As far as the harmonization of the school structure is concerned, the Cantons joining the agreement will have to implement the reforms within six years. The next step in the programmes for equal opportunities of women and men at Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences is the year 2012, for which clear targets have been defined (cf. above).

6. What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

There are no new arrangements planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success, as the instruments currently at disposal and mentioned in the answer to question 4 are considered to be adequate for this task. They are continuously analysed and adapted if need be.

#### **IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES**

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a) contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

As was mentioned before, there is not a unique national strategy designed to tackle all problems related to equal access to higher education, but rather a certain number of measures addressing different kinds of problems.

Due to the federal structure of Switzerland, many of the tasks mentioned are incumbent on the Cantons or have at least to be realised in close collaboration between the federal and the cantonal authorities.

The responsibility for grants and loans lies with the Cantons. The Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education ([www.edk.ch](http://www.edk.ch)) is elaborating an agreement to harmonize the different schemes of financial student support. The Swiss Confederation contributes part of the grants awarded by the Cantons to students engaged in tertiary education.

The Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Education is also responsible for the coordination of the harmonization of the school structures. In the end, however, each Canton is responsible for its own obligatory schools and so needs to approve the reforms.

The higher education institutions are responsible for the implementation of the national qualifications framework and the introduction of student-centred and outcome-oriented curricula.

There are also many further measures, some of which have been mentioned above. For instance, the Swiss University Conference ([www.cus.ch](http://www.cus.ch)) is responsible for the programme for promoting equal opportunities of women and men at University level, the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology ([www.bbt.admin.ch](http://www.bbt.admin.ch)) is responsible for the programme for promoting equal opportunities at University of Applied Sciences level, the Swiss National Science Foundation ([www.snf.ch](http://www.snf.ch)) is responsible the scholarships for young researchers, and many Cantons do have arrangements to facilitate the integration and to improve the linguistic competence of children with migration background.