

***11 March 2010, 13.30 – 14.30, Budapest (9 speakers)***

***Degree and curricular reform + cooperation in QA (cf paras 8 – 15 of the Executive Summary)***

## **DEGREE AND CURRICULAR REFORM**

Bologna has served as a catalyst to improve teaching and the students' learning experience at all three degree levels:

- The three-cycle degree structure is in place for 95% of respondents
- 77% have reviewed curricula in **all** departments
- 53% have developed learning outcomes in **all** courses (and 32% in some courses)
- 46% have changed the organisation of the study programmes to a system based on modules
- Doctoral reforms have proceeded very quickly, with the rapid expansion of Doctoral schools and more attention paid to the supervision and training of Doctoral students and their employment outside academia.

- These changes have not only been structural but represent a real move towards student-centred learning, flexible and transparent learning paths for a greater variety of students, as well as an opportunity to improve the quality of the learning experience

Looking back over the last decade, it is clear that a great deal of progress has been made but employability is still a problem at the Bachelor level. It is clear that some countries are struggling with the notion of a short first degree: this is true for both academics and employers. As evidence of this:

- 45% of universities expect their Bachelor to continue directly to the Master
- Only 37% of Trends respondents track their graduates' career progress and this is more likely the case in countries where the first degree is considered as a legitimate ticket into the labour market

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Much progress has also been achieved in the QA area with the development of internal quality processes by

institutions. Trends data show that for 60% of HEIs, one of the most important changes in the past ten years has been enhanced internal quality processes. This is true particularly for institutions that are interested in European partnerships and those that deliver the Doctorate.

QA at national level has been very dynamic but a recent ENQA survey shows that this has consisted in an accumulation of QA procedures, the predominance of QA at the programme level and the spread of accreditation. These national developments are worrisome. A focus on the external QA of programmes leaves little room for the responsibility of institutions in quality. Accreditation generally emphasises conformity rather than the capacity of institutions to contribute to the knowledge society.

At European level, both the European Standards and Guidelines and the European Quality Assurance Register have had a positive impact, primarily in internationalising the review panels, ensuring the

participation of students, and further professionalising QA agencies.

To ensure more effective implementation and commitment, it is critical that the ownership of the ESGs continues to rest with the stakeholders and that responsibility for any revision of the ESGs must continue to lie with the E4 Group.

## **GENERAL**

When measuring the achievements to date our analysis shows that the more the stakeholders are involved, understand and take ownership for the reforms the more important and sustainable the change process becomes. This has been true particularly for Doctoral education. It also holds good for European level QA discussions.

**Recommendation:** *Important to remember that BP is not a goal in itself but a means to an end, that is to create the EHEA for the citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This requires a shared partnership to facilitate and support a new paradigm for higher education.*