*Doc. Code: BFUG\_CY\_BA\_33\_6.1\_Annex5*

*Last modified: 24\_08\_12*

**Terms of Reference**

**on**

**the Second and Third Cycle**

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| **Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Second and Third Cycle** |
| **Contact persons** (proposed Co-Chairs)Aarhus University-DenmarkNicola VITTORIO-Italy (nicola.vittorio@uniroma2.it) Marzia FORONI-Italy (marzia.foroni@miur.it)  TBC-Romania |
| **Composition** The members of the group should:* be balanced in terms of geography and experience;
* cover expertise on the implementation at the institutional level of the “Salzburg II Principles” or of the “Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training”
* cover expertise on employability and mobility policies, both for the second and third cycle;
* cover expertise on transparency instruments, on qualifications frameworks and on recognition;
* should include one representative of the ERA;
* should include EUA, ESU, EURASHE and ENQA;
* should include the Commission, EURODOC and BUSINESSEUROPE.

The group should not have more than 15 members, with a majority of country members.The following countries expressed their willingness to participate in the Ad-hoc WG:Armenia, Austria, Belgium/Flemish Community, Czech Republic, Poland |
| **Purpose and/or outcome** Map the current arrangements for the second and third cycle in the EHEA, taking into account also the development within the ERA;Explore the need and feasibility of developing common principles for the second and third cycle programmes within the EHEA. |
| **Reference to the Bucharest Communiqué** “**Enhancing employability to serve Europe’s needs**”* In this respect, we will sustain a diversity of doctoral programs. Taking into account the “Salzburg II recommendations” and the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, we will explore how to promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, as the education and training of doctoral candidates has a particular role in bridging the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA);
* Next to doctoral training, high quality second cycle programs are a necessary precondition for the success of linking teaching, learning and research. Keeping wide diversity and simultaneously increasing readability, we might also explore further possible common principles for master programs in the EHEA, taking account of previous work.

**“Strengthening mobility for better learning”*** We are determined to remove outstanding obstacles hindering effective and proper recognition and are willing to work together towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees, building on the tools of the Bologna framework, as a long-term goal of the EHEA.

**“Setting out priorities for 2012–2015”*** Promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, while also building additional bridges between the EHEA and the ERA.
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| **Specific tasks** 1. Third cycle
	1. In cooperation with EUA and the Commission, analyse the two reference documents – the Salzburg II Principles and the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training – to evidence synergies and interactions;
	2. Map the diverse kind of third cycle degrees offered, with a specific focus on Doctoral Degrees and their profiles, starting from the information provided by the existing National Qualifications Frameworks;
	3. Formulate policy proposals on the possibility of using transparency instruments, especially ECTS credits and the Diploma Supplement, for third cycle degrees, based on existing good practices in the field, and propose integrations for the revision of the ECTS User’s Guide;
	4. Analyse the results achieved by the different kind of third cycle degrees offered, with a specific focus on Doctoral Degrees, in terms of employability and mobility and define policy proposals for improvement;
	5. Explore, especially in cooperation with QA Agencies and with the European Research Council, the opportunity to have guidelines to improve quality and QA procedures in Doctoral Training;
	6. Propose a set of policy recommendation to eliminate existing barriers and prevent new ones for recognition and accreditation of Doctoral Degrees, to contribute to the long term achievement of the automatic recognition of academic degrees;
	7. Propose a set of policy recommendations for Ministerial approval. The recommendations could include a set of principles for Doctoral Degrees in the European Higher Education Area, as requested for second cycle degrees.
2. Second cycle
	1. Map the diverse kind of second cycle degrees offered, with a specific focus on Doctoral Degrees and their profiles, starting from the information provided by the existing National Qualifications Frameworks;
	2. Map good practices to increase readability of second cycle degrees;
	3. Explore possible synergies between non – mainstreamed second cycle degrees and third cycle degrees, keeping into account specificities of regulated professions for EU countries;
	4. Explore the possibility for common principles for second cycle degrees, building on existing transparency instruments and safeguarding their diversity.
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| **Reporting** Minutes of working group meetings will be made available to the WG “structure” and to the BFUG on the protected part of the website (by the Bologna Secretariat).Reporting to the WG “structures”Besides minutes, the Co – Chairs of the WG “structure” will receive all the working documents of the sub – structure. One of the two Co – Chair will ensure his/her participation to the WG “structure” meeting.BFUG reports and updates. To allow for good communication with BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, the sub – structure will contribute to the progress reports of the WG “structure” and will submit at least two weeks before BFUG meeting any document for approval. **The draft final report/conclusions will be presented and discussed no later than the BFUG meeting in the second half of 2014.** |
| **Meeting schedule:** The sub – structure of the WG should meet at least three times:* End 2012/beginning 2013;
* Second half 2013;
* Beginning 2014.
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| **Liaison with other WGs’ and networks’ activities**Liaisons will mainly be ensured by the WG “structures”. Connections with the WGs on ECTS User’s Guide and the WG “mobility and internationalisation” should be prioritised. |
| **Additional remarks** |