



***Bologna Secretariat Completed National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email ([secr@bologna2009benelux.org](mailto:secr@bologna2009benelux.org)) no later than***

***1 November 2008.***

***April 2008***

## **PART I**

### **BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009**

#### **Notes:**

BFUG members are strongly encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

#### **Details**

Country	Norway
Date	
BFUG member (one name only)	
Position	
Email address	
Contributors to the report	

## 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.

On 1 April 2005, the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) passed a new Act relating to Universities and University Colleges (the Higher Education Act).

The Act outlines a common framework for both state and private higher education institutions regarding:

- their authority to establish and close down study programmes,
- quality assurance of institutions and programmes,
- the rights and obligations of the students,
- the continuance of today's organisation of the state-owned institutions with a large degree of organisational and financial autonomy,
- two models for the internal leadership structure, including the strengthening of the position of the Rector as head.

Model 1) The Rector is elected by academic staff (counting for 51–71 % of the votes), technical and administrative staff (5–25 % of the votes) and students (15–30 % of the votes). The Rector is the chairman of the Board.

Model 2) The Rector is appointed by the Board. The Rector is the administrative as well as the academic head of the institution.

- tuition fees. State higher education institutions do not charge tuition fees.

This forms part of the Quality Reform, the "Norwegian Bologna Process". The Quality Reform was implemented in all higher education institutions in Norway from the autumn of 2003. The Higher Education Act of 1 April 2005 was implemented on 1 August 2005. As of that day, both public and private HEIs are governed by the same law.

For more information see the national reports for 2006 and 2004.

The Quality Reform was evaluated by two independent research centres, and the final report was presented in January 2007. Based on the recommendations of the report, the Ministry of Education and Research presented a white paper called "The progress report for the Quality reform in Higher Education" to the Storting in November 2007. The Storting debated the white paper on March 7, 2008. Major changes have taken place at the Norwegian Higher Education Institutions with the Quality Reform, both in relation to institutional autonomy, the follow-up of students, the degree structure, the quality assurance systems, the funding system for institutions etc., and the aims of the Quality Reform are still seen as relevant. There are, however, still challenges to be met, and work has to continue in all areas encompassing the Quality Reform. The Ministry is amongst other things currently looking at possible changes in the system of institutional funding, and the system will be evaluated in 2009.

In May 2006, the Government appointed an official committee to evaluate the structure of higher education and make recommendations for its development within a time frame of 10-20 years. The commission was to focus on regional aspects in particular. The commission presented its report to the Minister of Education and Research in January 2008. The report points to a number of challenges for Norwegian higher education in the next 10-20 years. A number of small institutions outside the cities already have too few applicants, and this situation is expected to be aggravated by demographic changes combined with social preferences for urban life among young people. At the same time, fragmentation is identified as a problem with regard to research, in particular fragmentation of research training, which the Commission relates to the existing standards and criteria for accreditation as a university. To remedy the situation the Commission proposes a process of mergers based on the institutions' own preferences, combined with stronger profiling supported by agreements with the ministry and changes in the financing system. Other measures proposed include consolidation of research training in research schools or similar structures, and measures to increase the quality of teaching in higher education institutions.

As mentioned in the Bologna Action Plan on recognition, the Ministry appointed a commission to review national and international recognition issues in higher education in March 2006. The report from the commission was finalised in January 2007. There was a formal consultation of the review in spring 2007, and as a result, a number of measures have or will be taken:

- A working group to redesign or develop a national database for recognition of higher education was set up in autumn 2007 and will deliver its report in autumn 2008.
- A bill *inter alia* proposing amendments in the provisions of the Higher Education Act relevant to recognition was presented in September 2008. The amendments relate to a clarification of terminology and responsibilities, as well as the issue of fraudulent documents, including diploma mills, which has lately proven to be a matter of some concern.
- From autumn 2008, a national information centre for recognition of international educational qualifications will be set up at NOKUT to facilitate information to users, the general recognition documents issued by NOKUT will be improved to further facilitate their usefulness for employers and applicants, and there will be reinforced permanent efforts relating to the review and update of the list of international qualifications satisfying the general admission requirements to Norwegian higher education ("GSU-lista").

There are no major changes in the institutional structure since London, or in the number of public/private HEIs, apart from the fact that the previous Agder University College became the University of Agder in August 2007.

## 2. Partnership

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

The national Bologna Group

The national Bologna Group, Consists of the Ministry of Education and Research and representatives from all the major stakeholders: UHR (the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions), NPH (the Norwegian Network for Private Higher Education Institutions), NSU (the National Union of Students in Norway), StL (the Norwegian Association of Students), NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education), SIU (the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education), Forskerforbundet (the Norwegian Association of Researchers) and UNIO (The Confederation of Unions for Professionals, Norway). The group meets approximately four times a year discussing important developments and documents in the Bologna Process and is also important in order for the various stakeholders to exchange information on the Bologna Process.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up <sup>1</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Employers	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU)

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group<sup>2</sup>

Yes  No

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of

Ministry	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rectors' conference	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" 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) HEI Administrative staff

<sup>1</sup> A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

<sup>2</sup> A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

*Please add any additional comments if necessary:*

## 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.

The two-cycle degree system has been introduced throughout. In a few fields such as medicine and odontology, the studies consist of integrated programmes leading directly to a second-cycle degree. Norway has also kept the degree "høgskolekandidat" for short-cycle programmes within the first cycle.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all<sup>3</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>4</sup>	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
Not available until 10 November	Not available until 10 November	Not available until 10 November

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

### 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
- other elements<sup>5</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.

<sup>3</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>4</sup> If countries have more recent data available after November 1, they can provide an update but no later than January 15, 2009

<sup>5</sup> E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of doctoral studies), etc.

- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

- 93 % of those who accomplished a doctoral degree in 2007 had followed a structured doctoral programme.
- The length of full-time doctoral studies is three years (i.e. three man-year equivalents). The majority of those who follow a structured programme are employed full-time for four years, but perform other duties for the institution (give lectures etc.) for ¼ of the time (i.e. one man-year equivalent).
- The time that is spent on taught courses differs from institution to institution, but as a general rule amounts to one term (30 ECTS).
- Usually the university appoints a single senior researcher as supervisor, but there can be more than one supervisor. A committee of at least three senior academics evaluates the thesis, of these at least one must come from outside the institution, and if possible one from abroad. Then the doctoral student gives one or more lectures and defends his thesis in public, where members of the reviewing committee are institutional opponents.
- The doctoral level is included in the proposal for a national qualifications framework for higher education which was sent for formal consultation in 2007.
- Interdisciplinary training and transferable skills have been integrated in some programmes. In the last few years interdisciplinary graduate schools have been established connected to centres of excellence. Usually transferable skills are not integrated, but skills in disseminating knowledge and communication technology are integrated in some programmes.
- Credit points are only used in measuring the workload of mandatory course work, cf. above.

## 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.

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

The White Paper no. 20 to the Storting (2004-2005) outlines key issues concerning the synergy between HE and other research sectors. The report provides, among other things, a focus on the increased importance of commercialization and communication of research results, the cooperation between different types of research institutions and the role of the private sector and company based research.

Measures taken in this respect include legal changes that enable the research institutions to hold the legal rights to ideas or concepts (or intellectual property) produced by researchers at their institutions (Ot. Prop. No 67 2001-2002). Furthermore, Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) have been established at all universities and major research institutions to help researchers and their ideas/research results in the commercialization process, and to select the most viable projects. One of the most important sources of funding for the TTOs and other commercialization projects is the FORNY programme, administered by the Norwegian Research Council in cooperation with Innovation Norway. This

programme's main objective is to stimulate increased wealth creation in Norway through commercializing research based business ideas.

Since the Millennium, several measures have been taken to promote better cooperation between industry and the university sector, and several schemes have been or will be introduced to promote research in Norwegian companies, such as:

- Norwegian Centres of Expertise
- Centres for Research-based Innovation
- A tax deduction scheme for R&D expenses (Skattefunn)
- Programme for user driven innovation projects
- National and regional seed capital schemes
- The VRI programme (Funding Programme for Regional R&D and Innovation)
- New legislation to promote commercialisation of research (see above)

The Government has announced a White Paper on Innovation Policy in 2008. The aim of the White Paper is to present the policy foundation for an innovation policy that will contribute to sustainable wealth creation in the long-term perspective. The White Paper will outline a policy framework and concrete measures to take innovation forward in Norway, bringing together different innovation-related policy areas, such as Research and Development for industrial development, education and human resources, entrepreneurship, intellectual property rights and innovation in the private and public sector. Sustainable development and eco-innovation will be given special attention in the White Paper.

The business sector plays a vital role in R&D, both through research that takes place within the sector and through the cooperation with for instance HEIs and the research institute sector. To encourage involvement in R&D from this sector the Government has established Skattefunn, a tax credit scheme, which was

launched in 2002. The Research Council of Norway administers the scheme, but Innovation Norway and the tax authorities are also important players.

The scheme generated tax subsidies for research and development expenditures in Norwegian companies amounting to NOK 1.4 billion in 2006.

Another measure taken to increase the cooperation between the HE and the business sectors is the industrial doctorate scheme, which will be administered by the Research Council of Norway.

Another important actor in R&D is the research institute sector, which traditionally has had a stronger focus on user-initiated research and cooperation with the private sector. As the HEIs also move towards more professional commercialization of research output, competition as well as cooperation between these sectors increase. The Ministry of Education and Research has recently presented a parliament-proposition for a new funding system. If put into force in 2009, the proposed new funding system will to a larger extent acknowledge the important role played by the institute sector in supporting PhD candidates, as well as provide incentives to increase research of academic quality, through various indicators for academic research in the basic funding component. As the HE sector to a larger extent is encouraged to commercialize research based results, the institute sector sees new incentives to carry out academic research which to a large extent traditionally has been the domain of the HEIs.

The numbers:

-The percentage of GDP spent on research:

from public funds: 0.66

from private funds: 0.68

- Total annual national research expenditure (expressed in NOK)

From public funds . 12.9 billion NOK

From private funds 13.2 billion NOK

- Percentage of research carried out in HEI (in terms of funding)

30,63 percent

Total spending 29,6 billion of which 9,06 billion was carried out in HEI)

The general grant from the Ministry of Education and Research to HEIs covers the costs of the institutions with regard to rent, equipment and staff salaries. There is also a performance based grant from the Ministry to HEIs for every candidate successfully completing the doctoral level. In Norway almost all doctoral candidates are employees. Half of all the posts for doctoral candidates are funded directly by the Ministry. The other half is funded through the research council (the majority), research institutions, hospitals and industry.

Doctoral students have status as early stage researchers employed in full fellowship positions.

- c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?  
Yes  No  If Yes, please specify:

A Norwegian research institute has developed a database containing information on researchers. The database is updated every two years. Early stage researchers are registered in the database, and consequently it is possible to follow the career of doctoral graduates.

## 6. Access<sup>6</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

All first cycle qualifications give access to the second cycle

<sup>6</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)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input 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:

Certain second cycle courses, experienced-based master's degrees such as the MBA, require relevant work experience.

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

Most second cycle courses require a certain number of credits taken in the same field of study.

e) to which students the above special requirements apply (*please tick*):

- |   |   |                             |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| all students                                      | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| holders of particular first cycle qualifications  | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input 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 (*please tick*):

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

All second cycle qualifications give access to the third cycle.

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

NA

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

NA

## 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

There is little statistical data on this subject due to the fact the new degree structure has been in place only since 2003. No particular measures have been taken to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications.

In the evaluation of the Quality Reform that was completed last year, the question was raised whether the new bachelor programmes prepare the candidates for the labour market or more or less simply forms a basis for further studies. This will be followed closely. This question is probably more relevant for the general bachelor's degree at the universities than the professional degrees.

According to research by NIFU STEP on the employability of graduates, ("Kandidatundersøkelsen 2007") , only 13% of bachelor graduates are employed in relevant full-time jobs half a year after graduation. The report also shows that almost 80% of all bachelor students intend to continue on a master or Ph.D-programme. This might indicate that the general bachelor's degree at the universities is not regarded as sufficient for employment, or at least to a lesser extent than intended. 83 % of the master graduates were employed in relevant full-time or part time jobs (temporary or steady) half a year after graduating.

b) To what extent there is 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

If no, or in some cases only, please explain the current situation:

First cycle graduates holding a professional bachelor's degree have a relatively high degree of employability and may pursue careers in the public sector within their profession.

In the civil service, candidates with a general bachelor's degree will have more difficulty being employed due to competition from candidates holding a master's degree, and it is generally a requirement that candidates have completed the second cycle. There are, however, no explicit regulations excluding holders of a bachelor's degree from employment in the civil service.

According to a report published in July 2008, commissioned by the employers' association "Spekter", 56% of employers are of the opinion that graduates are not well prepared for the labour market. The survey also indicated the perception amongst employers that the education system is insufficiently involved in work-related issues.

As part of the Quality Reform, the higher education institutions are expected to describe the relevance of their study programmes for graduate employment. This is not yet generalised, however. One response to this challenge could be more career centres, as many higher education institutions still have not got career centres for their students. Another is the emerging alumni networks, which are relatively recent in Norway, and might cater for further and closer contact with former students and the business sector. The Ministry in addition expects that the problems relating to expected relevance for employment largely will be solved when the national qualifications framework for higher education has been fully implemented at both the national and the institutional levels

There have been no major changes in the recruitment procedures.



## 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>7</sup>?

Yes  No

**Comment** A working group consisting of representatives from the Ministry and the relevant stakeholders was appointed in December 2005 by the Ministry of Education and Research in order to develop a proposal for a national qualifications framework for higher education. The report from the working group was presented to the Ministry in April 2007, and was sent to all stakeholders in a broad consultation process. A new working group has currently been established in order to develop the proposal for a framework further based amongst other things on the responses from the consultation round.

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

Yes  No

**Comment** The proposal for a Norwegian qualifications framework for higher education consists of level descriptors for the three levels of higher education. The level descriptors describe the knowledge, skills, and competence expected from all candidates successfully completing the said level. There is one common descriptor for each cycle which covers all programmes, also professional programmes, fine arts etc.

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

Yes  No

**Comment**

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

Yes  No

**Comment** The working group developing a proposal for a national qualifications framework for higher education consisted of representatives from the Ministry, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions and the student unions. The task of the working group was to look into the need for a national qualifications framework for

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<sup>7</sup> A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

higher education in Norway, the impact of such a framework and to develop a proposal for a framework. In addition, a reference group consisting of representatives from the higher education institutions, the post-secondary non-tertiary institutions, the upper secondary schools, The Norwegian Association for Adult Learning, the Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning (VOX), The Norwegian Registration Authority for Health Personnel (SAFH), the trade unions, the Confederations for Norwegian Enterprise, the Union of Education, Norwegian Association of Researchers, The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) as well as the Ministry of Trade and Industry, was established.

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

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

Yes  No

***Comment***

***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

***Comment*** The Act on Higher Education states that the Ministry may pass a regulation on a national qualifications framework for higher education, but the chosen form of legal basis for the framework has so far not been decided upon.

g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed (*please tick one*)

- 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

**Comment** The Ministry is currently, in close co-operation with the national rectors' conference and academic staff, in the process of developing the proposal for a framework further according to the responses from the previously mentioned consultation round, Identifying the various qualifications types for which separate descriptors are needed (in addition to the three level descriptors) and then developing these descriptors, is currently being done.

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

**Comment**

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes  No

**Comment**

*Please add any additional comments if necessary:*

**Comment**

**NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)<sup>8</sup>**

**9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG<sup>9</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  
(Please specify time) \_\_\_\_\_

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

NOKUT was reviewed by a team of five researchers in 2007/2008, with a positive conclusion. The General Assembly of ENQA renewed NOKUT's membership in the organisation in september 2008. NOKUT has also applied for membership in EQAR.

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

**If Yes**, please give details of these incentives:

- Other measures

Yes       No

**If Yes**, please outline these measures

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

**If Yes**, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

### 9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education on 5 May 2003 adopted the following criteria for the evaluation of quality assurance systems in institutions of higher education:

The quality assurance system must apply to the entire institution, covering all areas of activity that are related to educational quality and the total learning environment. It must include all provision for which the institution is responsible, externally as well as internally. When the quality assurance system is evaluated, emphasis will be placed on the following aspects and functions of the system:

1. The integration of quality assurance in the strategic work of the institution.
2. The institution's defined aims for its work with educational quality.
3. The linking of quality work to steering and management at all levels.
4. The organising of quality work in such mechanisms and measures as will ensure wide participation, with defined distribution of responsibility and authority for the various elements and stages of the work.
5. The collection and organising of information from evaluations and other data sources that are necessary in order to make satisfactory assessments of educational quality in all study units, and the accumulation of this information at higher levels of steering.
6. Analysis of the information and assessment of goal attainment.
7. The institution's use of results from quality work as a basis for decisions and measures that are aimed at the assurance and enhancement of educational quality.
8. The clarification of how quality work contributes to resource management and priorities at the institution (human resources, infrastructure, services).
9. The active participation of students in quality work and the institution's focus on the total learning environment.
10. That an annual report is presented to the board of the institution, offering a coherent and overall assessment of educational quality and an overview of plans and measures for continued enhancement work

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

See description above under 9.1. All higher education institutions, both state-owned and private, are required to have internal quality assurance systems. Some systems are yet to be approved by NOKUT.

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.

More and more institutions use learning outcomes in this respect, and the Ministry encourage the institutions to start work on describing intended learning outcomes even if the national qualifications framework is not yet formally adopted.

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

**Additional information if necessary**

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

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

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

Cf. also the report for 2006.

The primary responsibility for quality assurance rests with the higher education institutions themselves. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, NOKUT is an independent government body, established by law with the aim of monitoring and developing the quality of higher education in Norway through evaluation, accreditation and recognition of quality assurance systems, institutions and study programmes. Internal quality assurance in the institutions must adhere to nationally set standards and will be externally evaluated by NOKUT. The external quality assurance system covers all higher education and operates at national level.

This division of responsibilities between the Ministry and NOKUT is defined in the Higher Education Act. NOKUT has the following responsibilities:

- To assess the quality assurance systems of the higher education institutions
- To accredit private higher education institutions.
- To accredit state higher education institutions applying for a change of status.
- To accredit new study programmes at institutions which do not have the right to establish such programmes.
- To review accreditations already given.
- To recognise foreign education/diplomas. NOKUT includes the Norwegian ENIC/NARIC unit.

All reports from external quality reviews are published.

Higher education must be accredited. Institutional accreditation empowers the institution to provide programmes at certain levels, depending on institutional category. Programmes at a level that is not covered by the institutional accreditation must have programme accreditation. All accreditations are carried out by NOKUT.

Accreditations are not given for a defined period. They are valid until revoked. NOKUT makes its decisions independently of the Ministry of Education and Research.

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

Yes  No

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education<sup>10</sup>

Yes  No

**If No, please specify** which types of institutions or programmes are not covered by your external quality assurance system:

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 type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" 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

If **No** is there a date set for the review?  Yes (please specify date \_\_\_\_\_) No

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<sup>10</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

*Please add any additional comments, especially if students are **not** involved in any of the aspects:*

Students are involved in all relevant procedures. The reason why we have ticked the "no" box for f) is that complete follow-up procedures for all aspects of the external quality assurance systems are not in place, cf 10 d)

### 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:

INQAAHE, The Nordic Network

*Please add any additional comments, especially if there is no international involvement in any of the aspects:*

## 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)

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

- 1st cycle programmes Yes  No
- 2nd cycle programmes Yes  No
- 3rd cycle programmes Yes  No
- remaining "old type" programmes Yes  No  Not applicable
- short higher education programmes Yes  No  Not applicable

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* English
- 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

**Comment** The Diploma Supplement is highly appreciated and used by credential evaluators, but many international applicants to the 2nd and 3rd cycles are still not equipped with a Diploma Supplement.

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

**Comment** The answer is Yes if the 'widely spoken language' in question is English. The ability to read other languages may vary.

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

**Comment** Verification of the authenticity of the documents presented may still be done for holders of a Diploma Supplement.

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

**Comment** As stated in the Norwegian 2006 report, the state higher education institutions are required by law to issue Diploma Supplements automatically and free of charge to all their graduates since January 2003. Private higher education institutions are under the same legal obligation since 2005.

#### 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>11</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: According to our legal tradition, compliance is not done explicitly by law, but through the phrasing /nature of the relevant provisions of the higher education act. Compliance is also obtained through the Ministry's powers of instruction of the higher education sector and follow-up of implementation by NOKUT (the ENIC/NARIC). In a recent Bill (26 September 2008 Proposition to the Storting) proposing amendments to the Higher Education Act, particularly as regards recognition, the links to the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its Supplementary Documents are made very explicit in the explanatory background. (See our Bologna Action Plan for the background for this legal revision.)

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes  No

<sup>11</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)

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See point a) above

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: There is a provision in the Higher Education Act on joint degrees.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See comment to point a)

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level It is ensured through the Public Administration Act, which also applies to HEIs.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level  
All higher education institutions and NOKUT have open procedures for the recognition of international higher education qualifications. In addition, as a follow-up of the 2007 report from the commission on recognition issues mentioned in our Bologna Action Plan, a working group is now developing specifications for a new national database for all decisions on recognition of international higher education qualifications

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level  
The Public Administration Act, which i. a. applies to applications for recognition of foreign qualifications, provides that the reason must be given for all negative decisions. In addition, the Convention and its supplementary documents must be adhered to.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is done in practice NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education), which is also our ENIC/NARIC, is responsible for information on Norwegian higher education particularly as regards recognition. In addition, potential applicants and others interested in study programmes provided and study conditions, etc. in Norway, can consult the Study in Norway web pages ([www.studyinnorway.no](http://www.studyinnorway.no)), which are run by the Norwegian Centre for Internationalisation of Higher Education, another agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. The Study in Norway web pages contain links to those of all the higher education institutions, which again provide more in-depth information on local conditions and programmes on offer.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally **Nationally, NOKUT, our ENIC, is responsible for so-called general recognition, i.e. recognition of international higher education qualifications . The ENIC is also responsible for guiding and assisting recognition evaluators at the higher education institutions and for the follow-up of the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its supplementary documents.**

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

As stated in our Bologna Action Plan, both previous and present legislation on higher education has ensured, and does provide for, full recognition of higher education from abroad. As a result of the recommendations of the commission nominated by the Ministry in March 2006 to look at national and international recognition issues in higher education, and the ensuing public consultation, the Government (Minister of Research and Higher Education) presented a bill on 26 September 2008 proposing to amend certain provisions in the Act on Higher Education, and notably those relating to the recognition of national and international qualifications. The aim of the proposed amendments is to further clarify terminology and responsibilities for the various stakeholders involved, and to make the phrasing of the relevant provisions better suited for the reformed ('Bologna') degree structure.

Another result of the follow-up of the work of the commission mentioned in the Bologna Action Plan, NOKUT has in 2008 been given an extra allocation, with permanent effect as from 2009, to establish a centre for information on the



developed. The higher education institutions have been encouraged to start preparations, and at the governance meetings between the Ministry and each of the institutions in spring 2008, it became clear that many of them are well advanced in the process, in terms of planning, and/or in terms of updating curricula to include learning outcomes.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: As part of the evaluation of the Quality Reform, through which many of the Bologna policies were implemented in Norway, research was also done on the real work load of students, based on two national surveys by Statistics Norway, from 1998 and 2005 respectively, on the living conditions of students. Learning outcomes plus the students' financial situation (support through loans and grants), amount of paid work, age and gender were also taken into consideration. (See Delrapport 6 Den nye studiehverdagen by Per Olaf Aamodt, Elisabeth Hovdhaugen and Vibeke Opheim, 2006 – unfortunately only available in Norwegian).

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain:

## 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

**If Yes**, please specify: There are provisions regarding the system and criteria for recognition of prior learning in the Higher Education Act (see our 2005-07 report for more detail).

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please specify: As the specific content of a given degree programme is decided at the individual higher education institution providing the programme, credits based on RPL must be awarded by the institution where the programme is given.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please specify: According to the Higher Education Act, the HEIs can and should give credits based on RPL. If the prior learning is from another HEI under the Norwegian Higher Education Act, the credits achieved must be fully recognised, for other applicants, the HEIs are free to allocate credits based on individual assessment. Decisions relating to RPL is down to the individual higher education institution, as particularly non-formal and informal qualifications must be measured against the requirements of the study programme in question.

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

Comprehensively  Some  A little  None

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Please describe the current situation: All HEIs apply recognition on the basis of prior learning, whether formal, non-formal or informal. However, there is some variation between institutions when it comes to the number and share of students who have been admitted on the basis of, or who have received, RPL.

The no. of applicants to higher education who requested to be admitted on the basis of insufficient formal qualifications (i.e. on the basis also of non-formal and informal qualifications) was reduced from 2871 in 2006 to 2589 in 2007. On the other hand, the share of these applicants who were found qualified increased from 61.5 % in 2006 to 66,9 % i 2007. In 2007, 1113 (64,2 %) of applicants who had been found qualified actually started their studies, while the corresponding number in 2006 var 1 228 (72,9 %) .

## 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.

There have been no major changes in this respect since the Bergen and London reports. Flexible learning pathways into higher education, compulsory inter-institutional recognition of successfully completed (parts of) study programmes, and a relatively high share of mature students are all characteristics of Norwegian higher education.

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

Yes  No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation Most higher education institutions offer distance education, and this will continue as a natural part of the development of studies also within the national qualifications framework. Today, there is no difference between qualifications earned through traditional and flexible modes of learning, and this will continue also within the qualifications framework.

A separate organisation, Norway Opening Universities, is responsible for stimulating and coordinating activities within the field of lifelong and flexible ICT-supported or multimedia learning in higher education.

b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?

Yes  No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation Norway Opening Universities has an annual grant from the Ministry of NOK 19.9 million (about Eur 2.3), of which about 11 million NOK are earmarked support for the development of new flexible courses and study programmes in higher education.

All higher education institutions have some staff dedicated to the development of flexible learning modes. For other staff working on specific issues like the establishment of flexible learning paths, the general rule apply, namely that support for staff should be integrated in the work agreements between the staff in question and his/her employer

c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?

Yes  No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles

Relating to admission to higher education, the following applies:

- Applicants aged 23 or above who have at least five years of relevant work experience, or a mixture of education and work experience, and who possess competences in six key subjects, fulfil the general (minimum) requirements for admission to higher education.
- Adults aged 25 and above can have their non-formal and informal learning assessed in order to allow them to study a specific subject (opposed to fulfilling “general admission requirements”). In addition, exemption from programme requirements can be granted so as to shorten the period of study. In either case the assessment is done by the institution in which the applicant wants to enrol. Students admitted on the basis of recognition of prior learning who have completed one year of higher education, are considered to fulfil the general admission requirements and may apply to other programmes on this basis.
- Applicants with a completed vocational qualification from the upper secondary level (a crafts or journeyman's certificate) need a one-year course in the six key subjects mentioned above to qualify for admission to higher education
- For certain especially designed courses, particularly in engineering, specific vocational qualifications from the upper secondary level satisfy the admission criteria.

Admission to the second and third cycles is the responsibility of the higher education institutions. As stated above, they are free to consider non-formal and informal qualifications in addition to the formal ones.

In addition, certain experience-based master's degree programmes have been established, for which a minimum of two years of work experience is necessary for admission, in addition to a bachelor's degree (or similar).

d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners

Yes  No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle. According to the Act on Higher Education, the higher education institutions should, "to the extent feasible and reasonable", adapt the study situation for the students with special needs. All higher education institutions therefore have contact persons for students with special needs, as measures could involve anything from extra technical equipment to modes of delivery of exams. The measures taken for the individual student are not dependent on the level of study and should be equal at all levels of study. It should be noted, however, that such measures should not lead to any reduction in academic or other requirements.

It should also be noted that the HEIs are legally responsible for the working environment for all their students and staff, and that the Labour Inspection Authority is responsible for surveying that conditions are satisfactory.

e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?

Yes  No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle. After the Quality Reform (the Norwegian implementation of the Bologna Process), study programmes at all levels are modular. At the doctoral level, however, we have retained an 'old fashioned' degree, the dr. philos. degree, in addition to the new, structured ph.d. degree, so that those who at that level prefer less imposed structure on their work, still have that possibility.

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,

Statistics on many of the groups of students with special difficulties are lacking, because according to Act of 14 April 2000 no. 31 relating to the processing of personal data (Personal Data Act), the possibility to process sensitive personal data is severely restricted. Education authorities have so far not been allowed to have national registers with such sensitive data.

In the Personal Data Act, sensitive personal data are defined as information relating to

- a) racial or ethnic origin, or political opinions, philosophical or religious beliefs,
- b) the fact that a person has been suspected of, charged with, indicted for or convicted of a criminal act,
- c) health,
- d) sex life,
- e) trade-union membership.

We do have some information on how well immigrants fare in Norwegian higher education, however. Among those with completed secondary education and training, there is no difference in the level of participation in higher education between the immigrant and the native population one year after completion of the upper secondary level. Second generation immigrants are equally well represented in higher education as Norwegians without immigrant background. In the age group 19-24, the level of participation is appr. 32 % in both groups. Due to difference in background from secondary education, the level of participation is much lower for first generation immigrants: only about 17 %.

## JOINT DEGREES

### 18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees<sup>15</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

**If No** please explain what are the obstacles

- ii) awarding joint degrees? Yes  No

**If No** please explain what are the obstacles

- 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%

<sup>15</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.

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 (please list if possible)?

1. education/pedagogy studies  
2. economy/management studies  
3. natural sciences/health studies

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

approx. 40 programmes

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

The Ministry supports joint degrees and joint study programmes amongst other things through The Nordic Council of Ministers. In addition, The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions has developed a handbook for joint degrees for the higher education institutions, cf. [http://www.uhr.no/documents/En\\_h\\_ndbok\\_for\\_felles\\_gradssamarbeid.pdf](http://www.uhr.no/documents/En_h_ndbok_for_felles_gradssamarbeid.pdf)

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

NA

## 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?

Through the Quality Reform, which is Norway's 'Bologna Reform', two main measures were taken to promote internationalisation, including staff and student mobility:  
- One was the establishment of the Norwegian Centre for Internationalisation of Higher Education (SIU) in 2004, which runs a wide range of international

education programmes, promotes Norway as a country of higher education and research and provides advice on internationalisation both to the Ministry and to the higher education institutions.

- The other was the introduction of an international mobility premium in the budget model used to distribute grants to the higher education institutions (in 2009, it will be NOK 6300 per incoming and outgoing student, i.e. Eur. 800)

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

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

International education and research programmes Norway participates in are given specific mention in a regulation to the immigration act, thus facilitating mobility for participating students. There are, however, remaining challenges in relation to immigration procedures and the opening of bank accounts etc for certain groups of students.

For staff, tax and pension schemes are still a challenge.

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

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: There is full portability of loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund for Norwegian students at all levels and in all parts of the world. Grants from international exchange programmes like the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme or the Nordic Nordplus Programme come in addition to national loans and grants. Through the 'Quota Scheme', there is annual support available for studies in Norway through the State Educational Loan fund for 1100 international students from developing countries and from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia. There are special support schemes for students from the Arctic Area and for students and staff from developing countries.

During short and medium term mobility, outgoing staff keep their salary from the higher education institution where they work, and additional financing is often available from project funds, international or national programmes and projects.

There is no system of support for international mobile staff outside of international research and/or education programmes, whether Nordic, EU, bilateral or development programmes.

Please note that ph.d. students in Norway are not considered as students but as staff in temporary posts. Noone, whether national or international, is hence admitted to a ph.d. programme without secured financing.

Since January 2007, the Research Council of Norway offers top-up financing to outgoing and incoming Marie Curie fellows to make the Marie Curie programme more attractive. The top-up financing scheme aims at giving Norwegian outgoing Marie Curie fellows equal financial terms with fellows going abroad on a personal research grant from the Research Council, and at giving incoming Marie Curie fellows (inexperienced level) on equal financial terms with doctoral research fellows funded by the Research Council.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: For exchange periods abroad, student loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund are only available to students who present a statement of pre-recognition of the study period abroad from their home university. Even if changes often have to be made in the original programme foreseen, this greatly facilitates recognition when students return to their home institution. However, some students still experience problems with recognition, particularly when unforeseen changes such as cancelling of courses occur at the host institution.

For degree programmes abroad, support through the State Educational Loan fund is only awarded for studies for which general recognition can be given by NOKUT.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Most higher education institutions earmark a good, and sufficient, share of the rooms at the local campus(es) for international students. (In certain cases so much so that there have been complaints from national students who have been left with the housing difficulties.)

Concerning the housing of incoming academic staff, there are more variations between institutions, and the ministry has less structured knowledge.

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

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: In addition to the measures mentioned above, international cooperation, including mobility, is systematically monitored by the Ministry and followed up at governance meetings with the higher education institutions.

Later in autumn 2008, the Ministry will present a white paper on internationalisation of education.

## 20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes  No

**If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes  No

**If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans.

## 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"

The BFUG Working Group on “European Higher Education in a Global Setting” has 27 members from Bologna countries and European stakeholders, and Norway is a member of the working group. The WG has prepared a report on the status and follow-up of the global dimension strategy. Further improvement of the web site of the Bologna Secretariat, the development of an overall information folder and the improvement of the national web sites have been the main focus areas. Norway has also implemented the Bologna Process and its content in all bilateral and multilateral policy dialogue and agreements.

As previously mentioned, action has been taken in order to promote Norwegian higher education institutions abroad and the possibility to study in Norway, i.e. the the website [www.studyinnorway.no](http://www.studyinnorway.no), and the establishment of the Norwegian Centre for Internationalisation of Higher Education (SIU) in 2004, cf. description under 14 c IV and 19 a.

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

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

SIU has been given the responsibility to promote Norway as a country of higher education and research, and it promotes international co-operation in education and research. SIU promotes and facilitates co-operation, mobility, and the overcoming of cultural barriers and exchange within higher education on an international level.

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

In addition to the EHEA, Norway has recently focused particularly on co-operation with North and South America. The Norwegian Minister of Higher Education and Research has signed agreements on research collaboration and on higher education with her colleagues in Brazil, Argentina and Chile. The agreements lay the basis for closer collaboration in areas such as climate and polar research. Exchange of researchers and students will also play a central role. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Norway and India.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

Through their work, particular attention is given by SIU to partnership as the best suited form of co-operation between higher education institutions.

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

cf. ii

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

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.

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

**If Yes** please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes  No

**If Yes** please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

## 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.

The challenges ahead for higher education relates to a number of different areas.

It is necessary to improve the social recruitment to, and graduation from, higher education as we still find social differences both in those applying for access to higher education and those graduating from higher education, the second cycle in particular. The lack of student housing, particularly in the big cities, is a challenge in this respect, and even though the Government has increased its investments in this area, quite a bit still remains.

The Higher Education Institutions still have not reached the aims for internationalisation that were set by the Quality Reform, and the Ministry is at present preparing a White Paper on internationalisation at all levels of education to be presented to the Storting in January 2008. Challenges include increasing student and staff mobility, both incoming and outgoing, both in terms of quality and quantity. In addition, further development of course provision in English remains important.

The introduction of a national qualifications framework for higher education based on learning outcomes, and the fact that learning outcomes will have to be developed for and implemented in all courses and study programmes in higher education, will remain a major challenge for Norwegian higher education in the years to come.

By tradition Norway has quite a high number of mature students. However, challenges remain in relation to developing flexible study programmes (distance/part time etc) at the higher education institutions for this group of students.

The question of labour market relevance for the general bachelor's degree is one of the main challenges ahead. The tendency emerging from two reports on the issue might indicate that the general bachelor's degree at the universities is not regarded as sufficient for employment, and further investigation into the matter is required.

## PART II

### TEMPLATE for NATIONAL STRATEGIES on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

#### Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: [secr@bologna2009benelux.org](mailto:secr@bologna2009benelux.org)) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension.**

The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

#### 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?

Young people from low income groups rarely take higher education. There is also an social imbalance within higher education. Young people whose parents have low income and education tend to choose shorter higher education studies, while young people whose parents have elite education which lead to high income professions often choose similar education themselves.

We do not have an exact number of the numnber of students with reduced functional abilities in higher education. The institutions have an overview of those who need special adaptation for their examinations, and these figures indicate that at least 2% of the students might need some form of adaptation. This number is probably increasing, not least due to the fact that an increasing number of persons with dyslexia apply for admission.

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).

The Act which is valid for both public and private institutions, places the responsibility for ensuring an optimal learning environment for all students, with the individual higher education institution. It establishes that this responsibility also includes students with functional disabilities, stating that, "as far as possible and reasonable", the physical working environment shall be designed in accordance with the principles of universal design. In practical terms, the institutions must ensure that the premises, including the entrance and sanitary and technical facilities, are designed so that persons with functional disabilities can pursue their studies there

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.

Pursuant to the Act, individual education plans must be agreed between the higher education institution and each individual student. The prime, general intention is to ensure a close follow-up of each student with the aim to reduce dropout and improving student performance. Such plans are useful tools for adapting studies for persons with specific needs. They should furthermore contribute to increased awareness of the higher education institutions as to the responsibilities they have for all their students, and for the need to adapt the study situation for students with some type of functional disability.

The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund was established in 1947. The objective of the Loan fund is to remove inequality and promote equal opportunities so that the pursuit of education is possible regardless of geographical conditions, age, sex and economical and social conditions"

The 25 Student Welfare Organisations in Norway are responsible for welfare offers to students regulated by the Student Welfare Organisation Act from 2008.

Welfare offers are financed through sales, student semester fees, government grants and free use of premises at the educational institutions. Student welfare organisations provide a wide range of services to make the student life easier such as student housing, cafeterias, health services, counselling, sports, kindergardens and bookstores.

Through the state budget, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research provides specific public funding to the student welfare organisations for the construction of student housing. These housing facilities have a lower rent level compared to the open housing market. The student welfare organisations receiving these grants are obliged to provide for an adequate number of housing facilities for disabled students. Furthermore, these particular facilities shall not be subject to higher rent than ordinary student housing facilities.

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?

Surveys on living conditions for students have been carried out in 1998 and 2005”

### **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?

Further democratisation of higher education so that differences in social, cultural, financial or geographical background, gender, age, sexual orientation or different level of disability should not be obstacles in relation to access to and graduation from higher education.

(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).

All higher education institutions are required to have action plans at the institutional level to ensure equal access for disabled students. Students who are delayed in their studies as a result of their disability, are currently given an additional year to complete their studies without consequences in relation to their student loans. The Ministry has proposed to develop this even further.

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

No

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

No

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

The social recruitment to higher education is still predominately from children whose parents have a background in higher education. A White Paper on this matter (St. Meld 16 (2006-2007) ... Og ingen stod igjen) was presented to the Storting in December 2006. The White Paper pointed to the challenges of democratisation, focusing particularly on flexibility with regards to access and admission, RPL, flexible provision etc.

As it has been found that policy relating to maternity leave for students varies both between institutions and even between faculties of the same institution, a Bill of September 2008 on amendments to the Higher Education Act (which is also mentioned in relation to recognition issues) includes a proposal to give students legal entitlement to maternity leave.

As part of their action plans on disabled students, all institutions are required to allocate part of their budget on improving the physical access for the disabled.

**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).

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## **ANNEX A**

### **Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports**

#### Financial

- scholarships - means tested
- scholarships - merit based
- research grants
- grants for studying abroad
- grants or loans for (nearly) every student
- unspecified social support system
- free education (at least 1st cycle)
- reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
- financial assistance for certain groups/areas
- improved funding systems

#### Structural

- new /expanded routes of access
- broader teaching or learning strategies
- information and preparation at secondary schools
- increase student places
- indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
- subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
- provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
- counselling/guidance services

#### Certain groups

- measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
- measures for disabled (not financial)
- measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
- allocation of study places to certain groups
- promote access from all national areas

#### Policy and practice

- explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
- carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
- evaluations/research of policies and practices
- monitoring access (and retention) by students

## **ANNEX B**

### **Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility**

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

- Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
- Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

- Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
- Flexible delivery of higher education
- Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
- Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
- Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

- Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
- Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
- Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

B, Provision of social services

- Counselling
- Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
- Appropriate housing conditions for all students
- Provision of healthcare
- Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

- Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance
- Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations
- Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies

- Financial and legal advice for students
- Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
- Support measures for students with children

## **ANNEX C**

### **Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension**

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

- Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

- Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

- Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

- Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that

can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues? How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not able to finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them? Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

- Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

- Stakeholder involvement

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?