



4. Institutional Autonomy and Governance

Working language:	English
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Public responsibility for higher education encompasses the structural elements of the Bologna Process such as a national framework, degree structure, quality assurance and recognition. Public responsibility for the structure of higher education is defined in all countries by national legislation. Funding of higher education may also be considered a public responsibility; however, in all systems there is an increasing demand for additional resources.

University autonomy was introduced in the Bologna Declaration with a reference to the 1988 Magna Charta Universitatum, which stated that

The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organised because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.

An autonomous institution may have the right to determine its organisational and administrative structure, decide its priorities, manage its budget, hire its personnel and admit its students, decide the content and forms of its teaching and research - or at least a number of these rights. The degree of autonomy is usually defined in national legislation. It may be restricted to universities or it may be given to all higher education institutions.

1. How should public responsibility and institutional autonomy be balanced in the Bologna Process for optimal cooperation and division of labour between public authorities and autonomous institutions?
2. Are there elements of institutional autonomy that are essential to the Bologna Process?

Governance of higher education institutions has not been a separate theme for discussion in the Bologna Process (we have discussed students' participation in institutional governance). Governance has, however, been a theme at meetings and seminars organised by partner organisations in the Process, in particular by the Council of Europe

and the European University Association (EUA). In this session at the Bergen Conference we propose to discuss consequences of increasing institutional autonomy for institutional governance.

3. Does increasing institutional autonomy imply a stronger and more centralised institutional leadership?
(Such as the appointment of a University President by the Executive Board instead of the Academic Senate electing a Rector?)
4. Does increasing institutional autonomy imply a stronger influence from external decision makers (Ministry of Education) on the composition of the institutional leadership?

Summing up the discussion: Should this theme be brought forward for further discussion in the Bologna Process after Bergen?