



***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	Austria
Date	Nov. 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Gottfried Bacher, deputy director
Email address	Gottfried.bacher@bmwf.gv.at
Contributors to the report	Enic/Naric Austria, Ministry of Science

	<p>and Research: the departments responsible for doctoral studies/development plans, performance agreements, universities of the arts, legal affairs, student support, statistics/data warehouse, European Higher Education Area/Bologna Process, and private universities/universities of applied sciences, and the Office for coordination and strategy in international cooperation. Universities Austria (former Rectors' Conference), Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research, ÖAD; Ministry of Education, Art and Culture (responsible for University Colleges of Education),</p>
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### 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.

The budget for needs-based study grants was raised by 12% in autumn 2007.

In March 2008, Austria became a member of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education.

In September 2008, shortly before the parliamentary election, a law was passed which abolished tuition fees for the majority of students (exceptions: e.g. international students, students who study considerably longer than envisaged by law).

As of September 2008 the cap on parents' incomes used to evaluate the needs-based grants for students will be about 20% higher, which will increase the number of beneficiaries.

As of winter semester 2008/09 grants are portable for a whole study programme in an EEA country or Switzerland.

#### ABBREVIATIONS USED:

AAC.....Austrian Accreditation Council

AQA.....Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance

BOFUG.....Bologna Follow-up Group

EHEA.....European Higher Education Area  
ERA.....European Research Area  
ESG.....European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in HE  
FWF.....Austrian Science Fund  
HEI.....Higher Education Institutions (university also refers to all HEI)  
"The Ministry"....Ministry of Science and Research  
ÖAW.....Austrian Academy of Sciences  
RPL.....Recognition of prior learning  
UA.....Universities Austria ( former Austrian Rectors´ Conference)  
UAS.....University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschulen)  
UCE.....University Colleges of Education (bachelor programmes for teacher education for elementary, lower secondary, and schools for children with special needs)

## 2. Partnership

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

First and foremost there is the Austrian Bologna Follow-up Group consisting of all major players involved in the Bologna Process. It is instrumental in preparing the Austrian input and positions for the European Bologna Follow-up Group. A "Bologna Contact Point" in the Ministry responsible for higher education provides relevant information, oversees the work of the Bologna promoters together with the national Follow-up Group, and organizes relevant seminars for the HE stakeholders.

- 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 type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Employers                         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please specify) representatives of all sectors of HE, representative of the provinces, representatives of other ministries which oversee postsecondary HEI,

- 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) representatives of all major HE sectors

*Please add any additional comments if necessary:*

As the Austrian Bologna experts group consists of 5 members, it was most important to include above all students' and HEI's representatives, who are the stakeholders most experienced in implementing the Bologna instruments.

Besides, the Austrian Rectors' Conference (now called "Universities Austria"), the Ministry, AQA and all the other stakeholders represented in the national BOFUG (federal provinces, other ministries, UAS Council, UAS Conference, National

<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

Agency for EU programmes, Bologna expert team, Austrian Student Union, Austrian Exchange Service, UCE, Private Universities) were involved in the selection process.

## DEGREE SYSTEM

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

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

As of fall 2007, 82% of all university study programmes have followed the bachelor/master structure. Many universities have completed their course-conversion entirely already. The fields of medicine and teacher training for upper secondary education are excluded from conversion by law. Until now they may only be offered in the "old style" diploma studies. This might soon change for the field of teacher training for upper secondary education with the amendment to the University Act of 2002 originally planned for 2008 but postponed due to parliamentary elections at the end of September 2008. In the amendment, options for a 4-year bachelor - for certain fields - are being considered.

As far as the the UAS are concerned, 95% follow the bachelor/master two-cycle structure. Only 12 out of 240 still follow the "old style" diploma.

Also private universities follow the Bologna two-cycle structure, almost entirely.

UCE have fully converted to bachelor programmes in a major reorganization which became effective in September 2007.

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
187.746	104.248	56%

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

With the planned amendment to the University Act of 2002 options for a 4-year bachelor - for certain fields - are being considered as well as the opening of the field of the teacher training for upper secondary education to the bachelor/master structure.

The absolute number of students in bachelor/master programmes is relatively small compared to the number of programmes offered in accordance with the Bologna study architecture because it is mostly the smaller programmes with fewer students at smaller HEI that have changed first.

<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

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

A lot of effort is being put in the process towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle, being aware of its role as the link between EHEA and the ERA.

An amendment of the University Act in 2006 created the legal basis for introducing doctoral studies fully in line with the Bergen Communiqué.

Many universities have reorganized and redesigned their doctoral study programmes. Many doctoral schools (Doktorandenkollegs) have been established along the way.

The duration of the new doctoral studies is a minimum of 3 years, with ECTS not being obligatory, on completion the title of "Doktor" or PhD may be awarded.

The enrollment in the "old" doctoral studies with a workload of at least 120 ECTS is still possible until 2009/10. These studies must be completed by 2017.

Admission to doctoral studies requires a Master's degree. Graduates of the universities of applied sciences are granted access to doctoral studies at universities. For certain fields of studies, special access requirements must be met.

A national position paper, jointly elaborated by Universities Austria (UA) and the Ministry, ("Das Doktoratsstudium in Österreich. Nationale Positionierung im Kontext europäischer Entwicklungen", Vienna, January 2005)) comprises recommendations including appropriate training in transferable skills, supervisory and assessment procedures, dissertation agreements between doctoral

<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.

candidates, supervisors and universities, definition of specific learning outcomes as well as the definition of a better-structured programme.

In December 2007 recommendations on new-style Doctoral Studies were published by UA, re-affirming the 10 Salzburg Recommendations.

As of fall 2007, the overall number of students enrolled in doctoral studies at Austrian universities amounted to 20,484. Out of those 20,484 students 9,400 were women. The number of students following PhD programmes at Austrian universities amounted to 572 (288 women) in the fall 2007, which is less than 3 % of all students. The number of students following PhD programmes has steadily increased over the last 2 years and is expected to rise further in the next few years.



## 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.

The challenge for the Austrian research policy lies in the achievement of both an increase in quality and quantity. As a consequence, emphasis is put on the achievement of the 3 % -of GDP-for-R&D goal and the enforcement of structural change (the R&D budget for 2008 represents 2.63% of GDP).The following main challenges for Austria's research policy (Austrian research and technology report 2008

([Http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenue/publikationen\\_und\\_materialien/forschung/berichte/forschungs\\_und\\_technologieberichte/](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenue/publikationen_und_materialien/forschung/berichte/forschungs_und_technologieberichte/)) have been identified:

- Austria shall shift from a provider of low- and medium technology to a high tech provider.

- On a quantitative level, the R&D rate is expected to pass the 3 % mark in 2010, with a relation of 1/3 public investment and 2/3 private financing of R&D.

- Universities must be supported in their efforts to focus their activities. Research excellence shall be promoted, in order to change the Austrian industrial structure by a shift from the provision of low and medium technologies to the upper league of high tech providers.

- strengthening the public research base is impossible without highly qualified human resources. Therefore improving the situation of young researchers is an important goal for the next few years.

\* Frontrunner strategy: The aim of this initiative is to move Austria to the forefront in the European research landscape. Here are some of the instruments and actions planned to achieve this ambitious goal:

- placing a priority on the training of young researchers, create new career tracks

- starting an excellence initiative

- facilitating the recruitment of highly-qualified researchers and teachers from abroad

- strengthening basic research in Austria

- fostering knowledge transfer from HEI to business, etc. ([www.bmwf.gv.at](http://www.bmwf.gv.at))

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

"COMET" promotes the creation of competence centres in which high-quality research programmes are being developed jointly by the business and science communities.

The respective programmes have been running since 1998 and have brought forth the most successful innovations in Austrian technology policies. More than 1,500 researchers are active in over 40 competence centres. The current priorities are building excellence, incorporating international research know-how as well as raising the research and technological capacities of Austrian enterprises and science.

Further examples are:

"AplusB", which is a programme that supports innovative and technology-oriented enterprise start-ups.

"COIN" (Cooperation and Innovation), which aims at stimulating R&D activities of enterprises, especially smaller and medium sized ones.

"CIR-CE", which promotes cooperation programmes with central and eastern Europe.

"Christian Doppler laboratories", which try to bridge the gap between basic and applied research and are often directly connected to university departments.

- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

Generally all types of doctoral studies are financed within the scope of global budgets given to the individual universities. Specific new forms of doctoral programmes may be managed or supervised and financed by different sources, as can be seen by the following examples:

Ich würde alle POst-Doc Passagen streichen, die Frage geht nur auf Finanzierung von doctoral students

Many doctoral students are employed in FWF(Austrian Science Fund)-funded projects.

While most of the funding of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) targets researchers who have reached at least post-doc level, the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) also offers scholarships for doctoral studies:

The so-called "Doc programme", on the one hand, supports highly qualified doctoral students, "Doc forte" on the other hand, is a programme designed to specifically support female doctoral students in the fields of mathematics, engineering sciences, technical sciences, medical studies and natural sciences, and "Doc team", finally, provides funding possibilities for small groups of doctoral students in the fields of humanities, social studies and cultural sciences. ([www.oeaw.ac.at](http://www.oeaw.ac.at)).

Further initiatives have been taken by HEI themselves. Various universities have instituted doctoral programmes in which students work in a group with close coordination of the subject of study, and funding is linked to a specific doctoral dissertation whose primary purpose is to prepare the doctoral candidate for a career in science. The Science Fund (FWF) offers the "Doktoratskollegs-Plus" a programme which supports research groups in all academic disciplines at Austrian universities and at non-profit research institutions devoted to academic research, with the goal of creating educational centres for highly qualified young scholars doing their doctoral programmes.

Furthermore, the universities have also shown initiatives to establish their own PhD programmes. For example, at the Medical University of Graz, a PhD programme in molecular medicine was created in 2007 in which the best-qualified

applicants are awarded paid dissertation research positions that last three years. Funding is provided primarily through comprehensive budgets, and a small portion is covered by funds from third-party sources.

The University of Vienna, for its part, has established so-called "initiative schools" in its development plan. These doctoral schools are distinctive in several ways: individual supervision of dissertation candidates is replaced by group supervision; supervisors receive appointments at the university; dissertations are integrated into international research programmes currently conducted by the supervising team; and the results of candidates' research are made known to the international scientific community. In all, five "initiative schools" started up during the 2006-2007 winter semester, and seven more began operating during the 2007-2008 winter semester. In addition, there are initiatives for structured doctoral programmes that do not include employment contracts. For example, at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, the traditional doctorate in social and economic sciences, covering an extremely broad range of subject matters, is currently being replaced by a cluster of specialised research-oriented PhD programmes. Until now, PhD programmes have been created in management and finance. They will concentrate on training young scholars to a high degree of proficiency. These innovations coincide with a paradigm shift in doctoral study driven by an institutional research orientation and the prominence of faculty members within their respective fields.

(For further information see Austrian research and technology report 2008 ([Http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenu/publikationen\\_und\\_materialien/forschung/berichte/forschungs\\_und\\_technologieberichte](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenu/publikationen_und_materialien/forschung/berichte/forschungs_und_technologieberichte)

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

2.63% of GDP is spent for R&D in 2008 (7.512 billion Euros)

public funds: 2,59 billion; domestic private funds: 3.65 billion; foreign private funds: 1.16 billion

\*About 45% of the university budget goes into university research

(for further information and analysis see the current edition of the Austrian Research and Technology Report. 2008:

[Http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenue/publikationen\\_und\\_materialien/forschung/berichte/forschungs\\_und\\_technologieberichte](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenue/publikationen_und_materialien/forschung/berichte/forschungs_und_technologieberichte), and ERAWATCH AUSTRIA: <http://corids.europa.eu/erawatch/>)

Since 2000 R&D expenditures have increased by 70%, which translates into an annual growth rate of 7.84 %. The public sector allocates 73% of its funds to the universities and 14 % to research in the public sector. The amount spent for R&D in the linked research sector (cooperation between enterprises and research institutions) has increased substantially, by 45 % between 2002 und 2004: Within the corporate sector, business enterprises finance their own R&D activities mostly in-house.

Funding from abroad is the third most important source for financing R&D in Austria. The larger part of this money is spent by foreign companies and international organisations, almost 10 % are returns from the EU Framework Programmes.

There is no general scheme for funding doctoral students, but there are a number of programmes and initiatives as described above.

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

Yes

No

If Yes, please specify:

Universities follow the further career of doctoral students through alumni club activities. There is no general tracking system installed.

A survey conducted in 2007 by "Statistik Austria" looked at the professional status of persons with a doctor's degree. One of the findings was that in December 2006, 93% of holders of doctorates had jobs (24,002 of 25,801). About one out of 7 job-holding "doctors" was self-employed. The survey is only available in German

## 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

100% of 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>

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

no special requirements in place

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

no special requirements in place

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

all students	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
students of the same field coming from other HEIs	Yes <input 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 type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
additional courses	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input 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 of them;

UAS master graduates may enter a doctoral programme at a university (legal provision). They have to take extra credits if their master programme was shorter than the corresponding master programme at a university.

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

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

## 7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

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

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

In Austria a lot of awareness measures have been carried out especially to improve the recognition of the Bachelor degree and its employability within the labour market as well as in the academic field.

Of those students completing their studies (first graduates in 2005/06) just a little under 15% have a Bachelor degree. Larger quotas of Bachelor graduates are expected by 2010. That is why there is little experience concerning Bachelor graduates on the labour market, especially since 87% of Bachelor graduates at a university continue to study towards their Master degree.

From 1981 to 2006 the share of the population in the age group from 15 to 64 with tertiary graduation tripled from 4.5 % to 13.6 %. The percentage of people with tertiary graduation in the age group from 25 to 34 is now 16.4% (female rate: 18.6%, male rate: 14.2%).

Within the labour force between 25 and 64 years the share of persons with University degree or HEI-degree increased from 10.9 in 2004 to 12.08 in 2007 (female increase: 1.7%, male increase: 0.8%).

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:

The negotiations about the specific classification of the Bachelor degree within the public sector in Austria are ongoing. Graduates of UCE have a special status.

## 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**

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

Yes  No

**Comment**

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**

***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** see g) below

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



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** : Work on an Austrian Qualification Framework started in spring 2007. A consultation paper with different scenarios for an NQF was drafted by a group of education researchers in autumn 2007. The first consultation process, including all stakeholders, was completed by July 2008 and a group of experts different from the authors of the consultation paper have analysed the feedback and positions from all sectors of education (secondary, tertiary, vocational and general education). As a next step the national steering group will discuss the experts' analysis and the decision on which model Austria will adopt will be prepared.

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.

Due to the historical development of Austrian HE there are currently three agencies addressing quality assurance and accreditation:

- The AQA (Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance), which is at the disposal for all HEIs,
- the UAS-Council (Fachhochschule-Council), which is the accrediting body of the UAS sector).
- and the Austrian Accreditation Council (AAC) which is the accrediting body for the private university sector.

All three national agencies underwent external evaluations in 2007, the compliance with the ESG was also part of the review. The review of AQA has been co-ordinated by ENQA, the two others by the Federal Ministry for Science and Research. The results of the reviews led to the confirmation of ENQA full membership and affirmed that the Agency's work is in accordance with the ESG.

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

<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

The outcomes of the external reviews of the UAS-Council, the AAC and the AQA and the experts' recommendations entailed important findings for the further development and improvement of the external quality assurance and accreditation system in Austria. Changes to the present external QA system and the development of a common strategy are currently discussed.

In Austria the internal quality assurance, its approaches and arrangements are within the institutional responsibility of the different HEIs. However the evidence of the efficiency, accountability and quality of the internal systems has to be assured through external quality assurance mechanisms and has to be carried out/established by an independent and competent organisation. Therefore a single organisation is envisaged by integrating the existing agencies and their expertise.

The prospective new organisation will cover the responsibility for the different sectors (public universities, UAS, private universities) and will take into account compliance with the ESG and the experts' recommendations.

The legal and organisational amendments are planned to be in place in 2010 .

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

## 9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

In Austria internal quality assurance, its approaches and arrangements are within the institutional responsibility of the different HEIs.

Public Universities:

As far as quality assurance and quality development are concerned, the Universities Act 2002 obliges universities to set up their own quality management systems. Accordingly, it is primarily the universities' responsibility to establish institutional mechanisms and structures which safeguard and promote quality in all fields of activities. Universities evaluate the entire spectrum of their services. Several elements are specifically mentioned in the Universities Act: continuous internal evaluation, course evaluation, evaluation of the activities and performance of university teachers at least every five years and external evaluation initiated by the university council, the rector or the Federal Ministry for Science and Research. The results of evaluation processes are to provide the various university bodies with a basis for decision-making. Students' evaluation of teaching quality is a relevant factor in connection with performance agreements.

Universities must apply subject-specific international standards to build quality management systems and conduct evaluation. Related procedures, the areas which are to be evaluated, evaluation periods, etc. have to be laid down in the individual universities' statutes.

Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS):

In the UAS sector, the choice of internal QA instruments is up to the providers of UAS study programmes (with the exception of student course evaluation, which is compulsory). However, the Guidelines issued by the UAS-Council touch upon internal evaluation (self-evaluation) of UAS study programmes in that recommendations are given as to how evaluations should be carried out. Reference is made to the fact that a documented and implemented management system must exist and minimum requirements of internal evaluation are listed. Aspects that are subject to evaluation include strategy, organisation, quality management, human resources development, study offer, students, teaching quality, applied research and development, resources, infrastructure, finance, internationalisation, communication and cooperation programmes.

Private Universities:

The choice of design and instruments of the internal QA system are in the institutional responsibility of the private universities, but they have to be in line with international standards and especially the ESG.

A description of the quality assurances system which comprises teaching and research is part of the application for accreditation. The QA-system and its implementation is also an important element of the evaluation procedure for reaccreditation.

University Colleges of Education (UCE):

In 2007 the previous teacher training colleges have been upgraded in institutional and qualitative terms to university level, i.e. University Colleges of Education. The University Colleges are obliged to set up their own quality management systems.

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

HEIs have a broad range of tools e.g. curriculum commissions, regular course evaluation, evaluation (peer-review) of faculties (research and teaching) and programmes, alumni evaluations.

There are different methods of publishing evaluation results due to different legal frameworks of the HE sectors:

The Universities Act 2002 introduced new steering instruments for public universities to gather data and information (performance agreements, performance reports and intellectual capital reports). Quality assurance activities are covered in those reports which are all publicly available.

UAS have to submit their evaluation reports to the UAS-Council. There is no obligation to publish a quality strategy or performance reports.

Private Universities have to report to the Accreditation Council. Institutions are required to present a progress report on an annual basis in line with statutory requirements. In addition to development data, this report must also include results of evaluation procedures (and follow-up procedures) that are to be carried out by the institution on its own initiative at least every two years. These reports are not published.

Programmes of UAS and Private Universities have to be accredited

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.

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**

Relevant documents can be found at uni:data, the statistical information system for HE of the Federal Ministry of Science and Research:  
<http://www.bmwf.gv.at/unidata>

It contains all performance agreements between the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research and public universities, yearly performance reports of the universities (2007 includes a report on the development of Quality Management-systems), the Ministries` Higher Education Reports (Hochschulbericht 2005) The 2008 report will be published in autumn and includes a chapter on the development of QA-systems at public universities:

[http://eportal.bmbwk.gv.at/portal/page?\\_pageid=93,95229&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://eportal.bmbwk.gv.at/portal/page?_pageid=93,95229&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) (In German, English Version forthcoming)

## 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

The external evaluation procedures which are applied in a similar manner by all the accreditation and evaluation bodies are based on three general stages: self-evaluation/documentation, external evaluation, including peer review and a follow-up.

The Universities Act 2002 (Art. 14) lays down the obligation on the part of universities to establish an internal quality management system. Universities are free to decide on their individual approach to external evaluation and quality assurance. External evaluation is to take place at the instigation of the university council and of the rectorate. Universities may seek assistance in evaluation from the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA).

Under the Federal Act on UAS Studies as amended ("Fachhochschulstudiengesetz" -- UAS Studies Act), ensuring evaluations is a prerequisite for the accreditation of UAS study programmes. The UAS-Council determines the specific objectives of evaluation instruments, methodological principles and areas of evaluation, publication modes, and how evaluation results are to be reacted to. In order to ensure uniform national standards with respect to evaluation methods and the comparability of evaluation reports, the UAS-Council publishes guidelines. According to the UAS Studies Act, teaching quality is also to be safeguarded through student course evaluation.

In the UAS sector, external evaluation is carried out by "review teams" based on self-evaluation reports. At least one member of the review team must be familiar with the Austrian UAS sector; at least one member must have experience in organising evaluation processes. There are two forms of evaluation: the evaluation of UAS institutions and the evaluation of UAS study programmes. To be able to carry out these tasks, the review team members must have different additional qualifications. Aspects that are subjected to evaluation include strategy, organisation, quality management, human resources development, study offer, students, teaching quality, applied research and development, resources, infrastructure, finance, internationalisation, communication and cooperation.

A summary of the resulting evaluation reports is published. In the course of a follow-up process, the evaluated institutions and study programmes have to submit annual reports to the UAS-Council outlining the measures that have been taken to bring about improvement. The review teams are also informed on these measures.

For the future, it is planned to systematically involve students more closely in the evaluation of the UAS sector and to publish the full text of the evaluation reports.

The 1999 University Accreditation Act regulates the accreditation procedures for private universities (accounting for around 2% of all students in higher education)

and establishes the responsibilities and decision-making powers of the Accreditation Council. The independent Accreditation Council is the accrediting body for the private university sector which issues pertinent recommendations. Any such recommendation for accreditation requires the approval by the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. Private universities are accredited for a limited period of time, extensions are equally granted for a limited period only. Private universities report to the Accreditation Council. In addition, it monitors the private university sector and the maintenance of the required quality standards.

The accreditation process for private universities starts with an application for accreditation as a private university being submitted by an educational institution. After a formal examination of the documents, a member of the Accreditation Council is designated who will have primary responsibility for accompanying the procedure and visits the institution together with the experts. One of the evaluating experts will generally come from abroad. The experts draft an opinion on the visit which is submitted to the institution for comment as part of their right to be heard. These documents, together with the comment by the educational institution, serve as a basis for decision-making by the Accreditation Council. The re-accreditation process is basically similar to the first application procedure. Special attention is given to developments since the first accreditation.

In 2007 the previous teacher training colleges have been upgraded in institutional and qualitative terms to university level, i.e. University Colleges of Education, and students will, upon graduation, receive the internationally recognised degree of "Bachelor of Education" in conformity with the Bologna process. The University Colleges are obliged to set up their own quality management systems. The work on an (external) evaluation regulation for the University Colleges is ongoing.

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:

b) and c): Currently each HE sector has its own 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"/> |

<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.



- follow-up procedures

Yes  No

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

## 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:*

## 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:

AQA is a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (CEEN), the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) and DeGEval (Evaluation Society).

The UAS-Council and the Austrian Accreditation Council are full members of INQAAHE, as well as the founding members of the D-A-CH Network (a regional

network of accreditation agencies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland). They are also members of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) and of the CEEN.

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

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

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

<b>Comment</b>
----------------

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

<b>Comment</b>
----------------

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

<b>Comment</b>
----------------

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**

#### 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: The Lisbon principles are part of all higher education acts.

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

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: see above

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

higher education legislation has been set up with regard to the recommendation; a national recommendation has been elaborated in conformity with the European one:

[http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/wissenschaft/naric/2-1-4-10-Doppeldiplom.pdf](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/wissenschaft/naric/2-1-4-10-Doppeldiplom.pdf)

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: see above

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

<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)

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level a legally proscribed procedure, which gives, in case of doubt, the right to appeal up to the Constitutional Court is in place.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level : As a practical tool of application, a recommendation has been given to the institutions:

[http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/lissabon\\_empf\\_untersch.pdf](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/lissabon_empf_untersch.pdf)

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level ; see above; the obligation to prove the differences lies with the institution.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is done in practice ; see website of ENIC-NARIC Austria: <http://www.bmwf.gv.at/naric>

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 :

**a) advice and recommendations ex officio and upon request**

**b) cooperation with all other ENICs bilaterally and multilaterally**

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

## 15. Stage of implementation of ECTS<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html)

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

- a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes<sup>13</sup> in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

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

- b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes<sup>14</sup> in your country? Please tick one:

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

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

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes  No

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

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: learning outcomes are included in the Austrian NQF

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: information seminars, visits by Bologna expert teams,.....

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: see above

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<sup>13</sup> Except doctoral studies

<sup>14</sup> Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

## 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:

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

Yes  No

If Yes, please specify:

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:

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

Comprehensively  Some  A little  None

Please describe the current situation:

On a national basis there are no procedures for RPL so far, but some procedures are in place for certain types of programmes (UAS--programmes and continuing education courses). In the ongoing development of a national LLL-strategy the NQF procedures for RPL on a national basis are being discussed.

Public and private universities and UAS offer continuing education courses with academic degrees and/or qualifications which aim at both postgraduates and non-academics. The Danube University Krems specialises in postgraduate continuing education. The continuing education offered by universities and UAS-programmes promotes an opening up of education due to the recognition of



relevant subject-specific qualifications and RPL as well as their orientation to people in employment.

### **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.

In Austria flexible learning paths are implemented which aim at e.g. eliminating barriers for the transfer of qualifications between schools and HEIs, developing flexible learning paths for part-time students, and integrating non-traditional students into UAS programmes.

Austrian HEIs offer continuing education courses for both postgraduates and non-academics, and they have the right to determine the admission criteria. Continuing education and further training are seen as essential responses of HEIs to the needs for lifelong learning. The continuing education offered by universities and UAS programmes promotes an opening up of education due to the recognition of relevant subject-specific qualifications and their orientation to people in employment.

The UAS-sector takes into account the needs of non-traditional students in several different ways. Measures taken to promote the permeability of the education system from below shall be outlined in the application for accreditation. UAS facilitate alternative forms of access as well as part-time courses and reduce regional disparities in access to higher education.

Recognition of proven knowledge is provided which may lead to a shortening of study duration. With regard to the recognition of documented knowledge and skills, the principle of course recognition applies.

The requirements of admission to a UAS encompass the "allgemeine Universitätsreife" (general qualifications to enrol in university studies) or any professional qualification in the particular field. Depending on the objectives of a

course of study, applicants with special professional qualifications may have to pass a number of additional examinations. The possible forms of university entrance qualification exams are laid down for each programme.

Qualifications from VET colleges or special professional qualifications can lead to credit transfer of exams in relation to subject specialisation and reductions of the study exams. Credit transfer of individual lectures and exams is at the discretion of UAS institutions.

Furthermore the UAS are entitled to offer so-called "target group-specific" part-time degree programmes for VET colleges graduates that have a particular scientific and teaching concept and are tailored to the needs of working students of a certain target group. The study period is usually one or two semesters shorter. Part-time UAS degree programmes are explicitly tailored to the target group of the gainfully employed and are characterised by the fact that the schedule of the degree programme, the curricula, the teaching concept and also the entrance procedure are tailored to the needs and wants of gainfully employed persons.

On the whole, the percentage of part-time programmes was 31.6% in the academic year 2007/08 (e.g. 50% of the master-programmes are accessible for employed persons).

The Universities Act 2002 provides regulation about the recognition of examinations as well as of specific professional experience and artistic skills.

Examinations passed by students attending recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institutions, higher vocational colleges, colleges of education, recognised Austrian educational institutions where the general university entrance qualification is an admission requirement, or university-level courses offered by non-university institutions, shall be recognised, provided that such qualifications are equivalent to those prescribed by the curriculum.

Artistic activities at non-university institutions capable of providing vocational artistic training may be recognised as equivalent to examinations if the nature of

the activities and the nature and extent of the student's participation is comparable.

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  
In order to raise awareness of and to spread information about LLL, in 2007, Universities Austria organised three events in cooperation with the European Commission, the Austrian Government, Austrian University Continuing Education and Staff Development Network (AUCEN) and the universities involved. In 2009, similar events will take place at two public universities in Austria.

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

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

There are several alternative entry requirements regarding HE access besides the "allgemeine Universitätsreife" (general qualification to enrol in university studies):

- The introduction of the "Berufsreifepfung" (special university entrance qualification): Since 1997, apprenticeship graduates who have successfully passed their apprenticeship examination or have attended a VET school for at least three years are further enabled to take the "Berufsreifepfung". This corresponds to the Certificate of Secondary Education from secondary academic school and the Certificate of Secondary Education and VET diploma from VET colleges and thus includes the general admission to a course of study. Courses preparing for the Berufsreifepfung have been extended considerably over the last few years.

- "Studienberechtigungsprüfung" (university entrance qualification exam): According to the University Qualification Entrance Act this exam is aimed at people without a secondary school leaving certificate. Several different examinations with regard to the chosen programme must be taken.

- The possibility of doctoral studies for students in UAS studies according to the Federal Act on the Fachhochschule study programmes.
- Continuing education courses: The admission requirements are determined by the HEIs in accordance with the legal framework / accreditation decision and take into account professional experience and prior learning.
- Recognition of vocational qualifications and professional experience at UAS-programmes: In individual cases, for qualifications not regulated by the accreditation notification, the definition of the relevant professional qualification and the additional examinations shall be laid down by the head of the teaching and research staff or the University of Applied Sciences Board.
- "Target group-specific" UAS-programmes: part-time degree programmes for VET colleges graduates that have a particular scientific and teaching concept and are geared to the needs of working students of a certain target group. The study period is usually one or two semesters shorter. Part-time UAS degree programmes are explicitly tailored to the target group of the gainfully employed and are characterised by the fact that the schedule of the degree programme, the curricula, the teaching concept and also the entrance procedure are tailored to the needs and wants of gainfully employed persons.

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  
 HEIs offer flexible delivery methods like part-time programmes and are free to offer parts of study programmes (modules) through distance learning, web-based learning, blended learning etc. to meet the needs of diverse group of learners

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  
 Study programmes are delivered through a modular scheme. Especially continuing education and part-time programmes aim at flexibility for the students

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,

The principle of the diversity of learning and training pathways is a basic principle of the Austrian educational system. Therefore the integration of ICT in education and training has been a priority of the last years, in order to increase access to education and improve quality of education for the individual. The focus lay for a long time on all kinds of disadvantaged groups among young people. Special education measures were also taken into account for certain groups of people with special needs such as women, migrants or people with disabilities.

Universities treat disabled and non-disabled students equally. Very little data concerning this issue exists at university-level. The UG 2002 points out that the integration of students with disabilities is a main challenge of universities.

The study "Social Circumstances of Students with Disabilities, 2006", published in July 2007 finds that disabled students amount to approximately 1 % of all Austrian students. Thus about 1000 disabled students are studying at universities and universities of applied science.

## 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%

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)?

<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.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

about 50

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

See [http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/wissenschaft/naric/2-1-4-10-Doppeldiplom.pdf](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/wissenschaft/naric/2-1-4-10-Doppeldiplom.pdf)

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

## 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?

A wide range of mobility programmes have been installed and an Austrian database for scholarships and research grants ([www.grants.at](http://www.grants.at)), to provide easy access to information about scholarships for outgoing and incoming students was set up:

- \* nationally financed top-ups for Erasmus grants provided by the Ministry
- \* the national needs-based grants are portable to study abroad (fully portable for EEA countries and Switzerland and up to 2 years for out-of-EHEA destinations).
- \* a researcher's mobility portal for Austria was established ([www.euraxess.at](http://www.euraxess.at))
- \* a guide for foreign researchers was developed : [www.bmi.gv.at/forscher](http://www.bmi.gv.at/forscher)
- \* the "ÖAD" (Austrian Exchange Service -- Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research) offers special services and counselling to facilitate academic mobility.

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:

For all questions concerning visas, residence and work permits as well as social security ÖAD has established a service centre for general information and counselling for international students and researchers. Whenever the necessity occurs, ÖAD experts, together with experts of the Ministry of Science and Research enter into discussions with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior to create more favourable conditions for visiting researchers, students and teachers.

\* incoming researchers' spouses have access to the labour market.

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

Yes  No

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

see 19a) plus:

\*..every HEI in Austria has an office for international relations which assists students and staff interested in going abroad, or incoming students and staff for that matter.(e.g. providing information on partner universities, funding and recognition matters).

\* a number of programmes exist to support academic mobility and international cooperation.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes  No

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

see National Action Plan for Recognition, ECTS is applied by law, Austria has signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes  No

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

The ÖAD-Housing Office, a 100 % subsidiary of the ÖAD -- Austrian Exchange Service -- administers and allocates places in student halls of residence and small flats for recipients of grants, ERASMUS students, visiting professors as well as for academic guests.

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

Yes  No

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

\* The Austrian Exchange Service has started the campaign "Auslandserfahrung im Studium: beweg dich und deine Karriere" (translation: study experience

abroad: move yourself and your career) with the aim to produce a positive image for study and research abroad.

\* A mobility initiative was started by the Ministry of Science and Research in order to increase the number of outgoing students to 50% of the student population by 2020 (graduates). The measures to achieve this ambitious goal are enumerated in a), c) , and d) above.

\* In addition a special action programme (AUSTRIA MUNDUS) was started to increase the participation of Austrian HEI, teachers, researchers, and students in ERASMUS MUNDUS. Special funds were made available for that purpose.

## 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.

Needs-based grants can be used for a whole study programme at a foreign university in EEA countries and Switzerland and for up to two years worldwide

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"

Information on the strategy and the need for implementation was disseminated via the National Bologna Follow-up Group

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

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

The Bologna brochure is regularly distributed at international conferences and experts from The Ministry are very active in policy dialogue fora with non-EHEA countries and in conferences and fairs (NAFSA, EAIE....) on EHEA related issues.



Besides, the Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAD) prepares publications, folders and other information and promotion materials. The major publications include "Higher education in Austria: multiple choice" with a general description of the Austrian higher education institutions, "Study in Austria", a brochure listing all study programmes available, a journal called "Kooperationen" with every issue covering a special topic (mostly cooperation projects with a specific country or world region), and "IAM", an electronic newsletter focussing on academic mobility.

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

At the initiative of the Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAD) a platform for the promotion of Austria as an attractive location for study and research has been established. Its members are representatives of higher education institutions and of ministries. The activities of this platform focus on the participation in major education fairs (EAIE, NAFSA, APAIE, European Higher Education Fairs) and the preparation of information materials (brochures, folders, homepage, etc. see also 21.b) i)). Still, the focus lies on Austria as part of the EHEA and not on the EHEA in general.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

This is common practice in HE and research and takes place directly between HEI. Besides, many bilateral programmes have been worked out.

There are also many multilateral projects and university networks, such as ASEA UNINET and the Eurasia Pacific Uninet supported by the The Ministry.

Besides, The Ministry contributes to implementing the millenium goals through special projects and funding for the Commission for Development Studies.

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

In the framework of visits of non-EHEA ministers round tables on issues related to HE and research policies are regularly organized by The Ministry. They include stake holders such as the UAS, FWF, ÖAD.

Austrian experts and The Ministry take part in fora on policy dialogue, eg. ASEM, EULAC, etc.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

This takes place on a case-to-case basis by the HEIs themselves; ENIC-NARIC Austria provides counselling and information

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.

Relevant information has been disseminated via the Austrian BOFUG

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 via the Austrian Accreditation Council

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes  No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

All HE provision in Austria must be accredited. It is sufficient evidence, if the programmes are accredited and officially recognized in their home countries,

## 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.

1. In general terms mastering the paradigm shift from teacher- to student-centred-learning and from input to output orientation.
2. the implementation of the Austrian Qualification Framework for all education sectors
3. the description of learning outcomes
4. the correct implementation of the whole ECTS package
5. the improvement of recognition practices in line with the spirit of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (arriving at a common understanding of "substantial difference")
6. the drafting of curricula for bachelor and master programmes in modular form including the provision of mobility windows



## 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?

In Austria a host of measures have been taken to make sure that the above-mentioned definition of the social dimension is met. As can be seen from some of the previous chapters of the template (especially, "flexible learning paths", "access", "LLL", and "mobility"), every effort is taken to open up higher education to all potential students. One major obstacle to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies is connected with the challenge of reaching those young people who do not grow up in an environment which is knowledgeable and appreciative of the added value of higher education. Another one is related to the fact that money will always remain a scarce "commodity" when it comes to financing a full study programme at home or abroad, i.e. full-cost coverage is not possible.

Most of the data and information provided are taken from the "Report on the Social Situation of Students 2007" (Bericht>Materialien zu sozialen Lage der Studierenden 2007), published by The Ministry.

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).

Austria provides two categories of aid measures for students: direct and indirect ones.

Direct measures:

needs-based grants, tuition refunds, transportation cost allowances, insurance cost subsidy, grants for the final study phase, grants for study abroad, language scholarships, mobility grants, grants for orphans, special grants (for cases of special study-related or social hardships and grants as award for outstanding academic achievements), and subsidized loans.

The homepage of the Study Grant Authority: [www.stipendium.at](http://www.stipendium.at) -- provides an overview of all direct support measures

Indirect measures:

family allowance, tax decuctions for students with children, health- and accident insurance, tax privileges, support for student housing and food services, subsidies for the Austrian Student Union.

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.

There are special grants to relieve financial hardship during a student's final study phase. These grants are paid for a period of up to 18 months.

To educate students about the added value of HE and to inform them about study programmes a so-called "student-checker" service has been installed by The Ministry. Students receive counselling in the last two years of secondary school to make sure they can make an informed choice before enrolling in a higher education programme.

The Ministry also sponsors the training of senior students as counsellors for beginning students. The training is carried out by the Austrian Student Union. The senior students then give the novices advice and a helping hand in study-related and administrative matters.

\* To widen the access of people who do not have a secondary school leaving certificate entitling them to study at a HEI, special exams called "Berufsreifeprüfung" (special university entrance qualification) are offered. They are available for persons who have completed a vocational training programme (apprenticeship) or a vocational education and training school of a duration of at least 3-years.

\* "Studienberechtigungsprüfung" (university entrance qualification exam) can be sat by any person without a certificate of secondary education. Successful passing will entitle them to enrol at a HEI.

As of 1995 UAS have been set up in all federal provinces of Austria so that most Austrians have access to a HEI in the region they live in.

About 25% of all students receive means-tested scholarships. Merit-based scholarships are available for students with outstanding academic achievements.

Tuition fees have been abolished for students who graduate within the envisaged time frame. The regulation will become effective at the beginning of the summer semester 2009. Tuition fees will be reimbursed to those students who receive a means-tested scholarship.

The direct and indirect aid schemes are mentioned above.

There are subsidized residences and student cafeterias available at all study locations (about 30,000 beds in over 200 residences). There are day-care centres for students with children, and special health and accident insurance. Subsidized student cafeterias offer low-cost meals at nearly all HEI.

In addition to the above-mentioned counselling services before and in the early stages of studying career centres keep students informed about their professional careers options after graduation and about the situation on the labour market.

More and more study programmes are offered to accommodate the needs of working and part-time students, especially with a view to scheduling classes from late afternoon to the evening hours, with the correspondingly adapted administrative and counselling services.

Especially for these students, virtual learning platforms have been developed which provide course materials, curricula, and other relevant information via special websites and download facilities.

ERASMUS grants are being topped-up by national funds to reduce the financial contribution of the mobile students to an affordable level.

All students in higher education are eligible for all support measures mentioned, except those at private universities, who do not have access to all the support measures.

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?

Yes, the report on the social situation of students mentioned under II.1. It provides an overview of how student support measures have developed over the last few years.

The "Studienbeihilfenbehörde" ("Study Grant Authority") is keeping track of direct support measures in the form of statistics.

### **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?

Secure the access from all social groups to HE and to mobility programmes.

(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).

An amendment of the Student Support Act which became effective on Sept. 1, 2007 increased the funds for means-tested scholarships by 12%. The main beneficiaries of this measure are students from low-income families.

A further amendment which became effective on Sept. 1, 2008 implements the reforms envisaged in the 2007 government programme. They take heed of the findings of the "Report on the Social Situation of Students 2007" and of recommendations by the Austrian Student Union. The most important issues are:

- \* raising the cap of family income for means-tested scholarships by 20% in order to increase the number of grantees.
- \* increasing the cap on the grantee's allowed additional income to €8,000 per year.
- \* special support measures for students with children, based on the number of children, and the time needed for child care.
- \* special support measures for students with special needs.
- \* providing mobility grants for entire study programmes carried out abroad.
- \* increasing the funds for merit-based grants

Furthermore the existing study support measures were adapted to the latest developments of the law regulating university studies.

A long-time need has been answered by providing a means-tested scholarship for students who would like to embark on an entire study programme abroad. This is possible as of the winter semester 2008/09. Thus the Bologna objective of portability of grants has been implemented in Austria.

Further funds will be made available for mobility actions carried out by HEI.

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

There are no classic underrepresented groups in Austria. The amount spent for student aid for 2007 was 191.3 million Euros. The estimate for 2008 is appr. €200m. Further increases are planned for 2009 and 2010.

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

see 5b and c above

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

A summary of the most important direct student aid measures is presented every year by the Study Grant Authority (performance report). The Ministry has a



controlling function. The results of the 2007 and 2008 amendments will be evaluated in due time.

#### **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).

The authority responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy for the student aid programme is department I/8 (Student Support and Counselling) of the Ministry of Science and Research ([www.bmwf.gv.at/submenu/wissenschaft/national/studienfoerderung](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenu/wissenschaft/national/studienfoerderung)). The Study Grant Authority is responsible for counselling and information services ([www.stipendium.at](http://www.stipendium.at))

Last but not least, The Ministry has installed a student ombudsing service, which serves as a help center for students who have complaints about unfair treatment.

## **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?