



Bologna Secretariat Completed National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email (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

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|-----------------------------|--|
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| Date | 1 November 2008 |
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| | National Agency for Higher Education, Beatrice Mancini Ulbrich International programme Office for Education and training, Fredrik Andersson, Association of Swedish Higher Education, Ann Fritzell, Swedish Association of University Teachers and Stefan Björk The Swedish National Union of Students |
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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 Government bill 2004/05:162, New world – new university was adopted by the Parliament in February 2006. Changes in the Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance have been decided and issued according to that. The reform covers the whole system for higher education and came into effect from July 1, 2007.

Some of the main characteristics of the reform:

- Higher education degrees and courses are divided into three cycles.
- All degree descriptions have been reviewed and the degrees are placed at either first, second or third level. The new degree descriptions are based on the expected learning outcomes of the student and related to the Qualifications Framework of the Bologna Process. The higher education institutions (HEIs) have specified the learning outcomes of each course.
- A new two-year Master's Degree is introduced within the second cycle.
- The credit system has been reformed and the new system is in line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- Diploma Supplement is introduced also for the third cycle.

2. Partnership

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

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is the national supervisory authority for higher education which includes the HEI:s implementation of the new degree structure.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up ¹

Yes No

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

¹ A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

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

Other (please specify) The International Programme Office for education and training, (LLP National Agency), Bologna experts' group, coordinated by LLP National Agency

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group² Yes No

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

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" 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): University administrator (LLP coordinator)

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

In 2000 an informal Bologna coordination group was set up.(2.a) The group meets at regular intervals to exchange information and discuss Bologna-related issues.

The national Bologna experts group is coordinated by the LLP National Agency. Representatives from the ministry are invited to meetings of the group on an irregular basis.

² A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna 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.

All students within higher education are enrolled in the three cycle degree system as of July 1 2007.

The degrees are awarded at both first and second level with General qualifications, Qualifications in the fields of Arts or with Professional qualifications

The professional degrees that are more than three years of length have not been split into bachelor and master degrees, but they are nevertheless part of the reform. All educational programmes consist of courses that have been placed at either first, second (advanced) or third level and the professional degrees have been placed at either first or second level depending on the expected learning outcomes of the students and the length of the studies. The Teacher degree is placed at first and second level depending on its focus.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all³ 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 ⁴ | % of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 |
|---|--|--|
| 320 000 | 320 000 | 100 per cent |

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

Sweden is implementing a three cycle degree system since July 1 2007.

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 elements⁵ 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

³ "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*

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

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

- information on 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)

100 per cent of the doctoral students follow structured individualised doctoral programmes including teaching e.g. meant to broaden the competence. The normal length of doctoral studies is 4 years, while the average net duration of doctoral studies is just under 4.5 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.

Following the Law on Higher education (1992:1434) all HE at all levels is based on research. All HEI:s pursue education and research integrated to each other. and there are no teaching universities.

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

Percentage of GDP spent on research in HE from public funds is 0.89 per cent and from private funds 0.18 per cent. The total annual national research expenditure in HE from public funds is SEK 20.7 billion and from private funds SEK 4.6 billion.

The allocation of state research funds to tertiary education as a sector is the result of political priorities set by the Government and Riksdag. The direct funding for research and doctoral studies is allocated separately from funding for other forms of higher education. It is the Government and Riksdag that decide on the distribution of funding to the institutions and to the areas of research at the institutions. The distribution of the government grants for research is based on the historical allocation, and is hence not based on any formulas. The distribution to each institution only changes when the Government makes new decisions and priorities. The funding is then delivered as a lump sum to each of the areas of research at every institution concerned.

In the Government's Research and Innovation Bill, presented in October 2008, a new quality-based system for allocation of state research funds is proposed.

Quality will be measured by means of two criteria – publications/references to publications and external research funds.

Doctoral students have several alternative ways of financing their studies. Appointment to a doctoral position– which is an employment and one of the most advantageous funding forms – is the most common. Financing can also take the form of some other appointment in HEI (for example as an *assistant or junior lecturer*), a postgraduate study grant, employment outside HEI with or without any links to the student’s own research, or a scholarship. The absence of tuition fees in Swedish HE applies to doctoral studies as well as to other levels. Doctoral students with postgraduate study grants are entitled, on application, to appointment to a doctoral position when two years of full-time study is remaining the award of their degree according to the individual study plan.

There is also a small number of doctoral students financed by private funding and by a mix of private and public funding.

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

Yes

No

If Yes, please specify:

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education together with Statistics Sweden do follow up-reports on the establishment at the labour market for doctoral graduates.

6. Access⁶ and admission to the next cycle

Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles. NB Swedish HE works in a Numerus Clausus system.

From 1 July 2007 all Swedish higher education degrees, programmes and courses are placed at either first, second or third level. The general regulation is given by the HE ordinance (1992:100). This regulation offers the HEI:s to also add a local regulation.

Access to the second cycle:

a, General academic degrees and degrees in the arts:

A person who has a first level degree comprising at least three years of full-time study, or an equivalent foreign degree, meets the basic eligibility requirement for a programme leading to a second level degree.

b, The professional academic degrees have been placed at either first or second cycle (except for the Teacher degree) depending on the duration of the studies and the amount of specialisation required to obtain a degree. Long educational programmes (four years or more) leading to professional degrees (generally leading to regulated professions) have not, however, been split in two parts. This means that students in these long programmes do not have to apply again after the first cycle once admitted to the programme.

⁶ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: “Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.”

There are, however, also several programmes at the second level leading to professional degrees and that do build on first level professional degrees of a duration of less than four years.

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

90 per cent, related to the proportion of 10% University diploma, requiring 120 ECTS and awarded within the first cycle.

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

University diploma, 120 ECTS (see above) does not give access to the second cycle.

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 No In some cases

complete additional courses Yes No In some cases

have work experience Yes No In some cases

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

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

In addition to the basic eligibility requirements the HEI:s can also apply special eligibility requirements. Individuals who through Swedish or foreign education, practical experience or for some other reason are capable of profiting from second level education should also meet basic as well as special eligibility criteria.

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

all students Yes No

holders of particular first cycle qualifications Yes No

students of the same field coming from other HEIs Yes No

f) which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies (*please tick*):

entrance exam Yes No In some cases

additional courses Yes No In some cases

work experience Yes No In some cases

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Studies at second level are necessary in order to be eligible to the third cycle. The basic eligibility requirements for third level study is met by anyone who

- has taken a second level degree or
- has completed course requirements for at least four years of full-time study, including at least one year at the second level, or
- has acquired the equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

In addition to the basic eligibility requirements the higher education institutions may also apply special eligibility requirements.

Please indicate:

- a) the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle

100 per cent (following an individual application)

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

All second cycle qualifications give access to the third cycle.

- c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

There are no major transitional problems concerning access between cycles foreseen (since compensatory measures required for students coming from another study field are not counted as major transitional problems). 90% of first cycle degrees give access to second cycle. There are no second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.

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

No national, central initiatives are being taken to enhance the employability of bachelor graduates. Sweden has a longstanding tradition of shorter degrees (two or three years of study) within higher education.

Since the three cycle graduates was introduced only in July 2007, there is no statistical data on employability status available.

The latest survey about employability *from 2005 and relating to graduates 2003* shows that 65 per cent of the students from bachelor programmes was established on the labour-market 1.5 year after graduation. Being “established” on the labour market means being employed in a given month in 2005 and having a salary exceeding 17 900 Euros/year during 2005. Furthermore, there should be no indications of unemployment or participation in any unemployment programme.

The statistics shows that the level of establishment in a higher extent depends on the field of study than the length of study.

We do not expect any major changes as a consequence of the new three cycle structure. The variations in employment possibilities are more often due to the economic situation of the labour market.

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:

Sweden has very few regulations of the labour market, only some regulated professions e.g. teacher, nurse and doctor often working in the public sector. But the public sector as such and public service are not regulated with respect to degree holders. Each employment is regarded as a unique case and the employer considers which qualifications are needed and employs in line with that.

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 prepared⁷?

Yes No

Comment

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

Yes No

⁷ A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

Comment

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

Yes No

Comment ECTS credits are also included in the third cycle. The Swedish Higher education credits used in the national qualifications framework are equivalent to ECTS credits.

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

Yes No

Comment Yes, it was developed in cooperation with primary stakeholders and then widely circulated for consultation during 2007.

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

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

Yes No

Comment

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:

f) Are all formal arrangements/decisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes No

Comment The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has been given the task to publish and maintain a presentation of the framework directed towards different stakeholders such as students, employers and foreign HEIs.

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 A publication of the framework is expected before the end of 2008. The framework will be updated on a continuous basis.

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)⁸

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG⁹ 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.

The national quality assurance system has been evaluated in 2006 by an external expert team, who has found that the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education complies fully with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The Agency, submitted this evaluation to ENQA, who confirmed the Full Membership in a decision by the ENQA board in 2006.

c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes No

The introduction of specific financial or other incentives aimed at improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of these incentives:

- Other measures

Yes No

If Yes, please outline these measures

d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

Yes No

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

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

⁹ ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

Internal QA systems are the responsibility of each HEI. Government and national agencies do not necessarily have complete information about the organisation and development of these systems. All HEIs are required by law to organise their activities so that high quality is maintained. Quality assurance is a joint concern for staff and students.

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

The government has not asked the HEIs about this, however there are strong reasons to believe that most if not all HEIs do have these arrangements.

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.

Student assessments is the responsibility of the individual HEIs and it is therefore impossible to answer this question by one single answer. This will show when the National Agency for Higher Education carries out the quality audits of the programmes.

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 All HEIs publish updated information on their courses and programmes. However, the HEIs compete on a market, and therefore they cannot be expected to publish "impartial" information. But the QA-reports made by the Agency are published and often cited in press. Moreover, according to the Higher Education Ordinance, all courses offered in HE must

have a course syllabus indicating to which cycle the course belongs, the intended learning outcomes, the literature and other teaching aids that are to be used.

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 national quality assurance system, which has been in place since 1995 and in its present form since 2007, is made up of five major components that interact with and support each other. These are:

- a) audits of the quality procedures at the higher education institutions,
- b) programme evaluations,
- c) appraisal of entitlement to award degrees,
- d) thematic evaluations and thematic studies,
- e) distinction to centres of excellent quality in higher education

Audits

Two rounds of audits have been conducted during the years 1995-2002. During this period the higher education institutions were in the process of establishing their own systems for quality assurance and quality development. The audits therefore focused primarily on development. Now, these systems are assumed to be in place and to function, which means that the audits starting from 2007 and onwards focus more on results and the outcomes of the quality assurance procedures at the HEIs.

In order to determine how well grounded the quality procedures of the higher education institutions are in operation and how they are conducted in practice, the audits also comprise faculty and departmental levels. At each HEI two to six areas are selected for in-depth study. The audits are based on the self-evaluations of the HEIs, quality procedure plans, follow-ups, evaluations and other material requested by the panel of assessors.

Quality assurance procedures are assessed on the basis of the seven aspects recommended in ENQA's Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The general aspects of quality will be appraised not merely on the basis of plans and documentation but also on how they are integrated, implemented and monitored in day-to-day operations. The audits focus on the outcomes of the quality assurance procedures.

Every HEI will be audited during a six-year cycle. The methodology used for the audits resemble that adopted previously, with panels of external assessors, self-evaluation, site visits and written reports. On the basis of the assessors' report, the Vice-Chancellor of the University will decide whether the National Agency has confidence, limited confidence or no confidence in quality assurance procedures at the higher education institution. In those cases where the National Agency has no confidence in the quality procedures, the higher education institution in question will be given one year to remedy the shortcomings specified.

Programme evaluations

Between 2001–2006 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education completed the first round of evaluating all study programmes that lead to the award of a general degree or a professional qualification. A new six-year cycle of programme evaluations started in 2007, covering all degrees at first, second and third level¹⁰, but with some methodological changes. In the new organisation, appraisal takes place in three stages. Initially the Agency compiles an overall national survey of the major subject areas that describes the programmes to be evaluated in any given year. In the next stage, a selection of individual programmes is made on the basis of these surveys. This selection is based on self-evaluations, key statistics and other factual material. Programmes which this material indicates may run the risk of failing to maintain sound quality will be selected for in-depth evaluation. The decision to conduct an in-depth evaluation is made by the Vice-chancellor of the University. The third stage means that the programmes selected will undergo in-depth appraisals, which also include a site-visit.

Just as in the earlier programme evaluations, reviews are based on a set of published criteria and on external evaluation by panels of assessors. The panels of assessors submit their opinion in reports on which the Vice-Chancellor of the University will base any decisions it makes. In cases where the in-depth evaluation reveals quality shortcomings of a serious nature, the Vice-chancellor of the University will question the entitlement of the higher education institution to award a degree. The institution will then have one year in which to remedy the shortcomings indicated. Unless sufficient measures have been taken the institution's entitlement to award the degree will be withdrawn.

Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees

Appraisal of entitlement to award degrees is still an important element in the Swedish quality assurance system. HEIs applying for entitlement to award professional qualifications are appraised by the National Agency, which also decides in each case. Independent course providers apply to the Government, upon which the Agency appraises the application and recommends a decision. HEIs that are not entitled to award third level degrees must be appraised for the entitlement to award a Degree of Master (Two Years) in these subject areas.

The Agency has formulated the aspects and criteria on which appraisal of entitlement to award degrees will be based. These criteria are general ones. The concrete criteria that will apply for each specific appraisal must be determined by the panel of assessors appointed. The descriptions of learning outcomes in the degree ordinance are to provide guidance for this task.

The method used for appraisal of entitlement to award degrees resemble an in-depth programme evaluation, with a panel of external assessors, a site visit, expert opinion and a decision by the Vice-chancellor of the University.

Thematic evaluations and thematic studies

Thematic evaluations aim to provide a national overview of how certain aspects of quality are being dealt with. This kind of national perspective, where the operations of all the HEIs are studied at the same time, also enables comparisons to be made and examples of good practice to be highlighted. These

¹⁰ Apart from university diplomas

evaluations are meant to provide inspiration and spur other institutions to improve quality.

The *thematic studies* are intended to produce in-depth knowledge about various phenomena in higher education in Sweden. Three thematic studies have been made, in which external researchers have been engaged to cooperate with the National Agency in studying issues that play an important role for the quality of programmes. Within the framework of these projects different forms of examination and degree projects were compared and also the links with research in various programmes at different higher education institutions. Furthermore, a study about the working conditions of academic teachers and academic governance has been published.

Thematic studies should be regarded as an integrated aspect of the quality assurance system in which the results of evaluations of HEIs or of programmes can be probed into more deeply. Thematic studies can also be initiated in other ways, for instance issues can be raised by the Ministry, the higher education institutions, students, future employers or other stakeholders.

Centres of excellent quality in higher education

As a part of the national quality assurance system, the Agency has established an award for outstanding centres of education, the Centre of Excellent Quality in Higher Education Award. The aim of the award is to stimulate quality enhancement and to inspire others by offering examples of good practice. Applications are voluntary and the higher education institutions themselves decide which educational organisations they want to nominate as particularly excellent. The educational organisations that apply for the distinction have to submit a report that offers a convincing description and analysis of how they operate and how this benefits student learning. To provide guidance, the National Agency has published criteria on which appraisal is based. The selection process is carried out by an international review panel and a group of international field experts. Site visits is made to the organisations that can be considered to have any chance of being awarded the distinction.

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 education¹¹

Yes No

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

All the degrees in the degree ordinance, apart from the university diplomas, are evaluated.

¹¹ 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.

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"/> |

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)

In December 2005 was reported, Evaluation of national Agency for Higher Education, Sweden According to Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in The EHEA. Reg. no 643-1440-05)

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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) as full members in external review teams | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) as observers in external review teams | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students) | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes) | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) in preparation of self-assessment reports. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) in follow-up procedures: | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | In some cases <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

D) Students, always as full members of the external review team, contribute to the conclusions drawn by the review team as well as the recommendations summarised in review teams final report. The Vice-Chancellor of the University makes a decision on the basis of the final report, which means that the decision making process does not include any member of the external review team. There are no observers in the review teams at all.

G) HEI:s are encouraged to include student representatives in the preparation of self-assessment reports and student surveys are included in programme evaluations.

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:

NOQA – Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education
EAIR, European Association of Institutional Research
INQAAHE, International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies
EFQUEL – European Foundation for Quality in eLearning
EDEN – European Distance and E-learning Network

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

Concerning 12 a on international participation in the governance of national agencies for quality assurance we want to stress that our constitution does allow only Swedish citizens as members of the board of a national agency.

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)

Since 1 January 2003 every student who graduates within the first and second cycles receives a Diploma Supplement. Since 1 July 2007 every student who graduates within the third cycle receives a Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement is in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format, in English, and issued automatically and free of charge. Thus, 100 % of the students graduating in 2009 will receive a Diploma Supplement.

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

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

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

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes No
 - *please specify the language* English
- issued free of charge for a fee
- issued automatically on request
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles.

Yes No

Comment

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualifications.

Yes No

Comment: The question is unclear – a Diploma Supplement does not need to be translated, but other documents may need translation depending on the purpose of use for the holder.

c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity of the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market).

Yes No

Comment: If it is stated in the Diploma Supplement.

d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes No

Comment

14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents¹² 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 Convention was implemented into national legislation in 2001:

“If a student at a higher education institution in Sweden has successfully completed a certain higher education programme, the student is entitled to credit for this when studying at another higher education institution. This does not, however, apply if there is a substantial difference between the educational programmes.

The same applies to students who have successfully completed a certain educational programme

1. at a university or other institution of higher education in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway or in an entity that is a party to the Council of Europe Convention of 11 April 1997 on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Swedish Treaty Series 2001:46), or
2. at the Nordic School of Public Health.” (the Higher Education Ordinance, chapter 6, section 6)

All negative decisions on recognition of previous studies and access to higher education can be appealed to the Board of Appeals for Higher Education, an independent juridical body.

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

¹² 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)

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

The Department for Evaluation of Foreign Higher Education within the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is responsible for *de facto* recognition of foreign qualifications. The primary purpose of evaluations is advice on the value of qualifications to employers. The recognition statements can also be used as guidance and tool for recognition at HEIs but are not binding decisions on academic recognition. The department strictly follows the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for Recognition, not only for countries that have ratified the Lisbon Convention, but also for other regions.

In 2001, the General Assembly of the Association of Swedish Higher Education, that represents all higher education institutions, adopted Recommendations on Recognition of Foreign Higher Education. The recommendations call upon the members to show generosity in their attitude towards recognition of foreign qualifications. The Code of Good Practice attached to the recommendations emphasizes the importance of transparent procedures.

In 2004, the Swedish Agency conducted a follow-up study on the implementation of the Lisbon Convention at institutional level. The study showed that the majority of institutions had internal policy documents on recognition based on the Code of Good Practice. The principle of generous attitude towards acceptance of foreign qualifications is followed. Only necessary documents are requested. Students have to submit detailed course descriptions only in exceptional cases. Students automatically receive information on their right to appeal against negative decisions.

The review also included an analysis of judicial decisions of the Board of Appeals for Higher Education. The results showed that practice had become more generous and that in many cases negative decisions were based on substantial differences in outcome of study periods or of qualifications rather than on differences in detailed content.

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

In January 2006, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education added an introduction to the Diploma Supplement model stating that information in all eight sections should be given, including section 6 where additional information can be given on for instance study periods at another higher education institution. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

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

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education recognizes qualifications:

- obtained by distance learning from recognized programmes and institutions
- from branch campuses that are accredited separately from the mother institution
- from international institutions if the degree is recognized in the country where the programme is provided
- issued by recognized institutions for studies at other institutions abroad ("franchised degrees") if a corresponding programme is also provided at the mother institution.
The same policy is recommended to higher education institutions.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
See 14 a) and b) above.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
See 14 a) and b) above.

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

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
See 14 a) and b) above.

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

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice

The National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges provides information in English about HE programmes and institutions on the website studera.nu and also about the validation of foreign upper secondary education.

The Swedish Institute provides information in English about the Swedish HE system and institutions on the website studyinsweden.se.

There is an English version of the website of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education where for instance information on the Swedish HEI:s is available. The legal provisions concerning higher education are published in English at the Swedish Government's website. A description of the education system is also included in English in the national format for Diploma Supplement.

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

The Swedish ENIC is part of the Department for Evaluation of Foreign Higher Education within the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. The department has a staff of 22 of whom 18 are credential evaluators. The collected experience and competence within the field is very high in the department. Half of the staff has been working with credential evaluations for more than ten years, several others have more than five years experience. Recruitments have often been done from the HEI:s or agencies with similar tasks. the language competence is wide. Apart from common languages such as English, german and French and the Nordic languages and Finnish, the office handles documents in Spanish, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic. The budget for the department is about 13.5 million SEK (of which 12.5 are costs for staff), plus overhead costs.

The office is prepared and has good competence to serve the public with expertise on request. The web is an important tool and the department has developed differentiated information according to possible target groups. In December 2007 the office introduced a webportal for staff at HEIs involved with recognition of foreign degrees and transfer of credits. The portal contains country profiles, sections on recognition methodology, a question and answer function etc. The department is also in the process of developing better contacts with agencies and organisations that need knowledge about the recognition procedures such as employment agencies and employers' associations. As a result the external bodies should be able to improve their services to the public. The department has close contacts with the staff at HEI:s concerned with recognition and is often interacting with them, both in day-to-day activities and in seminars and conferences. Cooperation with other competent authorities and stakeholders is also well established.

Internationally, the centre is an active participant in the ENIC/NARIC-network. Over the last years, the Nordic recognition centres have developed a thorough and fruitful cooperation. The centre also has well-established contacts with several other important recognition bodies and higher education agencies throughout the world. The staff participates actively in EAIE conferences and training activities.

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

After the Lisbon Convention had been ratified the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education was commissioned to ensure its implementation at institutional level. The information campaign involving all institutions was carried out in fall 2002. The Convention and all supplementary texts as well as examples of good practice were presented. The national brochures presenting the Convention and the code of good practice were distributed. The Agency has got a permanent

responsibility for information on the Convention. Biannual national conferences on recognition of foreign qualifications are very good for information and training of persons responsible for recognition at institutional level. Updated information on the Convention is available at the Agency's website. The Agency is also answering questions on implementation of the Convention in individual cases and on request organizes training for higher education institutions.

Since 2002, when the Lisbon Convention was incorporated in the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance, it has also become subject for legal supervision at the national level. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education supervises the HEI:s in Sweden. That means that it ensures their compliance with the laws and regulations in force in the area of higher education. The Agency inspects a number of HEI:s every year. These visits are intended to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations that apply to higher education. Inspections focus in general on legal rights of students and the Student Union is always requested to express its opinion. Results of the visits are published. In case of established deficiencies the Agency afterwards requires a report on measures taken to improve the situation. Sustained problems can be reported to the Government. The Government, the Agency itself, organizations or individuals can also initiate investigations of a specific issue. The studies can suggest changes in legal regulations. The majority of the investigations are the result of student complaints.

The Agency has published several documents describing detailed criteria and procedures used for recognition of foreign qualifications. All publications are available in Swedish at the Agency's website. Information for applicants that includes short descriptions of criteria and procedures is published in English and six other languages. Examples of evaluations are stored in a public database for use as an information source primarily for higher education institutions. The Agency also acts as an expert body and answers requests on recognition of individual qualifications.

Information on the right to recognition of studies abroad is given by the Swedish HEI:s. In general students are informed at the beginning of their studies. The information is included in catalogues; student sites on the web and in local degree regulations. The local study advisors act as contact persons in recognition matters and inform individuals on further details such as requested documents, etc. Special information packages exist only for the organized student exchange programmes. HEI:s are legally obliged to give information on the right to appeal negative decisions. The Agency has extensive web based information. When the application is submitted the applicant receives a letter with information on other measures that he/she can take while waiting for the recognition decision. The expected waiting time is stated.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS¹³

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

¹³ Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes¹⁴ in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

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

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes¹⁵ 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:

| |
|---|
| All HE is calculated using Higher Education Credits, "högskolepoäng". These are completely compatible with ECTS so that a year of fulltime studies consisting of 40 weeks corresponds to 60 Higher Education Credits. |
|---|

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes No

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

| |
|-----|
| 1/1 |
|-----|

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

Yes No

| |
|--|
| If Yes , please explain: The NSHU was in the early years of 2000 given the task to support the development of HE pedagogy. This task will for the future be in the hands of the HEIs. |
|--|

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

Yes No

| |
|---|
| If Yes , please explain: Yes, this is a part of the external quality assurance performed by the Agency. The Agency has also published reports Students Mirror, "Studentspegeln" focussing on student workload etc on the national level. |
|---|

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

Yes No

| |
|---|
| If Yes , please explain: No, the use of credits is not new to the HEIs, there has been no need to assist in the understanding or application of ECTS or högskolepoäng, since staff and stakeholders are used to the credit instrument. the Bologna experts' work on guiding the HEIs for getting the ECTS label. |
|---|

¹⁴ Except doctoral studies

¹⁵ 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:

Since the Autumn of 2003 all higher education institutions are obliged to assess prior and experiential learning of applicants who demand such an assessment and who lack the formal qualifications (or the documentation of such qualifications). The obligation is stated in the Higher Education Ordinance and accreditation decisions can be appealed. Accreditation of prior and experiential learning has been available for a few years and it seems to have opened a new possibility for non-traditional learners. In 2006 around 5 800 applicants asked to get their non-formal qualifications validated, which is around 30 percent more than in 2005. Almost 2 000 applicants were considered to meet the admission requirements for the programme or course they applied for. Due to competition with other students, only around 1 000 applicants were admitted.

The Association of Swedish Higher Education (the Swedish rector's conference) has conducted development work in relation to the accreditation of prior learning. In November 2003 the Association issued a recommendation to the HEIs on this issue. This kind of assessment procedures is still in an early stage of development.

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

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

(16 b and c) According to the HE Ordinance a student also has the right to be allocated credits for prior, non-formal or informal, learning if the level and amount of knowledge largely corresponds to the education for which allocation of credits is sought. In some cases, in order to prevent a lack of professionals within nursing and teaching, the Government has given some HEIs the task to elaborate models for recognition of prior and experiential learning in order to use the experience of people already working in these sectors and to shorten the formal education needed for these individuals.

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: pls see 16 b

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

Comprehensively Some A little None

Please describe the current situation: see description above.

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.

An important feature of the Swedish education system is that “dead-ends” should be avoided. It should be possible to follow different path ways to higher education. Swedish HEI:s have a long tradition of offering their courses and programmes to students with different backgrounds, students working part- or full-time etc. Many courses and programmes are given as part-time courses or distance courses. The fact that the system of higher education is built on an accumulation of modules and credits enhances the possibilities for lifelong learning and for moving in and out of the system.

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:
Since 2003 all HEI:s are obliged to assess prior and experiential learning of applicants who demand such an assessment (se above point 16)

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:
As from 2008, the possibility for the HE institutions to decide on the grounds of selection to be used for recruitment has been increased from 20 per cent to a maximum of one third of the student places, in order to widen access paths to higher education. The HE institutions have an even greater freedom to use alternative selection criteria for admission to the advanced level. However, it is important to note that the eligibility requirements, in both cases, are less flexible,

requiring, as a general principle, an upper secondary degree and a bachelor degree respectively.

The Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is used for selection as an alternative to upper secondary grades when the number of applicants exceeds the number of study places available. At least one third of all places are allocated on the basis of upper secondary education grades and at least one third on the basis of the score from SAT. The test measures knowledge and skills and provides an indication of the ability to succeed in higher education. The Agency is responsible for the implementation and development of the test. The test is held twice per year, is arranged by HEIs and is offered at various locations in Sweden. The test is only available in Swedish. In 2007 the test was taken by 74 000 individuals.

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:

Within the framework Swedish Net university, 35 universities and university colleges in Sweden worked together in order to give students the opportunity to take part of distance education at a university or a university college. Within the framework, Swedish HEI:s offered a total number of 3700 distance courses and programmes during the academic year 2006/07. Around 89 000 students were enrolled in distance education classes during 2006-07, which is more than three times higher than ten years ago. From June 2008 the framework Swedish Net University will be gradually phased out. At December 31st, 2008 the Swedish Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education, which supports educational development initiatives in all higher education (including distance education and the Swedish Net University), will be closed and its engagements will be phased out during 2008. From January 1st, 2009 the HEI:s have full responsibility to develop distance education. From July 1st, 2008 the responsibility for general information about distance studies was transferred to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, while the responsibility for technical information was given to the National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges.

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:

Preparatory studies aimed at applicants who lack the specific qualifications for a given programme, especially programmes in natural sciences and engineering, are widely used. A total number of 3 500 students were enrolled in the study year of 2006/07.

By certain regulation (ordinance 2002:763), HEIs also have the possibility to provide college education as an introduction to higher education. This education

works as a “bridge” between adult education/upper secondary education and HE (half of the courses are university level courses, the other half upper secondary level courses).

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 percentage of non traditional students coming from a less favourable social background has risen from 18 per cent to 25 per cent between the study years of 1993/94 and 2006/07. Unfortunately, there are no updated figures available, due to outdated data for an increasing part of the relevant age cohorts. However, there are clear indications that the trend towards widened participation is less significant in recent years.

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees¹⁶

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

Swedish HEIs have the status of governmental agencies, which has implications on their right to enter into agreements with other state organisations (Swedish or foreign). There are also other legal issues such as the right of Swedish HEIs to cooperate with other HEIs (national or foreign) on issues such as admission of students, examination and the issuing of a degree. HEIs issuing degrees included in the Swedish degree ordinance, have to be granted permission to issue the degree in question.

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)?

The follow-up of Swedish HEIs' participation in Erasmus Mundus shows that the participation is rather good. Swedish HEIs are involved in 22 out of the 103 Erasmus Mundus masters granted support by the EU during the period 2004-2008. There is a strong participation in engineering in the programme.

¹⁶ 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.

On the national level joint study programmes are common in the third cycle by the doctoral student schools which means that HEIs cooperate around a group of doctoral students concentrating on research studies on a special theme.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

Erasmus Mundus: Swedish HEIs are involved in 22 programmes.

On a national level, joint programmes are widespread within the third cycle. Since 2001 there are 16 national doctoral schools and since the start, 727 PhD students have enrolled in the programmes (94 have graduated, so far, with either a licentiate or a doctoral degree). The doctoral schools were evaluated by the National Agency for Higher Education in 2008 (Report 2008:16 R).

More joint programmes exist, however no comprehensive statistics is available.

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

An inquiry has presented its proposal for removing the legal obstacles for HEIs in Sweden to award joint degrees. The inquiry is currently going through a referral process with the stakeholders. Proposals for adjusting the legislation will be presented in a Government bill to the Parliament in spring 2009.

The national doctoral schools receive specific state support.

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

No

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 follow-up report by the National Agency for Higher Education in 2008, showed that HEIs are working intensively with information to and integration of foreign students coming to Sweden. The cooperation within the HEIs between faculties, student services, international offices and student organisations has intensified. HEIs are constantly improving the systems for credit transfer for Swedish students having studied abroad. HEIs are also working with improving the conditions for teaching abroad, for example through including the teaching time abroad in the required annual teaching time at the Swedish institution. Some HEIs have also granted extra funds for outgoing teacher mobility. More HEIs are getting involved in intensive programmes and course cooperation to involve more teachers and thus encourage them to teach abroad.

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

In a coming Government Bill on internationalisation some initiatives will be presented to make the process smoother for foreign students coming to Sweden to study. A "forum for internationalisation" has been set up, involving the different state and non-governmental agencies involved in the process of handling the process that foreign students coming to Sweden have to go through. The bill will also include a proposal for a prolongation of the time period that a foreign student (non-EU/EEA) is allowed to stay in Sweden after graduation. This is to allow them more time to look for a professional position in Sweden.

For the visiting researchers included by the directive 2005/71/EG there are special arrangements. For those not included by the directive, the general system is considered to function well.

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

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Study support- basic requirements:

- You may be awarded study support no later than in the year of your 54th birthday.
- You must be attending a school/higher education institution or course that qualifies you for study support.
- You must be studying at least half-time.
- You must study for at least three weeks.

One of the measures for improving mobility is the portability of study grants and loans. At least 30 000 Swedish students are every year outside Sweden for studying at foreign HEI:S beside the ordinary exchange programmes etc.

Foreign students' right to study support

If the student is not a Swedish citizen and is planning to study, he/she can receive financial aid assuming that he/she has a basic right to it. If the Swedish National Board of Student Aid, CSN decides that he/she fulfils the basic requirements, CSN will then establish whether the student meets the other requirements

Under the terms of EC law, EU, EEA and Swiss nationals may be treated as Swedish citizens and be entitled to study support if they fulfil the following conditions

- they are working or running their own business in Sweden
- they are a close relative of someone working or running his/her own business in Sweden
- they enjoy a status as a permanent resident of Sweden

Third-country nationals also enjoy this right if they have a status as a long-term resident in Sweden or in another EU Member State according to the Swedish Migration Board. The latter must also have a residence permit in Sweden.

All foreign citizens are entitled to study support aid under the terms of Swedish regulations if they

- hold a permanent residence permit
- have moved to Sweden for a purpose other than to study
- have a right of residence and permanent ties with Sweden

Exceptions from these rules can be made if there are specific reasons for doing so. Such a reason can be if the person has refugee status according to the Swedish Migration Board.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognized?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

HEIs are responsible for the recognition of study periods taken abroad. The process of recognition and transfer of credits is generally smoother if the student has studied abroad through an exchange agreement between the Swedish HEI and the foreign institution.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Each HEI has its own administration for supporting international students and staff with housing. In a Government bill to the Parliament in 2007, a new possibility for HEIs was introduced allowing them to rent housing with the purpose of sub-letting to students and staff coming to the HEI through exchange agreements. Some HEIs can guarantee housing to the incoming foreign students and staff.

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 Government has set a goal for the National agency for the Lifelong learning programme – the International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPO) – regarding outward student and teacher mobility within Erasmus. The goal is to reach 3000 outgoing students and 700 outgoing teachers during 2008. In order to achieve these goals IPO has decided to run a national Erasmus information campaign targeting students and teachers. The campaign is based on a survey that has been made among students, teachers and head of departments. Concrete activities are planned for the campaign, such as newspapers' debate articles, ads in student magazines, posters, a dedicated website, a short movie etc.

Besides this specific approach, IPO continues to address HEIs through conferences and seminars, by participating in student fairs and by organising meetings with representatives of HEIs.

In the coming Government Bill on internationalisation measures will be proposed to increase outward staff mobility, for example through an extra financial allocation to the institution per teacher who goes abroad to teach.

20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes No

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

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes No

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

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy "European Higher Education in a Global Setting"

Measures are proposed that will have an effect on Sweden's relations regarding higher education to the world outside the EU/EEA and the Bologna sphere. This will also have implications for the Swedish contribution to the visibility of the EHEA globally and the enhancement of the attractiveness of the EHEA.

b) What has your country done to:

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

The Swedish institute (SI) has had the task to inform an international audience about higher education in Sweden on the web (www.studyinsweden.se) and through other information channels. For the year 2009, the Government has proposed an increase in the funding of the SI with regards to the information efforts towards foreign students.

In a coming Government Bill on internationalisation a proposal of setting up specific offices for information on higher education in Sweden (and thus the EHEA) in a number of non-European countries is included. The National Agency for Higher Education has developed the Swedish national qualifications framework to clarify the higher education system in Sweden in relation to the qualifications framework of the EHEA. The Agency is also given the task to translate the national qualifications framework and to spread information about it internationally.

There is also a Nordic project group set up in 2008 with the purpose of looking at ways to improve information on higher education in the Nordic region.

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

The Government will put forward solutions to the legal issues regarding joint degrees in Sweden and plan to propose changes to the legislation in a Government Bill during the spring 2009.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

The Government has recently strengthened the national programme Linnaeus-Palme – a cooperation programme between Sweden and developing countries. The Government is proposing an introduction of fees for non EU/EEA nationals. This will be accompanied by two scholarship schemes – one intended for students from developing countries and one intended for students from any country outside the EU/EEA.

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

The Swedish Government takes part in policy dialogues with other world regions through, for example, the OECD and the Council of Europe. There are also bilateral initiatives with several non-Bologna countries.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

The Swedish Government has in 2008 received the report of the inquiry The Swedish National Commission on Validation. One of the commission's tasks was to investigate the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of the present division of labour in the validation and recognition of foreign academic degrees so as to facilitate the validation of education and professional experience acquired abroad. The inquiry presented a model according to which there should be a common point of entry to which immigrants can turn regardless of whether their education is completed or not, and regardless of the level of their education. The inquiry also underlined that there is a need for closer cooperation between the authorities involved. The proposals presented by the inquiry is currently being processed within the Government offices.

The Government is supporting HEIs with special funding to establish programmes for those third-country nationals who need to complement their higher education taken prior to arriving to Sweden. This mainly concerns those with education within the medical and health care sector. During 2009, the Government is going to establish a new procedure for recognition of qualifications for third-country nationals who are in the health and care sector and who wish to enter into professional activities within this field in Sweden.

In December 2007, the Swedish ENIC-office introduced a webportal for staff at HEIs involved with recognition of foreign degrees and transfer of credits. The portal contains country profiles, sections on recognition methodology, a question and answer function etc. The office also arranges frequent workshops for HEI staff about recognition of qualifications from countries in other world regions.

c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*? Please describe.

There has been no need to take any specific measures for implementation of these guidelines on government level, since national regulation is already in line with the guidelines.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

Short term and long term

- *quality assessments of the master degree programmes
- *the mobility of the teaching staff in HE
- *the mobility of the students at the first and second level
- *validating competences of third country professionals, a question of information and capacity
- *recognition of professional degrees
- * autonomy, financing and governing of HE
 - Reform on the autonomy of HEI
 - Reform on funding of HEI
 - Introduction of tuition fees for students outside the EHEA
 - Abolishment of the compulsory student union membership

There are four future, strategic fields for the Swedish HE policy

- **Improved quality in teaching and research,**

including

- reforms of the funding system for HEI:s following the proposals of and comments on the Commission report Resources for Quality (SOU2007:81)
- co operation between HEI:s in teaching as well as research for specialization and profile shaping
- international co operation for improving quality. A governmental bill with the focus on the internationalization of HE in Sweden, will include initiatives to strengthen teacher mobility and student mobility, to introduce a new funding structure of incoming third country students as well as to enhance information efforts on higher education in Sweden and improved coordination of the administration with regards to international mobility. The Bill will be put forward to the Parliament before the end of 2008.
- introduction of the possibility for Swedish HEIs to issue joint degrees (Government bill to be presented to the Parliament in spring 2009).
- the National Agency for Higher Education has got the task to invent and report on different systems of ranking and on their capacity to inform the students about the quality of different HEI:s (to be published November 08)
- participation in the OECD feasibility study on the assessment of higher education learning outcomes (to begin in 2009).

-**Autonomous HEI:s including**

- an inquiry on the possibilities of HEI:s to increase their strength and autonomy by a diminished detailed State governance (to be reported December 2008)

- **HEI: as attractive employers**

- based on the Commission report Careers for quality (SOU2007:98) and the comments from the consultation the government will propose on changes for the

research and teacher staff in both the Governmental bill on HE (to be decided spring 2009) and the governmental bill on research (see below).

-Improving the Swedish position in the international research society

a governmental bill on a strengthening boost of the research society, increasing the research budget with 1 billion SEK / year during the period 2009-and improving the conditions for researchers and staff of HEI:s following the Commission report Careers for Quality (SOU 2007:98).

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) 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?

Underrepresented groups include:

- Students coming from homes with no or poor study tradition.
- Students from some ethnic groups.
- Students with disabilities.
- A number of educational programmes are characterised by an unequal sex ratio.

Main obstacles include:

- Traditional patterns and attitudes towards higher education in general.
- Lack of support mechanisms for students who are in need of special support.

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).

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

The main goal of the educational system is that each citizen should have access to high quality education regardless of sex, social or economic background, place of residence etc.

The Act on Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education (2001:1286) prohibits discrimination and stipulates that the HEIs are to implement purposeful measures to actively promote equal rights for students and applicants, irrespective of their sex, ethnicity, religion or other creed, sexual orientation or functional disabilities.

Comprehensive legislation against discrimination, including all spheres of society, will enter into force on 1 January 2009. The main addition to the regulation in the Act on Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education is that the proposed law contains two new grounds of discrimination, namely: gender identity or expression and age.

The HE Act states that equality between men and women should always be borne and kept in mind in the activities of the HEIs. The HE institutions have an obligation, following a provision in the annual appropriation directives, to counter unequal sex ratio in recruitment to programmes and courses where the sex ratio is unequal.

The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) states:

Study and vocational guidance must be available to students. The higher education institution must ensure that a person intending to begin an educational programme has access to the information that is needed about the education. In particular, the HEI's admission procedures must be available. 'Admission procedures' include the rules for education applied by the HEI with respect to, firstly, application, eligibility and exemptions from eligibility requirements, as well as selection procedures, and secondly, how decisions on admission and exemptions from eligibility requirements are taken. With regard to first level and second level higher education, this term also refers to rules concerning how to appeal against decisions regarding eligibility.

As from 2008, the possibility for the HEIs to decide on the grounds of selection to be used for recruitment has been increased from 20 per cent to a maximum of one third of the student places available in a programme or a course, in order to widen access paths to higher education. The HEIs have an even greater freedom to use alternative selection criteria for admission to the advanced level. However, it is important to note that the eligibility requirements, in both cases, are less flexible, requiring, as a general principle, an upper secondary degree and a bachelor degree respectively.

The Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is used for selection as an alternative to upper secondary grades when the number of applicants exceeds the number of study places available. At least one third of all places are allocated on the basis of upper secondary education grades and at least one third on the basis of the score from SAT. The test measures knowledge and skills and provides an indication of the ability to succeed in higher education.

To ensure effectiveness in the distribution of information to applicants regarding admission rules and that the information provided is valid and updated, almost all HEIs distribute their information through the web portal www.studera.nu. The National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education are responsible for the portal which is available in both Swedish and English. www.studera.nu also provides a central

applications system which means that the individual can apply for up to 20 courses and/or programmes offered by different universities in one single application.

There are two forms of preparatory studies aimed at applicants who lack the specific qualifications for higher education or for a given programme. Through a specific regulation (ordinance 2002:763), students have the possibility to attend so called college education as an introduction to higher education. This education works as a “bridge” between adult education/upper secondary education and HE. Half of the courses are university level courses and the other half are upper secondary level courses.

Through another regulation (ordinance 2007:432), HEIs have the possibility to offer programmes with the specific purpose to give students who lack the specific requirements for certain higher education programmes. The program may last maximum one year and can be offered in connection to all programmes in the first cycle if there is a shortage of applicants and if there is a need for those specific qualifications on the labour market.

With the purpose of facilitating the recruitment to these programmes of persons who would need to go through this type of education, measures are in place to waive parts of the debt from the student loans taken for these programmes if the student later continues to study with study support for a degree in higher education.

In this context it is imperative to mention the importance of the mandatory schooling and upper secondary education and the platform these levels provide for young persons of all layers of society to proceed on to higher education. Teachers and counsellors play an important role in encouraging these pupils to continue in their educational career.

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

An important feature of the Swedish education system is that “dead-ends” should be avoided. It should be possible to follow different path ways to higher education. Swedish higher education institutions have a long tradition of offering their courses and programmes to students with different backgrounds, students working part- or full-time etc. Many courses and programmes are given as part-time courses or distance courses. The fact that the system of higher education is built on an accumulation of modules and credits enhances the possibilities for lifelong learning and for moving in and out of the system.

A large expansion in the number of student places during the last 15 years has taken place in order to increase participation in higher education. Geographical access to HE throughout the country has been a political goal; there is now at least one HEI in every county.

In 2002 and 2005 the HEIs have been obliged to produce action plans with measurable objectives on widening participation in higher education. The institutions have reported on the results in relation to the 2002-2005 action plans to the Ministry. In addition the institutions report annually on how they follow the obligation “to actively promote and widen recruitment to higher education” in the Higher Education

Act. In 2007, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education carried out a survey of how the Swedish HEIs are working with widening participation in higher education (2007:43 R).

Since the autumn of 2003 all HEIs are obliged to assess prior and experiential learning of applicants who demand such an assessment and who lack the formal qualifications (or the documentation of such qualifications). This obligation is stated in the Higher Education Ordinance and accreditation decisions can be appealed. Accreditation of prior and experiential learning (or validation) has been available for a few years and it seems to have opened a new possibility for non-traditional learners. The Association of Swedish Higher Education (the Swedish rector's conference) has conducted development work in relation to the accreditation of prior learning.

According to the HE Ordinance a student also has the right to be allocated credits for prior, non-formal or informal, learning if the level and amount of knowledge largely corresponds to the education for which allocation of credits is sought. In some cases, in order to prevent a lack of professionals within nursing and teaching, the Government has given some HEIs the task to elaborate models for recognition of prior and experiential learning in order to use the experience of people already working in these sectors and to shorten the formal education needed for these individuals

Several initiatives have recently been launched regarding the integration of individuals with foreign degrees into the HE system and the labour market. For example, in recent years, the Government has allocated resources for complementary education, aimed at immigrants with HE qualifications. In 2008, special initiatives have been taken in order to support individuals with medical education from third countries who need complementary education to be able to engage in professional activities in Sweden.

During the academic year of 2006/07 17 % of those entering higher education (excluding exchange students and free-movers) had foreign backgrounds, i.e. they were born abroad or had two parents who were born abroad. This means that the proportion of higher education entrants with foreign backgrounds is on a par with the proportion they represent in the population as a whole.

Swedish HEIs offer a large number of courses through distance learning as well as part time courses and programmes, allowing, for example, individuals who are working to study in parallel with their professional occupation. The Swedish Net University is a virtual organisation where 35 HEIs in Sweden cooperate on offering virtual courses and programmes, both in Swedish and in English. (www.netuniversity.se). However, from June 2008 the Swedish Net University is gradually being phased out. From January 1st, 2009 the universities and university colleges will have full responsibility for developing their activities within distance education.

Validation can be an important tool for assessment, valuing, documentation and recognition of knowledge and competences that an individual has gained, irrespective of how and where they have been acquired. The responsibility for validation in Sweden is divided between the education system and the social

partners. In December 2003, the Swedish Government set up a special commission which in 2007 presented recommended processes of methods for validation.

The HEIs have to reserve a certain amount of their government funding for assisting disabled students. The state also provides additional funding for expenses related to support needed in the learning situation. This extra funding is available for the HEIs upon request.

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A) Provision of academic services

Student counselling is being considered as important already at the compulsory school level as well as for the upper secondary level. The counselling is important in preparation for the entrance into higher education, during the studies and also in preparation for the labour market towards the end of the studies.

The Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) states:

Study and vocational guidance must be available to students. The higher education institution must ensure that a person intending to begin an educational programme has access to the information about the education that is needed.

The study guidance is organised in different ways depending on the nature of the HEI. It can be organised on a central level at the HEI but is quite often organised on faculty level. In 2007, the National Agency for Higher Education carried out a study of the counselling at Swedish HEIs (Studies – Career – Health, 2007:24 R). The report shows that approximately half of the HEIs have career counselling.

Most HEIs have well functioning libraries and/or students have access to library services as well as various databases. Internet access is widely spread, often through wireless networks and students generally have access to computers, either through their own laptops or through computer rooms provided by the HEI.

B) Provision of social services

Regarding health care for students, the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) states that the HEIs shall be responsible for the students having access to health care, in particular preventive health care aimed at promoting the physical and mental health of the students.

Student unions are important for the social life of students in higher education in Sweden. The unions organise a wide range of social activities, sports activities and they also run restaurants and cafés. Through the student unions, there are often discounts on a range of services such as transport and canteens as well as bookshops.

Most HEIs have are co-operating with companies providing student housing (often through the municipality). Some HEIs even guarantee housing to all admitted students. Some student unions also own or organise housing for students. The lack of student housing in many of the larger university cities poses a problem for many

students entering HE. This problem is a greater obstacle for students from lower socio-economic background.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

It is stated in the Higher Education Act that students shall be entitled to exert influence over the education in the institutions of higher education and that the higher education institutions shall work towards students taking an active part in the work with further development of the education. The Higher Education Act also states that teachers and students at the higher education institution shall be entitled to representation on the governing body.

Membership in a student union is mandatory (changes are foreseen by the current government). The student unions play an important role when students are appointed to positions in decision making bodies as well as consultative bodies within the HEIs.

The Higher Education Ordinance states that higher education institutions shall give students who are participating in or have completed a course an opportunity to present their experiences of and views on the course through a course evaluation to be arranged by the higher education institution. The higher education institution shall collate the course evaluations and release information about the results and any action occasioned by the course evaluations. The results shall be made available to the students.

Finances in order to start and complete studies

There are no individual tuition fees in Swedish higher education (stated in the Higher Education Ordinance).

The Swedish study support system is equal for everybody and study support is granted independently of parents' or the family's financial situation. The study support system (grant and loan) is intended to cover the living costs and study related costs of students. 34 percent of the support received is a grant and 66 percent is a loan and it is up to the student if he/she wants to take a loan (or to what extent). The study loan is an annuity loan with a maximum repayment period of 25 years.

Students with children may receive an extra child allowance. Under certain circumstances the student may also be eligible to receive a supplementary loan and loans for additional costs in connection with their studies. It is possible for students to work and earn a limited amount alongside their studies without study support being reduced.

Study support may be awarded no later than in the year of the student's 54th birthday and is restricted to 240 weeks (the equivalent of six years) for studies at tertiary level. Other basic requirements for study support are that the student must be attending an institution that qualifies for study support, must be studying at least half time and for at least three weeks.

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.

Following a provision in the Higher Education Ordinance the HEIs are obliged to provide study guidance and career counselling services to the students. Furthermore, as of 2008, the annual appropriation directives to universities and university colleges have been amended, obliging the HEIs to improve the study guidance and career counselling. The measures undertaken will be subject to a follow up analysis by the government in 2009.

Swedish language assistance is in place in almost all HEIs and sometimes the HEIs also offer tutoring in mathematics.

Parts of the social and financial support system for students are currently under investigation. There is a parliamentary commission (the Commission on Student Welfare Issues) appointed to investigate and propose changes in certain parts of the current system. The committee will look at mainly four parts: social security issues, the study support system, the administration of the study support system and how to increase student completion rates in Swedish higher education. The committee will present its report in March 2009.

All actions mentioned concerns all students in HE. (See conditions for the study support system in question 19 c above.)

4. Does your country 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 regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

Yes. Statistics Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån) provides figures on educational background. The percentage of so called non traditional student, i.e. students coming from a less favourable social background, has risen from 18 per cent to 25 per cent between the study years of 1993/94 and 2006/07.

The National Agency for Higher Education has published several reports in the field, to mention some examples:

- Evaluation of the work of HEIs regarding widened participation in higher education (Report 2007:43 R)
- Research programmes and research careers – aspects of gender and social background (Report 2006:2 R)
- HEIs and equality, student influence and social and ethnic diversity (Report 2003:31 R)
- Students in Sweden – the life as a student at the turn of the century 2000 (Report 2001:26 R)

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)?

Generally, the Swedish Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance provides thorough regulation in regards to, for example, discrimination, student participation in governance as well as how the HEIs should work on widening the recruitment of students in order to intensify the efforts, the Government is currently taking, or is planning to take, the following steps:

A stakeholder-composed Committee on Technology, Natural Sciences and ICT has the task to look at future needs of the labour market regarding competences in mathematics, natural sciences, technology and ICT. The Committee will also take action to enhance the interest in these areas among girls and women. The Committee will present its final report to the Government in April, 2010.

The Government has given the National Agency for Higher Education the task to make a research based analyse of the sex ratio in the teacher students' choice of study paths within teacher education (TE), the reasons why more men than women stop their studies, to identify HEI:s having pursued successful strategies for increasing the male share of teacher students, the male share of teachers in employment, sex ratio in the student groups studying at distance or part time and reasons for women and men to choose teacher education. The Agency is also asked to propose measures for achieving gender balance in TE and to disseminate best practice to HEI:s concerned

Initiatives to support third country nationals with a need to complement their education in certain areas has been launched.

Admission criteria and methods will be further developed.

The process of validation of prior learning will be further developed and improved.

The Government continues its dedicated support to disabled students.

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

The basis for all higher education in Sweden is that higher education should be open for any individual with interest, knowledge and skills and ability to succeed in the studies. No students should encounter discrimination on the grounds of sex, ethnic belonging, religion or other religious faith, sexual orientation or disability (and from January 1 2009; gender identity or expression and age).

Validation increases a wider background in terms of prior learning and knowledge in the student population in Swedish HEIs. Different competencies should be acknowledged, allowing students with different learning paths to enter and succeed in HE.

The stakeholder-composed Committee on Technology, Natural Sciences and ICT aims to increase the interest and participation in higher education within these fields and to change stereotyped gender patterns. The Committee will present its final report to the Government in April, 2010.

Targeted actions towards third country nationals with completed or partial higher education will improve their inclusion into society. It is also a way of filling gaps in the supply of educated worker in in specific fields on the Swedish labour market.

Admission is crucial to enhance quality in higher education and to ensure that the throughput in higher education is satisfactory. Different methods for selection allows students with different abilities to prove their competencies/abilities.

Dedicated support to students with disabilities is a tool to encourage individuals with disabilities to enter higher education.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target groups 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).

The Government has identified upper secondary education as a key area to assure that future students are provided with the knowledge they need to succeed in HE. Priority is given to the education of teachers for all levels of the educational system. Further developments in admission pathways may be foreseen. Special funding for students with disabilities will continue.

The Parliamentary Commission on Student Welfare Issues (Studiesociala kommittén) will investigate and propose changes in certain parts of the current system. The committee will look at mainly four parts: social issues, the study support system, the administration of the study support system and how to increase student completion rates in Swedish higher education. The committee will present its report in March 2009.

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

The budget for measures mentioned in (a) and (b) above is not specified regarding inclusion of underrepresented groups.

The stakeholder-composed Committee on Technology, Natural Sciences and ICT has been allocated SEK 40 million.

Targeted support to students with disabilities is a tool to encourage individuals with disabilities to enter higher education.

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

A Government inquiry on teacher education will present its proposals in December 2008.

The Government plans to present a bill on upper secondary education in 2009 as well as a bill on reforms in higher education.

The Parliamentary Commission on Student Welfare Issues will present its report in March 2009.

The stakeholder-composed Committee on Technology, Natural Sciences and ICT will report to the Government in April, 2010.

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

The National Agency for Higher Education has a task to monitor the work of the HEIs. They also take these factors into account in their general work with quality assurance and other evaluations carried out within the framework of their task as supervisory body.

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 Government (the Ministry of Education and Research) is responsible for the preparation of decisions and for setting the legal framework as well as the overarching principles in the field. Implementation will be carried out by various actors in the field, HEIs and governmental agencies will play an important role. Also, student organisations as well as other stakeholders are involved in different ways. The evaluation of different actions will be integrated in the work of the National Agency for Higher Education.