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WORKING GROUP ON LEARNING AND TEACHING (WG ON L&T)

First Meeting, Hosted by Germany, Online*
 Tuesday, 21 September 2021
 10.00-17.00 (Brussels time)

Minutes

List of Participants

Albania	Ermelinda	Durmishi
Armenia	Lilit	Sargsyan
Austria	Alexander	Kohler
Belarus	Victor	Gaisenok
Cyprus	Popi	Appios
EI - ETUCE	Agnes	Roman
ESU	Jakub	Grodecki
EUA	Michael	Gaebel
EUA	Therese	Zhang
EURASHE (Co-chair)	Ulf Daniel	Ehlers
France (Co-chair)	Phillippe	Lalle
Germany	Paul	Klär
Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Ireland (Co-chair)	Terry	Maguire
Kazakhstan	Akzhunis	Artykbay
The Netherlands	Emmy	Heijmans
Norway	Alina	Obonza
Portugal	Maria	Fernandes
Romania	Ciprian	Fartuşnic
Russia	Elena	Gorbashko
Slovenia	Duša	Marjetič
Switzerland	Antoine	Maret
Turkey	Mustafa	Sözbilir
Ukraine	Kateryna	Suprun





United Kingdom	Hillary	Ayebi-Ababio
BFUG Secretariat, Head	Enida	Bezhani
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
BFUG Secretariat	Aida	Myrto
BFUG Secretariat	Irma	Sheqi

Belgium Flemish Community and United Kingdom (Scotland) sent in their regrets. Spain, San Marino, Italy, Georgia, European Commission and ENQA were not in attendance.

Welcome and introduction to the meeting by the Co-chairs

The Co-chairs welcomed all the members of the Working Group on Learning and Teaching (WG on L&T) to the first meeting of the 2021-2024 work period, underlining the overall aim of this meeting, to agree on the fundamental objectives and tasks for the work of the group. The Co-chairs encouraged the members to collaborate with each-other and introduce concise principles for innovative and inclusive approaches in learning and teaching, with actions and best-practice examples to develop, enhance and implement strategies for teaching and learning within the higher education institutions.

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see *WG on L&T_SI_AM_1_Draft Agenda*.

2. Tour de table & Identification of what success will look like

All members of the WG on L&T introduced themselves and informed the group on their respective roles within the institutions they represent. During this session, the members shared their perspectives/expectations on potential indicators for the success of this group.

The most common recommendations comprised:

- Finding ways to enhance quality of Learning and Teaching, through a realistic approach and by focusing on student-centered learning to achieve sustainable success;
- Introducing effective, implementable and accountable recommendations and criteria (present measurable outcomes);
- Effectively supporting academic staff both in online and physical teaching methods (taking into consideration the effects of the Covid-19 situation);
- Sharing good practices across European countries and learning how to adapt them in a national context;
- Finding ways to include these recommendations into the Communique;
- Producing work that supports policies for student-centered higher education, flexible learning paths and learning about good practices;



Overall, the members agreed that the most important aspect was to provide realistic recommendations and reach a common understanding by sharing experiences among countries, in order to develop a framework which is meaningful and which can be accepted largely. The goal, as stated in the introductory session by the Co-chairs, is to reach a mutual and shared understanding and to convey the work to the BFUG, so that it can be brought into the Bologna Process.

For more detailed information on potential success factors of this WG, please see: *padlet-expectations.pdf*

For more detailed information and insights on previous reports/projects on learning & teaching, please see:

<https://www.eua.eu/issues/20:learning-teaching.html>;

<https://eua.eu/resources/projects/786-lotus.html>;

https://eha.info/Upload/BFUG_PT_AD_76_11.1_etuce%20report%20on%20covid%20impact%20on%20her%20staff.pdf

3. ToRs: From Advisory Group 2 to Working Group 4

Ulf Daniel Ehlers (Co-chair) provided an overview of the AG 2 Final Report, covering what was achieved during the 2018-2020 working period, with focus on:

- The principles and guidelines of the group: student-centered learning, fostering future teaching strengthening higher education institutional and systems' capacity to support learning and teaching;
- The collection of good practice examples;
- The conclusions and recommendations for the Rome Communiqué and the 2021-2024 work period.

The ToRs were presented and the expected tasks to be undertaken and the overall objectives to be achieved over the next three years were discussed.

Under the thematic objectives, several points were emphasized:

- Making student centered learning a reality across the entire EHEA;
- Supporting staff development;
- Strengthening the capacity of higher education institutions and systems;
- Fostering innovative learning and teaching;
- Strengthening the resilience of the HE system, with focus on future skills, high quality learning, and assessment methods with strong links to research and innovation.

4. Envisioning the outcomes of the different objectives of the ToRs

Phillippe Lalle (Co-chair) summarized members' viewpoints on potential success factors and achievements for this group, with great emphasis placed on concrete principals and examples, measurable indicators, clear recommendations and realistic outcomes. Moreover, the specific





tasks from the ToRs were revisited by the members, with the purpose of contextualizing and envisioning the outcomes of the different objectives outlined in the ToRs:

Specific Task 1

Further development of the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué by translating them into concrete actions at a European/EHEA level and developing measurable qualitative indicators, which can serve as a basis for monitoring the progress on learning and teaching in EHEA:

- In terms of the measurable qualitative indicators, it was suggested to define properly and specify the horizon span of such indicators; Identify the purpose and audience for whom the indicators will be developed.
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- The group reiterated its commitment towards student-centered learning, which should stand as the central paradigm for addressing learning and teaching across the EHEA. Monitoring actions evolving around the tasks of the WG should take this into account.
- Provide support to country members in the development of concrete national actions and strategies to implement the recommendations from the Communiqué. This could entail, but does not need to be limited to, organizing forums and/or seminars for policy makers and HEIs.

Specific Task 2

Organize a survey based on the recommendations to map challenges and actions within the EHEA and inform further work in this period. Repeat this survey at the end of the working period:

- The survey ought to be based on the recommendations from the previous advisory group in learning and teaching, and endorsed through the Rome Communiqué.
- In terms of how to structure the survey, one proposal was put forward to the group to ask the country delegations to create a "heat map" of the most pressing challenges in their respective countries with regard to: student-centered learning; support for teachers; institutional environment; digital learning and more.
- It should be noted that it has been very challenging so far to devise questions on student centered learning to be addressed at national level. EUA has worked on this in the past with Eurydice, the EC unit in charge of drafting the Bologna Process Implementation Report, and the result was that the BPIR used some of EUA's Trends data (from HEIs) instead.
- The survey themes should be clearly selected and defined. Great focus should be placed on student-centered learning: which policies have had a better impact on them; what kind of support has been provided and has been found to be effective in supporting students during the pandemic crisis; which competences and skills should students develop for the future. Evidence-based learning and practical assignments should also be included.
- The range of topics should be expanded (in addition to the ones already mentioned above), so that the group does not miss out on potential recommendations that can be derived from other topics mentioned in the specific tasks list (i.e., skills development for teachers; digital transformation of HEIs and HE systems; innovative learning, teaching and assessments, Covid-19 situation and potential solutions, etc.)





The main objective of the survey is to map existing successful strategies, by distributing survey questions to the target group of respondents, once agreed, to gain a more comprehensive picture of the current situation. The survey should be clearly structured so that all respondents understand and interpret the questions in the same way.

Other resources that can be used to assist in the work of the group include:

- Bologna Process Implementation Report. It will be important to not duplicate the work already undertaken under the usual BFUG WG on Monitoring (in charge of the Bologna Process Implementation Report), but seek for complementarity instead.
- Bologna with Students' Eyes (ESU)
 - o The second edition of Bologna with Students' eyes is in the process of being elaborated and it will include a forward-looking approach, unlike the previous edition which was focused on the past work.
- The upcoming Trends report and data collection for higher education institutions (EUA)
 - o Trends has been a milestone report providing data and evidence on the state of implementation of Bologna reforms within HEIs since 1999.
 - o The next data collection (survey) will be launched by 2022-2023, and the report will be launched to coincide with the next Bologna Ministerial meeting. Some data will be available before the publication and can be shared with the BPIR.
- LOTUS Project (EUA)
 - o The overall project aims to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for learning and teaching at HEIs across Europe. Its outcomes might serve the group as a way to look for further synergies with these institutional bodies.
 - o Under LOTUS, a study will be published on national initiatives in learning and teaching (autumn 2021), based on a series of interviews with national experts of 30 EHEA countries. The findings and project results could be used as complementary information.
- Student-Centered Learning Toolkits:
 - o <https://www.esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/100814-SCL.pdf>
 - o https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3235.html

The methodology/organizational process suggested by the majority of the group underlined the importance of prioritizing and grouping the specific tasks. The members observed that it would be inefficient to focus on all specific tasks simultaneously. A timeline should be proposed and followed, to identify the policy actions, concrete actions and recommendations on these tasks on which work should start.





5. Defining Work Structures for WG 4

A brainstorming session followed intending to prioritize and cluster the specific tasks. The goal was to create a concrete plan on the next work steps for the group. A discussion took place on the tasks that could be completed in parallel or consecutively.

In terms of the specific tasks under our ToR:

Specific Actions	Specific Action- Task	Possible Approaches Discussed
ToR/SA No. 3	Organise a survey based on the recommendations to map challenges and actions within the EHEA and inform further work in this period. Repeat this survey at the end of the working period;	This could be the first work plan focus of the WG. The format of gathering the required data needs to be discussed further
ToR/SA No.1	Further develop the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué by translating them into concrete actions at the European/EHEA level and developing measurable qualitative indicators , which can serve as a basis for monitoring the progress on learning and teaching in EHEA; ¹	Incorporated into the survey - i.e., Question to BFUG members: How is your respective country following up on the recommendations from Annex 3 of the Rome Communiqué and approaching them. Sequentially, after gathering the necessary data from the survey, the group can begin the development of measurable qualitative indicators.
ToR/SA No.6	Identify lessons learnt during the COVID-19 crisis for learning, teaching and assessment in higher education in the EHEA. Translate these into recommendations and actions for policymaking at the level of public authorities. Emphasis might be put on the digital transformation of higher education institutions and systems and on future skills development for teachers and learners.	As the BFUG country members have already identified and reflected on lessons learnt during the COVID-19 crisis with regard to learning, teaching and assessment within the HE, Survey/other could capture actions taken and the next steps based on the lessons learnt from COVID-19.

¹ This objective in particular raises the question of funding; to do this properly funding would be necessary to define and implement a systematic project approach. An EC funded umbrella project is suggested here, such as in the peer support groups of the current working period.



ToR/SA No.2	Support member countries in the development of concrete national actions and strategies to implement the above recommendations. This could entail, but does not need to be limited to, organizing forums and/or seminars for policymakers and HEI.	A peer learning approach (open to all countries) could be adopted for the realization of this task to enable the collection analyses and sharing of good practice.
ToR/SA No.4	'In preparation of the 2024 ministerial conference, recommend concrete policy actions to the BFUG and ministers on the implementation of micro-credentials in the EHEA, in line with the developments in the European Education Area;	Identified as a later work plan focus so working group can be informed by outcomes from ongoing projects/work in this area. However, it was also agreed that micro-credentials might also be addressed transversally through other tasks. One possible objective related to micro-credentials could be to understand how they fit into higher education systems, create new flexible ways of learning and teaching, and how, as a short learning provision, they affect the quality of education.
ToR/SA No. 5	Make concrete recommendations on strengthening innovative learning, teaching and assessment, including student-centred, trans-disciplinary, challenge-based and STEAM approaches;	To be completed by translating all lessons learnt and information gathered from all the tasks completed, into concrete recommendations.

For more detailed information on potential success factors of this WG, please see: *padlet-cluster of tasks.pdf*

6. Discussion of a Work Plan, chronology, meeting schedule

After the prioritization of tasks, a discussion took place on how the group would organize itself and collaborate to achieve the tasks mentioned above. Suggestions included internal working groups (i.e., task force or sub-group), plenary mode work, external expert mandates and more. In the past, plenary work was the only work mode, but for this working period, due to the larger number of members and organizations within this WG, it would prove very difficult to converge in plenary on everything.



The discussions led to the group’s conclusion that student-centred learning should be the umbrella paradigm for its work. The next step to collect information on the creation of the survey was to focus on: the monitoring /surveying of student-centered learning; where to access information about student centered learning in each country; talking with specialized people on how student-centered learning is implemented; looking for preexisting information (i.e., BPIR, Bologna with students’ eyes, Trends, LOTUS).

In regard to the organization of members to collaborate into achieving the tasks of this group, it was decided to create a Task Force to discuss how best to approach the survey (and any associated work to integrate any aspects of other specific actions) and to report back to the next WG meeting with an outline workplan. The BFUG Secretariat were asked to send an invitation to all the members that were not part of this meeting and that may wish to join this group. ESU, Holy See, EUA, Slovenia, Armenia, Germany and the Co-chairs will be members to this group. A shared list of references on SCL could prove useful for serving work done under different Specific Tasks.

7. AOB & Next Meeting

The Co-chairs concluded the meeting and made final remarks on the next steps. They underlined the main outcomes of the meeting such as: prioritizing and interconnecting the 6 specific tasks into a flow model; creating a task force to prepare for the next steps that will ensure the working group builds on the work of the previous advisory group.

A doodle poll will be sent out for the next meeting of the sub-group, approximately 6 weeks from this first meeting. Another doodle will be sent out for the next meeting of the WG, approximately 8-10 weeks from this first meeting. For the upcoming BFUG Board meeting, the Co-chairs will prepare a brief update, as well as a report for the BFUG meeting.

No other business was brought forward, therefore, the first meeting of the WG on Learning and Teaching was concluded.