Progress Report of the BFUG Working Group on Learning and Teaching

(September 2023)

Contents

1. Introduction

Progress Report of the Working Group on Learning and Teaching gathers information about the activities and outcomes of the work of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Learning & Teaching Working Group (BFUG L&T WG), focusing on translating the Recommendations endorsed by Ministers in the 2020 Rome Conference of Ministers, in particular Annex III of the Communiqué, into concrete policy actions.

2. Background

The BFUG Working Group on Learning and Teaching (WG L&T) bases its work on the Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA - Annex III to the Rome Communiqué (2020), specifically looking at how to translate these Recommendations into concrete policy actions across the EHEA and, where possible, into measurable, qualitative indicators.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

We adopt the "Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA" (Annex III) and commit to following them, supporting higher education institutions in further implementing student-centered learning and teaching. The recommendations comprise increased support for all learners, and for teaching and non-teaching staff. Academic staff, including junior academics, require stable employment and career opportunities, parity of esteem for teaching and research, attractive working conditions, access to up-to-date staff development, and recognition of their achievements. In all these respects we will foster dialogue and collaboration on learning and teaching in our national systems and at EHEA level.

Flexible and open learning paths, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of student-centred learning and are in increasing demand in our societies. In addition to full degree programmes, many higher education institutions offer or plan to offer smaller units of learning, which enable learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal skills and competencies at various stages in their lives. We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tools.

We commit to supporting our higher education institutions in using digital technologies for learning, teaching and assessment, as well as for academic communication and research, and to investing in the development of digital skills and competencies for all.

3. Thematic Framework

Three main specific topics in the broad area of learning and teaching, that the BFUG WG on L&T has been mandated to work on, are the following:

- Making student-centred learning a reality across the entire EHEA;
- Supporting staff development;
- Fostering innovative learning and teaching.

Additional topics from the Terms of Reference include the following:

- Discussing assessment in higher education;
- Supporting the continuous improvement of learning, teaching and assessment;
- Developing international learning environments for the students.

These additional topics are being addressed in the course of discussions on the three specific topics (SCL, staff development, fostering innovative L&T).

The WG on L&T is planning and carrying out its activities around these topics and always looking at the system-level initiatives and practices and not focusing on practices at the level of individual higher education institutions.

4. Implemented activities

The BFUG Working Group on L&T has held five meetings so far, four of them online and one face-to-face meeting at the EURASHE premises in Brussels. In addition to that, the BFUG WG on L&T has held one PLA hosted by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

First meeting (21 September 2021)

In its first meeting, the WG L&T discussed the Terms of Reference and agreed on how to make operational the tasks that it has been mandated to do. An agreement has been reached to first focus on discussing possible indicators in the area of learning and teaching based on the ministerial Recommendations.

The group agreed not to organise a specific survey based on the ministerial recommendations but to direct its efforts towards making a proposal to the BFUG Working Group on Monitoring and Implementation on topics and possible indicators to map challenges and actions within the EHEA in the implementation of the ministerial Recommendations.

These indicators would then be incorporated in the Bologna Implementation Report which would assure continuous monitoring and assessment of the implementation of Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA (2020).

Second meeting (25 January 2022)

The Annual Work Plan for 2022 has been adopted and the agreement has been reached to divide the work into three sub-groups, each to be led by one of the co-chairs, focusing on three main topics that are:

1. Student-centred learning
2. Staff development
3. Innovative learning and teaching

Three sub-groups met online, each sub-group once (21 February 2022, 28 February 2022, 2 March 2022) to discuss the topics and thematic framework to draw indicators on learning and teaching.

Third meeting (5 April 2022)

In the third meeting the co-chairs reported on the work of the sub-groups and key topics under which the indicators would be developed for monitoring the implementation of the ministerial Recommendations, which have been put together.

Fourth meeting (12 May 2022)

The WG discussed the development of indicators that could best assess progress on implementing the *Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA* and prepared an extensive list of topics that could be covered by indicators and submitted its proposal to the WG on Monitoring and Implementation.

The WG also discussed the possibilities of having PLAs on specific topics and sub-topics and prepared a structure for each member of the WG to come up with proposals and volunteer with specific contributions to PLAs. The excel table was prepared for that purpose. It is a working document shared on Google Drive and intended to be used throughout the duration of the mandate of the Working Group.

Fifth meeting (30 September 2022)

In the fifth meeting of the Learning and Teaching Working Group (30 September 2022) the WG discussed and agreed on a set of measurable indicators, prepared by the WG Monitoring based on a first list of possible topics identified by the WG L&T. The indicators cover the following topics:

1 Strategy and policy

1.2 Strategy/policy implementation plan

1.1 System-level strategy or policy on learning and teaching

1.2 Strategy/policy implementation plan

1.3 Consultation

1.4 Monitoring mechanisms/QA

2 Supporting learning and teaching

2.1 Structures to support teaching and learning

2.2 Consultation

2.3 student-centred learning

3 Professional development

3.1 Initial and continuous teacher training

3.2 Use of digital tools

3.3 International Collaboration

3.4 Professional experience

Moreover, the PLA on staff development was discussed and almost finalised and the discussion on the work plan for 2023 has been launched.

Finally, the co-chairs presented a proposed structure for the Final Report of the WG on L&T in a form of a discussion paper proposing a structure of the future report and calling for contributions from the WG members on drafting chapters on landscape scan, policy context, outcomes of the PLAs and direct inputs from members of the Working Group.

Working Group agreed to process based on a discussion paper that is to:

a) co-chairs to develop a template for collecting examples of good practices at the system-level

b) WG members to contribute to the landscape scan;

c) BFUG members to contribute with examples of practices from respective EHEA systems (using a common template).

Sixth meeting (1 December 2022)

In the sixth meeting of the Learning and Teaching Working Group the topic of the staff development was discussed based on the outputs of the PLA on staff development in higher education that was organised in Paris (27-28 October 2022) and with the objective to propose recommendations for the Tirana 2024 Communiqué. Participants were split into parallel breakout sessions and the three sub-groups offered potential proposals. The synthesis of the proposals is presented in Annex IV of this Progress Report - Proposals for the Ministerial Communiqué on the topic of STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Seventh meeting (5 April 2023)

In the seventh meeting of the Learning and Teaching Working Group, three main items were on the Agenda: results of the landscape scan, discussion on the proposal for the Communiqué and the preparations for the next PLA. First, the results of the screening of good practices at the system level in learning and teaching were presented and discussed. Since only 16 EHEA members responded to the survey, the agreement was reached that the deadline would be prolonged and another reminder will be sent to the BFUG members.

Second, the proposals for the Communiqué on the topic of staff development were discussed. The outcome of the discussion is presented as the revised Annex IV of this Progress Report - Proposals for the Ministerial Communiqué on the topic of STAFF DEVELOPMENT. An agreement was reached that the content of the input for the Drafting Committee was very well reflecting the discussion held so far on the topic of staff development but that the next version of the input needs to be more visionary, shorter and condensed, focusing on the main idea and formulated as a ministerial commitment (this work is ongoing). Secondly, the group agreed that it will not propose another annex to the Communiqué but will limit it contribution to a paragraph(s) on teaching and learning in the Communiqué. The WG agreed that the existing Ministerial Recommendations (ANNEX III to the Rome Communiqué) are quite ambitious and that, in the next work programme of the BFUG, the focus should be given to the implementation rather than on creating new commitments. In addition to that, the WG will submit the updated Progress Report as the Final Report of the WG.

Third, the concept and the draft agenda of the PLA on student-centred learning were discussed. The PLA will take place in Bucharest, back to back with the EURASHE Annual Conference and will focus on developing a proposal on the topic of SCL for the Communiqué.

Finally, the discussions of this working session led to the creation of a small group responsible for collecting available data on ethical issues related to the use of digital tools in training and pedagogy (artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT, learning analytics...) and produce recommendations that the drafting committee can use if they wish.

Eighth meeting (15 June 2023)

In the seventh meeting of the Learning and Teaching Working Group a proposal for ministerial commitments on student-cantered learning was presented as a synthesis of group discussions during the PLA, incorporating previous out-comes and discussions. The objective was to discuss, make changes, and revise the document before sending it to the Drafting Committee.

Ninth meeting (5 September 2023)

In the ninth meeting of the Learning and Teaching Working Group, the group concentrated on discussing proposals for the ministerial commitments to be submitted to the Drafting Committee. Three topics were covered: professional staff development, student-centred learning and ethics and digital technologies in teaching and learning.

While the first two topics have been in the scope of the work of the L&T WG since the beginning, the topic on ethics and digital technologies emerged as new topics that the WG decided to address. For that reason, an *ad hoc group* was established to prepare a draft statement on ethics and digital technologies in teaching and learning that could be integrated in the proposal for the ministerial communiqué.

The WG discussed proposals for the Communique. Longer version of the work done on the three topics are attached as annexes to this Progress Report as it follows:

- ANNEX IV – revised paper on professional staff development
- ANNEX V – paper on student-centred learning
- ANNEX VI – report from the *ad-hoc* group on Ethics & Digital Technologies in T&L

Shorter version of proposals for the ministerial commitments combining the three topics is attached as the ANNEX VII of this Progress Report.

5. Peer Learning Activities

Among the specific tasks of the WG L&T there is a task to further develop the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué by translating them into concrete actions at the European/EHEA level and support member countries in the development of concrete national actions and strategies to implement the above recommendations. The WG chose to operationalise this task by translating all lessons learnt and information gathered from all the tasks completed, into concrete recommendations. More specifically, the collection of good practices at the system level is being done, among others, through organising PLAs for policymakers and HEIs. The first PLA addressed the topic of staff development. It was hosted by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and held in Paris on 26-27 October 2022. More information about the PLA is presented in Annex I of this Progress Report.

A second PLA was on the topics of student-cantered learning. It took place in Bucharest on June 7, 2023 (https://www.eurashe.eu/events/pla-student-learning/) back to back with the EURASHE annual conference. This PLA brought together different stakeholders in higher education to share information about the system-level developments, exchange good practices and discuss possible commitments concerning further enhancing the student-centred learning approach at the system level.

The third PLA is envisaged to take place in Dublin, Ireland 23-24 October 2023. The PLA is envisaged to cover topics of transformative approaches to learning and teaching and stimulate discussions and share of practices among higher education institutions and policy makers on new and innovative approaches and use of technologies in teaching and learning.

6. Indicators

Among the specific tasks of the WG L&T, there is a task to develop measurable qualitative indicators, which can serve as a basis for monitoring the progress of learning and teaching in the EHEA, on the basis of the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué. The WG L&T came up with an extensive list of topics and possible indicators and submitted it to the WG on Implementation and Monitoring which extracted from the original list those that are feasible to be measured and compared at the level of the EHEA. The original list of potential topics from which to formulate indicators is included in Annex II of this Progress Report. And the outcome of the discussion held at the fifth meeting of the WG on L&T with the participation of the co-chairs of the WG1 is included in Annex III of this Progress Report.

7. Links established with other structures and projects

Being mindful of natural links between the area of learning and teaching with other areas covered by different working groups, some of them being supported by the umbrella or other ERASMUS+ projects supporting EHEA reforms and developments, the co-chairs of the WG on L&T reached out to other groups and consortia and established regular communication and cooperation with the following BFUG working groups and supporting projects so far:

Coordination with other groups within the BFUG internal structure:

- WG on Implementation and Monitoring - developing indicators in the area of learning and teaching;

- WG on Social Dimension - developing indicators in the area of learning and teaching and social dimension of higher education; exploring possibilities of having a joint PLA on shared topics;

- TPGs - developing recommendations on 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.

Lacking support from an umbrella project of its own, the WG on L&T has been continuously looking at how to make synergies and support from existing projects and relies substantially on resources of the WG members.

8. Other

There have been changes in the co-chairmanship of the L&T WG:

- Ana Tecilazić replaced Ulf Daniel Ehlers on behalf of EURASHE;

- Jon Altuna replaced Ana Tecilazić in behalf of EURASHE;

- Lynn Ramsey replaced Terry Maguire on behalf of Higher Education Authority, Ireland;

- Tim Conlon replaced Lynn Ramsey on behalf of Higher Education Authority, Ireland.

ANNEX I – PLA on staff development, Paris, October 2022

The first PLA of the WG on L&T was hosted by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and took place in Paris. It focused on staff development in higher education. A range of international speakers presented examples of system-level developments in this area. After the Introductory Session, there were three Sessions covering: Skills for teachers in Higher Education, Teaching and Digitalisation, and Teaching Supports and Careers. After each session, there was a Round Table discussion on the subject matter.

The following topics were included in the programmes of the PLA:

Keynote

- Staff development, teaching enhancement and careers at European universities (Thérèse Zhang)

Skills for teachers in higher education

- The art of teaching: (how) can state governance encourage the development of teaching skills at autonomous universities? (Alexander Kohler)

- Student-Centeredness and University-Enterprise Collaboration in Armenia (Lilit Sargsyan)

- Developing teaching appreciation and quality through a national framework in Denmark (Jakob Ravn)

Teaching and Digitalisation

- Technology meets pedagogy: The role of staff support services in Norway (Silje Refnes)

- Good practice in integrating technology in teaching and learning in Turkey (Mustafa Sözbilir)

- Staff development for enhancing digital teaching and learning: Lessons learned from the Irish experience during the pandemic (Sharon Flynn)

- Thematic digital universities and "FUN Resources": two national open education services for teachers in France (Michael Matlosz)

Teaching supports and careers

- The Continuing Professional Development of higher education teachers in France: a lever for promoting student learning? (Christelle Lison)

- Academic staff development practices in Georgia and possible synergies with PROFFORMANCE project outputs: Reflection from the perspective of QA on development of indicators for academic staff development (Lasha Zivzivadze)

- Varied testimonies of recent situations and developments in the careers of higher education teachers in different countries of the EHEA

ANNEX II - Topics and possible indicators to monitor learning and teaching at the system level (proposal of the WG L&T to the WG1)

Topic 1. System-level[1] regulations, including legislation, targeting L&T

- National (regional) learning and teaching strategy/policy and funded implementation plan developed through consultation with the sector that is regularly reviewed and captures impact.

- Dedicated funding for Learning and Teaching:

  - Is there a dedicated and sustainable funding stream for learning and teaching enhancement aligned to a clear and agreed strategy? How is this implemented? How the impact of this funding is evaluated?

- Strategic commitment to:

  - Learning and Teaching enhancement

  - A shared understanding and commitment to student-centred learning

  - Nationally agreed frameworks supporting capacity building to develop e.g., digital capabilities, open education and assessment literacy in staff and student

  - Provision that enables choice and flexibility to students to choose their own learning pathways and mode of learning and assessment

  - Programmatic approach to assessment

  - Policies to support openness in education (QA,OER)

  - The existence (or not) of national QA regulations that impact e.g., modes of learning across programmes or the need for staff to have a learning and teaching qualification to teach in HE.

Topic 2. Nationally agreed structures to support learning and teaching enhancement

- System-level institution/body to support learning and teaching

- Existence of processes to ensure inclusive decision-making, guiding national work

- Existence and quality of the processes in place for the HE sector and other stakeholders to inform policy at system level and support alignment, including e.g., representative bodies for QA, Institution type, student representation, staff unions etc.

- Top level frameworks e.g., professional development, micro credentials and/or commitment to flexible pathways, recognition of prior learning, student engagement, curriculum development, digital capacity and capability development. Level of guidance, incentives and support provided to ensure frameworks are embedded in a sustainable way.

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[1] Please, note that national in some countries and regional in others needs to be captured in the indicator

- An explicit commitment at the system-level to student centred learning and evidence of student partnership and co-creation in learning and teaching enhancement, including e.g., curriculum design, learning and teaching and assessment approaches.

- Recognition & reward structures that support e.g., staff professional development, leadership development, open educational practices

- The extent to which the system is agile, responsive innovative and forward looking.

Topic 3. Commitment to developing staff and student capabilities

- Regulation or recommendation for future university teachers to be trained for teaching

- Commitment to develop national leadership in teaching and learning enhancement (e.g. developing programme for supporting leaders)

- Provision for building open capabilities (so that people share but know what they should share, sharing resources that are granular, knowing what resource hubs are best to use to share)

- Commitment to professional development of teachers

- Commitment to enhancement of teaching and learning including programme development and innovation practice

- Commitment to building staff and student digital capabilities to ensure that the potential of technology to support learning and teaching is utilised and fair and valid digital assessment opportunities are provided for students.

- Commitment that assessment in higher education encompasses a wider set of learning outcomes, in addition to disciplinary knowledge, such as inter-disciplinarity and transversal, green and digital skills.

Topic 4. National and International Collaboration and linkages

- Connection with broader, international context e.g., international Open Education efforts and targets, e.g. EC, UNESCO

- Strength of links with industry including e.g., the opportunities for inter-stakeholder dialogue to develop curricula and to connect work-integrated learning assessment experience, both on and off campus

Topic 5. Scholarship and evidence-based policy making in Learning and Teaching

- Value put on SoTL .e.g., the recognition of the scholarship of learning and teaching

- The provision of integrated research funding, at national level, to support digital, online and open education

- Provision for data collection and analysis to support evidenced-based decision making.

- The data that is available/collected to guide decision making e.g., on the profile of staff and students across the sector and the extent to which decisions are evidenced based.

- Monitoring Impact

Topic 6. Inclusiveness

- Equity in access to connect to Learning opportunities including national digital infrastructure

- National commitment to embed the principles of Universal Design of Learning (UDL) in Higher Education

- Funding models in place to support all groups within a diverse student body

- Explicit commitment to lifelong learning and availability of flexible pathways and choice of mode of learning for all students

- Level to which HE staff and student profile reflect the diversity of the general population

- Provision and support for recognised marginalised groups of staff and students.

Topic 7. Higher education staff profile and working conditions

- Workload models of staff and types of contracts (temporary, short-term do not have proper access to teaching resources and professional development)

- Recognition and award structures for those who teach

- Recognition and provision for ongoing continuous professional development throughout the career.

- The role of teaching in the academic career progression and advancement

ANNEX III - Topics and possible indicators to monitor learning and teaching at the system level – outcome of the 5th meeting of the WG L&T

1 Strategy and policy

1.1 System-level strategy or policy on learning and teaching

This indicator considers whether higher education systems have a top-level strategy/policy on learning and teaching. It differentiates between:

- systems where at least one main learning and teaching strategy is currently being implemented within an overall higher education strategy;
- systems where a learning and teaching strategy is implemented independently;
- systems with no system-level strategy related to learning and teaching.

1.2 Strategy/policy implementation plan

This indicator is relevant only for systems where a strategy/policy is in place. It considers whether the learning and teaching strategy/policy is supported by a funded implementation plan with measurable objectives and targets.

1.3 Consultation

This indicator considers whether learning and teaching policy is the subject of regular consultation with stakeholders, including higher education institutions, academic staff, students, employers, trade unions and NGOs.

1.4 Monitoring mechanisms/QA

This indicator focuses on whether quality assurance agencies are specifically required to assess the implementation of the national strategy/policy (in countries where it is explicit). For countries without a strategy/policy related to learning and teaching, information on the role of QA agencies in relation to learning and teaching will be gathered.

2 Supporting learning and teaching

2.1 Structures to support teaching and learning

This indicator considers whether publicly-funded system-level bodies (e.g. an agency) exist to support learning and teaching in higher education institutions.

2.2 Consultation

This indicator considers whether system-level bodies are guided in their decision-making on the basis of consultation with stakeholders, including higher education institutions, academic staff, and students.

2.3 student-centred learning

The indicator considers the ways in which public authorities support student-centred learning.

Possible question looking for incentives:

- Is SCL explicitly mentioned/defined in the national level strategies/policies/legislation?
- If the SCL approach is defined, which elements does it encompass?

Elements of SCL identified by the WG L&T:

- Changed roles of teachers and students

- Students' active role and responsibility

- Students' choices

- Learning outcomes approach

- Learning, teaching and assessment methods based on partnership and cocreation

- Recognition of prior learning

- Flexible learning pathways

- Diversity of students' body

- Formal students' participation in governance

Possible question looking for obstacles:

- Are there any legal obstacles to the implementation of the SCL approach? (e.g. legally defined assessment methods such as compulsory written final exam; legal restriction on the use of online learning, teaching and assessment tools legally defined in %; legal restriction for the use of RPL in terms of %)

3 Professional development

3.1 Initial and continuous teacher training

The indicator considers whether there are requirements for higher education academic staff to receive training in teaching a) prior to being recruited, and b) during their careers.

3.2 Use of digital tools

The indicator considers whether there are requirements for higher education academic staff to receive training in using digital tools in relation to teaching.

3.3 International Collaboration

The indicator considers whether higher education institutional recruitment and promotion structures are required to consider and give value to international collaboration and experience.

3.4 Professional experience

The indicator considers whether regulations for recruitment and promotion, are required to take into account specific criteria – including indicators of research performance, indicators of teaching performance, and professional experience acquired outside of the academic world.

ANNEX IV – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The Annex III of the Rome Communiqué already provided recommendations for member countries of the Bologna Process to support the enhancement of learning and teaching, notably by making student-centred learning a reality, strengthening institutions' and higher education systems' capacity, and fostering the continuous enhancement of teaching. This document further elaborates on how staff development for teaching may contribute to the actual implementation of these recommendations.

In envisioning the future of education, we highlight the importance of supporting teachers through career and assessment frameworks that value continuous professional development, diversity, and embrace the potential of digital innovation. Furthermore, we will foster dialogues and collaboration on learning and teaching in our national and at EHEA level to reach our common objectives.

We believe that professional development of teachers is paramount for quality teaching and student success. Along with growing expectations ranging from research excellence to societal engagement, it is vital that teaching and learning are afforded equal esteem alongside research and societal engagement.

We commit to recognize and celebrate diverse perspectives and experiences that teachers can bring, thereby cultivating an inclusive and enriching learning environment that can unlock innovative teaching practices in higher education.

Furthermore, as we live in the era of rapidly evolving technologies, we commit to supporting investment in the professional development of our teachers that must place training in navigating the digital landscape at the forefront of professional development initiatives.

Many educators also lack support, expertise, and training opportunities to incorporate environmental sustainability in their teaching practices. They often feel insufficiently equipped to deal with eco-anxiety and eco-pessimism and help learners engage with climate and environmental issues in a positive way.

It is crucial to support educators, including by providing the necessary time and space, to adopt pedagogies that enhance environmental sustainability learning and to approach sustainability education in interdisciplinary ways and develop the socio-emotional aspects of learning for environmental sustainability, so that all learners can become agents of change and learn to act, both individually and collectively, for a more sustainable world.

THREE PILARS ON WHICH TO INVEST

(1) DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR TEACHERS IN THE PRACTICE OF THEIR PROFESSION AND FOR THEIR CPD

Initial teacher training is essential to the development of quality teaching conducive to the success of students in their diversity. Teacher training could be integrated into the compulsory or curricular requirements of doctoral students and early career researchers, and also accessible to all professional experts involved in the courses. In addition, professional development must be accessible to everyone, and not just at the start of a career.

Teacher training should be based on evidence-based approach to teaching and on research carried out in higher education. This training, whether initial or continuous, must be flexible, respectful of the specificities of the different fields/contexts and of academic freedom, learner-oriented, and include in particular the development of skills to support learner autonomy in education. In addition, such training should consider how teachers approach student equality, diversity and inclusion.

Development of pedagogical support centres (located at higher education institutions, or shared by several institutions) are a good way to cater for training needs and provide expertise and support on teaching enhancement. Development of such centres should be encouraged, and they should be properly staffed: these personnel must be trained, and there must be a sufficient number of them as it is an emerging profession that must also be valued. The networking of these centres should be promoted.

Mentorship programs in which experienced teachers support early career teachers in their teaching and learning practices could also be encouraged.

For the daily exercise of teaching, sufficient, effective and efficient infrastructure is needed: learning laboratories and classrooms equipped with various educational resources (for distance learning, for animation in small groups, with movable furniture, etc.).

The provision of educational resources (conferences, MOOCs, educational workshops, with dedicated support staff) is essential, and must be accessible to all teachers regardless of their status in the establishment (permanent, temporary, expert in profession, etc.). To this end, the use of open educational resources could be shared between institutions, via national and digital platforms.

(2) RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF TEACHING

In order for professional development to make sense and yield results, teaching should be properly recognised as an integral part of the academic profession. This valuation equally goes through appropriate teacher-student ratio.

Staff development frameworks, which could include approaches to academic assessment and career progression, would be one way to acknowledge and give visibility to the teaching mission, and relating it to teachers' career paths. Such frameworks need to accommodate and respect the diversity of teachers' profiles. Academic profiles may be diverse, but teaching and learning should enjoy parity in esteem with research and other relevant missions and working areas (such as commitment to the institution) in relation to academic recruitment and progression.

Recognition of the value of teaching could in particular take the form of:

- career promotions and tenure tracks based on teaching quality. It is important to underline that the assessment of teaching should be robust and evidence-based;

- a range of incentives for promoting teaching, including team teaching (such as awards, prizes, bonus and funding for teaching projects, etc.);

- funding for teaching innovation;

- developing research of teaching practices.

(3) GIVING TIME TO TEACH AND WORK AS TEAMS

- All required professional development must be included as an integral part of the academic workload (not an additional requirement);

- The teaching load must be reasonable. It is unrealistic to think that quality education can be provided without stable employment, without devoting a sufficient amount of time to preparation, innovation, student support, and assessment. As with research activities, teaching also requires time and space to discuss and share with colleagues, create together new formats/content, evaluate effects, etc.

- Reforming takes time: it's not « done » once the reform is adopted.

ANNEX V – Student-centred learning

STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING PARADIGM

Student-centred learning (SCL) is considered one of the key elements of higher education in the European Higher Education Area. Students should always be seen as active participants in their own learning, able to plan their learning pathways and acquire the knowledge, skills and competences that meet their personal goals and societal needs.

Recent developments in learning and teaching such as digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence and the use of technology in learning and teaching, green transition, and the related skills needs in professional and private life, demographic change which underline the need for more flexible learning that meets the diverse needs of students and enable it, show that the SCL paradigm needs to be further elaborated.

The WG4 on L&T noted in its work how difficult it was to define student-centred learning and teaching and concluded that further work is needed to arrive at a consensual, operational definition of SCL and solutions on how to adapt it to new developments such as digitisation, Artificial Intelligence and microcredentials, within the context of the Bologna Process.

Although there is still no universally accepted definition of SCL, it is consensually understood in terms of a paradigm and countries should be encouraged to implement what SCL entails and means. The SCL paradigm is understood as an ecosystem and culture applying to all types of higher education delivery.

SCL is characterised by different elements that could be included in the future definition, among which the following could be identified:

- learning opportunities, tailored to the needs and capabilities of diverse learners,

- a shared commitment from higher education institutions and public authorities to enable and foster student agency,

- deployment of innovative and always new methods of teaching and learning centred on students,

- empowering students to take active engagement for all aspects of their learning experience as co-creators,

- increased responsibility and autonomy of students in making the key decisions about their learning pathway,

- reflexive approach to teaching, learning and assessment processes on the part of both teacher and learner, focused on the learning outcomes achieved by the student,

- a shift from power relationship to a mutual respect and reciprocal learning between students and teachers,

- fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking,

- ensuring flexibility of learning pathways both within study programmes and in a lifelong learning perspective,

- offering access to adequate and qualitative learning resources and inclusive learning spaces tailored to each individual student's needs, as well as student support services, such as counselling, mentoring and tutoring.

Further work on SCL could be supported with an Erasmus+ project in the next implementation period and the next BFUG work plan that could include:

(1) developing a comprehensive definition that would allow for clearer and stronger future ministerial commitments,

(2) developing a Guide to Student-Centred Learning to support the implementation of the SCL paradigm at higher education institutions across the EHEA,

(3) developing a monitoring framework for the implementation of the SCL approach to learning and teaching in the future

(4) showcase and map practices of SCL in different systems.

This should be included in the terms of reference of the relevant working group/thematic peer learning group.

PROPOSALS FOR MINISTERIAL COMMITMENTS (ELABORATED VERSION)

Recognising the significance of student-centred learning, we shall incorporate its principles into legislation and/or national strategies, ensuring adequate funding and proper support structures for implementation.

We express our commitment to support higher education institutions in further development and implementation of their overarching learning and teaching strategies/policies, revolving around student-centred learning. We encourage higher education institutions to train teachers and learners to embrace student-centred learning.

We emphasize the necessity for a strategic approach, supportive policies, systemic funding and robust frameworks to support quality teaching, active learning and reliable assessment.

We encourage higher education institutions to take a proactive approach for adapting to the changing environment with flexible learning skills, respecting diversity of learners, considering both the individual realities of students and broader societal challenges. We commit to support policies that bridge the disparity in educational starting points, in an effort to level social differences by guaranteeing that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

We support higher education institutions in implementing institutional policies towards the recognition of skills and knowledge acquired by students outside of higher education, including in non-formal and informal learning.

We ask the BFUG to develop a comprehensive SCL Guide (similar to ECTS users' guide) that can serve as a resource offering practical strategies and best practices for educators to design SCL.

We aim to harness the challenges and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance the flexibility in learning and teaching, including for assessment. With the advent of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence, we are committed to encouraging their ethical and appropriate usage

for a more personalised educational experience emphasising critical thinking. We need to find new ways of teaching and learning to meet learners' needs with these opportunities.

As we continue to shape the future of education, we remain steadfast in our dedication to fostering an environment of inclusivity, quality, and innovation, with the ultimate goal of equipping our students for success in the ever-evolving global landscape.

Communities of learning, in general, evolve in formal and informal ways, and higher education institutions need to be mindful of this phenomenon. We intend to foster an environment that encourages peer learning within higher education institutions, between higher education institutions and across the EHEA. We call upon the BFUG to establish a thematic peer learning group that would bring together institutions from across the EHEA to exchange and learn from each other. The Thematic Peer Group should be given the task to work towards a commonly shared and operational definition, and propose concrete suggestions of how to take it up, based on sharing of practices.

ANNEX VI - Report of the Sub-group working on the development of draft statement on Ethics & Digital Technologies in T&L

Members of the Sub-group (listed according to alphabetical order):

1. Alexander Kohler - Austria

2. Andrej Pirjevec - ESU

3. Ciprian Fartusnic - Romania

4. Kateryna Suprun - Ukraine

5. Lali Giorgidze - Georgia

6. Lilit Sargsyan - Armenia

7. Michael Gaebel – EUA

Objective of the sub-group:

To create a short ministerial statement proposal that addresses the ethical implications of digitalization in higher education. This statement in future can provide the foundation for guidelines and recommendations for universities in the EHEA, for ensuring the responsible and ethical use of digital technologies in everyday academic practice.

Work methodology and timeline:

1. During 19 – 26 June, relevant sources specifically on ethics in digitalization (including AI) were collected that served as the foundation of the statement proposal - Sourcelist on Digitalization & Ethics.

2. During 26 June – 15 July scanning of the sources was conducted and brief summaries of the main points / noteworthy recommendations from each source were made. These summaries were grouped in 4 general themes and based on these general themes statement draft on ethics in digitalization was developed.

3. On July 18 the members of the sub-group met to discuss the summaries of sources that were grouped in 4 general themes (see annex 1) and statement draft on ethics in digitalization in T&L (see below). During the meeting there was a short discussion whether AI has to be considered as part of the digitalization or the AI encompassing digitalization. But considering the statement draft that has been developed AI is assumed to be just one component of digitalization in T&L. Another question was whether the statement had to address ethical consideration specifically in relation to learning analytics. In the end learning analytics was included in the statement draft, but if we opt for a shorter version of the statement, it can be removed.

Two members of the sub-group (Kateryna Suprun and Ciprian Fartusnic) could not participate in the meeting but all members were given time during 19-21 July to provide feedback on the developed draft statement.

Draft of the statement on ethics in digitalization

Acknowledging transformative power of digitalization and AI in higher education, we emphasize ethical considerations and values of societies. We affirm our commitment to encourage development of policies by HEIs promoting the ethical use of AI in teaching and learning and in scientific practice. We encourage institutions to integrate ethical principles into digitalization

efforts, ensuring transparency, fairness, and student and staff well-being. This includes engaging with students as partners and with staff on responsible AI use and maintaining data ethics in learning analytics and in teaching and learning in general. We will support the development of ethical guidelines and the provision of AI literacy for students and staff. By considering ethics in digitalization and AI adoption in teaching and learning, we commit to enhance educational quality, inclusivity, and uphold human rights, while harnessing potential of digitalization and of AI for positive impact on our societies.

Note: If we wish to opt for the shorter version of the statement draft, the text highlighted in yellow can be removed, as it provides specific ways of achieving transparency, fairness, and student and staff well-being in digitalization and in use of AI in T&L.

Annex

General themes and sub-themes/sub-topics emerging from the collected resources

Note: The track-changes show some of the additional points discussed by the sub-group during the meeting on the 18th of July

1. Responsible and Ethical Use of AI in T&L

- Universities should formally adopt policies on the responsible, ethical, and transparent use of AI tools and other emerging technologies with students and staff.

- There is a need to review and reform teaching and assessment practices to consider the potential use of AI and areas where AI cannot be used.

- Academic staff and students should receive adequate training on how to use AI, its positive features and risks, as well as assistance on its use to ensure inclusivity.

- Appropriate professional development for teachers, administrators, and policymakers is required to make informed decisions about the use of AI tools

- The use of AI should be reflected in institutional guidelines on good scientific practice and research ethics

- HEIs should seek networking and co-operation for solutions to the ethical use of AI

2. Ethics of AI and Data Usage in Learning Analytics

- Institutional codes of conduct should cover informed consent, transparency of data usage, ownership, and boundaries of data usage in learning analytics.

- Learning analytics should be seen as a moral practice, providing relevant pointers for what is appropriate and morally necessary.

- Students should be engaged as partners/co-creators in learning analytics.

- Data collected through learning analytics should have agreed-on life spans and expiry dates.

- There is a need to clarify who has access to data, how data are used, where data are stored, and for how long.

3. Human Rights and Ethical Considerations in AI Adoption

- Support for Europe's roadmap towards a human rights-embedded legal instrument on AI.

- Ethical standards must be followed when using data, including the help of AI, in educational processes.

- Adequate AI literacy education should be provided to the public to empower people and reduce digital access inequalities.

- Debates on digital technologies and ethical considerations should include broader ethical and socio-cultural perspectives.

- Things to consider – how transparently AI uses data, are the data used for commercialization purpose? these are things the HE needs to consider when adopting AI in in T&L

4. Quality Assessment and Impact of AI in Education

- Public funding should support open research projects on AI to assess its real impact.

- Policy-making should consider the impact of AI on education and prioritize human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

- Initiatives should assess the quality of education and the impact on students and teachers resulting from the use of AI technologies in teaching, teacher training, and e-learning.

ANNEX VII - Proposals for the Ministerial Communiqué

STUDENT CENTRED LEARNING

We will incorporate a commitment to SCL into **legislation** and/or national **strategies**, ensuring adequate **funding** and proper **support structures** for implementation.

We encourage higher education institutions to take a proactive approach for adapting to the changing environment through **flexible** learning, while ensuring that students are empowered to use their autonomy and responsibility in their learning experience (including in assessment), respecting a **diversity** of learners, ensuring the acquisition of skills for the future and emphasising critical thinking. We commit to create and implement policies that bridge the disparity in educational starting points, in an effort to achieve equity by guaranteeing that all students have **equal opportunities** to succeed.

We call upon the BFUG to establish a **thematic peer learning group** on student-centred learning to bring together institutions from across the EHEA to exchange and learn from each other, to work towards a commonly shared and operational definition, and to propose concrete actions of how to enhance the implementation.

Acknowledging the transformative power of **digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI)** in higher education, we emphasise ethical considerations in these areas. We affirm our commitment to encourage HEIs to develop policies that promote the ethical use of AI in teaching and learning and in scientific practice. We encourage institutions to integrate ethical principles into digitalisation efforts, ensuring transparency, fairness, and student and staff well-being. This includes engaging with students as partners and with staff on responsible AI use and maintaining data ethics in learning and teaching, including in learning analytics. We will support the development of ethical guidelines and the provision of AI literacy for students and staff. By considering ethics in digitalisation and AI adoption in teaching and learning, we commit to enhance educational quality, inclusivity, and uphold human rights, while harnessing the potential of digitalisation and of AI for positive impact on our societies.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Our recommendations aim to enrich the European higher education landscape by strengthening teacher support, acknowledging teaching's significance, while respecting their professional autonomy and ensuring ample time for effective educational practices and collaboration. They focus on three key areas

1. Enhancing Support for Educators: Efforts should be made to incorporate teacher pedagogical training into the curriculum for doctoral students and early career researchers. Continuous professional development should be accessible to all professionals engaged in education. Their training should be rooted in research and adapt to different contexts, while integrating equality and inclusion. Establishing teaching and learning centres is important to offer training and expertise, and mentorship programs can also aid early career educators.

2. Recognizing the Value of Teaching: Teaching should be acknowledged as an essential part of academia. Frameworks should be established to outline educators' development and career

paths. Recognition can manifest through promotions based on teaching quality, incentives for innovative teaching, and support for research on teaching practices.

3. Allotting Time for Teaching and Collaboration: Integrating professional development into the academic workload is crucial. Stable employment and reasonable teaching loads are essential for maintaining educational quality. Time should be dedicated to preparation, innovation, and collaborative activities among educators. Additionally, it's important to recognize that reforms about teaching enhancement are a long-term process.