> ***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.***

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 (shaded areas) and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

Details

Country	Finland
Date	3 November 2008
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	Bologna Promoters' Group and EU-sub-committee for education were consulted.

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.

Modernising higher education:

A new Universities Act replacing the present legislation from 1997 has been drafted and is to be submitted to Parliament in February 2009. The purpose of the legislative reform is to further extend the autonomy of universities and facilitate operation in an international environment. At present universities are state-run institutions. The legal status of universities will be changed. Some of the universities will become foundations under private law while most of the universities will be new type of legal personalities under public law. The legislation involves the change in the legal status of all university personnel, including professors, from state civil servants to employees under labour contract legislation. At the same time, the state steering and financing mechanisms will be changed to strengthen the autonomy of

the universities. The number of external members in university councils will be increased. All the members will be appointed by the universities themselves, except in the universities operating as foundations under private law. In these, the university council members will be appointed by the founders of the foundation. The Government's aim is to have the new legislation in force on August 1, 2009 and all university operations will transfer to new legal entities on January 1, 2010. At the same time the Polytechnics Act will be amended partly to correspond a new Universities Act.

(http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Koulutus/koulutuspolitiikka/Hankkeet/ Yliopistolaitoksen_uudistaminen/liitteet/Main_points_of_the_university_reform.pdf).

The aim is to pool resources, strengthen the research capacity of HEI's and adjust to the demographic change by the means of structural development. Structural development of higher education network will lead on to several mergers of HEI's. Three new merged polytechnics have already started their operation and three university mergers will take place in 2010. In addition to full mergers, there are different forms of enhanced cooperation under way in both university and polytechnic sectors. There are new strategic alliances between universities and polytechnics. However, this will not mean any change of the dual structure of Finnish higher education. All the mergers are based on the initiatives of the HEI's concerned.

Reform of univeristy degree system:

New degree stucture was adopted in 2005. Transition period of two parallel university degrees ended in August 2008 in the most fields of education. Students who strarted to study in a university before autumn 2005 had a right to continue studing according to the old syllabus up to August 2008. The fields of technology, medicine, dentistry and veterinary have a transition period up to 2010. The reform of university degrees will be evaluated in 2010.

Quality assurance:

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC, http://www.kka.fi/?l=en&s=1) has carried on the audit procedure focusing on the quality assurance systems of Finnish HEIs. The audits are performed on a

registration basis. FINHEEC started quality audits in 2005 and has performed audits of 19 institutions by the end of October 2008.The aim is to audit all higher education institutions by the year 2011.

National qualification framework:

The Ministry of Education has appointed a national working group to prepare the national qualifications framework for all levels of education. The working group has started its work and will finalise the report and proposal by June 2009. The members of the working group represent higher education institutions, and other educational institutions, social partners, university and polytechnic rectors' councils, students organisations, Finnish Adult Education Association, National Board of Education (incl. ENIC/NARIC) and the Ministry of Education.

2. Partnership

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

> The Government EU sub-committee for Education (described at point 2a) monitors the Bologna process in general. The sub-committee consists of representatives from rectors' councils, students organisations, social partners, other relevant ministries and the Ministry of Education.
>
> The Parliament is able to follow the results of the discussions in the EU sub-committee and is informed about the developments in the Bologna process before and after Bologna ministerial meetings.

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

Ministry	Yes ☒	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☒	No ☐
Academic staff	Yes ☐	No ☒
Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☒	No ☐
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☒	No ☐
Employers	Yes ☒	No ☐

Other (please specify) <u>Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, National Board of Education, Center fo International Mobility (CIMO). Academic staff is represented by central trade union, Akava - Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland.</u>

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group[2]   Yes ☒   No ☐

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

Ministry	Yes ☒	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☐	No ☒
Academic staff	Yes ☒	No ☐
Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☐	No ☒
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☒	No ☐
Employers	Yes ☐	No ☒

Other (please specify) <u>National Board of Education (ENIC/NARIC, ECTS-councellors, Center for International Mobility (CIMO)</u>

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[1] A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process
[2] A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

*Please add any additional comments if necessary***:**

The aim of the Bologna promoters work is to promote and raise discussion on selected key elements of the Bologna process and to facilitate national implementation of Bologna reforms and promotion of Lisbon strategy objectives (lifelong learning strategies). The aim is also to contribute to HE reform and to promote internationalisation of HE Community in Finland.

The Bologna promoters organises seminars open to large public on the current Bologna issues, (2007-2009: e.g. recognition of prior learning, Qualifications Frameworks, internationalisation of third cycle degrees). In addition the Ministry of Education regularly arranges national thematic seminars (2007-2008: e.g. Eurostudent, internationalisation strategy for higher education institutions).

One important aim of the Bologna promotion in 2008-2009 is to deepen cooperation and intensify debate with central stakeholders at national level. In this purpose an electronic newsletter and a new regular form of cooperation "Bologna roundtable" will be established. The Bologna roundtable will be held annually, starting in September 2008. The roundtable discussion in 2008 will concentrate on Bologna after 2010. The roundtable will bring together Bologna Experts and important stakeholders such as rectors' conferences, student unions, employers' and employees' organisations, university teachers' associations and quality assurance bodies (with and estimated number of participants being 30). Furthermore, the Ministry maintains close contact with institutions, students, and other relevant reference groups.

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.

> New degree system, ECTS compatible credit system and personal study plans were adopted already in 2005.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all[3] 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
2008/2009 data not available 2007/2008 288 500	2008/2009 data not available 2007/2008 288 500	98 %

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

> Two cycle system was adopted in 2005 except in the fields of medicine and dentistry. Students who strarted to study in a university before autumn 2005 had a right to continue studing according to the old syllabus up to August 2008 when the transition period of two parallel university degrees ended in the most fields of education. The fields of technology, medicine, dentistry and veterinary have a transition period up to 2010. The reform of university degrees will be evaluated in 2010.
>
> The Ministry of Education continued support the project W5W.2 (Five years, two degrees) for years 2007 -2009 which has provided models for curriculum development and offered training for the key personnell.
>
> In the polytechnic sector, the development network of polytechnic Master's degrees promotes new degrees and develops good practicies.

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

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[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

- other elements[5] apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)
- •

In Finland, all universities have traditionally engaged in both education and research, and they all have the right to award doctorates, including universities of performing arts. Doctoral studies in graduate schools typically take four years of full-time studies including a publicly defended doctoral dissertation. However, only about 30% of all dissertations are based on graduate school education and 70% is still done in various other organisational and funding structures.

Traditionally, most doctoral studies were undertaken as independent study, but the proportion of organized courses has been increased steadily and for more than 20 years there has been a requirement of certain amounts of courses and lectures in the doctoral degree. A graduate school system was created in 1995. It has expanded rapidly, and currently ca. 6.500 doctoral students study in graduate schools. This number constitutes a majority of those doctoral candidates who are pursuing their degree actively. The number of doctoral degrees taken in Finnish universities has increased from 1409 in 2006 to 1526 in 2007. In 1995, when the graduate school system was introduced, the amount of doctoral degrees confessed was 765.

The graduate school system has made Finnish doctoral education more efficient, structured, and transparent. Although the traditional route to the doctorate will be preserved, the good practices of graduate schools will be integrated in all doctoral training.

All structured doctoral programmes include taught courses, and the proportion of independent work on doctoral thesis is approximately ¾ of doctoral studies.

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

Credit points are in use in taught courses, not in independent research work. The scope of taught courses and other studies depends on the study field and may vary from 30 to 80 ECTS credits. Doctoral studies refer to all work required for a doctoral degree: the dissertation and related research work, seminars and other studies. Other doctoral studies may refer to a variety of teaching and learning methods, including courses or similar study units and studies integrated with research work which help the student reach the objectives of the doctoral degree. Doctoral studies must support the dissertation and provide the knowledge and skills required for research work and other demanding expert assignments. In addition to research work and field-specific studies, doctoral studies consist of e.g. studies in the philosophy of science, research ethics, international research work and general areas of expertise, including leadership, university-level teaching and learning, scholarly communication and project work.

The first critical phase in graduate education is the process of accepting students to graduate programmes. The university is responsible for finding the financial and immaterial resources to pursue the student's agenda and the student has to fulfil the requirements of a potential doctoral candidate. Each doctoral candidate must be assigned one or more than one supervisor. The candidates can be supported also by a monitoring group (in graduate schools). Supervision at the start of doctoral studies is given particular attention and the integration of doctoral students into the scholarly community is also supported. Doctoral candidate draws up a personal study plan, which consists of a research plan and a study progress plan. The personal study plan can be updated together with the supervisor throughout doctoral studies.

Doctoral studies can be either full-time or part-time. The conditions of part-time students for doctoral studies and research will be ensured and enhanced.

The status of the doctoral candidate may be both; an early-stage researcher or a student. In the graduate schools students are employed to the university as research workers.

In the assessment process, completed dissertation manuscript is reviewed prior to publication by a faculty-appointed team that includes outside reviewers, copies of the published dissertation are made available to members of the

relevant faculty and to others prior to the defense, and the published dissertation is defended in a public meeting involving faculty-appointed "opponents" from other universities, who are also expected to submit a written evaluation of the dissertation. Anyone who has concerns about the quality of the dissertation can also express her or his critical comments during the public defense (see Dill et al. 2006; http://www.kka.fi/pdf/julkaisut/KKA_106.pdf).

According to the plans of the Ministry, interdisciplinary training and transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies, and the graduate school system will be developed and strengthened as a route to a professional research career. In relation to this, the objective is to increase the number of graduates from doctoral programs entering in the private sector from current 15 % to 20 % until 2020. Following the guidelines of the EQF, the learning outcomes have been devised by Ministry's working group including also the third cycle (MoE 2005:4; http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2005/korkeakoulututkintojen_viitekehys_kuva us_suomalaisista_korkeako?lang=fi&extra_locale=en).

The universities are developing a four-stage career model for doctoral students in order to make research careers more attractive and predictable, and to promote especially female postgraduate studies and research careers. In addition, the Ministry commits to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers as regards to recruitment and career development (MoE 2008:15

http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/Neliportainen_tutkijanura.html?lang=fi& extra_locale=en).

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.

> According to the Universities Act the mission of universities is to conduct scientific research and provide undergraduate and postgraduate education based on it. According to Polytechnics Act polytechnic R&D is to serve education and its development, as well as local business and industry and its development.
>
> National Innovation Strategy issued in June 2008 aims to create broad-based and multi-faceted innovation policy that helps Finland to achieve innovation-based, sustainably targeted productivity improvements that increase wellbeing; and be a pioneer in innovation activity. Strategic measures have been selected to support, in particular, the four basic choices: (1) Innovation activity in a borderless, global world, (2) Demand and user orientation, (3) Innovative individuals and communities, and (4) A systemic approach.
>
> A national research infrastructure review and improvement project will be prepared by the end of 2008. The project will review national-level research infrastructures and existing commitments to international research infrastructures. At the same time, principles for participation in international research infrastructures will be planned and new infrastructure needs reviewed. Conditionsfor the utilisation and provision of sector research will be developed to correspond to the changing needs of society. This will require improvements in the overall steering and coordination of sector research. A Sector Research Advisory Board, linked to the Ministry of Education, has been established to promote the develop and steering of sector research. A proposal for the structural development of sector research will be prepared in the latter part of 2008.
>
> In spring 2008, the Academy of Finland approved an international operating strategy extending until 2015. The objective is to create new conditions for internationally high-level research, researcher education and attractive research environments. The Academy of Finland's international activity supports and promotes the implementation of the National Innovation Strategy. The key elements of the Academy's strategy are international peer reviews, supporting elite units' top-level research groups and researchers as well as clusters of strategic expertise, participating in the implementation of the national infrastructure policy, internationalising research programme and researcher careers, and promoting the visibility of Finnish science.
>
> The Ministry of Education has prepared an action plan to develop researcher education and the researcher career system for the period 2007–2011. The Ministry of Education, the Academy of Finland and the universities will implement the action plan, as part of which the universities will adopt a four-step researcher career model. The objective is to make researcher careers more transparent and predictable. The aim of the four-step researcher career model is to facilitate and strengthen two-way transfer between universities and other actors – research institutes, companies, public administration – for example by revising the examination of qualifications gained outside academic work, utilising a system of competence descriptions. The four-step system will also give companies and research institutes a tool for examining their own career structures.

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

The Ministry of Education encourages the higher education institutions to cooperate with other research institutions (both public and private).

The percentage of GDP spent on research was 3,5 % in 2007. Of this 72,3 % was from private funds and 27,7 % was from public funds. The total annual national research expenditure was 6,2 billion euro in 2007. Of this total 1,7 billion was covered by public expenditure and 4,5 billion euro by private. 18,7 % of the research expenditure was spent in the higher education sector.

The Finnish research funding agencies, The Academy of Finland and the Finnish funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, both have funding instruments for the cooperation between higher education institutions and other research institutions (both public and private). These include both funding for research projects and funding for the mobility of researchers between institutions.

The doctoral candidates receive funding from various sources. Appr. 1/3 of all doctoral candidates receive their funding as a salary through a doctoral school in which they are employed as university personnel. Some of the doctoral candidates are working in the research projects and receive their salary through external research funding. Another example of funding of doctoral studies is when the doctoral candidate is working as a lecturer in the university while conducting doctoral studies. One example of funding mechanisms are the individual grants from private foundations.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐   If Yes, please specify:

> Statistics Finland collects and analyses information on highly skilled personnel. The statistics describe the development of the reserve of human resources of science and technology, demographic structure, placement in work and mobility.
>
> Statistics Finland collects information on graduate placement one year after graduation. The information is publicly available in the KOTA database (https://kotaplus.csc.fi/online/Etusivu.do?lng=en). In addition, a survey on the quality and meaningfullness of the placement of doctoral graduates was conducted for the first time in 2007 by the network of Acedemid Career Services representing nine Finnish universities. A follow-up will conducted in 2009.
>
> Several universities follow the placement of their own graduates.

6. Access[6] and admission to the next cycle
Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles.

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:
a) the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

> 100%

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

>

c) any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: *please tick whether graduates must*:

sit entrance exam	Yes ☐	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:

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[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."

Complete additional course:

Student's who transfer to university second cycle programmes with a first cycle degree from the polytechnic sector (may be selected through an entrance exam) can be required to complete supplementary studies (maximum 60 ECTS/one year) owing to differences in the objectives and contents of the degrees. (see 2e Holders of particular first cycle degree)

Working experience:

In the polytechnic sector the requirement for second cycle programmes is a Bachelors' level degree and at least three years of work experience after graduation. Polytechnic second cycle programmes are working life oriented and they can be taken flexibly alongside work.

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

In some cases universities may request for a proof of language or mathematical skills (for example TOEFL and GMAT). In some cases the aptitude and motivation may be tested.

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

Please indicate:

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

100%

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

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

> Allthough, there are currently no legal obstacles for the holders of polytechnic second cycle degrees to access third cycle programmes of the universities, universities still do not fully recognise the possibility. Therefore, in the draft of a new University Act this possibility is highlighted.

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

Measures to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications:

The new degree structure was introduced in 2005 for both universities and polytechnics. Since 2005, in universities students first complete the Bachelor's degree, after which they may continue for Master's degree. However, most of the students are admitted to study for the Master's degree. Polytechnics have had the right to award Master's level degrees since 2005. During the degree reform process a lot of attention was paid to curriculum development and content (including the employability) of the new degrees.

Most of the university degrees taken are Master's degrees (more than 60% in 2007) and the most of the polytechnic degrees are at the Bachelor's level (98% in 2007). There is still very little experience of Bachelor's graduates from the university and Master's graduates from the polytechnics on the labour market.

Ministry of Education and HEI's have increased information about the new degree structures, especially for the students. To support the reform of the degree structures Ministry of Education has financed two major projects. "Five years, two degrees" project objective is to further develop the curriculum and study counselling practices in universities. In the polytechnic sector, the development network of polytechnic Master's degrees promotes new degrees and developes good practicies. In 2007-2009, Ministry of Education supports also a national network of polytecnics which advances the interaction of students and employers.

Employment status of graduates:

The most recent data from the Statistic Finland gives information about placement of university and polytechnic graduates of 2005 at the end of 2006.

The data does not yet illustrate the employment of graduates after the degree structure reform.

- Bachelor's degrees from polytechnics (21 100):

employed 85,5%, unemployed 5,3 %, student 3,8 %, other activity 5,4 %

- Bachelor's degrees from universities (1 860):

employed 70,6%, unemployed 1,9 %, student 22,6 %, other activity 4,9 %

- Master's degrees from universities (12 750)

employed 84,9%, unemployed 3,9 %, student 5 %, other activity 6,2 %

- 3rd cycle graduates, licentiate and doctoral degrees (1 830): employed 82 %, unemployed 2,7 %, student 2,5 %, other activity 12,8 %.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:

- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
  Significant ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- accreditation/quality assurance
  Significant ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- university governance
  Significant ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

If no, or in some cases only, please explain the current situation:

b) Curriculum design, work placements:

According to their mission polytechnics train professionals in response to labour market needs. Therefore, employers and representatives from working life have significant role in curriculum design of degree programmes in polytechnic sector. Polytechnics usually have advisory boards with stakeholders from the world of work for every degree programme or every field of study. Also all first cycle degree studies include practical work placements. In the university sector the involvement of employers in curriculum design varies more depending on the

field of study. Work placements are used in some fields of study but it is not compulsory part of studies in all degree programmes.

Quality assurance:

Quality assurance process is organised in HEI's internally and does not always include the involment of the representatives from the working life. However, the representatives of working life are included in the work of FINHEEC. For example, as a rule, the audit group is composed of five members, three of whom are representatives of the HEI, one a student representative and one a representative of the world of work.

Governance of HEIs:

All HEI's have external stakeholders in their governing board stipulated by the law (universities: minimum of one persion and maximum of one third of total number of members; Polytechnics: maximum of one third of total number of members). The number of external members in university councils will be increased in the new University Act (planned to be in force 2010). After that the external stakeholder involment in the governance of HEI's will be significant.

c) There are qualification requirements for civil service positions. The required education may be a qualification of a certain level, a qualification of a specific title, or specified studies. In general, if there is a requirement for higher education degree, a holder of Bachelor's or Master's degree either from university or polytechnic is qualified. However, some professions such as teachers and social workers have specific qualification requirements by legislation. Bachelor's degree graduate is able to pursue career in the public service in every field, but he/she is not able to enter all the professions with the Bachelor's degree.

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared[7]?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment

The Ministry of Education has appointed a national working group to prepare the national qualifications framework for all levels of education. The working group has started its work and will finalise the report and proposal in June 2009. The members of the working group represent higher education institutions, and other educational institutions, student organisations, social partners, university and polytechnic rectors' councils, Finnish Adult Education Association, National Board of Education (incl. ENIC/NARIC) and the Ministry of Education.

In 2005 the proposal for higher education qualifications framework was prepared by the national working group appointed by the Ministry of Education. This proposal included generic descriptors for each cycle (all 3 cycles) based on learning outcomes and competences. This proposal will be integrated (and possibly modified) to the overarching qualifications framework, which is being prepared. In addition to general learning outcomes the proposal for higher education qualifications framework included other aspects of the degree, incl. credits. Credits are fully compatible with the ECTS.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment See above.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment See above.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

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

> *Comment*   The proposal for the higher education qualifications framework for EHEA has been discussed nationally e.g. in different seminars. When the proposal was published, there was also a written consultation procedure.   Aftert the consultation, 60 written statements from stakeholders were received and analysed.

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):
e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

<div align="right">Yes ☐   No ☐</div>

> *Comment*

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:
f) Are all formal arrangementsdecisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

<div align="right">Yes ☐   No ☒</div>

> *Comment*
>
> Please see comment in "g". The higher education institutions are already free to implement the framework. The formal decisions will be made after finalising the proposal for the national qualifications system for all levels of education.

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

Higher education institutions have already started to describe qualifications in terms of learning outcomes. In many higher education institutions the proposal for the higher education qualifications framework has been one of the basis for this work. The work has mainly been done in the context of curricula development when the new degree structure for universities and polytechnics was introduced.

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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

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i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes ☐   No ☒

Comment

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*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 ESG[9] 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 QA system of the Finnish higher education institutions was reviewed as a whole against the Bologna process and ESG in 2003-2005 by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC), the Ministry of Education, the higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics), student unions and other stakeholder groups.

As a response to the aims and objectives set in Berlin communiqué, a national Committee proposed in 2004 that the universities and polytechnics should develop QA systems that cover all their operations and that these should be regularly audited by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC). The development of QA was not a new issue for the Finnish HEIs, but it involved better use of the existing structures and procedures, and making them more visible and concrete.

The instutional audit model was developed in 2004-2005. ESG standards and guidelines were taken into account especially in the formulation of the audit targets and audit criteria.

The most important starting point for the Finnish audit model is enhancement-led approach, which has long traditions in the Finnish evaluation and quality assurance culture. Another starting point is, that quality assurance should cover all operations of HEIs: not only education but also research/R&D and support services. The third starting point is, that the audit should have consequences. For this reason, the audit may lead to two conclusions: either the institution passes

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[8] http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf
[9] ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

the audit or, if it has major shortcomings in its QA, it has to take part in a re-audit after two years.

When introducing the audit model, FINHEEC and the Ministry of Education organised an extensive consultation round to HEIs and other interested parties. Also several seminars were arranged to offer the institutions and stakeholders an opportunity to give feedback on the audit model. In spring 2005, the audit methods and criteria were piloted with good experiences. Every institution has signed in the audit process and FINHEEC will audit the QA systems of all the Finnish HEIs by 2011. By the end of October 2008, FINHEEC has implemented audits of 19 institutions. During 2005-2008, FINHEEC has continuously developed the audit model according to the institutional and auditor feedback. The second, revised version of the Audit Manual is available at www.kka.fi/pdf/julkaisut/KKA_1007.pdf.

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:

HEIs can appeal the FINHEEC for project funding for quality enhancement. The annual total amount has been between 70 000 and 110 000 euros, which has usually been devided by the Council decision among 5-8 applicants. From the year 2004 FINHEEC has directed this funding for development of QA systems and supported especially joint projects of several Finnish HEIs with an innovative meaning also for the other institutions.

In 2004 the themes supported were the QA and students as members of the academic community and student participation in evaluation; in 2005 QA as a part of the everyday life in the academic community, use of different evaluations and feedback, and QA of research and R&D; in 2006 the connection between QA and steering, QA of research, R&D and regional impact; in 2007 was organised a benchmarking project for the HEIs on good practices in QA.

In addition to this, the Ministry of Education has granted project funding for the development of QA systems in HEIs (e.g. the ISO certification of the University of Kuopio).

- Other measures

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please outline these measures

FINHEEC has organised several seminars for higher education institutions in order to support their QA work.

In 2007 seminars for the rectors of universities and polytechnics on QA and auditing were organised.

In cooperation with centres for extension studies of different universities FINHEEC has organised long-term training on evaluation and QA for the university staff. During the training every participant carries out an own development project on the QA system of their own university. So far appr. 100 persons have participated in the training.

FINHEEC emphasises transparency in the practical implementation of an audit and for instance, always organises an open seminar for staff and students before the site-visit. These seminars have been attended by about 1 500 persons.

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

After each audit project, FINHEEC collects immediate feedback from the audited institutions and auditors. According to this feedback and audit reports, the audits and other measures have clearly supported the systematic development of internal QA systems. They have also produced information of the strengths and gaps in QA at the national and the institutional level.

In 2008 FINHEEC has directed funding towards research of the impact of audits and other evaluations, which makes possible a long-term research of the impact of the Finnish audit model.

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

> According to the FINHEEC definition, the institutional QA system comprises of procedures, processes and systems used by the HEIs to manage and enhance the quality of its education and other activities.
>
> Based on the autonomy of the HEIs, each institution determines independently its own objectives, the organisation and methods of its own QA system. It is the task of the institution to define the quality it aims to attain in its strategies. The QA system is then evaluated by FINHEEC in relation to the institutional strategic objectives. As a result, some of the instutions have QA systems that base on the ISO standards, EFQM, BSC, CAF or a combination of these. Some have a self-developed QA system. Often, the institutional QA systems include 1. the strategic work, 2. implementation of strategies and basic mission, 3. evaluations and feedback mechanisms and 4. utilisation of feedback.
>
> Individual quality tools may include quality handbooks and other documentation; quality criteria and indicators for education and research; process decriptions for core and support processes; definition of quality responsibilities; student, teacher and stakeholder feedback; cyclical internal and external evaluations; and systematic utilisation of feedback by e.g. the institutional management or teachers and improvement measures.
>
> As the audits look for evidence of the comprehensiveness, transparency and effectiveness of each HEI's QA system, they encourage the institutions to present concrete examples of improvement, i.e. the quality loops. The FINHEEC audit criteria also emphasize the continuous development of quality and QA system.

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

> Most higher education institutions have procedures for periodic monitoring and review of programmes and awards. E.g. many universities organise regularly international evaluations of education and research.
>
> Part of HEIs use internal audits of study programmes and units. For this purpose the institutions train internal auditors among the staff members. These internal auditors organise the site visits and report about the strengths and development recommendations of the unit audited.

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.

> According to the audit reports most HEIs have published criteria for grading the exams and theses.
>
> The situation at the universities differs to some extent from the situation at polytechnics. Practically all polytechnics have descriptions of the generic skills of polytechnic degrees as well as the programme specific competencies given by the degrees. They also have study plan descriptions based on learning outcomes. Universities completed field specific core content analyses of the degrees during the two-cycle degree reform in 2003-2005. Several fields have also at the university sector study programmes based on a learning putcome approach.
>
> Development of assessment methods is going on. The most advanced are the fields with regulated qualifications, as the field of social wellfare at the polytechnics or some fields of engineering. At the university sector especially in the field of medicine the OSCE, Objective Structured Clinical Examination, and progress-tests offer information about the progress of the students during studies.

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 universities/faculties and polytechnics publish annually study guides with detailed information about the programmes. The recruitment services at universities and polytechnics publish regularly information about the employment of alumni.
>
> An important part of national QA is also the open KOTA database (https://kotaplus.csc.fi/online/Etusivu.do?lng=en; also a parallel database for polytechnics, Amkota), maintained by the Ministry of Education. It offers statistical data on universities/polytechnics and fields of education from 1981 onwards. This data is also used for allocation resources both from the Ministry on Education to the universities and, inside the universities, to the faculties. Data is collected every year on several topics, e.g. number of applicants, number of admitted, new students, students, student mobility, degrees, graduate placement,

median graduation times, teachers, other staff, annual accounts, expenditure by performance areas, university premises, teacher and researcher visits, scientific publications etc.

One important tool are also the performance agreements between the Ministry of Education and each institution. These agreements determine quantitative and qualitative targets, the resources needed to acchieve these targets, the monitoring and evaluation of outcome, and further development of operations. Performance agreements are prepared for a three-year period.

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 Finnish national quality assurance system in higher education has three components: government steering (Ministry od Education), the institutional quality assurance (HEIs), and national quality audits (the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council FINHEEC). (See also 9.1.e)
>
> Steering:
>
> Fields of education in the universities are mentioned in the appendix to the Government Decree on University Degrees. In the polytechnic sector the fields of education for each polytechnic are determined in their operating licences. HEI's are not allowed to start education in new fields without amendments to Decree or operating licences. From 2005 onwards there is also a Ministry of Education Decree on separate Master degree programmes, to which the universities can propose new Master programmes. There are specified criteria for starting a new Master's programme. In the polytechnic sector Ministry of Education approves all the degree programmes.
>
> Institutional quality assurance:
>
> According to the legislation, the higher education institutions are responsible for the quality of their work. The institutions must evaluate their research and other activities and their effectiveness. They shall also take part in external evaluation of their activities. According to law, they must also publish the findings of the evaluations they undertake.
>
> FINHEEC:
>
> The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) is an independent expert body, which assists universities, universities of applied sciences/polytechnics, and the Ministry of Education in matters relating to evaluation. Its duties and policies are governed the the Government Decree on the Higher Education Evaluation Council from 1995. The council consists of 12 members, appointed by the Ministry of Education, usually for a four-year period. Members represent universities, polytechnics, students and employers. FINHEEC is a full member of ENQA.
>
> FINHEEC is mainly in charge of the external evaluation of education and other activities of HEIs in Finland. (Research is evaluated in Finland by the Academy of Finland.) FINHEEC has organised institutional evaluations of all the Finnish HEIs, and also a number of thematic and programme evaluations in selected fields. It also organises evaluation processes of high-quality units (so-called centres of excellence).
>
> The system of audits:
>
> As explained in point 9., FINHEEC currently implements the first audit cycle of all the Finnish higher education institutions. The audit model includes seven audit targets. In order to support the work of the HEIs and the audit teams, FINHEEC has prepared a set of criteria which describe four different stages of development of the QA systems. Each audit target includes definitions of absent, emerging,

developing, and advanced level. FINHEEC has defined that in order to pass the audit, none of seven audit targets should be at a level of absent and the system as whole must meet the criteria of a developing system.

So far, five of 19 audits have led to a re-audit decision. One re-audit has been carried out with positive results. The institution under re-audit had by the two-year development work reached the level of an advanced QA system.

As a whole, the aim of the audit approach is to support the development of systematic internal QA work in the institutions.

b) does your external quality assurance system operate at a national level;

Yes ☒   No ☐

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education[10]

Yes ☒   No ☐

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

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
- self-assessment report   Yes ☒   No ☐
- external review   Yes ☒   No ☐
- publication of results   Yes ☒   No ☐
- follow-up procedures   Yes ☒   No ☐

e) has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place

Yes ☐   No ☒

If **No** is there a date set for the review? ☐ Yes (please specify date <u>year 2009</u>) No ☐

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[10] 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.

11. Level of student participation
From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

a) in governance of national agencies for QA.
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

b) as full members in external review teams
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

c) as observers in external review teams
Yes ☐   No ☒   In some cases ☐

d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes)
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

g) in preparation of self-assessment reports.
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

h) in follow-up procedures:
Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

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

c) there is no observer status in the Finnish evaluation system; students are always full members of the review teams

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, INQAAHE, EAIR, Network of European agencies applying audit and institutional evaluation

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

External review for ENQA and EQAR will take place in 2009.

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)

100 %

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* <u>English</u>
- 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.

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

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.

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

Comment
Usually official translations are not requested, but there may be exceptions. The requirements concerning documentation are set by higher education institutions.

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).

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

Comment

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

Comment
E.g. the Finnish ENIC/NARIC and CIMO have organised several information meetings and given individual advice to different stakeholders. Also, specific instructions for filling in the DS and improving their quality have been prepared and are updated (latest update will be available in November). For labour market representatives specifically, the DS has been promoted in connection with the Europass, e.g. via the national Europass advisory group, where the labour market representatives are members.

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

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents[11] of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:
The compliance between the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the national legislation was reviewed and checked before the Lisbon Recognition Convention entered into force in Finland. The Government proposal (HE 155/2002) includes detailed explanation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This document covers all the Articles of the Lisbon Convention, explaining how and in which part of the national legislation the Articles have been implemented.
Law (877/2002) and Decree state the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its enforcement. The Articles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention have been implemented in relevant parts of the higher

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[11] 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)

education legislation, e.g. in Universities Act, Government Decree on University Degrees and in Polytechnics Act and Polytechnic Decree. The higher education legislation covers e.g. the competence of authorities, access and admission issues and the applicant's right to appeal. It also determines that access to higher education in the country of origin gives access also in Finland. Some Articles of the Lisbon Convention concerning e.g. the administration and information given to applicants have been implemented in the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) covering the administrative practice and procedures in Finland. The basic principles of equality are covered by the Constitution of Finland and it has been further specified in the higher education legislation.

The documents are available on the internet www.finlex.fi in Finnish and Swedish. The Finnish Constitution, parts of the higher education legislation as well as the Administrative Procedure Act are also available in English. (e.g. Universities Act http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1997/en19970645.pdf and Government Decree on University Degrees http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2004/en20040794.pdf). Information in English concerning legislation is also available from the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education/Finnish ENIC/NARIC.

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:
   i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See above

   ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See above

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:
   Since the beginning of 2008 the Finnish higher education institutions have had the possibility to organise made-to-order education that can be arranged for a group but not for individual students. The education can be purchased by a legal person under private or public law, such as a limited company, an association, a foundation or a state, a municipality or a municipal consortium. The provider of

education leading to a degree must charge the client at least for the costs incurred. The Finnish legislation in question is fully in line with the Code of Good Practice.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

    i) applicants' right to fair assessment

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level

Through national legislation. There is also specific training and information available.

A further challenge is to create uniform, reliable and transparent system for regognising prior learning. Currently, there is also a national working group coordinated by Rectors' conferences to discuss the procedures and basis in higher education institutions for the recognition of prior learning (including the recognition of foreign qualifications and non-formal and informal prior learning). In the recommendations for higher education institutions, again, the principles of Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts are being followed.

    ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level See "c".

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level See "c".

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice

The higher education institutions are responsible for providing information about themselves and their programs. This is done e.g. through printed material and on the web. The Finnish Ministry of Education (www.minedu.fi), Centre for International Mobility (CIMO, www.cimo.fi), Finnish Higher Education Evaluation

Council (www.kka.fi) as well as the National Board of Education (ENIC/NARIC, www.oph.fi/recognition) also provide information.

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 Finnish National Board of Education, which acts as the national information centre for academic recognition (ENIC/NARIC), is a central government agency for the development and administration of education, which functions under the Ministry of Education.

It is also the competent authority in the professional recognition of higher education qualifications completed abroad and decides the eligibility that foreign qualifications give for civil service posts and positions in Finland e.g. teachers, lawyers and social welfare professionals. In addition, the Finnish National Board of Education also acts as the national contact point under the Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. The task of the national contact point is e.g. to give information on the recognition of professional competence and national legislation concerning different professions. The information centre facilitates access to authoritative information on the education system and qualifications and gives advice and information on recognition matters and assessment of qualifications. It is also the national coordination point for the European and future national Qualifications Framework. To sum up, the Finnish National Board of Education (ENIC) has a strong role in information provision in all matters related to recognition and it also acts as the competent authority to make final decisions on the professional competence for many regulated professions in Finland.

Internationally, the staff of the Finnish ENIC has participated actively e.g. in the various working groups of the ENIC/NARIC networks. It has also an active role in training new ENICs. The member of the staff of the Finnish ENIC is the current President of the intergovernmental Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

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

The principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention are considered in all activities of e.g. the Finnish NARIC/ENIC.

Also, in implementing recognition of prior learning the principles of Lisbon Recognition Convention are taken into account. Transparency and recognition issues are on the agenda not only in the work of the NARIC/ENIC but also e.g. of the various projects, initiatives by higher education institutions, both universities and polytechnics. See e.g. www.ahot.utu.fi

A manual with recommendations to admission of applicants from certain countries (from which there are most applicants) has been prepared jointly by the

Finnish polytechnics and Finnish ENIC/NARIC. The work has been done in the context of joint application procedure to Finnish polytechnics. For further information, please see www.admissions.fi

Joint application system for university education was introduced in September 2008. (https://www.yliopistohaku.fi)

There is also a centralised admission service for foreign applicants established by Finnish universities. For more information: www.universityadmissions.fi

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS[12]

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes[13] in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

100% ⊠   75-99% ☐   50-75% ☐   <50% ☐

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes[14] in your country? Please tick one:

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

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

    i) is it compatible with ECTS?   Yes ☐   No ☐

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

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

Yes ⊠   No ☐

If Yes, please explain:

In order to support the degree reform and to promote the goals of the Bologna process the University of Oulu and the University of Kuopio have organised the national project called w5w (2004-2006) / w5w.2 (2007-2009). The

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[12] Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html
[13] Except doctoral studies
[14] 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

project organises systematic training to Finnish university teachers and curriculum designers. Project is funded by the Ministry of Education. The project also organises training to improve understanding of learning outcomes and promotes the use of LOs in designing Finnish degree programs.

When it comes to polytechnics, The Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences ARENE initiated a nationwide project launched in spring 2004. The project entitled as 'Participation of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences in the European Higher Education Area' ("the ECTS project", http://www.ncp.fi/ects). During the second phase of the project (1 August 2005 – 31 December 2006), the emphasis was on enhancement of the curriculum and the description of learning outcomes in different fields of study. Furthermore, the degree programmes defined subject-specific competences in national degree-specific groups. The competence-based curriculum is outlined by learning outcomes, i.e. core competences, to which the education aims at. In the recommendations of the project, the universities of applied sciences are advised to present the learning outcomes and objectives as subject-specific and generic competences and to use a matrix as their curricular outline. The universities of applied sciences have worked actively on the implementation of these recommendations in their curriculum development. However, the work is still going on and is also linked to the recognition of prior learning.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please explain:

The w5w project presented above publishes textbooks concerning curriculum development, study quidance and student workload regulation. The project has published a guide how to measure and determine students´ workload. (Karjalainen, Alha, Jutila, 2008. "Give me time to think".) The project also helps university teachers and curriculum designers to organise student workload and time consumption follow-up studies.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please explain: In the framework of the Bologna promotion activities supported by the Commission, Finland has nominated 2 ECTS/DS counsellors (Mari Emmes and Heikki Pekkarinen). They give assistance to HEIs related to implementation of ECTS and application for an ECTS label. A national seminar on this topic will be arranged in November 2008.

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: The higher education legislation encourages the recognition of prior learning at higher education institutions. According to the Government Decree on University Degrees "the student may count studies towards the degree and replace studies included in the degree with other studies of corresponding level, as specified by the university. At the discretion of the university, the student may also count towards the degree and replace studies included in the degree with knowledge demonstrated in some other manner". According to the Government Decree on Polytechnic Studies "students are allowed credits for corresponding studies completed in other Finnish or foreign higher education or other educational institutions on grounds laid down in the degree regulations and to substitute other studies of the same standard or corresponding practical training or work experience for studies or practical training required for the degree". A national working group, chaired by the Ministry of Education, has given recommendations for the recognition of prior learning in higher education institutions. These include recommendations for a recognition system, for the common principles of the recognition system, for the good practices of higher education institutions, and recommendations to the Ministry of Education on promoting the recognition of prior learning at higher education institutions.

Special emphasis will be on recognition and validation of prior informal and non-formal learning. The most relevant recommendations for recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning are listed below.

Recommendations for a recognition system:

Each higher education institution devises a consistent, reliable and transparent system for the identification and recognition of prior learning. The system should also cover identification and recognition of informal and non-formal learning. The recognition system is applied to education leading to a higher education degree.

The recognition system and methods of assessing competence will be developed in co-operation with key stakeholders, taking into account the skills needs of working life and adequate quality assurance.

Recommendations for the common principles of the recognition system:

The system is based on the students' right to apply for the recognition of their prior learning. Applying for recognition is voluntary for students and the process is initiated by an individual student. Students bear the burden of proving their competence and are primarily responsible for submitting sufficient information. Students are entitled to appeal against decisions issued to them. Higher education institutions must justify their decisions.

The recognition system and the assessment criteria determined by a higher education institution are based on a competence-based approach. Special emphasis is being paid to the learning outcomes. As part of their curricula, higher education institutions define the learning outcomes of degrees and parts thereof against which the competence attested by a student will be measured. Assessment is based on competence, not on where or how it was acquired. In their assessment, higher education institutions take into account the European qualifications framework.

Decisions made within the framework of the recognition system are based on expertise and reliable documentation. Higher education institutions are responsible for the quality assurance of the recognition of prior learning.

Recognised studies are equal to studies taken at the student's own institution.

Assessment relating to the recognition of studies and competence, and determining any possible supplementary studies is consistent and based on policies determined by the higher education institution. Students are treated in a consistent, equal and predictable manner.

The higher education institution should determine the proportion of degree studies that must be completed at the degree-awarding institution. Degrees may not be completed in full through informal and non-formal learning.

Studies awarded for prior learning may be graded.

Recommendations for higher education institutions:

Higher education institutions draw up clear descriptions of the system for the recognition of prior learning and the responsibilities at the different stages of the recognition process. The descriptions are incorporated into the institutional quality assurance system.

The descriptions should include at least the following details:

• documents relevant to credit transfer

• where to apply for the transfer of credits or for a decision on supplementary studies

• the decision-maker(s)

• field-specific criteria for assessment

• the time required for processing an application

• the appeal procedure and relevant documents

• documentation of decisions

• how to enter transferred credits into the higher education institution's electronic database

• how to indicate transferred credits on the degree certificate.

The description of the system is easily accessible to students, academic staff and stakeholders. The recognition system and its principles are presented at least on the institution's web pages and study guide.

Higher education institutions draw up plans for providing student counseling and guidance. Such a plan describes the counselling and guidance available to students, those responsible for its provision and the stages at which it is available. Higher education institutions pay special attention to the use of individual study plans in planning credit transfers and supplementary studies. The aim is to chart each student's learning and the achievement of the learning outcomes set for the higher education degree.

Higher education institutions introduce and develop methods (such as portfolios and skills demonstrations) for students to prove their competence in order to receive credit and/or for their prior learning to be considered in terms of the manner of completing studies or their scope. Higher education institutions may also recognise qualifications or studies based on evidence other than formal documents.

Higher education institutions evaluate the effectiveness of the recognition of prior learning, i.e. the effects of transferred credits and supplementary studies on the curriculum and its development, on the development of students' competence and their individual study plans, as well as on graduation times and transition to working life.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education:

The Ministry of Education supports activities aiming to develop methods to identify and recognise prior learning and informal and non-formal learning. The outcomes should be applicable at national level and/or in specific fields of education. In this purpose, the Ministry of Education has invited the university and polytechnic Rectors' Conferences to establish a joint working group to further implement the policy described earlier. The working group will report in the end of 2008 and give its recommendations to higher education institutions.

Recognition of prior learning at higher education institutions is included as part of their steering by targets and results.

Nationally established principles are e.g following.:

> -Higher education institutions have the right to admit anyone whom the institution deems to have sufficient knowledge and skills for studies.
>
> - Studies at Open University / Open Polytechnic may give credit towards higher education degrees.
>
> - A basic vocational degree shorter than three years in length and a vocational qualification give eligibility for a corresponding field in a polytechnic. A three-year secondary vocational qualification gives access to all higher education programs.

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

> **If Yes,** please specify:
>
> Recommendation of MoE committee (2007:4) HE institutions have outcome-based curricula. HEIs must have a uniform, reliable and transparent system for recognising prior learning. The system should be applied in degree education and in other education provided by HEIs. It should also apply to studies completed abroad.
>
> Field-specific RPL cooperation in the areas of social and health studies, technology, economics and business administration have started.

c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements?

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

> **If Yes,** please specify:
>
> According to the Government Decree on University Degrees "the student may count studies towards the degree and replace studies included in the degree with other studies of corresponding level, as specified by the university. At the discretion of the university, the student may also count towards the degree and replace studies included in the degree with knowledge demonstrated in some other manner". According to the Government Decree on Polytechnic Studies "students are allowed credits for corresponding studies completed in other Finnish or foreign higher education or other educational institutions on grounds laid down in the degree regulations and to substitute other studies of the same standard or corresponding practical training or work experience for studies or practical training required for the degree"

> RPL is being applied and documented in the personal study plans.

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

Comprehensively ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

> Please describe the current situation:
>
> At Finnish polytechnics, RPL is a statutory obligation. In university studies there is more discretion in credit transfer.

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.

> Access:
>
> A regionally covering network on higher education institutions has been created in order to ensure access from all geographical areas in the country.
>
> A public student finance scheme has been developed in order to ensure equal possibilities to enter higher education regardless of the student's social or financial background. Affordable student housing is arranged by independent foundations.
>
> All higher education leading to a degree is free of charge for students.
>
> University act 645/1997, 18 § states that for the purpose of ensuring the educational needs of one language group, it shall be possible to deviate from the consistent admission criteria to a limited extent. For example for the purpose of ensuring the educational needs of the language minority group a quota for Sami speaking population can be reserved.
>
> MoE has financed a project "Equal study rights for everyone". The essential aim of the project is to promote physical, psychological, and social accessibility in teaching and learning in Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs) so that everyone has the same right and access to study regardless of one's characteristics.
>
> Complementary studies in order to gain qualifications:

> HEIs organise complementary studies for example to immigrants. Polytechnics have organised training meant e.g. for nurses, public health nurses and midwives who have completed their degree outside EU.
>
> In universities, there have been specific training possibilities for immigrants who have academic education from abroad and want to work in Finland in regulated professions.

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
>
> The national qualifications framework is currently being prepared. Generally, there are no dead-ends in Finnish (higher) education system.

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
>
> Ministry of Education has funded several national projects (http://www.w5w.fi/, http://www.ncp.fi/ects/, http://www3.hamk.fi/oped-exo/, http://www.cop.fi/harke/, www.ylempiamk.fi, http://www.pkamk.fi/projektit/aikuisopiskelijanohjaus/, http://www.oamk.fi/opinnaytehanke/), concerning student guidance and councelling. Recommendations, which are given by these projects will harmonize the processes at higher education institutions as well as support and train higher education (teaching) staff.

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
>
> Special needs of the national linguistic minorities are taken into consideration in student selection and educational provision. Access into higher education is wide, also from non-traditional paths: vocational secondary education provides eligibility for higher education. The university and polytechnic legislation makes it possible for higher education institutions to admit students without formal qualifications, in case the institution otherwise verifies the student's abilities.

Through a national agreement (JOO-agreement) students can also attend to courses and modules in other universities in Finland. There is also virtual university and virtual polytechnic to give students wider selection of studies than they home institution can offer.

There is open university and open polytechnic that are accessible to all despite their educational background. It is possible to enter to a degree program though the open university.

Open Polytechnic (http://www.amk.fi/avoin/en/index.html)

Open University (http://www.avoinyliopisto.fi/en-GB/).

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d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle

HEIs arrange education and training intended for adults. It may lead to qualifications or relate to general self-development. Efforts have been made to make the provision as flexible as possible in order to enable adults to study alongside work. In higher education, adults can study in separate adult education programmes offered by polytechnics. Some 20% of polytechnic students are mature students. In universities there are no specific programmes for mature students, who study in the same groups with young people. Universities offer fee-charging continuing education and open university instruction, which do not lead to qualifications but can be included in a undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

The Finnish Virtual University (FVU), [http://www.virtuaaliyliopisto.fi/vy_front_page_eng.asp] is a partnership of all 21 Finnish universities. FVU gives online or distance education studies to students of the FVU member universities.

The Finnish Online University of Applied Sciences [http://www.amk.fi/en/index.html] is a partnership of 28 UAS´s. The flexible study right means that students can choose courses from any Finnish university of applied sciences.

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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

All the degree programs are based on modular structure.

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,

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees[15]
a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.
   Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes ☐   No ☒

   Does the legislation fully allow:
      i) establishing joint programmes?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If No please explain what are the obstacles

      ii) awarding joint degrees?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If No please explain what are the obstacles

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in
   i) joint degrees

   75-100% ☐   50-75% ☐   25-50% ☐   1-25% ☒   0% ☐

   ii) joint programmes

   75-100% ☐   50-75% ☒   25-50% ☐   1-25% ☐   0% ☐

c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country
   In the first cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐
   In the second cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐
   In the third cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread (please list if possible)?

Based on the enquiry made for the higher education institutions, most programmes are to be found in Sciences (Technology), Economics and Business Administration and Forestry.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

---

[15] 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.

Appr. 20 programmes

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

> In the Development plan for education and research 2007-2012 approved by the Government HEIs are strongly encouraged to develop high quality joint degree programmes in international cooperation.
>
> Already in 2004 the Ministry of Education has given its recommendations concerning joint programmes. The recommendation was prepared jointly with higher education institutions and other stakeholders. After this, in 2005 the National Board of Education (ENIC/NARIC), Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council jointly with Finnish higher education institutions prepared practical guidelines and "good practice" document on joint programmes. Based on experience gathered, these documents were updated in 2007.
>
> On top of written instructions, there have been several seminars and training events organised by the National Board of Education (ENIC/NARIC) and Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). During the Finnish Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers the Ministry of Education, ENIC/NARIC, CIMO and the University of Tampere jointly organised the seminar "Developing Joint Programmes and Degrees in Nordic and Baltic Countries" in 2007. International theme seminar focused on joint degree programmes from the perspective of higher education institutions covering themes related to institutional and national policies on joint programmes as well as implementing them in practice.
>
> In the higher education legislation, the degree titles in English have been confirmed. For the university sector, it is specifically mentioned that "education leading to a higher education degree may also be arranged in international co-operation". Also, it is stipulated that "the extent of studies required for a programme leading to the higher university degree which is geared to foreign students shall be a minimum of 90 credits."

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

> The regular student support systems are applied also for joint degree cooperation.

MOBILITY
.
19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility
a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

The issue of student and staff mobility has been a subject of much discussion on the national level. Finland is drafting a strategy for internationalisation of HEIs which has a deadline of December 2008. The aim of the strategy is to create interenationally strong and attractive higher education community in Finland and set targets for the next decade. The strategy will also outline concrete ways (e.g. scholarships, mobility window) to reach these targets.

In drafting the strategy, an open consultation with all stakeholfers was conducted and workshops discussing several relevant topics were held. Participants in these workshops included all relevant stakeholders, from HE-community, employers, NGOs etc.

Research concerning mobility has been conducted by several institutions and organisations, such as the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and the Student Research Foundation (OTUS). CIMO is at the moment conducting a survey on programmes offered by HEIs in languages other than Finnish or Swedish.

According to the Development plan for education and research 2007-2012 approved by the Government one of the main goals is to increase student-, staff- and researcher mobility. Social support system for international students and staff will be developed so that they have possibility to integrate into the Finnish society. The plan also outlines that tuition fees for students outside EU/EEA will be introduced, but at the same time scholarship funds will be created. It is also planned that HEIs' language strategies will be prepared during 2009.

Statistics on international mobility are collected regularly and national trends are analysed annually. Mobility targets are a part of the annual negotiations between the Ministry of Education and the HEIs.

The Parliament implemented Directive regarding researchers by amending legislation so that the process of getting a residence permit is easier for researcher in August 2008. On institutional level HEIs and the student unions are

> working in order to provide international students with different services to ease their integration to the HEI-community and society, e.g. peer-tutoring.

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:
>
> In August 2008 legislation was amended in order to ease process of getting a residence permit for researchers.
>
> Students who study in Finland for more than two years are entitled to municipal health care and are also abla to vote in municipal elections.
>
> However an obligatory health insurances for students outside EU/EEA has been introduced. Residence permit is dependent on a valid health insurance, meaning that students have to have health insurances before they arrive in Finland. At the persent Finnish insurancy companies do not offer such a health insurance would fullfill the criteria.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation:
>
> The Finnish student financial aid (grant, loan and housing allowance) is portable. In the academic year 2006/2007, there were altogether 4,360 students who received student financial aid for degree studies abroad. Most of these students, 83 %, were studying for a degree in another EU country. In 2006/2007 there were 6 985 students who received student financial aid for temporary studies abroad; 68 % of these students were studying in another EU country. The state support is very important source of income for Finnish students during periods abroad. According to latest student survey (2006) the state support makes up over half of the average mobile student´s income.
>
> Foreign students who have come to Finland to study are usually not entitled to the Finnish student financial aid. A foreigner who has a habitual residence in Finland, and who is in the country for some other reason than studying, can be granted student financial aid. The grounds for staying in the country are assessed

in accordance with the provisions of the Aliens Act. The majority, 72 % (4 299), of foreigners receiving student financial aid (together 5 985) are from countries outside the EU in 2006.

The most recent amendment to the Student Financial Aid Act was made in connection with the implementation of the Council Directive on the status of citizens of third countries. According to the amendment, a citizen of a third country who has resided in another Member State for a long time and moves to Finland and is granted a continuous residence permit is entitled to student financial aid. Another recent amendment, made in connection with the implementation of the Free Movement Directive, provides that citizens of another Member State who have resided in Finland continuously for at least five years and their family members are are eligible for the same entitlements as Finnish citizens.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Finland has ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention and it has come into force on March 1in 2004.

Student unions have received some reports from students saying that there are occasional difficulties in HEIs to get studies recognised as parts of their degrees. This indicates that on the institutional level all good practices are not yet in place.

A working group of the Ministry of Education published recommendations for the recognition of prior learning in 2007. Now there is a joint working group of the Rectors' Councils of both universities and polytechnics that are to put forward more concrete recommendations regarding RPL. This work also contributes to the recognition of study periods taken abroad.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Housing for students is provided in most cases by the student unions of HEIs. This is done either via student housing foundations or housing owned directly by

the student unions. Also HEIs offer housing for students. Generally HEIs and local student housing foundations/student unions have an agreement that all the mobile students are provided with accommodation. However, there can be difficulties for mobile students to get accommodation, especially beginning of academic year. Currently almost all foreign students are provided accommodation.

This arrangement has its drawbacks however, because the housing for foreigners is riskier than for Finnish students due to shorter terms of accommodation (e.g. 5 months) leading into empty apartments in summertime when there is much less teaching. As a result the foundations have been requiring HEIs to take part in the costs.

Arrangements regarding staff accommodation vary more, but if accommodation is offered, it is in most cases done by the HEIs.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Centre for International Mobility, CIMO, does active work on student and staff mobility by providing information and following the mobility trends. Also HEIs are working to encourage outward mobility. HEIs and their student unions offer scholarships for students. Staff mobility is supported by many HEIs and e.g. Academy of Finland.

Targets for both incomming and outgoing exchange students are set in the negotiations between Ministry of Education and HEIs.

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"

A strategy for the internationalisation of Finnish higher education institutions up to 2015 will be devised during 2008. The aim is to develop an internationally strong and attractive higher education and research community in Finland. The preparation of the strategy is recorded in the Government Programme and forms part of the ongoing reform of the higher education system. It is being prepared by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the higher education institutions and stakeholders. The strategy will set objectives for the next decade and determine the means of achieving them. In support of the strategy work, the views of stakeholders, such as higher education students and personnel, the academic community, business and industry will be taken into account.

b) What has your country done to:
i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

Maintaining and developing information on the websites (HEIs, Ministry of Education and CIMO) and promoting EHEA in all internationl interaction.

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

Academy of Finland has enlarged the funding scheme FiDiPro (Finland Distinguished Professor Programme) to attract foreign top researchers and scholars to Finnish HEIs. Several mobility programmes have been started in recent years. They include North-South-South (a network programme for mobility between Finland and certain developing countries); Asia programmes through the HEI Asia-networks , a fellowship programme for Indian post-graduates as of 2007; n2n (north-to-north) mobility programme between HEIs in the Arctic area. Finnish HEIs have been particularly active in Erasmus Mundus and Nordic Masters programmes with the aim of promoting European HE in the global context.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

HEIs, CIMO and Finheec have created wide networks to promote capasity building and international co-operation.

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

> When making co-operation arrangements with non European countries Ministry of Education uses EHEA objectives and initiatives as a framework for developing activities.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

> Recognition of qualifications is enhanced according to same principles despite of country of origin.

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.

> The main principle is that HEIs are responsible for the quality of all their programmes and activities. The quality assurance process covers also cross-border activities.
>
> The Ministry of Education has underlined the importance of following the principles of OECD/UNESCO guidelines when encreasing cross-border activities. Furthermore, HEIs together with Finheec are asked to make more detailed quality recommendations based on the Guidelines for Provision in Cross-border Higher Education by the end of August 2009.
>
> Finheec participates in a pilot evaluation project to develop and try out a method and criteria for evaluating Joint Nordic Masters programmes to support the development of joint programmes and to market them internationally.

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
>
> see above

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.

Modernising higher education (see point 1) will continue to be a major effort challenging the whole HEI community. Strengthening the quality and research capacity of HEI's and adjusting to the demographic change still remains on the agenda in the near future. Financing and owner-policy issues as well as intensifying cooperation between HEIs are central national development targets. Above-mentioned subjects are linked to the overall development requirements of modernisation and structural development of Finnish HE.

Further internationalisation of Finnish higher education continues to be one of the main challenges in the future. Special attention has to be paid to the competitiveness of the Finnish HEIs. In this purpose the Ministry of Education together with HEIs and stakeholders will issue a strategy for internationalisation of HEIs.

National Innovation Strategy issued in June 2008 aims to create broad-based and multi-faceted innovation policy that helps Finland to achieve innovation-based, sustainably targeted productivity improvements that increase wellbeing; and be a pioneer in innovation activity. Strategic measures have been selected to support, in particular, the four basic choices: (1) Innovation activity in a borderless, global world, (2) Demand and user orientation, (3) Innovative individuals and communities, and (4) A systemic approach.

Particular policies suggested in the strategy are aimed, among other things, at: improving mobility and the attractiveness of Finland as a location for experts (for example, developing the operating principles around public research and innovation financing so as to support open innovation and collaboration, creating an active immigration policy, and setting ambitious goals for the internationalisation of researchers and teaching staff at universities and other research bodies); developing individuals and entrepreneurship (for example, including entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation in the curricula of all stages of education, providing incentives for training and continuous learning in working life, establishing a top level development environment for learning so as to become an international pioneer in developing teaching methods and technical tools, and supporting reforms of organisational environments to improve the quality of working life. More broadly, greater international participation and

influence is a target of the strategy, which implies a greater need for skills related to communication, collaboration, negotiation and management.

It is a growing challenge for Finnish society to fast-track young people's entrance from education to the world of work. HEIs and working life need to cooperate more closely in order to develop degrees and their relevance in the labour market.

In order to develop RPL procedures and to make full use of NQF there is a need to put more effort to curricula work and describing learning outcomes.

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?

> Low sosio-economic groups are still underpresented, although according to Eurostudent III Finland appear to be one of the most open systems. Also the number of students with immigrant background does not correspond with their amount of population.
> The main obstacles of access to higher education for above mention groups are that the participation rate to education after basic education is lower than in average. The students with immigrant background might also lack sufficient knowledge in Finnish or Swedish language.

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).

> A regionally covering network on higher education institutions has been created in order to ensure access from all geographical areas in the country.
> All higher education leading to a degree is free of charge for students.
> A public student finance scheme has been developed in order to ensure equal possibilities to enter higher education regardless of the student's social or financial background. Finnish student financial aid, which is funded by the

governments budget is available for full-time studies from post-comprehensive school studies up to studies in institutions of higher education. Student financial aid is intended to provide an income to financially needy students whose parents are not under obligation to finance their studies and who are not eligible for aid under some other provisions. The financial aid may not be decreased on the basis of parents income. Financial aid is also available for studying abroad.

All full-time students enrolled in degree programs in polytechnics and universities are entitled to the student grant. The student grant is based on three elements: student grant, student loan and housing supplement. A tax relief can be granted for those who graduate in the normative time specified in legislation.

Special needs of the national linguistic minorities are taken into consideration in student selection and educational provision.

Access from non-traditional paths to higher is made possible through legistlation. The university and polytechnic legislation makes it possible for higher education institutions to admit students without formal qualifications, in case the institution otherwise verifies the student's abilities.

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 ion 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.

Student financial aid see above (2).

The Finnish universities and polytechnics started using personal study plans (PSPs) for study counselling in all fields of education in 2006. PSP means personal study planning as an ongoing process during the studies. In PSP the student can accumulate various study planning documents for him/herself or for study counselling. The PSP is therefore closely connected to the curricula and the degree structures.

In the university sector the evaluation of new degree structures and curricula continues. The special focus will be in learning outcomes and accumulation of students knowledge. Study paths, credit accumulation, graduation time and students study processes are also being monitored. The ministry of education supports these activities by funding 2007-2009 national project (W5W.2), which gives tools and guidance for development oriented evaluation procedures. In the polytechnic sector Special attention is been paid to correspondence between education and working life and improving tutorial activities in polytechnics.

4.   Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

> Regular surveys, latest is the national Student survey 2006, which is also used in Eurostudent III.

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5.   How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

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

> The aim is to improve the study opportunities for immigrants. The target is to increase the percentage of students with immigrant background at upper secondary schools and later in higher education.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

> The amount of student financial aid and the applicable income limits should be regularly adjusted in accordance with the development of living costs in order to secure sufficient aid. The possibilities for improving the financial standing and study possibilities of students with dependent underage children, for instance by developing student financial aid, will be identified. Also measures will be taken to monitor the effect of the introduction of the tax deduction for student loans and to further develop the tax deduction, if necessary. The aim is also to raise the amount of study loan to cover the extra cost of living abroad for studies.
>
> Government decided on Migration Policy Programme in 2006. The programme seeks to form a comprehensive framework for migration policy planning and implementation. Moreover, the programme aims to promote the development of a multicultural and non-discriminating society. Implementation of the programme includes for example increase of Finnish and Swedish language education provision. There is a plan to amend the Polytechnic act by introducing training for immigrants in preparation for polytecnic studies to their educational mission. The idea is to equip immigrants with sufficient skills to apply to study at a polytechnic and enable them to successfully complete their studies. This training particularly focus on consolidating the language proficiency required for politechnic studies and on adopting an independent, enquiring way of studing typically needed for studies at HEI.
>
> Student participation:
> There is two national student unions in Finland: The national Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applies Sciences (SAMOK) for polytecnic students and The National Union of Students in Finland (SYL) for university

students. Both student unions are interest organisations defending and improving the educational, financial, and social benefits and rights of the students. SYL and SAMOK are members of European Students' Union (ESU). Both national student unions have recognised expertise on matters of higher education, their opinion is heard in various official organs dealing with education and they take actively stand on all questions concerning students and education.

The membership of a student union is compulsory for all students studying for a full degree in Finnish universities and voluntary for polytehcnic students. SYL and SAMOK are umbrella organisations of the local student unions and thus have no individual members. All students are members of SYL or SAMOK through their local student unions.

Students have representatives in the governance of universities and polytecnics. This is secured by legislation. The local student unions select the student representatives to HEI's governing boards independetly through elections.

An important factor in student influence are student surveys and studies done by student unions. The Student Research Foundation (Otus) was founded in 1989. The purpose of Otus is to practice, promote and support research and publication concerning higher education and the students' economical, cultural and social status and their way of life. The most important part of Otus' work is independent research, which is done in co-operation with national student organisations and the Ministry of Education.

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

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

Government's aim is to have the new Polytechnic Act in force on 2010 (see b for training for immigrants in preparation for polytechnic studies).

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

Finlad will regularly carry out a student survey in order to monitor the progress in HEI. In addition, statistical information collection concerning students with immigrant background will be developed.

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).

Finland has not prepared a separate strategy for social dimension. The social dimension is taken into account in building up different policy areas concerning e.g. equal opportunities, migration policy, higher education and funding policies.

ANNEX A
Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports

Financial
• scholarships - means tested
• scholarships - merit based
• research grants
• grants for studying abroad
• grants or loans for (nearly) every student
• unspecified social support system
• free education (at least 1st cycle)
• reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
• financial assistance for certain groups/areas
• improved funding systems

Structural
• new /expanded routes of access
• broader teaching or learning strategies
• information and preparation at secondary schools
• increase student places
• indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
• subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
• provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
• counselling/guidance services

Certain groups
• measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
• measures for disabled (not financial)
• measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
• allocation of study places to certain groups
• promote access from all national areas

Policy and practice
• explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
• carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
• evaluations/research of policies and practices
• monitoring access (and retention) by students

ANNEX B

Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion
• Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
• Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education
• Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
• Flexible delivery of higher education
• Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
• Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
• Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience
A, Provision of academic services
• Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
• Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
• Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)
B, Provision of social services
• Counselling
• Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
• Appropriate housing conditions for all students
• Provision of healthcare
• Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education
• Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance
• Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations
• Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies
• Financial and legal advice for students
• Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
• Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
• Support measures for students with children

ANNEX C
Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

• Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

• Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

• Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services
B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

• Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that

can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues? How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not ableto finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them? Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

• Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

• Stakeholder involvement

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?