The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

The Bergen Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 19-20 May 2005 adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. Ministers committed themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007.

	Outcomes	ECTS Credits
First cycle qualification	 Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy. 	Typically include 180-240 ECTS credits
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Second cycle	Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle	Typically
qualification	are awarded to students who:	include 90-
	have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is	120 ECTS
	founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically	credits, with a
	associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or	minimum of
	opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying	60 credits at
	ideas, often within a research context;	the level of
	• can apply their knowledge and understanding, and	the 2 nd cycle
	problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar	•
	environments within broader (or multidisciplinary)	
	contexts related to their field of study;	
	have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle	
	complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or	
	limited information, but that include reflecting on social	
	and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of	
	their knowledge and judgments;	
	 can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge 	
	and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-	
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	specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;	
	• have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study	
	in a manner that may be largely self-directed or	
	autonomous.	
Third cycle		Not specified
Third cycle	Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are	Not specified
Third cycle qualification	Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:	Not specified
•	Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: • have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field	Not specified
	Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: • have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research	Not specified
•	Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: • have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, 	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research 	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; 	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; have made a contribution through original research that 	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a 	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national 	Not specified
•	 Qualifications that signify completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who: have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field; have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication; 	Not specified
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