

# Towards a European Higher Education Area

## 7 Key Strategies and Guidelines to implement the Bologna Process

Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

Joint project 2006 - 2008  
"Strengthening Higher Education in BiH"

# Impressum

## **Council of Europe Consultants:**

Stephen Adam, UK Bologna Expert, University of Westminster, United Kingdom

Carita Blomqvist, Senior Advisor, Finnish National Board of Education, Finland

Patricia Georgieva, General Secretary, National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, Bulgaria

Eva Gönczi, Programme Director, Collegium Budapest, Hungary

Gábor Mészáros, Director, Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre (ENIC/NARIC), Hungary

Lewis Purser, Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, Irish Universities Association, Ireland

## **Council of Europe project team:**

Karen Roberts

Nedim Vrabac

## **Translation by:**

Amira Sadiković

## **Published:**

January 2008

## **Printed by:**

Sonic Studio

## **Graphic Design:**

Sonic Studio

## **Copyright © 2008**

Council of Europe

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

---

**Council of Europe**  
**Conseil de l'Europe**



**European Union**  
**Union européenne**

Council of Europe  
Fra Grge Martića 2/I, 71000 Sarajevo  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Tel.: +387 33 264 360  
Fax: +387 33 233 937  
E-mail: [coe.sarajevo@coe.int](mailto:coe.sarajevo@coe.int)

European Commission  
Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Dubrovačka 6, 71000 Sarajevo  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Tel.: +387 33 666 044  
Fax: +387 33 666 037  
E-mail: [delegation-bih@ec.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-bih@ec.europa.eu)

# Table of Contents

Introduction

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Implementing a Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Recommendations for Implementing Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

National Action Plan for the Recognition of Qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Diploma Supplement Model for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Users' Manual for the Model of a Diploma Supplement for Bosnia and Herzegovina

## **Attached CD-rom**

BiH Bologna Documents issued in the joint EC/CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in BiH” 2006-2008

Bologna Process Information and Documents 1998 - 2007





## **Towards a European Higher Education Area: 7 Key Strategies and Guidelines to implement the Bologna Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The seven documents presented in this publication constitute agreed standards, strategies and guidelines for the implementation of Bologna Reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), following their adoption by the Council of Ministers of BiH on 27 December 2007.

At the same time, these documents have been agreed upon, developed and approved by a majority of directly concerned institutions and authorities in BiH, through a joint project of the European Commission (EC) and the Council of Europe (CoE) “Strengthening Higher Education in BiH”.

The joint project was launched in early 2006 with the aim to assist BiH fulfil its commitments from the Bergen Communiqué in May 2005 and to help prepare and introduce state-level reforms in three important and interlinked areas within the Bologna Process: the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance and a framework for higher education qualifications.

One of the focal areas of assistance in this project was the development of standards, strategies and guidelines in the three reform areas that are agreed upon and applicable throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To this end, the rectors of 8 public universities in BiH, the entity ministers responsible for education, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the EC and CoE formed a project steering board in April 2006 that advised on, monitored and approved the project's activities and results.

The steering board mandated three working groups to develop specific reform tools and guidelines in the area of the recognition of qualifications, quality assurance and qualifications frameworks.

These three working groups were assisted by international CoE experts and the CoE project team in their task to become acquainted with the subject matter in depth and, in consultation with their institutions, prepare the documents presented in this publication:

- the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in BiH and recommendations for their implementation;
- the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in BiH and recommendations for their implementation;
- the National Action Plan for Recognition of Qualifications in BiH and
- a Model for the Diploma Supplement in BiH and a corresponding Users' Manual.



The prepared documents were reviewed by the project's steering board and approved by the board in Summer 2007.

With the adoption of the Framework Law for Higher Education in August 2007, the seven documents in this publication that were adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2007 should encourage all concerned parties to contribute actively to a swift and comprehensive implementation of Higher Education reforms in BiH - and thereby towards joining the European Higher Education Area. The Council of Europe and the European Commission remain dedicated to assisting BiH with this goal.

Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

# THE FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This document was elaborated in the frame of the joint project of  
the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
"Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".







# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BiH) HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) higher education system is fragmented and in need of reform. The BiH educational area requires a higher education framework that is consistent with the principles and values of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as developed by the Bologna process,<sup>2</sup> including ENQA standards and guidelines for quality assurance in EHEA. The new BiH qualifications framework is designed to strengthen higher education and act as a lever in assisting the higher education authorities and decision makers in their reform efforts aimed at reshaping the academic community, its institutions and processes. The primary function of the framework is to act as a guide and reference point for those creating new qualifications and updating existing ones within the new quality assurance system for higher education.

The new framework has been produced in the frame of a joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, following widespread consultation and agreement with appropriate stakeholders including academics, students, public authorities and social partners.<sup>3</sup> Its successful implementation will improve public confidence in higher education. The framework is intended to help to improve the quality and recognition of qualifications and promote the reform of higher education for the benefit of all citizens.

## Structure of the framework

The BiH framework for higher education qualifications consists of three cycles that reflect and expand upon the 'Dublin Descriptors'<sup>4</sup> adopted by Ministers of Education under the Bologna Process,<sup>5</sup> following a decision of ministers to adopt a higher education

<sup>1</sup> A National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications: The single description, at national level or level of an education system, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between higher education qualifications. A qualifications framework is designed to ensure a consistent use of qualification titles.

<sup>2</sup> The Bologna Process is the most important and wide ranging reform of higher education in Europe. The ultimate aim of the Process is to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010 in which staff and students can move with ease and have fair recognition of their qualifications. The Bologna declaration was signed by ministers of education from 29 European countries in 1999. The process was opened up to other countries, and further governmental meetings have been held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005) and London (2007). BiH joined the process in 2003.

<sup>3</sup> For further information go to Joint EC/CoE project 2006-2007 "Strengthening Higher Education in BiH" at <http://www.coe.ba/highereducation>.

<sup>4</sup> Descriptors exemplify the outcomes of the main qualification at each level, and demonstrate the nature of change between levels. They provide clear points of reference at each level, and describe outcomes that cover the great majority of existing qualifications.

<sup>5</sup> The 'Dublin Descriptors' were originally formulated and further developed by the Joint Quality Initiative (an informal group of higher education specialists from a variety of countries, see <http://www.jointquality.org>) and were adapted in Bergen as the cycle descriptors for the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The full Bologna Working Group discussion text on 'new style' qualifications frameworks can be found at: [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main\\_doc/050218\\_QF\\_EHEA.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf).



system that is essentially based on three cycles. The Dublin Descriptors are generic (non-subject specific) statements of the typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of each Bologna cycle. They are built on the following elements: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, generic cognitive skills, making judgements, communication skills and learning skills, learner autonomy accountability and working with others.

The BiH descriptors provide more detail than the Dublin Descriptors and are intended to be read with reference to each other. They describe the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with typical end cycle qualifications e.g. Bachelors Degree, Masters Degree, and Doctorates. These descriptors are not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive and need to be cross-referenced with other external reference points including national and international academic or professional subject specific guidance materials e.g. Tuning project<sup>6</sup> materials and subject benchmark statements.

Currently, the BiH framework for higher education qualifications does not include any further levels or sub-divisions within the three cycles to illustrate progressions within the structure. However, the structure does reflect the ECTS credit ranges associated with the Bologna framework.

### **Relationship of the framework with the adoption of new approaches towards quality assurance, and recognition**

The new BiH qualifications framework is just one aspect of higher education reform that must be taken in conjunction with other initiatives, which collectively are designed to transform the higher educational system to make it fully consistent with the European Higher Education Area. The Council of Europe and the European Commission Joint Project '*Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*' has three elements (1) creating a higher education qualifications framework, (2) developing a work plan to introduce modern procedures and structures for the recognition of qualifications and, (3) establishing quality assurance standards and guidelines for higher education. These elements are connected and their simultaneous implementation is essential for any successful outcome.

Furthermore, it is recognised that successful reform will require bottom-up as well as top-down developments.

All three elements are closely linked to previous initiatives for university reform as well as the adoption of a framework law for higher education.

---

<sup>6</sup> "Tuning educational structures in Europe" was a pilot project undertaken by a group of European universities, with support by the European University Association (EUA) and the European Commission from 2000 to 2004 and a growing number of partners. It addresses several of the Bologna action lines, notably the adoption and application of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, based on two cycles and the establishment of a system of credits; by identifying points of reference for 1) generic competences, 2) subject-specific competences, 3) the role of ECTS as an accumulation system and 4) the role of learning, teaching, assessment and performance in relation to quality assurance and evaluation.

For further information go to <http://www.relint.deusto.es/TuningProject/index.htm>, <http://www.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index.htm>.



### **The objectives of the qualifications framework of the BiH Area are to:**

- enable employers, schools, parents, prospective students and others to understand the achievements and attributes represented by the main qualification titles, and how qualifications relate to one another;
- assist higher education institutions (HEI), learners and others to clarify potential routes for progression and credit transfer, particularly in the context of wider participation in lifelong learning;
- create and maintain international comparability of standards, especially in intra-institutional, inter-institutional, regional and European contexts; and to facilitate mobility for all (students, academic and non-academic staff, citizens);
- eradicate inconsistency and confusion between higher education qualifications by a clear description of qualifications in terms of cycle/level, learning outcomes and credit;
- help create domestic and international confidence in BiH higher education qualifications and standards by integrating them with the new BiH quality assurance system fully consistent with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) '*standards and guidelines*';<sup>7</sup>
- improve the recognition of BiH qualifications and the employability of citizens by ensuring their relevance to the needs of the national and international labour market;
- ensure that access to, and the content of, BiH higher education is based upon the principles and values of democratic society.

### **Qualifications that signify the successful completion of the first cycle (180-240 ECTS credits) are awarded to students who:**

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by appropriate learning resources (texts and information communication technologies), includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;
- can apply the thorough knowledge and critical understanding of principles relating to the field of study/discipline 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;

<sup>7</sup> The full ENQA '*Standards and Guidelines*' for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area can be found at: <http://www.enqa.eu/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>.



- 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 apply the main methods for acquiring knowledge and undertaking applicative research in the given discipline, and are able to decide on the approach to be taken for solving a given problem and are aware of the extent to which the selected approach is suitable for solving the problem;
- can communicate using appropriate language (and where appropriate foreign language[s]), communication technologies, information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences for given area of science;
- have developed the necessary learning skills to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy and academic skills and attributes necessary to undertake research, comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources;
- possess a foundation for future self-directed and lifelong learning;
- have acquired interpersonal and teamwork skills appropriate to employment and/or further study.

**Qualifications that signify the successful completion of the second cycle (60-120 ECTS credits) are awarded to students who:**

- have demonstrated a systematic understanding and mastering of knowledge in their field of study/discipline that is founded upon, and extends and/or enhances, that is typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- apply conceptual thinking and abstraction with a high level of proficiency and creativity, which will enable the:
  - critical evaluation of current research and academic work at the forefront of the discipline
  - evaluation of different methodologies, development of critical opinion and the raising of alternative solutions
- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on



social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;

- can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these using appropriate language(s), to specialised and non-specialised audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- are able to take their own knowledge to a higher level, deepen the understanding of their field of study/discipline and continuously develop their own new skills through individual learning and self-development;
- have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed and autonomous;
- have acquired interpersonal and teamwork skills appropriate to a variety of learning and employment contexts and also demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make a contribution to change and development.

**Qualifications that signify the successful completion of the third cycle are awarded to students who:**

*(The following are the 'Dublin' third cycle descriptors that need to be discussed and expanded upon. They may well be altered following the current Bologna work in this area.)*

- 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 scientific contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge;
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- shall be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, advancement in a knowledge based society.



## Acknowledgement

The below listed representatives of BiH ministries, universities and students were actively involved in the development of the BiH Framework of Higher Education Qualifications. The joint EC/CoE project owes its gratitude to their professional engagement and personal dedication as much as to the expertise and guidance that were provided by the CoE experts Eva Gönczi and Stephen Adam.

Ministry of Civil Affairs BiH  
Dragana Dilber, Esmā Hadžagić, Miljan Popić

Ministry of Education of the Federation of BiH  
Džemko Ruždić

Ministry of Education Republika Srpska  
Dragana Lukić-Domuz, Jugoslav Tepić

University in Banja Luka  
Dragan Partalo

University in Bihać  
Ifet Šišić, Nevzet Veladžić,

University in East Sarajevo  
Ranko Antunović, Marijana Čosović, Zoran Ljuboje, Nenad Marković

University in Mostar  
Ružica Burić, Marinko Jurilj

University «Džemal Bijedić» in Mostar  
Dragi Tiro, Edina Špago-Čumurija

University in Sarajevo  
Izet Bijelonja, Belma Dizdarević, Renata Jažić-Karić, Nina Šober

University in Tuzla  
Jasmina Berbić, Meliha Bijedić, Amela Teskeredžić

University in Zenica  
Hasan Avdušinović, Muris Bajramović, Almelina Krajišnik, Damir Kukić

### Student representatives

Mirhad Grebović, Elvir Heljić (University «Džemal Bijedić» in Mostar), Sead Kadrić (University in Tuzla), Ivica Jozić, Paula Pranjić (University in Mostar)

### Social Partners

Haris Huskić, employment service for labour market research and employment of the Federation of BiH, Goran Savanović, Trade Union for Tourism and Catering of the Republika Srpska

Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

IMPLEMENTING A FRAMEWORK  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION  
QUALIFICATIONS  
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This document was elaborated in the frame of the joint project of  
the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
"Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".







# IMPLEMENTING A FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Introduction

The following recommendations refer to the implementation of a BiH framework for higher education qualifications. A proposal for this framework was produced from May 2006 to May 2007 by a working group of BiH experts, with the assistance of two international CoE experts, under a joint EC/CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina”<sup>1</sup>.

The working group meeting in May 2007 held with the participation of senior university leaders and Ministry representatives endorsed the draft framework for higher education qualifications and continued to outline a plan for the implementation process. The recommendations in this document are based on discussions with participants of this and prior meetings and are subject to endorsement by BiH stakeholders, in a first step by the project's Steering Board at its meeting on 5 June 2007.

The implementation of a framework for higher education qualifications has become all the more important as Ministers responsible for higher education met in London in May 2007 and reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement qualifications frameworks articulating against the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA as „instruments in achieving comparability and transparency within the EHEA and facilitating the movement of learners within, as well as between, higher education systems.“<sup>2</sup> This task represents one of the major challenges in BiH of joining the European Higher Education area in 2010.

As the relevant structures to fully and coherently implement the framework in BiH are incomplete, the following recommendations outline the first few steps for implementation and offer further guidelines for the whole implementation process to higher education institutions and the relevant authorities.

Completion of the proposed set of steps may take 2-3 years.

The following implementation principles are important to observe throughout the whole process:

- Long-term political commitment should be maintained for the whole duration of the process.

<sup>1</sup> Since January 2006, the CoE/EC joint project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina” is developing higher education reform tools in the areas of quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and the recognition of qualifications together with the BiH universities and relevant ministries. For further information, see <http://www.coe.ba/highereducation>.

<sup>2</sup> London Communiqué, see: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna/uploads/documents/LondonCommuniquefinalwithLondonlogo.pdf>



- Close cooperation and full involvement of stakeholders are a prerequisite for successful implementation.
- The implementation process of the qualification framework should be linked with implementing the two other components of the higher education reform project.
- The implementation process should entail genuine curriculum change together with the development of appropriate teaching and assessment strategies in higher education institutions.
- Adoption of a state level higher education law including the concept of a qualifications framework for higher education is an urgent need.
- The procedures for linking qualifications to the framework should be transparent, properly documented and based on the Bologna guidelines.

## Steps for Implementation

- I. Consultation and dissemination with actors in the process** to raise awareness and develop knowledge and understanding of the purposes and functions of the framework, its place in the overall higher education reform process and the new approach towards describing qualifications.

The consultation process should address university leaders, the Rectors' Conference, senior university staff, student organisations, private higher education institutions and Ministries and other authorities having a responsibility for higher education. Other professional bodies to be involved are those concerned with accreditation and quality assurance as well as the recognition information centre (ENIC). Very important in the dissemination process would be the establishment of a website (e.g. with a FAQ section regarding the qualifications framework.) The Bologna Promoters should also be involved and informed at the very first stage of the process to be able to handle questions.

- II. Information Campaign** with adequate information strategies (media campaign)

This phase should include an information campaign towards the larger public but also the wider stakeholder community and the social partners (employers associations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, employment bureaus). The wider life long learning community should also be addressed. It is very important to communicate the social, economic and employment implications of the introduction of the new framework and its advantages for more flexible movement within the higher education system and across the institutions.



### **III. Training of BiH Promoters** (those who will work on further transfer of knowledge on the qualifications framework)

This should include academic staff as well as the assignment of academic coordinators who will be responsible for taking the lead in applying the general framework to particular fields of study and possibly also in linking qualifications to the framework. The ECTS coordinators may also provide assistance.

The descriptors of learning outcomes at the different levels of the framework are necessarily expressed in general terms and as such are open to differing interpretations both within and between institutions. To assist in achieving common understanding it is suggested that a series of workshops be conducted for senior staff from different institutions (i.e. the future promoters of a qualifications framework) to explain the intentions of the various statements together with the discussion of examples that would illustrate the required standards of achievement at different levels. The training should include modules on writing learning outcomes, about curriculum development and reform and the vital linkages between teaching, learning and assessment. Participants of the workshop could then arrange for similar follow-up workshops within their institutions to achieve consistency.

### **IV. Seek approval of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for BiH from relevant governmental authorities at various levels.**

All relevant authorities should have adequate understanding of the purposes and functions of the framework, its role in the reform process and take the necessary measures for adopting the framework and supporting implementation.

#### **Pilot project for applying the general framework to particular fields of study**

This phase would link existing/new qualification to the qualifications framework and be carried out in short and effective pilot project of a year maximum. It should be undertaken with selected BiH qualifications, in order to place these on the proposed Framework using the specific tools developed (levels, descriptors based on learning outcomes). The subjects for the pilot need to be chosen with care and address issues such as: 3 or 4 year programmes of a similar nature; progression issues (levels); credit issues.

To assist in achieving common understanding in different fields it is desirable to bring together groups of academic staff familiar with the details of the framework and with selected academic disciplines, to prepare documents similar to the UK subject benchmark statements<sup>3</sup>, and which could help others developing programmes in these fields to understand how the framework should be applied to their field. Such consultations should

<sup>3</sup> Subject benchmark statements set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding in the subject.

For further information, go to <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp>.



involve representatives of the relevant employers, particularly those responsible for requirements of professional practice in the relevant fields. It is suggested that such statements be prepared initially in a few fields of study as a pilot project before being extended to other fields.

This process would initiate real curriculum reform and lead to the development of new qualifications based on learning outcomes that really articulate with the EHEA overarching framework and meet the demands of the 21st century. One of the main aims of the pilot project is to help train staff in the process of curriculum development in the context of a qualifications framework and external reference points thus contributing to developing a core group of technical experts in qualifications and qualifications frameworks.

The project would ensure common standards and a coherent approach and comparable outcomes. Experiences and lessons from other Bologna countries as well as the European Commission's Tuning Project<sup>4</sup> would also be helpful in the process. The pilot project would have a coordination function which ideally would be assumed by the BiH Rectors' Conference. It could also link the implementation of the qualifications framework with programme accreditation as suggested by the Recommendations for the Implementation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and provide the basis for linking qualifications to the framework in a transparent manner with adequate quality assurance mechanisms. Such a process of linking may require a separate 'Protocol'.

## V. Legislation

The lack of relevant legislation could seriously hinder the implementation process and the momentum created by the joint EC/CoE project "Strengthening Higher Education in BiH" may be lost unless the relevant legislation at state level is passed without further delay.

### Recommendations:

- The above list may be regarded as a set of sequential steps in the process; however most of the activities may be implemented side by side, which would certainly speed up implementation.

<sup>4</sup> "Tuning educational structures in Europe" was a pilot project undertaken by a group of European universities, with support by the European University Association (EUA) and the European Commission from 2000 to 2004 and a growing number of partners. It addresses several of the Bologna action lines, notably the adoption and application of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, based on two cycles and the establishment of a system of credits; by identifying points of reference for 1) generic competences, 2) subject-specific competences, 3) the role of ECTS as an accumulation system and 4) the role of learning, teaching, assessment and performance in relation to quality assurance and evaluation.

For further information got to <http://www.relint.deusto.es/TuningProject/index.htm>, <http://www.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index.htm>



- An active participation of BiH institutions in regional and international workshops and other activities aimed at assisting the Bologna countries in designing their qualifications frameworks would enhance the level of technical assistance and encourage exchange of information.
- A possible extension of the joint EC-Coe project beyond June 2007 may be used to provide further technical support for implementation.



-----

Under the joint EC/CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina” a working group of BiH experts prepared a proposal for the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications in BiH in 2006 and 2007. Two international CoE experts, Eva Gönczi, Programme Director of the Collegium Budapest, Hungary and Stephen Adam, from the University of Westminster, United Kingdom assisted the group in the drafting process.

These recommendations for the implementation of the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications in BiH were prepared by Eva Gönczi and Stephen Adam and are based on discussions and consultations with the BiH working group.

Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR  
QUALITY ASSURANCE  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This document was elaborated in the frame of the joint project of  
the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
"Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".







# STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Introduction

Since before joining the Bologna process<sup>1</sup> in 2003, the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) have been working towards the introduction of quality assurance policies and practices. This work has taken on a new importance since joining the Bologna process at the Berlin ministerial conference in 2003, and during the academic year 2003-04 all public universities in BiH underwent institutional evaluations by the European University Association<sup>2</sup> in order to identify the challenges faced by the universities in meeting the requirements for inclusion in the European Higher Education Area by 2010.

The EUA evaluations identified an important number of major issues which needed to be addressed through systematic and rigorous quality assurance procedures. These issues covered strategic, academic, governance and administrative areas. Work in these areas is essential for the modernization and reform of higher education in BiH.

At European level, quality assurance was likewise one of the three priority areas examined in the Bologna process stocktaking exercise leading up to the 2005 Bergen Ministerial conference, and the score card for BiH reflected the relative lack of activity and progress in this field, compared to most other Bologna countries.

This European focus has been taken one stage further since the adoption by all Bologna process countries in 2005 of European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education (ESG)<sup>3</sup>. The ESG were prepared by ENQA in cooperation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, and accepted by all Ministers at the conference in Bergen in 2005. The ESG cover three main areas:

1. internal quality assurance organised within higher education institutions, related to the design, application and monitoring of quality processes and structures;
2. external quality assurance activities looking in generic terms at what should be examined in higher education institutions and how such external quality assurance activities should be conducted;
3. the work of external quality assurance agencies, covering their establishment, organisation and recognition.

<sup>1</sup> The Bologna process is the most important and wide ranging reform of higher education in Europe. The ultimate aim of the process is to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010 in which staff and students can move with ease and have fair recognition of their qualifications. The Bologna Declaration was signed by ministers of education from 29 European countries in 1999. The process was opened up to other countries, and further governmental meetings have been held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), and Bergen (2005); the next meeting will take place in London in May (2007). BiH joined the process in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe, European Commission (2004): *Institutional Evaluations of seven universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: summary report prepared by the European University Association*, prepared under the joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe "Modernising the Management and Governance Capacities of Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Sarajevo.

<sup>3</sup> ENQA (2005): *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, <http://www.enqa.eu/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>.



The implementation of the ESG for quality assurance in higher education has been one of the three priority areas for action in the period 2005-2007, and likewise one focus of the stocktaking exercise leading to the May 2007 Ministerial conference in London. As part of this implementation, each country should show how its own quality assurance system(s), both internal and external, are in line with the European Standards and Guidelines.

In BiH it was therefore decided by the relevant Ministries at Entity and State level and the public universities that, through the joint EC-CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, it was necessary to develop standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in BiH. A working group was brought together to develop these, composed of representatives of the relevant Ministries at Entity and State levels, of responsible officers within the eight universities, and of student representatives. Two international experts supported the working group in developing these standards and guidelines for quality assurance: Dr. Patricia Georgieva, Secretary General of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency in Bulgaria and Lewis Purser, Assistant Director of the Irish Universities Association.

The work of this group is therefore directly linked to BiH's obligations and commitments as a full member of the Bologna process. BiH reported on its progress in this area and in the other priority areas in its country report submitted to the Bologna process follow-up group at the end of 2006. The 2007 stocktaking report to Ministers in London 2007 has been written on the basis of these reports from every participating country, and the improved score-card for BiH already reflects advances made in the field of quality assurance.

## **Objectives**

The development of quality assurance systems are in the best interests of the higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Quality assurance generates quality-related information on education and degrees, which benefits employers, society at large, as well as academics, students and applicants. The analytical description and systematic evaluation of quality and its assurance make it easier for higher education institutions to convince their national and international partners of the quality of their education provision and to make higher education in BiH more attractive for students.

The purpose of this work is to provide explicit standards and guidelines both internal and external - for quality assurance in higher education in BiH, for the use by universities, ministries and quality assurance agencies in their work to support the fundamental reform processes which are taking place in higher education. These BiH standards and guidelines are designed to meet the requirements of the ESG.



The main objectives of the proposed set of standards and guidelines for quality assurance are

- Promoting and supporting continuous improvement in the quality and standards for the provision of higher education programmes;
- Ensuring that clear and accurate information is made publicly available about the quality and standards of higher education and training provision;
- Applying international best practice in evaluation and reviews of higher education and training.

The long term objectives for a quality assurance system are

- Promoting mobility of students, graduates and citizens within BiH and internationally;
- Promoting equal social opportunities for all learners in BiH
- Responding to stakeholder and user needs in higher education;
- Promoting research and knowledge transfer in BiH;
- Ensuring comparability with the European Union across a wide range of areas (student learning support; graduates and employers' feedback systems, etc.);
- Improving the public accountability of higher education to wider society.

It was stressed that these long-term objectives should be kept in mind when establishing standards and guidelines for quality assurance in BiH higher education, so that the processes being put in place are capable of addressing them. The lack of coherent higher education legislation throughout the country is currently an obstacle to addressing these long-term objectives.

### **Structure of the BiH Standards and Guidelines**

The BiH standards and guidelines are structured in two parts.

1. Guidelines for internal quality assurance, i.e. for quality assurance activities undertaken within the university under its own responsibility.

This first part comprises 8 standards for internal quality assurance of higher education institutions in BiH. It follows the logic of the first part of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions, but includes one additional standard setting a requirement for institutions to prepare for external review of its quality procedures.

2. Standards and guidelines for external quality assurance, i.e. for quality assurance activities undertaken by an external body/external bodies (agency, ministry, commission, etc.) which examines/examine the work that has taken place within a university or a unit within the university.

This second part sets arrangements for external quality assurance and contains 5 standards for external quality assurance of higher education and two standards for the body/bodies or agency/agencies that undertakes/undertake external quality assurance activities in BiH.



In addition to each standard and the associated guidelines explaining the requirements to it, there are “indicators”, illustrating documented evidences or measures of performance to indicate how the achieved standard is expected to be demonstrated.

3. Given the lack of a BiH quality assurance agency/BiH quality assurance agencies, the third part standards and guidelines for the quality assurance of agencies has been limited to the requirements for recognition and independence of the body/bodies or agency/agencies that undertakes/undertake external quality assurance activities in BiH.

This structure is based on the ESG structure. By May 2007, the BiH standards and guidelines for both internal and external quality assurance have been developed to the point where they can be piloted and tested.

### **The relationship of the Standards and Guidelines with recognition and the Qualifications Framework**

The proposed BiH standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education are just one aspect of the higher education reform agenda that must be taken in conjunction with other initiatives, which are collectively designed to transform the higher education system to make it fully compatible the European Higher Education Area. The Council of Europe and the European Commission Joint Project '*Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*' addresses three of these elements:

- (1) creating a higher education qualifications framework,
- (2) developing a work plan to introduce modern procedures and structures for the recognition of qualifications and,
- (3) establishing quality assurance standards and guidelines for higher education.

Since the main action lines of the Bologna process are closely inter-related, the three elements of this project are also inter-connected. For example, quality assurance must underpin the reliability and quality of qualifications on the qualifications framework, as well as providing the underlying trust needed for the effective recognition of these qualifications in the work place and in other academic institutions both in BiH and abroad. Recognition of qualifications is essential in ensuring progression and transfer for learners up the various levels of the qualifications framework, and an assessment of individual qualifications (i.e. recognition) is only possible if credentials evaluators have reliable information of the quality of the institution or provider of the study program leading to the qualification. A qualifications framework means that quality assurance standards and guidelines can use common level descriptors and an agreed learning outcomes approach when examining the quality of teaching and learning across different institutions.

All three elements are central in promoting the European dimension in higher education, in lifelong learning, and in promoting the attractiveness of the EHEA. Together they can foster closer links between qualifications and employability, and between business and universities. Without confidence in quality assurance systems, qualifications and



institutions will not be trusted or recognised. This is a crucial issue for BiH higher education at the present time.

These three elements are therefore connected and their simultaneous implementation is essential for any successful outcome. Furthermore, it is recognised that successful reform will require bottom-up as well as top-down developments. All three elements are closely linked to previous initiatives for university reform in BiH as well to the necessity of adopting a State-level framework law for higher education.

## **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education in BiH**

### **1. Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions in BiH**

#### **Standard 1.1**

**A higher education institution should have a clearly defined quality assurance policy and procedures derived from its documented vision, mission and strategy. Together with all relevant regulations, they should be published and made available to staff, students and all stakeholders. Vision, mission, strategy, quality assurance policy and procedures should have a formal status and be available to public.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

The quality assurance policy should reflect the provider's mission and values and relate closely to the relevant strategic management plans and operations. It should clearly set measurable quality objectives, at various functions and levels within the organisation. The procedures should provide opportunities for analysis and development of the mission statement, values and plans and in the long term contribute to the creation and maintenance of an institutional quality culture.

The quality assurance policy should focus on how well the institution is achieving the goals derived from the mission statement. Students' attainments of intended learning outcomes should be a major consideration. Further enhancement of programme quality should also be a major policy objective.

The quality assurance policy should include a commitment to the provision of adequate resources to enable the quality assurance procedures to be implemented satisfactorily.

The institution should clearly identify a body or person responsible for the design and implementation of the quality assurance policy and procedures, to whom responsibility for implementation is delegated. That body or person should report directly to the governing body on quality matters and should be at an appropriate level in the structure of the organisation, to ensure adequate authority for implementation of the quality assurance policy and procedures.

Institutions should clearly define the role of students, and other interested parties, in processes of quality assurance and continuous improvement.



### Indicators to this standard

- documented university strategy
- documented quality policy including the role of students
- a formally established body with specified responsibilities for internal quality assurance of the university

### Standard 1.2

**Procedures for the design and approval of study programmes should include clear and thorough provision for the presentation of evidence that the following issues have been satisfactorily addressed:**

- **the objectives of the programme/award are clearly stated,**
- **documented evidence that the programme/award<sup>4</sup> is meeting its objectives,**
- **the effectiveness of procedures for correcting deficiencies and making improvements.**

### Guidelines to this standard

Under this standard, higher education institutions in BiH are required to produce evidence of their capacity to provide degree programmes at an acceptable level of quality and that quality assurance procedures are in place to preserve and enhance academic standards to meet expectations of BiH society and the international community.

Each institution is expected to establish and make public its own process for the alignment of delivered programmes and awards with the BiH Higher Education Qualifications Framework.

For each programme of study documented evidence should be produced that the following issues are properly addressed:

- Stated programme aims and objectives
- Description of expected learning outcomes to be achieved by a successful student
- Relevance of the programme structure and content to the mission and strategic plan of the institution
- How the programme meets its stated objectives, particularly as regards intended learning outcomes
- Mode of delivery
- Relevance of staff qualification and resources
- Resources needed for the programme
- Impact of the programme on the learning resources and support facilities of the institution
- Programme management arrangements (e.g., Formal procedures for approval of programmes; Procedures for monitoring success of programme and defined responsibility for undertaking activities regarding their improvement; Regular and periodic revision of programmes, including external review)
- A role for students in quality assurance of study programmes
- Relevance of the program for the labour market (local, national, international)

<sup>4</sup> Award: a degree, qualification, title or certificate describing a bachelor, master or doctor, or any other award, if the course of study relating to it is classified as higher education.



- Satisfactory provision for learner access, transfer and progression in the context of the BiH framework of qualifications

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Industrial or other links, including possible work placement
- Learner demand for this programme compared to previous years and with other providers
- graduation rate and average duration of studies
- total number of graduated against enrolled students
- number of employed against total number of graduated students
- information packages

#### **Standard 1.3**

**Procedures for the assessment of students are clearly defined, transparent and impartially and consistently applied across the institution. Arrangements are in place for evaluating the effectiveness of assessment procedures, to ensure that they are in practice fair and consistent.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

Criteria and grading methods must be defined in advance, published and harmonised with regulations of the higher education institution.

Procedures on assessment of student achievements should ensure

- clear relation between assessment methods and objectives set with regard to the intended learning outcomes, and
- validity, consistency, transparency and public availability of the assessment process and proper certification of student achievements.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

Clearly defined, documented and transparent

- criteria for assessment of student progress and achievement,
- assessment methods,
- time and location of student assessment,
- appeal procedure and possibility for re-assessment.

#### **Standard 1.4**

**The institution must ensure that teaching is performed by qualified and competent teaching staff. The institution should review the effectiveness of its human resources policy and procedures regularly. This will in particular relate to the procedures for selection, appointment, appraisal, development and promotion of staff involved at any level in the delivery or support of a programme. A programme for staff development, with appropriate resources allocated to it, should be a priority.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

- The institution must have defined criteria for hiring and promoting teaching staff.
- The institution shall publicly announce criteria for the confirmation of teaching staff competence.



- Quality and competence of teaching staff must be regularly monitored and evaluated.
- The institution provides opportunities for professional development of staff.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Staff records
- Student surveys
- Publications and other documented research activity
- University staff development plan and activities
- Needs analysis for teaching staff

#### **Standard 1.5**

**The higher education institution should regularly review the efficient use of its premises, equipment and facilities, to ensure their adequacy and efficiency in relation to the programmes of higher education and training provided.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

This periodic review should focus on their contribution (*i.e. premises, equipment and facilities*) to successful learning by students of the respective programmes. Its purpose is to inform decisions regarding the continuous provision of adequate teaching and learning resources and other means that are in accordance with study programs on offer at the institution. For programs on offer, institutions shall determine minimum, achieved and projected standards for facilities and equipment. Where improvements are needed the institution shall establish an action plan in order to address these needs.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Review of resources records
- Resources investment plans
- Action plans for improvement
- Opinion of staff and students

#### **Standard 1.6**

**Institutions shall have in place mechanisms for collection, analysis and use of information relevant for an efficient management of study programmes and other activities.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

Ongoing monitoring of programmes is essential to ensure that quality and standards are being maintained. The quality management information system shall complement the programme monitoring efforts of the institution, namely to ensure an ongoing monitoring process.

#### **Indicators would typically include**

- staff and students ratio
- profile of student population
- student progression and achievement (individual)
- final graduation rates





- time to graduation compared to formal length of program
- students satisfaction with their studies
- success rates of students per academic year
- graduates' employment rates

### **Standard 1.7**

**The institution should regularly make public impartial and objective information on all programmes and awards offered, both qualitative and quantitative.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

Due to its public role, a higher education institution should provide information on

- programmes offered, the learning outcomes anticipated within the programmes, qualifications awarded,
- teaching, learning and assessment procedures,
- learning opportunities available to students,
- employment opportunities after graduation.

The institution should develop and implement an efficient public information provision system. Apart from that, information on study programmes should satisfy stakeholder expectations with regard to impartiality and objectiveness.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Presentations for future students
- Printed material available to public (e.g., study schedule, guide for future students, information packages)
- Web-sites with regularly updated data
- Number of web visitors
- Media contacts,
- Contacts with stakeholders
- Alumni registry
- Transparent enrolment rules and regulations

### **Standard 1.8**

**Standards for internal quality assurance provide a reliable basis for external quality assurance processes. Internal quality assurance procedures should be open for regular external evaluation processes, in order to determine to what extent standards have been met.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

A higher education institution should be able to demonstrate how effectively their quality assurance procedures are applied and implemented across the entire institution, in particular regarding the development and delivery of degree programmes.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Formal status of institutional arrangements for the preparation of self-evaluation reports at different levels and for different types of external quality assurance;



- A standard set of procedures for conducting internal quality monitoring of an agreed set of performance indicators;
- A standard set of procedures for preparing for site visits by external review panels;
- Regular reports to the university senates.

## **2. Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions in BiH**

The standards and guidelines for external quality assurance should apply, whatever the external structures are carrying out external evaluations of higher education institutions in BiH.

The standards and guidelines for external quality assurance could apply to

- A body/Bodies or agency/agencies from within BiH,
- international agencies/bodies.

In both scenarios such agencies should work under the authorisation of the relevant BiH authorities.

### **Standard 2.1**

**Higher education authorities in BiH shall arrange for:**

- a) a review of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance procedures,**
- b) a validation process of degree programmes, that are leading to the kinds of awards set in the National Qualifications Framework.**

### **Guidelines to this standard**

The purpose of external Quality assurance processes and procedures should be to ensure that the following questions have been properly addressed by the institution under review:

- Does the institution embed quality procedures throughout its units and in the programmes that it provides?
- Does the institution systematically monitor its progress towards its quality goals and in particular to improving the quality of the educational provision?
- Are the findings from the quality assurance procedures used to improve the quality of the education and training provision and to meet student needs?
- Is corrective action taken to remedy shortcomings and deficiencies identified by the quality monitoring procedures?
- Is relevant information on institutional and programme quality given to stakeholders?

### **Indicators to this standard**

- Agreed and published criteria and procedures for external quality assurance;
- Concise description of procedures with appropriate time-scale and documentation required.



### **Standard 2.2**

**External quality assurance processes shall be structured in a 4-steps model, which includes: a) a self-review report, b) a site visit, c) a published evaluation report, and d) a follow-up.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

- a self-review report should be submitted by the institution under review in order to provide its own analytical view, supported by evidences, that internal quality assurance procedures are in place and their effectiveness is secured;
- an appointment of external review panel should comprise three to five persons
  - of high academic standing and repute,
  - competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level.
  - should possess high competencies in the field which is subject to external evaluation,
  - should be independent to the extent that they cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.
- the review team should visit the institution in order to verify the self-review report;
- the review team should submit in due time an evaluation report. This report, together with the conclusions and recommendations based on it, should be made publicly available;
- a predetermined follow up procedure should be implemented consistently in order to ensure that a subsequent action is taken by the institution to address recommendations of the review team.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- implemented protocols for consistent use of the 4-steps review model
- reports on self-evaluation
- published and consistently applied criteria for nomination of external quality assurance experts
- provision of appropriate briefing or training of experts, programme and documentation on expert training, either planned or realised
- the use of international experts
- participation of students
- a code of conduct for a review expert

### **Standard 2.3**

**Evaluation reports should be made public and written in a style which is clear and readily accessible. Any decisions, commendations and recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find and understand the purposes of the review and the criteria used in making decisions.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

Typically, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation of the type of the review, its purpose and consequences



of the review decisions (e.g., approval or disapproval of the internal quality assurance system, accreditation of programmes of study, etc.), and the criteria used for the decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- published reports
- well structured, readable reports
- basic report drafting methodology published

#### **Standard 2.4**

**Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require subsequent drafting of an action plan should have predetermined follow-up procedures which are implemented consistently.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

Quality assurance is a continuous process of improvement. After the publication of an external evaluation report and its recommendations the institution under review should develop an action plan. The follow up processes should see to which extent these recommendations have been implemented.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Defined follow-up procedures acting on reports
- Defined deadlines for actions on the basis of experts' recommendation/s.
- Plans of action, tasks, timeframe and responsibilities.

#### **Standard 2.5**

**External quality assurance of an institution's internal quality assurance system and its study programmes should be undertaken periodically. The length of the cycle should be pre-defined and published.**

#### **Guidelines to this standard**

All subsequent external reviews should take into account the progress that has been made since the previous evaluation.

#### **Indicators to this standard**

- Defined cycles of external quality and their regular implementation
- Timeframe for external evaluation.

#### **Standard 2.6**

**The body/bodies with responsibilities for external quality assurance should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area and have an established legal basis. It/They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdiction within which it operates/they operate and with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.**



### Guidelines to this standard

Procedures for external quality assurance would be strengthened if it were transparent to what extent providers were themselves quality assured by recognised agencies. Public, private, and thematic agencies, operating or planning to operate in Europe should be recognised as professional and credible quality assurance agencies.

### Indicators to this standard

The implementation of this standard requires transitional provisions:

***During a transitional phase of 2 years*** after the adoption of this document by the governmental authorities in BiH,

- an agency/agencies authorised to carrying out external quality assurance should comply with standard 2.7 of this document and the related legislative requirements in BiH.
- foreign/International agencies commissioned to carry out an external evaluation in BiH should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area.

Indicators to this standard ***after a transitional phase of 2 years***

- The agency's/The agencies' full ENQA membership;
- Reviewed European or extra-European agencies, operating in Europe and included in the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies

### Standard 2.7

**An agency/the agencies or a body/bodies, undertaking external quality assurance activities should be independent to the extent that it has/they have autonomous responsibility for its/their operations and the conclusions and recommendations made in its/their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.**

### Guidelines to this standard

An agency/agencies or body/bodies responsible for external quality assurance will need to demonstrate its/their independence through measures, such as:

- Its/Their operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts).
- The definition and operation of its/their procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its/their quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence.
- While relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency/agencies.



### **Indicators to this standard**

- Terms of reference of the agency/agencies and substantial compliance with the ESG
- Proven independence through
  - external independent review of the agency/agencies
  - an external review report of the agency/agencieswithin two years after the agency has/the agencies have carried out its/their first external review.



## Acknowledgement

The below listed representatives of BiH ministries, universities and students were actively involved in the development of the BiH Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The joint EC/CoE project owes its gratitude to their professional engagement and personal dedication as much as to the expertise and guidance that were provided by the CoE experts Patricia Georgieva and Lewis Purser.

Ministry of Civil Affairs BiH  
Svjetlana Biloš, Nedžada Faginović, Vladimir Vukša

Ministry of Education FBiH  
Džemko Ruždić, Nijaz Slipičević

Ministry of Education RS  
Dragana Lukić-Domuz, Dragan Partalo

University in Banja Luka  
Miroslav Dragić, Petar Marić, Ostoja Miletić

University in Bihać  
Esad Bajramović

University in East Sarajevo  
Ranko Antunović, Nenad Marković

University in Mostar  
Vojo Višekruna

University «Džemal Bijedić» in Mostar  
Alim Abazović, Sead Pašić

University in Sarajevo  
Izet Bijelonja, Lejla Muminović

University in Tuzla  
Edin Delić, Enes Osmančević

University in Zenica  
Bernard Harbaš, Spahija Kozlić, Darko Petković, Ibrahim Plančić

### Student representatives

Zehrudin Dardagan, Edin Eminović, Izen Hajdarević (University in Tuzla), Ermin Mahmutović (University in Bihać), Ivan Marković, Miljan Rupar, Siniša Skočibušić (University in Mostar), Bojana Popadić, Ivana Šaraba (University in East Sarajevo)





Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
IMPLEMENTING QUALITY  
ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This document was elaborated in the frame of the joint project of  
the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
"Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina"





## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Since before joining the Bologna process<sup>1</sup>, the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) have been working towards the introduction of quality assurance policies and practices. This work has taken on a new importance since joining the Bologna process at the Berlin ministerial conference in 2003, and during the academic year 2003-04 all public universities in BiH underwent institutional evaluations by the European University Association<sup>2</sup> in order to identify the challenges faced by the universities in meeting the requirements for inclusion in the European Higher Education Area by 2010.

The EUA evaluations identified an important number of major issues which needed to be addressed through systematic and rigorous quality assurance procedures, to be overcome for an inclusion of BiH in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and for the modernisation and reform of higher education in BiH.

At European level, quality assurance is likewise one of the priority areas examined in the Bologna process stocktaking exercise leading up to the 2007 London Ministerial conference, and the score card for BiH reflects the relative lack of activity and progress in this field, compared to most other Bologna countries.

It was therefore decided by the BiH universities and ministries at state and entity level that, through the joint EC-CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, it was necessary to develop standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in BiH. A BiH working group was established in July 2006, which finalised a proposal for these in May 2007 with the assistance of international experts.

In view of the insufficient structures to implement coherent and efficient quality assurance policies and practices in BiH and based on the round table discussion of the BiH working group, these recommendations outline the major elements and steps towards the introduction of quality assurance policies and practices in higher education in BiH.

The recommendations in this document are issued to complement the standards and guidelines for quality assurance which have already been developed, and to provide orientation for higher education institutions and relevant authorities as well as for future international assistance for higher education reforms in BiH. The outlined elements and steps include the opinions and recommendations of the international experts of the CoE

<sup>1</sup> The Bologna process is the most important and wide ranging reform of higher education in Europe. The ultimate aim of the process is to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010 in which staff and students can move with ease and have fair recognition of their qualifications. The Bologna Declaration was signed by ministers of education from 29 European countries in 1999. The process was opened up to other countries, and further governmental meetings have been held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), and Bergen (2005); the next meeting will take place in London in May (2007). BiH joined the process in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe, European Commission (2004): *Institutional Evaluations of seven universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: summary report prepared by the European University Association*, prepared under the joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe “Modernising the Management and Governance Capacities of Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Sarajevo.



involved in the drafting process of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in BiH.

Completing the proposed cycle of activities could take 2 to 4 years.

**1. Raise awareness on quality issues and the use of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in BiH.**

This phase should include an information campaign to address not just academic and administrative staff in the universities, but also students and future students and their families.

A possible extension of the joint EC-CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in BiH” beyond June 2007 could be used to assist the relevant institutions in this matter.

**2. Enhance capacities for self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement activities within higher education institutions.**

This should include students, academic and administrative staff, as well as the constitution of a competent internal quality assurance unit assigned with the required decision making powers and provided with the necessary technical resources.

This activity has already been addressed through projects by SUS BiH and WUS Austria. The opportunities offered by the proposed WUS Austria - Tempus project could provide further assistance with this activity.

Further objectives of this phase could be the establishment of a practitioner-oriented network of BiH experts on quality assurance, for example to regularly consult priority topics, identify and prioritize professional development training needs, design training modules, disseminate to various target groups, the establishment of a database and internet forum for quality assurance, implement a Quality Training Program.

**3. Seek approval for the proposed BiH Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education from the relevant governmental authorities at various levels.**

A proposed extension of the joint EC-CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in BiH” could be used to assist the relevant institutions in this matter.

**4. Pilot the BiH Standards and Guidelines for internal quality assurance across a number of similar Faculties or disciplines or administrative divisions/domains.**

Quality assurance activities within a higher education institution are carried out under its own responsibility. Piloting common standards and guidelines across BiH will,



however, require a certain amount of assistance and coordination to ensure a coherent approach of all involved institutions, and a comparable outcome.

This coordinating function would ideally be assumed by the BiH Rectors' Conference. Several initiatives could assist this process, such as a proposed WUS Austria - Tempus project and a follow up project of the CoE and the EC under IPA<sup>3</sup> which is currently under preparation.

## **5. Develop a National Quality Assurance Framework.**

A quality assurance framework determines common ground for internal and external quality assurance procedures, thus ensuring their focus on accountability and improvement. Further, a quality assurance framework sets out procedures to manage the quality of higher education in a country. It interlinks quality assurance processes of higher education institutions and governmental authorities and instruments of national policy. Its purpose is to ensure the effectiveness of the quality assurance system, i.e. quality assurance standards and mechanisms embedded across higher education institutions in a country.

A quality assurance framework in BiH could set the base for the licensing process and its relationship to the programme/subject accreditation. It could further set the ground for linking the programme accreditation with the BiH qualifications framework and the benchmarking process.

Such a framework document could also be instrumental in initiating the implementation of the BiH standards and guidelines for quality assurance and the qualifications framework in higher education and bridging the time gap until BiH adopts a higher education law at state level that provides a legal basis for a national quality assurance system in BiH.

A follow up project of the CoE and the EC under IPA is currently under preparation and could assist in this matter.

## **6. Conduct an external evaluation of BiH universities, carried out by an external quality assurance agency, on the basis of the BiH Standards and Guidelines for Quality assurance in Higher Education.**

This should imply that the external evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance mechanisms and practices of the BiH universities (as outlined in step 4), in line with the BiH Standards and Guidelines for internal quality assurance.

A follow up project of the CoE and the EC under IPA is currently under preparation and could assist in this matter.

<sup>3</sup> IPA: the newly designed "Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance" of the European Commission



**7. Revise the BiH Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.**

On the basis of the outcome and accumulated experience in steps 1 to 6, the BiH Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education should be revised according to the terms of reference of the national quality assurance framework.



-----

Under the joint EC/CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina” a working group of BiH experts prepared a proposal for the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education in BiH in 2006 and 2007. Two international CoE experts, Patricia Georgieva, General Secretary of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency of Bulgaria and Lewis Purser, Assistant Director for Academic Affairs of the Irish Universities Association assisted the group in the drafting process.

These recommendations for the implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education in BiH were prepared by Patricia Georgieva and Lewis Purser and are based on discussions and consultations with the BiH working group.





Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

# NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

"This document was elaborated and translated in the frame of the joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe "Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".





# NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Introduction

In the Bergen Communiqué 46 ministers of education committed themselves to *draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with recognition of foreign qualifications. These plans will form part of each country's national action plan for the next Ministerial Conference.*

Within the joint EC/CoE project “Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina” a working group was formed in May 2006 to draft the national action plan for improving the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. The working group includes representatives of education authorities and of higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At its first meeting the task force agreed to divide its work load and establish subgroups in accordance with the structure of guidelines for national action plans<sup>1</sup>.

Taking into account the significance of the implementation of provisions from the Lisbon Recognition Convention the task force drafted the following action plan.

## 1. Legislation

### 1.1 Lisbon Recognition Convention

Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention on 17.07.2003. The Convention was ratified by the BiH Presidency on 19.11.2003. (BiH Official Gazette No. 15/03) after both chambers of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly had voted in favour it.

### 1.2 Review of national legislation relevant to recognition

Since the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, several legislative reform initiatives in higher education were launched. These include drafting a state level higher education law as well as initiatives at the levels of Entities and cantons.

At the time this action plan is produced the state level higher education law has not been adopted.

<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for NAP elaborated by the ENIC Bureau, the ENIC Advisory Board and the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. The Bologna Follow up Group approved the Guidelines in Vienna on April 7, 2006



Despite these reform initiatives, the legislation regulating recognition issues is largely based on the traditional principles of nostrification. Specific procedures for academic recognition are not stipulated by law.

**It is recommended** that the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs coordinates activities with the objective to review the existing legislation and its compliance with the provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts. The review should include the current legislation as well as recommendations for the implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts.

The mentioned activities will be conducted through a working group which will be composed of representatives of education authorities and higher education institutions. The foreseen deadline for realisation is one year.

The review should be published and available to all interested parties within the country and abroad.

### *1.3 Bilateral or regional recognition agreements*

**It is recommended** that the working group (1.2) includes existing bilateral and regional agreements for recognition in the review.

## **2. Recognition practice**

### *2.1 Criteria and procedures*

Due to different legislation and a lack of a state level higher education law, the procedures and criteria are not fully in compliance with recommendation on criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications and periods of study, adopted in 2001.

**It is recommended** to ensure the implementation of obligations from the Lisbon Recognition Convention for the entire territory of BiH through one law at state level. It is necessary to prescribe identical jurisdictions and procedures for the entire territory, in other words to harmonise legal regulations in a way that ensures equality, and unifies the time frame for processing applications (not longer than 60 days), regardless of which institution is running the process.

**It is recommended** that the BiH ENIC centre has a coordinating role in promoting the implementation of recommendations on criteria and procedures for the assessment of foreign qualifications and periods of study.

### *2.2 Joint degrees*

Also in this area, the legislation is inconsistent and does not specifically refer to criteria and procedures for recognising joint degrees.



### ***2.3 Overview of institutional practice***

See 2.1.

### ***2.4 Transparency tools for recognition***

In accordance with the Bologna process the majority of higher education institutions introduced ECTS as well as a Diploma Supplement. Some universities have a Diploma Supplement in English language published on their web site.

**It is recommended** to introduce a «transcript of records» in BiH's recognition practice, as one of the commonly recognised documents serving transparency in the recognition of qualifications in the EHEA as well as reaching the Bologna objectives concerning horizontal and vertical student mobility.

### ***2.5 Borderless/transnational education***

There is no defined policy at any level (educational authorities/higher education institutions) which regulates the recognition of borderless/transnational qualifications.

## **3. Information provision**

### ***3.1 Provision of information on recognition***

In accordance with Lisbon Recognition Convention and the ENIC/NARIC Code of good practice for information provision, which is one of the subsidiary texts of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the draft of the state level law on higher education foresees the establishment of a Centre for information and recognition in the area of higher education, i.e. a BiH ENIC centre. The centre's foreseen functions are *inter alia*:

- the collection and update of information on education systems and qualifications;
- advisory functions;
- ensuring adequate, reliable and authentic information.

The future BiH ENIC centre should by all means have its own web portal, since this would encompass its full transparency in the country and abroad while also facilitating access to information.

**It is recommended** that the importance of establishing a web portal and its maintenance is taken in consideration when elaboration legal documents that regulate the work of the future BiH ENIC centre, by including the position of an IT expert profile in the foreseen staff structure. This also implies planning an adequate budget.

In this transitional period, until the BiH ENIC centre is established, information on higher education in BiH and higher education institutions are available on the web site of the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs and the web sites of higher education institutions.



The deadlines foreseen for these measures are certainly related to the adoption of the state law on higher education. Assuming that in the near future the existing draft of the state law on higher education is adopted and taking into account that through projects of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and other donors certain steps have already been made, it can be said that the optimal deadline for the establishment of a functional BiH ENIC centre after the adoption of the state law on higher education is one year.

### ***3.2 Information package for applicants***

Due to the currently rather fragmented situation in the BiH higher education area, as referred to in item 2.1, the approach to the provision of an information package for applicants varies across the country. It is the universities and faculties that are directly addressed by an applicant, who provide information, in most cases on ad hoc basis, regarding the conditions for the recognition of qualifications through their offices.

**It is recommended** that the future BiH ENIC centre develops a template for information packages that is made available to applicants. The purpose of the information package is, first of all, to familiarise applicants with the recognition procedure in a simple and easily understandable way. The package should include:

- A listing of documents the applicant is obliged to submit for the purpose of recognition (verified copies, translations of originals, CV, ID, information on the higher education institution's conditions).
- The information package should contain one part explaining the purpose of recognition, in other words, an applicant should always indicate for which purpose he/she requests recognition.
- The duration of the evaluation process
- The information on who performs the evaluation
- The information on who takes the final decision
- The applicant's rights
- Prices/fees

## **4. Structures**

### ***4.1 National information centre***

Due to the obligations taken from Lisbon Recognition Convention and the participation in the Bologna process i.e. the shown commitment of Bosnia and Herzegovina to have all its institutions participate in the creation of a European Higher Education Area, certain steps have already been taken in the area of information collection. Within the Ministry of Civil Affairs a small team has been established with the support of the international community to start collecting information on higher education in BiH. Outcomes achieved so far: relevant legal documents and regulations and bilateral agreements are being collected, systematic collection of information on the higher education in progress, participation in the ENIC-NARIC network.



In terms of its responsibilities the role of future ENIC centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be advisory i.e. it will serve education authorities and higher education institutions in facilitating recognition procedures. The final decision on recognition should be made by the relevant education authorities or higher education institutions.

**It is recommended** to promote the concept of ENIC/NARIC network and its role in the process of academic recognition as much as possible. It is necessary to implement an open method of cooperation in the country and abroad. It is very important to further strengthen the cooperation between the ENIC/NARIC centres in the region, since the highest mobility of students takes place between BiH and its neighbouring countries.

#### ***4.2 Cooperation recognition/quality assurance bodies***

As far as the quality assurance concept in BiH is concerned, an agency at the state level is not yet established as a body in charge of quality assurance, i.e. the establishment of joint standards/mechanisms for quality assurance.

**It is recommended** to establish an agency for quality assurance in higher education in accordance with ENQA standards and to establish cooperation with the BiH ENIC centre in the country and similar bodies abroad. Online forums, as well as periodical experience exchange through conferences with emphasis on good practice examples should be foreseen in relevant budgets.



## Acknowledgement

The below listed representatives of BiH ministries, universities and students were actively involved in the development of the National Action Plan for Recognition of Qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The joint EC/CoE project owes its gratitude to their professional engagement and personal dedication as much as to the expertise and guidance that were provided by the CoE experts Carita Blomqvist and Gábor Mészáros.

Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH  
Nedžada Faginović

Ministry of Education and Science of the Federation of BiH  
Džemko Ruždić, Mensur Suljagić

Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska  
Proko Dragosavljević, Dragana Lukić-Domuz

University in Banja Luka  
Ostoja Miletić

University in Bihać  
Mehmed Duraković

University in East Sarajevo  
Vojislav Šuka

University in Mostar  
Marinko Jurilj

University “Džemal Bijedić” in Mostar  
Edina Špago-Čumurija, Emina Sokolović

University in Sarajevo  
Nina Šober

University in Tuzla  
Edin Delić

University in Zenica  
Arifa Čuruković

Student representatives  
Senad Đidić, Adnan Kulušić (University in Zenica), Ermin MAHMUTOVIĆ (University in Bihać), Bojana Popadić (University in East Sarajevo)



**Council of Europe**  
**Conseil de l'Europe**



**European Union**  
**Union européenne**

# DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT MODEL FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This document was elaborated in the frame of the joint project of  
the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
"Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina" .





## Preface

This model of a Diploma Supplement for Bosnia and Herzegovina was developed on the basis of the recommendations of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES.

The purpose of the Diploma Supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.).

The Diploma Supplement is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended.

Every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge in a widely spoken European language.

The Diploma Supplement should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions for recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give reasons why.



## **DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT MODEL for Bosnia and Herzegovina**

- 1. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION**
  - 1.1 Family Name:
  - 1.2 First Name:
  - 1.3 Date, Place, Country of Birth:
  - 1.4 Number/Code of Student or student card:
- 2. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION**
  - 2.1 Name of the Qualification (Full, Abbreviated):  
Name of Title (Full, Abbreviated):
  - 2.2 Main Field(s) of Study for the Qualification:
  - 2.3 Name of the Institution Awarding the Qualification:  
Status (Type/Control)
  - 2.4 Name of the Institution Administering the Studies:  
Status (Type/Control):
  - 2.5 Language(s) of Instruction/Examination:
- 3. INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION**
  - 3.1 Level of the Qualification:
  - 3.2 Official Length and workload of the Programme:
  - 3.3 Access Requirement(s):
- 4. INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED**
  - 4.1 Mode of Study:
  - 4.2 Program Requirements:
  - 4.3 Program Details:
  - 4.4 Grading Scheme, Grade distribution guidance
  - 4.5 Overall Classification:
- 5. INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION**
  - 5.1 Access to Further Study:
  - 5.2 Professional Status:
- 6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
  - 6.1 Additional Information:
  - 6.2 Additional Information Sources:
- 7. CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT**
  - 7.1 Date
  - 7.2 Signature
  - 7.3 Capacity
  - 7.4 Official Stamp/Seal



## 8. INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

As a member country of the Bologna Process Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is presently undergoing far reaching reforms to join the European Area of Higher Education by 2010. At the same time the state of BiH has a complex administrative set up dividing legislative and administrative authority for education regionally as well as among various governing levels. Alone 13 legislative bodies<sup>2</sup> are competent for enacting the relevant legislation. Therefore the higher education system at times varies from one part of the country to the other.

At present (May 2007), there are 8 public universities and 22 private higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>3</sup> All institutions must be licensed by the ministry of education in charge for the region in which the higher education institution is situated<sup>4</sup>. Some progress has been made with the introduction of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms at most higher education institutions and first legal stipulations for external accreditation are in place in parts of BiH. However, a countrywide accreditation system is not yet in place in BiH.

### 8.1 Access to higher education

Applicants for higher education are required to have successfully accomplished secondary education comprising 4 years of full time schooling. The credential that entitles for application is the '*svjedodžba o završenoj srednjoj školi*' (certificate on completion of secondary education).

Detailed information about access to individual higher education institutions in BiH can be obtained via the BiH country pages on the ENIC-NARIC website<sup>5</sup>, i.e. via links to the individual universities' websites.

### 8.2 Degrees and qualifications

Study programmes, degrees and qualifications in BiH are currently in transition towards a full scale three cycle system. The progress of reform varies from region to region and institution to institution.

According to the traditional system

- four years of full time studies lead to a *diploma* degree.
- Subsequent two years of study lead to a *magistar nauka* degree.
- Doctoral studies lead to the degree of *doktor nauka*.

The degree of *Doktor nauka* (the equivalent to a PhD) is awarded for after a minimum of three years of independent research. Candidates with a *specijalist* and master

<sup>1</sup> This Section must be regularly updated by and the update accessible to all higher education institutions in BiH. The update is usually made by the national ENIC or NARIC centre and published on its website. Prior to the establishment of the BiH ENIC at state level this task should be accomplished by the Ministry in charge of higher education at state level..

<sup>2</sup> Governmental authorities of the state of BiH are further divided among 2 first-order administrative divisions: the *Republika Srpska* and the *Federacija Bosna i Hercegovina*, the latter being subdivided into 10 Cantons. In addition to these two entities, BiH comprises the internationally supervised Brčko District, an administrative unit under the sovereignty of the state of BiH. Legislative competences in education are attributed to the BiH Parliament, the Republika Srpska National Assembly, the Parliament of the Federation of BiH, the 10 Cantonal Assemblies and the District Brčko Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> These figures require regular updating.

<sup>4</sup> In BiH, 11 ministries of education (one in Republika Srpska and ten in the ten Cantons of the Federation of BiH) have full competence over education including higher education. In Brčko District, the Department for Education of Brčko District has full competence over education. At state level, the Ministry for Civil Affairs is mandated to coordinate educational policy within the country. The Ministry of Education and Science of the FBiH has decision making competences to adopt standards and regulations for higher education and is responsible to coordinate between the 10 cantonal ministries of education.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.enic-naric.net/members.asp?country=Bosnia+and+Herzegovina>



degree apply by submitting a research proposal to a committee, established by respective university, to evaluate the proposal and decide on the application.

The *doktorska disertacija* (Doctoral dissertation) is required to be a result of an independent research project of a candidate and to contribute to progress of science in respective field. Upon successful public defence of the doctoral dissertation the candidate is awarded the academic degree of *Doktor nauka*.

The new study programs which are offered in line with the Bologna Process comprise

- A first cycle of 180–240 ECTS credits (three or four years full time study) to obtain the degree of *diplomiran/a*, which is the first degree.
- Upon completion of this first degree, 60–120 ECTS credits (one or two years of full time study) lead to the *magistar* degree, the second degree. Altogether higher education studies leading to a second degree require 300 ECTS credits (5 years), i.e. 180+120 or 240+60 ECTS credits (3 plus 2 years or 4 plus 1 year.)
- Information about exceptions to the above described rule (e.g. for medical studies) in BiH can be obtained via the BiH country pages on the ENIC-NARIC website<sup>6</sup> and the individual universities' websites.

### 8.3 Credit system and grading

The academic year in BiH usually lasts 10 months, starting in October and ending in July. The academic year is divided into two semesters.

The unit to define a full-time student workload during one semester is *kredit* or *bod*. The full-time workload for one academic year equals to 60 *kredita* or *bodova* (ECTS credits).

There are some differences in the grading system for undergraduate and postgraduate examinations between the public higher education institutions.

The University of Sarajevo, the University «Džemal Bijedić» in Mostar, the University of Bihać, the University of Banja Luka, the University of East Sarajevo, the University of Zenica and the University of Tuzla apply the following grading system:

ECTS	Grade	Description
A	10	excellent achievement;
B	9	above average;
C	8	average with small mistakes;
D	7	good with significant disadvantages;
E	6	satisfactory of minimum criteria;
F, FX	5	did not satisfy.

The University (Sveučilište) of Mostar applies the following grading system:

ECTS	Grade	Description
A	5	excellent
B	4	very good
C/D	3	good
E	2	satisfactory
F	1	failed

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.enic-naric.net/members.asp?country=Bosnia+and+Herzegovina>



-----

This document was prepared by Nedžada Faginović, Sector for Education of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and Karen Roberts, CoE project coordinator. Prior to its finalisation it was reviewed by Carita Blomqvist, Senior Advisor of the Finnish National Board of Education, Gábor Mészáros, Director, of the Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre and Sjur Bergan, Head of the CoE's Department of Higher Education and History Teaching.





Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



European Union  
Union européenne

USERS' MANUAL  
FOR THE  
DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT MODEL  
FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This document was elaborated in the frame of the joint project of  
the European Commission and the Council of Europe  
"Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".





# USERS' MANUAL FOR THE MODEL OF A DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

## Introduction

This manual is issued together with a model for the Diploma Supplement in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Its purpose is to provide guidance for the application and issuing of the Diploma Supplement in BiH, in accordance with the recommendations and template developed by a Joint European Commission - Council of Europe - UNESCO/CEPES working party.

The Diploma Supplement is one of the international tools for improving mobility and academic recognition in the European Higher Education Area and beyond. All parties signatory to the Lisbon Recognition Convention committed to promoting the use of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Diploma Supplement (Lisbon Recognition Convention, Section IX, Article 3) through the national information centre or otherwise.

The signatories of the Berlin Communiqué have further set the objective “that every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge (...) in a widely spoken European language”.

This manual and the model for the Diploma Supplement in BiH were elaborated in the frame of a joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe "Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina" in spring 2007.

Both documents were issued to assist BiH with meeting its international commitments in the Bologna Process, to facilitate a correct and coherent use of the Diploma Supplement in BiH and to provide graduates from BiH with coherent documentation when seeking recognition abroad.

This manual and the model for the Diploma Supplement address departments and individuals that are involved in issuing diploma and the corresponding Diploma Supplements. It is also intended as an orientation to future graduates and to end-users, higher education and research institutions and employers seeking information related to degrees issued in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## What is a Diploma Supplement?

The Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma aiming at improving international 'transparency' and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the program that was successfully completed by the holder of the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. The Diploma Supplement should be free from any value-judgments, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It is a flexible non-prescriptive tool which is designed to save time, money and workload.

The Diploma Supplement is composed of eight sections (information identifying the holder of the qualification, information identifying the qualification, information on the level of the



qualification, information on the contents and results gained, information on the function of the qualification, additional information, certification of the Supplement, information on the national higher education system). Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

The Diploma Supplement needs to include a description of the national higher education system according to which the holder of the original qualification has graduated. This description is usually provided by the respective national ENIC and NARIC centres and is available on the website: [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net). Since BiH has not yet established a national ENIC office, this description was developed with the respective authorities in the frame of the joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe "Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

### **What the Diploma Supplement is not**

The Diploma Supplement is no curriculum vitae. It is not a substitute for the original qualification/diploma. It is no transcript or certified copy. Neither does it guarantee the recognition of the qualification.

### **Language of the Diploma Supplement**

The Diploma Supplement is issued in a widely spoken European language to provide graduates with a coherent documentation when seeking recognition abroad. Frequently, countries also issue bilingual Diploma Supplements.

This manual and the attached model for the BiH Diploma Supplement were developed in English language and subsequently translated into local language. The English version should serve as the guideline for any adaptation to one of the official languages of BiH.

### **Recommended Links and Literature**

The following links are recommended for further information on the Diploma Supplement:

- the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents  
[http://www.enic-naric.net/instruments.asp?display=legal\\_framework](http://www.enic-naric.net/instruments.asp?display=legal_framework)
- the ENIC/NARIC website  
<http://www.enic-naric.net>
- the EC webpages on the Diploma Supplement  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec\\_qual/recognition/diploma\\_en.html#1](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html#1)
- the founding principles and general guidelines for those producing supplements  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec\\_qual/recognition/ds\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/ds_en.pdf) (chapter IV)
- a glossary of recognition related terms  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec\\_qual/recognition/ds\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/ds_en.pdf) (chapter V)
- explanatory notes by CEPES for the Application of the Diploma Supplement  
[http://www.cepes.ro/hed/recogn/goups/diploma/explanatory\\_notes.htm](http://www.cepes.ro/hed/recogn/goups/diploma/explanatory_notes.htm)



## 1. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION

1.1 Family Name

1.2 First Name:

1.3 Date, Place, Country of Birth:

1.4 Number/Code of Student or student card:

Items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 are explicit and do not require any particular instruction. The equivalent data provided in the Diploma must be the same as the data in the Diploma Supplement. Student number or Code is the number under which the student has been registered in the university administration (usually it is the number of students' ID i.e. *indeks*).

## 2. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION

2.1 Name of Qualification (Full, Abbreviated):

Name of Title (Full, Abbreviated):

Give the full name of the qualification in the original language as stated in the original qualification; e.g. *diplomirani pravnik, diplomirani ekonomista, magistar poslovne administracije*. If the qualification is a dual award this should be stated. Under 'Name of Title' give the adequate title in line with regulations that stipulate this field (*dr., mr.*). If the usage of the title is regulated by a legal act this should be indicated here; e.g. *book of rules on usage of academic titles, acquirement of academic and professional vocation*.

2.2 Main Field(s) of Study for the Qualification:

Give only the major field(s) of study (disciplines) that define the main subject area(s) for the qualification; e.g. *Finances and Accounting, History, English Language and Literature, Politics, Business Administration, etc.*

2.3 Name of the Institution Awarding the Qualification:

Status (Type / Control):

The institution that is awarding the qualification is often, but not always the same as the institution administering the studies and delivering the programme (see 2.4). Qualifications may be delivered by a sub-contracted institution that has been given a 'franchise' or some type of 'accreditation' by a senior competent authority. This might be the state, a university or a professional institution. Sometimes the senior authority may be a foreign institution. If this is the case it should be indicated here. Also indicate the status of the awarding institution: Public or private, and - if applicable - by whom it is/was accredited. Finally, indicate the general educational classification of the awarding



institution; e.g. *Univerzitet, Visoka škola, Tehnički koledž*, etc. If there is a difference between the awarding institution and the institution delivering the qualification indicate the status of both.

#### 2.4 Name of the Institution Administering the Studies: Status (Type/ Control):

This refers to the institution which is responsible for the delivery of the programme. In some cases this can be different from the institution awarding the qualification (see 2.3). Also indicate the status of the institution delivering the studies: Private/Independent, Private and State recognised, State, and - if applicable - by whom it is/was accredited.. Finally, indicate the general national educational classification of the administering institution; e.g. *College of Higher Education, Private Institute*, etc.

#### 2.5 Language(s) of Instruction/Examination:

Indicate the language(s) in which the qualification was delivered and examined.

### 3. INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION

#### 3.1 Level of Qualification:

Indicate, according to which system the diploma is awarded (traditional or three cycle according to Bologna principles as referred to in item 8.2 ). Give the precise level of the qualification and its place in the specific educational structure of awards (as explained and referred to in section 8).

#### 3.2 Official Length and Workload of Programme:

Explain the official workload of the programme in ECTS credits (or in other types of credits with the equivalent number of ECTS credits). This can be supplemented with information on the duration of the programme in weeks or years and the actual workload including information on any major sub-components; e.g. *practical training*. Preferably, the workload should be expressed in terms of total student effort required. This consists of the normal designated time on the programme including taught classes and private study, examinations, etc. This can be expressed as x hours per week for x weeks, or just by using the normal local description of the length; e.g. *one year full-time study*. Where possible, the effort should be described in terms of credit, and the credit system should be described.

#### 3.3 Access Requirement(s):

In this field you indicate the level of education that is required for access to the program that leads to the diploma; e.g. *the accomplishment of four years secondary education is required for access to the first cycle degree program*. (see 8.1).



## 4. INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED

### 4.1 Mode of Study:

The mode of study refers to how the programme was undertaken; e.g. *Full-time, Part-time, Distance learning*.

### 4.2 Program Requirements:

Where available, provide details of the learning outcomes, skills, competencies and stated aims and objectives associated with the qualification.

Include details of any particular features that help define the qualification, especially information on those obligatory requirements which are preconditions to obtain the qualification or details of the regulations covering the minimum standards required to secure the qualification.

### 4.3 Program Details

List the actual marks and/or grades obtained in each major component of the qualification. Entries should be as complete as possible and in accordance with what is normally recorded at the institution concerned. Cover all examinations and assessed components and/or fields of study offered in examination, including any dissertation or thesis. Indicate if the latter were defended or not.

All this information is often available in the form of a transcript (a useful format for transcripts was developed for the European Credit Transfer System [ECTS]). Many credit-based systems employ detailed transcripts that can be integrated into the wider framework of the Diploma Supplement.

If information on the credit allocation between course components and units is available it should be included.

If the qualification is a joint degree, indicate what parts of the qualification have been earned at which institution.

### 4.4 Grading Scheme, grade distribution guidance

(see 8.3)

### 4.5 Overall Classification:

Should your institution indicate overall classifications (such as *summa cum laude*, etc.) this should be indicated here. If this is not the case, insert 'not applicable'.



## 5. INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION

### 5.1 Access to Further Study:

Indicate to which further academic and/or professional study this qualification provides access; e.g. *qualifies to apply for admission of doctoral work*.

### 5.2 Professional Status:

If applicable, give details of any rights to practice, or professional status accorded to the holders of the qualification; e.g. *the issued degree of 'X' entitles its holder to the legally protected professional title 'Y' and to exercise professional work in the field of 'Z'*.

## 6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 6.1 Additional Information:

Add any additional information not included above but relevant to the purposes of assessing the nature, level and usage of the qualification; e.g. *the qualification involved a period of study/training in (another institution/company/country)*. Include further relevant details about the higher education institution where the qualification was obtained.

If the qualification is a joint or double/multiple degree, or if it was earned under a transnational or borderless education arrangement, this should be noted here.

### 6.2 Additional Information Sources:

Indicate any further useful information sources and references where more details on the qualification could be sought; e.g. the higher education institution's website; the department in the issuing institution; the website of the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net).

## 7. CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT

### 7.1 Date

Indicate the date when the Diploma Supplement was issued. This would not necessarily be the same date the qualification was awarded.

### 7.2 Signature

The name and signature of the official certifying the Diploma Supplement





### 7.3 Capacity

Indicate the official post of the certifying individual.

### 7.4 Official Stamp/Seal

Insert the official stamp or seal of the institution that provides authentication of the Diploma Supplement.

## **8. INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

A description of the national higher education system within which the individual named on the original qualification graduated has to be attached to the Diploma Supplement.

The description is usually provided by the respective national ENIC and NARIC centres and is available on the website: [www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net). Since BiH has not yet established a national ENIC office, a description was developed with international experts and the respective BiH authorities in the frame of the joint project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe "Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina". The description is issued in the attached model of a Diploma Supplement for Bosnia and Herzegovina.



-----

This document was prepared by Nedžada Faginović, Sector for Education of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH and Karen Roberts, CoE project coordinator. Prior to its finalisation it was reviewed by Carita Blomqvist, Senior Advisor of the Finnish National Board of Education, Gábor Mészáros, Director, of the Hungarian Equivalence and Information Centre and Sjur Bergan, Head of the CoE's Department of Higher Education and History Teaching.