

Joint EU/CoE Project  
Strategic Development of Higher Education and Qualification Standards



**5th and Final Workshop on Qualification and Occupational Standards  
11-12 December 2014, Hotel Europe, Sarajevo**

## REPORT

### DAY 1: **Welcoming and opening session (09:30)**

Nedim Vrabac (CoE Project manager) introduced the fifth and final workshop. He welcomed observer guest representatives who joined the meeting from ministries, employers, the project Steering Board and a new qualifications framework 'general level' project. He also reported that the six-month extension 'Qualifications and Occupational Standards Project' was awaiting approval. The agenda for the current workshop was to be regarded as flexible so as to ensure its effectiveness. Finally, he welcomed interpretation students from the Department of English of the University of Sarajevo who would gain experience of practical live interpretation from the booths.

### **Presentation of the results of working groups (09:45)**

The five working groups presented the results of their interim meetings that took place between September and December 2014 where groups were tasked with continuing to finalise their work and comment on and analyse the output of other groups. The full reports and any accompanying PowerPoints will be posted on the project website. A selection of some key points presented included the following:

- (i) Agriculture + Food Processing (see rapporteur report; previously distributed draft working documents: Qualification Standard [QS], Occupational Standard (OS); and the meeting PowerPoint presentation)
  - The QS title was confirmed to be '*Food Processing Engineer*' at level 6;
  - ECTS credits were allocated to learning outcomes allowing 35 free ECTS credits;
  - The labour market embraced a wide scope;
  - Used learning outcomes of the International Union of Food Science and Technology;
  - The OS also used the ILO international body materials.
- (ii) ICT (see rapporteur report; previously distributed draft working documents: Qualification Standard [QS], Occupational Standard [OS]) documents; and the meeting PowerPoint presentation)
  - Presented analysis of other groups' work including a concern that some QS allowed little room for choice/flexibility due to the high number of ECTS credits allocated, the importance of a reasonably sized thesis/dissertation, and problems with low level learning outcomes;
  - Has made very minor changes to the previous OS.
- (iii) Civil Engineering (see rapporteur report; previously distributed draft working document: Qualification Standard [QS])
  - Examined examples of programmes from other universities;
  - Found suggestions/analysis from other groups useful;
  - Concerned about the use of 'immeasurable' verbs to describe learning outcomes.
- (iv) Economy (see rapporteur report, previously distributed draft working document Qualification Standard [QS] and the meeting PowerPoint presentation)

- Had examined the work of other WGs to improve their own;
  - The group indicated that their work was almost finalised;
  - Their output was a product of unanimous agreement;
  - Agreed that a project/dissertation/thesis element was important.
- (v) Teacher Education (see rapporteur report; previously distributed draft working document: Qualification Standard [QS])
- Welcomed the opportunity to explore the work of other WGs;
  - Indicated that the final version of their QS was almost accomplished;
  - Noted that 11 members of the WG attended;
  - Responded to the comments of other groups and comments on their work.

### **Consideration of a selection of broad plenary questions raised in the paper distributed by Stephen Adam - '*BiH Issues for Resolution*' (10:45)**

Stephen Adam introduced his paper and stressed the importance of gaining feedback on a number of issues associated with the finalisation/extension of the project. The session was directed to focus on just a selection of broad plenary questions, namely questions:

3 - Currently, there are some variations in the detail under each agreed QS heading - should we be concerned about this - should there be a common approach/level of detail? Is it useful to retain the term 'minimal' in the QS/OS headings?

6 - If QS are to operate as standards/guidance devices, should they indicate anything about assessment?

7 - 'Transferable skills' and 'employability' are often not separately identified in the QS - should there be some mention of these and what form should this take?

10 - Should there be any guidance on the appropriate ratio between electives and core units of study - how much choice should exist and should any guidance be given on this element?

11 - Should all undergraduate degrees include a thesis/major project element? What are their function, importance and minimum effective ECTS size/weighting? What about the situation for postgraduate master degrees?

12 - How often should appropriate groups revisit/update/review QS? Who best should organise the ongoing development of any QS in BiH? How do we get stakeholders to agree the QS that you have produced?

A short summary of plenary responses included the following points (presented in reference to each question considered):

- (3) - Leave the term/headings 'minimal';
- (6) - Assessment details should not be included as this is a matter of academic freedom/discretion;
  - Include in the guidelines the important linkage between learning outcomes and assessment<sup>1</sup>;
  - Keep any standards flexible;
  - Professors need training in the learning outcomes - assessment relationship.
- (7) - Transferable skills are a foundation of educational reforms and this can be inserted into guidelines.
- (10) - Suggested ratios ranged between 3:1 and 4:1.
- (11) - Universities have their own rule for this element;
  - Agreed that the thesis/dissertation/project element was important (synthesising/crown/integrating element for course);
  - Mile Dželalija raised the question of the relationship between overall competences and learning outcomes and their link to any thesis element;
  - Also very significant for second cycle qualifications.
- (12) - 4-5 years review cycle, as this is a similar time for qualifications/programme reviews;
  - All stakeholders must be consulted (not easy);
  - Daria Duilović suggests that the BiH Inter-sectoral commission should supervise any process;
    - QS review cycles should be likened to OS review;
    - The practical effectiveness of QS needs to be evaluated - are they fit for purpose?

<sup>1</sup> NB. Consideration of assessment links to issues associated with assessment criteria and marking criteria - both expressed in terms of learning outcomes.

### **Tasks for Working Group (12:30)**

The five working groups were asked to: finalise their respective qualifications and Occupational Standards; consider the constructive written comments made by other working groups on their own output(s); and the written and verbal comments of the experts (Stephen Adam and Mile Dželalija).

### **Working Group meetings (14:15- 17:30)**

Working groups held their individual meetings and were visited by the two project experts. Result of their work would be presented in the morning of the day 2.

### **Reception (20:00)**

A reception was held at Hotel Europe to thank the working group members for their work and significant contribution to process of HE qualifications reform.

## **DAY 2: Working Group - plenary report back (0900)**

Individual working groups reported back on their deliberations on the content and decisions associated with their QS and OS. Their reports focused on the changes and developments they had decided the previous afternoon. The following points are a selection of points made by the individual WG rapporteur.

- (i) Teacher Education
  - Allocated ECTS credits to learning outcome groups;
  - Focused on pedagogy, didactics, psychology - all important elements for teaching;
  - Included a final thesis element (10-15 ECTS credits);
  - Indicated that graduates could teach at all levels;
  - This second cycle was a complex qualification that had several elements (TOEFL + teacher training + English language/literature) and a structure that exists in a challenging set of often conflicting regulations.
- (ii) Civil Engineering
  - Re-thought some identified skills and the verbs used to characterise them;
  - Re -grouped some learning outcomes;
  - Added a thesis but this took ECTS total to 165 credits (a 4th year to allow flexibility);
  - Re-named the occupational role to include: head of construction site.
- (iii) Economy
  - Thanked experts for their input;
  - Indicated that 60 of the 180 ECTS credits were free for institutional decision making;
  - Altered the order of the competences, adjusted learning outcome verbs and sets;
  - Increased the thesis element to 6 ECTS minimum and indicated it was designed to promote/test, research, apply knowledge, problem solve, and act as a synthesising element.
- (iv) ICT
  - Indicated that flexible access was not permitted by law;
  - Kept to existing learning outcomes;
  - Indicated 10 ECTS credits for the final paper (up from 6);
  - Harmonised QS and OS.
- (v) Agriculture and Food Processing
  - Considered all the recommendations;
  - Reduced obligatory ECTS credits from 180 to 150 to introduce some flexibility;
  - Altered some active verbs used in the description of learning outcomes.

## **Final overall observations by external experts on the work of the groups, the project and its future development (10:15)**

Stephen Adam and Mile Dželalija together with Nedim Vrabac thanked the groups for all their work and excellent cooperation over the whole of the project. They were optimistic that the overall project outputs would be positive. It was emphasised that the work has great significance for BiH. Working group members have clearly become experts in their own right (as demonstrated by their incisive comments on each others' work). However, their work was not done - the next challenge was in the finalisation, testing and implementation of their good work. Nedim Vrabac indicated the nature of the project extension to include the training of 20 trainers in a one-week intensive, assessed, training event.

## **Introduction and feedback on the Guidelines for the development of Qualifications and Occupational Standards Plenary session (11:00-12:00)**

Mile Dželalija presented and discussed the outline framework document (distributed). The plenary session elicited the following feedback:

- The relationship of the work to '*informal*' and '*non-formal*' education is useful but there needs to be some clarification of the distinction between the two;
- Section 3 - the '*modern structures*' element should precede the '*internal/external quality assurance*' component;
- The content and nature of '*modern structures*' and the applicability of any advice to agricultural colleges was questioned;
- The role, significance and nature of student-centred learning need to be included;
- The ongoing role of the '*trained trainers*' in BiH was questioned;
- Daria Duilović (Ministry of Civil Affairs) suggested that '*recognition*' needs to be linked to the quality assurance element and a glossary needs to be included;
- It is important that BiH higher education institutions use and accept the finalised document and its advice and recommendations.

## **Concluding comments**

Nedim Vrabac, Stephen Adam and Mile Dželalija thanked all the working groups members for their outstanding and very significant work and results. The interpreters were complimented on their exceptionally good work throughout the project.

It was agreed that:

- The Working groups will send the final versions of their respective Qualification standard and working groups for ICT and agriculture and food processing also their Occupational standards.
- The work and results of this component will become part of the future "guidelines for development of qualification standards".
- Mile Dželalija will send the agreed structure of future guidelines to the project team.
- Project team will develop criteria for selection of candidates for the planned training of trainers, and upon its approval by the Project Steering Board will inform all Working group members about the call for applications.
- All relevant materials will be published on the project web site (currently under reconstruction).
- All relevant news and development regarding the training will be regularly published on the project web site.

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Attached: Qualification Standards issues – plenary and group specific; *Stephen Adam 11-12 December 2014*