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2nd Workshop on Qualification and Occupational Standards

6-7 March 2014, Hotel Kardial, Teslić

REPORT

DAY 1

Welcoming and opening session (10:30-10:45):

The 2nd workshop was introduced by Nedim Vrabac (CoE Project manager) who welcomed participants and gave a brief update on other aspects of the project and outlined the plan for the workshop. He indicated that the agenda is designed to be flexible so as to focus on the requirements of the workshop groups.

Presentation of the results of the working groups (10:45-12:00)

In this session the working groups presented the results of the work done at the individual meetings of working groups that took place between 1st and 2nd Workshop during January-February 2014.

(i) Economy (see rapporteur report)
A number of points were highlighted including:
- The group analysed the study programmes in the economy related area;
- Found no significant differences in the study programme titles;
- Many programmes have only very broad learning outcomes defined;
- Banja Luka and Tuzla had well defined learning outcomes;
- All programmes have clearly defined examination criteria following institutional university statutes;
- The need to redesign/amend the existing syllabus was agreed;
- All institutions have common problems of how to monitor the syllabus, which is personal to each professor.

(ii) ICT (see rapporteur report)
Points highlighted included:
- Only nine of the 20 in the group could attend the interim working group meeting;
- The internet was used to identify missing study programmes;
- Banja Luka had good learning outcomes identified
- Good, and some less good, assessment criteria were identified;
- There were similarities found between most programmes + all were coherent;
- The need for a glossary was identified as there were different understandings of learning outcomes and competencies.

(iii) Engineering (see rapporteur report)
Points highlighted included:
- Only two universities' programmes had learning outcomes defined and those were of good quality;
- There were some examples of well-defined marking criteria and learning outcomes;
- The structure and organisation of programmes was very different, making comparison difficult;
- Key terminology employed in different Higher Education Institutions (HEI) was not the same;

- The role and application of ECTS credit points was problematic.

(iv) Agriculture and Food Processing (see rapporteur report)
Points highlighted included:
- 4+1 and 3+2 study patterns existed and complicated matters;
- All institutions had agricultural technology programmes;
- Learning outcomes were not of equal quality
- The group reported a lively and productive discussion and concluded that there was room for programme development.

(v) Teacher education (see rapporteur report)
Points highlighted:
- The group identified similar issues and problems identified by the previous rapporteur's verbal reports;
- The group analysed a large number of study programmes.

Expert feedback:
(i) Stephen Adam:
- Acknowledged the good work done and identified a number of issues and questions;
- Work highlighted the need to improve learning outcomes and relate them to delivery and assessment;
- There is a need to consider and integrate transferable skills in the curricula;
- A standard understanding of the learning outcomes, skills and competences need to be agreed and a glossary developed;
- Issues associated with assessment need further consideration including: the development of assessment and grading criteria; how to evaluate active participation and teamwork; and the relationship between unseen examination and other forms of assessment;
- The role and potential benefits of ECTS.

(ii) Mile Dželalija:
- Congratulated the working groups on their excellent work;
- Regarding methods of assessment and testing, much was not explicit;
- Posed the question of who administers and evaluates the exams - who is qualified to do this?
- Terminological consensus was required;
- Junior staff required appropriate support and continuing professional development.

(iii) Volker Gehmlich:
- Congratulated the working groups;
- Confirmed the points raised by other experts;
- Indicated that the work 'harmonisation' was dangerous - identical programmes of study were not the aim of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- Indicated that many of the programmes (particularly in Economics) had a common base of studies;
- The learning outcomes identified had a number of weaknesses and particularly focused on knowledge to the exclusion of other important aspects.

NB.   Daria Duilovic (BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs) indicated her support for the valuable work of the five groups and how it was significant to the action plan and essential for the future reform.

Dublin Descriptors, EQF and QF-EHEA level descriptors, QF BiH level descriptors (12:30-14:00)

In this session Stephen Adam presented a short PowerPoint on the relationship between 'external reference points' and the successive 'cascade' of different descriptors that existed, and the place of 'Qualification Standards' in this system.

Mile Dželalija presented a detailed set of PowerPoints covering: EU and Regional background facts on unemployment and education issues; the global increase in qualifications frameworks and their purposes; the role of the nature and role of the 'Dublin descriptors'; the role of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), etc.

Following the second presentation a number of questions were discussed, including:
- The links between economic development and educational reforms;
- That the USA and Japan had an excellent educational system without a qualifications framework;
- The need to include a 'humanistic' element in educational reform.

Learning outcomes - concept and 'how to'? (12:30-14:00)

In this session Stephen Adam first presented some further PowerPoints on Learning Outcomes - how to write them, some issues and some examples. He highlighted: the difficulties in writing them well and the need for intensive staff development for this; the essential link between learning outcomes and the need for more varied types and modes of assessment; the role and importance of 'transferable skills'; and some useful sources of subject standards with specific examples (good and bad).

Mile Dželalija then presented his talk with accompanying PowerPoints. He explored the whole process of development and application of learning outcomes and outlined a 10-point process. He stressed active verbs associated with learning outcomes are just one of main elements to show the complexity of learning outcomes. The Bloom's taxonomy, as one of examples, could be used but in a careful way. Following the talk the important question arose concerning the competence and qualifications of examiners and those who are qualified to mark as opposed to teach.

Finally, Volker Gehmlich gave a presentation, which stressed the role of knowledge, skills and competences (authority and responsibility). He outlined how to write good learning outcomes with appropriate active verbs, a clear subject, and modality. He observed that there was too much description of knowledge in the learning outcomes identified by the working groups. It is important, but difficult, to distinguish between levels (BA, MA, PhD) - here good level descriptors were essential. In Germany the Qualifications Framework for LLL consists of four pillars: Professional Competence and Personal Competence being each subdivided into two further areas of competence. Professional Competence on the one hand comprises Knowledge and Skills; Personal Competence on the other hand Social Competence and Self-Competence. Each of the four columns describes 8 levels. Each level is introduced by a level indicator. The descriptors comprise both education and VET/professional development being separated by an "or", e.g. level 6 column "skills" reads:

Be in possession of an extremely broad spectrum of methods for the processing of complex problems within a scientific subject corresponding to level 1 – Bachelor level – of the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications), further fields of study *or* field of occupational activity. Draw up new solutions and evaluate such solutions including

according consideration to various criteria even in circumstances where requirements are subject to frequent change.

As regards "Social Competence" the following is indicated at the same level:
Assume responsibility in working within expert teams *or* show responsibility in leading groups or organisations. Instruct the technical development of others and act in an anticipatory manner in dealing with problems within the team. Present experts with arguments for and solutions to complex professionally related problems and work in conjunction with such experts on further development.

This led to a discussion of how to measure 'social competence'.

Working Group tasks: learning outcomes and assessment criteria (1530-1800)

In this session Mile Dželalija outlined the tasks for the working groups for the remainder of the afternoon. These were distributed in written form (see attachments). The working groups then split up and worked individually to then report the next day. The experts joined each group to clarify and support them in their work.

DAY 2 **Plenary session - report back from the five working groups (0900-1000):**

The five working groups reported back and the experts gave their feedback. Points made by the groups included:

(i) Economy
- There was some uncertainty as to how to test the learning outcomes and whether to use the Dublin Descriptors for this;
- Programmes in 3A were analysed;
- It was concluded that new/better learning outcomes were required;
- There was insufficient time to complete all tasks given;
- Assessment and its relationship to learning outcomes was considered;
- It was difficult to define appropriate learning outcomes for a whole programme.

(ii) Teacher Education
- Limited progress was made due to time constraints
- The group spent their time focused on definitions;
- The group indicated that the learning outcomes they had were well conceived;
- There was insufficient time to complete all tasks set.

(iii) ICT
- Decided to begin from scratch with new learning outcomes altogether;
- Agreed that more 'active verbs' should be used;
- Learning outcomes had to be expressed in a more advanced way but this was difficult;
- Existing learning outcomes were defined too broadly;
- The exercise was found useful but more time and training was needed;

(iv) *Engineering*
- Explore the civil engineering Masters programme and changed little;
- Felt appropriate active verbs had been used in the first exercise;
- Worked on ICT level 5 and included general transferable skills;
- Developed new examination criteria + need for ECTS points.

(v) Agriculture and Food Processing
- Had similar comments to report as the previous groups;
- Agreed that learning outcomes could be significantly improved;

- Explored the use of more 'active verbs' to express knowledge;
- Indicated that yesterday's presentations were useful;
- Agreed that some previous learning outcomes were too broad and required further refinement;
- Wanted more time for this exercise, which would benefit if the teachers/designers of the courses considered were present.

Expert comments:
It was clear that more time was required for this useful exercise. The experts indicated that they would seek to get written comments/feedback on any inter-meeting work to groups in future. It would also be beneficial to give session work to groups in advance if possible. Working groups were encouraged to use the experts as 'research assistants' who would get appropriate materials/examples to them when requested.

Qualification Standards (1000-1130)

Mile Dželalija introduced a one-page document on Subject Standards that he had produced and the groups were given 30 minutes to consider it. The document sought feedback on the minimal elements the groups considered necessary for Qualifications Standards. The ESCO 'soft transferable skills' were mentioned in connection to this exercise.

The groups reported back:

(i) Economy**:**
The group indicated they would have liked more time but agreed the list. They raised the issue of titles of qualifications. They would focus on a level 6 qualification 180-240 ECTS credits. The entry route was after 4 years of high school. The role of the qualification was business/Master further education.

(ii) Teacher Education**:**
Agreed with most of the element.Indicated that class of qualification was not needed. Regarding the role of the qualification, horizontal transfer was mentioned.

(iii) Agriculture and Food Processing**:**
The group indicated all were needed. They would focus on BA Food Processing and Engineering. The level would be level 6 with 3/4 years of study (180-240 ECTS credits)

(iv) Engineering**:**
Agreed that all elements were required except 'class of qualification'. They indicated that there was an issue associated with equivalence under the old (pre-Bologna) system of qualifications. The issue of "nomenklatura" poses a problem for titles of programmes and qualifications.

(v) ICT**:**
Agreed with the engineers - all to be included except 'class of qualification'. Transferable skills would need to be identified.

Discussion:
Mile Dželalija indicated that other elements may need to be included apart from those identified, for the purposes of the project some elements could be omitted. Daria Duilovic emphasised the importance of this work and the need to let others know of it. In the further discussion it was mentioned that some qualifications were not recognised in the market. There were big problems associated with the recognition in BiH of 3-year 'Bologna degrees'.

Next steps and tasks for the interim meeting of working groups (1200-1300)

Mile Dželalija introduced and explained the next assignment/homework he had designed for the groups to undertake before the next formal full meeting with experts. He indicated:

- Working groups should complete any unfinished work from yesterday;
- Noted that section 4 of the next assignment/homework was the most demanding and the main focus of work;
- It was agreed that the Agriculture and Food Processing group would stay as one group and not split into two sub-groups.

Conclusions

- It was agreed that the next full meeting would take place on 15-16th May 2014. The venue would be decided later. The dates and venue(s) for interim working groups meetings would be decided and agreed at a later date.
- Project team will send tasks for the individual meetings to all working groups and Minimum elements for Qualifications Standards which was agreed at the meeting
- Project team will contact WG for agriculture and food processing for their suggestions for employers from Agriculture
- All working group members consider the work in the project very useful and based on it they strongly emphasised the urgent need for trainings of university staff
- Glossary of terms used is necessary
- Suggestion was made to involve part of WGs into the advisory group of component 1 of the project
- It is necessary to clarify levels of field (many programmes), programme and subject
- Project will publish all materials at its new web site: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/web/bih-higher-education/home

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Attachments

- Five rapporteur reports of the interim meetings held between January - February 2014
- The description of the working group tasks for the Thursday afternoon session 15:30-18:00
- The one-page document outlining the minimum contents for Qualifications Standards.
- The set of Working Group tasks to be accomplished after the second workshop and before the next full meeting 15-16 May 2014.
- NB. All PowerPoints and other materials will be put on the project website: http://pjp-eu.coe.int/web/bih-higher-education/home