



Guide to
**The Diploma
Supplement**

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Dear Colleague,

The UK HE Europe Unit is pleased to make available this 'Guide to the Diploma Supplement' for UK higher education institutions.

The Berlin Communiqué of the Bologna Process set the requirement for all HEIs to issue the Diploma Supplement to all students graduating from 2005. Although a recent Europe Unit survey shows a number of UK HEIs have met this target, others have still to do so. We hope this Guide, in setting out information on the purpose, use and content of the Supplement, will facilitate its production.

The Supplement is designed to increase the transparency and recognition of qualifications across Europe and is an important action line of the Bologna Process, which aims to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The benefits the Supplement offers, in terms of providing information on the student, the level and nature of their qualification – and where the qualification fits within the national qualification framework – will help our students to access further study and indeed employment across the EHEA.

The Europe Unit is grateful to a number of UK HE stakeholders – in particular the Burgess Steering Group (for Measuring and Recording Student Achievement) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – for commenting on the text to ensure it matches existing UK practice and thinking. Lastly, we are especially grateful to Stephen Adam, Head of Undergraduate Politics at the University of Westminster and UK Bologna Promoter, for drafting the text.

The Guide is best utilised as a reference document, as different sections apply to different audiences, rather than as a book to be read from cover to cover. The Europe Unit hopes you will find it useful as you work to produce the Diploma Supplement, and we would be pleased to answer any questions arising from the publication.

Yours faithfully,



Tish Bourke
Manager, UK HE Europe Unit

1 Introduction

The Diploma Supplement is a document issued to all students by higher education institutions (HEIs) on the successful completion of any higher education qualification. It describes the qualification they have received in a standard format that is designed to be easily understood and straightforward to compare. The reader (credential evaluator, admissions officer, academic, employer, citizen, etc.) should be able to make informed and accurate judgements about the qualification. The Supplement contains information on the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were undertaken and successfully completed by the student. In addition, it places the qualification in the context of the structure of the higher education system within which it was issued. Details of the eight information sections that comprise the Diploma Supplement and the order in which information must be presented can be found in section five of this Guide.

The Diploma Supplement is primarily used as a recognition instrument. It was developed jointly by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO, as the product of a joint working party and pilot project 1996-1998. It is now acknowledged as one of the key devices supporting the Bologna Process. The 45 Bologna signatory countries committed themselves to its introduction at the Berlin Ministerial meeting of September 2003 where it was indicated that:

‘(Ministers) set the objective that every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge. It should be issued in a widely spoken European language.’

[Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin, 19 September 2003]

It is the agreed, standard European method for presenting and explaining an individual's qualifications.

The Diploma Supplement is simply an explanatory document attached to any higher education qualification – the original credential or parchment. It acts as a supplementary explanation of the qualification rather than a substitute for it. The name 'Diploma Supplement' derives from the common European practice to refer to any qualification generically as a 'diploma'. It is important not to confuse the Diploma Supplement with any one particular qualification. The Diploma Supplement fulfils a number of roles, including improving international 'transparency' and facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It is a flexible non-prescriptive tool designed to save time, reduce costs and workload.

By making it easier to compare qualifications gained in different European higher education systems, the Diploma Supplement facilitates the mutual recognition and the better understanding of different qualifications. In turn, this improves the mobility of citizens holding higher education qualifications. It is tied closely with the majority of the Bologna Process objectives listed in the 10 Bologna Action lines. Further details can be found in: the UK HE Europe Unit publication: (2005) Guide to the Bologna Process, Europe Unit, ISBN 1 84036 115 8. Further help and advice on the implementation of the Diploma Supplement can be obtained from the UK HE Europe Unit and the UK Bologna Promoters (details are on the UK HE Europe Unit website: http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/qualifications/diploma_supplement.cfm).

This Guide is organised into ten sections that cover the information and issues associated with the successful introduction of Diploma Supplements in the United Kingdom.

2 The Diploma Supplement

The legal and policy context for UK higher education institutions

UK HEIs have a number of responsibilities associated with the production and dissemination of Diploma Supplements. Following the international agreement at the Berlin meeting of ministers in 2003 it was agreed that Diploma Supplements are to be produced for every student graduating from 2005. In the UK there has been relatively slow progress. This ambitious target has proved difficult for a significant number of UK institutions as many find that they cannot easily introduce the required changes for technical reasons associated with their management information systems. The UK HE Europe Unit survey of UK HEIs in July 2005 explored their general engagement in European higher education developments (Europe Note E/05/13). It found that only around one third of survey respondents issued the Diploma Supplement to 'some students'. Many institutions are delaying the issue of Diploma Supplements until they next upgrade their electronic information systems and have the technical capacity to undertake the task. [A more detailed discussion of implementation issues can be found in section seven of this Guide.]

There are a number of important dimensions to the initiative that UK HEIs need to take into account.

2.1 Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Group – the Burgess Group

The sector-wide Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Scoping Group was established by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), with the support of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in October 2003. The Group was chaired by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester. Its purpose was to review the recommendations from the DfES White Paper 'The Future

of Higher Education' relating specifically to recording student achievement, value added, degree classifications and credit systems.

The Group's deliberations on the degree classification system included discussions on how to record student achievement. The Group agreed in a report, published in November 2004, that there was merit in incorporating some of the existing initiatives in this area including the higher education Transcript, the Progress File and Personal Development Planning. The report stated that:

'account must also be taken of developments elsewhere in the UK, in other sectors and European developments such as the Diploma Supplement and the Europass.'

(the UK is committed to meeting the) 'objective that every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge.'

[Burgess Report (2004) 'Measuring and Recording Student Achievement', Universities UK/SCOP, pages 4 and 21.
<http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/measuringachievement>]

Early in 2005, the Scoping Group was reconstituted as a UK-wide Steering Group (also chaired by Professor Robert Burgess), to take forward the recommendations from the first report. Further consultation with HEIs in 2005 by the Burgess Steering Group revealed support for the Diploma Supplement and that it should form the core of the Transcript. Recent discussions among Burgess Group stakeholders indicate agreement that the Transcript and the Diploma Supplement can be incorporated in a single document, with a heading such as, 'The Diploma Supplement/Transcript'. Using this approach, the Diploma Supplement would therefore include the final Transcript, as issued on completion of the award of the final qualification.

The following statements have been agreed with the Burgess group:

'Institutions should now be taking steps to ensure the data set out in the Diploma Supplement they issue to students is consistent with the information and sequence of fields, recommended in the official European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES template, referred in section 5 of this Guide, Diploma Supplement – Structure and information fields. Complete alignment with the European template may however only be possible when an institution's student record management systems are up-dated to take account of these new requirements.'

'In addition to referring to a national/regional credit accumulation system, HEIs may also want to include European credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits for credit transfer purposes on the Supplement given that the overarching purpose of the Supplement is to facilitate recognition of qualifications across the European Higher Education Area. (The majority of Scottish HEIs issuing the Diploma Supplement include both Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and ECTS credits.) Guidance on articulation between ECTS and UK national/regional credit systems will be available shortly from the Burgess Group, following the recent consultation on proposals for national credit arrangements for the use of academic credit in higher education in England.'

[Text agreed by the Burgess Group, May 2006]

The Burgess Steering Group is currently considering how to support the sector's implementation of the Diploma Supplement/Transcript.

Further discussion of the precise relationship between the Diploma Supplement and the Higher Education Progress File (Transcript and Personal Development Planning [PDP]) can be found in section 7.1 of this Guide.

2.2 The Lisbon Recognition Convention

The Diploma Supplement is one of the main tools of the 'Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the Europe Region, Lisbon 1997.' This 'Lisbon Recognition Convention' was created by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It was ratified by the United Kingdom Parliament in May 2003 and came into force the following July. It is now part of UK law.

The importance of the 'Lisbon Convention' is that it states that no discrimination should be made against holders of qualifications of the 41 Europe Region countries who have currently ratified the Convention. It further states that access to further higher education study and use of an academic title should be granted to holders of qualifications on the same grounds as citizens from the country where recognition is sought. The responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not meet the requirements for further higher education study lies with the institution making the assessment. The onus of proof is clearly placed with institutions to justify their decisions. The Diploma Supplement is the key Lisbon Convention tool to ensure that any evaluation of a qualification is sound and based on informed value-free judgements.

The Lisbon Convention also states that:

- Holders of qualifications issued in one country shall have adequate access to an assessment of these qualifications in another country.
- There must be no discrimination on any ground such as the applicant's gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic or social origin.
- Each country shall recognise qualifications – whether for access to higher education, for periods of study or for higher education degrees – as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless it can show that there are substantial differences between its own qualifications and the qualifications for which recognition is sought.
- Recognition of a higher education qualification issued in another country shall have one or more of the following consequences: access

to further higher education studies, including relevant examinations and preparations for a doctorate, on the same conditions as candidates from the country in which recognition is sought; the use of an academic title, subject to the laws and regulations of the Party or a jurisdiction thereof, in which recognition is sought.

- All countries shall provide information on the institutions and programmes they consider as belonging to their higher education systems.
- All countries shall appoint a national information centre, one important task of which is to offer advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications to students, graduates, employers, higher education institutions and other interested parties or persons. In the case of the UK this is the UK National Recognition Information Centre – NARIC.

2.3 EUROPASS

EUROPASS is a European Commission initiative and therefore does not cover all the Bologna Process countries. It was created by the decision of the European Parliament and the Council in December 2004 (no 2241/2004/EC) and established a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass). This Europass framework brings together a collection of five documents that includes the Diploma Supplement. The five documents are: Europass Curriculum Vitae, Europass Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Europass Certificate Supplement and Europass Diploma Supplement. The initiative also created national Europass centres, which in the case of the UK, is the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC). This centre is the first point of contact for Europass information and has responsibility for its coordination and promotion. Further information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uknec.org.uk>.

The aim of Europass, a voluntary initiative, is to improve the transparency of qualifications and facilitate the mobility of learners and workers throughout Europe. The inclusion of the Diploma Supplement within Europass makes no difference to its nature and role.

2.4 Quality assurance dimension

At the 2005 Bergen summit of the Bologna Process, education ministers adopted the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) 'Standards and Guidelines' that detail internal and external guidelines for HEIs as well as standards for quality assurance agencies. These standards and guidelines introduce an approach familiar to UK institutions by emphasising external reference points, academic autonomy and the requirement for institutions to take responsibility for and justify their approaches to academic quality and quality assurance.

The production of Diploma Supplements, following the appropriate norms and requirements, represents a highly public area of activity that should be subject to internal and external monitoring. Institutions need to be vigilant that the Diploma Supplements they produce are clear, consistent and fit for their purpose.

2.5 Good practice principles

The Diploma Supplement is intended as an addition to the original credential and is based on the following important principles that respect both national and academic autonomy. These principles also serve to explain the purposes behind this initiative. The Diploma Supplement has national and international applications, and as such is designed to aid the resolution of international recognition problems as well as domestic ones. These have been intensified by the increasingly fast-changing pace of global educational change. The widespread introduction of new and complex qualifications, qualifications frameworks and award structures underscore the importance of introducing the Diploma Supplement.

The Diploma Supplement always should be used with sensitivity. The recognition of foreign qualifications should be viewed as a process for the assessment of the competence, experience and knowledge acquired, recognising that 'fair recognition' and not exact equivalences should be sought. Users of the Diploma Supplement are encouraged, where possible,

to focus on the outcomes of the learning that has taken place and to make their own judgements using the information provided.

When creating Diploma Supplements it is important to avoid the inclusion of so much detail that it confuses the user. However, the Diploma Supplement should provide all the necessary information for a judgement to be made without repeated demands for more data.

Finally, it is important to regard the Diploma Supplement as an addition to the original credential. It is not a substitute for it. The credential should remain unchanged from its normal state (in its approved language and textual form). The Diploma Supplement can be used in conjunction with other appropriate documentation including curriculum vitae, etc. A learner may well have several Diploma Supplements, each accompanying separate qualifications.

3 Benefits of the Diploma Supplement

for students, employers, and higher education institutions

There are benefits associated with the introduction and widespread use of Diploma Supplements. Countries are constantly updating their qualification systems to encompass new qualifications that arise as a result of technological, political and economic changes. With people now taking greater advantage of work and study opportunities abroad, the need for improved recognition of qualifications is essential. Good information about the level and function of a qualification is required to provide transparency. The Diploma Supplement aims to meet these demands by:

- Promoting transparency within and between higher education systems;
- Providing accurate and up-to-date information on an individual's qualifications;
- Aiding mobility and access to further study and employment abroad;
- Providing fair and informed information relating to qualifications; and
- Facilitating academic and professional recognition and thus increasing the transparency of qualifications.

Students gain from the introduction of Diploma Supplements in a number of ways. The introduction of Diploma Supplements is warmly welcomed by the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB).

'ESIB strongly supports the notion about Diploma Supplement....

In order for the Diploma Supplement to answer to the need to create transparency and contribute to recognition of qualifications and better employability, the system needs to be implemented more vigorously, and its use expanded. Genuine institutional →

→ commitment and information campaigning, also towards the labour market, are crucial.'

[ESIB webpage statement, 30th March 2006,
<http://www.esib.org/issues/ds.php>]

The Diploma Supplement provides students with information relating to their programme of study that is easily understood. It provides an accurate description of a student's academic work and competences acquired that may be relevant for further study and employment opportunities abroad. The Diploma Supplement will improve the world-wide acceptance of European qualifications. The benefits to students can be summarised as having their qualifications objectively and fairly judged on the basis of their achievements.

Employers will benefit from the Diploma Supplement as it provides detailed information on the nature, content and professional recognition of qualifications. It can be used in conjunction with the individual's curriculum vitae to help provide a rounded picture of any job applicant. In this way employers gain better insights into qualifications.

HEIs benefit in a number of ways. The Diploma Supplement respects national and institutional autonomy while offering a common framework which is accepted all over Europe. It aids credential evaluators and improves judgements about qualifications. The decision-making process for admissions or exemptions is simplified. It raises the visibility of the institution and its qualifications abroad and promotes the employability of its graduates at national and international level. It helps save time and resources in the longer term by providing answers to recurrent questions put to institutions.

4 The state of implementation across Europe

The European University Association (EUA) 'Trends IV: European Universities Implementing Bologna' report (Tauch C, Reichert S, 2005) indicated that a majority of European HEIs had complied with the specification in the Berlin Communiqué that they issue Diploma Supplements to every graduate by the end of 2005. A number of countries had introduced it in 2004 by law, including Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden. Whilst various HEIs in Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey indicated its imminent introduction. A number of countries supplied 'a more vague reply' regarding the planned date of introduction.

Trends IV also identified the following difficulties that were experienced: The student record system does not yet contain the necessary information; the national student data software has not yet been adjusted to Bologna requirements; the Diploma Supplement requires considerable information technology development properly to deal with the complexity of individual student paths; high costs are involved, especially for translation.

Similar problems were reported in all countries. In many countries, the Diploma Supplement is commonly introduced (as are many educational reforms) by primary legislation. The evidence is that the pace of implementation is faster in continental European countries. The 2007 Trends V report is expected to confirm this. However, all the 45 Bologna Process countries are moving towards implementation.

5 The Diploma Supplement

Structure and information fields

5.1 Diploma Supplement information sequence

The following sequence and introductory information should be followed by European HEIs issuing Diploma Supplements. The information contained in the box below is designed to be reproduced at the start of all Diploma Supplements as a device to help ensure the integrity of documents and to inform the reader of their correct nature and format.

DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

This Diploma Supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair 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 studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

- 1 Information identifying the holder of the qualification
 - 1.1 Family name(s):
 - 1.2 Given name(s):
 - 1.3 Date of birth (day/month/year):
 - 1.4 Student identification number or code (if available):

- 2 Information identifying the qualification
 - 2.1 Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language):
 - 2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification:
 - 2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (in original language):
 - 2.4 Name and status of institution (if different from 2.3) administering studies (in original language):
 - 2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination:

- 3 Information on the level of the qualification
 - 3.1 Level of qualification:
 - 3.2 Official length of programme:
 - 3.3 Access requirement(s)

- 4 Information on the contents and results gained
 - 4.1 Mode of study:
 - 4.2 Programme requirements:
 - 4.3 Programme details: (e.g. modules or units studied), and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained: (if this information is available on an official transcript this should be used here)
 - 4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance:
 - 4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language):

- 5 Information on the function of the qualification
 - 5.1 Access to further study:
 - 5.2 Professional status (if applicable):

- 6 Additional information
 - 6.1 Additional information:
 - 6.2 Further information sources:

- 7 Certification of the supplement
 - 7.1 Date:
 - 7.2 Signature:
 - 7.3 Capacity:
 - 7.4 Official stamp or seal:

8 Information on the national higher education system

(N.B. Institutions who intend to issue Diploma Supplements should refer to the following explanatory notes that clarify how to complete them.)

5.2 Official explanatory notes on completing supplements.

(NOTE: the numbers below refer to the numbered sections in the Diploma Supplement. In 2007 there is likely to be some minor updating of these explanatory notes to take account of the Bologna developments associated with qualifications frameworks and learning outcomes. The recommended structure and format of Diploma Supplements will not change.)

- 1 Information identifying the holder of the qualification
 - 1.1 Provide the full family or surname.
 - 1.2 Include all given/first names.
 - 1.3 Indicate day, month and year of birth.
 - 1.4 This should identify the individual as a student enrolled on the particular programme which is covered by the Diploma Supplement. A national or State personal identification number could be included for those countries that have such systems of identification.

- 2 Information identifying the qualification
 - 2.1 Give the full name of the qualification in the original language as it is styled in the original qualification e.g. Kandidat nauk, Maîtrise, Diplom, etc. If the qualification is a dual award this should be stated. Indicate if the award confers any nationally accepted title on the holder and what this title is e.g. Doctor, Ingénieur etc. Indicate if the title is protected in law.
 - 2.2 Show only the major field(s) of study (disciplines) that define the main subject area(s) for the qualification e.g. Politics and History, Human Resource Management, Business Administration, Molecular Biology etc.
 - 2.3 Indicate the name of the institution awarding the qualification. This is often, but not always, the same as the institution administering the studies and delivering the programme (see 2.4 below). 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: Private/Independent, Private and State recognised, State, and if applicable who it is accredited by, etc. Finally, indicate the general national educational classification of the awarding institution e.g. University, Fachhochschule, Professional Body, Technical College, Grande Ecole etc. If there is a difference between the awarding institution and the institution delivering the qualification indicate the status of both.

- 2.4 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 above). Also indicate the status of the institution delivering the studies: Private/Independent, Private and State recognised, State, and if applicable who it is accredited by etc. Finally, indicate the general national educational classification of the administering institution e.g. College of Higher Education, Private Institute etc.
- 2.5 Indicate the language(s) by which the qualification was delivered and examined.

3 Information on the level of the qualification

- 3.1 Give the precise level of qualification and its place in the specific national educational structure of awards (explained and cross-referenced to the information in section eight). The local educational framework should be explained, e.g. University Undergraduate/Postgraduate, Baccalaureate + x years etc. Include any relevant information on 'level indicators' that are nationally devised and recognised and which relate to the qualification.
- 3.2 Explain the official duration of the programme in weeks or years and the actual workload including information on any major sub-components i.e. 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.

3.3 List or explain the nature and length of access qualification(s) or periods of study required for access to the programme described by this Diploma Supplement e.g. Bachelor Degree, Baccalaureate etc. This is particularly important when intermediate studies are a prerequisite to the named qualification.

4 Information on the contents and results gained

4.1 The mode of study refers to how the programme was undertaken e.g. Full-time, Part-time, Intermittent/Sandwich, Distance, including Placements etc.

4.2 If applicable, provide details of the regulations covering the minimum standards required to secure the qualification, e.g. any compulsory components or compulsory practical elements, whether all elements have to be passed simultaneously, any thesis/dissertation regulations etc. Include details of any particular features that help define the qualification, especially information on the requirements for successfully passing it. If available, provide details of the learning outcomes, skills, competences and stated aims and objectives associated with the qualification. (In the UK much of this information is found in the Programmes Specification but it would require drastic simplification before being put in a Diploma Supplement.)

4.3 Give details of each of the individual elements or parts of the qualification and their weighting. 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. Include details of any credits for prior learning. 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. If information on the credit allocation between course components and units is available it should be included.

4.4 Provide information on the grading scheme and pass marks relating to the qualification, e.g. marks are out of a possible 100% and the

minimum pass mark is 40%. Tremendous variations in grading practices exist within and between different national higher education institutions and countries. A mark of 70% in some academic cultures is highly regarded whilst in other countries it is regarded as average or poor. Information on the use and distribution of grades relating to the qualification in question should be included.

- 4.5 If appropriate, indicate the overall classification for the final qualification i.e. First Class Honours Degree, Summa Cum Laude, Merit, Avec Distinction etc.
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- 5 Information on the function of the qualification
 - 5.1 Indicate if within the country of origin, the qualification normally provides access to further academic and/or professional study, especially leading to any specific qualifications, or levels of study, e.g. access to Doctoral studies in Hungary. If this is the case, specify the grades or standards that have to be obtained to allow progression. Indicate if the qualification is a terminal (end) award or part of a hierarchy of awards.
 - 5.2 Give details of any rights to practise, or professional status accorded to the holders of the qualification. Describe what specific access, if any, the qualification gives in terms of employment or professional practice and indicate which competent authority allows this. Indicate if the qualification gives access to a 'regulated profession'.
-
- 6 Additional information
 - 6.1 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 and/or, include further relevant details about the higher education institution where the qualification was taken.
 - 6.2 Indicate any further useful information sources and references where more details on the qualification could be sought, e.g. the HEI website; the department in the issuing institution; a national information centre; the European Union National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC); the Council of Europe/UNESCO European National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility (ENIC).

- 7 Certification of the supplement
 - 7.1 The date the Diploma Supplement was issued. This would not necessarily be the same date the qualification was awarded.
 - 7.2 The name and signature of the official certifying the Diploma Supplement.
 - 7.3 The official post of the certifying individual.
 - 7.4 The official stamp or seal of the institution that provides authentication of the Diploma Supplement.

- 8 Information on the national higher education system
Give information on the higher educational system: its general access requirements; types of institution and the qualifications structure. This description should provide a context for the qualification. A standard framework for these descriptions together with actual descriptions should be available for many countries. These are being created as a follow-up to this project and with the co-operation of the relevant National (European Union and European Economic Area) Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), European (Council of Europe/UNESCO) National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility (ENIC), Ministries and Rectors' conferences (1).

Footnote:

(1) The UK HE Europe Unit, working closely with UUK, the QAA and UK NARIC, has produced a description and diagram of the England, Wales and Northern Ireland education system. This description has been approved by the Europe Unit High Level Policy Forum, comprising heads of UK higher education stakeholder organisations. There is also an approved description of the Scottish national education system available. Institutions are advised to make use of these descriptions (without amendment) both of which are available on the website of the UK HE Europe Unit:
http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/qualifications/diploma_supplement.cfm.
They are also available from the UK national Europass website:
<http://www.uknec.org.uk/index.asp?page=106>.

6 General guidelines on the production of Diploma Supplements

Diploma Supplements should conform to the following principles and practices that were developed as guidelines in the pilot project and subsequently adopted internationally:

The brief explanatory note (the box at the head of the Diploma Supplement) should be reproduced as part of each completed Diploma Supplement, in order to guide universities, employers and other potential users of the information.

Institutions should follow the structure and sequence of information carefully developed and tested by the pilot project. Various customised versions were tested and found not to be as clear and user-friendly. In the cases where sections were omitted altogether, these Diploma Supplements were invariably found to be ineffective. Great care needs to be taken in compiling Diploma Supplements in order to avoid imprecise, missing or confused information. Over-long and over-complicated Diploma Supplements should be avoided. The information should be presented as concisely as possible.

In combination with the credential itself, a Diploma Supplement should provide sufficient information to enable the reader to make a judgement about the qualification and whether it is appropriate for the purpose for which the holder seeks to use it (e.g. for access to an academic programme, exemption from part of a programme, employment/right to practise a profession, etc.). It is not designed to replace the curriculum vitae but to provide additional information.

The Diploma Supplement should always be accompanied by the original qualification as Diploma Supplements normally have no legal validity. The existence of a Diploma Supplement does not guarantee the status of an institution, its awards, or whether it is recognised as part of a national

higher education system. However, it should contain information on these aspects.

The Diploma Supplement should always have the name and title of the qualification, the name and status of the institution awarding/administering it, and the classification of the award, all presented in the original language. Incorrect translations mislead those making judgements about qualifications. Transliterations are permissible in the case of scripts other than the Latin alphabet.

Great care should be taken with translations and terminology as many problems exist in this area. In order to overcome these, it is essential that the original language is used where indicated in the Diploma Supplement. In addition, the glossary of terms associated with the Diploma Supplement has been specifically produced to overcome linguistic confusions. Diploma Supplements should be produced in whatever language(s) institutions think appropriate.

Diploma Supplements should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, a reason should be given.

The production of Diploma Supplements is best done centrally and not devolved to different parts of academic institutions. This keeps costs down and minimises variation in content and approach.

Institutions should take appropriate action to minimise the possibility of forgery and misrepresentation of their Diploma Supplements.

The UK Europe Unit, working closely with UUK, the QAA and UK NARIC, has produced a description and diagram of the England, Wales and Northern Ireland education system. This description has been approved by the Europe Unit High Level Policy Forum, comprising heads of UK higher education stakeholder organisations and should be used for section eight of the Diploma Supplement. There is also an approved description of the Scottish

national education system available. Institutions are advised to make use of these descriptions (without amendment) both of which are available on the website of the UK HE Europe Unit: http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/qualifications/diploma_supplement.cfm and also from the UK national Europass website: <http://www.uknec.org.uk/index.asp?page=106>.

Diploma Supplements should be issued automatically and without charge at the time the qualification is completed. This is preferable to retrospective issue which becomes more difficult as programmes and educational awards are subject to continuous evolution and change. It is particularly important that section eight of the Diploma Supplement describes the national higher education structure in force at the time the qualification was awarded.

Where they exist, institutional, regional and national quality assurance systems should include Diploma Supplements in their activities. This will help ensure the quality of Diploma Supplements.

Diploma Supplements are designed to be used with sensitivity. The evaluation of qualifications from another country should concentrate on the competence, experience and knowledge acquired, recognising that 'fair recognition' and not exact equivalence should be sought.

7 Implementation issues

7.1 Relationship to the HE Progress File (Transcript)

The relationship between the Transcript element of the HE Progress File and the Diploma Supplement is clear. There is a substantive degree of overlap in the information required, with many similar fields present in each document. There are, however, important differences between the documents:

- The Diploma Supplement is issued solely on the successful completion of a qualification. Whereas the Transcript has both a formative and summative function. The Transcript can be issued annually and/or by semester (to provide information on student progress to date) as well as when the qualification is completed. The Transcript is designed to record student achievement and facilitate the process whereby students can 'monitor, build and reflect on their personal development.' The Diploma Supplement is not designed to fulfil this personal development and planning function.
- The Progress File Transcript lacks several important elements of information that must be present in the Diploma Supplement. These include: the status of the awarding institution; main fields of study; access requirements; mode of study; grading scheme information; a description of the higher education system, etc. The sequence of information is also different – this is an important and significant difference.

The Transcript in its formative form should continue to be issued throughout the period a qualification is being studied and used, as appropriate, as a reflective tool for personal development purposes. In this form the Transcript does not need to follow the pattern or sequence of information required by the Diploma Supplement. It simply requires information to be made available that could help the student to monitor and reflect on their progress and plan their further academic development in order to realise

their full academic potential and successfully complete the qualification they are studying.

Consultation with HEIs in 2005 by the Burgess Steering Group revealed support for the Diploma Supplement and that it should form the core of the Transcript. Recent discussions among Burgess Group stakeholders indicated agreement that the Transcript, in its final form, and the Diploma Supplement can be incorporated into a single document, with a heading such as, 'The Diploma Supplement/Transcript'.

Using this approach, the Diploma Supplement would therefore include the final Transcript, as issued on completion of the award of the final qualification.

Institutions should now be taking steps to ensure the data set out in final Diploma Supplement/Transcript they issue to students is consistent with the information and sequence of fields recommended in the official European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES template, referred in section 5, Diploma Supplement – Structure and information fields. It is recognised, however, that complete alignment with the Diploma Supplement template may only be possible when an institution's student record management systems are up-dated to take account of these new requirements.

7.2 Software issues

The introduction of the Diploma Supplement in the UK has been constrained by the limitations of existing management information systems. In many cases UK HEIs have decided to wait until they next upgrade their computer software before they can issue Diploma Supplements. There are a number of companies and institutions that are providers of academic management information systems software. A list of many of the main providers can be found on the 2006 Student Record Officers' Conference (SROC) website: <http://www.sroc.ac.uk/sroc2006/sponsors.php>. Some have systems that accommodate the requirements of producing information for the Diploma Supplement while others provide updates to their existing software.

7.3 The quality assurance and security dimensions

The universal introduction of the Diploma Supplement has a number of obvious implications in terms of both internal and external quality assurance. Every HEI has responsibility for the production of accurate and appropriate information. The Diploma Supplement should be subject to normal internal and external quality assurance processes. The European Commission is seeking to ensure the quality of the Diploma Supplement by awarding a 'label' to those institutions that meet their required standards.

It is the responsibility of each institution to make appropriate arrangements for the physical security of any Diploma Supplements they issue. Although the Diploma Supplement should always accompany the actual credential it is good practice to ensure that appropriate security features are included in any formal institutional document that is issued. This can include the use of special watermarks, paper and stamps, etc.

A number of institutions are investigating the use of electronic Diploma Supplements that allow the students and any authorised person to access individual Diploma Supplements online. For example, the University of Limerick, Ireland, currently issues the Diploma Supplement to its graduates in electronic form. Students, graduating from September 2005, can access their Diploma Supplements online and send them by email to prospective employers or other universities. The European Commission EUROPASS initiative encourages the electronic issuing of Diploma Supplements. The University of Limerick worked with a company called 'Framework Solutions', which uses a system called Advanced Electronic Signatures that meets the requirements of the European Union Digital Signatures Directive. The documents issued through the system can have the same legal status as paper originals and provide a means for third parties to authenticate them.

7.4 Staff development

The introduction of the Diploma Supplement is best accompanied by a structured staff development process. Institutions may wish to consider the ways to inform all staff about the use and nature of the Diploma Supplement

as it will impact on them at some stage whether as admissions tutor, administrator, records clerk, credential evaluator, information provider, etc. Soon all higher education students from the 45 Bologna Process countries will be issued with Diploma Supplements and UK staff will need to be able to recognise and use them appropriately. It is good practice to train staff in their use by providing suitable (good and bad) example Diploma Supplements for practical evaluation. Staff must be able to recognise Diploma Supplements that do not conform to the internationally agreed guidelines.

7.5 Relationship to European Qualifications Frameworks and credits

Several major developments are beginning to impact on European higher education as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) nears completion in 2010. Perhaps the most significant are the adoption by the Bologna countries of the Framework of Qualifications for the EHEA and the European Commission initiative to create a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong learning (EQF).

Under the Bologna Process the 45 signatory countries have, in the Bergen Communiqué of 2005, adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA and committed themselves to elaborate 'new style' national qualifications frameworks (based on levels, qualification descriptors, learning outcomes, credits and competences), compatible with the overarching framework by 2010. This development will have implications for the information presented in any Diploma Supplement but will not change the format or nature of Diploma Supplements. The information within Diploma Supplements will just be more precise, and easier to interpret as it will be expressed in terms of common methodological tools and approaches – based on learning outcomes. Similarly, the EQF under development by the European Commission will enhance the quality and effectiveness of information presented in Diploma Supplements. Many countries are also adopting the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) as the basis of their national, regional and local credit systems.

7.6 Completing Diploma Supplement sections

Detailed explanatory notes, developed in the initial Diploma Supplement pilot project, exist to facilitate the completion of Diploma Supplements and are reproduced in section 5.2 of this guide. The eight sections and sub-sections of the Diploma Supplement are unlikely to be subject to any revision as they have been reviewed by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee who found it fit for its purpose. However, it is likely that there might be some minor updating of the explanatory notes to take account of the widespread educational reforms engendered by the Bologna Process. The amendments would just emphasise the appropriate use of learning outcomes, qualifications descriptors, levels and level descriptors, qualifications frameworks and credits. The existing Diploma Supplement sections and sub-sections will not change but more guidance would be provided on how they relate to these aspects.

7.7 Interpreting a Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement is designed to present information in an eight-section sequence that conforms to a common pattern across Europe. This is designed to facilitate the evaluation of Diploma Supplements as the reader can easily locate the sections required. There is no perfect or correct way to read Diploma Supplements although they should all be examined with sensitivity. Fair recognition is not about seeking a perfect match between different qualifications as this does not exist. The Diploma Supplement is a document used by credential evaluators, admissions officers, academics, administrators, employers, etc. in making accurate, fair and informed judgements about qualifications. Properly completed Diploma Supplements should contain all the information required to make a judgement.

8 Frequently asked questions

8.1 What is the Diploma Supplement?

The Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education qualification aimed at improving international 'transparency' and 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 studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which the Diploma Supplement is appended. It should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It is a flexible, non-prescriptive tool that is designed to save time, money and workload. It is composed of eight sections in a given sequence and is always prefaced by an agreed statement that explains its function and nature.

8.2 Who created the Diploma Supplement?

The Diploma Supplement was created by a joint working party consisting representatives from the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO. It was tested in a pilot project 1996 -1998 and subsequently adopted by the participating countries of the Bologna Process.

8.3 Why is the Diploma Supplement required?

New qualifications proliferate worldwide and countries are constantly changing their qualification systems and educational structures under the impact of rapid economic, political and technological change. An increasing number of mobile citizens are seeking the fair recognition of their qualifications. The non-recognition and poor evaluation of qualifications is now a global problem. Since original credentials alone do not provide sufficient information, it is difficult to gauge the level and function of a qualification without detailed appropriate explanation. The Diploma

Supplement is a response to these challenges since it: promotes transparency in higher education; accommodates rapid changes in qualifications; aids mobility, access and lifelong learning; and therefore promotes fair and informed judgements about qualifications.

8.4 Is it a curriculum vitae or Transcript?

It is not a Curriculum Vitae or a substitute for the original qualification or a Transcript. The curriculum vitae is an outline of a person's whole professional and educational history. Transcripts are issued for part-completed and completed studies and do not contain information on the full profile of a qualification. The Diploma Supplement fully details a successfully completed individual qualification and contains the final transcript for the qualification.

8.5 Does it guarantee recognition?

Issuing or holding a Diploma Supplement does not automatically guarantee recognition of a qualification. The decision to recognise a qualification is made by the appropriate competent authority. This principle is important in protecting national and institutional autonomy. However, the enhanced information contained in the Diploma Supplement facilitates the recognition process.

8.6 What does the Diploma Supplement offer to students?

A qualification that is more readable and easily comparable abroad, plus a precise description of their academic career and the competences acquired during the study period for a particular qualification. It also provides an objective description of their achievements and competences together with easier access to opportunities of work or further studies abroad.

8.7 What does the Diploma Supplement offer to higher education institutions (HEIs)?

It facilitates academic and professional recognition, thus increasing the transparency of qualifications. It protects national/institutional autonomy while offering a common frame, which is accepted all over Europe. It promotes informed judgements about qualifications that can be understood in another educational context. It raises the visibility of the institution abroad. It promotes the employability of their graduates at national and international level. It can save time by providing answers to recurrent questions put to administrative services in institutions about the content and portability of qualifications.

8.8 What is its relationship to EUROPASS?

The Diploma Supplement has been consolidated by the European Commission into a family of five tools under the heading of Europass – the framework for transparency of qualifications. This does not change the nature or rules governing the Diploma Supplement, which are the same for the 25 EU member states and the 20 non-EU Bologna participating countries. Europass also includes a Certificate Supplement, which has some similarities with the Diploma Supplement but is issued only to holders of vocational certificates.

8.9 What is the relationship between the Diploma Supplement and the Progress File (Transcript)?

Recent discussions among Burgess Group stakeholders indicate agreement that the Transcript and the Diploma Supplement can be incorporated into a single document, with a heading such as, 'The Diploma Supplement/ Transcript'. Using this approach, the Diploma Supplement would therefore incorporate the final Transcript, as issued on completion of the award of the final qualification. Further details on their exact relationship can be found in section 7.1 of this guide. The Burgess Steering Group is currently

considering how to support the sector's implementation of the Diploma Supplement and following further consultation will produce a report and guidance on the issue in the autumn of 2006.

8.10 How does the Diploma Supplement relate to other Bologna Process developments and the creation of the European Higher Education (EHEA)?

The Diploma Supplement has been recognised by the Bologna participating countries as a common device to improve the recognition, transparency and mobility of qualifications. It aids the achievement of the majority of the 10 Bologna Action Lines and plays an important role in the creation of the EHEA.

8.11 Can Diploma Supplements follow a different sequence from the recommended information sequence?

No – for any document to be named a Diploma Supplement it must adhere to the rules and practices identified in the guidelines and explanatory notes associated with it.

8.12 How do Diploma Supplements relate to internal and external quality assurance?

Diploma Supplements should be subject to the normal quality assurance processes that apply to all HEIs. They should be included in any internal and external quality assurance procedures. In addition, the new European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) 'Standards and Guidelines' for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area' (http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050221_ENQA_report.pdf) indicates that institutions should publish impartial and objective information about their programmes and awards.

8.13 How do Diploma Supplements relate to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)?

It is suggested that Transcripts can be used to provide useful information for section 4 of the Diploma Supplement: 'Information on the contents and results gained'. Furthermore, many countries are adopting ECTS as the common basis of their national, regional and local credit systems. The use of credits provides useful information that enhances the information provided in any supplement. In addition to referring to national/regional credit systems, HEIs may also wish to include ECTS credits in order to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The majority of Scottish HEIs issuing the Diploma Supplements include information on both Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and ECTS credits. Further guidance on the articulation between ECTS and UK national/regional credit systems will be available shortly from the Burgess Group and the Europe Unit, following the recent consultation on proposals for national credit arrangements for the use of academic credit in higher education in England.

8.14 Do institutions have to create a description of the UK higher education system?

No. The UK HE Europe Unit, working closely with UUK, the QAA and UK NARIC, has produced a description and diagram of the England, Wales and Northern Ireland education system. This description has been approved by the Europe Unit High Level Policy Forum, comprising heads of UK higher education stakeholder organisations. There is also an approved description of the Scottish national education system available. Institutions are advised to make use of these descriptions (without amendment) both of which are available on the website of the UK HE Europe Unit:
http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/qualifications/diploma_supplement.cfm.

8.15 Can Diploma Supplements be issued for part-completed qualifications?

No – Diploma Supplements are only issued for successfully completed higher education qualifications.

8.16 Can Diploma Supplements record non-credit bearing activities?

Diploma Supplements record all components of the study programme undertaken and these are often, but not always, expressed in terms of credits. It is possible to use section 6.1 'Additional Information' of the Diploma Supplement to record non-credit bearing activities undertaken as part of a programme of learning. However, any such activities that had no formal link to the qualification should be detailed in the curriculum vitae.

8.17 What is the relationship between learning outcomes and the Diploma Supplement?

Learning outcomes are a familiar part of UK education and their use facilitates the inclusion of precise information in Diploma Supplements particularly in section 4, 'Information on the Content and Results Gained'. Increasing numbers of Diploma Supplements issued by mainland European HEIs will include information in the form of learning outcomes following the decisions by ministers at the Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005) Bologna Process meetings to adopt them as a way to express units, modules, qualifications, qualifications and level descriptors. This means that progressively these will be used to convey accurately the nature and level of qualifications and that Diploma Supplements will contain increasing amounts of information couched in terms of learning outcomes.

9 Glossary

Reproduced below is the glossary developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES for the Diploma Supplement pilot project. Definitions and usage of terms vary from country to country. To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding this glossary aims to cover all the main terms used in the papers associated with the Diploma Supplement initiative. It is partly based on, and fully consistent with, the definition used in the 1997 Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region.

Academic recognition refers to the recognition of courses, qualifications or diplomas from one (domestic or foreign) higher education institution by another. Usually this is sought as a basis for access to further new study at the second institution (cumulative recognition) or, as recognition allowing some sort of exemption from having to re-study elements of a programme (recognition with advanced standing). A further type of academic recognition is recognition of studies taken elsewhere in another institution that replace a comparable period of study at the home institution. This (recognition by substitution) operates under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) mobility scheme (see ECTS).

Access (to higher education) refers to the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education. Access is distinct from admission, which concerns the individuals' actual participation in the higher education programme concerned.

Accreditation is the process by which one higher education institution gains authority to award, and/or gains recognition of, its qualifications from another senior competent authority. This might be the State, a government agency, or another domestic or foreign higher education institution (see FRANCHISE). The term has its origins in the American system and is used in some European countries in the same way as 'recognition'.

Admission The act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme.

Assessment i) (of institutions or programmes) the process for establishing the educational quality of a higher education institution or programme; ii) (of individual qualifications) the written appraisal or evaluation of an individual's foreign qualifications by a competent authority; iii) (of individual students) the actual testing of a student's ability and skills within a programme (e.g. by examination).

Award This is used synonymously with qualification.

Competent recognition authority A body officially charged with making binding decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Course A part of a programme of studies that is normally self-contained and assessed separately. Complete study programmes are normally composed of several courses.

Credential A term sometimes used to refer to a qualification (see **Qualification**).

Credential evaluator The individual who makes a judgement on the recognition of foreign qualifications (see **Competent recognition authority**).

Credit The 'currency' providing a measure of learning outcomes achieved in a notional time at a given level. Usually associated with credit-based modular courses (see ECTS).

De facto recognition refers to situations of unregulated professional recognition, such as where no national legal authorisation to practice a particular profession exists or is required. This is the most problematic area of professional recognition (see **Professional recognition** and **Recognition**).

De jure recognition refers to the recognition of the right to work in a specific (European Union or European Economic Area) country in a legally regulated profession (e.g. medical doctor). These situations are subject to various

European Union Directives whereby if a citizen is a fully qualified professional in one Member State, he or she has a right to be recognised as a professional in another Member State, including the right to use the relevant professional title (see **Regulated profession, Professional recognition** and **Recognition**).

Diploma here refers to any qualification/credential. There is a possibility of confusion here. In some educational systems the term refers to a specific category or type of qualification. It is not being used in this restricted sense here.

ECTS The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (developed by the European Commission). This is a system based on learning outcomes and workload, designed to facilitate mobility, credit accumulation, credit transfer and the international recognition of periods of study completed abroad (see **Academic Recognition**).

ENIC European (Council of Europe/UNESCO) National Information Centre on Academic Recognition and Mobility.

Franchise the situation where an institution agrees to authorise another institution (nationally or internationally) to deliver an approved programme whilst normally retaining overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements. However, significant variations in franchise relationships exist.

Field of study The main disciplines or subject areas of a qualification.

Higher education All types of courses of study, or sets of courses (programmes), training, or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to its higher education system. Higher education builds on the level of competence, knowledge and skills generally acquired through secondary education (see **Higher education institution** and **Programme of study**). Higher education normally comes after secondary education in time and is normally offered through higher education programmes at higher education institutions.

However, it should be noted that higher education institutions may give courses of study that are not higher education level. Conversely, institutions which are not considered as belonging to the higher education system may offer some higher education programmes. The exact definition of higher education and higher education institutions vary from country to country. For example, in some countries, nursing is considered to be a field of higher education, whereas in other countries, nursing is considered to be part of post-secondary education without being higher education.

Higher education institution An establishment providing higher education and recognised by the competent authorities as belonging to its system of higher education (see **Higher education** and **Programme of study**).

Learning outcomes The specific intellectual and practical skills gained and tested by the successful completion of a unit, course or whole programme of study. These are expressed in terms of statements of what a successful student is expected to know, understand and is able to demonstrate after the completion of a process of learning.

Level The place of a qualification in the higher education system. Normally, a national hierarchy of qualifications exists. The number of levels of higher education qualifications vary between countries and/or kinds of higher education (see **Level indicators**).

Level indicators These can range from any general information on the role of the qualification to highly detailed specific statements about the nature, skills and competences associated with the successful completion of parts or all of a qualification (see **Level**).

Lisbon Convention refers to the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region adopted in Lisbon April 1997.

Module A separate and coherent block of learning. Part of a modular programme of studies where the curriculum is divided into a range of similar sized segments.

NARIC National Academic Recognition Information Centre (European Union and European Economic Area). Some NARICs also have responsibilities for professional recognition.

Profession recognition refers to the right to practise and the professional status accorded to a holder of a qualification. In the European Union recognition for professional purposes is defined as the legal act by which a competent authority in a host Member State recognises that the qualifications obtained by an applicant in another Member State are suitable for the pursuit on its territory of a professional activity whose practice is legally regulated (see **Regulated profession, De jure recognition, De facto recognition** and **Recognition**).

Programme of study A set of courses, the various components of which complement and build on each other in order to provide the student with a higher education qualification (see **Higher education, Higher education institution** and **Course**). 'Programme' also denotes the academic fields of study and requirements that collectively define the qualification (see **Field of study**).

Qualification i) higher education qualification: any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme; ii) qualification giving access to higher education: any diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education programme and giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to higher education (see **Higher education, Higher education institution** and **Programme of study**). Also termed as any higher education award given for the successful completion of a programme of learning; a generic term that refers to the wide variety of higher education qualifications at different levels and across different countries.

Quality assurance refers to the internal and external processes by which the quality of academic provision is maintained.

Recognition A formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities. An assessment of individual qualifications. Such assessment may be any kind of statement on the value of (in this case) a foreign qualification. Recognition refers to a formal statement by a competent recognition authority acknowledging the value of the qualification in question and indicating the consequences of this recognition for the holder of the qualification. For example a qualification may be recognised for the purposes of further study at a given level (academic recognition), or for the use of a title, or for the purposes of employment (professional recognition) (see **Competent recognition authority, Qualification, Academic recognition** and **Profession recognition**). Recognition can also refer to the accreditation of a higher education institution by another authority (see **Accreditation**).

Regulated profession refers to professions in the European Union and European Economic Area whose practice is regulated in some way by law or administrative rules (see **De jure recognition**).

Transcript An official record or breakdown of a student's progress and achievements. Many credit-based education systems employ detailed transcripts that show the credits and grades for units undertaken (e.g. ECTS Transcript of Records).

Validation the process by which a recognised awarding institution judges that a programme of study leading to a qualification is of appropriate quality and standard. This can be a programme of its own or that of a subordinate institution (see **Franchise**).

10 Further information

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

Council of Europe

<http://www.coe.int/>

ENIC-NARIC NETWORK

www.enic-naric.net/

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

<http://www.enqa.net>

EUROPASS (central website)

http://europass.cedefop.eu.int/europass/preview.action?locale_id=1

European Commission (DG EAC)

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html/

Lisbon Recognition Convention 1997

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_EN.asp

Trends IV Report (see section 3.4 Diploma Supplement, pp22-23)

http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/02-EUA/050425_EUA_TrendsIV.pdf

UK HE Europe Unit

<http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/home/>

UK National EUROPASS Centre

<http://www.uknec.org.uk/>

contd. →

UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC)

<http://www.naric.org.uk/>

UNESCO-CEPES European Centre for Higher Education

<http://www.cepes.ro/hed/recogn/groups/diploma/Default.htm/>

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