Completed National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email (secr@bologna2009benelux.org) no later than

1 November 2008

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS
TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

BFUG members are strongly encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template (shaded areas) and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

Details

Country	Iceland
Date	1 November 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Hellen M. Gunnarsdóttir, Director, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
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Contributors to the report	Einar Hreinsson, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

1. Main developments since London 2007

Please describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms and changes in institutional structures, since the London meeting in 2007.

On 1 July 2006 a new Act on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) no. 63/2006 was adopted by the Icelandic Parliament. Following that decision, all universities had to apply for accreditation for operation in their respective fields of study. Thus, from 2006 through 2007 all HEIs in Iceland had to go through an accreditation process that resulted in a major revision of all study programmes in accordance with the National Qualification Framework from 2006. The process was officially completed in May 2008.

On 12 May 2008 a new Act on Public Universities no. 85/2008 was adopted by the Icelandic Parliament. It resulted in a new management structure of university councils in public universities, with the majority of members coming from external bodies. A new definition of the overall organisation of public universities was introduced by establishing Schools/Faculties according to fields of study, introducing more decentralisation and increased autonomy of HEIs.

In 2007 the authority of the Agricultural HEIs was moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Main developments in summary: establishment of an accreditation process, National Qualification Framework, revision of quality assurance pratices, changes in management structure, increased autonomy and introduction of a common legal framework for all HEIs. In addition, some HEIs have recently merged

www.menntamalaraduneyti.is

2. Partnership

Please describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

After the Berlin conference, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture decided to establish a National Bologna follow-up group to formalise and strengthen the implementation of the Bologna process in Iceland. The group consisted of representatives of all HEIs and students. The Ministry also cooperates directly with different HEIs concerning the Diploma Supplement, ECTS issues and the establisment the National Framework for HEIs, i.e. regarding learning outcomes descriptions.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up [1]

Yes ☒   No ☐

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

Ministry	Yes ☒	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☒	No ☐
Academic staff	Yes ☒	No ☐
Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☐	No ☒
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☒	No ☐
Employers	Yes ☐	No ☒

Other (please specify) Employers and Staff trade unions are not a part of the Bologna follow-up group. However, they are consulted on an individual basis. That consultation is in the hands of the chair of the Bologna follow-up group.

There is no independent National Quality Assurance Agency in Iceland. In the Act on HEIs the provision on external evaluation is as follows: "The Minister of Education, Science and Culture can delegate the administration of an external evaluation of teaching and research to a committee, an institution, a company or other relevant agent, national or international. Implementation of an external evaluation shall be assigned to an independent agent. The evaluation process shall involve both domestic and foreign experts, as well as a student representative".

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group [2]   Yes ☒   No ☐

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of

Ministry	Yes ☒	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☐	No ☒
Academic staff	Yes ☒	No ☐

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[1] A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process
[2] A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☐	No ☒
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☐	No ☒
Employers	Yes ☐	No ☒
Other (please specify) _____		

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

The Bologna promoters' group is managed by the International Office for Higher Education on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The office administers the implementation of the project.

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

> The three cycle system already existed in Iceland before the Bologna process, although there were programmes outside that system. Apart from the three year Bachelor, and the two year Masters, only two programmes of the old five year professional degree system remain and those are within the fields of medicine and dentistry. With the new Higher Education Act no. 63/2006 HEIs are obligated to implement the first and second cycle for all programmes. Therefore, all students in Iceland follow the first and second cycle system.
>
> As of now, HEIs have fully integrated the first and second cycle structure.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all[3] students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09[4]	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
16.366	3.433	21%

c) Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation regarding implementation of the two cycle system in your country:

> As of now, HEIs have fully integrated the first and second cycle structure.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle
Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:
- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements[5] apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes

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[3] "All" = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. *NB Students of ALL study fields are taken into account*
[4] If countries have more recent data available after November 1, they can provide an update but no later than January 15, 2009
[5] E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of doctoral studies), etc.

- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

Doctoral programmes are now offered in two HEI´s. As the implementation of the Bologna process is fully integrated into the new Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, the normal length of doctoral studies is three to four years, 180 - 240 ECTS credits. All doctoral candidates in Iceland shall follow a structured course of study that can both involve taught courses and independent research. The doctoral programmes include coursework up to around 15% of the full programme. Doctoral students are both defined as students and early stage researchers.

For every student enrolling in doctoral studies a tenured advisor is appointed to him/her and a special three member doctoral committee is assigned. The role of the committee is to monitor the progress of the study and ensure that it conforms to the planned course of study and research that was decided upon at the beginning of the study programme. The committee also has to ensure that the research work meets academic standards as prescribed in the rules of different Schools/Faculties and to oversee the students' examinations.

The doctoral programmes are included in the National Qualification Framework and are linked to learning outcomes and ECTS course credits. In 2007 100/% of doctoral candidates followed structured doctoral programmes. Thus, interdisciplinary training and transferable skills are integrated into all doctoral studies.

About 20% (3000 individuals) of the total Icelandic student population is studying abroad, a large number thereof in doctoral programmes.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

a) Please describe the main trends in the role of higher education institutions in research in your country.

> Higher Education Institutions are the largest research institutions in Iceland. Their research activities are based on four main pillars: State contribution, national and international competitive funds and private contribution. In recent years, the HEIs have been provided with increased financial contribution for research from the government to strenghten their research basis and to enable them to apply for outside resources. Thus, the HEIs have to a larger extent emphasised the importance of the role they play in research activities in Icelandic society and have been thriving to strengthen their research capacity. As a result there has been a rapid expansion of research-based education, with an increased number of PhD and postgraduate students.
>
> The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and each HEI sign a performance related contract for their research activities. The contract defines indicators to measure quality and research output and determines the role of each HEI in the overall science community. As a result, HEIs are generally becoming more international, emphasising cooperation with research institutions, other HEIs and industry. These contracts are important and actually define the research role of each HEI in society as a whole.
>
> In summary, the main trends are: increased financial contribution, strengthened role of HEIs in research, increased international cooperation and a more performance related approach to research activities.

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:
- percentage of GDP spent on research
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and each HEI sign a performance related contract for research that defines indicators (e.g. number of contracts and cooperational agreement with industry, other HEIs, joint degrees, patents etc.) to measure the output and quality of different research activities. Objectives are set forth in the beginning of the contract period and measured periodically. The contracts are usually 3 to 5 years in duration.

- percentage of GDP spent on research 2,81%
from public funds 40,5 %
from private funds 48,0%

- total annual national research expenditure:
from public funds 40,5 (percentage of gross expenditure for R&D financed by the government)
from private funds 48,0 (percentage of gross expenditure for R&D financed by industry)

- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding). 22,0

 Generally the funding mechanism is as follows:

1. Since 1999/2000 the funding of the teaching cost of higher education (first, second and third cycle) in Iceland has been determined by a model based on the number of full-time equivalent students and a pricelist. The pricelist is based on a discipline dependant through subject banding.

2. Each HEI recives financial contribution from the government as a lump sum.

5. Doctoral students have the option of working as teaching or research assistants for professors and can thus receive salary to finance their studies.

3. Doctoral students often receive salaries during their study, often from outside funds, companies or other sources.

4. Doctoral students can also apply to the Icelandic Student Loan Fund for support.

c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?
                              Yes ☒   No ☐   If Yes, please specify:

According to provisions in the performance related contracts, HEIs are supposed to monitor the careers of university alumni in the labour market and assess the value and benefits of their studies.

6. Access[6] and admission to the next cycle

Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and between the second and third cycles.

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

> According to the Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, all baccalaureate degress of full 180-240 ECTS give access to second cycle studies. Thus, the percentage is 100%.

b) any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (please specify)

> All first cycle qualifications give access to the second cycle. However, there are a few diploma degrees (often one year programmes) in the first cycle that do not give access to the second cycle and those are often designed as a part of a full degree, so there is a structured path for students to follow if they choose to continue studying for a full degree or even further.

c) any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: *please tick whether graduates must*:

sit entrance exam	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐
complete additional courses	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐
have work experience	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐

> If the answer to the last point is *yes*, please specify what type of work experience is required:

> N/A

d) any further special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies

> In some cases a passing grade is required by individual departments.

e) to which students the above special requirements apply *(please tick):*

all students	Yes ☒	No ☐
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes ☐	No ☒
students of the same field coming from other HEIs	Yes ☐	No ☒

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[6] Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: "Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education."

f) which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies *(please tick)*:

entrance exam	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐
additional courses	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☒
work experience	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☒

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle

> The percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle is 100%.
>
> There is a possibility for exceptionally gifted students to progress straight from the first cycle to the third cycle within natural sciences. However, this is rare and only 10-12 students have done so in the last five years.
> There are some fields of study that are not available in Iceland at postgraduate level, however, there is a strong tradition in Iceland for students to go abroad for studying in these fields.

b) any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle (please specify)

> There are three degrees, MBA, MPA and an Accounting degree, that require individuals that want to enroll in PhD studies to take additional research training, which is then provided on individual basis by the HEIs.

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

> Not necessary, as there are no obstacles between cycles.

7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

a) What measures are being taken to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications? Please include the most recent statistical data on the employment status of graduates of all cycles.

If your higher education institutions also provide professional bachelor programmes, please provide employability data for both types of bachelors separately

> The unemployment rate in Iceland has been very low (2-3%) for a very long time. In addition to the low unemployment, 70% of the people registered as unemployed in Iceland have been on the register for less than three months, according to Statistics Iceland. According to data for September 2008, less than 1-2% of people holding a university degree are unemployed. The same applies to professional bachelor programmes.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:
- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
  Significant ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- accreditation/quality assurance
  Significant ☐   Some ☐   A little ☒   None ☐

- university governance
  Significant ☒   Some ☐   A little ☐   None ☐

c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes ☐   No ☐   In some cases ☒

d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

If no, or in some cases only, please explain the current situation:

> N/A

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared[7]?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment The National Qualification Framework for Iceland is a systematic description of the structure of education and degrees at higher education level and is specifically based on learning outcomes. All higher education institutions in Iceland that are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture according to the Higher Education Act no. 63/2006 are obliged to follow this framework.

b) Does the framework or proposed framework include generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment According to the framework, there are three subsequent cycles of higher education: Bachelors degree, Masters and Candidatus degree and Doctorate degree. As each cycle can cover different qualification objectives, the cycles are divided into levels. It also includes generic descriptors of learning outcomes and competences.

c) Does it include ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment According to the Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, teaching in higher education institutions is organised in courses which credits are allocated to. A full study programme normally consists of 60 credits (ECTS) per academic year that reflect all student work during that time for the first and second cycles.

d) Has the NQF been nationally discussed with all stakeholders?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment The National Qualification Framework for Iceland was designed by a committee consisting of representatives from all relevant stakeholders.

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):
e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment The National Qualification Framework for Iceland shall be revised periodically so it may reflect the expected learning outcomes at each time. The aim is to revise the National Qualification Framework (established in 2006) for Iceland in 2009, taking into consideration the higher education institutions' definitions of learning outcomes for different study programmes. At the same time, the self-certification process will start, in the spring of 2009.

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[7] A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:

f) Are all formal arrangementsdecisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment See above.	

g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed *(please tick one)*

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation) ☒

- There is significant progress on implementing the framework ☐

- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and competencies has been completed ☐

- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started ☐

- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed ☐

- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is no timetable for implementation ☐

Comment In addition to being valuable for higher education institutions, employers and other stakeholders, the framework is important for external quality assurance of the activities of higher education institutions. Increased flexibility and competition between higher education institutions, both at national and international level, demand that higher education institutions clearly account for their operations. Descriptions of content, admission requirements and learning outcomes facilitate quality control and student mobility and promote transparency. HEIs that do not operate according to the NQF will not be accreditated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

h) What is the stage of progress on the self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework ?

Completed ☐   Started, but not yet completed ☒   Not yet started ☐

Comment In May 2009 the National Qualification Framework for Iceland will be self-certified by indepentent experts. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture has already appointed a work group with all stakeholders to supervise the self-certification process.

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes ☐   No ☒

Comment It will be published and included in the Diploma Supplement

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Comment

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)[8]

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG[9] and national support for implementation

a) Has your national QA system been reviewed against the ESG?

Yes ⊠   No ☐   ☐ Not yet, but such a review is planned
(Please specify time) _____

b) If a review has been undertaken or is planned, please give further details of the review process.

> With the adoption of the new Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, all higher education institutions had to undergo an accreditation process. One of the criteria was that the internal quality control system of the HEIs fullfilled the qualifications specified in the ESG.

c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes ⊠   No ☐

The introduction of specific financial or other incentives aimed at improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions?

Yes ☐   No ⊠

> **If Yes,** please give details of these incentives: However, following the accreditation process mentioned above, a new regulation on quality assurance is to be introduced. It includes incentives stating that any results of external evaluations of HEIs are to be taken into consideration in negotiations regarding performance contracts between the authorities and the HEIs.

- Other measures

Yes ☐   No ⊠

> **If Yes**, please outline these measures

d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

Yes ☐   No ⊠

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[8] http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf
[9] ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

If Yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

> Higher education institutions carry out systematic quality control of teaching and research on the basis of an internal evaluation. The internal evaluation of higher education institutions and their individual units shall be carried out regularly and deal with policy and objectives, study content, teaching, teaching methods, assessment, research, research effectiveness, working conditions, administration and external relations. Active participation of staff and students in the internal quality control process of higher education institutions shall be ensured as appropriate. According to the Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, all HEIs shall have implemented an internal quality assurance system that complies to the standards of ESG to fullfill the requirements of accreditation.

Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to relevant websites:

a) How many HEIs have published a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality?

All HEIs ☒   Most HEIs ☐   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

b) How many HEIs have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

All HEIs☒   Most HEIs ☐   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

> According to Article 8 of the Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, all HEIs shall regularly and publicly account for how they ensure that the studies offered fulfill the National Qualification Framework for higher education. This is a part of the internal quality assurance system and is carried out i.e. through student evaluation of courses and teaching, through committees that evaluate courses within programmes, etc.

c) How many HEIs have described their programmes in terms of learning outcomes?

All HEIs ☒   Most HEIs ☐   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

d) Are student assessments at HEIs designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (based on published criteria) applied in a consistent way?

All HEIs ☐   Most HEIs ☒   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

Please describe how the above is achieved.

> This process is in transition as most courses are currently being updated. This will be checked through external quality control of the study programmes.

e) How many HEIs publish up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

All HEIs ☒   Most HEIs ☐   Some HEIs ☐   No HEIs ☐

Additional information if necessary

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:
a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture determines the time for conducting an external evaluation of teaching and research and sets the agenda for such evaluation for three years. In addition, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture may decide to conduct a special evaluation of a higher education institution or its specific units upon the Minister's discretion.

The external evaluation can involve a higher education institution or individual fields of study or science, faculties, study programmes or other specified elements of a higher education institution's operation. The external evaluation can also involve several institutions simultaneously.

An external evaluation shall be carried out in consultation with the respective higher education institution and HEI's shall provide the assistance and information required for the evaluation. Evaluation reports shall be published together with a statement regarding how the respective university intends to react to the evaluation results.

The Minister of Education, Science and Culture can delegate the administration of an external evaluation of teaching and research to a committee, an institution, a company or other relevant agent, national or international.

Implementation of an external evaluation shall be assigned to an independent agent. The evaluation process shall involve both domestic and foreign experts, as well as a student representative.

b) does your external quality assurance system operate at a national level;

Yes ☒　　　No ☐

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education[10]

Yes ☐　　　No ☐

If No, please specify which types of institutions or programmes are not covered by your external quality assurance system:

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- self-assessment report	Yes ☒	No ☐
- external review	Yes ☒	No ☐
- publication of results	Yes ☒	No ☐
- follow-up procedures	Yes ☒	No ☐

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[10] Higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

e) has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place

Yes ☐   No ☒

If **No** is there a date set for the review? ☐ Yes (please specify date _____) No ☒

11. Level of student participation
From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

a) in governance of national agencies for QA.

Yes ☐　　No ☒　　In some cases ☐

b) as full members in external review teams

Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐

c) as observers in external review teams

Yes ☐　　No ☒　　In some cases ☐

d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews

Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐

e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)

Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐

f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes)

Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐

g) in preparation of self-assessment reports.

Yes ☐　　No ☐　　In some cases ☒

h) in follow-up procedures:

Yes ☐　　No ☐　　In some cases ☒

*Please add any additional comments, especially if students are **not** involved in any of the aspects***:**

As there is no national agency in Iceland, no students nor any other stakeholders or individuals participate in the governance.

12. Level of international participation
In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance
a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance

Yes ☐　　No ☒　　In some cases ☐

b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies

Yes ☐　　No ☒　　In some cases ☐

c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers

Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐

d) membership of ENQA

Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐

e) membership of any other international network

Yes ☒　　　　No ☐　　　　If **Yes**, please specify:

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is a member of NOQA - The Nordic Network for Quality Assurance.

*Please add any additional comments, especially if there is no international involvement in any of the aspects***:**

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country. Please include the percentage of all students graduating in 2009 who will receive a Diploma Supplement (if less than 100%, please explain)

> The higher education institutions in Iceland started issuing the Diploma Supplement in 2005. Since then, all students graduating from higher education institutions have received the Diploma Supplement.

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:

- 1st cycle programmes Yes ☒ No ☐
- 2nd cycle programmes Yes ☒ No ☐
- 3rd cycle programmes Yes ☒ No ☐
- remaining "old type" programmes Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable ☐
- short higher education programmes Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable ☐

b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes ☐ No ☐
  - *please specify the language* English
- issued free of charge ☒ for a fee ☐
- issued automatically ☒ on request ☐
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format ☐

- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format ☐

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles.

Yes ☐ No ☐

> **Comment** When available the Diploma Supplement is used for recognition of foreign qualifications or degrees.

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualifications.

Yes ☐ No ☐

> **Comment** A certified translation is normally not needed if the Diploma Supplement is available in a widely spoken language.

c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity of the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market).

Yes ☒   No ☐

> ***Comment*** Usually the information provided in 5.1 and 5.2 of the Diploma Supplement will be sufficient.

d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes ☒   No ☐

> ***Comment*** The Diploma Supplement has been introduced to the labour market in seminars. Further introduction is planned in the near future.

14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents[11] of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes ☐   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: A new Higher Education Act no. 63/2006 entered into force on 1 July 2006. According to Article 10 of the Act, HEIs are authorised to evaluate studies from other HEIs for course credits and to recognise studies from other universities, schools or research institutions. The regulations for each university/institution shall contain rules regarding the recognition of studies. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture will ensure that universities, which get accreditation, have provisions in their regulations regarding academic recognition that must comply with international agreements that Iceland is party to, such as the Lisbon Recognition Convention with its later supplementary documents, Recommendations on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition, Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees and Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:
    i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See a) above.

    ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See a) above.

    iii) Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Yes ☒   No ☐

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[11] Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: See a) above.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level If a student applying for recognition does not accept the decision of the higher education institution regarding his application, he may appeal to the students' appeals committee within the respective higher education institution. The committee operates according to provisions in a regulation based on the Higher Education Act from 2006 and is empowered to deliver rulings in cases where students consider that their rights have not been respected regarding academic recognition.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level The recognition procedures of each university and information on students who apply for recognition and the results in each case will be taken into account during external QA. Should the fact emerge, that a particular higher education institution does not adhere to the Lisbon Recognition Convention or other relevant agreements, it will lead to a reprimand in the QA report and the HEI in question will be given certain time limit to correct its procedures.

Iii) demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level

iv) provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice The ENIC/NARIC office provides general information on the Icelandic Education System, higher education institutions and programmes, current legislation, regulations and international agreements (e.g. the Lisbon Convention and the Nordic agreements such as the Reykjavik Declaration from 2006 and the Nordic Agreement on University Access).

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes ☐   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally **The primary role of the ENIC/NARIC office is to provide guidance on academic recognition and information on where to direct application for recognition. The unit also provides general information on the Icelandic Education System, current legislation, regulations and international agreements (e.g. the Lisbon Convention and the Nordic agreements such as the Reykjavik Declaration and the Nordic Agreement on University Access).**

d) As additional information, please describe any actions to implement fully the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS[12]

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes[13] in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits
100% ☒   75-99% ☐   50-75% ☐   <50% ☐

According to the framework law on higher education institutions, ECTS credits must be used in all programmes offered at higher education level.

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes[14] in your country? Please tick one:
No ☐   In some programmes ☐   In the majority of programmes ☐
In all programmes ☒

c) If you use credit system other than ECTS, please give details of your national credit system:

      i) is it compatible with ECTS?   Yes ☐   No ☐

      ii) what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits?

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[12] Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html
[13] Except doctoral studies
[14] Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

d) Are you taking any action to improve understanding of learning outcomes?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: Seminars have been organised for the personnel of the universities (Bologna promoters), and some of the universities have offered their staff special courses .

e) Are you taking any actions to improve measurement and checking of student workload?

Yes ☐   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: The HEIs have been encouraged to add the revision of student workload and credit allocation to their internal QA systems.

f) Are you taking any actions to assist HE staff or other stakeholders in applying ECTS.

Yes ☐   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: With national seminars, seminars at institutional level and peer advice from Bologna experts.

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning
Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning (RPL), including non-formal and informal learning (for example learning gained in the workplace or in the community).

a) Do you have nationally established procedures in place to assess RPL as a basis for access to HE programmes?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify: According to the framework law, higher education institutions may define their own entrance requirements. They may admit students who do not fulfil formal requirements if their maturity and knowledge is comparable to the maturity and knowledge of those who fulfil the formal requirements according to the evaluation of the higher education institution. HEIs may also, according to the law, offer special university preperation courses for those who do not fulfil the entrance requirements.

b) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits towards a qualification?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify: According to the framework law, higher education institutions may allocate credits for prior learning achieved outside formal universities, if the prior learning is evaluated by the university to be comparable to university studies in quality and academic standards.

c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify: See a) and b)

d) To what extent are any such procedures applied in practice?

Comprehensively ☐   Some ☐   A little ☒   None ☐

> Please describe the current situation: Such procedures are applied only after applications from individuals.

17. Flexible learning paths

Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

> The higher education institutions have full autonomy in creating their own degree programmes within the normative 3+2+3 structure and the National Qualification Framework. In the Higher Education Act, universities are encouraged to offer diverse academic programmes.

a) Are there specific measures in place to promote flexible learning paths within the national qualifications framework?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation See above

b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?

Yes ☐   No ☒

> Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation

c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles See above

d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners

Yes ☒   No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle The flexibility in entrance requirements is mainly within the 1st cycle. According to the framework law, higher education institutions may admit students who do not fulfil formal requirements if their maturity and knowledge is comparable to the maturity and knowledge of those who normally fulfil the formal requirements according to the evaluation of the university. The higher education institutions may also, according to the law, offer special university preperation courses for those who do not fulfil the entrance requirements. About 5 - 7% of the students are admitted by exemption from formal entrance requirements.

e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle The universities offer distance learning in certain programmes in addition to the more traditonal on-campus learning.

f) If possible, please provide any statistics on the results of measures taken to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups,

> N/A

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees[15]
a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.
   Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes ☒   No ☐

   Does the legislation fully allow:

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[15] A *joint degree* is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

i) establishing joint programmes?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If **No** please explain what are the obstacles

ii) awarding joint degrees?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If **No** please explain what are the obstacles

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in

   i) joint degrees

   75-100% ☐   50-75% ☒   25-50% ☐   1-25% ☐   0% ☐

   ii) joint programmes

   75-100% ☐   50-75% ☒   25-50% ☐   1-25% ☐   0% ☐

c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country

   In the first cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐
   In the second cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐
   In the third cycle?   None ☐   Little ☒   Widespread ☐

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread (please list if possible)?

Natural sciences.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

15-20

f) Describe any actions being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

According to Article 9 of the Higher Education Act from 2006, HEIs are authorised to offer degrees in cooperation with other HEIs, both on a national and international basis for all three cycles of higher education (Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral). This gives Icelandic HEIs the possibility to offer and to recognise joint degrees or double degrees. Before the revision of the Higher Education Act, the legal basis for offering and recognising joint degrees was not secure. The Act also encourages higher education institutions to cooperate in order to exploit as much as possible the resources available to enable them to offer divers degree programmes.

g) Are there any specific support systems for students to encourage joint degree cooperation?

MOBILITY

.
19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

> The Icelandic Student Loan Fund provides financial support to all students regardless of where the student is studying, whether it is a full-time degree or part of a mobility programme. Iceland has cooperated with other Nordic countries in creating the Nordic Masters that include both student and staff mobility. In general, institutions have been improving their support services for incoming and outgoing students and staff.

b) Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: There are no difficulties regarding student and staff mobility within the Schengen/EU area. Residence permits for students from countries outside the Schengen area and the EU have been more problematic.

c) Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Outgoing students can receive loans from the Icelandic Student Loan Fund. Grants from programmes such as Erasmus and Nordplus do not affect the allocation from the Student Loan Fund. Besides grants from Erasmus or Nordplus, outgoing staff can sometimes get some additional funding from different sources (i.e. institutional funding, labour union education and training funds).

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: All institutions use Learning Agreements and as long as the learning agreement is fulfilled there should hardly be any problematic cases. The main problem remains the difficulty of getting information about available courses in due time.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Institutions assist incoming students and staff in finding appropriate housing.

f) Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility?

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: No new specific measures were taken this year but the ongoing promotional measures were implemented and updated.

20. Portability of loans and grants
a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes ☒   No ☒

> **If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA
AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy "European Higher Education in a Global Setting"

> International cooperation in education has always been crucial for Iceland. Information about "The European and International Dimension in Education" in Iceland 2007/08 is available at Eurybase http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/ressources/eurydice/eurybase/pdf/0_integral/IC_EN.pdf

b) What has your country done to:
i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

> The administration of international cooperation in the field of education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. In cooperation with the University of Iceland, the Ministry operates the Office of International Education (OIE). The OIE attends international information fairs in order to

promote Icelandic Higher Education Institutions. It also distributes information both on demand and with own initiative about higher education in Iceland.

ii) promote European higher education, enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness?

Same as above

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

Same as above

iv) intensify policy dialogue with partners from other world regions?

During official ministerial (education & research and industry) and presidential visits, there has been some dialogue about possible cooperation in education, often in relation to the fields of renewable energy and/or fisheries. Recent examples are India, Uganda and China.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, in cooperation with the University of Iceland, operates an ENIC/NARIC centre that assists the institutions with recognition of qualifications.

c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*? Please describe.

Icelandic higher education institutions do not run cross-border higher education, and foreign instituions have not offered cross-border higher education in Iceland.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education
Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

Due to the current economic situation in Iceland, the main challenges that we face in the short term will be to open up the HEIs for people that face loosing their jobs in the coming months. The government will put increased emphasis on innovation and research in HEIs and focus on analysing what actions can be taken for getting scientific results faster into industry and creating new jobs.

The two agricultural universities came under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture as of January 2008, having been under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture. They have completed the accreditation process of HEIs, but a short term challenge of these institutes will be to adapt to the administrative system of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

The accreditation process of all HEIs in Iceland was completed in 2008 and all HEIs have fulfilled the requirements of the Bologna process. In continuation, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture will announce a three year plan of external quality assurance for all HEI´s.

Long term challenges include merging and streamlining the HEIs system, making it more adaptable to the future challenges of society and make it better aligned to the Bologna process as a whole.

PART II

TEMPLATE for NATIONAL STRATEGIES
on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secr@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension**.
The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

"We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity."

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1.   Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

Information from Statistics Iceland indicates that the relative homogenity of the Icelandic nation makes it hard to define any ethnic minorities. Less than 7% of the population in Iceland does not hold an Icelandic passport. Other kinds of social distinction, based on sex, disability or national areas do not indicate that any minority group is currently underrepresented in higher education, although statistical data is in some cases not available. Women, for instance, are quite overrepresented in all three cycles of higher education and measures have been taken to ensure the enrollment of students with children.

2.   Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

As stated in Q1, none of the identified groups is considered as underrepresented. However, this situation is to a large extent the result of measures taken by the governement to ensure equality for all. Acording to Article 19 of the Higher Education Act no. 63/2006, admission rules for every higher education institution shall be transparent and allow certain flexibility, and ensure that students who have not completed a final examination from upper secondary school still have the opportunity to enter higher education. The same Article and Article 20 also stipulate that all higher education institutions shall have a regulation in order regarding student rights and duties, including rules of appeals within the institution.

The government has also encouraged all higher education institutions to establish committees for safeguarding gender issues.

It is also worth mentioning that all higher education institutions are obligated to ensure that disabled students get proper support, enabling them to complete their studies on equal basis. Additionally, there are special measures for students with dyslexia. The same goes for the rights of students with other disabilities.

Special programmes have been offered in remote areas for preperation for university studies. Lifelong learning is evaluated in these programmes. Higher education centers have also been established in these areas in cooperation with the universities.

3.   Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report ion the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).   Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

4.   Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

See Q 1.

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5.   How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

The government will continue its policy as explained in question 1. We will however increase information gathering and monitoring on "under-represented" groups - to see if the system and policy by the government is functioning as intended.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

See a)

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details

Yes, we will increase the budget for information gathering and monitoring.

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

No specific timeline in that sense.

6.   What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

See above

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a)contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the national strategies. In coming years, the Ministry will cooperate with the HEIs and other stakeholders to evalute the national strategy described above (Q1).

The performance related contracts between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and HEIs will be used as a base for information gathering on how the HEIs are fulfilling their obligations against different groups of students.

External evaluations will be conducted to ensure that the HEIs have a functional internal quality system that fulfills obligations concerning the social dimension of the Bologna process.

ANNEX A
Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports

Financial
• scholarships - means tested
• scholarships - merit based
• research grants
• grants for studying abroad
• grants or loans for (nearly) every student
• unspecified social support system
• free education (at least 1st cycle)
• reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
• financial assistance for certain groups/areas
• improved funding systems

Structural
• new /expanded routes of access
• broader teaching or learning strategies
• information and preparation at secondary schools
• increase student places
• indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
• subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
• provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
• counselling/guidance services

Certain groups
• measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
• measures for disabled (not financial)
• measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
• allocation of study places to certain groups
• promote access from all national areas

Policy and practice
• explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
• carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
• evaluations/research of policies and practices
• monitoring access (and retention) by students

ANNEX B
Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion
• Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
• Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education
• Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
• Flexible delivery of higher education
• Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
• Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
• Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access
and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience
A, Provision of academic services
• Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
• Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery,
tracking academic success etc.)
• Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and
seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)
B, Provision of social services
• Counselling
• Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
• Appropriate housing conditions for all students
• Provision of healthcare
• Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education
• Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher
education governance
• Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student
organisations
• Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including
action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies
• Financial and legal advice for students
• Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems
that are transparent
• Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
• Support measures for students with children

ANNEX C
Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

• Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

• Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

• Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services
B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

• Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that

can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues? How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not ableto finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them? Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

• Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

• Stakeholder involvement

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?