

What can we learn from the experience of Portugal regarding the implementation of the Bologna Process in our University?



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Access to higher education

- Access is through the Certificate of Basic Education.
- Courses are sanctioned by the Certificado de Habilitações do Ensino Secundário/Diploma de Ensino Secundário (Secondary School Credential/Diploma)
- This is the prerequisite for access to higher education through national access examination
- Those aged 23 and over can apply to higher education institutions through other special examination, even without the Secondary School Credential/Diploma.

Higher Education

- Divided into two main subsystems: university and polytechnic education.
- Provided in
 - autonomous public universities,
 - Private universities.
 - public or private university institutes,
 - polytechnic institutions and
 - higher education institutions of other types.

Higher Education

- The university system has a strong theoretical basis and is highly research-oriented
- The polytechnical system provides a more practical training and is profession-oriented.
- Degrees in fields such as medicine and law are taught only in university institutions.
- Vocationally orientated degrees such as nursing health care technician, accounting technician, preschool and primary teaching, are only offered by the polytechnic institutions

What was the Educational system like prior to Bologna?

- The Portuguese higher education system is marked by the duality between the universities and the polytechnics.
- Before the implementation of the Bologna process the university system was based on three-cycle diplomas:
 - first cycle (5 years for Licenciatura),
 - second cycle (2 years for Mestrado), and
 - third-cycle (3 or more years for Doutoramento);
- and the polytechnic system was based on two-cycle diplomas:
 - first cycle (3 years for Bacharelato) and
 - second cycle (2 years for Licenciatura).
- Following this, the Bacharelato was a degree offered exclusively by the polytechnic system and the Mestrado and Doutoramento degrees by the university system.

Bologna Process in Portugal

- The Portuguese Government approve the Decree-Law 42/2005, of February 2005 that aims to introduce principles and instruments for the creation of the European higher education area.
- ECTS and Diploma Supplement introduced.
- Learning outcomes introduced and work in progress in this area
- First cycle = 180 – 240 ECTS credits. Most are 180 credits.
- Second cycle = 90 – 120 ECTS credits. Most are 120 credits.
- Medicine is a special case with an integrated masters for 360 ECTS credits, with first cycle qualification at 180 ECTS credits.

Bologna Process in Portugal

- The government commissioned in 2005 the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education to undertake a review of the Portuguese quality assurance system, asking for advice to set up an accreditation agency following the European standards.
- Also commissioned the OECD to do a review of the Portuguese higher education system
- In March 2006 the Portuguese Government also passed a law establishing the legal framework thus making possible the implementation of the Bologna process.
- Positive response to Bologna Process found in research carried out by Veiga and Amaral (2007).

Quality Assurance in Portugal

- The current system of evaluation of the higher education courses was set-up 10 years ago, and the choice of the model adopted was mostly based on the Dutch system, after a period of scrutiny of various alternatives. Evaluation is compulsory and the system is now well established and has been extended in recent years to the polytechnical and private sub- sectors of higher education. The national agency (CNAVES) is affiliated to ENQA and is fully prepared to cooperate internationally.
- Apart from this mostly pedagogic evaluation, many Portuguese universities have been evaluated institutionally by the EUA. Also, the engineering courses can go through an accreditation procedure to speed up entrance of the graduates to the profession. Similar accreditation procedures have been set up by the professional associations of architects and of pharmacists. Other professional associations have other less formal ways of cooperating with the higher education institutions.
- A National Quality Assurance Agency has been set up.

Life Long Learning

- Portugal has dramatically expanded the level of participation in higher education (18-22 age bracket) from 5%, 40 years ago, to 40% nowadays.
- As a consequence, the percentage of the active population with a higher education degree in the age range 25-34 years (23%) is twice the percentage in the age range 45-65 years (13%), and the percentage with minimum qualifications is 18% and 62%, for the two age ranges mentioned.
- This situation calls for long-life learning programs, not only to take account of the need to retrain, up-date and expand the knowledge of those with a proper initial education, but also as a second chance for the many who didn't have an opportunity to proceed to higher level education.

Some Recommendations from Porto Conference (19 – 20 June 2008)

- Develop and disseminate user-friendly documentation to explain to all stakeholders the benefits of learning outcomes and credits.
- Implement a holistic approach, developing learning outcomes as an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment methods within an aligned curriculum.
- Offer incentives to encourage staff to engage in new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

Porto Conference (2008)

See handout with conclusions
and recommendations.

