



The Swansea Recommendations

SWANSEA BOLOGNA SEMINAR ON ENHANCING GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY 12/14 JULY 2006

The **key recommendation** of the Seminar is that employability remains an important part of the Bologna Process and requires to be addressed in each of the three cycles.

As part of the Bologna Seminar on Enhancing Graduate Employability hosted in Swansea, the delegates participated in four workshops. There were two workshops held on the theme of Embedding Skills in the Curriculum, including soft/sector skills, one held on Internationalisation, including Mobility and one held on Links with Industry.

The recommendations produced by each of the Workshops clearly identified a number of themes and there were several areas of overlap. Therefore, the recommendations have been distilled to the following three recommendations.

- Embedding skills in the curriculum is a key element of the Bologna reforms and as such needs to be monitored, with an emphasis on sharing good practice across Europe. Recognising the wide diversity of national systems, regional priorities and circumstances together with institutional missions, the widest range of method and approaches is to be encouraged. The importance of effective links with employers cannot be over-stated, but the methods adopted must be appropriate to the context of the course of study, the institutions, the geographical regions and national policies.
- Higher education institutions should assist students to recognise and articulate the employability skills developed within the curriculum and in other activities at all three cycles – linked to the Dublin Descriptors/national qualification frameworks and to future Continuous Professional Development needs. Higher education institutions should also ensure that students receive information and advice on all sectors of the labour market, together with career management skills.
- The Bologna reforms are creating a new range of transition and exit points from higher education. The ensuing complexity of options for further study or employment, combined with the encouragement of student mobility requires the provision of high quality professional staff guidance for students and appropriate staff development for academic and other university staff. In this context, higher education institutions and governments should promote a coherent cross-departmental strategic approach, to allow institutions to integrate the international dimension and particularly student mobility in institutional policy and curriculum planning.

Detailed Proposals

Each Workshop produced a number of proposals which are set out in full below.

Internationalisation, Including Mobility – Work Placements/Teacher Mobility

Recognising the need to embed all aspects of the Bologna Process. HEIs and Governments should promote a coherent cross-departmental strategic approach and provide incentives for institutions to integrate the international dimension and particularly student mobility in institutional policy and curriculum planning

In line with the principles of the European Mobility Charter and with a view to achieving a cultural shift, seek to ensure that quality assurance at all levels (European, national and institutional) includes every aspect of internationalisation and mobility:

- Recognition
- Mobility of academic and administrative staff
- Language skills
- Information provision
- High quality management

Links to Industry

HEIs to assist students to recognise and articulate the employability skills developed within the curriculum and in other activities at all three cycles and linked to the Dublin Descriptors/national qualification frameworks and to future CPD needs

HEIs to ensure that students receive information and advice on the labour market (all sectors) and career management skills

HEIs to develop as many links as possible with industry and other sectors (SME, charity, public sector) e.g. Advisory boards, staff exchanges, work placements/experience in order that students and staff are more aware of the business requirements

Flexibility must be maintained to ensure the diversity of learners is accommodated (lifelong learning)

Embedding in the Curriculum – Soft/Sector Skills (1)

The importance of effective links with employers cannot be over-stated, but the methods adopted must be appropriate to the context of the course of study, the institution, the geographical region and national policies. The right links can be built at many levels using Conferences and Seminars, individual contacts, work placements, alumni schemes and faculty or department boards to name but some. Careers services were seen to play a key role in this and it is recommended that such services should be visible and accessible to students, supported by academic and management staff and centrally located

“Weaving” in Teaching and Learning and Assessment and the Curriculum, and the need for greater transparency which does not obstruct mobility

Need for Programme/Degree as well as course/module skill learning outcomes which should involve academic staff and careers service working in teams (QA)

European mobility scheme for academic staff and employer to develop innovation for embedding employability

Embedding in the Curriculum – Soft/Sector Skills (2)

Embedding skills in the curriculum is a key element of the Bologna reforms and as such needs to be monitored, with an emphasis on sharing examples of good practice across Europe. Recognising the wide diversity of national systems, regional priorities and circumstances and institutional missions, the widest range of method and approaches is to be encouraged

The Bologna reforms are creating a new range of transition and exit points from higher education. The ensuing complexity of options for further study or employment, combined with the encouragement of student mobility requires the provision of high quality professional guidance for students and appropriate staff development for academic and other university staff