

Smooth recognition of academic qualifications: The role of quality assurance

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Types of Recognition

Recognition of academic degrees / full qualifications

→ EHEA; in Germany: recognised by a central administrative body (the Central Office for Foreign Education, jointly run by the state ministers for higher education) that is involved in cases of doubt or when an official certification is needed

Recognition of prior learning

→ Different and complex discussion, not included in this presentation

Recognition of periods of study

→ My focus for today!

Recognition and QA – basics: LRC

LRC = Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon, 11. April 1997

Article III.3: The responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment.

Article V.1: Each Party shall recognise periods of study completed within the framework of a higher education programme in another Party ... unless **substantial differences** can be shown between the periods of study completed in another Party and the part of the higher education programme which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought.

Recognition and QA – basics: European Standards and Guidelines

ESG, Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, **recognition** and certification.

- Guidelines: Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study ... are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on
- institutional practice for recognition being in line with the **principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention**;
- cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Case study: Germany, Rules for Accreditation



Legal framework for accreditation:

1. Interstate study accreditation treaty, agreed on between the federal states, on the accreditation system and its organisation
2. Specimen decree, including the criteria and procedures

Specimen Decree, “§ 12 Coherent study programme concept and adequate implementation

(1) The study programme ... creates a suitable framework to encourage student mobility, allowing students to attend other higher education institutions without losing time.”

Case study: Germany, Rules for Accreditation



“Substantiation:

Clause 4 stipulates that the study programme must offer a suitable framework to encourage student mobility, allowing students to attend other higher education institutions without losing time. This includes in particular the consideration of mobility windows in the programme concepts and **recognition procedures that consistently apply the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention** for not only study periods at higher education institutions abroad but also those in the home country.”

Case study: Germany, Rules for Accreditation

Like the ESG, the rules stipulate what has to be done, they do not prescribe how.

→ Universities need to define their own procedures for recognition and to integrate them into their quality management system.



instead of



However the Qm of recognition is organised, what should it cover? Elements of Good Practice

1. Generally,

- the regulations are transparent and easily accessible for all,
- responsibilities, processes, methodology and assessment criteria are documented and accessible,
- information on recognition and support are available,
- the procedures are evaluated on a regular basis.

However the Qm of recognition is organised, what should it cover?

2. Implementation of the procedure

- The process and responsibilities are binding and transparent.
- There is a list of documents required for an application and corresponding templates and forms.
- The crediting procedure is fully documented and refusals are adequately justified.

However the Qm of recognition is organised, what should it cover? Elements of Good Practice

For outgoing students, before they leave:

- Information and advice,
- Learning agreements that lead to automatic recognition of their periods of study abroad,
- Transcript of Records for all periods of study.

However the Qm of recognition is organised, what should it cover? Elements of Good Practice

For incoming students who do not have learning agreements:

- Are there substantial differences between the period of study at an other university, compared to the recognising university?
- Would these differences jeopardise the successful continuation of the studies?

→ quality, level, learning outcomes, workload, profile

Elements of Good Practice from universities – application evaluated in Qm-system

A - Transparency and reliability:

The U has established one transparent process for recognition, including comprehensive information and templates on an online-portal. U-wide “standards and guidelines” for recognition.

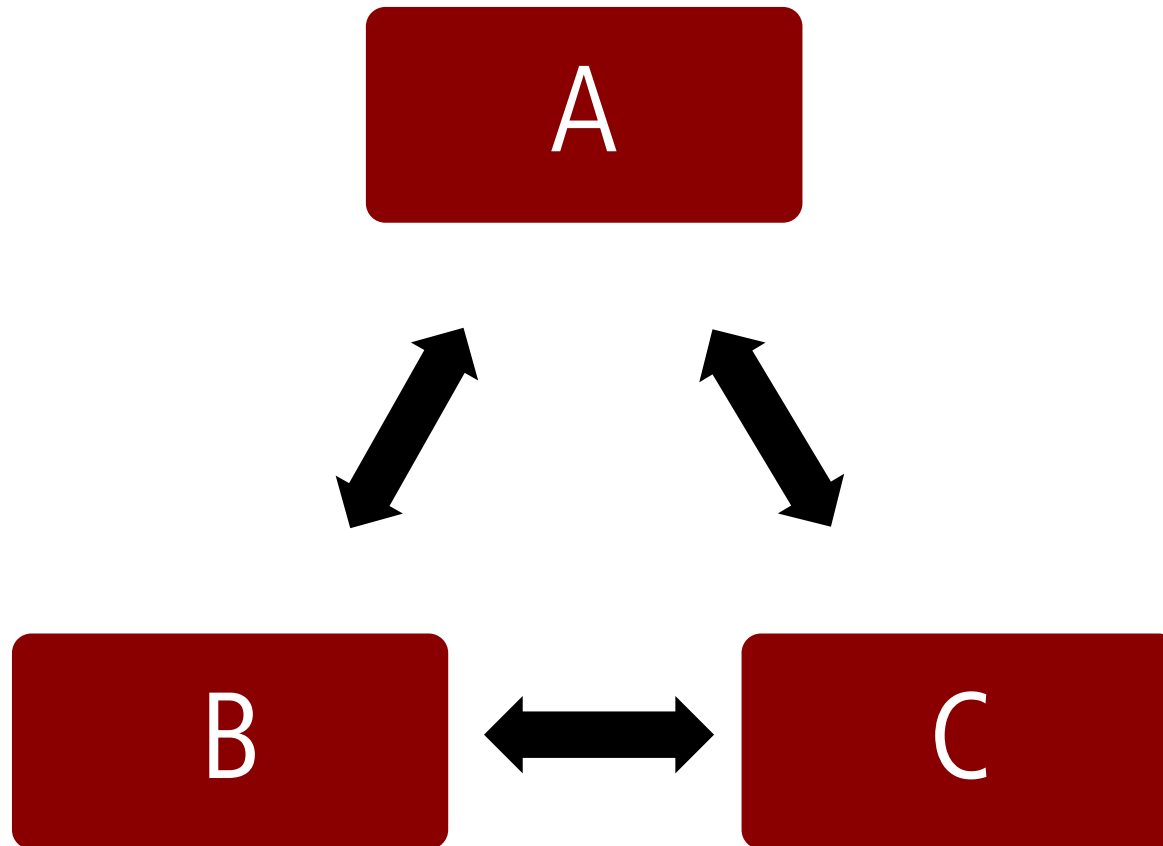
B - Data base:

Students can browse a data base of modules / study programmes and how they were recognised by their university in other cases.

C – General and subject specific frameworks:

U-wide working group developed general framework with subject specific guidelines.

Elements do not work as stand-alones but are interconnected



However the Qm of recognition is organised, what should it cover? Elements of Good Practice

→ quality, level, learning outcomes, workload, profile

- Are the university and / or the study programme accredited by a reliable agency?
- Is the period of study on the same level of the qualifications framework (Ba, Ma)?
- Learning outcomes: are they comparable with regard to the requirements of further studies?
- Workload: credits take second place to LO, but may be a supportive indicator.
- Profile and qualification objectives of study programmes – do they correlate?



To make the link between Qm and recognition work, which needs do arise?

- Need of expertise concerning quality, level, learning outcomes, workload, profile
- Need of distributed responsibilities – central and decentral level?
- Need to keep in mind that the result should be recognition, not rejection
- Need to include Qm at different points of the recognition process
- Need for consistency in application of LRC and ESG
- ...
- ...

To make the link between Qm and recognition work, which needs do arise?

Keep in mind the overall objectives:

→ Ensure mobility

→ Ensure successful completion of studies

LRC and ESG – a sandwich?

Universities have to implement fair and transparent recognition procedures according to the **Lisbon Recognition Convention**.

HOW universities do it, is their own autonomous decision.

They need to prove that they do it in accreditation procedures according to the **European Standards and Guidelines**.

HRK

Thank you for your attention -
questions and comments are
welcome, now or later!

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