



World Education Services

Understanding and Evaluating The “Bologna Bachelors Degree”

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WES Position on the Bologna Process

What is the Bologna Process?

The Bologna Process is an agreement among 45 European countries to harmonize their systems of higher education and create what will be known as a European Higher Education Area by 2010. It is a vast and complex undertaking which, when completed, will result in the complete re-structuring of higher education across Europe.

Membership

The Bologna Agreement was signed in 1999 by the ministers of education of 27 European countries. New countries have joined the Bologna Process every two years between 1999 and 2005, and the number of signatories now stands at 45 countries.

What does it Entail?

To achieve the goals of the Bologna Process, higher education institutions, programs and degrees in Europe are undergoing profound changes. Although all the signatories are committed to the 2010 deadline for the full implementation of the reforms mandated by the Bologna Process, they didn't all start at the same time and the pace of implementation varies according to local conditions.

As countries gradually reform their systems of higher education and implement the changes mandated by the Bologna Process, it is not uncommon to find academic programs that follow old patterns being offered alongside newly reformed programs, sometimes within the same institutions. Thus, it is important to bear in mind that the Bologna Process is a 'process' and not an event.

One of the key features of the Bologna Process is the restructuring of European degree programs in three cycles corresponding respectively to the 'bachelor's,' 'master's,' and 'Ph.D.' degrees. These degrees are defined in terms of credit units known as ECTS as follows:

- Bachelor's: 180-240 ECTS credits
- Master's : 60-120 ECTS credits

It is up to individual institutions in Europe to develop degree programs within these broad parameters.

In addition to the quantitative measures, there are agreed learning outcomes that students must demonstrate at the conclusion of each level of education.



Current Situation

At the present time, only a few degrees have been presented by students who have completed the new programs of study. Even countries, such as Austria and Italy, who were among the first to implement the Bologna agreement and restructure their higher education systems, did not graduate their first cohorts with new degrees until 2004.

WES and the Bologna Process

World Education Services has been monitoring the Bologna Process since 1999 and has published several articles on the topic in World Education News and Reviews (WENR). WES staff have given presentations on the Bologna Process at conferences and workshops in the U.S. and abroad. The articles published by WES on the Bologna Process can be viewed at <http://www.wes.org/ewenr/bolognaprocess.htm>

How are the so-called “Bologna degrees” viewed in the US?

There is no single official U.S. position on the equivalency of the new European bachelor's degree. Given the autonomy of U.S. universities, it is also unlikely that a single, one size fits all, position will be adopted.

U.S. graduate schools that have extensive exchange relationships with European universities have been monitoring developments in Europe in the wake of the Bologna Process. The general consensus is that this fundamental restructuring of European university programs and degrees has implications for academic exchanges between the U.S. and Europe. These exchanges include the admission of graduate students and the hiring of faculty and researchers.

A 2005 survey conducted by the Council of Graduate Schools www.cgsnet.org revealed that 78% of the institutions that responded indicated that they would consider holders of three-year degrees for admission to graduate programs under specific conditions while 22% require four-year degrees. This would indicate that U.S. graduate schools are open to the new three-year degrees and that they are willing to consider candidates with strong academic records.

How does WES View the Three-year Bachelor's Degree?

WES conducts research and updates its information on educational systems on an on-going basis. Since the early 1990's many countries in Asia, Europe and Latin America have reformed their educational systems. WES keeps abreast of changes in educational systems to ensure that its evaluations are based on information that is current and accurate. Likewise, with the Bologna Process and



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the ensuing reforms, WES monitors the changes as they happen and reflects them in its analyses and evaluations.

WES has compared the three-year bachelor's degree awarded following the Bologna Process to be largely equivalent to the bachelor's degree in the U.S. For a more detailed discussion, please see the following:

<<http://www.wes.org/ewenr/04Jan/Feature.htm>>
<http://www.wes.org/ewenr/04March/Feature.htm>

Conclusion

The Bologna Process, as implied by the name itself, is not a single event but a process designed to lead by 2010 to a European Higher Education Area where educational systems and degrees will be harmonized. Of the 45 signatory countries, only a few have finished reforming their higher education systems and award only the new degrees. In the meantime, WES will continue to monitor its progress and share its findings with colleagues in the U.S.



The Bologna Bachelor's Degree: An Overview

By Mariam Assefa, Executive Director, WES
and Robert Sedgwick, Editor, WENR

I. Introduction

Since the signing of the [Bologna Declaration](#) in 1999, Europe has gradually been moving toward a two-tiered system of higher education based on separate bachelor's and master's degrees. Countries that have the traditional long first degrees plan to phase them out by 2010, when the Bologna Process is scheduled for completion.

The reasons for this transition are fairly straightforward. First and foremost, the new degrees are more flexible, both in terms of their curricular content and exit points. The long first degrees, which were primarily designed to prepare students for scholarly work, can last up to seven years in some countries forcing many students to abandon their studies before graduation. It is anticipated that the new (shorter) bachelor-level degrees will make university education more relevant to the demands of the labor market and enhance comparability between the disparate systems of higher education that exist in Europe.

By adopting the new bachelor/master's degree structure, European countries also hope to boost the global competitiveness of their institutions of higher education. Many countries began introducing the new bachelor's programs in 2001/2002, and the first of the new degrees will be awarded in 2005.

This article will examine the new Bologna bachelor's degree using Austria and Italy as case studies. In 1999, both countries adopted legislation that restructured their higher education programs and implemented the Bologna bachelor/master's model. We will be focusing on the bachelor-level degree here and will deal with the Bologna master's degree in a forthcoming issue of WENR.

One of the main benefits of the new bachelor's degree is that it allows students to pursue graduate studies or employment anywhere within Europe depending on the type of program they completed. However, gaining recognition for the new degrees beyond Europe is also among the stated objectives of the Bologna Declaration. The first cohort of students enrolled in the new Bologna programs are scheduled to graduate next year, and the new degrees will begin turning up in North America for assessment. How will the Bologna bachelor's degree be viewed on this side of the Atlantic?

This article will take an in-depth look at the Bologna bachelor's degree. To better help us understand and assess this new degree, we will examine two sample programs taken from universities in Austria and Italy.

II. The Traditional (Long) First Degree

University first degrees in Europe differ significantly from country to country. The typical long degree can require anywhere between four-and-six years of study but students usually take longer to graduate. The curriculum for long first degrees is largely defined by individual faculties but specialization in a particular field of study is perhaps its most salient characteristic. In almost all instances students are required to write and defend a thesis in order to graduate.

AUSTRIA

The traditional *Diplomstudium* programs last four-to-five years, but in fact most students usually take longer to finish. The programs are divided into two cycles: The first cycle introduces the student to an area of specialization and concludes with an examination known as the *Erste Diplomprüfung*. The second cycle entails in-depth study and concludes with an examination, the *Zweite Diplomprüfung*, and a written thesis. Students who successfully complete this stage of higher education are awarded either a **Magister** or a **Diplom** degree, depending on the field of study.

ITALY

The traditional **Laurea** requires four-to-six years of study depending on the discipline and is awarded upon the defense of a thesis. In the sciences, the curriculum is divided into two phases: a first two-year period which is considered a preliminary stage with basic theoretical disciplines and a second three-year stage which consists of courses in the specialization and its application. The *laurea* gives admission to doctoral studies programs via competitive exams, and is also the minimum legal requirement for entry into most professions. Holding the *laurea* gives the right to use the title *dottore/dottoressa*.

III. The Bologna Bachelor's Degree

Under the new system currently being implemented, bachelor's and master's degrees can be awarded by universities and non-university institutions of higher education. The degrees will be defined by their content and outcome rather than by the type of institution that awarded them. Hence, the new degree structure under Bologna represents a departure from the traditional binary system of universities and polytechnics because the value of degrees is now based on the content and objectives of the curriculum rather than school type. Some degrees will be designed to allow immediate access to the labor market while others can be used for admission to graduate study at the master's and doctoral levels. In sum, the new degrees will require a significant restructuring of traditional systems of higher education.

A principal objective of the Bologna Process is to make university degrees transparent so that employers and institutions of higher education will be able to understand a student's credentials. To further facilitate transparency, the new degrees will be quantified in terms of ECTS credits and accompanied by the [diploma supplement](#), which provides a detailed description of the studies completed by the individual.

In order to promote the desired comparability and transparency among European credentials, some common criteria have been formulated to define the new Bologna bachelor's degree:

- 1) A bachelor-level degree is earned at an institution of higher education and requires between three-and-four years of full-time study, or 180 to 240 ECTS credits.
- 2) A bachelor-level degree is earned at both traditional universities and at non-university institutions of higher education.
- 3) The details (profile) of each degree program and its learning outcomes should be noted in their title and included in the diploma supplement issued to the student.
- 4) Bachelor's degrees that prepare students for further study should be freestanding and should not be regarded as part of a longer curriculum. This allows students to change disciplines and/or pursue graduate studies at another institution. Admission to second-cycle (graduate) degree programs requires successful completion of first-cycle (undergraduate) degrees.

Austria

Austria adopted the *Bakkalaureat* as a first university degree in September 1999. Programs leading to this qualification were introduced the following year, and the first cohort of new degree holders is scheduled to graduate in 2005. As of 2003/2004, as many as 180 individual bachelor programs have been adopted at Austrian universities.

The current plan is to offer bachelor's and master's degrees in at least 50 percent of all academic fields by 2006. All newly introduced programs must adhere to the two-tiered structure called for by the Bologna Declaration. Universities can no longer offer the traditional long first degrees. Students who began their studies under the old system have the option of staying in that program or transferring to the new, *bakkalaureat* program. Admission requires the *Reifeprüfung* or *Matura*, the Austrian school-leaving certificate awarded upon the completion of 12 years of elementary and secondary education.

Sample Program

The [Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration](#) (*Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien*) offers a bachelor's program in information systems designed to train specialists in the field of IT and information systems. The program focuses on the IT knowledge necessary to qualify students for occupations that include designing, developing and introducing applications in the IT sector.

The program lasts six semesters and consists of 106 weekly hours (64 in core subjects, 32 in special subjects and 10 in electives.) Core subjects include 16 weekly hours in business administration, 22 weekly hours in information systems, 8 weekly hours in information technology and a variety of additional classes. The 32 hours of specialized subjects include an IT specialization area plus additional IT-oriented specialist subjects or an advanced IT subject. The program includes an internship that can be completed either in a business enterprise or as a research project within the university. Twenty-five percent of the program is taught in English.

Students are required to write two research papers in the course of the program. In the first paper, they must discuss a specific topic in an IT-related field (i.e., their IT specialization area or an advanced IT subject.) In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all required courses and submit a second research paper related to their internship. A student's overall grade is based on the individual grades received in each course. Students graduate with the academic degree of *Bakkalaurea/Bakkalaureus* in social and economic sciences.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Note on credits: In this program offered at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, each weekly hour is equated with 1.75 ECTS credits. For more information on how the ECTS system is used in Europe please go [HERE](#).

Core Subjects

- 1) Fundamentals of Economics (2 weekly hours)
- 2) Fundamentals of Mathematics (2 weekly hours)
- 3) Accounts and Financial Reporting I (2 weekly hours)
- 4) Marketing I (2 weekly hours)
- 5) Personal Management, Leadership and Organizational Behavior I (2 weekly hours)
- 6) Introduction to Business Information Systems (2 weekly hours)
- 7) Cost Accounting I (2 weekly hours)
- 8) Procurement, Logistics and Production I (2 weekly hours)
- 9) Corporate Finance I (2 weekly hours)
- 10) Computer Lab: Business Information Systems (2 weekly hours)
- 11) Political Economy and Economic History (2 weekly hours)
- 12) Economic Policy and Institutions (2 weekly hours)
- 13) European and Public Business Law I (2 weekly hours)
- 14) Private Business Law I (2 weekly hours)
- 15) Statistics (2 weekly hours)
- 16) Business Communication I (Foreign Language I) (2 weekly hours)
- 17) Business Communication II (Foreign Language II) (2 weekly hours)
- 18) Principles of Modeling (2 weekly hours)
- 19) Principles of Programming (2 weekly hours)
- 20) Computer Lab: Programming (2 weekly hours)
- 21) Fundamentals of Information Management (2 weekly hours)
- 22) IS Project Management and Teamwork (2 weekly hours)
- 23) IT Internship (8 weekly hours)
- 24) Advanced Practical Project I (2 weekly hours)
- 25) Advanced Practical Project II (2 weekly hours)
- 26) Database Systems (2 weekly hours)
- 27) Algorithms and Data Structures (2 weekly hours)
- 28) Analysis of Information Systems (2 weekly hours)
- 29) Networks and Network Security (2 weekly hours)

Total Weekly Hours: 64

IT Specialization Area Weekly Hours

Students select one from the following areas:

- 1) E-Business (16 weekly hours)
- 2) Electronic Commerce (16 weekly hours)
- 3) Information Management (16 weekly hours)
- 4) New Media (16 weekly hours)

Total Weekly Hours: 16

IT-Oriented Specialist Business Administration Option Weekly Hours

Students can choose one of the following IT-oriented specialist business administration options:

- 1) Corporate Finance (16 weekly hours)
- 2) Commerce and Marketing (16 weekly hours)
- 3) Organization and Supply Management (16 weekly hours)
- 4) Operations Research (16 weekly hours)
- 5) Tourism Analysis and Leisure Marketing (16 weekly hours)
- 6) Transport Economics and Logistics (16 weekly hours)

OR

they can choose one from the following Advanced IT Subjects:

- 1) Data Analysis and Decision Support (16 weekly hours)
- 2) GEO Information Systems (16 weekly hours)
- 3) Information Management and Law (16 weekly hours)

Total Weekly Hours: 16

Elective Subjects

Electives can be chosen from classes offered by any recognized Austrian or foreign university as long as an examination is required for each class.

Total Weekly Hours: 10

IT Internship

The IT internship is to be completed within the framework of a class in which a specific topic is addressed and practical performance is evaluated. The IT internship can either be completed as an internship at an external company or as an internship in the university environment (e.g. in a research project). The results of the IT internship are to be summarized in the form of a bachelor's research paper.

University Education in Austria

Old System	New System
<p>Humanities & Social Sciences</p> <p>Diploma Program: 8 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: <i>Magister</i>____</p>	<p>Humanities & Social Sciences</p> <p>Bachelor Program: 6 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: Bachelor of____</p> <hr/> <p>Diploma Program: 10 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: e.g. <i>Diplom-Ingenieur</i></p>
<p>Engineering & Science</p> <p>Diploma Program: 10 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: <i>Diplom-Ingenieur</i></p>	<p>Engineering & Science</p> <p>Bachelor Program: 6 - 8 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: Bachelor of____</p> <hr/> <p>Master's Program: 2 semesters</p>
<p>Fine Arts & Music</p> <p>Diploma Program: 12 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: <i>Magister</i>____</p>	<p>Fine Arts & Music</p> <p>Bachelor Program: 6 - 8 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: Bachelor of____</p> <hr/> <p><i>Magister</i> Program: 4 semesters</p> <p>Academic Degree: <i>Magister</i>____</p>

Italy

In 1999, the Italian government began restructuring its degrees along the lines set out in the Bologna Declaration. The first university degree under the new system is the **Laurea** (same as the old degree name). It is three years in length and requires 180 ECTS.



World Education News and Reviews

March/April 2004

Feature

Evaluating the Bologna Degree in the U.S.

By Mariam Assefa, Executive Director, WES
and Robert Sedgwick, Editor, WENR

The first Bologna bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2003, which means that European students will soon begin using the new qualifications to gain entry to graduate-level programs in the United States. The Bologna bachelor's is (in most cases) a three-year, freestanding degree designed to prepare students for further study or employment. How then does this new degree compare with the traditional American bachelor's degree? At first glance, there are some fairly obvious similarities between the two: the nomenclature is the same, and both are terminal first degrees leading to either access to the job market or graduate study. At the same time, the degrees are quite different from one another, as we shall see.

In the last issue of WENR we presented an overview of the new Bologna bachelor's degree, comparing and contrasting it with the traditional first degrees in Europe. This article puts the Bologna degree up against the American bachelor's and illustrates how it will be evaluated when presented in the U.S. for graduate study.

The U.S. Bachelor's Degree

In the United States, institutions set degree requirements in terms of credits that are typically distributed over a period of four years. Each year is divided into semesters or quarters. The built-in flexibility of the system allows students to adjust the number of credits they choose to complete annually, so it is possible for students to earn their degrees in less than four years. They can also take longer than four years to complete their undergraduate education if they take fewer credits or attend school on a part-time basis.

Most bachelor's degree programs require the completion of a minimum of 120 semester credits drawn from three areas of study: general education, the major and electives.

General education is unique to the American system of undergraduate education. It is generally known as "the breadth component of the undergraduate curriculum and is usually defined on an institution-wide or college-wide basis. It generally involves study in several subject areas and frequently aims to provide a common undergraduate experience for all students at a particular institution. It has been variously described as the necessary prerequisite for specialized study" (Levine 78).

Students are usually expected to complete their general education requirements early on in their undergraduate studies. Most undergraduates undertake these courses during their freshman and sophomore years before they begin to concentrate on a major.

General education can be offered as either core curricula, distribution requirements or free electives. When it is set in the form of a core curriculum, general education consists of a set of common, broadly

based and interdisciplinary courses usually required of all students and consist of subjects in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Distribution requirements ensure that students complete their general education by taking a minimum number of courses or credits in specified academic areas drawn from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Free electives allow students to take courses outside their major to fulfill the general education requirements.

The quantity of general education varies from institution to institution. However, on average between 40 and 60 percent of U.S. bachelor's degree programs are devoted to general education. The remaining credits are devoted to the major and related subjects.

Comparing the Two Degrees

Even though the Bologna Process has resulted in shorter degree programs that are defined in terms of required credits and introduced a two-tiered (undergraduate/graduate) system, the new European bachelor's is still quite distinct from its U.S. counterpart. Based on the sample "Bologna" bachelor's degrees we examined from Austria and Italy (see previous issue of [WENR](#)), it is apparent that the European degrees are more heavily concentrated in the major -- or specialization -- and that the general education component which is so crucial to U.S. undergraduate education is absent. The new degrees, awarded by traditional European institutions, are undeniably European in character.

Below we have juxtaposed two programs for a bachelor's degree in business administration: one from [Indiana University](#) in Bloomington, and the other from the [Bocconi University](#) in Milan, Italy.

In the Italian program, courses in the major are taken starting in the first semester of study. The entire curriculum is devoted to business and related subjects including mathematics, computer science and foreign languages that are all taught in the same faculty. The sheer number of required courses in business and related subjects indicates that the program is heavily concentrated in the major, which is covered in great depth.

In comparison, the U.S. degree program includes subjects drawn from a wide range of disciplines to fulfill the university's general education and distribution requirements. The Kelly School of Business mandates that students who major in business "take at least 62 semester credits outside of business and economics coursework" in the different departments and faculties at Indiana University. Courses in the major and related subjects constitute 50% of the 124 credits required for the bachelor's degree.

At the same time, the objectives and intended outcomes of both programs are remarkably similar as they aim to equip students with the tools and skills required for employment or for graduate education in their chosen field.

The Kelly School of Business states that its graduates should "possess a broad-based knowledge of business and the business environment and the role that business plays in society; understand the national, international, political, social and economic environment that landscapes a firm's operations; be able to articulate their thoughts orally and in writing and be computer literate; understand and incorporate ethical principles in all processes and decisions; possess an appreciation of the opportunities and problems involved in managing complex organizations; have the skills and capability to work effectively with others in the completion of joint tasks; possess the ability to find and formulate problems, think analytically, and recommend solutions; have the understanding and expertise needed to function effectively in an advanced technological society."

The Bocconi program aims to "give students an understanding of the economic, financial, social, cultural, legal and technological foundations of business, and to equip them with the analytical and decision making tools that will allow them to manage different businesses in a changing environment. Graduates will be qualified for professional and managerial positions in marketing, sales, finance or human resources."

The main differences between the two programs--the number of years of study, the amount of coursework devoted to the major, and the absence of general education from the Italian curriculum--reflect the distinct characteristics of each educational system

The Evaluation

The task for the credential evaluator is to examine the new qualification and determine whether it constitutes sufficient preparation for graduate admission in the U.S. To achieve that end, it is necessary to establish a coherent set of criteria that can be used for comparing the American and European degrees. The main criteria that World Education Services (WES) considers when assessing a degree are the level, structure, scope and intent of the program. Those factors are expressed in terms of: requirements for admission to the program; its contents and structure; and the function that the credential is designed to serve in the home system, respectively. After having considered all the relevant factors, WES regards the new three-year Italian *laurea* as functionally equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree.

The number of years of study is merely one of the elements that define the structure of a program. In this particular case, the discrepancy in the number of years between the Italian and U.S. bachelor's degrees is outweighed by the similarities between the two programs.

Failure to recognize the Bologna bachelor's degree solely because it is a three-year qualification would leave U.S. graduate schools no choice but to reject candidates who apply for admission using these degrees, even when their records demonstrate that they have completed more than enough subjects in their discipline, have achieved the same skills and level of knowledge as their U.S. counterparts, and would very likely succeed at the graduate level. Such decisions would not only lack any academic merit, but they would also have profound and negative implications for international academic mobility.

CONCLUSION

Academic credentials serve as recorded proof of an individual's itinerary and accomplishments within a coherent and unified system of education. Credential evaluation exists first and foremost to facilitate the international mobility of students, scholars and professionals. This ideal is codified in the [Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education](#) in the European Region, adopted in 1997 and signed by 41 countries including the United States. The Convention calls on member states to promote, encourage and facilitate the recognition of credentials earned outside of their borders to encourage the mobility of students and professionals. It also specifies that "Each country shall recognize qualifications as similar to the corresponding qualifications in its own system unless it can be shown that there are substantial differences."

To be effective, credential evaluation must examine the nature, structure and objectives of different systems of education and build the bridges that allow students and professionals to use their educational qualifications internationally.

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Kelley School of Business (Indiana University)

The bachelor's program at the Kelley School of Business provides a general-education component complemented by the study of business and economics. The application of this principle promotes a balanced program of study while it enables a student with an interest in a professional area of business to specialize in that field.

In addition, all undergraduate programs include courses that ensure the development of a basic understanding of the principles and practices involved in the management of business firms in the dynamic economic, social, and political environment of the world today. Four interrelated, rigorous junior-level courses in marketing management, operations management, financial management, and strategic management, known collectively as the integrative core, are required of all business majors. Consideration is given also to basic trends that are likely to shape the pattern of the business world in the years ahead. Beyond these basic requirements, students are given an opportunity to pursue studies from a wide variety of subject areas.

Graduates of the Undergraduate Program of the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University should have a general knowledge and appreciation of accomplishments in the physical sciences, arts, humanities, and social sciences; possess a broad-based knowledge of business and the business environment and the role each business plays in society; understand the national, international, political, social, and economic environment that landscapes a firm's operations; be able to articulate their thoughts orally and in writing and be computer literate; understand and incorporate ethical principles in all processes and decisions; possess an appreciation of the opportunities and

problems involved in managing complex organizations; have the skills and capability to work effectively with others in the completion of joint tasks; possess the ability to find and formulate problems, think analytically, and recommend solutions; have the understanding and expertise needed to function effectively in an advanced technological environment.

BACHELOR'S PROGRAM IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The course work required for the **B.S. degree in business** consists essentially of three parts:

- I. General-Education Component
- II. Business Component
- III. Electives

GENERAL EDUCATION COMPONENT

(62 credit hours)

Kelley School of Business majors must complete at least 62 credit hours outside of business and economics course work.

I. Communications (8-9 credit hours)

- Elementary Composition or an approved English composition option (2-3 cr.)
- Public Speaking (3 cr.)
- Business Communications (3 cr.)

II. Mathematics

- Finite Mathematics (3 cr.)
- Brief Survey of Calculus (3 cr.) OR • Calculus I (4 cr.)

III. International Dimension (6 credit hours)

The international dimension requirement may be fulfilled in any one of the following four ways.

1. Language

A minimum of 6 credit hours of a language at the 200 level or above

2. International Business and Economics

A minimum of 6 credit hours from the following list:

- The International Business Environment (3 cr.)
- International Business: Operations of International Enterprises (3 cr.)
- International Business Law (3 cr.)
- International Finance (3 cr.)
- Public Policy and the International Economy (3 cr.)
- International Marketing (3 cr.)
- Survey of International Economics (3 cr.)
- International Trade (3 cr.)
- International Monetary Economics (3 cr.)
- Economic Development (3 cr.)
- Soviet-Type Economies in Transition (3 cr.)

3. Approved Overseas Programs

Participation in any approved overseas program of Indiana University (minimum 6 cr.) will fulfill this requirement. Please see a business advisor.

4. Area Studies

Selection of two approved courses (minimum 6 cr.) from one of the following area studies programs:

- African studies
- Central Eurasian studies
- East Asian studies
- Latin American and Caribbean studies
- Near Eastern studies
- Russian and East European studies
- West European studies

Distribution Option

Complete a total of 27 credit hours of course work distributed in the following way:

1. Fifteen (15) credit hours of course work offered by the College of Arts and Sciences in *one* of the areas listed below with a minimum of 6 credit hours at the 300/400 level (with the exception of • Natural and Mathematical Sciences, which requires 6 credit hours at the 200 level or higher):

- Arts and Humanities
- Social and Historical Studies
- Natural and Mathematical Sciences

2. Six (6) credit hours in *each* of the other two College of Arts and Sciences areas not selected for the 15 credit hour requirement.

Field Specialization Option

Students may complete *one* of the field specializations listed below by completing 27 credit hours taking any courses from the departments or schools within the chosen field. At least 6 of the 27 required credit hours must be at the 300/400 level for all but the science and technology field, which requires at least 6 credit hours at the 200 level or above.

1. Communication

- Journalism
- Telecommunications
- English
- Communication and culture
- Speech and hearing sciences
- Physics (P105 and P106 only)

2. Environmental

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Geological sciences
- Public and environmental affairs
- Physics (P120, P201, P202, P211, and P310 only)

3. Global Studies and Languages

- African studies
- American Sign Language
- Central Eurasian studies
- Classical studies (language courses)
- East Asian studies
- French/Italian
- Germanic studies
- India studies
- Jewish studies
- Latin American and Caribbean studies
- Near Eastern studies
- Russian and East European studies
- Spanish/Portuguese
- West European studies

4. Not-for-Profit

- Fine arts
- Jewish studies
- Music
- Philosophy
- Public and environmental affairs
- Religious studies
- Social work
- Theatre

5. Science and Technology

- Astronomy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Computer science
- Geological sciences
- History and philosophy of science
- Mathematics
- Medical science
- Physics

BUSINESS COMPONENT

I. Fundamentals

- Business Accounting Skills (1 cr.)
- Introduction to Financial Accounting (3 cr.)
- Introduction to Managerial Accounting (3 cr.)
- The Computer in Business (3 cr.)
- Legal Environment of Business (3 cr.)
- Technology (3 cr.)
- Career Perspectives (2 cr.)
- Introduction to Microeconomics (3 cr.)
- Introduction to Macroeconomics (3 cr.)
- Statistical Analysis in Economics and Business (3 cr.)

II. Junior Year

- Managing and Behavior in Organizations (3 cr.)
- Business and Economic Strategy in the Public Arena (2 cr.)

III. Senior Year

- Business Career Planning and Placement (2 cr.)

IV. Integrative Core (12 cr.): (must be completed with a C or higher)

- Financial Management (3 cr.)
- Strategic Management (3 cr.)
- Marketing Management (3 cr.)
- Operations Management (3 cr.)

Integrative Core (12 cr.): (must be completed with a C or higher)

- Financial Management (3 cr.)
- Strategic Management (3 cr.)
- Marketing Management (3 cr.)
- Operations Management (3 cr.)

Business Concentrations

In addition to fulfilling the general-education component and the business component requirements previously listed, students in the Kelley School of Business select one or more of the following concentrations, listed below under their home departments.

Accounting and Information Systems

- Accounting
- Computer Information Systems

Business Economics and Public Policy

- Economic Consulting Track
- Public Policy Analysis Track

Business Law

- Legal Studies

Finance

- Finance
- Finance-Real Estate

Management

- Entrepreneurship [ABSENT]
- International Studies
- Management

Marketing

- Marketing
- Marketing—Distribution Management

Operations and Decision Technologies

- Business Process Management
- Production/Operations Management

THE BOCCONI UNIVERSITY

The Bocconi University of Milan offers a new laurea program in business administration (economia aziendale). The program's objective is to give students an understanding of the economic, financial, social, legal, cultural and technical foundations of business, and to equip them with the analytical and decision making skills that will allow them to manage different businesses in a changing environment. Graduates will be qualified for professional and managerial positions in marketing, sales, finance or human resources.

The program is three years in length and requires the completion of 180 ECTS credits (146 credits in compulsory subjects, 12 elective credits, 12 credits in two European languages, four credits in computer science and six credits for the final project). Students who wish to take English as one of their languages must have achieved a minimum TOEFL score of 550 on the paper test or 213 on the computer-based examination. Other English language tests may be used to show a comparable level of proficiency.

During the first year, students study economics, business administration, law, history, quantitative methods and computer science. In the following years, they take marketing, finance, production, logistics, business organization and accounting. Courses in Italian and English are taken throughout the program.

LAUREA PROGRAM IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

First Year

FIRST SEMESTER

- 1) Economic History
- 2) Mathematics (first module)
- 3) Principles of Private Law
- 4) Theory and Principles of Management
- 5) Computer Skills
- 6) First Foreign Language (preparatory modules)

SECOND SEMESTER

- 1) Accounting and Financial Statements
- 2) Fundamentals of Management
- 3) Mathematics (second module)
- 4) Microeconomics
- 5) Principals of Public Law
- 6) First Foreign Language (preparatory modules)

Total first year credits: 62

Second Year

FIRST SEMESTER

- 1) Accounting and Financial Statements 2
- 2) Macroeconomics
- 3) Organizational Theory
- 4) Statistics
- 5) Theory and Principals of Public Management
- 6) First/Second Foreign Languages (preparatory modules)

SECOND SEMESTER

- 1) Corporate Finance
- 2) Financial Mathematics
- 3) Managerial Accounting
- 4) Marketing (taught in Italian)
- 5) First/Second Foreign Languages (preparatory modules)

Total second year credits: 60

Third Year

FIRST SEMESTER

- 1) Financial Markets and Institutions
- 2) Innovation and Technology Management
- 3) Management Information Systems
- 4) Public Economics
- 5) First Elective Course*
- 6) Second foreign Language (preparatory modules)

SECOND SEMESTER

- 1) Company and Business Law
- 2) Strategic Management
- 3) Second Elective Course
- 4) Second Foreign Language
- 5) Final Work

Total third year credits: 58
Total credits: 180

The editors would like to thank Mr. Lonnie Johnson, executive director of the [Austrian Fulbright Commission](#), and The [Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture](#) for their helpful suggestions on Austria's system of higher education.

We would also like to thank Ms. Silvia Capucci, deputy director, CIMEA della Fondazione Rui Italian [ENIC-NARIC](#), for her help on the Italian system of higher education.

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World Education News and Reviews

January/February 2005

Practical Information

A Practical Guide to Bologna Tools and Instruments

By Nick Clark
Assistant Editor WENR

INTRODUCTION

The new bachelor's and master's 'Bologna degrees' started filtering into evaluators' inboxes at World Education Services (WES) soon after the first graduating class – 2002/03 – began applying for a U.S. equivalency of their newly awarded degrees. As the European educational reform movement, known commonly as the [Bologna Process](#), has gained pace, so those charged with evaluating the new degrees in the United States have started acquainting themselves with the reforms and their implications.

In previous issues of *WENR* we have: documented the challenges and the progress being made towards the 2010 goal of a European Higher Education Area [[The Bologna Process as Seen From the Outside](#)]; described the new Bologna bachelor's degree, comparing and contrasting it with traditional long degrees in Europe [[The Bologna Bachelor's Degree: An Overview](#)]; and, in last years' March/April issue, we compared the bachelor's degree in business administration from Indiana University's Kelly School of Business with that from the Bocconi University in Milan, Italy [[Evaluating the Bologna Degree in the US](#)].

We begin this article by providing a practical guide to the new tools and documents that credential evaluators can expect to receive in the coming years together with the new 'Bologna degrees'. We have included a sampling of documents received at WES as well as generic documents provided by the European Commission and national ministries of education. The second part of the article will outline some of the issues that are beginning to surface in Bologna-related discussions regarding degree equivalencies and international student flows.

BACKGROUND

The Bologna Process is a fundamental restructuring of higher education in Europe, of which the introduction of three cycles – bachelor, master and doctoral – in lieu of the traditional long program is the single most important feature. Traditionally, students who failed to complete a first university degree program at a European university had nothing to show for their many years of study and the courses that they had completed. Therefore, one of the key goals of the reform movement is to improve graduation rates at European universities and more efficiently prepare students for the labor market.

A realignment of this size and magnitude affecting higher education across 40 signatory countries is truly a unique and enormous undertaking. The last major European higher education reform movement was what is referred to as "the massification of higher education," which took place in the 1960s and 1970s. That process saw the creation of non-university institutions of higher education that were distinct from universities and never enjoyed the same status as them. An essential aspect of the Bologna reforms,

therefore, is its emphasis on lifelong learning and the importance of incorporating professional and technical schools as equal partners within the structure of the European tertiary system.

Originally signed in 1999, the [Bologna Declaration](#) is an agreement now covering 40 countries to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010. In addition to a fundamental restructuring of degree systems, signatories to Bologna have agreed to promote quality assurance systems, remove obstacles to the mobility of students, implement a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, and establish a common credit system. The following is offered as a guide to some of the transparency and mobility tools that have been introduced to help achieve those goals.

Programs and degrees will be expressed using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

What is the ECTS?

The ECTS is a key tool in the promotion of academic mobility within, to, and from Europe. First introduced by the European Commission in 1989, within the framework of the Erasmus mobility program to facilitate credit transfer for tertiary-level students spending study periods abroad, the ECTS has since been adopted as the standard credit transfer *and* accumulation system to be used in all countries and institutions that have adopted the Bologna reforms.

As part of the ECTS process, European institutions are required to disseminate an array of supporting information in the form of three main tools: **institutional information catalogs**, the **ECTS study contract** between institutions and between the institution and student, and the **transcript of records**.

The credit, what is it and how does it work?

The ECTS is a credit system based on a definition of what constitutes a full-time academic course load, reflecting the quantity of work each course requires of a student in relation to the total quantity of work required to complete a full year of academic study at a particular institution. Credits are assigned to all academic work (lectures, laboratory work, seminars, examinations, private study and theses) that comprises an integral part of the program of study.

Credits are awarded only when the course has been completed and all required examinations have been successfully taken. In ECTS terms, **60 credits** represent the workload of one year of full-time study, **30 credits** are given for a semester and **20 credits** for a trimester. Sixty credits stands for an average workload of around **1500 hours**, which corresponds to around **25 student work hours per credit**. In ECTS terms a bachelor's degree consists of **180 to 240 credits**. A master's degree should normally represent an additional **60 or 120 credits**, for a total of **300 credits**. Within this framework, institutions and faculties allocate credits among their various courses.

- [See sample transcript with ECTS credit allocations](#)

THE ECTS INFORMATION PACKAGE/COURSE CATALOG

European nations are increasingly promoting themselves as international study destinations. This has led to a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of informational outputs on education systems and program offerings in a manner that is increasingly consistent and systematic across the emerging European Higher Education Area.

The ECTS information package resembles a US university catalog. It provides up-to-date information on the institution, faculty, organization and structure of programs and courses. It is available in hard copy and online, and the information is updated annually. It offers also descriptions covering the content, prerequisites, mode of assessment, time unit, type of course, teaching and learning methods employed and ECTS credits allocated by the department offering the course or program.

Sample Information Packages (Bearing Quality Label)

- [Deusto University, Bilbao \(Spain\)](#)
- [Agricultural University of Wroclaw \(Poland\)](#)
- [Agder University College \(Norway\)](#)

THE TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDS

The new European academic transcript breaks the learning achievements of the student into individual course or module units and shows the course weighting in terms of ECTS credits. The transcript also shows the grades awarded according to the local grading scale and the ECTS grading scale.

- [See generic and specific examples](#)

ECTS GRADES

Many different grading scales currently co-exist in Europe. In order to facilitate the mobility of students and their grades between institutions, an ECTS grading system has been developed to complement the award of ECTS credits. This provides additional information alongside that provided on the transcript, but does not replace the local grade. Receiving institutions make their own decision on how to apply the ECTS grading scale to their own system. Grades are reported on a carefully calibrated and uniform A-F scale combined with keywords and short qualitative definitions.

WES GRADING SCALE EQUIVALENCY

ECTS Scale	Definition	Percentage of Successful Student/s Normally Achieving the Grade	U.S. Grade Equivalents
A	EXCELLENT - outstanding performance with only minor errors	10	A
B	VERY GOOD - above the average standard but with some errors	25	A-/B+
C	GOOD - generally sound work with a number of notable errors	30	B
D	SATISFACTORY- fair but with significant shortcomings	25	C+

E	SUFFICIENT - performance meets the minimum criteria	10	C
FX	FAIL - some more work required before the credit can be awarded	-	F
F	FAIL - considerable further work is required	-	F

THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

The [Diploma Supplement](#) (DS) was introduced to provide independent data designed to improve the international transparency and fair academic and professional recognition of academic credentials. As its name implies, it is issued together with a final diploma or degree. The DS provides a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification.

Institutions are expected to follow the standard DS format and provide all the information elements specified in the template. The DS is composed of eight sections (information identifying the holder of the qualification, information identifying the qualification, information on the level of the qualification, information on the contents and results gained, information on the function of the qualification, additional information, certification of the DS, information on the national higher education system). The DS is not a substitute for a diploma or degree; it is issued in addition (as a supplement) to the qualification itself. However, institutions are required to apply the same authentication procedures, such as an official stamp and signature, as for the diploma.

- [See DS model and examples](#)

ENIC-NARIC NETWORK

The European Network of Information Centers (ENIC) and National Academic Recognition and Information Centers (NARIC) located in each participating country serve as additional sources of information to aid degree recognition and equivalency. The ENIC-NARIC website provides information on national systems of education. It also provides the contact information of the agencies and individuals that are available to answer queries about a country's educational structure and qualifications, with the goal of facilitating cross-border degree recognition.

- <http://www.enic-naric.net/>

How is the implementation monitored?

While many countries in Europe are at various stages of implementing the Bologna reforms, it has become evident to those involved in the process that there is a need to provide some simple reference points with regard to student workload and learning outcomes to guarantee the legitimacy, transparency and effectiveness of the process.

While the framework of the Bologna reforms have been set by the ministers of education of the signatory countries, it is the working groups composed of academics, students and employers who are negotiating to make sure that degree programs are properly set and calibrated across disciplines and across the participating countries through a process known as *Tuning*.

The name *Tuning* was chosen for the project to reflect the idea that universities do not necessarily look for harmonization of their degree programs but simply for points of reference, convergence and common understanding.

The project ***Tuning Educational Structures in Europe*** has, in part, been undertaken to ensure that credit allocations for courses or modules are defined across Europe by similar and equitable competences and subject-related learning outcomes (i.e. what skills are students acquiring from a certain degree program and how can they be compared to other degrees in the same field at other institutions of higher education within Europe?). This concerns both subject specific competences and generic competences, like communication skills and leadership. The *Tuning* process is also designed to take into account a range of other variables, such as teaching methods and diversity of traditions so as not to restrict academic or institutional autonomy.

For more information on Tuning go here:

- [Phase 1](#)
- [Phase 2](#)

ECTS Standards of Good Practice

The European Commission in November 2004 awarded, for the first time, the **ECTS Label** to 11 institutions. The ECTS Label is awarded to institutions which apply ECTS correctly in all first- and second-cycle degree programs. The Label is designed to raise the profile of nominated institutions as transparent and reliable partners in European and international cooperation.

The ECTS label is awarded for three academic years. In addition to applying ECTS credits correctly to all academic programs, institutions are required to make widely available (online and in hard copy) information packages/course catalogs in two languages (or only in English for programs taught in English), samples of learning agreements, transcripts of records and proof of academic recognition.

- [List of Institutions awarded ECTS Label](#)

Diploma Supplement Standards of Good Practice

Similar to the ECTS Label, the **Diploma Supplement Label** is awarded to institutions that ensure transparency and recognition by issuing supplements that meet the guidelines set by those who developed the model DS. In the first round of applications and selections, conducted in November 2003, 85 institutions applied for the Diploma Supplement Label of which 28 were awarded Labels (75 percent were from Nordic countries).

- [List of institutions awarded the Diploma Supplement Label](#)

The Bologna Bachelor's Degree Equivalency Issues

The last few months have witnessed an increasing volume of literature on the Bologna degrees in both professional journals and in the mainstream press. Much of the discussion on this side of the Atlantic has focused on the challenges that now face U.S. colleges and university admissions offices and professional evaluation services in finding a fair and balanced equivalency for the new European three-year degree.

Different views have emerged around the issues and, as the process of evaluating foreign degrees in the United States is entirely independent from any national authority, it is no surprise that a range of interpretations and decisions have been proposed. The crux of the debate centers on whether or not the new three-year bachelor's degree is comparable to a US degree and constitutes adequate preparation for graduate studies at institutions in the United States (i.e. is it equivalent to a U.S. four-year bachelor's degree?).

In the view of those for whom the number of years is the most prominent consideration when judging a degree, a three-year degree cannot be compared to the US degree, which requires a minimum of 120 semester credits and is typically completed in four years. Moreover, they argue that accepting the Bologna first degree as equivalent to its U.S. counterpart for graduate admissions is unfair to domestic students who are required to complete the equivalent of four years of undergraduate study.

From a functional standpoint, as we suggested in a previous issue of [WENR](#), it is the scope and intent of the new Bologna degrees that should be evaluated rather than a count of the years a student has spent at university. As an example we compared the bachelor's degree in business administration from Indiana University's Kelly School of Business with the new three-year degree from the Bocconi University in Milan. We concluded that while the Kelly School of Business program was a year longer, the two degrees are functionally equivalent. Although the general education component common to U.S. bachelor's programs is not a feature of the Italian university system, the depth and scope of the new three-year *laurea* more than adequately prepares students for entry-level management jobs or for the rigors of a master's program at a U.S. institution of higher education.

US-Europe Mobility Issues

One of the main objectives of the Bologna Process is to facilitate educational and professional mobility within Europe and beyond by making qualifications coherent and transparent.

The harmonization of degree structures across Europe is designed not only to make the various systems of education better understood, but also as the cornerstone of a policy to increase the number of non-European students enrolling at European institutions of higher education.

In order to attract international students, European universities have started to offer detailed information on academic programs, housing, student services as well as other requirements such as health insurance, visa and residency rules. Many are starting to offer credit-bearing courses taught in English (approximately 1,500 master programs were offered during the 2003/04 academic year in countries where English is not the first language). These features alone represent a significant transformation for European universities, which are now more outward looking and responsive to the needs of students, including international students.

Although this trend can be seen to represent a challenge to U.S. institutions of higher education in terms of international student recruitment, the Bologna Process also presents future recruitment opportunities. A [recent report](#) by [GMAC](#) (Graduate Management Admission Council), a global business school association, assessed the possible implications of the structural changes of the Bologna Process in the context of graduate management education. The report concluded, in part, that the reforms will result in a huge increase in the number of post-Bologna bachelor graduates, many of whom will be seeking entry to master's-level programs. If the findings of the report can be extended beyond the domain of management education to all fields of study, then, from the perspective of U.S. universities and colleges this newly enlarged pool of European bachelor graduates can be seen as a possible boon to recruitment opportunities.

In conclusion, the Bologna Process is impacting the way in which U.S. admissions offices evaluate European credentials. Their work, however, is being made much easier by the abundance of information that is being made available as European nations increase the attractiveness and transparency of their tertiary-level credentials. Furthermore, the speed with which information is being made available both online and in hard copy means that the evaluator in the United States more than ever has the tools necessary to make informed decisions when assessing the new European degrees.