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Executive Summary

This E-Note summarises the main results of the UK HE Europe Unit survey on European HE developments.

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Results of the 2007 UK HE Europe Unit survey on UK HEIs engagement in European HE developments

Introduction

1. This paper reports on the UK HE Europe Unit's¹ 2007 survey on UK higher education institutions' (HEIs) engagement in European HE initiatives. Survey responses demonstrate that UK HEIs have increased their engagement with the European higher education agenda. It also provides information on areas where future action is needed. The Europe Unit would like to thank HEIs for their assistance in responding to the survey.

2. Separate Europe Notes report on the results for England and Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and GuildHE members. Visit:

http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/news/europe_note_archive/2007.cfm

Survey objectives and content

2. The Europe Unit carried out the survey to assess UK HEIs engagement in European initiatives following an earlier survey in 2005². The survey was sent to institutions in August 2007 and included questions on the following issues:

- Diploma Supplement;
- Credit issues;
- Joint degrees;
- Masters degrees, including integrated Masters programmes;
- Recognition of qualifications;
- Collaboration; and
- Institutional strategies

3. The survey has been administered and delivered in an online format by JISC. The outcomes will inform the HEFCE-funded JISC infoNet project 'Building Capacity: Preparing for Bologna' currently under development with a range of project partners, including the Europe Unit. The project is aiming to develop a

¹ The Europe Unit is a sector-wide body working in the interests of UK higher education. It has three objectives: to raise awareness of the European issues affecting UK higher education; to coordinate the UK's involvement in European initiatives and debates; to strengthen the position of the UK higher education sector in debates over the Bologna Process and EU policies and initiatives. For more information visit:

www.europeunit.ac.uk

² To view the results of the 2005 survey, visit: <http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/resources/E-05-13.doc>

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so-called 'Applied infoKit' or practitioners' guide highlighting good practice and assisting institutions in implementing their own Bologna action plan with particular reference to information systems. For more information visit: <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/bologna>.

Key survey results

- 153 HEIs received the survey and 92 responded, giving a response rate of 60%. 68 HEIs³ in England and Northern Ireland responded (66 in 2005), 12 in Wales (7 in 2005), 13 in Scotland (12 in 2005) and 11 from GuildHE (3 in 2005).

Response rate	England & Northern Ireland	Wales	Scotland	GuildHE members	UK
2007	57%	100%	62%	50%	60%
2005	42%	61%	57%	10%	53%

- The 2007 response rate is 7% higher than the one for the survey conducted in 2005 demonstrating a growing awareness, interest and engagement in European HE developments.
- 50% of respondents were from HEI Registry departments. The remaining responses came from an even spread of representatives across other categories/departments.

Diploma Supplement

- 99% of respondents are aware of the requirement to issue the Diploma Supplement 'automatically and free of charge' for students graduating from 2005 onwards. 60% of respondents currently issue the Diploma Supplement - over twice as many HEIs as in 2005 when only 28% of respondents issued the Diploma Supplement.

Implementation rate	England & Northern Ireland	Wales	Scotland	GuildHE members	UK
2007	57%	58%	62%	82%	60%
2005	20%	75%	42%	10%	28%

- Over half of the HEIs who issue the Diploma Supplement do so automatically to students graduating with an undergraduate and postgraduate level qualification and about a quarter issue it on an adhoc basis. Only a quarter of HEIs issue the Diploma Supplement automatically to doctoral graduates. Three institutions issue the Diploma Supplement electronically and a paper-based format appears to be standard.
- 90% of those not yet issuing the Diploma Supplement intend to do so in the coming years, 88% by within the next two years. In 2005, 62% of respondents stated that they would introduce the Diploma Supplement by 2007.

³ This figure includes 11 GuildHE institutions

10. Of those issuing the Diploma Supplement, 58% use the standard format developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES⁴.
11. 78% of HEIs have encountered difficulties with implementing the Diploma Supplement. IT issues appear to be the main difficulty encountered by HEIs (77%) and also the main reason for not issuing the Diploma Supplement (78%).
12. The majority of survey respondents (70%) have sought advice to overcome difficulties in producing the Diploma Supplement. Of these 58% have sought help from other HEIs, 28% from the Bologna Experts, and 16% have contacted the Europe Unit. A minority approached software suppliers for advice.
13. One third of respondents have received the Diploma Supplement from other HEIs and half are of European provenance. 79% of HEIs find that the Diploma Supplement is a useful tool for evaluating students' achievements and supporting admissions procedures with 75% stating they had not experienced difficulties in interpreting information provided on the Diploma Supplement.
14. 70% of respondents produce transcripts of graduates that accord with the Minimum Data Set provided within the Progress File Guide (73% in 2005).

Credit

15. The survey shows that the majority of respondents (93%) credit rate their courses (84% in 2005). 92% do so in England and Northern Ireland, and all respondents in Scotland and Wales. Over half of respondent institutions (58%) with credit rated programmes use European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for either transfer (56%) or accumulation (33%). Some institutions that have internally developed credit systems state these are compatible with the Burgess recommendations on the use of academic credit in HE England⁵.
16. Responses also suggest that the majority of respondents (70%) who do not use ECTS as their main credit system record ECTS equivalent credits against the credit system in use.

Joint degrees

17. 73% of respondents have the power to award joint degrees or multiple/dual/double degrees (the same rate as in 2005).
18. Of those UK respondents able to award joint degrees, 73% do so in collaboration with an institution in the UK. 70% with an institution in one of the 46 other Bologna Process countries and 61% do so with an institution outside the European Higher Education Area.

⁴ This survey was submitted prior to the publication of the final report prepared by the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group – the Burgess Group.

⁵ For further information please see: http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/Burgess_credit_report.pdf.

19. Of those UK respondents awarding multiple/dual/double degrees, 54% do so in collaboration with an institution in the UK. 52% with an institution outside the European Higher Education Area and 64% do so with an institution in one of the 46 other Bologna Process countries.

Masters programmes

20. The survey suggests a significant diversity in the UK for second cycle provision. 92% of respondents offer Masters programmes the majority of which are one-year full time equivalent and, in subject areas, almost 22% are two-year full time equivalent. Programmes available range in duration from 15, 18, 19 and 36 months, to three or five year part-time or flexible distance learning.

Integrated Masters programmes

21. 60% of respondents offer full-time integrated Masters programmes (the same rate as in 2005) of which 82% are MEng degrees.
22. 68% of respondents stated that they had not made changes to integrated Masters programmes in response to Bologna process developments.
23. Nine respondents (17%) have incorporated teaching into the summer vacation. 51% have incorporated industrial placements with assessed and credit-rated outcomes and 9% have extended the timescale for submission of the dissertation to extend the duration of the programme.
24. 81% of HEIs providing integrated Masters award a Masters qualification only at the end of the Masters stage of the programme as opposed to 7% of HEIs offering a Bachelor qualification after the Bachelor stage and a Masters qualification after the Masters stage, and 11% of HEIs offering both qualifications at the Masters stage.
25. Eight respondents (15%) claimed that they did not allocate a minimum of 60 credits at Masters level.

Recognition of Masters degrees

26. Responses also indicate widespread acceptance of UK one year Masters and integrated Masters qualifications abroad. 68% of respondents are not aware of any difficulties experienced by one-year full time Masters graduates in gaining recognition of their award for access to further study or employment in either the public or private sector. Two respondents indicated known recognition difficulties experienced by one-year full time Masters graduates for employment in the private sector, six respondents indicated known recognition difficulties for employment in the public sector and seven respondents indicated difficulties for graduates going on to further study.

27. 64% of respondents are not aware of any difficulties experienced by Integrated Masters graduates in gaining recognition of their award for access to further study or employment in either the public or private sector. No respondents indicated known recognition difficulties experienced by Integrated Masters graduates for employment in the private sector, one respondent indicated known recognition difficulties for employment in the public sector and two respondents indicated difficulties for graduates going on to further study.

Institutional Strategies

28. 74% of HEIs responding have an International Strategy and 41% have a European strategy. Of those HEIs with a European strategy, 29% have it embedded in their international strategy and 12% have it separate from their international strategies.

29. Twenty-two HEIs (24%) have a Bologna Process Coordinating Group or Taskforce.

Areas for further action

30. Respondents have asked for more information and guidance in the following areas: joint degrees, Diploma Supplement, developing European strategies, use of ECTS, status of UK one-year masters programmes and Integrated Masters, recognition of UK degrees.

Europe Unit follow-up activity

31. The survey produces useful information for the UK HE sector in terms of progress in meeting Bologna goals as well as identifying areas where more action is required. Following the results of the survey, the UK HE Europe Unit plans the following activities in the coming months:
- continue to assist the sector to ensure that all HEIs issue the Diploma Supplement to graduating students automatically and free of charge, particularly to students graduating with a foundation degree or doctoral level qualification;
 - ensure that the Higher Education Achievement Report proposed by the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Group builds on the Diploma Supplement.
 - continue to work with the Quality Assurance Agency, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and professional and regulatory bodies on recognition difficulties.
 - Encourage HEIs to relate their credit system to ECTS credits.
 - With regards to integrated Masters, clarify the situation with those institutions that have suggested their Master's level qualifications do not have the required 60 ECTS credits.
 - follow-up with those institutions who provided contact details and indicated willingness to provide more information on recognition difficulties;
 - organise an event on institutional strategies in 2008 to support institutions in developing effective European strategies and share best practice.