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Rektorenkonferenz der Schweizer Universitäten
Conférence des Recteurs des Universités Suisses
Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Svizzere
Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities

A History of the Development of the Qualifications Framework for the Swiss Higher Education Area (nqf.ch-HS)

European Context

At the Bergen Bologna Ministerial Meeting in 2005 the ministers of education adopted the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). The ministers committed themselves to develop national qualifications frameworks compatible with the QF-EHEA by 2010 (Leuven Bologna Ministerial Meeting in 2007: by 2012!).

The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) recommends the following 10 steps in developing a national qualifications framework:

1. Decision to start: Taken by the national body responsible for higher education (minister?)
2. Setting the agenda: The purpose of our NQF WG-Report nr. 1 (section 2.3)
3. Organising the process: Identifying stakeholders; setting up a committee/WG
4. Design Profile: Level structure, Level descriptors (learning outcomes), Credit ranges
5. Consultation National discussion and acceptance of design by stakeholders
6. Approval According to national tradition by Minister/Government/legislation
7. Administrative set-up Division of tasks of implementation between HEI, QAA and other bodies
8. Implementation at institutional/programme level; Reformulation of individual study programmes to learning outcome based approach
9. Inclusion of qualifications in the NQF; Accreditation or similar (cfr. Berlin Communiqué)
10. Self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework (Alignment to Bologna cycles etc.); WG Report nr. 1; Pilot projects

The sequence of steps need not be identical in all countries.

Development of the nqf.ch-HS

2005

Mandate of the Swiss Secretariat for Education and Research (SER) *BFUG Step 1*

In September 2005, based on the decision of the European education ministers to develop and implement national qualification frameworks by 2010, the SER commissioned the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) to develop the Qualifications Framework for the Swiss Higher Education Area together with the Rectors' Conferences of the Universities of Applied Sciences (KFH) and of Teacher Education (COHEP), in collaboration with the Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (OAQ) and including all interested parties. The project is jointly managed by the three rectors' conferences.

Orientation Meeting „Qualifikations Framework“ of the SER, 02.09.2005

Among others, representatives of the following authorities attended the meeting: the three rectors' conferences, the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET), the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK/CDIP) and the Swiss Students Association (VSS-UNES).

Working Group AG nqf.ch-HS (September 2005 – August 2009) *BFUG Step 3*

The members of the working group (AG nqf.ch-HS „gross“) appointed by the rectors' conferences were the secretary generals of the three rectors' conferences, representatives of the OAQ, the SER, the EDK/CDIP, the OPET and the associations of Swiss students and of the non-professional teaching staff as well as - in advisory capacity - a higher education expert. The head of the working group was Dr. Fredy Sidler, secretary general of the KFH, and from April 2008 onwards Prof. Hans Peter Müller, rector of the University of Teacher Education in Bern. The management was

delegated to the CRUS. This working group generally held meetings twice a year in order to make decisions and determine how to proceed. The actual framework development was done by a selection of working group members (AG nqf.ch-HS „klein“).

Activities of the AG nqf.ch-HS

- Various preliminary clarifications (descriptors, terminology, aim and purpose of the framework, state of affairs in other European countries etc.)

2006

Activities of the AG nqf.ch-HS

- Project organisation established and submitted to the Swiss University Conference (SUK) and the Council of the Universities of Applied Sciences of the EDK/CDIP (FHR EDK / CHES CDIP) **BFUG Step 2**
- First draft of the nqf.ch-HS **BFUG Step 4**
- Foreign experts invited: Jan Rathjen (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, Germany), Isabelle Le Mouillour, (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, Germany), Nick Harris (Quality Assurance Agency, United Kingdom)
- Participation in the BFUG Workshop, 30.06.2006
- Survey „Functions and characteristics of the nqf.ch-HS from the perspective of various stakeholders“
- First orientation meeting for stakeholders, 08.11.2006

2007

Activities of the AG nqf.ch-HS

- Discussions with 6 stakeholder groups (working world / university management / Bologna specialists / quality assurance specialists / university lecturers / students and non-professional teaching staff)
- Revision of the nqf.ch-HS

2008

Activities of the AG nqf.ch-HS

- Second national meeting, 29.01.2008
- Revision of the nqf.ch-HS
- National consultation: June – October 2008 **BFUG Step 5**

2009

Decisions made by the Steering Committee of the Rectors' Conferences of the Swiss Higher Education Institutions (la-rkh.ch), 21.01.2009

- One generic qualifications framework for the whole higher education area is to be developed.
- The la-rkh.ch supplies a presentation of the types of higher education institutions which is to be included in the nqf.ch-HS.
- The nqf.ch-HS is a reference document.
- The „owners“ of the nqf.ch-HS are the 3 rectors' conferences.
- Further education must be included in the nqf.ch-HS.

Activities of the AG nqf.ch-HS

- Analysis of the consultation results
- Decision to use the Dublin Descriptors and to develop the further education descriptor analogically
- Revision of the nqf.ch-HS
- Submission to the three rectors' conferences for adoption

Adoption of the nqf.ch-HS in autumn 2009 **BFUG Step 6**

- By the three rectors' conferences
- By the steering committee of the rectors' conferences

Transmission of the nqf.ch-HS to the State Secretariat for Education and Research

- After the meeting of the steering committee on November 23rd 2009

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