

DISCUSSION NOTE ON DISSEMINATION TOOLS FOR THE UNESCO/OECD GUIDELINES ON QUALITY PROVISION IN CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION

UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education Second drafting session 14-15 October 2004 Tokyo, Japan

The purpose of this note is to explore some possible means for the dissemination of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education (Joint Guidelines). It is suggested that this issue be discussed more in details at the third drafting session that will take place on 17-18 January 2005 at the OECD Headquarters, Paris, taking into account the initial feedback received at this second drafting session. At the second drafting session, participants are asked to:

- ADVISE on possible means of dissemination of the Joint Guidelines
- SUGGEST possible platforms for dissemination of the Joint Guidelines

Introduction

In the UNESCO/OECD draft Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education (Joint Guidelines), it is suggested that UNESCO and the OECD review developments in countries regarding implementation of the Joint Guidelines within three years of the adoption. It is foreseen that there will be at least three strands to this implementation process. The three strands are the following:

- 1) Strengthening the capacity of national systems of quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications;
- 2) Development of an international information tool on recognised higher education institutions;
- 3) Dissemination of the Joint Guidelines.

The first two strands are elaborated respectively in the note on capacity building (*UNESCO's Capacity building activities in qualifications recognition, quality assurance and accreditation: Towards a coherent framework*) and the draft on proposed next steps for an international information tool on recognised higher education institutions that have been made available to participants. For the first strand, close link to the UNESCO capacity-building exercises for quality assurance, accreditation and the

recognition of qualifications is important. The purpose of this note is to explore some possible means for the third strand, dissemination of the Joint Guidelines.

Possible means of dissemination

Wide dissemination of the Joint Guidelines is crucial to make the instrument meaningful. It is important to stress that not only the governments are responsible for the dissemination of the Joint Guidelines. The dissemination process would be most effective if it is done at both national and international levels and when all the stakeholders are actively involved in the process.

1. National Level

At national levels, the governments as well as national networks and associations of higher education institutions/providers, students, quality assurance and accreditation agencies, recognition of qualifications bodies, professional bodies have an important role to play in the implementation, including the dissemination of the Joint Guidelines.

- 1) Would it be helpful for the implementation of the Joint Guidelines to identify one or several contact points within each country in order to facilitate collaboration within and between countries? This/these could be governmental or non-governmental. This contact point or contact points can furthermore be used for the review of implementation process within the country. It could also be useful that these contact points be closely linked to the national information centres on the recognition of qualifications: an obligation of all State Parties to one of the UNESCO recognition conventions.
- 2) What are the roles of the governments as well as the above mentioned stakeholders in the implementation process?
- 3) Are there other important actors than those mentioned above that should play a role in the implementation, including the dissemination of the Joint Guidelines?
- 4) In countries where there are several competent bodies at sub-national level, how best could the implementation of the Joint Guidelines be co-ordinated?

2. International level

At the international level, a number of NGOs such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), International Association of Universities (IAU), International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), regional university associations, ENIC/NARIC (European Network of Information Centres/National Academic Recognition Information Centres), European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), National Union's of Students in Europe (ESIB), Asian Students Association (ASA), as well as regional students associations in other regions, could possibly play an important role in the implementation of the Joint Guidelines, especially in increasing awareness about the Joint Guidelines.

- 1) What are the possible roles that these bodies could play? For example, would it be helpful and possible to use their conferences? For example, the following events are already planned and could be timely for the dissemination of the Joint Guidelines.

- 21-25 February 2005 11th General Conference of Association of African Universities: Cross0border provision and the future of higher education in Africa, Cape Town, South Africa
 - 29 March-1 April 2005 INQAAHE Conference, New Zealand
 - 10-15 July 2005 IAUP Triennial Conference, Thailand
- 2) What could be the role of the governments at the international level? For example, there are regional events that bring together governments as well as NGOs. How could these events be best used?
- 19-20 May 2005 Bologna Bergen Summit 2005 (Conference of European Education Ministers part of the Bologna Process), Bergen, Norway
- 3) What could be the role of student bodies at the international level?
- 4) What could be the role of professional bodies for dissemination of the Joint Guidelines?
- 5) Who are the other possible actors who could play a role at the international level for the dissemination of the Joint Guidelines? How could they facilitate the implementation of the Joint Guidelines, especially with focus on their dissemination?

3. UNESCO and OECD

UNESCO and the OECD envisage to have an active role together with governments, the international and regional networks and associations of higher education institutions/providers, students, quality assurance and accreditation agencies, recognition of qualifications agencies to make the guidelines “visible”.

Both UNESCO and OECD will use a number of dissemination tools of the Joint Guidelines, such as relevant events, UNESCO and OECD Websites, OECD Policy Brief, preparation of Q&A on the Joint Guidelines. Furthermore, UNESCO has many relevant platforms that could be useful channels for dissemination such as:

- Higher Education NGO Collective Consultation Network to the UNESCO
- UNESCO/NGO Student Forum (an online network)
- Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications,
- UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge
- World Conference of Higher Education (WCHE) Follow-Up Committee

In addition, UNESCO's regional and field offices as well as the regional committees for the application of the recognition conventions could have an important role to play in the implementation process.

1) What could be the role of relevant platforms as well as UNESCO's regional groups? For example, some of the events planned could be used as part of the dissemination process of the Joint Guidelines.

- 6-8 April 2005 9th NGO Collective Consultation, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
- 27-29 April 2005 UNESCO Regional Seminar on the Implications of WTO/GATS on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, Seoul, Republic of Korea
- 16-17 June 2005 International WCHE Follow-up Committee