International Issues:

AACRAO International Activities on Bologna-Compliant Three-Year Degrees
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Learning Objectives

- Learn about AACRAO (www.aacrao.org) and how AACRAO supports graduate admissions professionals
- Become familiar with the Bologna process as an international admissions issue and its impact on GEM
- Identify issues in the AACRAO Symposium discussion that resonate with issues in your GEM environment
- Articulate your current policies on the evaluation of Bologna-compliant 3-year degrees or gain a foundation for developing policies if you don’t already have them
AACRAO International

http://www.aacrao.org/aacrao-solutions/aacrao-international/home
What is AACRAO? We are:

- over 11,000 higher education colleagues
- at over 2600 institutions
- in over 40 countries (25 represented at our 2018 Annual Meeting)
- supporting the work of admissions, registration and records, enrollment management, student services, and administrative information technology (including GEM)
- by developing and promoting standards of best practice, engaging our membership in strategic professional development and promoting advocacy for the benefit of higher education.
Develops and promotes best practices in international enrollment management and evaluation of international student records

Provides training in general, freshman, transfer and graduate admissions

Offers customized training on-campus

Researches and publishes country educational system information, including AACRAO EDGE (Electronic Database for Global Education) ([http://edge.aacrao.org/](http://edge.aacrao.org/) - by subscription)

Moderates the International Activities listserv ([http://www.aacrao.org/about/newsroom/useful-listservs](http://www.aacrao.org/about/newsroom/useful-listservs))

Engages in projects and programs with institutions and other associations
**Initial Report Release:**

**The US Perspective on the Bologna-compliant Three Year Degree**

On September 18, 2017, AACRAO hosted the 2nd symposium focused on the U.S. perspective on the three-year Bologna-compliant bachelor’s degree. This gathering brought together more than 30 leaders from across U.S. higher education, including representatives from institutions, professional credential evaluators, and other key stakeholders to explore the current perspectives of U.S. Higher education on this as of yet unresolved issue.

Symposium participants will continue to be engaged with a number of identified next steps, including but not limited to continued discussion of standards, education of end users, clarification of the function of an evaluation as an advisory opinion, and collaborations with the regulated professions. AACRAO seeks to chart a path forward to communicate the complexity of the issues to U.S. institutions and their distributed graduate departments, our credential evaluation colleagues overseas, and, most importantly, to European students who would like to pursue graduate education in the U.S. In this world of increasing mobility, these conversations will become more and more important.
The Bologna Process – What & Why

What is it?
- A framework for reform of higher education across Europe
- “Bologna Joint Agreement” signed by the ministers of education from European countries in Bologna, Italy, in 1999
- A bureaucratic decision, not a grassroots movement (Most European countries have a national-level education ministry.)

Why?
- To promote and facilitate academic and employment mobility within Europe
- To strengthen Europe’s standing in the sphere of international mobility

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en
The Bologna Process – How?

How?

- **Transparency**: A system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- **Common degree structure**: Two main degree “cycles;” later three “cycles”
- **Common credit system**: ECTS credits for accumulation and transfer
- **Common documentation**: “Diploma Supplement” for completed programs
- **Common outcomes**: Focus on function and portability of the credential
- **Quality assurance**: Institutional and program accreditation mechanisms
- **Mobility programs**: For students and scholars
- **“European dimension:”** the “European Higher Education Area (EHEA)”

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en
The Bologna Process – When?

When?

- 1999: Agreement signed by 29 education ministers
- 2010: Goal date for implementation of “European Higher Education Area”

- Early 2000’s: Transition period as signatory countries develop new education legislation to facilitate implementation of the Bologna features
- 2004-07: Majority of countries pass new legislation; implementation uneven; not all complete by 2010
- 2018: 48 signatory countries

48 Participating Countries http://www.ehea.info/pid34250/members.html
The 48 Participating Countries

- Albania
- Andorra
- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Belgium (Flemish & French)
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Holy See
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Kazakhstan
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Serbia
- Slovak Republic
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom

http://www.ehea.info/pid34250/members.html
Bologna-Related Tools

- **ENIC-NARIC centers:** [http://www.enic-naric.net/](http://www.enic-naric.net/)
  - NARIC: National Academic Recognition Information Centre
  - ENIC: European Network of Information Centers
  - Official sources of information on education in the country and official credential evaluation service for foreign credentials presented in the country


- Bologna reports country-by-country: [http://www.ehea.info/pid34249/members.html](http://www.ehea.info/pid34249/members.html)


- Qualifications Frameworks (QF’s) on various levels
  - EHEA Framework (QF-EHEA) adopted 2005, overarching
  - National QF’s began to be developed around 2007
  - Useful for us to research the level of a credential
## The Bologna Process: Degree Cycles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Cycle</th>
<th>First cycle</th>
<th>Second cycle</th>
<th>Long cycle</th>
<th>Third cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(admission from secondary school)</td>
<td>(admission from first cycle)</td>
<td>(admission from secondary school)</td>
<td>(admission from second or long cycle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic nomenclature</td>
<td>“Bachelor”</td>
<td>“Master”</td>
<td>“Master” or professional title</td>
<td>“Doctorate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>At least 3 years (180 ECTS credits)</td>
<td>1, 1.5 or 2 years (60, 90 or 120 ECTS credits)</td>
<td>5 years (300 ECTS credits)</td>
<td>3 years (180 ECTS credits) (in many countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 full-time year = 60 ECTS credits)</td>
<td>[Can also be 3.5 or 4 years (210 or 240 ECTS credits)]</td>
<td>[Can also be 4.5 years (270 ECTS credits)]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Employment; entry to “Master”</td>
<td>Employment; entry to “Doctorate”</td>
<td>Employment; entry to “Doctorate”</td>
<td>Research; employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Bologna and Three-Year Degrees on U.S. Admissions
A Focus on Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom, Nov. 2-4, 2006

- **Context:** Earliest Bologna three-year bachelor degrees causing conundrums for U.S. admissions offices and foreign credential evaluators
- **International organization partners:** German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD); Australian Department of Education, Science and Training; The British Council
- **U.S. sector perspectives:** Graduate admissions, foreign credential evaluation, professional licensure, accreditation
- **Academic comparative perspectives:** US faculty / deans comparing curriculum design with German, Australian and UK representatives (mechanical engineering, history and humanities, business management, chemistry/physics)
- **The elephant in the room:** India
Differences between countries: There is no “one” Bologna three-year degree.

European focus on “outcome” v.s. U.S. focus on pragmatics:
- Bologna does not include secondary education while U.S. evaluators look at the structure of a country’s entire educational system. Example: 12 + 3 (many Bologna countries) is not the same as 11+3 (Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine) or 13 + 3 (UK, Italy) or 14 + 3 (Iceland). Secondary education is an important component.
- How can “3 years” in Europe = “4 years” in the U.S.?
  - “Benchmarking” vs “year counting”
- Are European “outcomes” more important than quantitative “input” (years)?
- Are European “outcomes” valid in the sphere of professional licensure in the U.S.?
- What about other countries with 12+3 degrees? What about India?
Many countries have a centralized system of education, but there is not “one voice” that speaks for all of U.S. higher education.

Credential evaluators must follow principles of best practice in reviewing international academic records, but resulting evaluation and admission decisions may differ from one evaluator/institution to another.

In U.S. higher education, institutional autonomy is valued.

Diversity across higher education in the U.S. is valued.

U.S. institutions should discuss the impact of Bologna degrees in the context of institutional mission and profile.

Ramifications for the student’s life after graduation should be considered (employment, licensure).
369 Institutions responded. Some highlights:

1) *Grad admission requires UG program of four years?*
   - 30% Yes; 29% No; 25% case-by-case basis; 15% I don’t know

2) *If you would consider a 3-year bachelor’s for grad admission, what type?*
   - 24% I don’t know; 20% European/Bologna; 16% other 3-year programs; 11% We do not accept 3-year degrees for graduate admission; 11% Indian; 9% Canadian; 9% Australian

3) *Do you consider how the applicant’s undergraduate degree gives access to graduate education in the home country?*
   - 45% No; 25% I don’t know; 16% Yes; 14% case-by-case basis

*AICE* (http://aice-eval.org/) Association of International Credential Evaluators, Inc.
How big is the “three-year Bologna degree” issue today?

What is the significance of U.S. and “three-year Bologna degree” differences?
- Structure of ed system: role of secondary ed; number of years; pathways/benchmarks
- Input-based philosophy (quantitative) vs. outcome-based focus (functional)
- Degree holder readiness for US graduate studies – track record?
- Employment/professional licensing issues – track record?

What is the role of marketing/recruiting in the current climate?

What about US students prepared for graduate study after 3 UG years?

What about how Europeans view U.S. higher education?

What about India?
Foreign credential evaluators’ perspectives
- Generally agree that “3 years do not equal 4 years”
- Evaluations are advisory only; institutions make their own admissions decisions

Graduate admissions perspectives
- Focus on admissibility: degree comparability, readiness for success in graduate studies
- Variety of models of decision-making, even across departments in one institution

Employment and immigration perspectives
- Challenges for 3-year degree holders in meeting US professional licensing criteria and government employment requirements
- Challenges for 3-year degree holders in meeting USCIS visa category criteria
- Private sector employment may be more flexible
The Bologna process is not an “educational system”; it is a framework for reform in Europe. Thus there is no “one” Bologna three-year degree, and best practice is still to evaluate every credential in the context of the educational system of the country in which it was earned.

- There is no uniform “US policy on Bologna-compliant three-year degrees”.
- An increasing number of US institutions are accepting Bologna-compliant three-year degrees for graduate admission.
- In the US, institutional autonomy and the diversity of institutions are still valued.
International Credential Evaluation Principles of Best Practice

- Get initial training and keep on learning.
- Make decisions based on your institutional and departmental policies.
- Apply admission review criteria fairly across all countries.
- Evaluate in the context of the country’s educational system.
  - Consider the level, scope and purpose (function) of the foreign credential in its own system.
- No two credentials are exactly the same. Evaluate for “comparability,” not “equivalency”.
  - In graduate admissions, evaluate for readiness to undertake graduate level work.
- Evaluate based on official documentation.
  - Require both native language documents and accurate English translations
  - Receive directly from the issuing institution or via a secure channel facilitated by the applicant.
- Keep notes and records of your admissions decisions with samples of the documents.
- Keep track records of students when you make a change in policy.
PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

New to the Issue

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- Senior Manager, Chapman Graduate School of Business
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On the Topic of Bologna-Compliant Degrees

- What do I need to learn about the issue?
- What factors need to be considered?
- How do I bring these factors to the table in my grad admissions environment?
- Where can I find resources and support?
What I Need to Learn

- History is important!
- Know your documents
- Institutional policies and procedures
Factors to Consider

- Year counting vs benchmarking
- What are the degree components?
- How do I treat other 3-year degrees?
- What are other institutions and organizations doing?
Resources

- AACRAO Edge
- Continuing professional development
- Your network
- This presentation
PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE:

Leadership on the Issue

Elizabeth Spark
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- Assistant Dean, Graduate College
- AACRAO 2017 Symposium panelist
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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Bologna Interest

- International Recruitment Status in 2007:
  - 4th largest international enrolling institution (1st public institution)
  - 6% of applications from Europe (next highest population after Asia)

- Bologna Concerns:
  - If we don’t accept 3 year degrees, will we lose European students?
  - If we accept EU 3 year degrees, will we be pressured to take those from India?
  - Could we lose other international students to the EHEA?
  - Are we putting all our eggs into one basket (Asia)?
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Bologna 3-Year Bachelor Policy Transformation

- 2004: Accept on probation with support of admitting program
- 2007: Begin tracking all students admitted with 3 year EU degree
- 2009: Survey all grad programs
- 2010: Faculty Workshop Series
- 2010: Accept 3+2 degrees on full status, allow programs to decide if 3 year degree should be accepted as full status or probation
- 2013: Surveyed CIC
- 2013: Accept 3 year degrees on full status
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Recommendations for Developing your Policy

- Seek out Bologna training opportunities
- Track your admission decisions and student success
- Survey your peers
- Create a dialogue with faculty and grad program administrators
- Faculty buy-in is critical
- Conduct a value assessment
- Make the decision right for your campus
Recap & Discussion

- **AACRAO International** ([www.aacrao.org](http://www.aacrao.org))
  - A trusted source for best practices, standards, training, networking

- **The Bologna process**
  - Become and stay informed.
  - Apply best practice in credential evaluation. Evaluate in the context of the country in which the credential was earned. “Bologna” is not an educational system.
  - Identify which aspects of Bologna three-year degrees are significant in your admissions process.

- **AACRAO Symposium 2017**
  - Identify issues that resonate in your GEM environment.

- **Articulate your current policies on Bologna-compliant 3-year degrees**
  - Or identify ways to begin developing policies if you don’t already have them.
Resources: Country Profile Collections

*paid subscription ^print (paper or PDF) pubs for sale

- **AACRAO EDGE:** [http://edge.aacrao.org](http://edge.aacrao.org)
- **ECE Publications:** [http://publications.ece.org/](http://publications.ece.org/)
- **Europa World of Learning:** [http://www.worldoflearning.com/](http://www.worldoflearning.com/)
- **IAU WHED Portal and International Handbook of Universities:** [http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/whed-portal-ihu](http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/whed-portal-ihu)
Resources: Country Profile Collections

*paid subscription  ^print (paper or PDF) pubs for sale

- NAFSA Online Guide to Educational Systems Around the World: [http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Publications/NAFSA_Guide_to_Educational_Systems_Around_the_World/](http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Publications/NAFSA_Guide_to_Educational_Systems_Around_the_World/)
- NORRIC Countries and Regions (study visit reports), several in English: [http://norric.org/publications](http://norric.org/publications)
QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

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