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GUIDE TO ADAPTATION TO THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA



3. Your role as a
student



3. Your role as a student

This document forms part of the Guide to Adaptation to the European Higher Education Area.

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INTRODUCTION

"Those of us who thought that Bologna was the Red City - that city in the north of Italy between the River Reno and the River Sabena, beside the Appenine mountains, famous for, among other things, its ancient city centre, its cuisine, its university - have discovered that it is also the name adopted for the process to promote convergence between national higher education systems, that is, the creation of a European Higher Education Area."

This is one way of beginning to learn about the Bologna process. It was written by a student of Communication in Organisations, one of the degree courses taking part in the UdG's Pilot Scheme, in the introduction to their end of year report.

Some responses from other students, in this case from Tourism Management, to a question on adaptation to the EHEA will also help to put us in the picture:

- "Adapting teaching to the student's workload and the competences he or she has to acquire."
- "Continuous assessment, more work at home, fewer hours in class and the same system throughout the EU."
- "Structuring studies according to the student's workload and focusing on the competences he or she has to acquire, while at the same time putting in place the common European system of credits."



1. THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND ITS AIMS

It is called the Bologna process because this is the name of the city where the Education Ministers from the EU countries signed the Declaration of the same name on 19th June 1999 which states the need for European university systems to work together. It is a short document, a mere two and a half densely-packed pages.

The aims of the Declaration, which are being worked on at all European universities, lead towards building a Europe which is strong from the point of view of university training, enabling us to compare the qualifications granted by universities from different

countries, bringing the academic and professional worlds closer together and promoting student and teacher mobility as well as that of all European citizens.

The reforms which result from the Bologna Declaration start to come into force during the academic year 2006-2007, with the first official masters courses. It is expected that the reforms will be generally applied over all courses during the academic year 2007-2008.

Thus, for undergraduate students, we will treat the year 2006-2007 as a period of information and preparation for entry into a new type of university.



2. A TWO-DIMENSIONAL UNIVERSITY REFORM

2.1 Reforming the degree structure

Moving towards three new educational stages: a first stage of 3 or 4 years, the DEGREE, professional in nature; a second stage of 1 or 2 years, the MASTERS, which leads to specialisation; and a third stage, the DOCTORATE, which will last for as long the student takes to prepare a doctoral thesis. The masters and doctorate are known as POSTGRADUATE studies. You will shortly be able to see a plan of all the degree qualifications which the UdG will offer starting from the academic year 2007-2008, the first year in which the Bologna process comes into effect. The structure of the new courses brings the university closer to the professional world; business and institutional practices, the carrying out of projects, etc. will form a growing part of your preparation for your future professional life.

2.2 Reforming teaching methods

This is where your role as a student will really change. We can illustrate this

with a few comments:

- a) The aim of each course, each degree, will be that when you, the students, graduate, you will be competenced in your field. The teaching staff's help and guidance will be directed towards helping you to acquire the appropriate competences for the degree for which you are studying.
- b) The person who has to acquire or learn the competences, however, is you, the student. **Learning is your responsibility**, with the help of the teaching staff.
- c) Studying means carrying out activities to acquire competences, both inside and outside the university. You will work with the teaching staff and independently, although always under the guidance of your lecturers.



3. WHERE CAN WE FIND OUT WHAT EACH COURSE ASKS OF US?

To make the process of adaptation to the EHEA as easy as possible, in 2005 the UdG began to put into place certain electronic tools which, while being used by the lecturers to plan according to the new criteria, can at the same time show the student details of each course. These tools are being improved and in 2006 they will include new facilities.

Figure 1 shows the structure of La Meva, the UdG's intranet. One of the basic elements which you will find there is an area dedicated to teaching, which

includes a set of constantly evolving tools to help lecturers and students to continuously improve the learning process. These are **communication tools such as the forums and the calendar of events, learning tools such as the document manager, etc.**

Figure 2 shows part of the design of a course which you can access from the Teaching tab of La Meva.



Figure 1

La meva UdG Student ...

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[Press clippings](#)
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[Car-pooling database](#)
[International academic contacts](#)

Students

> [Official announcement of financial assistance in support of student initiatives from the Vice-Rector's Office for Students and External Affairs of the University of Girona for the year 2006.](#)

FEP

UdG

> [The pre-registration period has opened for \(optional\) INTERCAMPUS subjects for the first semester of the 2006-2007 academic year.](#)

Figure 2

Competences	Contents	Activities																					
Use tools to observe, analyse and interpret the practices	Tools for the joint analysis of the activity in educational settings.	<table><tr><th>Description</th><th>Ass</th><th>w/L</th><th>w/o L</th></tr><tr><td>Recording, observation and analysis of educational practices using video.</td><td>15</td><td></td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Small and large group class work related to the analyses carried out in class and the case study.</td><td>15</td><td></td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>...</td><td>...</td><td></td><td>...</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Total</td><td>41.5</td><td>32.5</td></tr></table>	Description	Ass	w/L	w/o L	Recording, observation and analysis of educational practices using video.	15		3	Small and large group class work related to the analyses carried out in class and the case study.	15		5			Total	41.5	32.5
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...																				
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...	Contributions from the analysis of educational practices to psychopedagogical intervention and advice.																						
...	...																						

Hours it will take you to complete this course with a lecturer (w/ L) and without one (w/o L)



Activities with and without the lecturer

4. A NEW STUDY MODEL

The methodological principles of the EHEA lead us to a model in which you, the student, work independently and autonomously, alone or with your classmates, **and consolidate what you learn in this way with the activities which take place in the presence of a member of the teaching staff.**

We therefore have activities with and without lecturers.

It will be absolutely essential to attend the activities with a lecturer, because these will be the main guide to your learning. In class, you will have to show

that you are working autonomously. You will find that there are new assessment systems which take into account everything you do, and go far beyond what could be expected in a final examination.

And on the other hand, it will be absolutely essential to work at home, on your own or with your classmates, to prepare for your work in class. You will need to work consistently and be aware of your own personal responsibility.



5. BUT...WORKING ALONE? ON ANY SUBJECT?

You will never be alone. You can work with your classmates, and it is a good idea to do this. **Collaboration multiplies the learning process**, if properly and rigorously applied. And as a student you will always have access to a lecturer, either in tutorials or by electronic communication.

Yes, there will be autonomous learning in all subjects, to a greater or lesser degree. In each case the lecturers will decide what their students can do without their physical presence.



The UdG has opted to equate 1 ECTS with 25 hours of work for the student, between work with and without the lecturer.



6. DOES BOLOGNA MEAN MORE WORK FOR THE STUDENT?

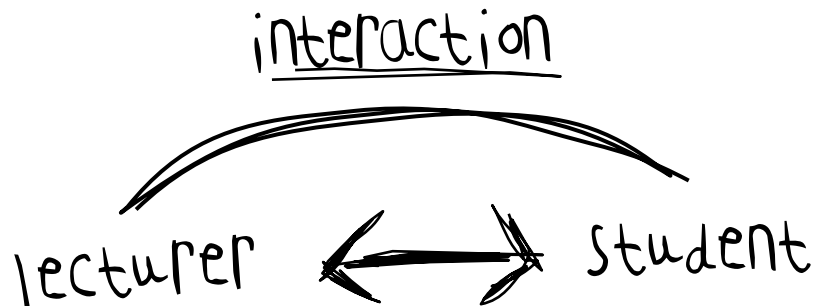
No. Bologna means more responsibility for the student. It will be more difficult to miss classes, to fail to do your assignments or to do your work at the last minute. Bologna requires students to be aware of their own responsibilities for learning.

This does not involve more work. The teaching staff are in charge of planning their teaching taking into account, among other things, the amount of work they ask of the students, and they have the necessary tools for this sort of planning.

Teaching in the EHEA is quantified in ECTS (European Credit Transfer System)

units. The UdG has opted for the equivalent of 1 ECTS unit = 25 hours of work for student, divided between time spent working with and without the lecturers. This option was chosen from the European-wide range of 1 ECTS unit = 25-30 hours.

The maximum workload planned for each student who registers for a full year is the equivalent of 40 hours per week, divided between activities with and those without the lecturers.



7. AND WHAT DO THE PEOPLE ON THE PILOT SCHEME THINK OF IT?

There are all sorts of opinions. Some of the students have hardly even heard of the EHEA and the Bologna Declaration. This is mostly because of a lack of information. The document you are reading now is intended to avoid this problem in the future. There are those who know something about it and you will see some of their comments on the first page of this document.

As for those students who have begun to study according to the new model, with more awareness and enthusiasm, they are generally happy. Let us look at some of the encouraging comments we mentioned at the beginning, from a student at the end of a course:

— "Right at the start of the academic year, the whole course content was available on La Meva, along with the bibliography and all the practical work that would be done. As for the second term, even the dates when they would show us a film or when we would do group work were available."

— "To say more about the general aspects, I would like to emphasise the teacher-student interaction, as well as the personal relationship and treatment. I am glad not to be just a number..."



8. IN SUMMARY, THE UDG WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND:

That you set to work with enthusiasm.
 That you listen, talk, write ...
 That you get involved: share, discuss, make friends.
 That you use your intelligence all the time: do you have a problem? Then let's

study it, discuss it, assess it, suggest solutions, make decisions. Work as a group, with your fellow students, seeking out the teaching staff ...
 All these things are what the EHEA asks of you.

AND IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, DON'T HESITATE TO ASK.

You can ask your colleagues on the Students' Council (consell.estudiants@udg.es), or ask the Vice-Rectorate of Teaching and Academic Policy (vr.d.supdoc@udg.es). We will answer you.

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