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**Transatlantic Equivalencies and Mobility:
The Reception of the Bologna Degree Regime
by U.S. Institutions of Higher Education**

*Academic Mobility between Austria and the
United States: Status, Trends, and New
opportunities
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Session Goal
Provide an update on thinking and trends in the U.S. with regard to the Bologna Process

- Initial reactions
- Current awareness
- Common myths
- Evolving reception of three-year compliant degrees
- Challenges

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Initial and Current State of Understanding in the U.S. and Responses of International Educators

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Initial Reactions

- **Confusion**
 - due to lack of information
- **Hope and optimism**
 - ECTS and Diploma Supplement will make credential evaluation easier
 - higher level of consistency expected
 - greater ease in obtaining information expected
- **Concern**
 - evaluation of three-year degrees for graduate admission

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Evolving Reactions

- Growing understanding of paradigm shift initiated by the Bologna Declaration and its increasing global impact
- Growing recognition of European Higher Education Area's attractiveness

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Recognition of Competition

- **Model for other national systems**
 - Australia ministry white paper
 - China a keen observer
 - South America moving toward Bologna model
- **Competition for students**
 - Innovative, multilateral academic exchange
 - Attractive research components
 - Shorter time to degree
 - Cost
 - Growth in number of programs offered in English

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Recognition of Competition



- EHEA encompasses 46 countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

In 2007

- more than 69,000 EHEA students in the U.S.
- Turkey, Germany, U.K., and France among the top 20 sending countries

Taken from Open Doors 2008

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Changing Knowledge Base

- Increase in fundamental information
- Additional constituents join discussion
 - study abroad professionals
 - graduate deans
 - international education administrators
 - faculty

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Common Myths

- See Bologna as a product rather than a process
- Assume Bologna will result in one three-year undergraduate degree
- Believe in 2010 the reforms will be complete and fully implemented at undergraduate level
- Hope the 'product' will be a uniform system across Europe, consistent and easy to understand

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Growing Awareness

- Variations will exist
- Won't be one European system but rather national systems within the larger framework of the EHEA.
- Growing understanding that Bologna is "an organic, complex process with moving targets"
- Implementation will be uneven

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Reception on Bologna-compliant Degrees

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Evolving

- Traditional focus on degree 'equivalency' frequently determined by
 - length of undergraduate program
 - Combination of secondary and post-secondary study
- Discussion moving from degree 'equivalency' and degree 'comparability' to degree 'compatibility' and preparation

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Council of Graduate School: Findings on Current Practices 2005 and 2006

2005	2006
Acceptance of 4 year degree only – 29%	Acceptance of 4 year degree only – 18%
Provisional acceptance of 3 year degree – 9%	Provisional acceptance of 3 year degree – 4%
Evaluation of course work for equivalency using a variety of measures – 40%	Evaluation of course work for equivalency using a variety of measures – 49%
Determination of competency to succeed in U.S. graduate program - 22%	Determination of competency to succeed in U.S. graduate program – 29%

Taken from CGS International Graduate Admission Survey II and III 13

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IIE's Fall 2008 Snapshot of Doctoral-granting Institutions

- **Have an official policy regarding 3-year Bologna – compliant degrees**
 - 53.4% yes
 - 46.6% no

YES

- 26% equivalent
- 35% determination varies by department
- 26% other

No

- 39% may still be considered for regular admission
- 28% conditional
- 18% other
- 15% not considered

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Top three factors weighed most heavily by academic departments

Factor	Percentage
standardized test scores, e.g. GRE or GMAT	57.5%
English language ability	49.7%
preparation for study in specific field or specialization	73.7%
quality of institution(s) previously attended	52.1%
prior experience with students to faculty from an institution	19.2%
educational system in home country	12.6%
length of undergraduate degree	12.0%
other	12.0%

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What generally happens to applicants presenting three-year Bologna-compliant degrees?

Outcome	Percentage
granted regular admission	63
granted conditional or exceptions	34
not granted admission	16
don't know	17
Other	43

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Other Approaches

- **Admission to alternative programs**
 - bridge program
 - honors diploma
 - qualifying year
 - varied length graduate programs for varied length first degree
- **Alternative admissions status**
 - provisional admission
 - conditional admission
 - challenge examinations

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Challenges

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Equity



- Require four year degrees for domestic students but three-year for international
- Accept three-year degrees from developed countries but not developing countries

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Wishlist

- Clear guides on quality assurance mechanisms in Europe
- Greater consistency across national systems in using tools
- An interim report prior to graduation, that includes program, courses, grades and ECTS
- More information on where a given country is in terms of implementation and status of traditional vs. Bologna-compliant programs
- Anxious for rational models and information on
 - types of degrees/programs that lead to further study within a national system and across the EHEA system

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Conclusions

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RESOURCES

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) – information on credential evaluation -- www.aacrao.org
 Publication: [The Impact of Bologna and Three-year Degrees on U.S. Admissions](#)

Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) – www.cgsnet.org

- Information grad enrollments & trends.
<http://www.cgsnet.org/VirtualCenterResearch/index.htm>

Institute of International Education (IIE) – www.iie.org

- Open Doors Annual Report on international student mobility trends
<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org>
- White paper series on Study Abroad --
<http://www.iienetwork.org/?p=StudyAbroadCapacity>

NAFSA: Association of International Educators— www.nafsa.org

- Discussion Forum:
http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/recruitment_admissions/bologna_process_network
- International Educator Bologna Process Supplement
http://www.nafsa.org/_/Document/_/bolognaprocess_ie_supp.pdf

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