Tuning Chemistry Group

Minutes of the Meeting in Brussels, May 9th and 10th 2003

1. Opening Remarks
Reports were made as follows:
Jiri Barek, Charles University Prague, will join the group for the remaining meetings as an Observer from one of the accession countries.
The situation of the Eurobachelor project resulting from the Prague meeting of ECTN was summed up.

2. State of Affairs
Several members had prepared written material on this topic. A survey was made within the group to get an overall picture. Raffaella Pagani would send group members the results of her survey (May 2003).

3. Fine Tuning of First and Second Cycle Descriptors
The group had not referred to Cycle 2 in any detail previously, and was still of the opinion that subject-specific descriptors would not be useful/feasible. The Eurobachelor proposal might be adaptable in a "neutralised" version to aspects of Master programmes.

4. Applying Competences in Practice
   - Generic competences
     The three competences suggested for further consideration by the Tuning project leaders were discussed in some detail. No specific recommendations were made.
     The list of generic competences used in the Tuning Phase 1 questionnaire were surveyed. With minor modifications these can be used as an appendix to the Eurobachelor proposal.
   - Subject specific competences
     These were not discussed further, since they are dealt with in the Eurobachelor proposal and are generally valid for Master programmes in chemistry.

5. ECTS as an Accumulation System
It was reported that Denmark and Norway already use the ECTS grading system as the national system, and that Finland may soon do the same.
   - Developing level indicators
     The group agreed that it was not in favour of dividing credits according to level (e.g. the BIAS system as suggested by EUPEN). Modules, however, should be denoted according to their level. A detailed system would both infringe on the rights of institutions and hinder student mobility. It was suggested that a division into B(achelor), M(aster) and D(octoral) Level would be appropriate, whereby some modules could be used at either both levels B and M or both levels M and D.
   - Developing a model for measuring workload
     In the teacher-oriented system contact hours are the units referred to. Some national systems have legally defined total student workload numbers (European average 1500). In the UK students are normally told how much self study is expected.
     In order to get a feel for how workload is thought of, a questionnaire will be devised and circulated to members of the group. In this questionnaire the members will be asked to estimated the ratio of self-study hours to contact hours across the following types of course unit: lecture, practical course, group exercise, seminar, project work (theoretical/practical). Estimates of the workload for exam preparation and the Bachelor and Master thesis will also be surveyed.
     These numbers can form a basis for an initial workload definition, which must be subject to iteration on the basis of student feedback.

6. Quality Assurance
A survey was made within the group members present as to whether evaluation or accreditation is/will be used nationally.

7. Consultation of Stakeholders
The following stakeholders were identified: a) national chemical societies and the FECS; b) national societies for chemical industry and their European organisations; c) trade unions where clear that there is academic representation (e.g. VAA, Germany); d) student organisations with a chemistry representation

8. Group Tasks
A number of tasks were agreed in order to work towards the next meeting in Athens.

T.N.Mitchell, 19.5.03