

TUNING EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES IN EUROPE – 2. Meeting of 9-10 May 2003 at Brussels. Abstract report of the Geology Subject Area Group.

1. OPENING REMARKS OF THE JOINT CHAIR

The group has no new partners, but two Universities changed their representatives.

2. STATE OF AFFAIRS

The participating Institutions/Countries have adopted or are in the process of adopting a 1.st cycle of 3 years, except for the Spanish and Portuguese Institutions that may likely adopt a 1.cycle of 4 years. While the UK have a 2.nd cycle of one year (full calendar year) the other participants are working on the basis that the total combined 1. + 2.cycle corresponds to 5 years (300 ECTS). Also in Ireland and Scotland, where the 1. cycle may be 3 or 4 years, combined 1. + 2. cycles tend to correspond to 5 years.

3. FINE TUNING OF 1.ST AND 2.ND CYCLE DESCRIPTIONS

The Tuning-1 document will be revised; 1.st and 2.nd cycle competences will be more clearly separated and a more comprehensive description of competences for the 2.nd cycle will be included.

4. APPLYING COMPETENCES IN PRACTICE

A very open debate took place on the different strategies to develop the generic and specific competences. It was felt that the preparation for seminar courses and the preparation of essays were important tools to develop the capacity for analysis and synthesis and independent work. However, all Group members agreed that carrying out fieldwork (including field seminars, mapping exercises etc.) are by far the most valuable in this respect, and that hence adequate funding of this type of activities in all participating countries is of utmost importance. The experience of the tutorials developed in many UK Universities appears to be a good practice to develop from the beginning the capacity of independent work, autonomy and responsibility. Participants will send further information on national/institutional practice.

5. ECTS AS ACCUMULATION SYSTEM

The possible use of level indicators was discussed. A distinction was made between level and type. Those were considered different attributes that require a double classification. As “type” were identified names like core, supportive, subsidiary, option. With regard to “level” the Group favoured the adoption of a total of 4 levels (2 - basic and advanced - for each cycle). While all Institutions apply to a large extent ECTS for mobility, some do not use ECTS yet for accumulation. Also the way in which ECTS are applied varies with countries. However a general consensus appeared from the credits allocated to fieldwork. In the UK more than workload based credits, there is a preference for the link between credits and level of output.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

External Evaluation involving peer review, after a self-evaluation process, is a regular practice. Also teaching assessment by students is commonly practiced.

7. STAKEHOLDERS

Some relevant stakeholders were identified. Group members will send additions to the list.