



COMMENTARY
ON THE
EURO-INF
FRAMEWORK STANDARDS AND
ACCREDITATION CRITERIA
FOR
INFORMATICS PROGRAMMES

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I. Objectives of the Euro-Inf Project

Euro-Inf aims to create a framework for setting up a European system of Standards for assessing informatics education at the First Cycle and Second Cycle level (as defined within the Bologna process).

Based on the establishment and approval of this set of standards, the main objectives of the Euro-Inf Project are:

- to provide an appropriate “European Quality Label” for accredited educational programmes in informatics
- to provide a basis for comparing educational qualifications in informatics in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- to facilitate mutual transnational recognition by programme validation and certification
- to facilitate recognition of accredited degrees in informatics higher education in accordance with the EU Directives and other agreements
- thus, together with other field-specific standards and criteria, to contribute to the harmonisation of the European Higher Education Area
- to support the mobility of informatics graduates
- to contribute to international transparency - as one of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration
- to support improvements to the quality of informatics programmes in general

II. Scope and Application of the Euro-Inf Framework Standards

The Euro-Inf Framework Standards are informed in particular by four documents at European level, which are concerned with reforming the European higher education systems. These are:

- The ‘Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area’, agreed by the Bergen Conference in May 2005
- The Dublin Descriptors referred to in the above Framework for Qualifications
- The ENQA ‘Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area’, agreed by the Bergen Conference as ‘European Quality Assurance Standards’

- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning proposed by the European Commission for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, COM(2006) 479 final.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/com_2006_0479_en.pdf (2007-04-27)

While pursuing a Europe-wide approach, the Euro-Inf Framework Standards for Accreditation are not intended to compete with or replace national guidelines for informatics courses. They shall augment them by providing Europe-wide reference points for outcomes of degree programmes in informatics. Thus, they provide a means for demonstrating the mutual compatibility of the accredited programmes.

The Euro-Inf Standards may be applied in two ways: First, in countries where a national system for assessing informatics programmes already exists, recognition of national accreditation certificates as having achieved the proposed EU standards can be immediate if the existing arrangements are consistent with these Framework Standards.

Alternatively, in countries where no national informatics accreditation system yet exists, the Framework Standards can be directly applied to relevant programmes, or used as a starting basis for the Standards and Procedures of newly created Accreditation Agencies.

The Framework Standards describe the programme (desired learning-) outcomes of an accredited programme but allow for considerable variation in the individual emphasis of the higher education programmes. They do not address conditions of access to programmes: these are handled by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), in accordance with any national regulations and/or requirements including new and innovative programmes.

As regards their scope, the Euro-Inf Standards are intended to:

- be widely applicable and inclusive, enabling eligibility of a wide range of possible approaches to informatics higher education
- handle the diversity of content of informatics degree programmes, including, for instance, aspects of business, administration, management, education, health, forensics, and security, embedded systems or information systems in informatics devices, applications and services, often involving some element of criticality, involving safety or security; research and development, e.g. biologically inspired computing, e-science or Grid computing
- be relevant for (academic) informatics study programmes leading to a First or to a Second Cycle Degree
- facilitate in particular accreditation of trans-national joint- and double degree programmes.



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The Euro-Inf Standards shall not explicitly refer to, but on the other hand shall not exclude, programmes delivered by e-learning (distance learning), lifelong learning or any other type of learning delivery.

III. Professional Recognition of Informatics Degrees

The ultimate goal of the Euro-Inf Project is to facilitate Europe-wide professional recognition by the competent national authorities of the informatics degrees awarded by study programmes accredited on the basis of the programme outcomes and accreditation criteria defined in the Euro-Inf Framework Standards.

The Euro-Inf Standards are concerned only with the accreditation of the education base of the initial professional formation. It is for the appropriate authority in each country to determine whether a programme is of sufficient quality and relevance as the education base for registration or qualification for professional practice in that country, or if further education, training or industrial experience are necessary. The Euro-Inf Quality Label is intended to assist such decisions, and particularly support cross-recognition of those that involve transnational recognition.

It can be expected that achievement of informatics degrees accredited to the Euro-Inf Standard as FCD and SCD, possibly with additional requirements, will usually lead, in due course, to professional practice at levels (d) or (e) of professional qualifications, defined in Article 11, Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications (September 07, 2005).