



## NEWSLETTER **27** - 21st NOVEMBER 2017

### 1 Introduction

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After the WBL seminar in Luton, UK, where all newsletters were made specifically for the participants in this event, it is now time to come up again with *general newsletters*.

From now on, you can find a newsletter in your mailbox every month, with short messages about developments, and summaries of documents and relevant reports. In addition, we will send you documents about the seminars and conferences that we are going to organize.

We are open to suggestions for the newsletters. We would also appreciate if you could provide information if it is of interest to the members of CHAIN5.

We are aware of the fact that the publications on our part are forwarded by many members to colleagues, not only in their own organizations but also in other countries. However, if they want to receive all the documents themselves, inform them of our free membership. This additionally will mean that CHAIN5 will know more about where and who our target groups are.

### 2 Our Annual Conference – 8/9 March 2018 - Brussels

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The next Annual Conference of CHAIN5 will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2018, in Brussels. Looking back at the success of the conferences in Amsterdam, Aalborg and Bled, we are hoping to offer the participants again the opportunity to meet colleagues, other experts, members of our network involved in crucial aspects for level 5, and people who take an interest in the challenges we are facing with the growing need for flexibility within the national systems.

A national Level 5 Area is crucial to cooperation between institutions, employers and other stakeholders, to change the mindset for the use of the whole spectrum of level 5 qualifications for optimisation of the talent of learners in all kind of situations.

***Let the European Level 5 Area Drive Change and Connect Talent***

**How to make qualifications at level 5 future-proof  
and function well with the needs of the world of work and the challenges for all  
learners**

***8-9 March 2018, Brussels***

***There will be a social programme (visits to institutions in Gent, Flanders) on the  
7<sup>th</sup> of March 2018***

A newsletter with detailed information about the programme and the procedure for registering for the conference, including a call for contributions (presentations and workshops) will be published in the **second week of December**. Here already some issues – to be taken in account if you are planning to come to Brussels.

1. Dates of the conference: 8 and 9 March
2. Thursday 8 March: lunch / 13:00 – 17:00 / dinner in Brussels
3. Friday 9 March: 09:00 – 13:00 / lunch / social activity in Brussels

4. Date of the visits to institutions in Gent: 7 March, 10:00 – 17:00 / possibility for having dinner in Gent
5. Venue: Hogeschool Odisee (University College), Brussels
6. The conference is a good opportunity to harvest good practices for the use of the 'Level 5 Area', and the qualifications that are used at the international level, being important for the national settings of learning pathways. Short Cycle HE is one of them, to feed the discussion about the use of this qualification (see item 4 in this newsletter, about the Bologna Process), and also Higher VET as a challenge for VET providers to offer vocational qualifications parallel to the higher education area.
7. Themes for the conference (for presentations and workshops), in the present version:
  1. The world of work as a partner in education (co-makship / curriculum development / quality insurance in cooperation with employers
  2. Level 5 programmes in Flanders: From professional qualification to a programme with learning outcomes, and other developments at level 5, like building a curriculum and the use of work-based learning
  3. Learners as the key figures in offering programmes at level 5, needed for flexible learning pathways in HE, looking also to specific situations (students with special needs, dropouts and (re)orientation, internationalization...)
  4. Teaching staff at level 5 (training, counselling, cooperation with businesses...)
8. Brussels is easy to reach by plane and train, and the venue is within walking distance of the Central Station: <https://www.odisee.be/en/campus-brussels-en>.
9. We recommend that you find a hotel by yourself, knowing that it is difficult to make a general arrangement for the whole group.
10. How to register for the conference and what the fee will be (conference, dinner, programme Gent and other activities): **see the next newsletter.**

### **3 Categories under Work-based Learning (WBL) as a general concept**

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During the seminar on work-based learning in Luton, much attention was paid to the practice of providing qualifications and study programmes at level 5 and the use of formats in which study and work are combined. On the basis of examples from various institutions it was possible to get an idea of how they are used at the moment. Apprenticeships are 'hot' in more and more countries.

The theory was also discussed in a number of plenary sessions and during the workshops. Important was to learn from the experiences gained in the Tandem project, about an investigation into the way in which employers make it possible to train their employees from level 4 to 5 or higher. Constructions are needed that make the offer flexible and also keep it that way.

In addition, it is important that we, as CHAIN5, can continue to work with the outcomes of the seminar on WBL. It also concerns the aspects that have been brought forward for using work-based learning for qualifications at level 5 and for embedding them in flexible learning routes from level 4 to level 6.

It is therefore about designing the best strategy to discuss the theme 'WBL and level 5', as one of the CHAIN5-themes, with experts, target groups and others who influence the frameworks for this. It may involve regulations, financing, relevance for the labour market and, above all, the possibilities of giving employers a role in the provision of a qualification.

In the preparation for the seminar in Luton, it became clear that the number of formats for projects that fall under the WBL-concept, actually leads to a 'jungle' of possibilities. Differentiation is an important goal when it comes to serving the target groups. But if it is necessary to discuss and exchange experiences across the boundaries of an institution and in speaking about WBL at the national and, above all, international level, then a workable and transparent concept of the formats is absolutely useful.

That is why during the seminar Hans Daale (CHAIN5) presented a proposal for using three categories for WBL, at least for the European Level 5 Area, to give the discussion a start. Each category can handle a number of crucial aspects. These aspects can then be discussed internationally to see where structures within WBL can be strengthened.

Here the three categories (and in CHAIN5's newsletters they will be further elaborated):

1. **SBW** = Study-based Working  
A contract as a student, enrolled for initial and formal education (think of working with internships, work projects, practical assignments, etc.)
2. **DualEd** = Dual Education  
Two contracts, such as an employee (company) and as a student (education institution (i.e. certain forms as an apprentice, dual student, with shared responsibilities for those involved - though aimed at a formal degree)
3. **JBL** = Job-based Learning  
A contract as an employee, including learning in this agreement (lifelong learning, adult learning, in-company training – also in collaboration with Business Academies - mainly focused on certificates and non- formal diplomas).

This shows the wide scope of learning that is taking place at the work-place, not always directly linked to formal education programmes. For adult learners they are exactly those programmes that might be most relevant as it provides them with possibilities to learn on the job and progress in their career.

For youngsters in the more formal education system it can be helpful to be aware of the status as learner. The employers will also more able to have a clear position in the cooperation with providers of formal and non-formal qualifications.

So, enough input for discussions in the near future, during seminars and conferences, with those stakeholders of WBL – to help this concept to have a better understanding if it is about the position in the whole education system.

#### **4 SCHE in HE: in 2018 more input for discussions about the Level 5 Area**

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*In May 2018, the further introduction of Short Cycle HE is on the agenda of the EHEA meeting for the Ministers of the countries concerned. Here some background information, plus a few comments about what this can mean for CHAIN5.*

Since 2005, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as a result of the Bologna Process, includes the Short Cycle HE, with its own position and recognition, with a matching set of Dublin Descriptors. From that moment on, each country, as a participant in the EHEA, could see whether a SCHE degree could be further developed, or whether a (new) start had to be given. At that time there was no obligation yet as part of the general agreements to give the SCHE a place within the national system.

In 2015, the next step was taken in the process, during the EHEA meeting in Yerevan. A Commitment on the use and further implementation of SCHE was included in the communiqué:

*“... to include short cycle qualifications in the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) based on the Dublin descriptors for short cycle qualifications and quality assured according the ESG, so as to make provision for the recognition of short cycle qualifications in their own systems, also where these do not comprise such qualifications.”*

#### *Recommendations for SCHE*

After the meeting, a special working group with national experts was asked to further elaborate all 'commitments' and 'agreements'. Moreover, the assignment was to report in 2018 on the progress concerning the topics in question. Finally, the working group could also come up with new recommendations to feed the discussion in May, in Paris.

Recently, the state of affairs was drawn up by this working group. As far as SCHE is concerned, there has been a lot of talk about the possibilities of taking the next international step, knowing that not all countries have the same thoughts about the positioning of SCHE - also as level 5 of the EQF (and comparable levels in the national frameworks).

But an agreement has been reached on making the following interesting recommendations. They can be used for the communiqué that will soon have to be written for the meeting in Paris, but of course every country is free to take further actions with SCHE on the basis of these documents. Here are those recommendations,

#### Recommendations Working Group 2 (BFUG) for SCHE

1. We recommend the ministers to make a small adjustment of the Dublin descriptors and the Qualifications framework for higher education as it was adopted in Bergen and to delete the wordings/phrase 'within the first cycle' in paragraph including the descriptors of the short cycle.
2. We recommend that the ministers and the higher education institutions should take the necessary measures to ensure an advanced entry in the first cycle for the holders of a short cycle higher education degree included in the national qualifications framework of the country of origin and provided that the Bologna tools are applied to those degrees.
3. We encourage all countries to consider measures to ensure an advanced entry in the first cycle if relevant for the holders of a EQF level 5 qualification or equivalent while those qualifications have been placed as post-secondary non higher education qualifications.
4. We recommend keeping the diversity of the learning provisions in place but also encourage the use of the ECTS credit system and a system of QA in compliance with the ESG.

#### *No dead ends*

In the document that has been published by this working group, there was also a 'warning' if it is about the discussions that will take place – looking at the need for level 5:

*“We have to avoid that the short cycle becomes a dead end for the students. Therefore all countries and the higher education institutions should take the necessary measures to ensure that the holders of short cycle higher education degrees can progress to the first cycle by recognising and validating and transferring the credits when those holders would like to enroll in a first cycle study programme within the national borders or cross border while complying with the national requirements regarding access and admission to the programmes concerned.”*

#### *For us as CHAIN5*

Looking at the these recommendations, you will get the clear impression that it is not just about SCHE finding a way and establishing a position in the EHEA and to force all countries to use it as a 'stand-alone and formal cycle'. The role of SCHE is more important if it can be seen in combination with those 'EQF level 5 qualifications or equivalent, where those qualifications have been placed as post-secondary non higher education qualifications'. This is exactly what CHAIN5 is also promoting, to use the level 5 area at a start for a progression route to level 6: 'an advanced entry into the first cycle'.

In Brussels, during the Annual Conference, it will be up to us and our participants to show that this is the 'reality for flexible systems', by showing good practices and experiences that work. As a 'community of practice' we can do that for our members.