



# Using credits in the Tertiary Education Area

Knut Erik Beyer-Arnesen

Ingrid Marie Aarre

Hans Daale

## In short...

- ▶ We are using the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)... for the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process)... and the National Higher Education Area
- ▶ Parallel to the NHEA we can have a national area for other formal qualifications... We call this area the 'Vocational-Professional Education Area', in the international context ('Higher VET...')
- ▶ The EHEA and the VPE Area are both parts of what we call the European Tertiary Education Area (everything at 5 and above)

The issue here is: How to deal with the study load for learning units of formal qualifications in the VPE Area and other areas parallel to the NHEA... in the international setting?

Using the term 'credit'... but what type is the best one? Or another 'international name' (if that is a better option)?

How to deal with it if it is about the status of the NHEA and the National VPE Area?

# Welcome

- ▶ Short introduction of the contributors to the workshop
- ▶ Short round: who are attending the workshop?

# Set-up in short

- ▶ **First part:** 45 minutes (information..)
  - Presentation in general about the subject
  - Presentation about the situation in Norway
  - Presentation from a student's perspective
- ▶ **Short Break:** 5 minutes
- ▶ **Second part:** 40 minutes
  - Discussions in small groups
  - Presentation of group discussions and recommendations

# General introduction

- ▶ There are plans for setting up an international process for the area that runs parallel to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA - Bologna Process)
- ▶ We call it the (European) Vocational-Professional Education Area (VPEA)
- ▶ It concerns all types of formal qualifications, not being part of the EHEA (and the NHEA)

# Focus on level 5 (and transition to 6)

- ▶ Specific attention will be given to level 5 - having in mind the learning path from 5 to 6
- ▶ Looking at countries that don't have in a formal context SCHE in their National Higher Education Area...
- ▶ And maybe also not having other formal qualifications at level 5
- ▶ But we are interested in countries that have them at level 5, not being seen as a SCHE qualification

# Instruments for the EHEA

- a. Use of the term Cycle
- b. Use of the term Degree
- c. Dublin Descriptors for the levels and cycles
- d. Use of the terms Professional and Academic (within a binary system)
- e. European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance, internal and external
- f. Basing the study load on the use of ECTS, and therefore credits (EC - ECTS credits)**
- g. Use of the diploma supplement, with a specific format.



# Using 'units' for the study load

- ▶ The starting point is to leave those instruments exclusively for Higher Education (EHEA - NHEA)
- ▶ Meeting the criteria for the EHEA = a qualification in HE - and the other way around too
- ▶ If we have a process for the VPE Area... do we need an international common name for an unit - taking in account that VPE providers (and the governments) want to work with this instrument?

# What is then to be discussed?

- ▶ Talking about the international context!
- ▶ We can develop a system for the VPE Area, to be used for the study load...
- ▶ But can we mirror it with the ECTS?
- ▶ Can we adopt some or all core criteria of the ECTS?

# Thinking out loud

- ▶ Call it VPC (Vocational-Professional Credit) or just 'credit'...
- ▶ 60 per study year
- ▶ Same study load per VPC as used for the EC in a NHEA...
- ▶ And so on...

# In practice: Norway

- ▶ Norway does a 'partial level 6.1' within the First Cycle at level 6.2
- ▶ 6.1 offered by a University College
- ▶ 6.2 offered by a University
- ▶ Both at level 6 of the EQF... !
- ▶ Looks like the Ordinary and Honours Bachelor in the UK...
- ▶ But the question is: Is 6.1 in the international context to be seen as SCHE... at level 5 of the EQF?

- ▶ There are also formal qualifications parallel to the NHEA:  
Tertiary Vocational Qualifications 1 and 2
- ▶ At level 5 of the NQF and the EQF
- ▶ To make ‘the difference’ with level 6.1
  
- ▶ Let’s see what is going on in Norway if it is about using a ‘unit’ for the study load...



Break... short...



# Plenary

## First

- ▶ Feedback
- ▶ Comments
- ▶ Questions...

## Second

- ▶ Differences, similarities and experiences, looking at the national approach - in general
- ▶ And: what if you are using your international experiences, as part of international collaboration... problems, blocks...?



# Discussions in small groups

- ▶ Do we have to use the ECTS exclusively for the EHEA?
- ▶ Can we build a similar ECTS (system) outside the EHEA, for the levels 5 and higher of the EQF - in an international context?
- ▶ If not, do we need a credit system that is linked to the VET sector (till level 4)?
- ▶ Or should we develop a specific credit system for VPE/Higher VET - and can it be based, more or less, on the same criteria that are being used for the EHEA?
- ▶ Or what is a better approach? Suggestions?

# Conclusions...

- ▶ Outcomes of the groups
- ▶ Recommendations for the process
- ▶ How to go on... as CHAIN5