

# **Implementing the Bologna reform at the K.U.Leuven.**

## **Approach and evaluation**

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**"Quality and reform processes in the  
university systems in Italy and Europe".**

**University of Rome Tor Vergata, November 26, 2003**

# History and start

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- Dialogue with the faculties
  - Sorbonne declaration (1998)
  - Bologna declaration (1999 ...)
- Structures for reform:
  - Standing Curriculum Committees: reform of the programmes
  - Faculties: coherence with regard to content and structure
  - Steering Committee and its working groups: strategic framework
  - Curriculum Reform Task force
  - Academic council
- Start
  - Meeting of the Academic council June 11, 2001
  - Approval of first bama-document
  - Task faculties: make your proposals for the new programmes (deadline: May 31, 2002)

# General approach by the K.U.Leuven

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## Principle:

The proposed new programmes have to be internally ‘accredited’ (= accepted) by the Board of the University:

- on the basis of a set of acceptance criteria
- within the limits of the (anticipated) legal framework
- with respect for the local dynamics of the faculties/departments

## Elaboration:

- a set of principles: acceptance criteria
- a model with two phases and a specific procedure

# I. Acceptance ('accreditation') criteria

(= what should guide us?)

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1. General implications of the Bologna declaration
2. Specific objectives of the K.U.Leuven
3. General principles of guided independent learning
4. General principles of curriculum development
5. Specific principles with respect to ba- & ma-levels

# 1. General implications of Bologna

## Domains of tension

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • research orientation           | professional orientation - employability  |
| • regional orientation           | international orientation                 |
| • each institution its own thing | relation local and other institutions     |
| • a fixed path to a degree       | flexible learning paths                   |
| • first study, then work         | combination work/study, lifelong learning |
| • post degree programmes         | a call for creativity                     |
| teacher training                 |   |

**How can the projected new curricula be positioned against these domains of tensions?**

## 2. Specific objectives of the K.U.Leuven

- Guided independent learning as 'leitmotiv'
- uphold the already implemented principles of the semester system
- stimulate flexibility:
  - credit system / facilitate transitions between curricula
- internationalisation
- democratisation
- Association K.U.Leuven - other institutions of Higher Education

**Curriculum proposals should take these  
objectives into account**



### 3. General principles of guided independent learning (as the K.U.Leuven concept of university education)

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Goals of university education: students should

- assimilate discipline specific research findings and frameworks
- acquire insight in the coming about of these findings
- be able to acquire information independently
- be able to contribute themselves to the development of knowledge
- be able to use the knowledge acquired in solving new problems and in developing independent and articulated viewpoints

Features of the educational process

- the student himself is responsible for his own learning
- the nature and intensity of student coaching/tutoring should be tuned to characteristics of the students and the goals of the study process
- the notion of research linked education and training is central

Note: *guided independent learning (GIL) comes in many forms*

**Transform old into new according to this concept**

## 4. General principles of curriculum development

**Build curricula and transitions between  
curricula with the following elements**

- Identification of the programme
- Educational frame of reference
  - objectives, end terms, specificity
  - educational concept (principles, concrete, research)
  - target groups, entry criteria, admission policy
- Structure of the programme
- Description of the different parts of the programme



## 5. Specific principles with respect to bachelor- and master levels

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- a. Principles for all programmes (bachelor and master)
- b. Principles for bachelor programmes
- c. Principles for master programmes
- d. Transition between bachelor and master programmes

## a. Principles for the overall K.U.Leuven offerings

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- **System capacity as a key criterion:**
  - personnel criterion:
    - ♦ quality/expertise
    - ♦ quantity
  - input criterion (quantity and quality)
  - output criterion (quantity and quality)
- **Total number of programmes**
  - the present number is the reference point
  - reasons: ♦ transparency of the curricular offerings
    - ♦ limit too great a spread of students over too many programmes
    - ♦ limited capacity of the system

## a. Principles for the overall K.U.Leuven offerings

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- **Set priorities**
  - first: re-programme what you have
  - next: consider interesting interdisciplinary programmes
  - then: consider 'new' programmes  
(but don't forget to delete 'old' ones)
- **Internationalisation**
  - student exchange
  - visiting faculty
  - joint curricula
  - use of foreign languages
- **Equal opportunities for equal students**
- **Transition regulations for students 'on the road'**

## b. Bachelor programmes (180 ECTS)

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- We will not only change house numbers, we want to do more
- more = develop a concept of a bachelor programme
  1. Promote the acquisition of academic skills
    - scientific thinking
    - communication skills
    - skills to analyse, synthesise
  2. Introduction to and acquisition of skills in one or more disciplines
  3. Prepare student for:
    - a position in society
    - continued education
- special attention for first year students

## c. Master programmes (60+ ECTS)

- core feature:

scientific specialisation

preparation for a scientific or professional career



**Master thesis**

(scientific/professional)

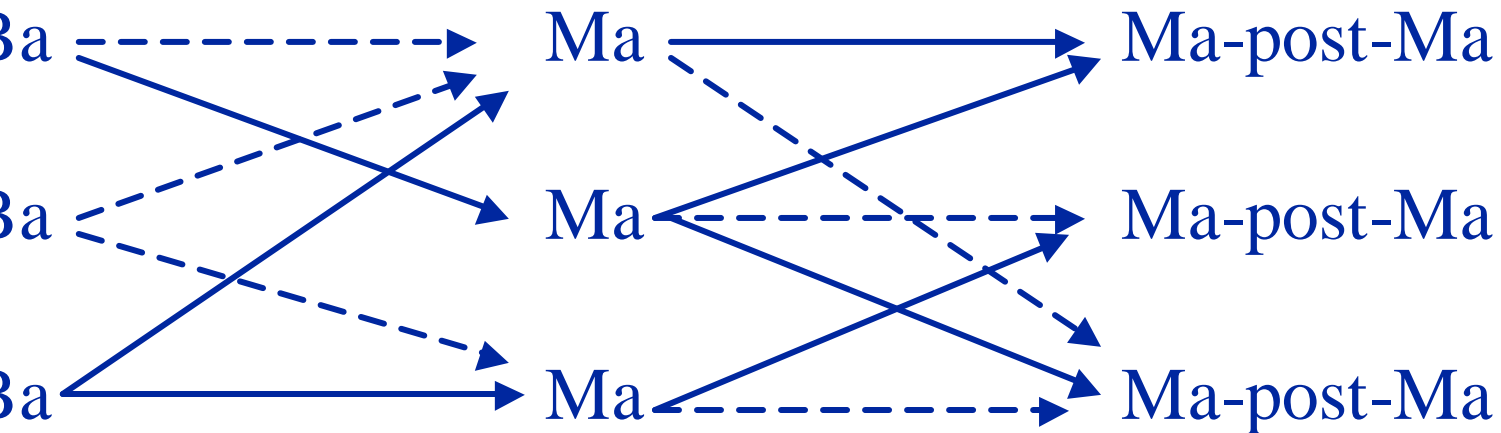
- duration: 60 of 120 ECTS???
- Master-post-master programmes
- separate master programmes or multiple options within a single programme?
- language of instruction and internationalisation
- how about teacher training?

## d. Transition between bachelor en master

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- direct transition (exit terms and entry terms)
- indirect transition :
  - ♦ preparatory programmes
  - ♦ remedial programmes
- transitions
  - ♦ between programmes within institution
  - ♦ between institutions
  - ♦ between universities and 'hogescholen' (both ways)

## d. Transition between bachelor en master



—————> : direct access  
-----> : indirect access

## II. The procedure: a two phase model

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### Phase 1:

development (and selection) of general proposals

### Phase 2:

elaboration (and approval) of specific programmes

### Phase 1 and 2:

support structure



# Phase 1: development (and selection) of general proposals

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## Development

who:	Standing curriculum committees, faculties, groups, individuals
what:	general proposals for meaningful programmes Which? Why? For whom? Structure? Can we do it?
how:	Phase 1 document
when:	October 2001 - 31st May 2002

## Evaluation and selection

- Curriculum Reform Task Force ( $\pm 50$  people: academic staff and students)
  - ♦ analyses proposals using criteria known to submitters
  - ♦ holds meeting with submitters
  - ♦ submits recommendation to Academic Council
- Academic council
  - decides (in principle) in October 2002  
(with recommendations for changes)

## Phase 2: Elaboration of specific programmes

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- Work it all out (deadline: March 15 or April 30, 2003)  
based on a “guide book”
- Evaluation by CRTF
- Decision by Academic Council (June 2003)



START: 2004-2005

## Phase 1 & 2: support structure

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- Information
  - several meetings with deans and programme directors
  - documents (bama-documents 1 tot 7), FAQ's ... on website
  - brochure: "Guideline for curriculum development"
- Service for educational support K.U.Leuven
- Bachelor - master support team
  - support for programme directors
  - administrative tasks (Campus Management module - SAP)

### III. An evaluation while still on the road

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**1. On the positive side**

**2. On the critical side**

# 1. On the positive side

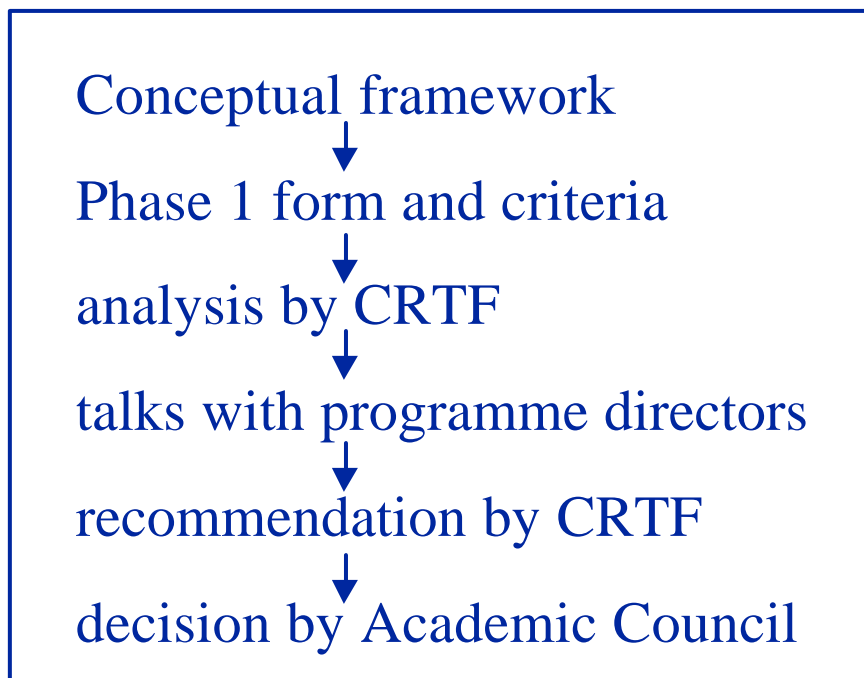
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- A lot of work has been done by the Standing Curriculum Committees and the faculties to realise real reforms
  - new structured programmes
  - new curricula and courses
  - further implementation of the “Guided independent learning”-concept
  - first steps to transcend the faculty boundaries
  - internationalisation
  - flexibility
- Relation with the “hogescholen” (polytechnics)
  - academisation
  - bridges
  - ...

# 1. On the positive side (continued ...)



- The overall strategy works, although at a heavy cost of investments:



- The outcome: a consistent set of decisions across proposals
- We are now well prepared for Phase 2
- Our efforts now stand as a model for other institutions



# 1. On the positive side (continued ...)

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## Results

Existing  
programmes

Restructured/new  
programmes

			Rest.	New	Total
First cycle	51	Bachelor	60	2	62
Second cycle	63	Initial master	111	4	115
Third cycle	116	Post master	69	20	89
Total	230	Total	240	26	266

## 2. On the critical side

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- The law of inertia: change takes time  
( ... which people don't always have)
- Vested interests, tradition, existing structures ...
  - The persistence of old concepts versus flexibility
  - Interdisciplinary programmes?
  - Easing rigid entrance criteria?
  - Rationalisation (= deletion) of outdated programmes and courses?
- New programmes: sometimes weak base
- Internationalisation?
- Administrative red tape: a necessary (?) evil (?)



## IV. What follows ...

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- Phase 1 is finished. Phase 2 is finished for
  - all bachelor- programmes
  - some master post master programmes
- 2006-2007 (or later): start new programmes
- 2007-2008: start initial master programmes
- Meanwhile (deadline: September 30, 2003)
  - approval of restructured/new programmes by government
  - academisation of some “hogescholen” curricula
- Meanwhile (deadline: November 15, 2003)
  - preparation information campaign
- Expected
  - decree on teacher training
  - decree on flexibility in higher education
  - decree on financing of studies
- Accreditation