

## **Some notes on the European Higher Education Area and Primary Teacher Training in Spain according to the Bologna plan (\*)**

Javier Barquin Ruiz  
Universidad de Málaga  
España

In Bologna in 1999 the Ministers of Education of 29 countries agreed on a common vision of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They found that this vision was politically relevant for their own countries and translated it into the operational goals listed in the Bologna Declaration.

### **The key elements of the European Higher Education Area envisaged at that time were:**

- European countries with different political, cultural and academic traditions would engage in cooperation to reach a shared objective;
- European students and graduates would be able to move easily from one country to another with full recognition of qualifications and periods of study, and access to the European labor market;
- European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) would be able to cooperate and exchange students/staff on bases of trust and confidence and also of transparency and quality;
- European governments would fit their national higher education reforms into a broader European context;
- Higher Education (HE) in the European region would increase its international competitiveness, as well as enter into dialogue and improve cooperation with HE in other regions of the world.

In the past 18 years the Bologna Process, through voluntary convergence and an intergovernmental approach, has led to the construction of the main pillars of the European Higher Education Area

It is worth noting that during this period of government, the meetings of ministers from the university area of Europe were held in Berlin (2005), London (2007), Louvain (2009), Budapest - Vienna (2010) Budapest (2010), Bucharest (2012), Yerevan (2015) and next year in Paris (2018). In these meetings, different areas and sections of the teaching, research, networking, etc. processes have been formulated and improved among the universities of the associated countries.

There are currently 48 countries that make up the EHEA.

The EHEA / BFUG members are **48 countries** and the **European Commission**.



There is abundant documentation resulting from working meetings over the years. Here are some of the most significant aspects that conform the guidelines and regulations among universities.

The Bologna Plan divides higher education into three levels. The degree has a duration of four years, 240 credits, and replaces the diplomas and degrees. The master's degree is a specialisation in a specific or multidisciplinary field and can last one year (60 credits) or two (120). The doctorate is accessed through a specific master's degree, and on average studies last for four years.



## Change in the academic credit model

The European Credit Transfer System (ETCS) is the new credits that regulate studies. They differ from the previous ones in that not only are class hours measured. In the past, one credit was equivalent to 10 hours, and now they also bareman the student's work outside the classroom: on average, an ETCS is equivalent to between 25 and 30 hours of learning.

- Its implementation in all European universities allows for the unification of the student's assessment, which translates into greater ease of movement of the student through the continent's higher education institutions.
- In the EHEA, the unit of measurement for the subjects will no longer be the old credit (based solely on the teacher's teaching hours, for which 10 hours of class corresponded to one credit), but will be **the ECTS credit** (European Credit Transfer System).
- In this system students will be assessed the hours spent by the student body in the **study activity**. This activity, which will be between **25 and 30 hours per credit**, includes the time spent on teaching hours, study hours, tutorials, seminars, jobs, internships or projects, as well as those required for the preparation and performance of exams and evaluations.
- The great advantage of ECTS credits is that, as the unit of measurement is the same in all universities in the new European area, it makes it much easier to compare the teaching load of degrees and facilitates student **mobility** and the **validation** of their studies.

## Another view of the student's role: Responsibility

The pupil becomes a passive agent to an active one with the new educational model. The goal is to make your own decisions about your learning when choosing a pathway or other pathway or choosing a major. Bologna requires the student to make a greater effort to, among other things, carry out work and constantly attend classes.

## Access to the University

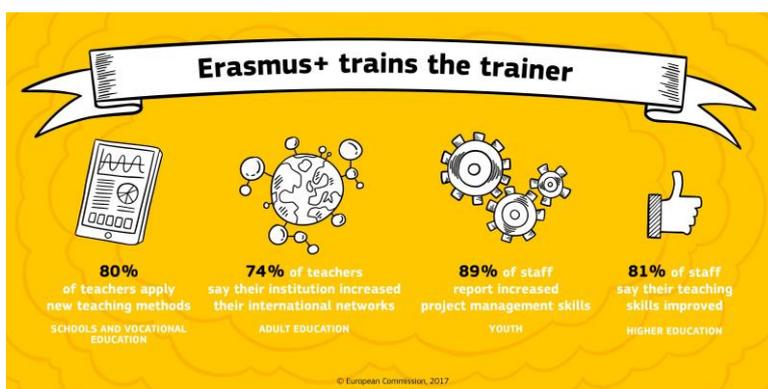
The different cases and degrees for admission to university are collected and an entrance exam is established, which has varied over the years. Each university will draw up a minimum admission score for each degree offered.

This score is obtained between the final high school grades and academic tests that are carried out throughout Spain and which are very similar to each other. The sum of the final grade of secondary school studies and the so-called "**Selectivity**" test is the score used to study one or the other degree.

There are also specific guidelines for people over the age of 25 or 45 who wish to return to school.

## The role of the teacher. Profile changes

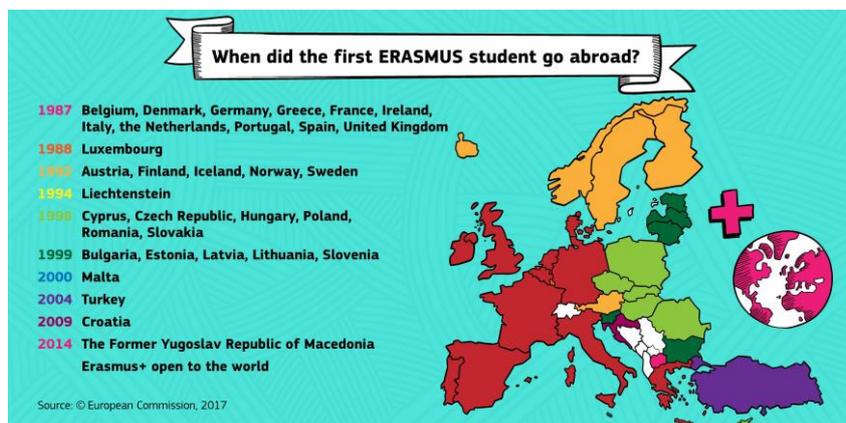
Concepts such as continuous assessment, academic tutoring and the promotion of active learning characterise the new role of teachers in higher education. In this way, in addition to the master classes, specific tutorials and other more practical and individualized teaching modalities are combined, such as workshops, laboratory sessions or seminars and the promotion of joint work among students. In addition, the communication and development of teaching plans between teachers is enhanced through the Erasmus project.



## Mobility among students. Erasmus Grants

Mobility in EHEA continues to be fundamentally based on Erasmus scholarships. Students have the opportunity to study with them from three months to a complete course at a European institution with which their university has signed an agreement. There is also the Erasmus Mundus scholarship, which focuses on exchange during the completion of a master's or doctorate and the possibility of studying a degree accredited by several universities.

Bologna also introduces the European Diploma Supplement (SET), which reflects the results of all the studies carried out by a student and the accreditation of acquired knowledge. SET facilitates not only mobility between centres, but also the possibilities of finding work in a European country.

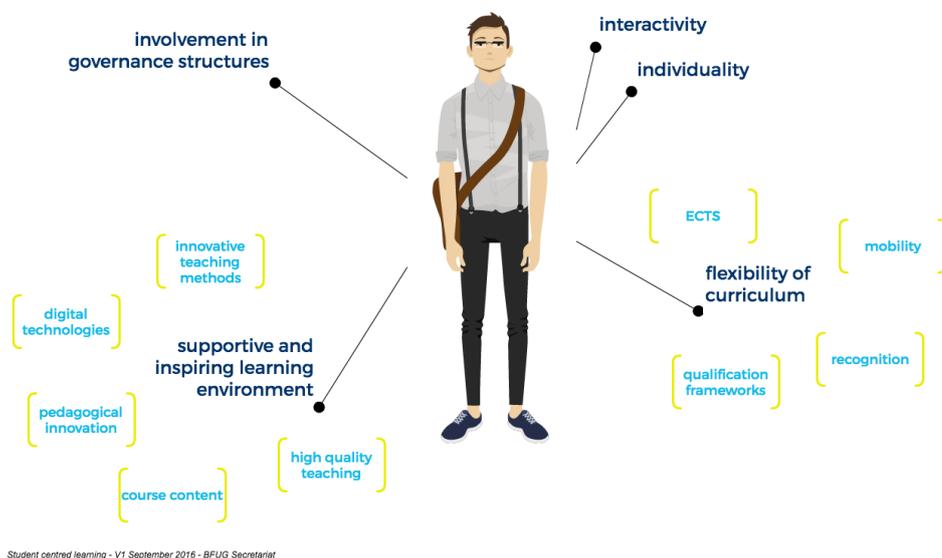


Thanks to the Treaty of Rome, we now experience a Europe without borders; a Europe which allows for the free movement of people, and facilitates work and study abroad. Even since the launch of Erasmus student exchanges in 1987, we have witnessed more openness in Europe, enabling an increasing number of young Europeans to take advantage of all that Europe has to offer. Indeed, for the **9 million people** who have gone abroad supported by Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes over the last 30 years, life in a Europe with closed borders is almost unimaginable. This Erasmus+ generation identifies not only with a given city or country, but also with Europe.

### A project of own final work

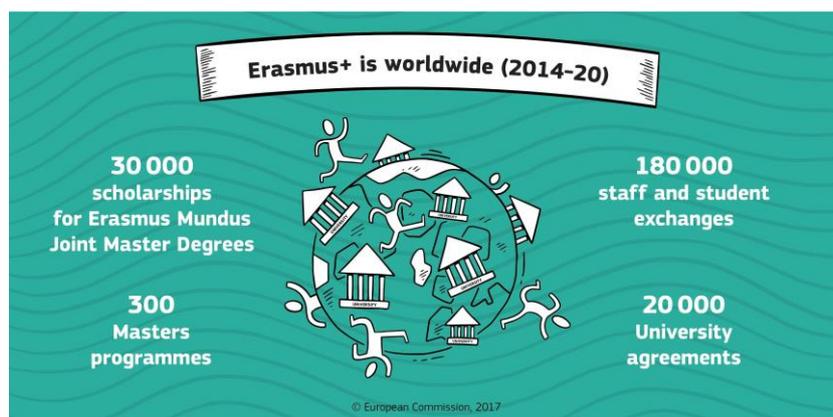
The Bologna Plan makes it compulsory for some careers to carry out internships. And it will be necessary in all the studies to prepare a graduation thesis (TFG). The approach will depend on each centre and the degree awarded and may consist of writing a specific project or an external internship.

In short, we hope to obtain a much more qualified professional profile that will be maintained in continuous training and specially prepared for a structure of work that demands flexibility and permanent attention to change. But also prepared to live and strengthen a more democratic society.



Another very important aspect of the programmes to promote exchange with students and teachers from all over the world is Erasmus support for staff placements in European universities.

With about 17% of the Erasmus+ budget going towards projects and scholarships with a worldwide focus, the period stretching from 2014-2020 will see this funding translate into 180,000 students and staff moving between Europe and the rest of the world; 1,000 capacity building projects for higher education; and 30,000 scholarships for students worldwide to take part in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programmes.



In the case of the University of Malaga, for example, for the 2017/18 academic year we have a dozen scholarships from the Erasmus KA107 programme for teachers from various universities in Iran and I myself coordinate another programme with Palestine and two universities (Birzeit University and Al Quds Open University) through which four Palestinian students will study and a stay for two teachers from the respective universities.

### Teacher training in Spain according to the Bologna Plan

From 2010 onwards, new training plans in accordance with the Bologna Plan guidelines will be implemented in the different Faculties of Education.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) sent information to the universities, set up expert groups, etc., and proposed a work plan and guidelines for each university to adapt the Bologna plan to their circumstances and determine how to structure their respective careers.

In the case of Education, the "White Paper" was prepared as a reference for the design of the curriculum. In the following we will take as an example the one developed in the Faculty of Education of the University of Malaga. All the faculties had to prepare an extensive document describing the sections of career development, the list of subjects, competencies, justifying the presence of the same, making estimates of work for future teachers, etc. Here are some sections that provide an overview of the same.

The general structure comprises a table of distribution of appropriations which would be as follows:

Distribution of the ECTS credit curriculum by subject type

Type of subject	Crédits
Basic	60
Compulsory	100
Elective	30
External practices	44
Work end of Study	6
Total	240

This overall distribution has another more elaborate restructuring that is slightly different between the two specialties: Primary Education and Infant Education.

The primary school career has several specialties with their corresponding subjects that students must study once they have been chosen and the corresponding credits are distributed:

<b>DISTRIBUTION OF CREDITS IN THE CURRICULUM (PRIMARY)</b>		
CREDITS TOTAL	BASIC TRAINING CREDITS	CREDITS IN EXTERNAL PRACTICES
240	60	44
CREDITS OPTIONAL	CREDITS COMPULSORY	CREDITS END OF DEGREE WORK / MÁSTER
30	100	6
<b>List of Especialties (mención)</b>	CREDITS OPTIONAL	
Especialties in Physical Education	42	
Especialties in Musical Education	42	
Especialties in Foreign Language	42	
Especialties Inclusive School and Attention to Diversity	42	

The two specialisations are thus divided into training and credit areas. Below are two tables with the distribution of areas and credits that each university then organize in different subjects and areas of teaching.

**Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education (Curriculum).**

<b>Technical Data Sheets</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Guidelines MEC</b>	<b>Créditos/ módulos</b>
Educational processes, learning and personality construction (0-6 years)	20	Educational processes, learning and personality construction (0-6 years)	100
Learning disabilities and developmental disorders	10	Learning disabilities and developmental disorders	
Family and school	8	Family and school	
Children, health and food	6	Children, health and food	
Organization of school space, learning materials and teaching skills	10	Organization of school space, learning materials and teaching skills	60
Systematic observation and contextual analysis	8	Systematic observation and contextual analysis	
The School of Early Childhood Education	10	The School of Early Childhood Education	
Learning science and mathematics	10	Learning science and mathematics	
Learning languages, reading and writing	20	Learning languages, reading and writing	
Music, plastic and body expression	10	Music, plastic and body expression	
Practicum	40	School practices, including Final Degrade Project	50
End of Grade	8		
Final Degrade Project: drafting and public defense	8		
Foundations of contemporary culture	8		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	158		210
<b>MENTIONS AND OPTIONAL</b>	82		30
<b>TOTAL FINAL</b>	240		240

### Master's Degree in Primary Education

Technical Data Sheets	Credits	Guidelines MEC	Crédits/ modules
Learning and personality development (6-12 years)	10	Learning and personality development (6-12 years)	60
Educational processes and contexts (6-12 years)	14	Educational processes and contexts (6-12 years)	
Family and School	8	Family and School	
Teaching and learning mathematics	20	Teaching and learning mathematics	100
Teaching and learning of the social sciences	14	Teaching and learning of the social sciences	
Teaching and learning of the experimental sciences	14	Teaching and learning of the experimental sciences	
Teaching and learning of languages	20	Teaching and learning of languages	
Teaching and learning music, plastic and visual	10	Teaching and learning music, plastic and visual	
Teaching and learning of physical education	8	Teaching and learning of physical education	
Practicum	40	School practices, including Final Degrade Project	50
End of Grade	8		
Final Degrade Project: drafting and public defense	8		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>168</b>		<b>210</b>
<b>MENTIONS AND OPTIONAL</b>	<b>72</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>TOTAL FINAL</b>	<b>240</b>		<b>240</b>

The document also includes general and specific competencies for the two specialties. Here you can find a non-exhaustive list of them by way of example. Each area has its own specific competencies and the total occupies several pages in the official document. The corresponding subjects should reflect them in their specific curriculum.

<b>Grade basic skills related to minimum competencies</b>
1.01 knowledge comprehensive and meaningful from a field of knowledge to disciplinary and interdisciplinary.
1.02. effective, critical and creative application of comprehensive knowledge.
1.03 preparation of informed and responsible judgments as well as proposals for alternatives.
1.04 agile communication, clear, orally and in writing, using the resources of ICT.
1.05 collaboration, work group and respect for diversity and the discrepancy.
1.06 self-regulation of learning and ability to learn throughout life with autonomy.

These are the general competencies that are later extended to other more specific competences such as the following (5 of 12):

Specific competences of the grade of primary education
2.01 know the curricular areas of education primary, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria and the body of didactic knowledge around the respective teaching and learning procedures.
2.02 design, planning and evaluation processes of teaching and learning, both individually and in collaboration with others / as educational and professional Center.
2.03 effectively address situations of learning languages in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Encourage reading and critical commentary of texts of the different scientific domains and cultural content in the school curriculum.
2.04 design and regular learning spaces in contexts of diversity and which address gender equality, equity and respect for human rights that make up the values of citizen formation.
2.05 foster cohabitation in the classroom and beyond, solve discipline problems and contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Stimulate and value the effort, perseverance and personal discipline in the students.

## Practicum

The Externships in the grade of primary education are covered in memory checks in the Practicum module. It is a module of 50 credits, of which 44 are "school practices".

These school practices constitute a single material that focuses on four subjects.

The **Practicum I** subject of 6 credits, is included in the curriculum in the first semester of the 2nd year. During 3 weeks the student remains in schools of primary education **public primarily**. During this period of time the student develops functions of teacher assistant and is advised by a professional tutor of the training centre and an academic tutor of the Faculty of Education, this last being responsible for guiding all the student work at the school and organize the workshops with the students.

Course **Practicum II** of 8 credits, is located in the second half of the 3rd year of the degree. In this case students remains for four weeks in the centres of practices that, as in the previous case, are publicly owned. These students are advised also by professional tutors and academic tutors, assuming functions expressed above.

The courses 18 credits of **Practicum III.1** and **III.2 Practicum** of 12 credits are covered in the first half of last year, i.e., 4th year of primary education degree. The students performed their last period of training remain in the scholls for 15 weeks. During this period also attend seminars disciplinary and multidisciplinary organized from the Faculty of Education Sciences and supervised by the afore mentioned professionals.

To carry out these practices of teaching the Faculty of Education has signed agreements with primary education centres in Malaga and the province. In Malaga, school practices are carried out in public and private centres.

Competencies for Practicum are also regulated in this section.

<b>Module school practices and end of degree work skills</b>
5.1.01 acquire practical knowledge of classroom and the management of the same.
5.1.02 know and apply the processes of interaction and communication in the classroom and master the skills and social skills necessary to foster a climate of classroom that facilitates learning and living together.
5.1.03 control and the monitoring of the educational process and in particular the teaching and learning through mastery of the techniques and strategies.
5.1.04 relate theory and practice with the reality of the classroom and Center.
5.1.05 participate in teaching and learning to do, acting and thinking from the practice.
5.1.06 participate in the proposed improvements in the different areas that you can set in a Center.
5.1.07 regulate processes of interaction and communication in groups of students from 6 to 12 years for primary education.
5.1.08 explore forms of cooperation with the various sectors of the educational community and the social environment.

The Faculty provides all students with information on this document, timetables, specific programmes for the subject matter, etc. See below:

<http://www.uma.es/facultad-de-ciencias-de-la-educacion/>

The virtual campus is also widely used. Within the Magisterium courses there is an alternative of double degree where several subjects that are studied in English appear.

At the end of the course, all faculties must draw up a report of activities and results. According to that, programs, more or less financial aid, etc. are maintained.

All processes are highly regulated and there are continuous evaluations and reports from the different departments and offices.

In recent years, the four-year model is being revised and some colleges and universities want to return to the three-course model and extend the credits on master's degrees.

Several problems appear on the horizon, from the drop in enrolment due to the low birth rate to the replacement of teachers who retire and who are usually not covered by official but provisional teachers. Likewise, the Faculties generate more graduates than necessary in the labor market.

(\*) References.

*The information contained in the article is based on official documents from both the European Union and the Faculty of Education of the University of Malaga. Information has also been obtained from newspapers and other media channels*