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Curricula Development based on Learning Outcomes – An Austrian Case

Abstract

The development of curricula is influenced by many factors. Basis for the development in Europe of today are the Bologna Process and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Additionally to those influences, the legal situation of each country influences the development of curricula as the law defines rights, duties, and the possibilities educational institutions have in these contexts. On top of all these regulations we find internal institutional regulations and guidelines. And finally within these institutions we have commissions or committees that, at the end of the day, do the actual work of designing a program.

Our contribution should present a quick survey of the legal and administrative levels, the necessary definitions and guidelines supplied by each level involved, and give some valuable hints on how to proceed through this process. In addition, we present a template for curricula, covering the structural and legal aspects of a curriculum, sections on how to write a qualification profile, on how to map competences to courses or particularly course-types, and on the contents of the necessary course descriptions. A short checklist completes this part of the handbook. We also try to explain potential benefits and drawbacks, and things to keep in mind – experiences grown throughout several years of severe and repeated changes in both legal and administrative aspects.

Abstract in German

Die Entwicklung von Curricula ist von vielen Faktoren beeinflusst. Die Basis für Curricula-Entwicklung im Europa von heute bilden der Bologna-Prozess und der Europäische Qualifikationsrahmen für Lebenslanges Lernen. Die nächste Ebene wird durch die rechtliche Situation jeder Nation geformt und durch die Möglichkeiten, die damit den Bildungseinrichtungen zur Verfügung stehen. Diese bilden mit ihren eigenen Bestimmungen und Richtlinien die darauf folgende Ebene. Und schließlich haben wir innerhalb der Bildungseinrichtungen die jeweiligen Kommissionen oder Komitees, die letztlich die reale Erstellung der Programme durchführen.

Unser Beitrag soll einen kurzen Abriss über die rechtlichen und administrativen Ebenen bilden, und die jeweils beizubringenden Definitionen und Richtlinien, sowie wertvolle Hinweise geben, wie man diesen Prozess bewältigt. Darüber hinaus präsentieren wir als Beispiel ein Muster eines Curriculums, das die strukturellen und rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen festlegt, sowie Abschnitte über die Erstellung eines Qualifikationsprofils, darüber, wie man Kompetenzen auf Lehrveranstaltungen bzw. LV-Typen abbildet und den notwendigen Inhalt von Lehrveranstaltungsbeschreibungen. Eine kurze Checkliste bildet den Abschluss dieses Abschnittes des Handbuchs. Wir versuchen auch, potentielle Vor- und Nachteile zu erläutern und Dinge, die man im Hinterkopf behalten sollte – Erfahrungen, die in mehreren Jahren, zum Teil durch einen sehr markanten Wechsel in der legalen und rechtlichen Situation gewachsen sind.

Keywords

Curricula, competence-matrix, institutional regulations, development process

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Eugen Brenner received his diploma in Electrical Engineering at Graz University of Technology in 1983. In 1987, he received his PhD degree for his work in control theory, also at Graz University of Technology. His primary research interests are in FPGA-based hardware extension to parallel systems, real-time systems, and security in embedded systems.

After having been several years in various commissions for curricula design he became Dean of Studies for Telematics in 2003 and member of the Curricula-Commission at Graz University of Technology. In this function he was responsible for restructuring the studies at the university. He also took part in the ELITE'LLL project of the European Commission.

Julia Niehs was born on 10th of June 1981 and grew up in Austria. She attended the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz studying English and German and finished her teaching certificate (Master of Arts) in 2005.

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