

What does 'student-centred' mean in practice?

It means using the great capacities of European Universities and Higher Education Institutions to organise the learning process with an eye to the competences (knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities) that the student will need for a satisfying personal and professional life. It means using ECTS credits — which are based on student workload measured in time — in order to use the students' time in the most effective way possible.

How can CLIOHnet/CLIOHRES.net and Tuning help?

First of all, by providing information and agreed guidelines; furthermore Quality evaluation tools and examples of good practice are available on-line and on paper; information sessions, workshops and site visits can be organised if requested.

What is the EQF for Higher Education?

The European Qualifications Framework for HE provides very general statements of what a student must know, understand and be able to communicate at the end of each cycle. They are based on the so-called "Dublin Descriptors"; countries are now asked to create their national version (NQF) and 'Sectoral' versions, that is, applied to single subject areas such as History.

What are the "Dublin descriptors"?

They are very general descriptions of what a student must know, understand and be able to communicate at the end of each cycle.

How do the History cycle level descriptors relate to them?

The History descriptors are compatible with the Dublin Descriptors, but they are specific for History.

Will all History programmes in Europe be alike?

No, absolutely not. Diversity is the most important single characteristic of European History Programmes. But, by applying the agreed guidelines and reference points, programmes will become transparent — that is understandable to others — and their quality and relevance to the students will increase.

Are other countries and continents involved?

Yes, 18 countries of Tuning Latin America have carried out similar work in establishing guidelines and reference points for History, and Russia, India, Pakistan and Central Asia are doing so or intend to do so in the near future.

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A Pocket Guide to designing quality

History Programmes in the Bologna framework



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HISTORY CYCLE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

General Aims of any History course unit or programme:

Any course or programme should enable the student (to the extent possible in the time available) to develop a historical perspective on reality. This should include acquiring or experiencing:

1. A critical view of the human past, and the realization that the past affects our present and future and our perception of them.

2. Understanding of and respect for viewpoints moulded by different historical backgrounds.

3. A general idea of the diachronic framework of major historical periods and events.
4. Direct contact with the historians' craft, that is, even in a circumscribed context, contact with original sources and texts produced by professional historiographical research.

First cycle History Programme ("Bachelor"):

The general objectives remain as above. Furthermore, at the end of a first cycle History programme the student should:

1. Possess general knowledge and orientation with respect to the methodologies, tools and issues of all the broad chronological divisions in which history is normally divided, from ancient to recent times.

2. Have specific knowledge of at least one of the above periods or of a diachronic theme.
3. Be aware of how historical interests, categories and problems change with time and how historiographical debate is linked to the political and cultural concerns of each epoch.

4. Have shown his/her ability to complete and present in oral and written form — according to the stature of the discipline — a medium length piece of research which demonstrates the ability to retrieve bibliographical information and primary sources and use them to address a historiographical problem.

Second Cycle History Programme ("Master"):

A student completing a second cycle degree in History should have acquired to a reasonable degree the subject specific qualities, skills and competences listed below. He/she will have built further on the levels reached at the first cycle so as to:

1. Have specific, ample, detailed and up-to-date knowledge of at least one great chronological division of history, including different methodological approaches and historiographical orientations relating to it.
2. Be familiar with comparative methods — spatial, chronological and thematic — of approaching historiographical research.
3. Have shown the ability to plan, carry out, present in oral and written form — according to the stature of the discipline — a research-based contribution to historiographical knowledge, bearing on a significant problem.

HISTORY GRADUATES' PROFESSIONS

First cycle degrees in History are useful for employment in nearly any service or communications related field: civil service, local, regional administration, personnel management, journalism, international organisations, tourism, administration and valorisation of the cultural patrimony in its various manifestations including archives, museums, libraries.

Second cycle degrees in History according to the specifics of the national organisation of studies may give access to employment in secondary or even higher education. They also give a good basis for positions of greater responsibility in all the sectors mentioned for the first cycle.

Third cycle degrees in History are associated with an academic or a research role, although, in practice, many holding such degrees teach in schools or accept other kinds of employment.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Forming each competence requires a different strategy. CLIOHn2-Tuning recommends using many different formats (seminars, lectures, group work, problem-based learning, oral and written reports, independent and guided research) to form the necessary competences. Assessment criteria must be made explicit and aim at ascertaining that the student possesses the desired competences.

“COMPETENCES” are what students know, understand and are able to do. Forming them is the objective of the learning/teaching process.

GENERIC COMPETENCES FOR HISTORY STUDENTS

To prepare for employment and citizenship, students must possess competences not always considered in the academic world. These include **‘instrumental competences’** such as ‘capacity for analysis and synthesis’, ‘information management skills’ and ‘problem solving; **‘interpersonal competences’** such as ‘team-work’, ‘interpersonal skills’ and ‘appreciation of diversity and multiculturality’; and **‘systemic competences’**, such as ‘research skills’, ‘creativity’ and ‘capacity to learn’. History students are particularly well-placed to acquire ‘information management skills’, and ‘capacity for analysis and synthesis’, for example, which are very important in almost any field of employment. They also learn to write and communicate effectively.

SUBJECT SPECIFIC COMPETENCES FOR HISTORY STUDENTS

This list helps to choose what is relevant for your students and define which competences should be formed in each curriculum, each cycle and each course unit. No one student will acquire them all! And perhaps your students will acquire competences not included in this list.

1. A critical awareness of the relationship between current events and processes and the past.
2. Awareness of the differences in historiographical outlooks in various periods and contexts.
3. Awareness of and respect for points of view deriving from other national or cultural backgrounds.
4. Awareness of the on-going nature of historical research and debate.
5. Knowledge of the general diachronic framework of the past.
6. Awareness of the issues and themes of present day historiographical debate.
7. Detailed knowledge of one or more specific periods of the human past.
8. Ability to communicate orally in one's own language using the terminology and techniques accepted in the historiographical profession.
9. Ability to communicate orally in foreign languages using the terminology and techniques accepted in the historiographical profession.
10. Ability to read historiographical texts or original documents in one's own language; to summarise or transcribe and catalogue information as appropriate.
11. Ability to read historiographical texts or original documents in other languages; to summarise or transcribe and catalogue information using correctly the various types of historiographical writing.
12. Ability to write in one's own language using correctly the various types of historiographical writing.
13. Ability to write in other languages using correctly the various types of historiographical writing.
14. Knowledge of and ability to use information retrieval tools, such as bibliographical repertoires, archival inventories, e-references.
15. Knowledge of and ability to use the specific tools necessary to study documents of particular periods (e.g. palaeography, epigraphy).
16. Ability to use computer and internet resources and techniques for elaborating historical or related data (using statistical, cartographic methods, or creating databases, etc.).
17. Knowledge of ancient languages.
18. Knowledge of local history.
19. Knowledge of one's own national history.
20. Knowledge of European history in a comparative perspective.
21. Knowledge of the history of European integration.
22. Knowledge of world history.
23. Awareness of and ability to use tools of other human sciences (e.g., literary criticism, history of languages, art history, archaeology, anthropology, law, sociology, philosophy, etc.).
24. Awareness of methods and issues of different branches of historical research (economic, social, political, gender-related, etc.).
25. Ability to define research topics suitable to contribute to historiographical knowledge and debate.
26. Ability to identify and utilise appropriately sources of information (bibliography, documents, oral testimony etc.) for research project.
27. Ability to organise complex historical information in coherent form.
28. Ability to give narrative form to research results according to the canons of the discipline.
29. Ability to comment, annotate or edit texts and documents correctly according to the critical canons of the discipline.
30. Knowledge of didactics of history.

ECTS credits measure the time a normal student needs to do all the work associated with a particular course unit: — whether at home, in the library, in the classroom or elsewhere. 1 ECTS credit equals 25-30 hours of tutorial time. Usually: First cycle = 180 credits; Second cycle = 120 credits.

Ten steps

for designing new programmes or improving existing ones

- ☒ 1. Is there a need? Determine, consulting stakeholders, whether there is really a need for the proposed course of study.
- ☒ 2. Define the profile and the key competences. Find out what competences are actually useful for employment, personal culture and citizenship (see inside this guide for a list).
- ☒ 3. Define the learning outcomes indicating the most important competences (choose around 10 key competences with reference to the cycle level indicators inside this guide).
- ☒ 4. Decide whether to 'modularise' (course units can be of a random number of ECTS credits, or else of a set number, e.g. 5, hence "modularised").
- ☒ 5. Define the learning outcomes and the key competences in each module or course unit (the lists of competences inside this guide will help).
- ☒ 6. See how those competences can best be formed and assessed, using a variety of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.
- ☒ 7. Check that all the key generic and subject specific competences have been taken into account.
- ☒ 8. Describe the programme and the course units, indicating the learning outcomes in terms of competences.
- ☒ 9. Check for balance.
- ☒ 10. Implement, monitor and improve.

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(In)frequently asked questions

What is the Bologna process?

Starting with a declaration signed in Bologna in 1999, the Ministers of Education of the signatory countries (now 45) meet every two years to take stock of what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done in order to make higher education system in all their countries comparable, compatible and transparent. Between the meetings of Ministers, activities take place (seminars and events organised by the "Bologna Follow-up Group", the Bologna Promoters, Rectors' conferences, Universities) in order to examine specific issues and prepare the next ministerial meeting.

Why apply 'Bologna'?

Bologna is output oriented. It is centred on the student and the students' needs and experience of the learning process, rather than on the teacher, and his/her expectations of the continuity of the traditional 'input-based' structure. It provides general guidelines, so that Universities in all 45 Bologna countries can communicate in an agreed language and share basic structures (cycles, credits, quality procedures). This makes it possible for students' work to be recognised in other countries and in their own as well. In fact, Bologna means Quality, Transparency, Recognition and Employability — not just mobility!

Who implements 'Bologna'?

Ministers are responsible for being sure that the normative framework in their country allows and encourages Universities to apply the Bologna reforms. The actual design and implementation of the new programmes, however, is the responsibility of Universities: that is Higher Education administrative and academic staff with the students. The Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project is based on the idea that in final analysis it is the professors, students and administrative staff of Universities that can actually "implement Bologna" in a concrete meaningful way.

What tools are available?

The Tuning project has given the chance for academics from all EU countries to develop agreed guidelines and reference points for a number of Subject Areas. The History Subject Area Group, working with the History Thematic Network, has involved more than 3000 academics, employers and students in the elaboration of the History Guidelines and Reference Points.