

The Bologna Process and Changes to Europe's Educational Systems

At a meeting in Bologna, Italy, in 1999, education ministers of 29 countries in Europe met to begin a discussion of how to facilitate mobility and acceptance of degrees amongst their countries. Based on the location of this meeting, this became known as the Bologna Process. Since then, the participating countries have grown to 46. A list of the countries is included. The goal of the Bologna Process is full implementation by 2010. "Full implementation" means that no new students would be admitted to the traditional (former) education system in these countries.

While many tenets of higher education are part of the Bologna Process, the one most immediately affecting institutions of higher education in the U.S. is the change in number of years of education to complete a degree from these countries. They have all agreed to a three-cycle education system. Most countries are calling them the bachelor-master's-doctoral degrees (although some countries, such as France, may use different terms for the bachelor level degree). The biggest change for many countries is that their first degree, now often called the bachelor degree, can be a three-, three-and-a-half, or four-year degree. There is no mandate for length other than it cannot be fewer than three years, and the bachelor-master's cycles can be no more than five years combined. So the following shows several combinations of these two parts of the system.

3 year bachelor plus 2 year master's (3 + 2)

3.5 year bachelor plus 1.5 year master's (3.5 + 1.5)

4 year bachelor plus 1 year master's (4 + 1)

Many of the countries are embracing the 3+2 model, which can pose challenges to U.S. universities that routinely have required a U.S. bachelor degree equivalent with a minimum of four years to completion.

The International Admissions Team in the Office of Admissions will be keeping abreast of the progress of the Bologna Process. Automatic acceptance of these degrees would need to include discussion of acceptance of three-year degrees from other countries such as Australia, Canada and India, which also have three-year degrees that are traditionally not considered equivalent to a U.S. four-year degree.

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Holy See
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia
Malta
Moldova
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
Serbia and Montenegro
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom