



Fighting for students'
rights since 1982

Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

In line with the ESGs

Lana Par, Vice President of ESU





44 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 40 countries

20 million students across Europe

Representing & promoting **educational, social, economic** and **cultural interests**

Towards the **European Union**, the **Bologna Follow-Up Group**, the **Council of Europe** and **UNESCO**

NUS – 4 pillars: **independent, democratic, representative, open** (Ljubljana Declaration)

History and definition of Student-Centred Learning in EHEA

- 2007 **London Communiqué**: not a commitment, but an effect of Bologna Process policies ; „*a significant outcome of the process will be a move towards Student – Centred Learning*”
- 2009 **Leuven Communiqué**: Student-Centred Learning linked with both labour market and empowering students to become active and responsible citizens.
- 2010 **Budapest-Vienna Communiqué**: focus on learning and working environment
- 2012 **Bucharest Communiqué**: adding innovative teaching methods and student participation as precondition
- 2015 **Yerevan Communiqué**: including digitalisation, assessment methods, curriculum design + ESGs

History and definition of Student-Centred Learning in EHEA

From 2015, focus is shifted towards reflection & lack of implementation:

- ‘Student-Centred Learning was **not always clearly recognized as the main pillar of the European degree structure** and was not sufficiently assimilated and implemented’

- **Rome 2020 Communique + Annex II:** reiteration and collection of previous commitments + micro-credentials, open education, and learning analytics, as well as more clearly enforcing the link between SCL and social dimension.

- **Tirana 2024 Communique:** we need to ensure Student-Centred Learning is a reality for all students, empowering individual learners through research-based learning, effective support and guidance and cross-disciplinary teaching approaches



Student -Centred Learning and ESGs

SETTING THE CONTEXT: Responding to diversity and growing expectations for higher education requires a fundamental shift in its provision; it requires a more student-centred approach to learning and teaching, embracing flexible learning paths and recognising competences gained outside formal curricula.

1.3 STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

STANDARD:

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.



Student -Centred Learning and ESGs

1.5 TEACHING STAFF

STANDARD:

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centred learning and teaching and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing



Student -Centred Learning and ESGs

1.6 LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

STANDARD:

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

The needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support.

Student-Centred Learning from students perspective

- ESU definition 2015: ‘both a **mindset and a culture** [...] characterised by **innovative** methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in **communication** with teachers and other learners and which **take students seriously as active participants** in their own learning, fostering **transferable skills** such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking’
- The **core principles** of student-centred learning remained the same, but **new forces and developments** (student learning patterns, digitalisation, international connectedness etc) influence HE policy on student-centred learning
- It is a **whole-change approach** focused on moving from mnemonic to learning-outcomes based

Student-Centred Learning from students perspective

In terms of **scope**, ESU sees **three dimensions** of student-centred learning:

- **pedagogical concept** (learning and teaching methods)
- **cultural frame** (learning environment and institutional environment)
- **lever supporting learning systems**

• Student-centred learning is **not consumerism**, but student **satisfaction** is a first step leading to **engagement** and then **agency**

• **Learning and teaching methods** – putting students in the ‘driver seat’, flexibility of approaches, diverse range of methods and (digital) tools and exercises (! not all students react the same to all SCL approaches and a balance is needed à adaptability)

Student-Centred Learning from students perspective

- **Usage of learning outcomes** in practice and student **assessment**
 - **User-friendly and easily accessible** (students being able to understand their qualifications and LO based on NQF) – “Students should be well-informed about the intended learning outcomes of their programme, and of where they can find more detailed information if need be”.
 - **Transparent** – intended LOs presented at the beginning of term and discussed with students.
 - **Clear and coherent.**
 - **Students consulted** when Learning outcomes are designed and reviewed (impact assessment, link between LO, syllabi, bibliography, teaching methods etc) and employability
 - **Student assessment and feedback based on learning outcomes**
 - **Using Learning Outcomes** as a tool to enhance flexibility of learning paths and L&T methods

Student-Centred Learning from students perspective

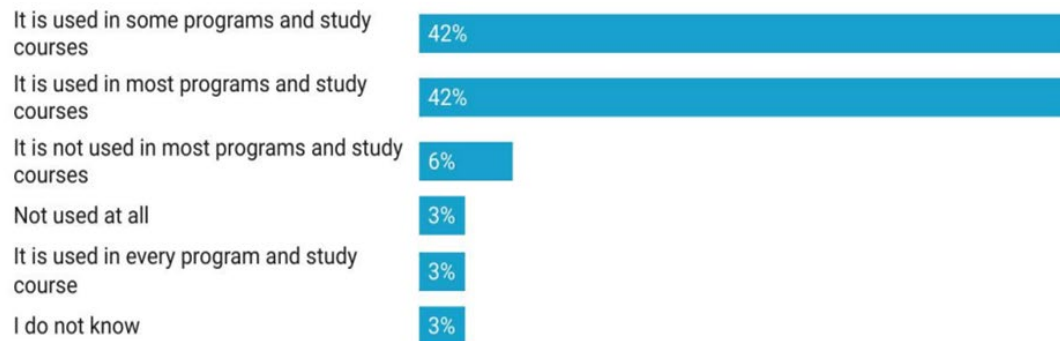
- Up-to-date **educational resources**, including (online) libraries and quality educational infrastructure (digitalisation is also a possible uniformization of differences in capacity to offer quality resources)
- Fostering a wide range of **transversal skills**
- Initial and continuous **teacher training, evaluation, appraisal and promotion** criteria
- Information, guidance, counselling, tutoring/mentoring** systems
- Flexibility of learning path and learning pathways**, including **recognition of prior learning**
- Meaningful **student participation**
- Catering for **diverse student population** (creating a diversity of needs), including a stronger data collection on experiences and impact on learning (path)
- Using **mobility to enhance SCL**



Quality Assurance Fit for the Future - Students' perspective

Figure 3 - Implementation of SCL in HE study programmes

To what extent do higher education institutions implement student-centred learning in your country?

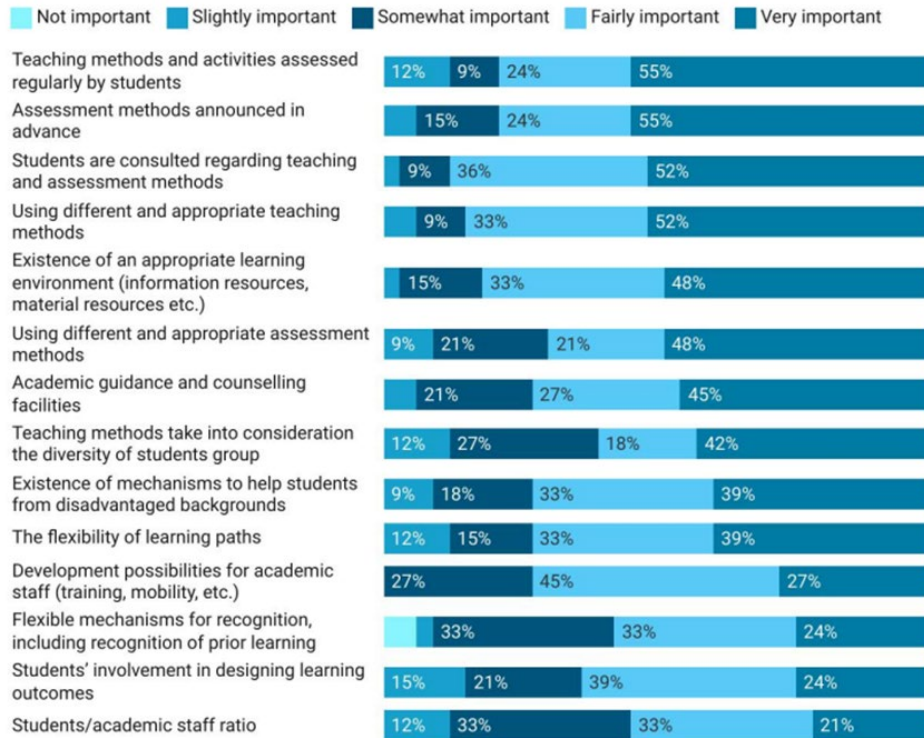


Results show the need to intensify endeavours in implementing student-centred learning across all programmes and study courses



Figure 5 - Importance of indicators to assess SCL

How important do you consider these indicators as means to assess the implementation of student-centred learning?



The most important indicators, from the NUSes perspective, are teaching methods being assessed regularly by students, students being consulted regarding teaching and assessment methods and assessment methods being announced in advance, using different and appropriate teaching methods

We can also observe that two of them are linked to assessment, which can heavily influence both student behaviour and the perceived satisfaction of the teaching and learning process, while the most selected one is, in essence, means to ensure student participation in the process through offering tools that would incentivize teaching activity.

Figure 6 - Use of the indicators in current external QA practices

Which of the indicators are already used in external Quality assurance procedures in your country?



Five indicators (student/staff ratio, teaching methods taking into consideration the diversity of students group, the flexibility of learning paths, students' involvement in designing learning outcomes, using different and appropriate assessment methods) were marked by less than half of the NUSs as being used in EQA. Relatively, the survey revealed that there are still challenges in implementing some important indicators in External Quality Assurance mechanisms

Figure 8 - Situation of student surveys on teaching quality

To what extent are the following practices common in your national HE system?

■ Never
 ■ Rarely
 ■ Sometimes
 ■ Usually
 ■ Always



Chart: ESU • Source: QA FIT • Created with Datawrapper

It was also pointed out that in some cases the only objective instrument as far as internal quality assurance is concerned that takes students' opinion of the SCL into account is the end-of-course questionnaire, to be completed before registering for the examination. However, it is also highlighted that students seldomly receive information about the follow-up actions after filling in the surveys or these follow-up actions are lacking.

Links and contacts



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