Briefing Paper on the Diploma Supplement with Recommendations

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BRIEFING PAPER ON THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT)
Education Matters WG

Purpose and introduction
The purpose of this paper is to inform the ER WCPT MO’s and in general all Physiotherapists, mainly those with educational and/or managerial roles, of the existence of the Diploma Supplement (DS). A document issued by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that, among other aspects, promotes transparency and a fair and informed judgment about the qualifications of their graduates, and this way contributes to facilitate mobility, recognition and employability.

The DS is free of charge, and an increasing number of HEIs is now offering it to their graduates.

The ER WCPT Education Working Group considers relevant to promote the dissemination / spreading of the existence of this tool, and that the MO’s, the Higher Education Institutions, employers and registration authorities discuss (evaluate?) its impact on the mobility and employability of physiotherapists.

The paper addresses the following questions:
- What is the diploma supplement?
- What it is not?
- What does the diploma supplement offer to the students?
- What does the diploma supplement offer to higher education institutions?
- What does the diploma supplement offer to employers, professional bodies and registration authorities?

As annexes you can also find:
- The list of contents / template of the Diploma Supplement
- A list of references, and links to obtain further information

What is the diploma supplement?
The Diploma Supplement (DS) is a document attached to a higher education diploma aiming at improving international ‘transparency’ and at facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully
completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value-judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It is a flexible non-prescriptive tool, which is designed to save time, money and workload. It is capable of adaptation to local needs.

The DS is produced by national institutions according to a template that has been developed by a Joint European Commission - Council of Europe - UNESCO working party that tested and refined it. The DS template is available in the 11 official EU languages http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/diploma-supplement/examples

The DS is composed of eight sections (information identifying the holder of the qualification, information identifying the qualification, information on the level of the qualification, information on the contents and results gained, information on the function of the qualification, additional information, certification of the Supplement, information on the national higher education system). Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why. Institutions have to apply to the DS the same authentication procedures as for the diploma itself.

A description of the national higher education system within which the individual named on the original qualification graduated has to be attached to the DS. This description is provided by the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs) and is available on the website: www.enic-naric.net

What it is not?

- It is not a Curriculum Vita.
- It is not a substitute for the original qualification or a transcript.
- It is not an automatic system that guarantees recognition.

What does the diploma supplement offer to the students?

- A diploma that is more readable and easily comparable abroad.
- A precise description of their academic curses and on the competencies acquired during the study period.
- Objectivity and a fair judgement of their achievements and competencies
- An easier access to opportunities of work or further studies abroad
- It fosters their employability (employers are more and more interested by the student profile that is provided for in the DS).
What does the diploma supplement offer to higher education institutions?

- It facilitates academic and professional recognition, thus increasing the transparency of qualifications.
- It protects national/institutional autonomy while offering a common frame, which is accepted all over Europe.
- It promotes informed judgements about qualifications that can be understood in another educational context.
- It raises the visibility of the institution abroad.
- It promotes the employability of their graduates at national and international level.
- It helps saving time since it provides the answers to a lot of recurrent questions put to administrative services in institutions about the content and portability of diplomas.

What does the diploma supplement offer to employers, professional bodies and registration authorities?

New qualifications proliferate worldwide and countries are constantly changing their qualification systems and educational structures under the impact of rapid economic, political and technological change. An increasing number of mobile citizens are seeking the fair recognition of their qualifications. The non-recognition and poor-evaluation of qualifications is now a global problem. Since original credentials alone do not provide sufficient information, it is very difficult to gauge the level and function of a qualification without detailed appropriate explanation.

The Diploma Supplement is a response to these challenges since:

- It promotes transparency in higher education.
- It accommodates rapid changes in qualifications.
- It aids mobility, access and lifelong learning.
- It promotes fair and informed judgements about qualifications.

Recommendations

The Education Working Group in cooperation with the other PI and EU WGs of ER WCPT must explore the relevant contents to be included in section 6 of the Diploma Supplements issued by HEI, that may contribute to facilitate mobility and employability of their physiotherapy graduates. This issue must be kept in the agenda of the regular meetings with ENPHE.

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