

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications

Preamble

The Preamble builds on the existing legal framework for the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education, as elaborated within the frameworks of the Council of Europe and of UNESCO (as far as the latter applies to the Europe Region). Specific attention is drawn to the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, elaborated jointly by both Organisations and adopted on 11 April 1997. This Convention entered into force on 1 February 1999. The Preamble also builds on the most important developments in the international recognition of qualifications over the past years, including the outcomes of the Conference on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications: Challenges for the next Decade, organised by the Higher Education and Research Committee of the Council of Europe (CC-HER) (Malta, 26 - 28 October 1994) and the seminars on the methodology of credentials evaluation organised by the European Association for International Education (EAIE) and NAFSA: Association of International Educators in 1994 - 95. In the case of qualifications issued through transnational arrangements, the Preamble builds on the provisions of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.

III. General principles

Paragraphs 4 - 11

The Recommendation clearly underlines the right of applicants to having their foreign qualifications assessed according to transparent, coherent and reliable procedures and criteria.

As far as possible, competent recognition authorities should strive to recognise applicants' foreign qualifications. Where this is not possible, the Recommendation urges the competent recognition authorities to consider alternative forms of recognition. Such alternative recognition may include:

- (i) recognition of the foreign qualification as comparable to a qualification of the host country, but not to that indicated by the applicant;
- (ii) partial recognition of the foreign qualification;
- (iii) full or partial recognition of the foreign qualification subject to the applicant

- successfully taking additional examinations or aptitude tests;
- (iv) full or partial recognition of the foreign qualification at the end of a probationary period, possibly subject to specified conditions.

The grant of partial recognition or recognition subject to the fulfilment of specific conditions does not, however, imply an automatic right to admission to any courses designed to help applicants remedy deficiencies with a view to obtaining recognition.

Only when the competent recognition authority finds it impossible to grant even an alternative form of recognition should an application be rejected outright. It should be kept in mind that in some cases, the absence of recognition may be "fair recognition" on the evidence of the case.

Where the recognition decision is different from the decision requested by the applicant, the competent recognition authority has a special obligation to stating the reasons for its decision and to inform applicants of their possibilities for making an appeal against the decision. This is important both to allow applicants to make an appeal against the decisions and to enable applicants to undertake remedial measures with a view to obtaining recognition at a later stage. This should in no way prevent competent recognition authorities from stating their reasons for granting recognition.

Paragraph 12

There is an inherent dilemma in specifying criteria for the assessment of foreign qualifications. While the aim of an assessment is to assess the foreign qualification in qualitative terms, the assessment cannot be undertaken without to some extent relying on both qualitative and quantitative criteria. It is, however, important that the criteria used be chosen because of their suitability in indicating the quality of the qualification in question and the applicant's ability to undertake the activity for which recognition is sought (e.g. further study, research, gainful employment). For example, students who have obtained good study results (grades) may be considered to have considerable potential for learning and personal development, even if the qualifications for which they seek recognition have been earned in an education system or at an institution which is considered to be of substantially

lower quality than the education system of the host country. In this case, the result of the assessment may depend on whether recognition is sought for the purpose of further study or for the purpose of entry into the labour market. In the former case, it may be easier to recognise the qualifications, since the applicants may be expected to improve their qualifications and reach their true potential in the course of further study. In the latter case, it may be more difficult to grant recognition, since the qualifications will be the basis for an activity which may have a direct impact on other citizens, and since there is no guarantee that the qualifications will be improved in the course of the exercise of this activity in the labour market. For the latter form of recognition, the duration and content of practice periods may also be of importance.

The main difficulty, to which there is no obvious answer, consists in reconciling the desire for an assessment of quality with the requirement for transparency and accountability, which implies the use of "objective" criteria. In no case should a recognition decision be based on only a limited number of quantitative criteria, such as length of study, without some attempt being made to assess the quality of applicants' qualifications. To an extent, substantial differences according to quantitative criteria may, however, be taken as an indication of a difference in quality.

IV. Assessment procedures

Paragraph 14

The paragraph concerns the information which should be provided to applicants by national information centres and competent recognition authorities upon receipt of the application. The standardised information should deal with at least the following elements:

- (i) the documentation required, including requirements as to the authentication and translation of documents;
- (ii) a description of the assessment process, including the role of the national information centre, other assessment agencies and higher education institutions;
- (iii) a description of the assessment criteria;
- (iv) the status of recognition statements;
- (v) the approximate time needed to process an application;
- (vi) any fees charged;
- (vii) a reference to the national laws and international conventions and agreements which may be relevant to the assessment of foreign qualifications;
- (viii) the conditions and procedures for appealing against a recognition decision, according to national legislation.

In principle, recognition decisions should be open to appeal, and it is the duty of the competent recognition authority to inform applicants of the modalities of such appeals, including its formal aspects, such as deadlines. It is recommended that this information be provided already at the receipt of the application, partly to provide as complete a set of information as possible to applicants, and partly to avoid a direct linkage

between the information on the outcome of the application and the possibilities for appeal which may be taken as an implicit encouragement to appeal even in cases where an appeal would have little chance of being upheld. Assessment agencies may consider whether to require applicants to sign an acknowledgement confirming that the information has been received, and that the applicant has acquainted himself or herself with the possibilities and procedures of appeal.

Paragraph 15

This paragraph underlines the duty of the competent recognition authority to specify its normal time limits for processing recognition applications, keeping to these limits and informing applicants in case of delay. It also specifies the "starting point" for counting the time limits; i.e. from the time all relevant information has been received by the competent recognition authority. While all assessment should be undertaken and completed as promptly as possible, it should be pointed out that any assessment taking more than four months could seriously delay applicants' further study, or their gainful employment, or oblige them to undertake additional studies to meet requirements which the assessment may subsequently find that they have already satisfied through their foreign qualifications. Four months should therefore be considered as the maximum time limit for processing recognition applications; uncomplicated cases should, as a rule, be evaluated faster.

Paragraph 17

The consistency of recognition decisions is an important element in assuring transparent and coherent treatment of applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications. It would be unfortunate if similar recognition cases were handled in substantially different ways and substantially different decisions were reached. An overview of typical recognition cases may help in assuring the required consistency.

The question of whether to make information available to applicants is somewhat complicated. On the one hand, such information may give applicants an indication of what they can realistically expect and help them formulate their application. It may also be of help to applicants in considering whether to make an appeal against a decision. On the other hand, applicants may wrongly understand the typical cases to provide a legal precedent for "automatic" recognition of their own qualifications. It is therefore essential that information on typical recognition cases provided to applicants be accompanied by a clear explanation of the function of this information, underlining that in all cases an individual assessment of the application is undertaken.

Paragraph 18

Responsibility for providing information on the qualification for which recognition is sought is shared:

- (a) the applicants bear the main responsibility for providing the information required by the competent recognition authority;
- (b) higher education institutions at which the qualifications were earned have a duty to

provide applicants and/or the competent recognition authority with information about their qualifications as well as other relevant information (such as information on the qualifications structure, course content, etc.). Higher education institutions should be encouraged to make use of instruments devised to explain the content of foreign qualifications, such as the UNESCO/Council of Europe Diploma Supplement and information on credit accumulation and transfer systems, such as the ECTS¹. The duty of higher education institutions may be limited to responding to requests by applicants and/or the competent recognition authority undertaking the assessment;

- (c) the competent recognition authority is responsible for maintaining a system of information on foreign education systems and qualifications in the area of its competence.

It should be underlined that the competent recognition authorities should provide applicants with a complete overview of the pieces of information needed to undertake the assessment. Only in exceptional cases should the competent recognition authority ask for information in addition to what is specified in this overview, and in no case should requests for additional information be used as a means of prolonging or delaying the assessment concerned. Applicants as well as higher education institutions have a duty to provide all information requested within a reasonable deadline specified by the competent recognition authority.

Paragraph 19

The Background Paper is intended to be a tool

- for the credential evaluator to reconstruct the educational background of the refugee in order to facilitate the (future) assessment;
- for the refugee to affirm his or her academic achievements towards other evaluating bodies, like universities and employers, in order to gain access to further studies or appropriate employment.

Applications from persons in a refugee-like situation or others who for good reason cannot document their qualifications should be treated in the same way.

The Background Paper itself is not an evaluation, but an authoritative description or reconstruction of the academic achievements linked to the available documents and supporting evidence.

The Background Paper is:

- an overview of the claimed educational background with the available documents and supporting evidence

- a checklist, based upon the model of the Diploma Supplement, used by the credential evaluator to add more relevant information

Example of overview

Educational Background	
Qualification	Evidence
Secondary education	diploma
Higher education -first degree	Student ID + transcript of 1st year
Higher education -second degree	No educational documents, but teacher statement + employment contract

Paragraphs 20 - 22

Fees may constitute an impediment to recognition. If the assessment of foreign qualifications cannot be provided free of charge, fees should therefore be kept as low as possible. It is recalled that any fees charged by the competent recognition authority will be additional to any costs of translating and/or certifying documents. The provisions of the present Recommendation are especially important in view of the increasing tendency for public bodies to charge user fees.

Fee practices vary considerably throughout the European region. It is hardly possible to give precise indication of acceptable fee levels, as local conditions such as the cost of living and the level of salaries and student support must be taken into account. Nevertheless, in some cases the fees charged must be considered as excessive. It is, for example, unreasonable that the assessment of a foreign qualification should cost a substantial part of an average monthly salary in the public sector.

Paragraph 23

The requirements for complete information should be carefully weighed against the burdens the fulfilment of this need places upon applicants, specifically as concerns requirements for authentication and translation of documents, which tend to be time-consuming and costly. A consideration of requirements for authentication should weigh the necessity of minimising the risk of fraud against the need to reduce the burden on honest applicants. It is suggested that it may, in most cases, be sufficient to require authentication of key documents, such as diplomas, transcripts and birth certificates. It should also be considered whether certified photocopies, rather than originals, may be required. It is important that all requirements be clearly specified to applicants.

In the case of translation requirements, it should also be considered whether these may be limited to key documents. It may, for example, not be necessary for the applicant to provide detailed translation of curricula. It should also be considered whether it is strictly necessary to require translations to be carried out by certified translators. Where this requirement is maintained, the competent recognition authority should provide applicants with lists of accepted translators. It should further be considered whether certain documents could be accepted without translation. This could apply to documents issued in widely spoken

¹ European Credit Transfer System.

languages, in languages which are linguistically close to the language(s) of the host country, languages widely understood in the host country, and/or languages in which staff members of the competent recognition authority have sufficient competence.

Paragraph 24

The reason why titles of foreign qualifications should not be translated is that a translation in this case implies an assessment, and this assessment should only be undertaken by qualified recognition experts. The Diploma Supplement revised jointly by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO as well as credit accumulation and transfer systems have been devised to explain the content of qualifications without translating or evaluating them. Attention is drawn to the fact that transliteration is distinct from translation. Transliteration implies reproducing the sounds rendered by one alphabet or writing system in another alphabet or writing system, such as rendering a word written in the Cyrillic alphabet or in Japanese characters in the Latin alphabet. Transliteration enables readers unfamiliar with the alphabet or writing system of the original language to identify words or expressions from that language and should be undertaken using standard systems of transliteration where they exist.

Verification of the authenticity of documents

Paragraphs 25 - 28

The problem of falsified documents is becoming increasingly serious. It is therefore necessary to underline the need to verify the authenticity of documents submitted by applicants, as well as the identity of the applicants themselves. At the same time, however, it is necessary to maintain a balance between the need for verification and the need to avoid placing undue burdens on the majority of applicants, who submit authentic documents, and who should be treated according to the basic judicial rule of being "innocent until proven guilty". It is therefore necessary to give competent recognition authorities the possibility to require particularly severe proofs of authenticity, such as the submission of original documents, in cases where forgery is suspected. Another possibility in such cases is to require copies certified by an original signature and/or stamp of the institution having issued the qualifications. Higher education institutions should reply promptly to requests for such certification, which should be issued without fees, if possible, or at any rate at moderate fees.

At the same time, some laws on the verification of documents, such as those which require full legalisation of all documents, date from a time when international communication was much more difficult than today. While they may have been justified at the time, today there are better and more efficient ways of verifying the authenticity of documents through direct contact with competent recognition authorities and higher education institutions from which the documents are claimed to originate. States are therefore encouraged to review their national laws with a view to simplifying and modernising their rules on the verification of the authenticity of documents.

V. Assessment criteria

Paragraphs 29 - 31

In view of the increasing diversification of higher education systems, and of higher education institutions through transnational arrangements, including the establishment of a large number of private higher education institutions, qualifications cannot be properly evaluated without taking into account the institution which has issued the qualifications. At the same time, national laws and practices for the assessment of higher education institutions vary very widely. Consequently, the kind of information which may be obtained on higher education institutions also varies. Section VIII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention outlines the kind of information which should be provided by Parties which have established a system of formal assessment of higher education institutions and programmes, as well as the kind of information which should be provided by Parties which have not established such a system. The UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education outlines the principles which should be respected by institutions and organizations involved in the provision of educational services through transnational arrangements and they should be applied in the assessment of academic qualifications.

Paragraph 32

There is a direct connection between the assessment of foreign qualifications and the purpose(s) for which recognition is sought. For example, a given qualification may be adequate for the purpose of further study, but not for the purpose of employment at a given level. Conversely, a given qualification may be adequate for the purpose of employment, but not for further study, e.g. at doctoral level. This could, for example, be the case if a research component, the writing of an independent thesis or another form of substantial independent work were totally lacking in the foreign qualification, and such a component were a requirement for access to doctoral studies in the home country. This implies that a recognition statement should make it clear for which purpose(s) it is valid, and a renewed assessment should be undertaken if recognition is sought for other purpose(s) than those (that) covered by a previous statement.

Qualifications may serve a wide range of purposes, some examples of which are:

- (a) general access to higher education;
- (b) restricted access to higher education (i.e. access restricted to certain parts of the higher education system, such as certain technical studies);
- (c) general access to further studies at a given level (such as doctoral studies or second degree studies);
- (d) restricted access to further studies (e.g. access to further technical studies);
- (e) access to professional training;

- (f) general access to the labour market (i.e. as a qualification for a wide range of positions at a given level);
- (g) access to a specialised area of the labour market;
- (h) access to a regulated profession.

Paragraph 33

Some examples of national or international legal texts which may apply to applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications are:

- (a) national laws and regulations on qualifications concerning higher education;
- (b) national laws and regulations concerning the exercise of gainful employment, including laws and regulations on regulated professions;
- (c) Council of Europe and UNESCO Conventions;
- (d) Council of Europe and UNESCO Recommendations and codes of good practice;
- (e) European Union directives, including those on professional recognition;
- (f) other European Union rules and regulations, e.g. those governing the recognition of qualifications earned in the framework of EU mobility programmes such as SOCRATES and, previously, ERASMUS;
- (g) international agreements established in the framework of other international Organisations, such as the Nordic Council of Ministers;
- (h) bilateral or multilateral agreements between States;
- (i) bilateral or multilateral agreements between higher education institutions.

Not all such texts have the same legal value; their relative legal status must therefore also be taken into account.

Paragraph 36

Differences in the content and profile of qualifications may concern e.g. the degree of specialisation or general education, requirements for independent written work (including theses), the inclusion of practice periods, laboratory experience or similar requirements (e.g. in medical or natural sciences), or the inclusion of non-academic elements (such as sports or vocational training) in the qualification.

What may be defined as "substantial differences", which may lead to partial recognition or to non-recognition, will to a large extent depend on the purpose(s) for which recognition is sought, for example recognition for the purpose of pursuing further studies or for access to a non-regulated professional activity. In some contexts, a broadly based education may be desirable, whereas, in other contexts, a considerable degree of specialisation may be required. In another example, a thesis may be an essential requirement for a given qualification. Applicants whose

foreign qualification satisfies the teaching requirements for the qualification in the host country, but do not include a thesis, may be required to submit a thesis before full recognition can be granted.

Examples of learning outcomes may be one or more of the following:

- (a) broad knowledge of a specific subject;
- (b) understanding of research results in a specific subject;
- (c) ability to analyse and solve problems;
- (d) ability to communicate effectively - orally and in writing - with diverse groups on complex issues;
- (e) ability to apply research results with routine skills and in a fixed domain;
- (f) ability to apply research results and to adapt routine skills to new domains;
- (g) ability to conduct research;
- (h) ability to discern conflicting theories or paradigms;
- (i) ability to pursue a specific occupation or profession at operational, management or technology development level.

Paragraph 37

The paragraph underlines that if a competent recognition authority wishes to withhold recognition - entirely or partially - of a foreign qualification, it is the duty of the competent recognition authority to demonstrate that this decision is justified. This is in accordance with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention as well as the European Union Directives on professional recognition. The "relevant qualification of the country in which recognition is sought" may be indicated by the applicant requesting recognition or, if the applicant has given no indication, by the competent recognition authority, taking into account the purpose for which recognition is sought.

Paragraph 38

Formal rights are not totally distinct from, but also not totally identical to, the purpose for which recognition is sought. Formal rights obtained through a qualification may, for example, be the right to access to higher education (i.e. the right to be considered for participation in higher education), the right to access to doctoral studies, the right to use a given title or the right to apply for professional recognition. The latter will in many, perhaps most, cases also be subject to non-educational requirements, such as practice periods (where these are considered as distinct from, rather than as a part of, the education programme leading to the qualification) or nationality, residence or language requirements. The assessment of foreign qualifications for professional purposes is covered by this recommendation only in so far as the assessment concerns the knowledge and skills certified by the qualification concerned for the purpose of professional recognition.

The Recommendation suggests that where a qualification gives its holder certain formal rights in the home country, the assessment should seek to assess whether the qualification can give the holder comparable formal rights

in the host country. It is, however, realised that national practices with regard to granting formal rights through educational qualifications may vary. This provision is applicable only to the extent that these formal rights may be obtained through a qualification issued in the home country.

Paragraph 39

A qualification certifies a certain competence obtained at a certain time. The value of a qualification may diminish over time, or be entirely lost, either because the holder of the qualification has not kept up the competence acquired by undertaking activities relevant to the field, or because significant new knowledge has been gained in the field, and the holder is not adequately acquainted with these developments. To what extent a qualification becomes outdated may depend on the field of knowledge concerned. The recognition of older qualifications can therefore be problematic, and there is no standard solution to the problem. However, the problem is not limited to foreign qualifications. If older qualifications from the country in which recognition is sought are still recognised, similar foreign qualifications of similar age should also be recognised for the same purpose. If, however, qualifications from the country in which recognition is sought are considered outdated and are no longer recognised, similar foreign qualifications should be considered in the same way.

Paragraph 40

Length of study is one of the most frequently used assessment criteria, and experience shows that it is also among the criteria most easily accepted by applicants whose qualifications are recognised only partially or not at all. The concept of "length of study" is somewhat problematical because, while generally expressed in terms of years or semesters of study, there may be differences, between countries and between individual institutions, in the number of weeks which make up a semester or a year of study and in the number of working hours in a week of study as well as in the distribution of those of hours in terms of teaching, self study and other learning activities (practice periods, laboratory work, etc.). Substantial differences in this respect could reduce the difference between two qualifications of seemingly different "length", or they could increase the difference between qualifications of seemingly similar "length". "Length of study" should therefore not be considered a uniform concept, and it should not be used as the sole criterion in the assessment of foreign qualifications. In general terms, however, length of study may be taken to give an indication of the level of a qualification. The wider the difference in the length of study normally required to obtain various qualifications, the more likely it would seem that these qualifications are not of the same level. The question of what constitutes a substantial difference in the length of study must also be seen in relation to the stipulated length of study for the qualification in question. A difference of one year is a clearer indication with regard to a study programme the stipulated length of which is, say, four years, than with regard to an entire primary and secondary education programme the stipulated length of which is, say,

twelve years. Therefore, it is suggested that a difference of one year or more may be considered substantial in the case of most higher education programmes, while the difference in the length of programmes leading to access qualifications should be two years or more in order to be considered substantial. It should also be underlined that while the differences indicated *may* be considered substantial, they must not necessarily be so considered, nor should other factors necessarily be excluded from the assessment. In cases where the differences in length of study are less than indicated here, these differences should not be considered sufficient by themselves to justify a decision not to recognise the qualification.

It should also be noted that "level" and "quality" are different concepts. A given secondary school leaving certificate may be of excellent quality for the purpose of general access to higher education at starting level, which is one of its main purposes, and a student holding that qualification with good grades may be assumed to have an excellent potential for academic studies. The student will, nonetheless, not have acquired the academic level necessary for access to advanced studies.

Paragraph 41

The paragraph underlines the need to focus any assessment of a foreign qualification on that qualification. Taking account of previous levels of education should be an exception rather than a rule. For example, in the case of someone applying for recognition of a doctoral degree, the applicant's school leaving qualifications should not be a part of the assessment. Previous levels of qualifications should only be considered in exceptional cases, and the assessment should as far as possible be limited to the level immediately preceding the qualification for which recognition is sought. The most pertinent example is perhaps that deficiencies in an applicant's secondary school leaving qualifications may affect his or her first degree qualifications, or partial qualifications at first degree level, to such an extent that full recognition at first degree level cannot be granted. However, it should be emphasised that this would be an exceptional situation.

Paragraph 42

The paragraph concerns the efforts which competent recognition authorities and other assessment agencies can reasonably be expected to undertake in the assessment of individual cases. They should apply all their professional skills and take account of the relevant literature, but they are not required to conduct in-depth research on the comparability of learning outcomes and/or fitness for further activities. In evaluating a foreign qualification, more emphasis should be given to the outcome of the education process (i.e. the knowledge and skills certified by the qualification and the ability to undertake further activities) than to the process itself (i.e. the education programme through which the qualification was earned).

VI. The outcome of the assessment

Paragraph 45

The indications referred to in this paragraph concern additional education applicants may take in order to

improve their chances of obtaining recognition at a later stage. The competent recognition authorities should assist these applicants by obtaining as precise indications as

possible on measures to be taken or, as appropriate, refer applicants to relevant written information or contact persons at higher education institutions or other relevant bodies.

**SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE
FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATION** (see graphic outline on next page)

In the following, a schematic outline will be given of the recommended procedure for the assessment of foreign qualifications or periods of study. This is intended as a summary checklist. In practice, the sequence of the steps outlined may vary, or several steps may be taken simultaneously.

Step 1

Receipt of the inquiry or application by the competent recognition authority.

Acknowledgement of receipt; information to the applicant about procedures and criteria.

Proceed to step 2.

Step 2

Verification of whether all necessary information is supplied.

If no: gather further information from the applicant or higher education institution(s)

If yes: proceed to step 3

Step 3

Verification of whether the applicant's qualification is authentic, and whether the documents submitted have in fact been rightfully issued to the applicant. [In this the competent authority may seek the assistance of the national information centre]

If no: (i.e. the qualification is false): recognition refused.

If yes: proceed to step 4.

Step 4

Verification of whether the institution and/or programme having issued the qualification is recognized as belonging to a system of higher education. In the case of transnational education, verification of whether the awarding institution complies with the principles stipulated in the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.

If no: recognition would normally not be granted.

If yes: proceed to step 5.

Step 5

Assessment of the foreign qualification, taking into account:

- (i) the purpose for which recognition is sought;
- (ii) formal regulations
 - (a) national laws
 - (b) international Conventions, directives, Recommendations, good practice, etc.
- (iii) past practice in similar cases;
- (iv) the content of the qualification, to the extent that this completes items (i) - (iii);
- (v) information and advice from other ENICs, higher education institutions or other sources.

The assessment should seek to answer questions such as:

- (a) are the differences in (targeted or achieved) learning outcomes so substantial that the foreign qualification cannot be fully recognised? If so, is it possible to grant alternative or partial recognition?
- (b) are the differences in the further activities for which the foreign and the home country qualifications prepare so substantial that full recognition is not possible? If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?
- (c) are the differences in key elements of the programme leading to the qualification so substantial in relation to similar programmes in the host country that full recognition cannot be granted in view of the purpose for which recognition is sought? If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?
- (d) is the quality of the programme or the institution at which the qualification was earned so different from similar programmes or institutions in the host country that full recognition is not possible? If so, is alternative or partial recognition possible?

Step 6

The assessment statement on the foreign qualification is issued (the outcome of the assessment). Depending on national laws and practice, this may take the form of:

- (i) advice to another institution, which will then make the decision;
- (ii) a decision;
- (iii) a statement to the applicant or to whom it may concern (e.g. current or prospective employers, higher education institutions, etc.).

If positive decision by (i) or (ii): recognition granted, applicant satisfied.

If negative decision: the reason(s) for the decision should be clearly stated and the applicant informed of his or her possibilities for appeal.

The applicant may:

- (a) accept the verdict;
- (b) appeal the verdict.

