

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Fundamental Values, 2024-2027

Name of the working structure	Working Group on Fundamental Values
Work period	2024-2027
Co-chairs	- Malta – Rose Anne Cuschieri - Romania – Mihai Cezar Hâj
Composition	Austria, EUA, Council of Europe, Croatia, Education International – ETUCE, European Commission, ESU, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, United Kingdom
Reference to the Tirana Communiqué	<i>Fundamental values</i> <i>Higher education can only fully develop its missions when its fundamental values are respected. While they are now more threatened than they were a decade or even four years ago, we reaffirm our commitment to protect, promote, and uphold academic freedom, as defined in the Rome Communiqué. In addition, we commit to upholding, promoting, and protecting the following values:</i> <i>We understand academic integrity as a set of behaviours and attitudes in the academic community internalising and furthering compliance with ethical and professional principles and standards in learning, teaching, research, governance, outreach, and any other tasks related to the missions of higher education.</i> <i>We further understand institutional autonomy as the will and ability of higher education institutions to fulfil their missions without undue interference and to set and implement their own priorities and policies concerning organisation, finance, staffing and academic affairs.</i> <i>Participation of students and staff in higher education governance encompasses their right to organise autonomously, in accordance with the principle of partnership and collegiality, without pressure or undue interference; to elect and be elected in open, free and fair elections; have their views represented and taken into account; initiate and participate in all debates and decision-making in all governing bodies; and, through their representative organisations, be duly involved in issues concerning the governance and further development of the relevant higher education institutions and system.</i> <i>Public responsibility for higher education denotes a set of duties,</i>

	<i>mainly exercised at the level of the national higher education system, which public authorities must fulfil as part of their overall responsibility for the education sector and society as a whole.</i> • <i>Public responsibility of higher education denotes the obligations of the higher education community to the broader society of which the higher education community is a part.</i> <i>We adopt the statements on the fundamental values annexed to this Communiqué. While each value is essential, all six of them need to be implemented as a coherent whole. As a reliable monitoring of their implementation within all our education systems is required, we welcome the work on creating a technical monitoring framework, and we ask the BFUG to report back to us at our 2027 Ministerial Conference.</i>
Main goals	• Finalize the development of a comprehensive framework and indicators to further the monitoring and implementation of the fundamental values of the EHEA, based on the work done in the previous Fundamental Values Working Group and the supporting project. • Coordinate the first round of the implementation of the monitoring tool in accordance with the agreed framework and indicators and report back to the BFUG. • Coordinate the knowledge sharing and promotion of the fundamental values in order to raise awareness on the common understanding within the EHEA members
Outcomes	• Comprehensive framework and monitoring tool with indicators presented to the BFUG - 2nd BFUG 2025. • An implementation report based on the first round of monitoring, in accordance with the framework – 4 months before the Ministerial Conference. • Report of the Working Group on Fundamental Values - 4 months before the Ministerial Conference. The report will include details on the events and actions implemented regarding the knowledge sharing activities, as well as proposals for future steps on transfer of monitoring.
Specific tasks	• Revise and adopt the proposals on the framework and monitoring tool for fundamental values and propose and submit it to the BFUG • Coordinate the process of implementation for the first round of monitoring, in accordance with the framework. • Participate at the meetings of the various BFUG structures to ensure common understanding and approach regarding the fundamental values

	- Organize knowledge sharing events. - contribute to the development of different outputs aimed at sharing the common understanding regarding the fundamental values.
Meetings	6 meetings (face-to-face), two per year
Liaison with other working structures	- A representative of the working group on Monitoring should be a member of the working group, preferably one of the co-chairs of the WG, to establish a link between the work done in the two groups. The WG on Monitoring and the WG on FV should liaise on the inclusion of the report on fundamental values in the BPIR. - Liaison with TPG on Quality Assurance, TPG on Social Dimension on the common topics. - Liaison with other topics as relevant, for example CG GPD on the international perspective and the TF on the Future of Bologna on future priorities on fundamental values
Contribution to enhancing mobility	The work under this working group contributes indirectly to enhancing mobility
Correlation with initiatives outside the Bologna Process	The work of this working group correlates with the following initiatives: - the work within the European Research Area on freedom of research - the work within the European Commission/ European Education Area on “<i>academic fundamental values</i>” - the work within the Council of Europe (CoE) on values (ETINED platform, academic freedom etc.) the work within the European Parliament on Academic Freedom.
Reporting	- Regular progress report will be given to the BFUG. - The framework and monitoring tool should be validated by the BFUG. - A final report on the implementation of the framework and monitoring tool will be presented to the BFUG. - Minutes of working group meetings will be made available in a timely manner by the Bologna Secretariat.
Dissemination and enhancing knowledge sharing	- Organising events aimed at disseminating the common understanding of the fundamental values. - Organising peer learning events in connection with the WG on FV meetings. - Participate in other Bologna events to present the common understanding of the fundamental values.

Tackling transversal topics	The work under this working group might tackle transversal topics such as: • Digitalisation & AI and their impact on fundamental values • learning and teaching
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