



Groningen, 16 April 2012

Groningen Declaration on Digital Student Data Depositories Worldwide

We, the signatories of this Groningen Declaration on Digital Student Data Depositories Worldwide, are witnessing a growing awareness in large parts of the worlds of politics and academics, as well as in public opinion, of the need to establish a more complete and far-reaching delivery of digital student data. As we see it, digital student data portability and digital student data depositories are becoming increasingly concrete and relevant realities, and in the years to come, they will contribute decisively to the free movement of students and skilled workers on a global scale.

In order to make this free movement of students and skilled workers a reality, and in order to unleash the full potential of digital student data depositories, we want to look into privacy rights, identification, access, and forwarding/sharing of data, next to compatibility of systems and comparability of data. Respecting the principle of autonomy and diversity of systems and modes of delivery, the overriding principle is to seek convergence rather than to create uniformity.

It is understood that there are more stakeholders involved than just the digital student data depositories themselves. These other stakeholders include, of course, first and foremost the students themselves; then education institutions at the primary, secondary and tertiary level; national ministries of education; employers; and so forth. This group of stakeholders would not be primarily concerned with the technical part, but with acceptance and recognition and is, as such, of vital importance for the acceptance of the goals of this declaration. These stakeholders are therefore naturally included among the signatories.

The Groningen Global Founding Seminar of Digital Student Data Depositories Worldwide that is now coming to a close aimed at gathering the critical mass that may bring about global momentum as the best possible way to bring about change. And the best way we can think of to continue, after the seminar, is through promoting concrete measures to achieve tangible forward steps.

The present declaration will take the above named issues as overarching themes for the road ahead.

We consider the following issues - privacy rights; identification; access; consulting; forwarding/sharing; compatibility; comparability; acceptance; and recognition - to be of primary relevance, in order to establish a global area of convergence on digital student data depositories, and we strive to co-ordinate our policies on the following goals and/or tasks:

- Discussion of purpose, feasibility and cost-efficiency of worldwide exchange of digital student data
- Looking into ways to make our systems more compatible, inter alia by looking into semantic interoperability
- Looking into ways to make data more easily comparable
- Sharing or forwarding of data through designated systems
- Promoting acceptance, for purposes of recognition, of digital student data in lieu of paper documents
- Compliance with national or federal privacy rights, both at the sending and at the receiving ends, when data are transferred
- Phasing out of paper based documents and of paper based authentications (legalisations)
- Establishment of a Global Standing Secretariat on Digital Student Data Depositories Worldwide, to develop a follow-up structure, consisting of a "consultative group" of representatives of all signatories, plus a smaller "follow-up group", in order to organize future events.

We hereby undertake to attain these objectives within the framework of our respective organisational competencies and taking full respect of the diversity of current systems. To that end, we will mutually seek intergovernmental and/or non-governmental co-operation.

Signatures on reverse side

Signed by

CHINA

CHESICC China Higher Education Student Information and Career Center
Mr. Ning Xiaohua, Assistant Director-General

INDIA

NAD National Academic Depository - for NAD
Mr. Ramkumar K., Vice-President Operations and New Projects, Central Depository Services (India) Ltd.

NETHERLANDS

DUO Education Executive Agency
Mr. Rob Kerstens, Director-General

NORWAY

FS, Felles Studentsystem
Mr. Christen Soleim, Leader, Steering Committee FS

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ministry of Education and Science
Dr. Yuri Akimov, Head of Division, Department for International Cooperation

SOUTH AFRICA

SAQA South African Qualifications Authority
Mr. Joe Samuels, CEO

UNITED KINGDOM

DARE Digital Academic Records Exchange - for DARE
Mr. Jonathan Dempsey, Chief Executive Officer, DIGITARY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NSC National Student Clearinghouse
Mr. Rick Torres, President

DIGITARY

Mr. Jonathan Dempsey, Chief Executive Officer

EAIE European Association for International Education
Mr. Hans-Georg van Liempd, Vice-President

EUNIS European University Information Systems Organisation
on behalf of the EUNIS President: Dr. Janina Mincer-Daszkiewicz

RS³G Rome Student Systems and Standards Group
Mr. Simone Ravaoli, President

SIGNE S.A.
Mr. Luis Díez, Director
