

## Revised Guideline for Subject Areas<sup>1</sup>

### Subject Areas – Definition

ELLS joint study activities are developed and implemented by the Subject Areas that concentrate on a thematic subject. For each ELLS Subject Area a lead university is designated with the responsibility of coordinating the jointly developed activities. The leading institution appoints an academic Subject Area coordinator with the responsibility of:

- identifying relevant partners and establishing the academic contact network
- planning of Subject Area meetings
- coordination of joint activities including preparation of a joint concept with annual activity plans
- presentation of the activity plan and the achieved progress at the annual meeting of Board, Task Force and Subject Area coordinators
- internal dissemination of network related information and
- involvement of colleagues in SA projects.

### Criteria for approval of Subject Areas

- 1 Societal relevance, European dimensions – Contribution to the ELLS ambition to spearhead the European Education and Research Area
- 2 Attractiveness for students/effective in stimulating students' mobility/better chances on the labour market for the graduates
- 3 Educational need: Important field of knowledge/innovative/interdisciplinary field
- 4 Participation of at least 3 ELLS universities, accepted by the involved faculties
- 5 Academic merit/availability of expertise
- 6 Added value: Complementing competence, improvement of the quality of education of the ELLS partners
- 7 Operational efficiency of the SUBJECT AREA: functional network, clear leadership, joint concept with clearly defined short- and long-term goals including a timeline with stipulated and achievable milestones
- 8 Mutual recognition of ELLS study courses by all ELLS universities, no extension of study period

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<sup>1</sup> As approved by the ELLS Board in May 2004:

Revised according to the results of the ELLS meeting in Vienna, October 2004

## **Formation process of Subject Areas – a stepwise procedure**

The development of a Subject Area has to be considered as a step-by-step process, where each step should be monitored for achievement/success. The step-by-step development of Subject Areas should be encouraged as opposed to over-ambitious action plans.

### **1 Proposal of a Subject Area**

Establishment of Subject Area groups is based on common interest expressed by the ELLS institutions. A bottom-up approach is preferred and proposals for new Subject Areas should primarily come from the departmental level. For the initiation of a new Subject Area, all criteria should be basically met.

Setting up of a Subject Area group: The initiating scientist contacts and invites interested representatives of the other ELLS universities for a kick-off meeting. The group decides on contents and title of the Subject Area and appoints the coordinator. The coordination of a Subject Area may be changed according to a joint decision of the SA group. The SA coordinator presents the joint proposal for a new SA to the Task Force and applies for preliminary approval.

### **2 Preliminary approval by the Task Force**

If the Task Force agrees on the potential feasibility of a new Subject Area and gives its preliminary approval, a one-year pilot phase is started.

### **3 Pilot phase**

During the one-year pilot phase funds for financial support (travel expenses) will be provided for the meetings necessary to develop an efficient network and a joint action plan. There is no general rule for the development of a Subject Area (there must be “many ways to Rome”); in principle, all three types of joint study programmes as listed in the ELLS policy document are possible.

Subject Areas which do not present concrete results after a pilot phase of one year are not further supported and will be terminated.

### **4 Final Approval as ELLS Subject Area**

Upon the pilot phase, the Task Force checks whether the Subject Area entirely meets the criteria listed above. After successful evaluation by the Task Force, the Task Force recommends the Subject Area for final approval by the Board.

### **5 ELLS Fund**

All Subject Areas can apply for a common ELLS fund for incentives that was raised by the ELLS Board on occasion of the meeting in Vienna in October 2004.

### **6 Responsibilities of the Subject Areas**

The Subject Area coordinators will submit an annual report to the Task Force with information on the achieved progress and an activity plan for the following year. This activity report must include concrete milestones, time lines and identified responsible anchor persons for each milestone as well as a budget proposal. On the basis of these reports the Task Force prepares an annual ELLS Plan of Operation including a budget for the coming year. This Plan of Operation will be discussed at an annual meeting of the Board, the Task Force and the Subject Area coordinators. The Board evaluates whether the goals of the past year were achieved and decides on the activities to be supported and financed during the next year.