

DR. JUDIT HIDASI¹

Higher Education in the beginning of the 21st ct in Hungary – with a focus on Budapest Business School

In this contribution to the *Ukranian Hungarian Scientific Days* on the occasion the the 20th Anniversary of the Unkraine organized on the premises of BBS, some words are in place about the Budapest Business School not only as co-host (together with the Embassy of the Ukraine, Budapest) to this event, but also as a university of applied sciences nurturing good relations and fruitful coopeartion with the greatest University of Economics and Commerce in Kiev. The content is divided into three parts:

1. Higher Education system in Hungary
2. Budapest Business School
3. Inter-university cooperation between BBS and KNUTE

1. Higher Education in Hungary

The Hungarian higher education has a long history. The first Hungarian university was founded in Pécs in south Hungary over 600 years ago, in 1367. Hungarian higher education institutions are autonomous, state or non-state (private and religious) institutions recognised by the state. There are 71 higher education institutions in Hungary (18 state universities, 12 state colleges, 7 none state universities and 34 none state colleges).

Hungary has been taking part in the Bologna Process since 1999, whose most important goal is the creation of the European Higher Education Area. With the effect of September 1, 2006 the new Bologna regime two-cycle degree system has been introduced. The first degree programmes (3 to 4 years) lead to Baccalaureus / Bachelor's degrees, while second degree programmes (1 to 2 years) lead to Magister / Master's degrees. Unified, undivided, long-term Master's degree programmes (5 to 6 years) are offered in some specific fields of study, e.g. in human medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, architecture, law and in a few programmes of art education. All Bachelor's and Master's degrees grant access to the labour market. Based on a Magister / Master's degree or its foreign equivalent, PhD or Doctor of

¹ egyetemi tanár, BGF Külkereskedelmi Kar, dékán

Liberal Arts (DLA) degrees as third cycle degrees can be awarded after 3 years of study.

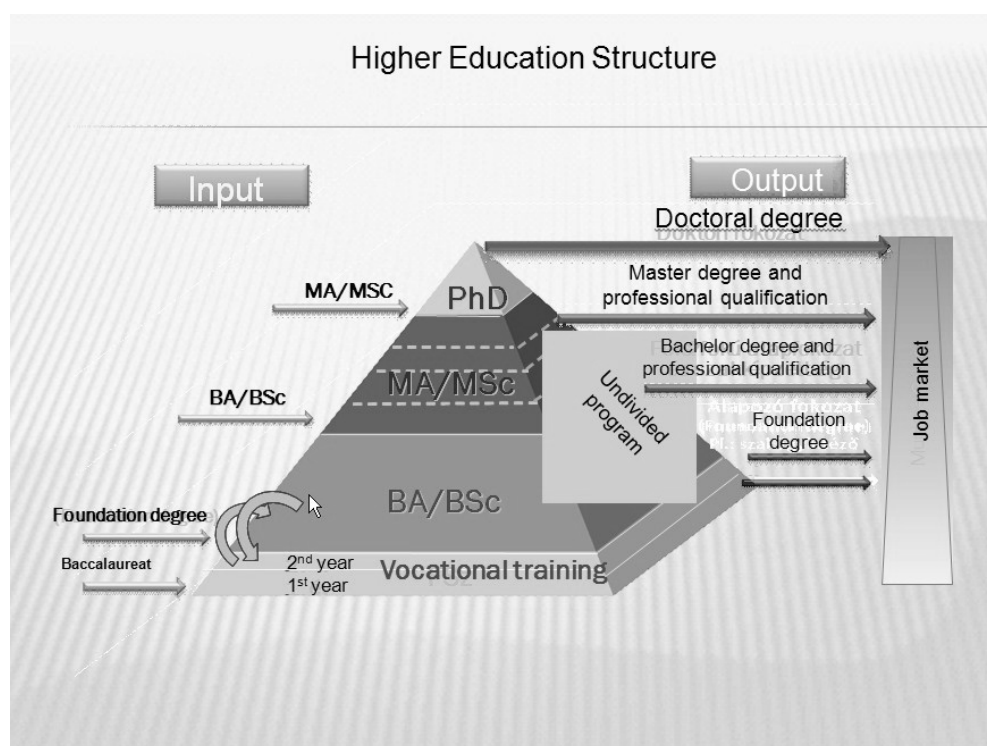
In addition to the degree programmes described above, higher education institutions offer non-degree programmes too, such as higher-level vocational trainings, postgraduate specialist training courses based on a first or second degree as well as summer universities and partial trainings in the framework of lifelong learning.

Higher education programmes may be offered in full-time training, part-time training or distance learning courses.

Admission requirements for higher education

According to the Higher Education Act, admission to Bachelor's degree programmes and unified, undivided, long-term Master's degree programmes is selective, with the Secondary School Leaving Certificate or its foreign equivalent as a prerequisite for admission with a few exceptions where practical examinations or aptitude tests are also required. The minimum requirement for admission to Master's degree programmes is a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent, to PhD and DLA doctoral programmes is a Master's degree or its equivalent.

Higher education institutions may link admission to Master's and doctoral programmes to additional criteria.



Degrees and Qualifications

The programmes of study offered in foreign languages include medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, economics, natural sciences, humanities, art and music. One of the strengths of Hungarian higher education lies in its PhD programmes offered in an equally large variety of subjects. The PhD and DLA doctoral degrees granted by Hungarian institutions - just as the Hungarian Bachelor's and Master's degrees - can easily get recognised in Europe.

Credit system

The obligatory use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) compatible credit system was introduced in September 2003, but several higher education institutions have already been using it since the middle of the 1990's. One credit corresponds to 30 hours student workload.

2. A Brief Introduction to the Budapest Business School

The Budapest Business School (BBS) was created as a result of the government's integration policy in higher education embodied in the Act LII/1999 by merging three colleges, the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism, the College of International Management and Business, and the College of Finance and Accountancy. The colleges retain much of their autonomy in academic matters. It is a publicly funded university sector college with a student body of approximately 20,000, most of whom are studying for undergraduate level awards in Business, Finance, Tourism or closely related areas. Their undergraduate programmes last 7 semesters, consisting of 3 years of academic study and a 6-month work placement. All study one or two foreign languages (of which English is one of the most popular) to a high level. BBS runs undergraduate programmes in foreign languages in order to facilitate student mobility to and from partner institutions not only in Europe but also in Asia. Undergraduate programmes offered in English are: International Business, Accounting and Finance, Tourism and Catering, Commerce and Marketing; in French: International Business; in German: Tourism and Catering, Commerce and Marketing. The first of these international programmes were accredited in 1992 and the latest ones most recently in 2007.

BBS also runs master's programmes in Hungarian (Accounting; Economics Teacher Training; Finance; International Studies; Marketing; Tourism and Catering) and in French (MA in e-Business and Net-Economie) in collaboration with its international partners. In order to broaden its perspectives, BBS plans to run its International Studies master's programme in English too. The programme is to be submitted to the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) for validation in June 2011.

The main goal of the school is to train students for business careers in which practical skills - based on theoretical knowledge - are needed. These skills include a

thorough knowledge of languages, creative skills, and well-founded professional and practical knowledge. With those skills, graduates are highly competitive in the labour market.

A Brief History of the Colleges of Budapest Business School

The *College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism* regards the Pest Commercial Academy, the first Hungarian commercial academic institution founded in 1857, as its predecessor. The Academy, which incorporated the Eastern Commercial Academy in 1899, was the first commercial school in the East-Central European region, and specifically in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The building of the College was erected in 1885 on its present site in Alkotmány St, in Budapest's 5th District. Between the two World Wars it housed a Commercial School, where students studied for careers in commerce and banking. It continued its activities in the field of tourism, and in 1992 it was renamed College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism.

The history of the *College of International Management and Business* goes back to 1957, when a school to train correspondent clerks for foreign trade companies was established. The school expanded its scope in 1962 by also training sales and forwarding clerks. In 1971, it was renamed the College of Foreign Trade, then in order to emphasize the international focus of its courses the school's name was changed to College of International Management and Business.

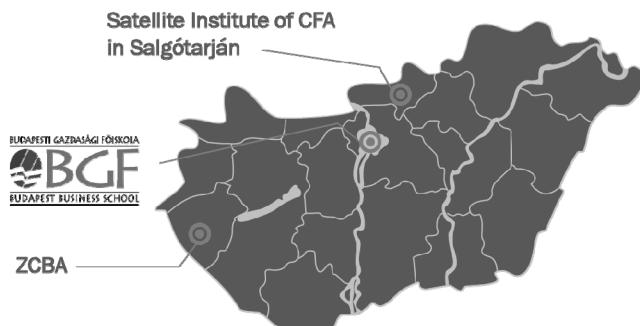
The *College of Finance and Accountancy* also traces its origins back to the Pest Commercial Academy, thus linking its history up to the end of the Second World War with the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism. The school was established as the College of Finance and Accountancy in Budapest in 1962, and in 1971 it expanded its activities by establishing a campus in Zalaegerszeg (Zala county), 240 km South-West of Budapest, and one in Salgotarjan (Nograd county), 100 km North-East of Budapest. In January 2011 the *Zalaegerszeg* satellite institute became the *Faculty of Business Administration*.

The Budapest Business School Today

The Budapest Business School (BBS), one of the determinants of Hungarian business education, was created as a result of the merger of the three colleges and integration of their professional potential.

Our Colleges are the following:

1. College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism (CCCT),
2. College of International Management and Business (CIMB),
3. College of Finance and Accountancy (CFA),
4. Zalaegerszeg Collegenof Business Administration (ZCBA)



The main goal of the school is to train students for business careers. BBS offers the widest selection of business studies courses, ranging from economics, commerce, tourism, hotel management, through international communication, media studies, marketing, to European studies, finance, accountancy, business information systems and human resource management. The school also offers teacher training in some of those areas. Standard programmes are undergraduate courses leading to a college degree equivalent to a BBA. As of 2008 BBS offers master's programmes in Hungarian as well as a wide range of post-graduate, and vocational training courses.

In 2008 BBS accredited five MSc programmes, namely *Marketing, International Studies, Tourism, Finance, and Accounting*. The Vocational Teacher Training programme was accredited in 2007. BBS runs a distance learning master's programme with the Université de Picardie in E-commerce and Net-Economie. The English language master's programme run jointly with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) was validated in 1995. Since then BBS has been recruiting students on the programme every year in September and in February. The *MA International Business* Programme is a franchise programme where BBS provides the facilities and academic staff, who teach according to the curriculum and assessment designed and prescribed by ARU faculty. Since collaboration with ARU proved to be beneficial for both BBS students and staff, the two institutions decided to expand the number of franchise programmes offered. In 2009 the *BA Business Management* and the *MA Global Communication* programmes were validated. The first cohort of students on the BA programme commenced their studies in September 2010. ARU and BBS collaborate in running a *PhD programme*. Two students were recruited on this programme in September 2010 and two new students are expected to enrol in the programme in 2011.

Language training plays an important role in the curricula of the four colleges constituting BBS. The main goal of language teaching is to expand the students' communication skills in the business environment. In most programmes students study two foreign languages.

BBS is a state institution, and although it receives government subsidies, it increasingly relies on its own sources of income. The school also performs a regional function, especially through its satellite institutions in Salgotarjan and Zalaegerszeg. It is currently in the process of expanding its activities by establishing a network of training centres for the two-year vocational programme, which will operate within a franchise system. This type of training is in a process of growth.

The four colleges of the Budapest Business School conform to the system and standards of European higher education with regard to the materials and the methods of training. Since similar colleges exist in Hungary and in many parts of Europe, the colleges of BBS have established a large network of partnerships both with domestic and foreign institutions of higher education, which makes it possible for students and professors to exchange views and share experiences, and for the institutions to recognize prior learning experience and to award double diplomas or degrees.

The first *dual awards programmes* were launched in the early 90s. These programmes are still running. Our partners in these programmes are the Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, France and since 2005 the Breda International School of the Avans Hogeschool, the Netherlands. The language of tuition on these programmes is French and English, respectively. Our original partner in the BA programme taught in English was the University of Humberside (later University of Lincoln). BBS also runs single degree undergraduate programmes in German.

The colleges also participate in different programmes of *research*. These programmes are most often connected with practical activities within the scope of the disciplines taught in the colleges. The colleges rely on three resources in their research. Firstly, it is academics who are best qualified to do this type of work. Secondly, consultants to enterprises and other organisations do research often sharing their expertise with members of other institutions. Such Cupertino is frequent with the staff of the College of Commerce, Catering and Tourism and the College of Finance and Accountancy. Thirdly, the colleges of BBS are often awarded grants by various European and international foundations, which greatly facilitates the implementation of different projects.

The colleges have their own publications, including periodicals, in which members of the staff and students can publish the results of their research.

The colleges provide a large variety of services to students and other users. Accommodation, catering, and sports facilities, libraries, laboratories, computers should be mentioned, though there are some differences in this respect among the colleges. The Business School has its own accredited Language Examination and Further Training Centre.

The four colleges have long-established traditions and good names. Each year, a large number of applicants, take the entrance examinations to enrol in different

programmes. We can say that even in an environment of growing competition, BBS has retained its leading position in the educational market. This position is strengthened by the fact that BBS graduates are in demand in the labour market.

The Colleges play an increasing role in the *international market for education*. Some programmes are offered in English, German or French. Both Hungarians and foreign nationals may apply to study on these programmes. Though the number of students on foreign language programmes is not significant, the trend shows growth. We think that we have reserves in the new generation of students of Hungarian origin beyond the frontiers, and the expected increase of student mobility within Europe. We also attach importance to the dual awards conferred as a result of collaboration with other institutions of higher education because due to these partnerships the degrees awarded by BBS can be accredited and acknowledged in Europe and worldwide.

Centre of Excellence

In recognition of the high quality of BBS's academic activity, the Ministry of Education and Culture presented BBS the Higher Education Quality Award in 2010.

In 2011 BBS became an associate member of the European University Association. It is also a long standing member of EURASHE, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education.

BBS's Rector is currently the President of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference which comprises the heads of all institutions of higher education in Hungary. The Hungarian Rectors' Conference is a body entitled to represent higher education institutions and to protect their interests. It may deliver an opinion on any issue with relevance to the operation of the higher education system and make proposals for decision-makers or those in charge of preparing decisions.

The Mission of BBS

The mission of BBS is to become one of the leading institutions of higher education nationally and in East-Central Europe in the field of business studies and related disciplines at the levels of post-graduate, undergraduate and graduate training as well as in continuing education.

Quality Assurance

The BBS is an institution accredited by the *Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC)*. All its academic programmes, degrees and qualifications are accredited by HAC and recognised by the government.

The quality policy of BBS has been formulated with the following points in mind:

- The main requirement of the social and economic environment in the 21st century is the assurance of the continuous improvement of the Quality of Life through the complex quality management system at educational level, within the institutional infrastructure and environment, with our external partners, at various levels of knowledge, and the existential safety of our internal partners.
- Meeting the requirements of the Bologna Declaration with respect to the single quality management activity assuring transferability of credits, comparable criteria and methods in higher education institutions in the EU.
- Achievement of quality strategy objectives of the Institutional Development Plan.
- The quality requirements of the HAC.
- The successful institutional traditions of quality management training.

Quality management within BBS is co-ordinated by the Quality Assurance and Assessment Committee under the Senate. Operative tasks are performed by the Quality Management Office in collaboration with quality management representatives of the Colleges. The quality management system of BBS is based on European higher education quality management standards and guidelines (ENQA/2005). From 2006 BBS further developed its quality management procedures on the basis of the Excellence Model in accordance with the EFQM Common Assessment Framework.

As a result of self-assessment BBS has processed the strengths and weaknesses of conditions applying the logic of PDCA model in the interest of sustainable growth. BBS's quality management procedures are closely connected with its Institutional Development Plan modified in 2007.

In addition to the present Excellence Model in its quality development strategy, BBS has introduced the quality standard MSZ EN ISO 9001/2009 in September 2010. BBS's further aim is to make the MSZ EN ISO 9001/2009 standard higher education-specific by integrating higher education institutional standards into quality standards, and to enhance continuous development of the Excellence. Staff Development, Research and Consultancy and Related Activities

BBS has nearly a 20-year tradition of working with UK, French and German institutions of higher education. Tutors have been trained by the partner institutions to use the methodology applied in the given institution. This is especially true of the English language BA programmes. The College of International Management and Business started its dual award BA (Hons) programme with the University of Humberside (now University of Lincoln) in 1992. In 1995, in view of the positive results of the collaboration, the two institutions decided to start a part-time, then later distance learning, MBA programme too. Their experiences were positive, and many elements of the learner-centred methodology were introduced into the programmes taught in Hungarian.

As part of their regular work, BBS tutors are required to engage in research activity in their particular field of interest. Their findings are incorporated into their lectures, teaching materials, and written up as articles to be published in national or international refereed journals or one of BBS's in-house scientific journals, e.g. EU Working Papers, Szakmai Füzetek, etc. Tutors regularly attend conferences in Hungary and abroad. BBS holds an *annual scientific conference in November* where tutors and students can present their work to other staff members and to students. Every year BBS awards a prize to two of its tutors for their scientific achievement in the years preceding the conferment.

In view of the academic structure of the programmes running at the College, the research carried out by staff focuses on the various areas of economic sciences, namely, the macro- and micro-economic aspects of international economy, Hungary's attempts at integration, issues pertaining to company management. Research is also carried out in the areas of applied linguistics, communication, public relations, political sciences, tourism, etc. International funding for research has also been granted; the Public Relations Department is given support by UNESCO.

3. Cooperation between BBS and KNUTE (Kiev National University of Trade and Economics)

The initiative to establish academic links between BBS and KNUTE dates back to 2004, when professors of the two institutions first met at a conference organized by the Foreign Trade Academy in Kiev. After working out details of the cooperation, the Agreement on Collaboration was officially signed in Kiev on 15 February 2005 as part of the Hungarian delegation's program on the occasion of the visit of the Hungarian Prime Minister. Since then, cooperation has been going with changing intensity. This cooperation has manifested itself so far in different forms:

- mutual visits of university management in order to study study programs and possibilities of cooperation;
- mutual visits and study tours of academics – including conference attendance, conference contributions, etc.
- providing a chance to publish scholarly articles in each-other's scientific journals.

On his visit to BBS on 27-29 April 2009, the rector of KNUTE Anatoliy Mazurak was awarded the title "Honoris professor of Budapest Business School" in recognition of his scientific and pedagogical merits, his personal contribution to the development of cooperation between the two leading educational institutions of economics of Ukraine and Hungary.

It is our wish and intention to intensify collaboration with KNUTE in the future as well by expanding our activities – besides the above-mentioned ones - in the following three areas:

1. To perform interdisciplinary and collaborative research and consultancy in the areas of:

Hungary and the European integration experience,,

- the theory and practice of PR,
- Euromarketing,
- TQM;
- principles and practice of exporting,
- organisations and management,
- logistics management,
- international system of institutions political power relations,
- intercultural communication,
- the harmonisation of the Hungarian accountancy system with international systems,
- e-commerce,
- methodology of e-learning,
- tourism and catering.

2. The enhanced research-activity can be embodied by developing activities towards participation and collaboration in the *PhD in International Business doctoral project* run by BBS in collaboration with Anglia Ruskin University – both in terms of staff participation and in terms of student enrollment.

3. Both sides strive to work out the conditions and details of a „double-degree” construction for a selected number of students who could complete part of their studies in each-other’s institution- and by completing certain strict criteria of academic performance could eventually gain double degree – that is the regular degree of each institution.

At present, there are 47 Ukrainian student-nationals registered at BBS – who so far got enrolled on an individual basis – either as entrants with a Hungarian native background, or as foreign students studying on our „foreign-language” programs – English or French or German. We would welcome more students from Ukraine – also arriving on the basis of inter-university agreements. Choosing from a wide range of courses offered by the Budapest Business School, our domestic and foreign students may acquire a broad spectrum of theoretical knowledge and practical skills that will enable them to work for businesses or public organisations. They will learn everything that is necessary to embark on a successful career, maintaining high ethical standards, looking for innovative solutions, and demonstrating good communication skills in both native and foreign languages. Hence we have confidence in inviting students from the Ukraine to study at our University. Welcome to BBS!

www.euroeducation.net/prof/hungarco.htm

www.nefmi.gov.hu/letolt/english/highereducation2_1.pdf

www.bgf.hu/