



First Announcement

SILVA Network Conference

**Should all Forestry Students learn the same?
Generalization versus Specialization**

16. – 18. April, 2015



Conference Venue: Wilhelm Exner House
BOKU University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

Organizer and Contact details

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Should all Forestry Students learn the same? Generalization versus Specialization

On behalf of the SILVA Network, the Department of Forest and Soil Sciences, BOKU - University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria, and the IUFRO education group we invite you for the upcoming conference on Forestry Education.

Tentative Program

Prior to the SILVA Network conference an ICA-Edu Symposium "Educating Life Science Graduates Fit for Europe" will take place (cf. www.ica-ls.com). Participation is encouraged.

Thursday: 16. 4. 2015

12:00 – 14:00 Registration, Lunch organized by BOKU

14:00 – 14:30 Welcome address and opening of the Silva Conference

14:30 – 17:30 Technical Sessions

18:30 Dinner at a Heurigen Restaurant organized by BOKU

Friday: 17. 4. 2015

**9:00 – 12:00 Technical Sessions,
including General Assembly and Working Groups**

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch organized by BOKU

13:00 – 17:00 Technical Sessions

Free evening, Guided tour through the city of Vienna can be organized upon request

Saturday: 18. 4. 2015

**8:00 – 18:00 Excursion to the Experimental Forest of the Department of
Forest and Soil sciences Forest Sciences, Rosalia**

Lunch and a visit to a local restaurant will be organized by BOKU



Background and Topic

The discussion of a standard curriculum of forest sciences, e.g. throughout Europe, and a standard competence profile of the graduates is not new. There was an “undefined consensus”, that forest graduates should have a certain know how to meet the expectations of the forestry sector. With the implementation of the Bologna process, which strongly focusses on learning outcomes and competences. this discussion has gained new attention.

Curriculum development is an ongoing process, strongly driven by enhancements in science and society needs. However some of key challenges remain for all Forestry Bachelor and Master programmes across Europe:

- typical standard competences versus individual profiles to meet the expected future job perspectives of the graduates
- subject specific knowledge versus generic competences of the graduates
- general standard curricula versus specialized programmes addressing the regional needs and strengths of the Forest Faculties and/or Universities
- general approach in the curriculum development: (i) outcome/competence oriented (looking at the graduates), or (ii) scientific discipline based (science driven).
- definition of the field of forestry: a more narrow application oriented approach, versus a wider, covering also neighboring disciplines
- learning paradigm versus instruction paradigm

At the SILVA Network conference 2005 in Wageningen we asked about the future minimum standard for forest education in Europe at the Bachelors and Masters level. The conclusion was (see also in the proceedings on our homepage):

(i) There is no consensus about content and workload for curricula like we had in our traditional university and “Fachhochschule”.

(ii) There is a strong regional differentiation related to the backyard of the university (e.g. region, country), which reflects the regional society demands, and this diversity persists.

The importance of the local situation seems to have a lasting impact on both the type of universities and the contents of the academic forestry education. There will be no uniformity, but different profiles of curricula in different places, which – with a growing mobility – highly increases the students’ opportunities for individual qualification profiles.

The universities will cooperate, even share resources in joint activities like teaching, but they will also compete more than before. The individual competence profiles of the graduates depend on the possibility of choosing elective courses or limited specializations in different lines of studies – examples ranging from traditional high proportions of compulsory courses to elaborated ways of offering different options to the students. Ten years later it seems worthwhile to reconsider core studies and specialities and assess the ongoing developments.

Call for contributions

We invite you to prepare a presentation in closer or wider connection with the theme of the conference. Student participation is encouraged. Please send by e-mail an abstract of up to 300 words to Siegfried Lewark, copy to Hubert Hasenauer by e-mail (cf. below) till February 10, 2015. The organizing committee will decide on contributions; all applicants will be informed as soon as possible.

Venue and Fees

Participation fee is 150 € (special fees for students), which will include: 3 lunches, the conference dinner, tea/coffee breaks during the conference, and the field trip. Fees must be paid in cash at the registration.

Accommodation

Participants have to make their own accommodation arrangements, at their own cost. More information about hotels (special price) will be provided on the homepage of SILVA Network, and by the organizers upon request.

Travel arrangements

Participants have to make their travel arrangements themselves, at own cost. Vienna can easily be reached by air as well as by train.

Local organizer

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